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**The influence of L2 on L1:**  
**Metapragmatic judgments of Arabic L1 non-verbal greetings by**  
**Saudi L2 speakers of English**  
*A mixed methods study*

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication  
Birkbeck, University of London

*Presented by:*

**HESSA MOETIK F ALSHAHRANI**

## **WORD COUNT AND DECLARATION**

Word count (exclusive of bibliography and appendices): **68368 words.**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this dissertation is entirely my own.

Hessa M. Alshahrani

2020

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the influence of English L2 on metapragmatic judgments of Arabic L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. Through a sequential mixed methods approach, it looks at the effect of length of residence in the L2 target culture, cultural orientation, and personality traits on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK.

The participants are 437 Saudi and British adults, made up of three groups: 1) Saudis with experience of living in the UK with English as their L2; 2) Saudis in Saudi Arabia who had never lived in the UK with English as their L2; and 3) British L1 English speakers living in the UK who had never been to Saudi Arabia. The data was collected using an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The online survey consisted of scales on appropriateness of non-verbal greeting behaviours displayed in four social relational situations, the Vancouver Index of Acculturation, and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire. This quantitative data was complemented by the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with nine UK-based Saudi adults.

There was variation found between the three groups in their metapragmatic judgments of Saudi non-verbal greetings. Moreover, attachment to L1 Saudi culture was positively linked with UK-based Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings, whereas acceptance of L2 British culture negatively affected their judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours. Amongst UK-based Saudis, Cultural Empathy and Openmindedness were both strongly related to appropriateness ratings of various L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. There was also a link with levels of Social Initiative, and Flexibility. This suggests that a person's L2 influences their metapragmatic awareness of their L1, confirming the principle of multi-competence of L2 users (Cook, 1992, 2003).

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*“We communicate not only with our voices but our entire bodies and the space around”*

– Laurence W. Wylie

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>EFL</b>	<b>English as a Foreign Language</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>
<b>L1</b>	<b>First language</b>
<b>L2</b>	<b>Second language</b>
<b>MPJs</b>	<b>Metapragmatic judgments</b>
<b>MPQ</b>	<b>Multicultural Personality Questionnaire</b>
<b>NVGs</b>	<b>Non-verbal greetings</b>
<b>SLA</b>	<b>Second Language Acquisition</b>
<b>VIA</b>	<b>Vancouver Index of Acculturation</b>

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

“Holding on to one’s L1 sociocultural and socio-pragmatic norms in a new cultural and linguistic environment could be compared to holding on to a fistful of fine white North Sea sand in the sea breeze. No matter how tight the fist, the sand will escape.” (Dewaele, 2016, p. 139)

Dewaele states that it is inevitable that when people move from their L1 culture to another, they will gradually lose some cultural and social norms. This can be difficult for L2 speakers to come to terms with and they sometimes resist the process. Learning an L2 language is different from using it in the L2 culture and some do not expect the pragmatic challenges they face. Cross-linguistic, pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic failure can all occur. Pragma-linguistic failure is “caused by differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force” (Thomas, 1983, p. 109). Socio-pragmatic failure, by contrast, is a result of “different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour” (Thomas, 1983, p. 109).

L2 users can also face non-linguistic challenges, though this is not as widely recognised. These challenges can relate to interpersonal distance (proxemics) and touch (haptics) (Hall, 1966). Dewaele (2016) stated that when he moved to London from Brussels, British people thought he shook hands too frequently, this being the norm in Belgium. Absorbing new norms consciously or unconsciously, the immigrant may unwittingly extend them to contexts where they are different. He adjusted his behaviour, but then found himself surprised by the change when he returned to Belgium after 20 years.

I shook hands with everybody, remembering how fond Belgians are of this. Colleagues touched my arm, and ladies insisted on giving me a peck. I realized I had forgotten about all that, and that my current behaviour and reactions were typically British. I had to suppress a feeling of bewilderment when the same colleagues who turned up at the conference the following day wanted more pecks, more hand-shaking, and again the following day. I returned to England feeling exhausted (Dewaele, 2016, p. 140).

Dewaele found it difficult to behave in the expected, Belgian, way, having become used to British behaviour. He said: ‘My interlocutors were standing much too close for comfort’ (Dewaele, 2016, p. 140).

The author of this study has personal experience of differing cultural expectations of behaviour. Having arrived in the UK from Saudi Arabia to begin PhD study, my male supervisor offered to shake my hand, as is normal in the UK. In Saudi Arabia, opposite-sex physical contact is prohibited. It was this experience that led to me undertaking this study.

## **1.1 Background**

For an L2 speaker to be considered competent, they must have “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas, 1983, p. 94). L2 speakers sometimes cause communication breakdowns by trying to use features of their L1 while speaking their L2. The process of carrying over some of L1 features in particular when these features are not compatible with L2 could be explained in terms of pragmatic negative transfer or pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983). Kasper (1992) argued that pragmatic transfer occurs when L1 pragmatic knowledge affects L2 pragmatic knowledge. This definition focuses solely on the transfer of knowledge and behaviour from L1 to L2. Other scholars see the process as moving from L2 to L1 in addition (e.g. Gass and Selinker, 1992; Pavlenko, 2000; Cook, 2002, 2003; Kecskes and Papp, 2003).

Kecskes and Papp (2003) define ‘transfer’ as all kinds of influence and change of concepts, knowledge, skills, linguistic elements, in either direction between the L1 and the subsequent language(s). They see this transfer as bi-directional between L1 and L2. Cook (2003) also argues that learning an L2 can influence how someone uses their L1, something he refers to as backward, or reverse, transfer. He states: “As well as the first language influencing the second, the second language influences the first.” (Cook, 2003, p. 1).

Interactions between an L1 and an L2 are inevitable in the process of L2 acquisition. This means that L1 influence on L2 and L2 influence on L1 is perceptible in SLA. This view reflects the integrated and holistic view of bilingualism (Grosjean, 1989) and Cook’s (2003) multicompetence perspective. Cook’s perspective of multicompetence denotes that a learner has “knowledge of two or more languages in one mind” (Cook, 2002, p. 2). In other words, all languages are interconnected in the mind of the bilingual and that learning an L2 could also affect the learner’s L1. Cook also argues that the mind of L2 users differs from monolingual speakers not only by the presence of a second language but also by the emergence of a unique multiple competence. One interesting aspect of research in this perspective is that learning and using an L2 can have consequences that are not necessarily linguistic: “Acquiring another language alters the L2 user’s mind in ways that go beyond the actual knowledge of language itself” (Cook, 2002, p. 7).

Cook (1991) identifies that L2 speakers have a different knowledge of their language than an L1 speaker of the same language. He says: “Though the differences may not be great or even noticeable in everyday situations, the L1 knowledge of the majority of L2 users is not identical to that of monolinguals” (Cook, 2002, p. 7). Cook argues that L2 speakers are different to monolingual speakers of L1 or L2. Scholars point out that L2 influence on the L1 arose out of the notion of multicompetence (Cook, 2003; Pavlenko, 2000; Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002; Kecskes, 2015; Grosjean, 2001, 2012). Therefore, L2 users should not be considered as deficient against monolinguals because L2

influence on L1 will not necessarily result in any errors in L1 norms (Kecskes and Papp, 2003).

### **1.1.1 L2 influence on L1 pragmatic competence**

Pragmatic competence as a component of communicative competence is usually defined as the ability to understand and speak language in a way that is adequate in the relevant sociocultural context (Rose and Kasper, 2001; Thomas, 1983). Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) determined two types of pragmatic competence: pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic. Pragma-linguistic competence refers to the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings (Leech, 1983, p. 10). Socio-pragmatic competence is: “the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of their communicative action” (Leech, 1983, p. 10). Socio-pragmatic competence relates to how communicative action is interpreted and perceived by different speech communities (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). Different speech communities assess social distance and power, their own rights and obligations and degree of imposition inherent in communication in different ways. This should mean that when a person is exposed to the culture of their L2, their L1 pragmatic competence would change.

The change of L1 pragmatic competence under the influence of the newly emerging language or exposure to a new culture is a dynamic process which primarily implies the modification, adjustment, and additions to the existing L1 pragmatic competence (Kecskes, 2015, p. 426). Kecskes also argues that socio-pragmatic norms and conventions concerning appropriateness developed in a person’s L1 are resistant to change, even when subject to cultural immersion. Even advanced L2 speakers will not “abandon his/her own cultural world” (Barro, Byram, Grimm, Morgan, and Roberts, 1993, p. 56). L2 speakers living in an L2 community can find it difficult to share the values and beliefs of that community, even after a long period of time (Adamson, 1998; Kecskes, 2015). An L2 can influence an L1, but it will do so

in a gradual and diverse ways including borrowing, shifting, converging, and L1 attrition or loss (Pavlenko, 2000).

Studies on the pragmatic transfer that takes place from L2 to L1 are scarce. Little research has been done on how learning an L2 might influence the way a person speaks in their L1. Those that are include Valdés and Pino (1981) and Cao (2016), which focus on compliments. Blum-Kulka (1990), Cenoz (2003), and Sadighi, Chahardahcherik, Delfariyan, and Feyzbar, (2018) chose requests, and Tavakoli and Shirinbakhsh (2013) examined refusals and requests. All these studies suggest that speech patterns will be similar in a person's L1 and their L2, and strategies will transfer from the L2 to the L1. These studies, however, examined only the impact of an L2 on linguistic patterns, and not its influence on non-linguistic behaviours.

The studies mentioned documented evidence of pragmatic transfer from L2 to L1, demonstrating multi-competence of L2 users. It is crucial to note that pragmatic competence is not simply the ability to speak and understand language (Stude, 2007). It is also the ability to comment on communication itself where the effects of language use become objects of discourse (Silverstein, 1993). This meta- ability is relevant to human communication since language use is not merely an instrument of communication (production) but rather a means of reflection and comment on language and its use in interactions (perception) (Stude, 2007, p. 199). The ability to comment on, interpret, explicate language use in speech events is known as metapragmatic awareness (McConachy, 2018). Some scholars have called for greater weight to be given to metapragmatic awareness among L2 speakers.

Thomas (1983) says:

“We must draw on insights from theoretical pragmatics and develop ways of heightening and refining students' *metapragmatic awareness*, so that they are able to express themselves as they choose.” (p. 91, emphasis in original)

Kasper (2001, p. 31) says: “Explicit pragmatic socialisation reflects metapragmatic awareness of pragmatic practices that are salient and important to the party that invokes the pragmatic norm”. Accordingly, examining metapragmatic awareness of L2 users is crucial as it is an important part of pragmatic socialisation (Blum-Kulka, 1990; DuFon, 1999; Kasper, 2001). It also indicates L2 users’ levels of understanding of communicative and pragmatic norms in their L2 and contributes to their intercultural awareness (McConachy, 2013, 2018). When L2 speakers have metapragmatic awareness, their levels of pragmatic and general communicative competence rise. They’re then able to adjust their approach to communication as needed.

The evidence that we have suggests that pragmatic competence is influenced by learning an L2, leading to convergence between the L1 and L2, borrowing and, subsequently, a shift in language use and some loss of the L1 (Vales and Pino, 1981; Latomaa, 1998; Tao and Thompson, 1991; Waas, 1996). It is thought that this happens as a result of L2 speakers’ acculturation to L2 culture, a high level of L2 proficiency and daily exposure to and use of L2 pragmatic norms (Pavlenko, 2000).

Most of the evidence presented so far of the influence of an L2 on a speaker’s L1 has been focused on verbal production of speech acts. But if we look at Dewaele (2016) and his experience of differences in non-verbal greetings between Belgium and the UK (see pp. 16-17), we can see that the influence of the L2 on the L1 may reach beyond speech (Pavlenko, 2000; Schmid and Köpke, 2007). No studies have yet, to the best of our knowledge, explored in depth the influence of an L2 on non-verbal patterns in an L1, though there is some anecdotal evidence. This study will examine the subject in depth at a metapragmatic level.

It seems clear that there is no one factor that influences how learning an L2 and exposure to L2 culture can affect perceptions of non-verbal behaviours appropriateness in L1. Immigration is one of the strongest predictors of L1

attrition or shift to an L2 in speech, and this study will seek to examine whether this is also true for non-verbal behaviours. Factors that may make a difference include length of residence in the L2, cultural orientation, and individual personality traits.

## **1.2 Significance of the present study**

This study examines how an L2 influences metapragmatic awareness in the L1. In particular, it looks at how metapragmatic awareness changes when a person moves to live in an L2 culture, with a focus on users' perception of the appropriateness of different L1 non-verbal greetings. It is likely that the L2 will have its biggest influence on people who have spent three years or more in the L2 culture (Pavlenko, and Jarvis, 2002). This study looks at Saudi L1 Arabic speakers who have lived in the UK for at least three years and speak English as their L2. The control groups are Saudis living in Saudi Arabia with no residence experience in the UK, and British L1 speakers of English living in the UK, who have never been in Saudi Arabia.

Levels of acculturation differ, even among those who have spent the same amount of time in their L2 culture. It's likely that acculturation is a significant factor in the degree to which metapragmatic judgments are influenced by a person's L2. This study uses a bi-dimensional model measuring levels of cultural orientation towards participants' L1 and L2 cultures, using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000).

There are also personal factors to be considered, particularly personality traits. This study uses the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee, and Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001) to measure levels of Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative and Emotional Stability. Unlike general personality questionnaires, the MPQ is tailored specifically to predictions regarding multicultural success (Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee, 2002, p. 680). The MPQ also fits the development of intercultural effectiveness of L2 users in L2 environment.

The objectives of the present study, then, are:

1. To explore whether the length of time spent in an L2 culture has an effect on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours.
2. To explore whether levels of cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures influence metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours.
3. To explore whether multicultural personality traits have an effect on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours.

By addressing these objectives, this study will contribute to the field of L2 pragmatics by: 1) establishing how far L2 residence influences people in their L1 at a metapragmatic level, 2) investigating the reflexive ability of L2 speakers to evaluate the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal behaviours, 3) exploring how far acculturation affects metapragmatic judgments of L1 cultural norms, for people living outside their native culture, and 4) examining the effects of personality traits on metapragmatic judgments.

This study provides a response to calls made in the literature to focus on metapragmatic awareness among L2 users and their degree of understanding of L1 norms and interactions (Thomas, 1983; Kasper, 2001; McConachy, 2013, 2018). It also makes a significant contribution to the research field of study abroad as it not only reports on L2 users' metapragmatic awareness, but also looks in detail at their levels of psychological, sociocultural, and socio-pragmatic adaptation to British life and culture. It will be particularly of use to students of L2 pragmatics, languages teachers, and directors of international study programmes.

### **1.2.1 Originality of the present study**

The originality of this cross-sectional study can be demonstrated as follows. It is the only study that looks at the influence of L2 culture on a person's metapragmatic judgments of non-verbal behaviours in their L1. It explores the complex relationship between the length of time spent in the L2 culture, acculturation and personality on metapragmatic judgments. The study uses audio-visual stimuli to assess the influence of an L2 on reflective and receptive skills, instead of the commonly used DCT instrument to investigate productive skills.

This is the first study, to the best of our knowledge, to examine the multicompetence of L2 users in relation to the way they evaluate L1 non-verbal behaviours. Competences include socio-pragmatic, intercultural, socio-cultural, interactional, social and communicative. In addition, this study looks at the links between metapragmatic awareness, length of residence in an L2 culture, acculturation and personality traits. This will be relevant for future research into L2 pragmatics, cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics.

### **1.3 Thesis structure**

This thesis has seven chapters.

**Chapter 1** gives the theoretical framework, including outlining the definition of multicompetence in an L2 user and examining how L1 and L2 influence each other. It then looks at factors that may have effects on L2 users' L1 including their personality, acculturation and the length of time they have spent in their L2 culture. Significance of the study including main contributions is stated.

**Chapter 2** looks at existing relevant research. The concept of multicompetence among L2 users is introduced along with definitions of the different types of competence. Pragmatic transfer and failure and the influence of an L2 on an L1 are addressed, in addition to an examination of metapragmatic awareness and judgments. This is presented with reference to studies on cultural variance in non-verbal communication (especially non-verbal greetings). There is a review of research into bi-dimensional acculturation and socio-cultural and psychological adaptations, including the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA). Research into acculturation of personality, personality and L2 pragmatics, and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) is also examined. The chapter then defines the rationale for this study and its research questions and hypotheses.

**Chapter 3** sets out the mixed-methods approach used in this study. The rationale and theoretical approach for the study's sequential explanatory design are set out. The study's participants and methods of data collection and analysis are defined. And the study's qualitative data instrument, participants, data collection procedures, data analysis and coding are set out.

**Chapters 4, 5 and 6** examine the research findings. Each of these three chapters addresses one of the research questions set out in Chapter 2. Each chapter includes the research results, discussion and a summary.

Chapter 4 addresses research question 1 on the impact of length of stay in the L2 culture on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. This is the longest part of the study.

Chapter 5 addresses research question 2 on the relationship between cultural orientation and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal

greetings behaviours. The Vancouver Index of Acculturation is used to assess acculturation level of Saudi residents in the UK.

Chapter 6 addresses research question 3 on the influence of multicultural personality traits on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, as measured by the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). It also presents change of multicultural personality traits of Saudi participants in the UK over time.

All three of the above chapters present both quantitative and qualitative research. Qualitative research was carried out through semi-structured interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding of the trends uncovered in the quantitative research.

**Chapter 7** is the final chapter. It provides a summary of the study's findings in relation to the research questions and hypotheses and an illustration of the multicompetence of Saudis with English as their L2, living in the UK. The pedagogical implications of the study are examined, as are its limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews relevant literature that relates to the primary themes of the study. The chapter has five sections. Section 2.1 presents the concept of multicompetence in L2 users and sets out the different types of competence. It looks also at pragmatic transfer and the influence of an L2 on an L1 and vice-versa. It also examines metapragmatic awareness and metapragmatic judgments. Section 2.2 is devoted to cultural differences in non-verbal communication. Section 2.3 presents relevant literature on bidimensional acculturation, including the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA). Section 2.4 examines multicultural personality traits and how they are measured, including by the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). Section 2.5 gives the rationale for this study and sets out its research questions and hypotheses.

#### **2.1 Multicompetence in L2 users**

Possession of a high degree of proficiency in a second language does not necessarily lead to successful communication. L2 speakers can find it difficult to know how to communicate with competence and are influenced by their L1. It seems obvious that a person's first language will influence their second, but the second language also influences the first (Cook, 2003, p. 1).

Cook (1991) introduces the concept of mutual influence between first and second language and describes this using the term multicompetence. This means "knowledge of two or more languages in one mind" (Cook, 2003, p. 2). The alternative to multicompetence would be for a person to have two (or more) completely separate languages that do not influence each other. Cook (1991, 2003) and Grosjean (1992) state that this is not a feasible state. They argue that L2 speakers demonstrate a different knowledge of their first language than those who have never learned an L2. Bilingual people are not

“equivalent to two monolinguals but a combination of its own” (Cook, 1992, p. 557).

Research into second language acquisition traditionally concludes that L2 speakers cannot reach the same degree of competence as native speakers. This leads to the assumption that second-language speakers are “deficient” (Cook, 2003, p. 3). A strong argument can be made against this position. An L2 speaker can be said to demonstrate differences from both native speakers of their L2 and monolingual native speakers of their L1.

Cook (2002, pp. 4-8) identifies these characteristics of L2 speakers:

- L2 speakers use language for different purposes than monolingual people.
- L2 speakers have different knowledge of language than L1 speakers of the same language.
- Differences can be seen in the minds of L2 speakers and monolinguals.

The above suggests that L2 speakers will always be different to L1 speakers of the same language (Cook, 2003). L2 speakers have a different kind of competence to monolingual speakers (Cook, 1992). Bilingual people have a different approach to monolingual speakers, and they perceived language differently (Watson, 1991). The way a person’s first and second languages interact means that the first language affects how a person learns the second. Cook (2003) argues that interference occurs between languages. In other words, the second language also has an affect on the first language calling this ‘reverse’ or ‘backward’ transfer. Pavlenko (2004) argues that an L2 can influence the L1 either permanently, or for a short time in particular contexts. An L2 speaker is able to use and balance both two languages, leading to multicompetence. This study will now examine each of the competences that L2 speakers obtain.

### 2.1.1 Communicative competence

Chomsky (1965) makes a distinction between competence and performance. He argues that competence simply implies knowledge of grammatical rules, whereas performance is a deeper level of knowledge (Hymes, 1971). Hymes believed that competence meant more than the ability to understand grammar, but the overall underlying knowledge and ability to use language effectively in conversation (Barron, 2003). Hymes argues that “knowledge whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated” (Hymes, 1972, p. 281, italics in original).

Hymes looks specifically at social interactions between L1 speakers rather than interactions between L1 and L2 speakers. Hymes’ ideas gained significant currency in the field among educators and researchers and influenced Canale and Swain’s (1980) interpretation of communicative competence. Their work re-defined the term in relation to second language acquisition. They developed Hymes’ ideas, identifying three components to communicative competence:

- *Grammatical competence*, meaning how a speaker understands the rules and components of a language, including vocabulary, spelling and sentence structure.
- *Sociolinguistic competence*, meaning how a language is to be used in particular contexts.
- *Strategic competence*, meaning the use of both verbal and non-verbal strategies to avoid and deal with communication breakdown

Canale (1983) identified a fourth component.

- *Discourse competence*, meaning the ability to speak and write with competence.

Canale and Swain's model became the theoretical framework for much second language teaching, but they did not consider the relationship between the four components identified. Savignon (1983) was one of the first to do so, arguing that when a learner increases their level of competence in one of the four areas, they will increase their overall level of communicative competence. They may be able to use increased competence in one area to make up for a lack of skill in another. For example, a learner who struggles with grammar will be able to use physical gestures and facial expressions to communicate (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006).

Neither of these models considers the role of pragmatic competence. The first to do so was Bachman (1990). His model develops Hymes' (1972) work. His model makes a distinction between language knowledge, and the ability to use language effectively. His model has three main components:

- 1) Language competence which in turn comprises two components:
  - a. Organisational competence.
    - I. Grammatical competence.
    - II. Textual competence.
  - b. Pragmatic competence.
    - I. Illocutionary competence.
    - II. Sociolinguistic competence.
- 2) Strategic competence.
- 3) Psychophysiological mechanisms.

The organisational competence identified in Bachman's model is similar to the grammatical and discourse competences identified by Canale (1983) and Savignon (1983). Pragmatic competence component illocutionary or pragmatic-linguistic competence implies the ability to use and understand pragmatic conventions (Youn, 2007). Sociolinguistic competence, or socio-pragmatic competence, is the ability to understand how to use language appropriately in particular social situations. This is similar to the sociolinguistic competence identified by Canale and Swain (1980) and Savignon (1983). Strategic

competence means the ability to use language to negotiate meaningfully. Psychophysiological mechanisms, the final component, refer to how language is performed; including orally, aurally and visually (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006).

Bachman (1990) distinguishes between pragmatic and other forms of competence, but he does not examine the relationship between the different components of competence. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) developed Bachman's ideas, adding sub-competences to each competence and identifying connections between different competences.

They identified the following competences:

- *Sociocultural competence* meaning the cultural and social knowledge needed to use a language effectively and to understand others.
- *Discourse competence*, meaning the ability to choose appropriate sentences and to use them to form discourse in speech or writing.
- *Linguistic (grammatical) competence*, meaning the ability to use different elements of language, including sentence patterns and lexical resources.
- *Strategic competence*, meaning the ability to develop and use communication strategies.
- *Interactional competence*, meaning the ability to understand intent by interpreting speech and actions, especially non-verbal and paralinguistic competence. Paralinguistic competence is made up of:
  - Kinesics (body language), the ability to understand eye contact, gestures and turn-taking signals.
  - Proxemics, the ability to use space appropriately.
  - Haptic behaviour, the ability to use touch appropriately.
  - Use of non-linguistic utterances such as *ah* or *uh*, silence and pauses (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 49, Italics in original).

The definition they used of sociocultural competence is very similar to the definition of sociolinguistic competence used by Bachman (1990), Savignon (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980). In the Celce-Murcia et al. model, strategic competence influences all other components of competence, meaning that this model examines the connections between different forms of competence. In particular, it gives weight to the importance of socio-cultural competence. For an L2 speaker to become competent, it is vital that they have cultural awareness and are able to interpret speech events in social situations. Thus, their definition of interactional competence focuses on use as well as interpretation of non-verbal patterns of communication.

#### *2.1.1.1 Interactional competence*

Interactional competence is a vital part of performance. It differs from communicative competence, as it is not “what a person *knows*, it is what a person *does* together with others.” (Young, 2011, p. 430, emphasis in original). Interactional competence means the ability to participate in conversations effectively (Kasper and Ross, 2013, p. 9). It cannot be examined solely with reference to a person’s ability or knowledge but must be seen in a social context. It relates to how people learn and use particular speech and interaction patterns.

He and Young (1998) said:

“Interactional competence is not an attribute of an individual participant, and thus we cannot say that an individual is interactionally competent; rather we talk of interactional competence as something that is jointly constructed by all participants (...). Equally, interactional competence is not a trait that is independent of the interactive practice in which it is (or is not) constituted.” (p. 7)

Interactional competence means having pragmatic abilities as acquired tools to be applied in appropriate contexts (Van Compernelle, 2013, p. 327). The relationship between different forms of speech and social context is vital to better understanding of interactional competence. To understand

interactional competence, we must also understand the interpersonal nature of communication and how it relates to our interactions.

Young (2001) considers interactional competence as “the construction and reflection of social reality through actions that involve identity, ... belief, and power” (p. 1-2). He sees the development of understanding of social context and the ability to interpret others’ actions as vital to interactional competence. Research on interactional competence focuses on speech, but some researchers have considered the importance of non-verbal behaviours, including the use of gestures, gaze, body posture, kinesics and proxemics (Young, 2011; Celce-Murcia, 2007). Interactions happen not only through verbal but through non-verbal resources (Kasper and Ross, 2013). Interactional competence is considered as an indispensable element of pragmatic competence (Ren, 2018).

Pragmatic competence develops from simple interactions (Young, 2011). When learners become competent in those, they develop the ability to deal with more complex interactions. In L2 context, people use their L2 daily in ordinary interactions and tend to develop good levels of interactional competence. This includes the ability to understand others’ views and empathise with them (Dings, 2007; Ishida, 2009).

#### *2.1.1.2 Intercultural competence*

Intercultural competence is “a complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini, 2006, p. 12, emphasis in original). A variety of terms are used in the literature to describe intercultural competence, including intercultural communicative competence, cross-cultural adaptation and intercultural sensitivity. The terms used attempt to demonstrate the ability of people to move past their native cultural norms fit into an L2 culture and develop relationships with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to their own.

Research into intercultural competence tends to look at students on study abroad programmes, the acculturation of immigrants and expat groups. Researchers tend to assess intercultural competence using an evaluation of individual values, motivation and personality (Reid, 2015). These assessments can help predict how well a person will be able to adapt to life outside their native culture and prepare them for it (Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe, 2007).

Byram (1997) suggested intercultural communicative competence should look at the integration of five different factors. These are:

1. Attitude. This is the ability of people to see themselves relative to others, including “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (p. 91).
2. Knowledge of oneself and others. This means the ability to understand rules of social and individual interaction and how they differ between groups, including in a person’s L1 and L2 cultures.
3. Interpretation and relation skills. This means the ability to understand, explain and interpret events and language from another culture and relates them to one’s own culture.
4. Discovery and interaction skills. This means how a person gains “new knowledge of culture and cultural practices” and uses their existing knowledge in cross-cultural interactions. (p. 98).
5. Critical cultural awareness. This means the ability use perspectives and practices in one’s own culture and in other cultures in order to make evaluations.

Byram also states that interaction includes both verbal and non-verbal communication and competence in linguistic and socio-linguistic discourse. Byram’s model is important to understanding of interaction, as it does not focus solely on communicative competence. Instead, it includes the ability to have effective cross-cultural interactions and the ability to reflect critically on

more than one culture, including L1 culture. It focuses on intercultural evaluation and interpretation. Byram emphasises the significance of non-verbal patterns to communication and considers the importance of personality traits to the development of competence (these include openness to other cultures and curiosity). His model is similar in this sense to Van Ek's (1986) model of communicative competence<sup>1</sup>, which looks at social development of L2 learners. Social competence of second language learners includes personal trait such as their motivation, self-confidence and empathy levels (Byram, 1997; Aguilar, 2007).

Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) see intercultural competence as including both non-verbal communication and cultural factors. They include body language, the ability to use space, touch and silence in non-verbal communication. By culture, they mean a person's sociocultural knowledge of their L2 society. Using this definition, interactional confidence can be seen as being part of intercultural competence. To gain intercultural competence, L2 learners should be able to relate their knowledge of L1 own culture to their knowledge of their adopted L2 culture. This is related to L2 speakers' reflection on their L1 culture norms included in this study.

Kesckes (2014) argues against separating intercultural and pragmatic competence, believing that it is impossible to define the difference between them. He states:

“In intercultural communication the existing L1-based pragmatic competence of interlocutors is adjusted as required by the actual situational context and allowed by the preferences of the individual speaker/hearer.” (Kecskes, 2014, p. 61)

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<sup>1</sup> Van Ek's model of communicative competence comprises six types of competences: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and social competence.

He also argues that being exposed to a language is not enough for a person to develop a real understanding of a culture and its pragmatic norms, in line with Kasper and Rose's view (2002) stated earlier (see section 2.1.1.1). He states:

“Exposure to and immersing into the new language and culture are not enough to change them. Sometimes L2 norms and patterns need conscious acts by the language learner to accept and/or acquire them. Bilinguals may see things in L2 through their L1 socio-cultural mind set.” (Kecskes, 2015, p. 421-422)

In sum, components of communicative competence are interconnected. L2 speakers are seen as competent and distinctive from monolinguals not only by the presence of a second language but also by the emergence of a unique multiple competence (Cook, 1991, 2003).

In the next section, this study examines pragmatic competence and its components, followed by an examination of pragmatic transfer and failure.

### *2.1.1.3 Pragmatic competence*

#### *2.1.1.3.1 Defining pragmatic competence*

Pragmatic competence as a component of communicative competence is defined as the ability to understand and speak language in a way that is adequate in the relevant sociocultural context (Rose and Kasper, 2001; Thomas, 1983). Kecskes (2014) states that the pragmatic competence of L2 speakers is focused on “how the developing new language with its own emerging socio-cultural foundation, affects the existing L1...knowledge” (p. 61). This definition is adopted in this study for pragmatic competence of L2 users in L2 environment. Kecskes indicates that learners already have pragmatic competence in their L1 and work to adjust this competence in their adopted new culture. This is not a permanent change for the majority, though it can be for those who spend a lengthy period of time in their L2 culture (Kecskes, 2014). He argues: “the more the L2 speaker engaged intercultural

encounters, the more likely it is his or her pragmatic competence will change more significantly” (Kecskes, 2014, p. 61). This view mirrors that of Cook (2003), who argues that the development of an L2 influences the way a person uses their L1. This is the theoretical basis for this study.

#### *2.1.1.3.2 Components of pragmatic competence*

Research into pragmatic competence in an L2 focuses on socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic competence (Thomas, 1983). Socio-pragmatic competence is “the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action” (Leech, 1983, p. 10). An understanding of pragma-linguistic norms includes understanding how to use particular forms of language and speech in a given context to express intent (Cohen, 2008).

Socio-pragmatic competence includes the ability to interpret communicative action (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). It includes both receptive and productive communication skills (Ishihara and Cohen, 2010; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Productive socio-pragmatic competence is “the ability to vary one’s language uses appropriately according to the context to achieve a specific purpose” and receptive socio-pragmatic competence is “the ability to understand language uses in context, including pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic perception” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, p. 15).

Pragmatic perception is the ability to judge the appropriateness of utterances in the particular context (Tada, 2005). Receptive socio-pragmatic competence can also be seen as sociocultural competence (Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2002). Dewaele and Pavlenko, (2002) defines sociocultural competence as the ability “to identify, categorise, perceive and engage in verbal and non-verbal behaviours” of speech event (p. 268). Receptive socio-pragmatic competence, therefore, implies the ability to understand and assess the appropriateness of non-verbal behaviours in a particular given context (Ren, 2018), and, thus, socio-pragmatic competence is the main component of pragmatic competence

related to this study. Socio-pragmatic competence also addresses learners' ability to understand and choose the language uses under the effect of context-related factors of social distance and power of interlocutors in a certain social interaction (Ren, 2018).

*2.1.1.3.2.1 Social variables of power and distance:*

The field of applied linguistics makes significant use of the concepts of power and distance. In pragmatics research, power and distance are studied as key variables affecting the production and interpretation of language, in particular within the dimension of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) argue that interlocutors assess the relative power and distance of each other when they converse (Spencer-Oatey, 1996). They argue that as power and distance increase, so do levels of politeness (Kasper, 2006).

*2.1.1.3.2.1.1 Power*

In linguistics, the word 'power' is used in reference to social status. Brown and Levinson define it as:

“The degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation. In general there are two sources of P, either of which may be authorized or unauthorized - material control (over economic distribution and physical force) and metaphysical control (over the actions of others, by virtue of metaphysical forces subscribed to by those others).” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 77)

Power is not always defined in the same way. Brown and Levinson (1987) see it in the context of social relationships, emphasising that it with power comes hierarchy and with hierarchy comes control of others' behaviour (Spencer-Oatey, 1996). 'Status' is sometimes used instead of power, demonstrating the hierarchical nature of the term, such as by Holtgraves (1986). The term 'status' is used to describe relationships between people in particular social

roles, including teacher and student, manager and employee, and doctor and patient.

In cross-cultural pragmatics, the terms power and status are both used to describe particular personality traits and values, including directness, solidarity and intimacy. Eelen (2001) states that the ways in which power and distance manifest demonstrates differing social and cultural norms. We know that the use of politeness and the way it expresses power and distance differs across societies. Studies that have focused on this include Cook (2011), Felix-Brasdefer (2008), Kecskes (2015), and Song (2017). For example, in cultures defined as 'low power', such as the UK and Australia, it is common for university students to refer to professors using their first names (Kurylo, 2013). In cultures defined as 'high power', such as Singapore and the Middle East, this is seen as inappropriate (*ibid.*).

A number of studies have presented empirical evidence on cultural difference in interpretations of power and of social distance. Felix-Brasdefer (2008), for example, examined cultural differences in perception of refusals in a hierarchical interaction among 100 respondents from Mexico and the US. He found that Mexican people usually prefer to receive indirect refusals from those they consider higher status to them. In contrast, American people usually favour direct refusals, regardless of the level of power or social distance of the hearer. This demonstrates that, although the Brown and Levinson model can be widely applied, there are still culturally specific influences that mean it is not entirely universal.

According to Song (2017), the ways in which people understand politeness vary. Chinese students are more mindful of the importance of power than American students (Su, 2012). Su (2012) examined how social status affected apologies of 120 Chinese and American students. When apologising, Chinese students studying in the US used more apology strategies with those they considered superior or equal than when they apologised to those, they considered inferior. American students did not show such a marked difference

in the way they apologised according to social status. However, those Chinese students who were more advanced L2 learners of English showed more similarity to American students and less to other Chinese students, suggesting they were beginning to become acculturated to US society. The limitation of this study, which was acknowledged by the author, was that it looked only at production rather than L2 speakers' perceptions of apology.

#### *2.1.1.3.2.1.2 Social distance*

Social distance refers to “the degree of familiarity [...] between two or more individuals, which may be previously established or not (e.g. existing relationships versus strangers) (Van Compernelle, 2014, p. 59). The term can be used in reference to the degree of friendship, solidarity, familiarity and closeness between two people. Brown and Levinson (1987) used the term social distance to mean the degree of equality between the speaker and listener in a conversation.

“D [social distance] is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act. In many cases (but not all), it is based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S and H (or parties representing S or H, or for whom S and H are representatives). An important part of the assessment of D will usually be measures of social distance based on stable social attributes. The reflex of social closeness is, generally, the reciprocal giving and receiving of positive face. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 76-77).

The degree of distance between two people in a conversation is determined through a variety of measures, including closeness and familiarity. We can identify three degrees of social distance to be used in this study (see Chapter 3).

- 1) Close friends, with a significant degree of closeness and familiarity (Lim and Bowers, 1991; Olshtain, 1989).

- 2) Colleagues, who are familiar but not close and do not want to be (Holmes, 1990).
- 3) Strangers, who are neither familiar nor close (Blum-Kulka, Danet, and Gheron, 1985).

L2 speakers engage in interactions in L2 involving various degrees of power and distance. L2 speakers often depend on their L1 in order to communicate in their L2, particularly when they are not confident or competent. This is known as pragmatic transfer. It can be beneficial to L2 learners, as it helps them communicate. It can also be a negative process, leading to errors and communication breakdowns. This is termed pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983). Research into pragmatic transfer has tended to concentrate on how the L1 affects acquisition of the L2, with a few studies also looking at the reverse. They include Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002) Chen (2006) and Su (2012). A few studies have looked at how an L2 can influence an L1 pragmatics. For instance, Valdés and Pino (1981) and Cao (2016) looked at compliments. Blum-Kulka (1990), Cenoz (2003) and Sadighi, Chahardahcherik, Delfariyan, and Feyzbar (2018) investigated requests. Tavakoli and Shirinbakhsh (2013) looked at refusal.

### **2.1.2 Pragmatic transfer**

When people speak to others of a different cultural background, they tend to be more likely to misunderstand each other than if they were speaking to people from their own culture. L2 pragmatics looks at how communication transfers from one language to another, and there is a significant body of research available on this subject. Pragmatic transfer shapes L2 learners pragmatic knowledge and performance in L2.

Scholars disagree on how pragmatic transfer should be defined. Kasper (1992) gives one of the most widely used and accepted definitions. She states that it is: “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and

cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information” (p. 207). This definition rests on the transfer of previous knowledge to the learning of an L2 and its use within it. However, pragmatics researchers often argue that transfer of knowledge can take place from the L2 to the L1 as well as from the L1 to the L2. Kecskes and Papp (2000) define knowledge transfer in this context as the “influence of concepts, knowledge, skills.... *in either direction* between the L1 and the subsequent language(s)” (Kecskes, 2015, p. 420, emphasis in original). Using this definition, transfer is bidirectional.

Some refer to pragmatic transfer as the “carryover of pragmatic knowledge from one culture to another” (Kecskes, 2014, p. 77). This means that knowledge is not just transferred on through language an individual level, but between cultures on a broader level. Language and culture cannot be separated. Kasper (1992) identifies two types of pragmatic transfer: pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic. Pragma-linguistic transfer means that how illocutionary force and politeness are used in a person’s L1 influences how they operate and perceive the use of language in their L2 (Kasper, 1992, p. 209). Socio-pragmatic transfer influences how learners assess actions and politeness styles (Blum-Kulka, 1982). It happens when “the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts” (Kasper, 1992, p. 8).

We can assess the degree to which pragmatic transfer has taken place by comparing the communicative behaviours of L2 users in their native and adopted cultures. Pragmatic transfer can be seen by:

“Observing a person’s communicative behaviour in the host culture and comparing it with their communicative behaviour in their home culture. If we observe that the communicative behaviour in the host culture is informed by the attitudes, values, norms and conventions of the home culture, then we have good grounds for assuming that the communicative behaviour in the host culture is partly due to pragmatic transfer.” (Žegarac and Pennington, 2000, p. 162)

Pragmatic transfer is not simply about errors in communication and learning. It is also a positive process that can help L2 speakers become competent in their second language. An L2 learner will use the pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic knowledge they gained in their L1 in consistent behaviours and perceptions with those of L2 (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, and Ross, 1996). Studies show that it is possible for learners to use their L1 in a positive way, such as to understand indirect requests (House and Kasper, 1987; Takahashi and DuFon, 1989) and to develop apology strategies (Bergman and Kasper, 1993). Many researchers assume that positive transfer is unusual and can only happen when the L1 and L2 operate using similar patterns (Maeshiba et al., 1996).

Some scholars of second language acquisition have examined whether and how L2 and L1 influence of each other is bi-directional. The term ‘transfer’ is often thought to be inadequate to describe the process, which is complex and involves multiple influences and interactions between both languages and cultures. They suggest a cover term for the process, i.e. ‘cross-linguistic interference’ or ‘influence’. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) proposed that the competent speakers of an L2 are able to create an intercultural style that is different from both their L1 and their L2.

This view has been supported through findings of some studies, including Cenoz (2003) (see 2.1.2.3). This view, however, does not account for L1 loss or the influence of an L2 on an L1 (Bou Franch, 2012). To gain a full understanding of influence, we must look at errors (or negative transfer), facilitation (or positive transfer) and the avoidance or overuse of target language forms (Ellis, 1994, p. 341).

2.1.2.1 *Bi-directional interference of L1 and L2:*

Research into bi-directional transfer is essential to this study. Bialystok's (1993) two-dimensional model of pragmatic learning shows that "adult learners can rely on already existing pragmatic representations but need to achieve control over appropriate L2" representations (Kasper and Rose, 1999, p. 90). Kecskes (2015) argues that pragmatic skills developed in an L2 are "modifications, adjustments and additions to the existing L1-based pragmatic competence" (p. 421). He states:

"How will the existing L1-based pragmatic competence change under the influence of the newly emerging language, and how will the new strategies, behaviour patterns and socio-cultural knowledge blend and/or interact with the existing ones?"

In asking these questions, Kecskes assumes that:

- Change is the modification of an existing system.
- The process of change is dynamic rather than linear.
- Language and culture influence each other bi-directionally.
- There is a distinction between behaviour and socio-cultural knowledge.

There is evidence that the influence of an L2 on an L1 is less noticeable than influence in the opposite direction. However, Kecskes (2015) argues that L2 can exert influence on some distinct areas of an L1.

Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002) found that there was bi-directional transfer of narratives from a Russian to an English L2, in a study of 22 learners. The participants lived in the USA for between three and eight years. The degree of cross-linguistic influence shown in their speech was assessed through the showing of four stimuli films. The study's results indicated that they had experienced bi-directional transfer. Their Russian L1 influenced the way they spoke in their English L2. And there was evidence of lexical borrowing from their L2 that affected the way they spoke in their L1. Authors discussed that the length of time the participants had spent in the USA was not a significant

factor in the degree to which bidirectional transfer took place. This study, however, did not account for intensive interaction in the L2 context.

Bi-directional transfer is also known to influence the degree to which an L2 learner becomes proficient. Chen (2006) studied the writing ability of 56 graduate Chinese students of English. The group was divided into three, depending on their level of proficiency. Monolingual Chinese and American English L1 speakers were also studied for comparison. The students were asked to take part in sentence and discourse tasks. The study showed that the Chinese students learning English as their L2 experienced bidirectional transfer. Forward transfer was seen in the way they wrote in their L2 at a discourse level, while backward transfer was seen in the way they wrote in their L1 at a sentence level. They showed less interest in writing in their L1 in their native Chinese discourse pattern as a result of learning English. However, the study's argument for backward transfer could be strengthened if a qualitative account was included, i.e. interviews with Chinese L2 learners of English to support quantitative data.

Bi-directional influence on speech was studied by Su (2012). He examined the way in which Chinese learners of English apologised and how this changed. One hundred and twenty participants in the study included monolingual L1 speakers of Chinese and American English, and Chinese learners of English at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The L2 was shown to influence the L1, but not to as significant a degree than the L1 influence on the L2. The strongest influence of the L2 on the L1 was seen in the group of advanced learners. This group did not assess apology realisation patterns in Chinese in accordance with perceived power to the extent that Chinese monolingual L1 speakers did. The main weakness of this study that was acknowledged by the author was the use of the DCTs whose data were less elaborated.

### 2.1.2.2 Influence of L2 on L1

There is little research that examines how an L2 influences an L1. The research that does exist tends to conclude that learners transfer speech patterns between languages and can transfer negative strategies they use in their L2 to their L1. This can include the avoidance or overuse of particular elements and can even mean that they lose pragmatic competence in their L1. “Ironically, while pragmatic competence is the most difficult aspect of language to master in learning a second language, it seems also to be, under certain conditions of bilingualism, ... the easiest to lose in the first language” (Blum-Kulka and Sheffer, 1993, p. 219).

The influence of an L2 on an L1 is not, however, always negative. It is often either positive or neutral (Cook, 2003). A study of 35 Hungarian students of English showed that they were more likely to form complex sentences in Hungarian than monolingual Hungarian speakers (Kecskes and Papp, 2000). Where the influence of an L2 on an L1 is negative, the result is attrition or loss of the L1. There is a neutral middle-ground, where a speaker can have a different degree of competence in an L1 and in an L2, but they are able to use both without one negatively or positively influencing the other (Cook, 2003).

Pavlenko (2000) identifies five different ways in which an L1 and L2 can influence each other.

1. The borrowing of elements of the L2 to be used in the L1.
2. The convergence of the L1 and L2, where a speaker creates their own system that spans their use of both languages.
3. The shift away from the structures and values used in an L1 and towards those of an L2.
4. The restructuring of elements of an L2 into an L1, resulting in some changes or substitutions in L2, or a partial shift in L1.
5. The attrition or loss of the L1, with the speaker becoming unable to use some elements of their L1.

Of the factors that can lead to L1 attrition, emigration is usually identified as one of the most important. A person who has emigrated will be constantly exposed to their L2 and they will lose opportunities to speak in their L1. Hulsen (2000) and Ammerlaan (1996) found that as the use of an L2 increases, so do levels of inhibition in an L1. People who maintain contact with other L1 speakers in their L2 country lose less of their L1 than those who do not (Ammerlaan, 1996). The length of time spent in the L2 society is also important, with Ramirez (2003) finding that the consistent use of an L2 in social situations leads to a degree of loss of the L1. Similarly, Prescher (2007) argues that long-term bilingual immigrants often report that they experience L1 attrition after years of living in an L2 surrounding. Ammerlaan (1996) believes that it is vital that emigrants continue to speak with native L1 speakers and retain connections with L1 friends to avoid this loss.

If an emigrant is not able to maintain contact with their L1 community, the way they use their L1 is likely to change. Smith and Van Buren (1991, p. 23) state: “the L1 changes not because of lack of use but because of lack of confirming evidence that L1 is the way it is in the L1 community”. L2 speakers who keep in contact with their native community retain the influence of L1 pragmatic norms (Kopke, 2007). The degree of contact that an emigrant might have includes:

- 1) No contact in their host culture. Contact with others from their native culture is confined to books, TV, and internet.
- 2) Contact in their host culture with other emigrants, forming a minority community and providing regular linguistic and pragmatic input (Kopke, 2007, p. 24).

These two situations are likely to lead to two distinct outcomes.

1. Those who do not have any in-person contact with other native speakers of their L1 will become more isolated and find that their L1 becomes weaker and limited.
2. Those who become part of a minority immigrant community in their L2 country will continue to have regular input into their L1 from a variety of sources. However, there will still be changes to their L1 and possible attrition, as they will be influenced in ways they would not have been in their native culture. They will, therefore, develop new norms in the way they use their L1 (Kopke, 2007, pp. 24-25).

The culture in which a person lives is not the only influence on their L1 and the degree to which they experience attrition. Individuals respond differently to the same set of circumstances and a person's particular demographics may play a significant role in how far they experience L1 attrition (Kopke, 2007). For example, adults give greater weight to their L1 and its importance in their identity than children do. A child who emigrates will usually place greater importance on integrating into their new society, and particularly with their peers, and will see it as part of their identity. They will be more prone to L1 attrition as a result. Therefore, L1 attrition is the result of a complex interaction of factors and the degree to which it affects any individual will vary. While emigration is significant, it alone is not enough to cause significant attrition. It should always be seen "within a *multi-competent view*" (Kopke, 2007, p. 30, emphasis in original).

When a person learns an L2, they experience a change in their L1 pragmatics. The way they interpret pragmatic cues changes (Paradis, 2007). This means that they begin to use patterns learned in their L2 in their L1. Through acculturation, "one will also eventually change one's responses to particular situations" (Paradis, 2007, p. 128). He gave an example on Japanese students in the USA indicating that they experienced some L1 attrition.

“Japanese students who have spent some years at an American institution will report that they have lost the automatic use of the complex system of politeness markers when, for instance, addressing older Japanese students or professors” (Paradis, 2007, pp. 128-129).

Kecskes (2015) states:

“Pragmatic skills in L2 appear like modifications, adjustments and additions to the existing L1- based pragmatic competence. Socio-pragmatic norms and conventions concerning appropriateness developed through L1 are very influential and difficult to change. Exposure to and immersing into the new language and culture are not enough to change them.” (p. 421)

Other studies demonstrate differing degrees of L1 attrition and L2 influence on the L1. A study of Spanish students learning English showed that they used the Spanish words *Perdón*, *Lo siento* and *Por favor* (equivalent to *sorry* and *please*) more often after spending time in the UK. Bou Franch (1998, p. 13). English speakers tend to use these words more often than Spanish speakers and native Spanish learners of English in the UK are sometimes thought to be rude for their scant use of *Sorry* and *Please*. The Spanish students had adjusted to fit English norms and continued to do so even once they returned to Spain. However, they were judged to be extremely polite by their L1 community.

We can also see the influence of an L2 on an L1 through production of similar speech patterns in both languages. Cenoz (2003) studied 69 Spanish university students, some of whom were fluent English speakers and some of whom spoke some English, but not fluently. Cenoz examined whether English as an L2 would influence the students' request behaviours.

The study showed that those students who spoke English fluently displayed the same request behaviours in English as they did in Spanish. The length of time the students had studied English at university also had an effect. The fluent students demonstrated different request behaviours in Spanish to those

who were not fluent. The study's results indicated the existence of interaction between L1 and L2 at the pragmatic level only.

Similarly, Cao (2016) studied 206 Chinese speakers of English as an L2 in their L1 environment. It investigated four groups of learners' compliment response via a written DCT questionnaire. English L2 was found to influence their compliment responses in their Chinese L1. In particular, those who were more proficient in English showed a greater degree of L2 influence. The author claimed that factors of gender, social status, and age were considered of relation to L2 influence on L1, but we were given no explanation for their effects.

Tavakoli and Shirinbakhsh (2013) studied 44 Persian students who had English as an L2 to determine how far English influenced the way they refused invitations in Persian. The students were given three role-plays, each of which involved a different power and social status dynamic. There were four groups of students: 1) those with little or no experience using English, and 2) three groups of students with knowledge of English, each group with a different proficiency level. Results showed that the students who were most proficient in English were showed large differences in the refusal strategies they used and the frequency with which they used them, compared to those without any English. Those who were most proficient in English were also more direct than those who were least proficient. The latter result indicated that L2 speakers were less sensitive to social status than their L1 peers. However, the authors stated that some qualitative insights would be of better understanding of the process of L2 influence on L1.

Sadighi et al. (2018) investigated the influence of English as an L2 on the request strategies employed by 10 Persian children of pre-school age. The children were asked to carry out role plays in both English and Persian using request strategies. The study showed that L1 pragmatic production of request changed after learning English as an L2. The backward transfer from L2 to L1 in this study was limited to the ages of 4 and 6 children.

*2.1.2.3 Pragmatic failure: negative transfer*

Negative pragmatic transfer can be a significant barrier to communication for L2 learners and as such it has been frequently studied. It often leads to the misuse of language and misunderstanding of L2 learners by others. Thomas (1983) defines negative pragmatic transfer as “the influence of L1 pragmatic competence on...pragmatic knowledge that differs from the L2 target” (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 10).

When the “L2 learner has mistakenly generalized from pragmatic knowledge of L1 to a L2 setting” (Žegarac and Pennington, 2000, p. 144), pragmatic failure has occurred. L2 learners fail to communicate effectively because the way they communicate in their L2 is different to the way native L2 speakers communicate (Kasper, 1992, p. 9). Pragmatic failure occurs often, even among L2 speakers who have reached a high degree of proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1990).

Pragmatic failure in intercultural communication can often be seen in the interactions between native and non-native speakers of a language. L2 speakers can be seen as rude or impolite by L1 speakers and may result in serious consequences such as surprise, or embarrassment (Cruz, 2013). It can be difficult for L2 speakers to understand what is considered appropriate in their L2 language. In some extreme cases, interactive conflict can result from pragmatic failure, both between individuals and more broadly between cultural groups. Native speakers may ascribe negative personality traits to non-native speakers based on their pragmatic failures (Thomas, 1983; Beebe and Takahashi, 1989; Bou Franch, 1998). Native speakers naturally see non-native speakers’ mistakes in the way they use grammar and pronunciation, but pragmatic errors aren’t always identified as such.

Cenoz (2003, p. 63) states:

“Pragmatic failure differs from other types of failure in that it is not easily recognizable by interlocutors who may judge the speaker as being impolite or uncooperative or attribute the pragmatic errors to the speaker’s personality.”

Some studies show that L2 speakers can be resistant to using the norms of their L2 language, seeing doing so as a threat to their identity. As a result, they may carry out deliberate pragmatic failures (Al-Issa, 2003; Ishihara, 2008; Siegal, 1996). Siegal (1996) gives the example of a female student of Japanese from a Western country who resisted adopting the usual modest language used by Japanese women. There is a considerable body of research into pragmatic failure among L2 speakers, covering a range of languages and cultures. Jaworski (1994) studied greetings, Olshtain (1983) and Harlow (1990) examined apologies, Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) looked at refusals. Blum-Kulka (1988), Harlow (1990), and Lwanga-Lumu (2002) studied requests. Harlow (1990) and Eisenstein Bodman (1993) chose gratitude.

### *Types of pragmatic failure*

Researchers have identified two types of pragmatic failure: pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragma-linguistic failure occurs when people attempt to transfer speech act strategies from one language to another (Thomas, 1983). For example Israeli students of English were thought by Americans to be insincere when apologising by Americans, because they did not use intensifiers such as *deeply*, *really* or *very* (Olshtain and Cohen, 1990). Nelson et al. (1996) found that Syrian native Arabic speakers tend to respond more elaborately to compliments than expected, rather than simply saying *thank you* as a native English speaker would tend to do.

Thomas (1983) argues that socio-pragmatic failure is different, occurring as a result of the differing assessments of native and non-native speakers, with each group having different ideas of what is acceptable and appropriate. It is more than a difference in the use of language, as pragma-linguistic errors are, but a difference in cultural norms, values and beliefs (Thomas, 1983; Jaworski, 1994).

Non-native speakers sometimes commit socio-pragmatic failure when they reject a particular phrase as being too formulaic or insincere, as they do not have an equivalent in their native language. For example, Jaworski (1994) found that 72 Polish advanced speakers of English often reject the phrase *how are you doing today?* There is no Polish equivalent, and so they choose not to use it or see it as a question demanding a response, rather than as a greeting. This result supports that socio-pragmatic failure is difficult to correct because it involves making changes in their own beliefs and values (Thomas, 1983).

Pragmatic failure can also happen because of a lack of knowledge of cultural differences. Cruz (2013) states:

“Misunderstandings and pragmatic failures may sometimes arise as a consequence of a lack of cultural knowledge or differences in the contents of the cultural metarepresentations pertaining to different aspects of the individuals’ social behaviour in specific circumstances.” (p. 17)

Some L2 speakers struggle to understand the meaning behind particular aspects of communication. Researchers and teachers in the field of second language acquisition and pragmatics have often called for an increase in the teaching of metapragmatics (Thomas, 1983; House, 1990; Olshtain and Cohen, 1990, 1991; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Bou Franch, 1998, 2012). Greater awareness of the significance of metapragmatic awareness would help both teachers and students understand their own potential for pragmatic failure and help them mitigate it. L2 speakers’ level of competence depends partly on their ability to understand language but also on their ability to focus on communication (Stude, 2007). This is a meta ability related to human

communication as language use is not merely an instrument of communication but rather a means of reflection and comment on language and its use in interactions (Stude, 2007, p. 199). The ability to reflect on, interpret, explicate and discuss language use in speech events is known as metapragmatic awareness (McConachy, 2018).

Metapragmatic awareness is important for L2 learners. Thomas (1983) states:

“We must draw on insights from theoretical pragmatics and develop ways of heightening and refining students' *metapragmatic awareness*, so that they are able to express themselves as they choose.” (p. 91)

Metapragmatic awareness in L2 speakers helps them achieve pragmatic and communicative competence. It allows them to identify and understand the norms of their L2.

### **2.1.3 Metapragmatic awareness**

#### *2.1.3.1 Pragmatic awareness and metapragmatic awareness*

Scholars often use ‘pragmatic awareness’ and ‘metapragmatic awareness’ interchangeably (McConachy, 2018). Both terms can be used to describe the speakers’ perceptions of those aspects of language that have interpersonal and social functions (House 1996; Clennell, 1999). Safont Jordà (2003), for example, defines metapragmatic awareness as: “the acknowledgement of those contextual features that determine the extent to which a given linguistic routine may be appropriate for a particular situation” (p. 48). Kinginger and Farrell (2004) refer to metapragmatic awareness as “knowledge of the social meaning of variable second language forms and awareness of the ways in which these forms mark different aspects of social contexts” (p. 20). These definitions both show overlap between metapragmatic and pragmatic awareness and do not define metapragmatic awareness in conceptual terms.

Verschueren (2000) and Silverstein (1993) both describe metapragmatic awareness in terms of the reflexive and metalinguistic aspects of language. Nikula (2002) states that pragmatic awareness means the interaction carried out by learners to achieve relatively fluency and social and interpersonal functions in the speech event. She argues that this does not necessarily imply the reflexive ability of language users to articulate and describe patterns of language use. Metapragmatic awareness can be described as an ability that “deals with the appropriate use of language” (Lucy, 1993, p. 17).

The definitions given by Lucy (1993), Nikula (2002), and McConachy (2018) are the basis of the concept of metapragmatic awareness used in this study. McConachy (2018) describes metapragmatic awareness as being “characterised by a growing ability to describe, evaluate, and explore one’s own and others’ interpretations of features of language in use” (p. 24). McConachy argues that metapragmatic awareness is founded in a person’s ability to understand, discuss and reflect on their own use of language in a variety of settings. In demonstrating metapragmatic awareness, a person is “managing the process of communication and marking one’s identity and social position” (Shilikhina, 2012, p. 301).

Metapragmatic awareness forms part of the socialisation process of L2 speakers, and it is the only part of that process that is explicit (Blum-Kulka, 1990; DuFon, 1999). Socialisation, including pragmatic socialisation, is usually considered to be implicit rather than explicit. It comes about over time as people take part in communication. However, in metapragmatics, socialisation is explicit: “explicit pragmatic socialisation reflects metapragmatic awareness of pragmatic practices that are salient and important to the party that invokes the pragmatic norm” (Kasper, 2001, p. 31).

Blum-Kulka (1990) states that metapragmatic comments can contribute to pragmatic socialisation. She also identifies that metapragmatic comments can influence the way people respond to cultural differences and make cultural

preferences, leading to pragmatic socialisation. This means that metapragmatic awareness in an L1 can be influenced by an L2.

DuFon (1999) demonstrated that metapragmatic tasks aided pragmatic socialisation in a study of six adult learners of Indonesian as an L2. The students, who lived in host families' homes, were asked to seek permission from that family each time they left the home, as would be expected in Indonesian culture. This gave those students a significant experience of pragmatic socialisation and is an example of how teachers of students learning a language as an L2 can demonstrate cultural norms to their students as a group, rather than simply teaching them to individuals.

Metapragmatic awareness can be taught in the classroom and L2 teachers often take an active part in leading the socialisation process for their students. Metapragmatic judgments allow us to understand and evaluate speech and the context in which conversations take place (Kasper, 1988). We can use them to establish the relative status of participants in a conversation and how well they know each other.

#### *2.1.3.2 Metapragmatic assessments: receptive data and dependent variables*

Metapragmatic assessments can be obtained for several purposes. Kasper (2008) stated that metapragmatic assessments could be used: "as a research issue in its own right, as an additional resource to help interpret performance data, as a preliminary step towards developing the instrument for the main study" (p. 295). Metapragmatic assessments are used in data collection in some relevant studies looking at the level of pragmatic and grammatical competence achieved by L2 learners (e.g. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1985; Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998). Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) carried out a cross-sectional study into the influence of the length of time spent in an L2 community on the pragmatic competence of L2 speakers. Their study examined 105 L2 Hebrew speakers and the way in which their perception of politeness and direct speech changed over time in their L2 culture. The study

used a metapragmatic assessment of requests and apologies and found that the L2 speakers studied became more similar to L1 native speakers in their perception of politeness and direct speech the longer they spent in their L2 culture.

The speakers studied became more tolerant of direct speech and developed a stronger preference for positive politeness through spending time in Hebrew culture, where these attitudes are the norm. The people studied fitted into three groups: those with fewer than two years' residence, those with between two and 10 years' residence, and those with more than 10 years' residence. Those who had spent the longest time in their L2 culture showed the strongest level of convergence with it.

Chen (1995) examined the reliability of metapragmatic judgments between L1 and L2 speakers. He studied a group of 42 English speakers, both L1 and L2. The participants were asked to rate 24 written statements that described various scenarios. The scenarios covered four types of refusal stimuli: requests, invitations, offers and suggestions. This was repeated four weeks later to ensure consistency in the participants' judgments. The study found that the L1 speakers tended to make different judgments to the L2 speakers, and this was found to be the case both times the test was run. People in the L1 group showed similar ways of expressing refusal to other group members, and the same was true for the L2 group. The effects were found to be strongest where the pragmatic expression tested was strongest. Refusal statements made by L2 speakers were generally considered less appropriate by L1 speakers than those made by fellow L1 speakers. This study indicates the importance of metapragmatic judgments. It "appeals to the subjects' [...] intuition, which is the foundation of pragmatics". (Chen, 1995, p. 8). Chen asserts that pragmatic intuition is both reliable and subjective.

Studies that focus on metapragmatic judgments are not limited to using them for data collection (Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei, 1998; Masumura, 2001). Metapragmatic judgments depend on a variety of factors, including the

perceptions of those being subject to judgment. A cross cultural study by Song, Eslami and Galindo (2018) examined the influence of their respective cultures on Chinese and American people's perceptions of how effective public apologies were. The study used the term 'recipients' perceptions' rather than 'metapragmatic judgments', but the meaning is the same. The mixed-methods study sought to identify which verbal and non-verbal cues led to learners making an evaluation of apology strategies seen in a video made by Netflix founder Hastings and sent to customers by email. This email and video apologised for the service increasing its prices and included both verbal and non-verbal apology cues.

A total of 181 students participated in the study through a Likert scale survey with six being selected for group interviews. A comparative analysis did not show any significant differences between the Chinese and American students' evaluation of non-verbal cues. Neither group thought the apology was effective or sincere. Both believed that Hastings' smiling facial expression and relaxed posture made the apology seem insincere. There were, however, some differences in the way the two groups assessed the apology and suggestions they made for improving it. The Chinese students focussed on the importance of formality, professional clothing and bowing as indicators of sincerity. The American students believed posture and eye contact would make an apology seem more sincere. The study demonstrates that differing interpretations of non-verbal and verbal cues between cultural groups is complex, but that an awareness of cultural norms and values is likely to improve communication. The study's results indicated cultural differences in pragmatic perceptions of verbal and non-verbal cues, demonstrating the need for further research to look at potential influence of other factors on metapragmatic awareness.

Metapragmatic awareness is an important tool in efforts to increase intercultural awareness. McConachy (2013) studied four Japanese students learning English in Japan for a period of 12 weeks, assessing their levels of metapragmatic awareness. They were asked to carry out a role-play dialogue in pairs to explore apology strategies and their feelings towards them.

The teacher asked the students to discuss how they felt about the characters in the role play, thus developing a metapragmatic commentary. They were asked a series of questions designed to explore their understanding of the dialogue and draw out their thoughts on it and their first language, Japanese. The study concluded that L2 students need to learn to understand a language in its cultural context, rather than simply its grammar, if they are to gain a deep understanding of that language. Metapragmatic commentary can help students to talk about their interpretations of language in their L2, improving intercultural understanding and giving those students the ability to undertake more successful L2 interactions.

The McConachy study's conclusions are important to this study. He focuses on defining the ways in which L2 learners can use their L1 to help them understand the cultural and pragmatic norms of their L2. He uses metapragmatic talk to discuss communicative behaviours, including commenting on their levels of appropriateness (Stude, 2007, p. 200). Making a judgment of appropriateness depends on being able to make individual "interactionally-grounded evaluations" (Haugh, 2010, p. 142). Through classroom discussion, McConachy asked his students to use strategies they would employ in their L1 (Japanese) to help them learn their L2 (English). He states that he has found through his teaching practice that the use of L1 can support the learning of an L2, especially in the development of intercultural awareness. He believes that the L1 can provide an important source of data to support L2 learning (McConachy, 2018, pp. 23-24).

It is generally thought that metapragmatic development is strongly linked to the development of a learner's pragmatic skill (Stude, 2007). The influence of metapragmatic development in L2 speakers can be also be seen in their L1, especially in their use of non-verbal communication. This will be examined in the next sub-chapter.

## **2.2 Cultural variance in non-verbal communication**

### **2.2.1 Defining culture**

There is disagreement among scholars on how to define the term 'culture'. The word has gained a variety of meanings in different contexts and it is difficult to determine a universal definition. The word is usually used in a collective sense, meaning "a way of life of a group of people" (Berry et al., 2002 p. 229). However, it can also be used to mean a set of values, beliefs, traditions, norms and concepts that are shared by a group of people who live in the same geographical area. Among the things they share will be their language (Ting-Toomey, 2012; Brislin, 1999). Culture in this sense means national or regional groupings.

Grojean (1996) includes behaviour in his definition of culture. He states that "culture reflects all the facets of life of a group of people: its organization, its rules, its behaviours, its beliefs, its values, its traditions, etc." (p. 28). He argues that people usually belong to several different cultures simultaneously. These include major cultures: national social, religious and linguistic cultures. And minor cultures: sports, hobby and occupational cultures.

For those living outside their native L1 culture, there is another definition to which we should pay attention in this study. For L2 speakers living in their L2 culture, the Kramsch's (2015) definition is relevant. She states that culture is a series of "portable schemas of interpretation of actions and events that people have acquired through primary socialization and which change over time as people migrate or enter into contact with people who have been socialized differently" (p. 638). According to this definition, culture can differ considerably depending on individual interpretation.

Cultural norms and values influence the way people behave and communicate on a day-to-day basis. Knapp and Hall (2010, p. 463) define culture as "the

rules and norms people expect our behaviour to match”. The members of a particular community will behave in a way that they believe is socially acceptable, and those behaviours and beliefs will form their culture.

However, there can be considerable differences in what behaviours are thought to be suitable and acceptable in different cultures. One culture may see a particular behaviour as rude, while another sees the same behaviour as ordinary and acceptable. Spencer-Oatey (2000, p. 4) states that “there is...no absolute set of features that can provide a definitive basis for distinguishing one cultural group from another”. The notion of culture is seen by many scholars as ill-defined and even unhelpful (Kasper, 1992; Spencer-Oatey, 2000). While it is difficult to define specific norms in absolute terms, it is clear that cultural norms do exist across groups.

Some argue that how we define culture depends on the situation that we are referring to. According to Kecskes (2014), “culture cannot be seen as something that is ‘carved’ in every member of a particular society or community. It can be made, changed, manipulated, and dropped on the spot” (p. 86). He states it is not culture that can be changed, manipulated, and dropped in interactions, but its manifestation (Kecskes, 2014). People do not always behave in the same way in every context and so cultural interactions may differ depending on context-related factors including social distance and power of interlocutors.

### ***2.2.2 Social distance and power in non-verbal communication***

Social variables can heavily impact on culture and the ways in which members within a particular culture communicate. Social relationships also affect different aspects of communication, including non-verbal communication behaviours such as touch. Power or higher social status is often indicated by more frequent touch and the use of other forms of non-verbal communication, such as smiling and hand gestures in specific contexts across cultures (Stewart, Dustin, and Barrick, 2008; Hall, Coats, and LeBeau, 2005; and Hall

and Veccia, 1990). Gregersen and MacIntyre (2017) argued that those of higher status tend to initiate touching behaviours more often than those of lower status, as when a doctor touches a patient or the boss pats an employee on the back (see Section 2.2.3).

Status has a considerable impact on proxemic patterns. This means that social status is “a major organiser of proxemics behaviour” in pair and group interactions (Gillespie and Leffler, 1983, p. 138). It is usually thought that individuals determine how much space to give to a person depending on their perceived social status. Someone considered to be of a higher social status is usually given more space by others than someone of a lower social status. A higher-ranking person has “more rights to space, a greater right to invade with impunity low-status subjects’ space” (Gillespie and Leffler, 1983, p. 137).

Burgoon et al. (1996, p. 92) argued that space and interpersonal distance should be considered to be “rough approximations”. They defined three zones of distance, depending on the relative status, familiarity and intentions of the people involved. They are:

- 1) A narrow zone of close distance and touch reserved for couples and close family.
- 2) A wider personal and social zone for general, everyday contact with the majority of people, including friends and colleagues.
- 3) A public zone for formal interactions with strangers.

Studies into proxemics have tended to seek to connect levels of social status and power with the degree of physical space someone is given. Gillespie and Leffler (1983, p. 125) claimed that those with higher status are said to naturally come to dominate the physical space around them. The conclusion of this way of thinking is that it is “status rather than subculture that may determine ethnic proxemic differences” (Gillespie and Leffler, 1983, p. 129). However, other studies disagree with this conclusion. Carney, Hall, and LeBeau (2005), for example, examined how power is associated with non-

verbal behaviours among 124 American African and Hispanic participants. They found that those with higher social status were likely to maintain a lesser, not a greater, physical difference from those around them. However, their findings revealed some of the stereotypes that were influential in real-life interactions of the study's participants who were asked to play high and low power roles.

### **2.2.3 Cultural variance in non-verbal greetings**

There are often clear cultural differences in the way space is regulated and how much touch is normal. These are demonstrated through different greetings rituals. Watson (1970) examined these rituals in 30 countries and classified each of them as being either a 'contact culture' or a 'non-contact culture'. The contact cultures were those in which physical touch was common and usual and in which conversations took place over a narrow physical space. McDaniel and Andersen (1998) agreed broadly with this assessment but called for sharpening these generalisations by taking into account social contexts and social relationships in each culture. For example, Japanese people are often uncomfortable with high levels of touch and will display embarrassment if they are hugged or kissed by people they do not know well, Americans begin with a handshake on the first meeting, but will often wave, nod or briefly communicate verbally when they meet someone for the second or third time, rather than shaking hands (Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter, 1995).

Japanese people traditionally use the bow as a greeting in business meetings, rather than the handshake that Americans would use (Ting-Toomey, 2012, p. 17). Matsumoto et al. (2016) broadly stated that Europeans and Americans generally use a handshake and a smile as a greeting, while East Asians generally bow without physically touching, keeping their hands by their sides. In Middle-Eastern culture, touch is more common, and a greeting may include a shake of the hand, an embrace, or a kiss, depending on the status and relationship between the people greeting each other (Matsumoto et al., 2016).

In the Middle East, people use a small bow with their hand on their chest, over their heart (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, for instance, physical contact is only seen between people of the same sex, with physical contact between people of different sexes generally not acceptable in public and such contact “can be considered extremely offensive, especially in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula countries” (Feghali, 1997, p. 365).

The amount of conversational space that people give each other can also be considered to be a non-verbal greeting and this too is subject to cultural differences. In Arab cultures, conversations take place close “enough to feel the other person’s breath” (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2016, p. 93). In Saudi Arabia, the usual conversational distance used among close friends and family members is small (Hassanain, 1994). This widens for those who know each other less well, including colleagues, and for conversations with those of a higher status (Ferraro, 1990).

Non-verbal greetings in an L1 are influenced by the learning of and exposure to an L2. Mori (1997), states that after leaving Japan and living in the USA for 20 years, she finds it difficult to exchange the usual Japanese non-verbal greetings. She states:

“When someone insists on speaking to me in Japanese, I calm up after a few words of general greetings, unable to go on.... I can only fall silent because thirty seconds into the conversation, I have already failed an important task: while I was bowing and saying hello, I was supposed to have been calculating the other person’s age, rank, and position in order to determine how polite I should be for the rest of the conversation.” (Mori, 1997, p. 11)

This experience demonstrates Mori’s loss of pragmatic competence at the level of politeness in Japanese, her L1 language and culture (Pavlenko, 2004). She describes how social status would usually govern interactions between people in Japan. Mori’s experience presents evidence on the impact of L2 culture on her L1 non-verbal greetings as well as perceptions of social factors in L1 interactions.

### *2.2.3.1 Saudi greetings*

Turjoman (2005) examined greeting and leave-taking behaviours in Saudi Arabia. The Turjoman study looked at the behaviours of 237 people (including 127 men and 110 women), observing and recording their conversations as they occurred naturally. There were three age groups in the study: those aged 18 to 30, those aged 31 to 50 and those over 50. The relationships between the people studied varied, and included relatives, close friends, acquaintances and strangers.

The study showed a significant difference in greeting and leave-taking behaviours between the three age groups. However, it did not find any significant difference depending on social status. This was unexpected: Turjoman had thought that she would find that status made a difference to these behaviours. She found a significant sex difference among the participants. The women in the study tended to take much longer to greet and to take leave of other women. They tended to use more superlatives and metaphors alongside their greetings behaviours. This was the case regardless of differences in age, status, relationship or settings. However, it should be noted that Saudi society restricts interactions between people of opposite sexes and that this is likely to affect the way that people behave and greet one another. A limitation of the study lied in examining influence of social factors on Saudi verbal rather than non-verbal greetings.

Hassannin (1994) examined Saudi greetings rituals. He states that when two Saudis of the same sex meet, they tend to greet each other verbally and then with a firm handshake. A hug usually follows, especially if the interlocutors are friends and had not seen each other for some time. Because opposite-sex physical interactions between strangers are prohibited in Saudi Arabia, handshakes between members of the opposite sex occurred only in private between family members and close friends.

He also argues that Saudis tend to move very close to each other when greeting and having a conversation. Wide space between people is seen as hostility in Saudi culture, whereas it might be seen as the opposite in other cultures: “the more the distance is the more hostility shows the nonintimate relation” (Hassanin, 1994, p. 69). British culture, by contrast, is much less physical and “allows only minimal touch contact with the exception of the handshake” (ibid, p. 75). He argues that non-verbal greetings are culturally specific. However, cultural norms were treated as monolithic entities in his assessment of Arab, Western, and Islamic cultures. (Jaffe, 2009; Verschueren, 2004; Holliday, 2010).

Opposite-sex greetings are forbidden in Saudi Arabia other than between close relatives. This is explained by Mulyana (2013, p. 7):

“In Saudi Arabia, unless you are nuclear family members, it is rude to touch women. Indeed, among Muslims touching people of the different sex other than their immediate relatives without adequate reason can be detrimental as this is not unlawful according to Islam.”

As well as religious restrictions on physical touch as seen in Saudi society, cultures often also place health-related restrictions on touch. Handshakes, kisses and hugs are known to spread disease and can increase the risk of developing infections and allergies (Oaten, Stevenson, and Case, 2011; Gupta and Kumar, 2018; Dahl, 2016).

Dahl (2016) describes how diseases can be transferred via handshakes and touching.

“A firm handshake is a widely used greeting, but contaminated fingers and palms can also transfer bacteria and virus. Hand sanitation is important to prevent spreading of contagious diseases,” (Dahl, 2016, p. 181)

According to Dahl and others, restrictions on physical touch, especially between strangers, can play an important part in restricting the spread of or worsening breathing diseases e.g. asthma.

### **2.2.4 The concept of appropriateness**

Appropriateness means “social judgment of the acceptability of some instances of language in context” (Van Compernelle, 2014, p. 29). The communicative competence defined by Hymes (1972) focuses on appropriateness. He argues that judgments made of appropriateness sit somewhere between the fields of linguistics and culture. He suggests that cultural knowledge is important to developing communicative competence and the ability to form judgments of the appropriateness of the patterns seen in interactions (McConachy, 2018). Cultural understanding is still important in helping people to understand speech events and the norms (both implicit and explicit) that govern them.

Cultural beliefs are vital to our understanding of appropriateness. Ting-Toomey (2012, p. 23) argues that people make judgments of individuals’ behaviour influenced by their personal, social, and cultural experiences. She states that people talk about who they believe to be a good communicator depending on their perceptions of others’ verbal and non-verbal behaviours. Taguchi and Roever (2017) argue that metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness reflect people’s perceptions about social acceptability of pragmatic norms, in addition to their perception of power, social distance, and imposition.

Gregersen and MacIntyre (2017) state that “members of the same culture can interpret one another’s non-verbal cues more accurately than those from outside” (p. 13). Determining whether a particular behaviour is appropriate or not depends on being able to understand and apply the rules of use that govern such behaviour and speech (McConachy, 2018). This can vary depending on the sociocultural context (ibid). In other words, the degree to which appropriateness can be judged depends on knowledge of the relevant culture and social context. These judgments can vary and, in intercultural communication, we think that judgments of appropriateness made by L2

users may change and adapt to the cultural context they are in and may also affect their L1 behaviours.

### **2.3 Acculturation**

Migration is common and many people now live in a culture that is different to the one they were brought up in. This means that they must deal with a range of challenges as they adjust to the culture they live in. This process can take a number of forms and will vary considerably between individuals and cultures. Factors that affect the way in which adaptation takes place include individual capacity to deal with change, how the new culture influences an individual and the psychological changes that a person experiences.

Those who have studied acculturation in depth have found that the process of cultural change begins with intercultural contact (Berry, 1980). Cultural change can include a number of different shifts, including in the use of language and in behaviours (Kang, 2006; Berry, 1997), and in way that minority groups state their own ethnic identity (Phinney and Ong, 2007).

Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz (1936) define acculturation as:

“Those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either groups” (p. 149)

Three things must be true if acculturation is to take place.

1. That there are at least two different cultural groups.
2. That these groups must have constant contact with each other.
3. That the process of acculturation takes place over a long period of time.

All these things apply to L2 speakers who move to their L2 culture, particularly once they have been there for a significant length of time.

In addition, changes may take place to the cultural patterns of the two originally separate cultures after acculturation has happened. Acculturation is a two-way process. L2 speakers can experience particular challenges as a result of the bidirectional nature of acculturation. They might find that they struggle to maintain a strong identification with their original culture, either because they lack the motivation to do so or because they are discouraged from doing so. They might also find that they are not fully accepted into or motivated to join the culture they live in (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005).

### **2.3.1 Sociocultural and psychological adaptation**

Acculturation changes can take place in many different domains including language use, communication style, cultural identity, beliefs, and values (Nguyen and Benet-Martinez, 2007). As people emigrate, they encounter psychological and socio-cultural challenges. How a person meets those challenges, or otherwise, depends on the individual and dictates how successful they are at developing a life in their adopted culture.

Ward, Bochner and Furnham (2002) defined three types of reaction that people might have on adapting to life in a new, unfamiliar cultural grouping.

1. Psychological adaptation – developing positive and pleasurable feelings (or anxious and negative ones if they struggle to adapt) about the new culture.
2. Socio-cultural adaptation – learning how to fit in with and interact within the new culture.
3. Acculturation – identification with (or separation from) the new culture and community.

Research into the process of acculturation has tended to conclude that there are particular variables that govern whether or not a person will be able to fit in with their new culture. ‘Culture shock’ can result from a move to a new

culture (Ward and Kennedy, 1994). This is “the anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering a new culture” (Schumann, 1978, p. 88). The degree of cultural distance between one culture and another tends to predict how difficult a person may find it to adapt to their new culture (Searle and Ward, 1990). Cultural distance means the differences (or similarities) between two cultures in religion, language, values, traditions and climate (Ward and Kennedy, 1993; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005). Moving to a culture that is significantly culturally different to one’s own is often a cause of intercultural problems and often makes socialisation difficult for both individuals and minority cultural groups.

Berry (2005, 2006) identified four acculturation strategies that individuals may adopt. These are:

1. Assimilation. An immigrant adopts the values and norms of their adopted society and is not interested in retaining their previous cultural identity.
2. Separation. An immigrant avoids becoming part of their new society or interacting with its members and continues to live by their native culture’s norms and values.
3. Integration. An immigrant balances maintaining their native culture with interacting with their new culture.
4. Marginalisation. An immigrant shows little interest in either their native or their adopted culture.

People who are able to adapt to their new culture find life within it easier than those who do not. Those who do successfully adapt tend to have support from both their native and adopted cultures and become bicultural. They tend to:

1. Take part in cultural life in both societies (Ewert, 2008).
2. Adapt their behaviours, attitudes and language to suit each culture (Moody, 2011).

3. Combine aspects of both cultures where possible, or blending them. Adaptation is not always easy (Grosjean, 2015).
4. Those who manage it find that they are in 'a third place' between both cultures (Kramsch, 1998).

The length of time someone has spent in their L2 culture significantly affects the degree to which they can achieve acculturation. Tracy-Ventura, Dewaele, Köylü, and McManus (2016) found that the longer a person had lived in a non-native culture, the more they developed their language skills, became interculturally proficient and developed personally. They found that for a person to experience these benefits, they needed to live in their adopted culture for at least a year. Ward and Rana-Deuba (2000) found that immigrants often experience fluctuations in their levels of adjustment to a new culture, though they were more likely to find it more difficult earlier on in their journey. Socio-cultural adaptation is significantly affected by the degree to which immigrants develop high-quality relationships with people in their new culture (Ward and Kennedy, 1992).

A person who spends a significant amount of time in their adopted culture is likely to experience weaker identification with their native culture and a strengthening of identification with their new culture. This can include changes in the way they interact with others, the food they eat, the way they dress and the music they enjoy. At the same time, the length of stay in a new culture can lead to a strengthening of identification with their native culture for some people, which can lead to cultural tension between groups (Ward, Bochner, and Furnham, 2001).

Scholars who have examined this topic from a pedagogical perspective agree that it is better for L2 learners to live in their L2 culture, and that they develop better linguistic skills and stronger pragmatic socialisation as a result. The L2 environment can add to classroom learning, giving learners easy opportunities for socialisation and plenty of opportunities to practise their skills and use them in a variety of new contexts (Kinginger and Farrell, 2004).

### **2.3.2 Acculturation as a bidimensional construct:**

Research into the process of acculturation has led to the development of two models: unidimensional and bidimensional. The unidimensional model assumes that it isn't possible to integrate into two different cultures at the same time. This means that acculturation must be the "shedding off of an old culture and the taking on of a new culture" (Flannery, Reise, and Yu, 2001, p. 1035). This model defines acculturation as linear, with immigrants giving up their native culture and moving into their adopted culture. It sees the native and adopted culture as being in opposition and does not take account of the impact of individual differences and cultural variations.

In response to the limitations of the unidimensional model, some researchers use a generic acculturation instrument designed to allow immigrants to self-report their experiences, making the model better able to take account of individual difference. In the bidimensional model, individuals can be attached simultaneously to more than one culture without these necessarily being in conflict. The model relies on "cultural mediation" (Bochner, 1982). Using mediation, immigrants bring together both their cultures and develop bicultural personalities (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman, 2008). The bidimensional model allows measuring people's orientations towards two cultures independently of each other. According to Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000), this model relies on two assumptions:

"First, the model presupposes that individuals differ in the extent to which self-identity includes culturally based values, attitudes, and behaviours. Culture may play a large role in the identities of some individuals, whereas others may base their identity more on factors such as occupation or religion. Second, individuals are capable of having multiple cultural identities, each of which may independently vary in strength" (p. 50)

If they are correct, the unidimensional approach is not accurate as individual levels of identification with different cultures can vary significantly. Bicultural people are not necessarily different from those who reject both their native and adopted cultures. Berry (1994, 1997) developed a more complex model for categorising immigrants and their levels of acculturation. His framework of acculturation is well-known and used in the field, but it does present two important issues (Demes and Geeraert, 2014):

1. That the maintenance of a person's native cultural heritage while living in their adopted culture is important.
2. That accepting and participating in a person's adopted culture is important.

Berry's framework conceptualised four different strategies, described previously, that define how an immigrant might deal with the process of acculturation (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005). These are:

1. Assimilation – identification primarily with the host culture.
2. Integration – identification with both cultures.
3. Separation – identification primarily with the native culture.
4. Marginalisation – little identification with either culture.

Some scholars have criticised the development of these four categories as lacking in supporting evidence (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000). Berry (1998) has himself conceded that the expectations he had do not always coincide with people's experiences. However, the model is still influential and commonly found in relevant literature. Acculturation research has tended in recent years to conclude that unidimensional models are inaccurate and that for most people, a bidimensional model will reflect their experiences (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2004; Berry, 2006; Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000; Dere, Ryder, and Kirmayer, 2010):

“Acculturation researchers have come to reject a simple unidimensional approach to these changes, no longer assuming that heritage cultural features are lost as mainstream cultural features are gained, instead favoring bidimensional models in which heritage and mainstream dimensions vary independently” (Ryder et al., 2013: 502)

In comparison to the unidimensional model, the bidimensional model is comprehensive and is likely to include the majority of people. Therefore, author of this dissertation believes that the bidimensional model is a more useful and accurate construct.

### *2.3.2.1 Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)*

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation, now commonly used by researchers in the field, was developed by Ryder, Alden and Paulhus (2000). As there were no previous studies comparing the effectiveness of the unidimensional and bidimensional models of acculturation, they conducted research to establish the validity of both models. To do this, they used common personality traits as a means of assessing how people responded to the experience of emigration.

Ryder et al.’s work looks at the relationship a person has with their native culture and with their adopted culture. They assessed the degree of acculturation each person had in each culture independently and assessed them against five personality traits. The authors expected that a positive correlation between levels of acculturation in both cultures and the personality traits would mean the bidimensional model was correct and a negative correlation would mean the unidimensional model was correct.

The researchers studied two groups of people with Chinese ancestry. The first group was made up of people born in a country dominated by Chinese culture. The second group was made up of people born in an English-speaking culture. Participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to measure their personality traits against the Big Five Inventory and assess them against measures of bidimensional and unidimensional acculturation.

The study found in favour of the bidimensional model, with participants generally reporting personality traits that correlated in both their native and adopted cultures (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000). The mainstream, or adopted, culture subscale was associated with lower levels of neuroticism and higher levels of other personality traits. The heritage, or native, culture subscale was associated with lower levels of neuroticism and higher levels of conscientiousness. The unidimensional model was not supported by either scale. It may have been that the effects of the two cultures cancelled each other out. The strongest associations were found between the bidimensional model and the personality traits of openness and extraversion.

This study found that the bidimensional model's two subscales – a person's native and adopted culture – were not in opposition to each other (Gupta, et al., 2013, p. 375). As a result, Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) used the study to develop the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA):

“a self-report instrument that assesses several domains relevant to acculturation, including values, social relationships, and adherence to traditions” (p. 53).

In order to develop the VIA, Ryder, Alden and Paulhus undertook a second study. This study was intended to overcome the first study's psychometric limitations, including the fact that the bidimensional subscales were not reliable. 150 people took part in the study, with the same characteristics as the participants in the first study. They were given a questionnaire that included questions on demographic details, personality traits, their view of themselves and psychological adjustment.

Twelve questions became part of the VIA, all designed to establish the level of acculturation in participants' native and adopted cultures (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 1999b). Items were paired so that one referred to Chinese culture and the other to North American. Examples of items include “*I am interested in maintaining or developing Chinese traditions*” and “*I would be willing to marry a North American person.*” For each item, participants were asked to

provide an answer on a five-point scale, with 1) meaning *not at all* and 5) meaning *very much so*.

A higher score on a subscale indicated higher levels of acculturation with the relevant culture. As with the first study, the results indicated that the bidimensional model of acculturation is accurate, with a person's two cultural identities working independently of each other. The two subscales were also shown to be more reliable than in the first study, making the VIA a promising tool for measuring cultural identity more widely. The study also found that there was a strong correlation between high scores in the adopted (North American) culture subscale and longer exposure to that culture.

“Individuals who had received a greater proportion of their education in Canada or the United States were more likely to score highly on the Mainstream subscale. In contrast, the relative absence of associations between the Heritage subscale and these same indicators suggests that this dimension may be capturing a distinct and relatively unexplored aspect of acculturation.” (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000, p. 56)

“it is important to note that the results from the unidimensional measure lend themselves to two other interpretations: (a) Acquiring a new identity leads to greater adjustment, and (b) losing the old identity leads to greater adjustment.” (Ryder et al., 2000, p. 56)

The VIA was proved to be an effective tool to measure a number of factors relating to people's ability to adjust to an adopted culture (Ryder, Alden and Paulhus, 2013), and determining the length of time needed for acculturation (Cheung Chudek, and Heine, 2011).

Cheung Chudek and Heine (2011) used the VIA to gather information about the period of acculturation undertaken by immigrants. They studied two groups of Chinese people: those who had spent between two and 39 years living in Canada, with a spread of ages; and students who had spent two years or fewer living in Canada. The acculturation level of the participants was measured by determining how far they identified with their heritage (Chinese)

culture and how far they identified with their mainstream (Canadian) culture. The study found that the younger participants tended to acculturate quickly. Younger participants also became more identified with Canadian culture the longer they spent in the country, whereas older participants' level of identification with Canadian culture was not influenced by the length of time they had spent in the country. The study therefore concluded that neither age at immigration nor duration of stay were reliable predictors of how far a person would continue to identify with their native, heritage culture. Various factors affect to what extent a person will adapt to emigration to a new culture. They include cultural distance and shock, and innate personality traits.

## **2.4 Personality**

### ***2.4.1 Personality in L2 pragmatics***

Personality is a significant influencing factor in the way people behave in social situations. It is, therefore, responsible for considerable differences in pragmatics (Taguchi and Roever, 2017). As people move between cultures, they go through a process of adaptation, socialisation and acculturation (both short and long term). The way in which people approach this process is governed to a large extent by their personality (Zimmermann and Neyer, 2013; Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven, 2009; Dewaele and Stavans, 2012). Personality determines “how people perform a pragmatic act in certain ways based on their perceptions of situational dynamics and their judgments about expected behaviours in...a situation” (Taguchi and Roever, 2017, p. 153).

There is scant literature on the influence of personality in L2 pragmatics, though there are some useful models. One of these is the Keirsey (1998) Temperament Sorter. The Keirsey Temperament Sorter assess four dimensions of personality:

1. Extraversion-introversion.
2. Feeling-thinking.
3. Perceiving-judging.
4. Sensing-intuition.

In Keirsey's definition, extraverts are focused on the world around them while introverts are focussed inwardly. Feelers use subjective criteria to make decisions and place a high value on personal relationships, while thinkers are objective and rational. Perceiving types are spontaneous and like to keep plans open, while judging types prefer order and closure. Sensing types are detail-oriented and gather information empirically, while intuitive types live in the world of imagination and abstraction (Taguchi, 2014c, p. 208).

The other model is the Big Five personality traits model (Goldberg, 1992; McCrae and Costa, 2003). This has five dimensions:

1. Agreeableness (sympathetic, kind, affectionate, cooperative).
2. Openness to experience (curious, creative, adventurous).
3. Extraversion (sociable, talkative, assertive, expressive).
4. Neuroticism (emotionally unstable, anxious, moody, tense).
5. Conscientiousness (organized, goal-directed, self-disciplined) (Taguchi and Roeber, 2017, p. 154).

Studies examining the influence of personality traits on learning seek to establish whether or not personality affects a person's ability to produce, perceive and perform pragmatic tasks. Some such studies have found a relationship between personality and pragmatic ability. Others, generally those who have analysed personality traits separately, have not. These studies are "far less conclusive, indicating that not all traits have an equal effect" (Taguchi and Roeber, 2017, p. 155).

There are few empirical studies of the link between personality and pragmatic competence, measuring personality through the application of models. Only

three such studies have examined the potential connection between L2 learners' ability to carry out pragmatic tasks and their personality. Two of these studies, Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002), and Kuriscak (2006), used the Big Five scale. The other, Taguchi (2014), used the Keirsey Temperament Sorter.

Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) studied the relationship between pragmatic competence and the five personality dimensions defined on the Big Five scale. The participants were 241 children aged 11 to 13, living in the Netherlands and speaking Dutch as either their L1 or their L2. Their levels of pragmatic competence were studied using role-play. The children were prompted to react in situations involving apology, greeting and thanks.

The study found that, in both the L1 and L2 children, there was a significant correlation between openness to experience and pragmatic competence. However, no link was found with any other personality trait. The L2 children in general scored higher for openness to experience and most were keen to feel that they belonged to the L1 group of native Dutch-speaking children. By being open to experience, they were able to learn more quickly and fit in more easily. The study found no link between age, pragmatic competence and personality, though it was thought that it might, particularly with regard to emotional stability and sociability. However, because the children studied were with their peers every day, their pragmatic performance was not affected by these traits.

The Big Five model was used by Kuriscak (2006) to study adult L2 learners and the link between their personality and levels of pragmatic competence. The study examined students on a study abroad programme and assessed whether their perception and production of two particular speech acts was influenced by their personality. There were 292 participants in the study: advanced Spanish learners living in the US and enrolled in Spanish courses there. Three dimensions of personality were studied: extroversion, neuroticism and social desirability. The study measured the degree to which

each student believed they had difficulty producing a complaint and a request speech act, measured via a DCT.

The study found that those students who scored high for extraversion on the Big Five scale produced more elaborate speech than those who did not. Students who scored high for neuroticism and social desirability perceived the speech acts requested as being harder to produce and respond to.

These results appear to be logical. Extraverts, being generally more sociable and talkative, are likely to find speech acts easier to produce, even in an L2. Those who scored high for neuroticism are likely to feel generally more anxious and to be less confident than other students, and so they found the task more difficult. Students who scored high for social desirability are likely to be those students to whom it is important to maintain a positive social image and not to lose face in front of their peers. Thus, they too found the task difficult. However, the fact that the two latter groups found the task difficult did not affect their performance. They believed that they would find it difficult and they were not as confident, but their actual performance was unaffected by their perception.

The Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) and Kuriscak (2006) studies show that, while personality can have an impact on pragmatic ability, the strength and nature of its influence depends on the context, age, and other factors. The third study, Taguchi (2014c), examined how far pragmatic competence is affected by individual characteristics over time, taking a longitudinal approach and using repeated measures instead of a single-moment design. The study looked at the development of pragmatic competence over time and how it was affected by personality traits, as measured by the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey, 1998).

The study's participants were 48 Japanese students learning English as an L2. They were assigned speaking tests three times over the course of an academic year, in which request and opinion speech acts were assessed. A five-point

scale was to measure the appropriateness of these speech acts and their fluency (including planning time and speech rate). The study found that where the participants scored on the thinking-feeling scale made a significant difference to their performance, both in terms of appropriateness and their ability to plan their speech acts. However, there was no significant difference found with regard to introversion-extraversion. Students who scored as thinkers on the Keirsey Temperament Sorter showed increased scores on the appropriateness test, while those who scored as feelers showed decreased scores.

The study's author said:

“The "thinking" types tend to focus on their thoughts, while the "feeling" types pay more attention to their feelings and make decisions based on their emotion and desire. While the "thinking" types are concerned with getting sufficient information to weigh options and make decisions that are both balanced and right for them, the "feeling" types are concerned with harmony, empathy and interpersonal relationships when making choices.” (p. 214)

The feeling types were more likely to use indirect requests. As these students valued empathy and the development of personal relationships highly, they found being direct more difficult. Given that they wanted to build relationships, they were less explicit and more likely to use preparatory and mitigated-preparatory forms. The thinking students found it easier to produce the speech acts requested, but this did not mean that they did it faster. Their speed was unaffected. This suggests that there is a difference between the levels of knowledge (indicated by appropriateness) and processing ability (indicated by fluency). The students' personalities affected their levels of knowledge differently to their processing abilities.

This study suggests that there is a link between personality traits and the structure of pragmatic competence. Specifically, the amount of time taken to plan, and levels of appropriateness interact with each other. However, the study had some limitations. It focused on only one particular element of pragmatic competence: the production of speech acts. In addition, the

responses given to the DCT instrument used were lacking in authenticity, even though they gathered a significant quantity of data (Geluykens, 2007).

#### **2.4.2 Personality and acculturation in previous research**

Personality and acculturation are linked. Personality traits affect how a person acculturates when they emigrate to an L2 culture and it influences not only their perception of their adopted culture but their behaviour within it. Acculturation also affects personality and can cause change over time.

“Despite the common perception of personality as stable and unchanging, there is some evidence to suggest that cultural change may be sufficient to cause corresponding changes in personality in the direction of the mainstream culture” (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000, p. 51)

McCrae et al. (1998) found that the personality profiles of 633 bilingual Chinese students, studied after moving to Canada, changed over time as they adjusted to life in their new country.

Being in possession of particular personality traits is likely to make the process of acculturation easier, especially in relation to a person’s ability to cope with new experiences. Kim (2001) identified three personality traits that influence a person’s ability to adapt particularly strongly. These are openness, strength and positivity. These traits are important in enabling immigrants to “endure challenges and to maximise new learning” (p. 84).

‘[Openness] enables strangers to minimise their resistance and to maximise their willingness to attend to new and changed circumstances. Openness further enables them to perceive and interpret various events and situations in the new environment without making ethnocentric judgments.’ (Kim, 2001, p. 84)

Kim found that people with high degree of strength are able to deal with stress better than others and cope with cultural and other shocks. Those who are generally stronger are also usually more positive, and positivity “encourages

acceptance of others despite differences” (Kim, 2001, p. 85). The three traits identified by Kim – openness, strength and positivity – are linked strongly to other traits of the effective multicultural personality. They include flexibility, open-mindedness and emotional stability. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) found that bicultural people who perceived their two cultural identities as working with each other rather than being in opposition tended to score high for openness to experience in the Big Five scale and low for neuroticism.

“Individuals who are rigid and closed to new experiences are more likely to [...] feel stressed...support a separation acculturation strategy, and be less biculturally competent.” (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005, p. 1036)

Conversely, bicultural people who scored high on the neuroticism scale were at greater risk of having a negative experience of acculturation. Neurotic people are generally more anxious than others, often feel vulnerable and are more likely to believe that their two cultures are in conflict rather than in harmony. They are, therefore, more likely to find intercultural relationships stressful and to experience cultural distance and conflict (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005). Those who scored highly on the agreeableness scale were usually more tolerant of others and better able to form positive intercultural relationships. Extraverted people, though they enjoy socialising, are frequently more comfortable in a more monocultural and less multicultural environment (Allik and McCrae, 2002). The final dimension of personality of the Big Five, conscientiousness, was not found to be linked to acculturation, cultural conflict or bicultural competence (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005).

This study seeks to examine the links between personality and acculturation ability in L2 speakers living in their L2 culture. To do this, it is vital to examine relevant evidence on how the two relate and affect each other. In doing so, we can establish how far the personality of an L2 speaker defines how successful they are in adapting to life in their L2 culture. This applies not only to their pragmatic and communicative adaptation, but in a

metapragmatic sense through their perception. There is significant evidence available that suggests that personality is a strong predictor of a person's ability to adjust to a new culture, both in socio-cultural and psychological terms (Searle and Ward, 1990; Güngör et al., 2013; Zhang, Mandl, and Wang, 2010; Panicacci and Dewaele, 2017a)

Searle and Ward (1990) examined the effects of personality traits on socio-cultural and psychological adjustment, in a study of 105 Malaysian and Singaporean people living in New Zealand. They used the 21-point Eysenck Personality Questionnaire to evaluate the participants' personalities. They found that more extraverted students were happier and better adjusted to life in New Zealand, stating that "extraversion proved to be conducive to psychological well-being" (Searle and Ward, 1990, p. 458). They stated that those whose personality was a better cultural fit for New Zealand were able to adjust to life there better than those whose personality was more suited to life in their native Malaysia or Singapore.

Personality traits can be affected by cultural transition and may change in response to exposure to different cultural norms. Güngör et al. (2013) found that immigrants could experience the acculturation of their personality. They studied first-generation Japanese immigrants living in the USA and sought to establish whether American life had affected their personalities. Their hypothesis was that immigrants would experience a degree of acculturation of their personality, whether or not they also maintained the cultural norms of their native culture.

They studied three groups: monocultural Japanese people living in Japan, Japanese people living in the USA and monocultural Americans from a European background. All of the participants were women. Among the immigrant group, the average length of time spent in America was 5.83 years. The Japanese American Acculturation Scale (JAAS) was used to measure the immigrant participants' level of acculturation. The scale measures cultural orientation to both Japanese and American norms. To assess personality

traits, the study used the Jackson Personality Inventory (JPI), which is similar to the Big Five scale.

The study showed that the immigrant group experienced a degree of change to their personalities as a result of acculturation. The two monocultural groups, both Japanese and American, both showed similarities among members in personality, with definite patterns emerging, whereas the immigrant group were less similar to other members of the groups. This indicates that they are in a state of flux, and that they “may feel Japanese among European Americans but Americans in Japan” (Güngör et al., 2013, p. 12). This supports the accommodation idea proposed by Giles and Ogay (2007). Accommodation has been defined as a strategy whereby individuals adapt their communicative behaviours in terms of a wide range of features in such a way as to become more similar to their interlocutor’s behaviour (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

The study also found that, while the personality patterns of the immigrant group were more similar to those of the monocultural Japanese group than to the monocultural American group, there was still a significant difference between the immigrant and monocultural Japanese group. This suggests that they had acculturated to at least some degree during their time in America, becoming more like an average American and less like an average Japanese person. There was a strong link between the degree of acculturation and the length of time an immigrant had spent in America.

Zhang, Mandl, and Wang (2010) studied how personality traits affected acculturation. They examined the process of adjustment made by immigrants during the acculturation process and how it affected their attitudes to both their original and their adopted cultures. 139 Chinese students living in Germany took part in the study, with the researchers visiting them at home. They had been in Germany for an average of 33.2 months.

The participants were given several surveys to complete in order to assess their levels of acculturation and their personalities. These included the Big Five Inventory to measure personality and the VIA to measure acculturation and their degree of cultural orientation to German and Chinese culture. They were also assessed on a sociocultural adjustment scale (measuring both general and academic adjustment) and a psychological adjustment scale. The study found that, of the Big Five traits, neuroticism and openness were predictive of psychological and socio-cultural adjustment. Conscientiousness was found to be linked to academic adjustment. And agreeableness and mainstream acculturation were found to be linked to general adjustment.

Acculturation variables were not found to have any significant influence on levels of adjustment, meaning that even those with a high degree of orientation towards their native Chinese culture were able to adjust to their adopted German culture. However, the researchers believed that this finding may have been due to a methodological weakness, with “the measurement of acculturation established in an Asian student sample in North America may not be suited to Chinese students in European countries” (Zhang, Mandl, and Wang, 2010, p. 522). Panicacci and Dewaele (2017a) studied possible links between personality (as measured by the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)) and acculturation (as measured by the VIA). 468 Italian people living in English-speaking countries were studied.

The research found that those who scored highly for Cultural Empathy, Social Initiative and Open-mindedness were more likely to be strongly oriented to their adopted English-speaking culture. Those who scored highly for Flexibility and Emotional Stability were less likely to have maintained a strong link to their native Italian culture. Research suggests that immigrants’ personalities do change in response to acculturation, with the acculturation process triggering those changes.

### **2.4.3 Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)**

Researchers have used a number of instruments to measure intercultural competence in individuals. A need to identify the key personality traits that lead to intercultural effectiveness led to the development of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000, 2001) and Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee (2002). It measures the personality traits that are vital to intercultural success (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez, 2015).

The MPQ has been proved to be an accurate and valuable tool in the assessment of personality and how it responds to cross-cultural transitions. It was “designed with the sojourners in mind” (Leong, 2007, p. 548) and as such has become influential in studies of international students (Yakunina et al., 2012).

The MPQ measures five traits (Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee, 2002; Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven, 2009, pp. 7-8) and can be explained as follows:

1. Cultural Empathy. This is the ability to empathise with the feelings and thoughts of people from a cultural background other than one’s own. Items include “Tries to understand other people’s behaviour” and “Pays attention to the emotions of others”.
2. Open-mindedness. This means being open to different cultural norms and values. Items include “Finds other religions interesting” and “Has a feeling for what is appropriate in another culture”.
3. Social Initiative. This means the ability to approach social situations actively and lead them at times. Items include “Takes initiative” and “Takes the lead”.

4. Emotional Stability. This includes the ability to stay calm under stress, rather than reacting with strong emotions. Items include “Is self-confident” and “Gets upset easily”.
5. Flexibility. This includes the ability to learn from experience, including learning from mistakes and behavioural adjustment, particularly in relation to new experiences. Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2001) defined flexibility as the ability to switch easily from one strategy to another because “the familiar ways of handling things will not necessarily work in a new cultural environment” (p. 279). Items include “Seeks challenges” and “Enjoys unfamiliar experiences”.

The tool’s effectiveness comes from its multi-thematic dimensions (Leong, 2007). It “emphasises cross-cultural sensitivity (Cultural Empathy)” and “the capacity to handle stressful intercultural experiences (Emotional Stability)”, which is an important part of multicultural competence. It also measures “important facilities that assist the coping of culturally ambiguous situations” (Leong, 2007, p. 546).

The short form of the MPQ (SF-MPQ), used in this study, was developed by Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, and Fietzer, (2013). It is based on the original 91-question MPQ (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), but reduced to 40 questions across the five traits measured. Various studies of intercultural personality have used the MPQ and proved its validity (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001; Leone et al., 2005; Leong, 2007; Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto and Fietzer, 2013).

The traits that form the MPQ are similar to those on the Big Five model (see section 2.3.1). Cultural Empathy is similar to agreeableness; Open-mindedness to openness to experience; Social Initiative to extraversion; Emotional Stability to low neuroticism; and Flexibility to conscientiousness (Basow and Gaugler, 2017, p. 40). While they are very similar in the traits they measure, the two scales are generally used differently. The Big Five model is

used primarily to measure career performance, productivity and training proficiency. The MPQ is “tailored to predictions regarding multicultural success [more] than general personality questionnaires.” (Dewaele and Van Oudnehoven, 2009, p. 7). In addition, the MPQ is designed to “refer to behaviour in multicultural situations” (Van Oudnehoven and Van der Zee, 2002, p. 680). Therefore, the MPQ was chosen for this study, as this study follows L2 learners living in an L2 culture and adapting to it.

The multicultural personality traits in the MPQ are designed specifically to predict how well international students are able to adapt to a new culture, socially and psychologically. A longitudinal study by Leong (2007) tested the predictive validity of the MPQ for socio-psychological adaptation. He studied Singaporean undergraduates on a student exchange programme, with a group of Singaporean locals as a control group. Leong’s hypothesis was that international students would demonstrate better intercultural adaptation than the domestic control group. The results bore this out, with the international group scoring higher on four MPQ traits. The exception was Cultural Empathy. The group’s high level of Social Initiative, Emotional Stability and Flexibility was associated with low levels of socio-cultural and psychological difficulty.

Social Initiative was the key predictor of socio-psychological adaptation. Leong (2007) stated that: “the ability to connect with people and to the immediate environment becomes essential for effective intercultural transition as it helps the sojourners to explore solutions and strategies to solving their daily problems” (Leong, 2007, p. 557). Lee and Ciftci (2014) carried out a study of multicultural personality traits and socio-cultural adjustment. They studied 330 Asian international students in the USA. The students were from China, India, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and Singapore, and were both undergraduates and graduates. They were asked to complete a web survey that included the 91-item MPQ, social support, the Academic Self-efficacy Scale and the Socio Cultural Adjustment Scale (SCAS) (Ward and Kennedy, 1999). The authors’ hypothesis

was that multicultural personality would be positively associated with socio-cultural adaptation and mediated by academic self-efficacy and social support. They also thought that demographic and personal details would have an influence, including language proficiency, duration of stay, and the amount of contact they had with local and co-national students.

The study's results showed that the multicultural effectiveness of the students was indeed associated with socio-cultural adaptation and mediated by academic self-efficacy. The students who were more open-minded, culturally empathetic and willing to take social initiative adjusted better to life abroad. However, Emotional Stability and Flexibility had to be disregarded as they were not "adequately measured", and the social support measure simply "measured the overall social support' participants receive in general, without specifying support from the host culture" (Ward and Kennedy, 1999, p. 104).

Dewaele and Stavans (2012) examined the impact of acculturation and immigration on personality as measured by the MPQ, in relation to 193 immigrants to Israel. Surprisingly, the study showed that the immigrant group scored lower than the control for Emotional Stability and did not score much higher for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness. This supported the findings of an earlier study (Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven, 2009) that also found that acculturation to L2 culture led to lower Emotional Stability.

Basow and Gaugler (2017) studied 120 American undergraduates in Costa Rica. They were studied before leaving the USA and 14 weeks into their studies in Cost Rica. They were given online survey that included the short form of the MPQ and tests for language proficiency and openness to diversity. After 14 weeks, they were also asked questions around psychological adjustment, language proficiency, sociocultural adjustment and their social interaction with local people in Costa Rica.

The results of the study indicated a correlation between four of the MPQ traits (Cultural Empathy, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability, and Open-

mindedness, and excluding Flexibility) and psychological adjustment. Sociocultural adjustment was found to be associated with higher levels of language proficiency and social interaction with local people. There was a link found too between Open-mindedness and social interaction.

Though it was longitudinal, this study's methodological weakness was that it did not repeat the measurement of MPQ traits at the end of the study. These were measured only at the beginning of the students' journey. The sample was also thought by the study's authors to be unrepresentative. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised with confidence.

## **2.5 Rationale for the study**

Earlier research into the effect of an L2 on L1 pragmatic norms has been presented and the factors that can influence pragmatic patterns in people living in their L2 culture have been reviewed. External variables include length of stay in the L2 culture and acculturation. Internal variables include the multicultural personality traits of L2 users. The current study will seek to contribute to the body of research in four areas.

### *Pragmatic and metapragmatic features*

Previous research suggests that being exposed to another culture affects L1 pragmatic aspects over time, including terms of address (Paradis, 2007), speech acts such as requests (Cenoz, 2003) and responses to compliments (Cao, 2016). There is evidence of an L2 influence on L1 pragmatic knowledge, which extends to the L2 classroom. This influence includes refusals to invitations (Tavakoli and Shirinbakhsh, 2013) and request strategies (Sadighi et al., 2018). These studies examined L2 influence on the production of pragmatic patterns in L1.

Recent research demonstrates the role of metapragmatic awareness in increasing the intercultural competence of L2 learners (McConachy, 2013, 2018). More recently, cross-cultural differences have been found in judgments of appropriateness made of non-verbal cues in relation to public apologies (Song et al., 2018).

There is no current evidence known about on how or whether an L2 influences L1 metapragmatic awareness over time in an L2 culture. This study seeks to fill this research gap, by examining the metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours among Saudis who have lived in the UK for three years or more, speaking English as their second language. There are two monocultural control groups: Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and British people in the UK.

Research question 1 and its hypotheses are as follows:

RQ1 (a): Does length of residence in the UK affect Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours?

H1: Metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK will be different from those by Saudis in Saudi Arabia.

H2: Metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK will approximate those by British L1 speakers of English in the UK.

To gain understanding of the relationship between length of residence and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings, the lived experience of the participants must be understood. To aid this understanding, research question 1 (b) was formulated as follows:

RQ1 (b): What are the participants' views on appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings over time of residence in the UK?

*Acculturation: Cultural orientation towards L1 and L2.*

Previous research examined acculturation as a bidimensional process, identifying common changes in the views respondents held of their L1 cultural norms (Berry, 1997; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005). Kecskes (2014) argued that the adoption of a new culture has an effect on L1 pragmatic knowledge and competence. Scholars argue that the more often an L1 speaker takes part in intercultural encounters, the more likely they are to see changes in their L1 pragmatic competence (Kecskes, 2014, 2015; Pavlenko, 2002). Some researchers take the view that strong acculturation to an L2 culture indicates that a significant impact of the L2 on L1 is likely (Grosjean, 2015; Ammerlaan, 1996; Kang, 2006). However, this author could not find any evidence of such an impact on levels of L1 metapragmatic awareness among L2 users moving to live in their L2 culture. This study will investigate how cultural orientation affects metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings among Saudis living in the UK.

A bidimensional acculturation perspective is adopted. Cultural orientation towards L1 Saudi culture and L2 British culture are measured using a bidimensional instrument adapted from the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000). Two groups of Saudis, one in Saudi Arabia and one in the UK, took part in this section of the online survey in order to determine acculturation differences between them.

Research question 2 is as follows:

RQ2 (a): Does cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures affect metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?

H1: Saudis living abroad who have a strong orientation towards their L2 British culture will diverge **more** from Saudi norms than others.

H2: Saudis living abroad who have a strong attachment to Saudi culture will diverge **less** from Saudi norms than others.

It is important to understand the correlation between cultural orientation and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours. For this reason, the study will examine the views of its participants through qualitative research, in order to illustrate the quantitative data.

Research question 2(b) is:

RQ2 (b): What are participants' views on effects of maintenance of L1 culture and acceptance of L2 culture on appropriateness of Saudi L1 non-verbal greetings?

### *Personality traits*

Personality is thought to be a vital influence on pragmatics because of its important role to social interactions. Literature on personality and pragmatics is scarce, but some scholars have examined personality and how it affects perception of expected behaviours and situational dynamics (Verhoeven and Vermeer, 2002; Kuriscak, 2006; Taguchi, 2014c). The studies demonstrate the relationship between the personality of L2 learners (with multiple instruments used to measure it) and the pragmatic competence of those learners (both production and perception). These studies show that the impact of personality is not constant. It is influenced by both the context and the measures used.

Research has also been carried out into how personality traits develop in L2 learners living in their L2 culture (Leong, 2007; Güngör et al., 2013; Zhang, Mandl, and Wang, 2010; Yakunina et al., 2012; Dewaele and Wei, 2012; Panicacci and Dewaele, 2017a). These studies provide evidence on change of personality as a result of acculturation among immigrants. This study seeks to examine how personality and metapragmatic awareness are related. No other study can be found that explores how personality traits influence L2 speakers' perceptions of L1 non-verbal greetings. This study addresses the research gap using the MPQ to measure and analyse the multicultural personality traits of Saudis living in the UK, compared to Saudis living at home. The study will also examine correlations between particular traits and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings made by Saudis who have lived in the UK for at least three years.

Research question 3 and its hypotheses are formulated as follows:

RQ3 (a): Does living abroad affect personality traits of Saudi residents in the UK over time? If that is the case, do Saudi residents in the UK score higher on multicultural personality traits than Saudis in their home country?

H1: Compared to Saudis living in Saudi Arabia, Saudis resident in the UK will report higher scores for the MPQ traits: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social initiative and Emotional Stability.

RQ3 (b): Are personality traits, measured by MPQ, linked to metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?

H2: Saudis with higher scores on MPQ dimensions will rate L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours as being **less** appropriate.

Gaining higher scores in the MPQ indicates higher levels of intercultural understanding and familiarity with L2 interactions, including non-verbal interactions (Matsumoto et al., 2016). It is expected that higher scores on the MPQ will be linked with lower appropriateness scores for L1 NVGs among Saudis living in the UK. Those who give L1 NVGs lower appropriateness scores are likely to display a greater degree of socialisation into UK society and will therefore be better oriented towards British customs and values. Those who give L1 NVGs higher appropriateness scores are likely to be more oriented to Saudi culture and more committed to retaining Saudi cultural practices.

It is assumed that an adopted culture cannot completely replace a native culture in people's minds and behaviours (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos, 2005; Grosjean, 2001, 2015; Matsumoto, 2006). It is also assumed that not all traits will affect metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings equally (Taguchi and Roever, 2017). Participants' personality traits are expected to be independently linked to metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings (Van Oudenhove and Van de Zee, 2000).

The MPQ was chosen for the study over the Big Five questionnaire because it is tailored towards measuring multicultural success and the development of intercultural effectiveness in an L2 culture. The Big Five is a more general personality tool (Van Oudenhoven and Van der Zee, 2002, p. 680). It is clear that "it is less likely that change could have been caught with a culturally neutral Big Five questionnaire" (Tracy-Ventura, Dewaele, Köylü, and McManus, 2016, p. 122).

### *Study design: mixed methods*

This is a mixed methods study using both qualitative and quantitative research. While there are clear advantages of mixed-methods studies, previous research into pragmatic transfer and the influence of L2 culture on L1 pragmatic patterns has not typically used both approaches. There are some

exceptions, especially among more recent studies. Song et al. (2018) examined metapragmatic judgments through quantitative group research and individual qualitative research, as this study does.

This study uses a quantitative questionnaire given to all the participants and individual follow-up semi-structured interviews carried out with nine participants. All of the interviewees were Saudis living in the UK who gave personal accounts of their perceptions of L1 non-verbal greetings.

There are limitations of quantitative research carried out via large-scale online questionnaires. The inclusion of qualitative research in this study is an attempt to overcome this limitation, provide richer data and aid understanding of the subject. Qualitative research is known to help increase the number of possible interpretations and help researchers identify dynamic phenomena (Dörnyei 2007; Dewaele, 2019).

The quantitative element of this study is designed to facilitate an exploration of the relationship between all the study's variables and determine whether the groups studied behave differently. The qualitative element is designed to allow exploration of the possible causes of the patterns found in the quantitative analysis and to give the participants a voice in the study. Focusing on participants' experiences means that we can develop a greater understanding of "their perceptions, opinions, evaluations, emotional framings, expectations, and agenda relative to the topic of the study" (Schrauf 2016, p. 3, cited in Dewaele, 2019, p. 80). For this reason, a mixed-methods approach was chosen. The next chapter presents the study's methodology and focuses on the rationale for the mixed-methods design, the instruments used, samples, data collection and data analysis.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides details of the methodological approach and research design used in this study to answer the research questions set out in the previous chapter. First, the rationale for carrying out a mixed-methods study is given. This is followed by the study's ethical considerations. Next is an overview of the quantitative data instrument, data collection, the key characteristics of the sample, and data analysis techniques. Finally is a summary of the qualitative data instrument, participants and data collection procedures followed by a data analysis and coding.

#### **3.1 A Mixed Methods Study**

A mixed-methods design was chosen for this study to investigate and compare the perceptions of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, of two groups of Saudi people, one group living in the UK and one at home. The study also examined cultural orientation and the personality traits in relation to metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The mixed-methods design was chosen in order to develop a thorough understanding of the influence of L2 on L1 in this area, with quantitative trends identified and supported by qualitative data (Dörnyei, 2007). In particular, a sequential explanatory design was adopted in order to conduct this study.

Mixed-methods studies have become commonplace in applied linguistics in recent years (Dörnyei, 2003, 2007; Hashemi, 2012; Dewaele, 2019). A mixed-methods approach allows researchers to balance the strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative approaches, leading to a stronger understanding of the research, the data collected and overcoming the limitations of each method (Dewaele, 2008; Creswell, 2014). Recently, Dewaele (2019, p. 85) has argued that the two approaches can be seen as “the left and right eyes of researchers”.

Quantitative data is best suited to evaluations of the perceptions of participants, including metapragmatic judgments of speech acts (Chen, 1995; Takimoto, 2012). Qualitative methods help develop explanations of numeric patterns identified in the quantitative research, offering an in-depth examination of individuals in the study. The benefits of examining metapragmatic judgments via interviews have been proven through previous studies (McConachy, 2013; Kinginger and Farrell, 2004; Mertz, 1993). A mixed methods approach helps researchers to explore perceptions in-depth, as for Song et al. (2018).

This study used a quantitative online survey (Appendices I-V). Qualitative data was then gathered via follow-up interviews with Saudi people who had been in the UK for at least three years (Appendix VI). In addition, qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions included on the online survey.

### ***3.1.1 Theoretical approach***

Various philosophical assumptions have been identified that affect how researchers must think about research design, methods and procedures. A mixed-methods research design allows the researcher to collect “diverse types of data to provide a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone” (Creswell, 2014, p. 19). When using a sequential explanatory design, philosophical assumptions about the research can “change and shift from postpositivist to constructivist as researchers use multiple philosophical positions” (Creswell and Plano, 2011, p. 83).

It is vital to understand the postpositivist and constructivist assumptions that underpin the mixed methods approach as used in this study. Postpositivist assumptions are more likely to be true for quantitative than for qualitative research. They assume that knowledge is an absolute truth (Creswell, 2014, p. 7). The constructivist perspective helps people gain understanding of their

world in a deeper sense, through qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Constructivist researchers tend to focus on interaction between people in order to aid understanding of the “cultural settings of the participants” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8).

### **3.2 Ethical considerations**

This study examines the perceptions of its participants, and so a mixed-methods design was a good fit. It was decided at the beginning of the research to use mixed methods. Ethical clearance was then obtained from the ethics committee of the Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication for both methods used. In relation to the quantitative research, it was agreed that a confidentiality statement would appear at the head of the online questionnaire, which participants would need to accept before taking part. Names and emails were not gathered, but participants were given the researcher’s email so they could add further comment or ask questions if they chose.

A pilot study was run first with 19 participants, of whom nine were Saudis living in the UK, six were Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and four were British English L1 speakers. The pilot resulted in the reformulation of some of the study’s items and the rephrasing of some of the statements made in the stimuli videos. The survey was released online in the middle of December 2015 and was accessible for five months. Social media was used for recruitment, including circulation among Saudi students on relevant official accounts. For the qualitative interviews, the questions used were piloted with three of the researcher’s colleagues and then refined following feedback to produce the final version.

### **3.3 The quantitative data**

#### **3.3.1 Instrument**

The first set of data gathered was centred on gathering statistical evidence of a potential shift in the metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings made after living in an L2 culture. In the field of pragmatics, metapragmatic judgments are receptive data requiring comprehension. They put slight pressure on the productive abilities of the participants (Taguchi and Roever, 2017). The data at this stage was collected through an online survey, the link to which was circulated on social media. The survey had four sections and was collected specifically for this study.

The metapragmatic judgments task used in this study included the creation of audio-visual stimulus materials. These videos were shown to participants and they were then asked to judge the appropriateness of the L1 non-verbal greetings shown in them. They gave their answers on a five-point Likert scale. Appropriateness was defined in this study as the level of social acceptability of non-verbal greetings behaviours at the proper level of politeness and formality in relation to context (Taguchi, 2014c; Van Compernelle, 2014; Van Compernelle, 2014). The following two sections included adapted scales of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) and the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ). All questions were in English.

#### **3.3.2 Quantitative data collection**

Participants in this study volunteered and were able to access a Google form to complete their answers. The survey was online for period of five months, from December 2015 to April 2016 with 764 participants recruited. Of those, 437 produced eligible, complete entries. The remaining entries were discarded as they were incomplete, double entries or submitted by ineligible participants. Of those ineligible, 14 were disqualified because they were under 18 and 313 were disqualified because they were either Saudis living in countries other than the UK or Saudi Arabia, or Saudis who had lived in the

UK for less than three years.

Participants were asked to complete a four-section questionnaire. Its sections were as follows.

*Section one: background questionnaire.*

The study sought to respect the ethical principle of accurate disclosure, and so asked participants to sign consent form before answering the questions. The form asked participants to confirm they understood the purpose of the study and knew how long it would take to complete and confirmed the study's procedures for anonymity, confidentiality, and data protection. Respondents who refused to accept and confirm agreement were not allowed to proceed to the questionnaire itself (Appendix I).

After confirming their consent, participants were asked to give their socio-demographic characteristics, including age, nationality, gender, native language, country of current residence, other languages spoken and the number of years they had lived in the UK. Participants were also asked to say how many people they greet in a week using their L1. This showed how often they socialised with other Saudis and British people (Appendix II).

*Section two: metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings.*

Participants were shown four videos, each of 30 seconds duration, that showed non-verbal greetings behaviours: handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and proximity. These four behaviours were chosen as they are among common non-verbal greetings behaviours in Saudi Arabia (Hassanain, 1994; Feghali, 1997). The behaviours were performed by two Saudi males, who are colleagues of the researcher, and both were volunteers. Two males were chosen because opposite-sex physical contact is prohibited in Saudi culture, other than between relatives. Though some females were asked if they were

willing to participate in the videos, they were not keen to do so and declined. For this reason, the research proceeded with the two males as outlined.

Videos were chosen as the means of eliciting responses from the participants over written material (such as DCT) because “the richness of the contextual information provided by the video recording allowed the learners to view the type of interaction that best captures the sense of pragmatic infelicities” as well as pragmatic appropriateness (Bardovi-Harling and Dörnyei, 1998, p. 242).

Metapragmatic judgments are also known as ‘appropriateness judgments’ elicit participants’ perceptions about pragmatic features in addition to their perceptions of power and social distance (Taguchi and Roever, 2017, p. 77). In the four videos, the two volunteer Saudi actors greeted each other in different scenarios of power and social distance. These were:

- 1) Close friends, with a low level of power and little social distance.
- 2) Colleagues, people who do not know each other well, so with a degree of distance but equal power.
- 3) A manager and employee, with a high degree of power difference and social distance.
- 4) Strangers with no power difference but a high degree of social distance (more so than the colleagues).

In addition to the examination of socio-pragmatic awareness, the study looked at four different relational situations which were all designed to be authentic greetings that participants would easily recognise. Each scenario had to be judged individually. In video 1, greetings between close friends, showed all four greetings behaviours studied in turn (handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and close proximity). The remaining three videos showed only a handshake. Four statements were given to the participants after each video regarding the degree of appropriateness of each greeting.

Participants were asked to rate the appropriateness level of each greeting on a five-point Likert scale as follows: (1) Inappropriate, (2) Slightly inappropriate, (3) Neutral, (4) Slightly appropriate, and (5) Appropriate (see Appendix III).

The scale and statements appeared below each video in the following format:

Colleagues' embrace:

- (1) = Inappropriate
- (2) = Slightly inappropriate
- (3) = Neutral
- (4) = Slightly appropriate
- (5) = Appropriate

*Section three: Acculturation and cultural orientation (VIA Scale).*

This part of the survey included 20 items to measure the cultural orientation of Saudi participants living in the UK and in Saudi Arabia. A bidimensional scale was used, adapted from the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder, Alden and Paulhus, 2000). The assessment included examining the degree to which the participants agreed or disagreed on a nine-point Likert scale (1 = Disagree to 9= Agree). 20 identical paired items covered a variety of issues including values, traditions, entertainment and social activities in Saudi L1 culture and British L2 culture.

For example, the paired statements regarding entertainment were:

- 9. *I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my heritage Saudi culture.*
- 10. *I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from mainstream British culture.*

The possible scores ranged from 0 to 90, with higher scores demonstrating the participants' orientation to either their adopted British or native heritage Saudi culture. The differences between the two groups of Saudi participants were compared (see Appendix IV). A correlation test was then carried out to determine the relationship between their scores and the metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours that were gathered in section 1 of the questionnaire (see Chapter 5).

*Section four: personality traits (MPQ Scale).*

The final page of the questionnaire included 40 statements on five personality traits adapted from the short form of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire SF-MPQ (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto and Fietzer, 2013). There were eight statements on each personality trait, and answers were requested on a five-point Likert scale that measured applicability from 1 (totally not applicable) to 5 (completely applicable). As stated in Chapter 2, the five traits measured by the MPQ are: Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability. The scale measured the personality traits of Saudi participants only. The British L1 English speakers control group was not asked to answer (see Appendix V). Participants' final scores were then submitted for statistical analysis. Then, a correlation analysis test was conducted to determine the relationship between scores on the MPQ of Saudi participants in the UK and their metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings that were collected in section 1 of the questionnaire (see Chapter 6).

### **3.3.3 Participants**

There were 437 participants in the online questionnaire included in the data analysis. All of them were adults (Age,  $M = 38.45$  years,  $SD = 5.90$ ) and they came from both sexes (males = 222, and females = 215). The participants were either living in Saudi Arabia or the UK at the time of the survey and were made up of three groups as follows:

- 67 Saudis with English as their L2, living in Saudi Arabia (at-home Saudis).
- 264 Saudis with English as their L2, living in the UK (Saudis in the UK, the target group).
- 106 British L1 speakers of English living in the UK (the British group).

### *3.3.3.1 Saudis in Saudi Arabia (control group)*

The group of Saudis living at home country of Saudi Arabia was made up of 67 people, 31 males and 36 females. They were all bilingual in Arabic and English and responded to a question on which languages they spoke to confirm this. The members of this group had learned English in EFL classroom settings in Saudi Arabia and had not travelled to the UK. They had, therefore, had little or no contact with British L1 English speakers.

Half of this group were undergraduate students with an English major ( $n = 29$ ). Others were postgraduate students with various majors, include MA students ( $n = 11$ ) and PhD students ( $n = 8$ ). There are also some lecturers ( $n = 3$ ) and teachers ( $n = 9$ ). The other seven participants include IT auditors ( $n = 2$ ), a dentist, an engineer, a computer technician, a training assistant and a pharmacist.

### *3.3.3.2 Saudi residents in the UK*

The Saudis living in the UK included 264 Saudi people (152 males and 112 females). They had lived in the UK for between three and 15 years ( $M = 8.66$ ,  $SD = 2.248$ ). The minimum amount of exposure was set at three years because L2 exposure is likely to be of a significant level after that time period. In the literature, one can see a documented influence of L2 over L2 users after they have spent at least three years in their L2 environment (Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002).

The Saudis living in the UK were all educated people, with the majority being students at UK universities, including PhD, MA, and BA students. 152 were postgraduate students and 31 were undergraduate students. There were also teachers (n = 12), doctors (n = 5), dentists (n = 7), lawyers (n = 3), engineers (n = 11), lecturers (n = 12), journalists (n = 5), accountants (n = 5), pharmacists (n = 7), nurses (n = 6), TV directors (n = 2), managers (n = 3), an architect, a businessman and a naval officer.

### *3.3.3.3 British L1 speakers of English in the UK (control group)*

There were a total of 106 British participants (39 males and 67 females) who took part in this study as a control group. They were recruited via a website that helped to find English L1 speakers living in the UK. Three people were excluded due to English not being their first language. All of them were adults who had never been to Saudi Arabia.

The group of British participants included undergraduate students (n = 26) postgraduate students (n = 7), sales associates (n = 2), therapists and health fellows (n = 9), managers (n = 5), engineers (n = 5), accountants (n = 4), teachers (n = 7), journalists (n = 5), insurance managers (n = 3), dentists (n = 3), information technologists (n = 6), officers (n = 2), lawyers (n = 3), financial advisors (n = 4), human resource directors (n = 3), writers (n = 2) investors and business owners (n = 5), a retired attorney, a music agent and a forensic analyst.

The two control groups of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and British L1 English speakers in the UK were chosen to provide baseline data against which the data collected from the main study group could be compared. Including the control groups meant it was possible to establish the potential influence of living in the UK on the Saudi participants' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings (Su, 2010, 2012).

Having two groups of bilingual (Arabic-English) Saudis in the study, each in a different cultural environment, made it possible to control changes from L1 norms due to L2 exposure (Brown and Gullberg, 2008). The changes in metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours by Saudis living in the UK could be explained by changes to L1 patterns as a result of living in the L2 environment. If that were the case, then metapragmatic judgments made by Saudis living in the UK and by British L1 users of English would have been 'approximation', i.e. the ratings of L2 speakers who have lived in L2 environment are similar to those of native speakers (Olshtein and Blum-Kulka, 1985, p. 321) and accommodation to L2 norms (Giles and Ogay, 2007). If no such changes had been found, and the metapragmatic judgments made by both groups of Saudis had been similar, then this study would have concluded that a shift due to L2 influence was unlikely (Brown and Gullberg, 2008, p. 231).

### **3.3.4 Variables**

#### *3.3.4.1 Metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings*

As mentioned previously, the study's participants were asked to rate the appropriateness of four non-verbal greetings behaviours across four different scenarios. The behaviours were chosen because they were frequently practised in Saudi society. They are handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and proximity. Participants' perceptions of the appropriateness of these behaviours were communicated on a five-point Likert scale for each behaviour and scenario combination. The appropriateness of the behaviours was rated from 1 (inappropriate) to 5 (appropriate) with 3 as the neutral midpoint.

The length of time the Saudi participants had spent in the UK varied, but was not less than three years for any participant. This was chosen as the minimum period of residence in L2 culture. People in the control group of Saudis living at home were required to have no experience of living in the UK. This meant that a comparison could be drawn between the two groups with differences in

the metapragmatic judgments made by the two Saudi groups indicating the influence of L2 culture on the group living in the UK (Ramirez, 2003; Pavlenko, 2000). By the same token, a similarity in the metapragmatic judgments made by the Saudis in the UK and British L1 English speakers can be assumed to be as a result of the influence of British L2 culture on the Saudi group (Pavlenko, 2000). The mean scores given by the three groups will be compared and analysed.

#### *3.3.4.2 Cultural orientation*

This study uses a bidimensional perspective of acculturation. The VIA (Ryder, Alden and Paulhus, 2000) was chosen as the tool used to gauge the level of attachment to their native L1 culture and adoption of L2 culture felt by Saudis living in the UK. The VIA includes 10 statements, identical for each culture, which participants are required to rate for agreement or disagreement on a nine-point Likert scale. The statements cover various values, norms, traditions, and customs. The sub-scores for each cultural dimension (L1 heritage or native culture acculturation and L2 mainstream or adopted culture acculturation) were computed and the mean scores calculated.

#### *3.3.4.3 Personality traits*

The short version of the MPQ (SF-MPQ) (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto and Fietzer, 2013) was used in this study. This includes 40 statements relating to individual attitudes over five personality traits, including Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability. Participants were asked to rate each one for its applicability on a five-point Likert scale. The scores were calculated by adding each score given by the participants.

Table (3.1) presents the variables included in the quantitative data.

Table 3.1 Variable types in the quantitative data

<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Independent variables</i>
Metapragmatic judgments of four L1 non-verbal greetings (handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and proximity)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Length of residence in L2 (UK)</li> <li>2. Cultural orientation</li> <li>3. Personality profiles</li> </ol>

### 3.3.5 Reliability and validity

#### 3.3.5.1 Reliability of scales on metapragmatic judgments of NVGs

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was used to test the reliability of scales showing metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness, following viewing of four videos of four different Saudi non-verbal greetings behaviours. The scales were shown to be reliable and consistent to a satisfactory degree, and the participants were clear in their understanding of the statements given to them.

Table 3.2 internal consistencies (alphas) of NVGs main scales

<b>Scales on NVGs appropriateness</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>No. of items</b>
Close friends scale	.778	4.146	5
Colleagues scale	.868	4.259	5
Manager-employee scale	.816	4.045	5
Strangers scale	.892	4.593	5

3.3.5.2 Validity of scales on metapragmatic judgments of NVGs

A correlation matrix of dependent variables was used to test the validity of the 5-point Likert scales of metapragmatic judgments on the non-verbal greetings behaviours that were shown in the videos. A Pearson correlation matrix was used to indicate that the dependent variables were significantly correlated at  $p < 0.01$ , 2-tailed.

The four tables below present the results of the correlation matrix for each of the four videos: (1) close friends, (2) colleagues, (3) Manager and employee, and (4) strangers.

Table 3.3 Intercorrelations between dependent variables in close friends \*  $p < 0.01$

<b>Close friends</b>	<b>Handshake</b>	<b>Cheek-to-cheek kiss</b>	<b>Embrace</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.314*		
Embrace	.364*	.396*	
Proximity	.284*	.578*	.392*

Table 3.4 Intercorrelations between dependent variables in colleagues \*  $p < 0.01$

<b>Colleagues</b>	<b>Handshake</b>	<b>Cheek-to-cheek kiss</b>	<b>Embrace</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.459*		
Embrace	.464*	.749*	
Proximity	.507*	.606*	.593*

Table 3.5 Intercorrelations between dependent variables in Manager-employee \*  $p < 0.01$

<b>Manager-employee</b>	<b>Handshake</b>	<b>Cheek-to-cheek kiss</b>	<b>Embrace</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.184*		
Embrace	.174*	.788*	
Proximity	.245*	.596*	.584*

Table 3.6 Intercorrelations between dependent variables in strangers \*  $p < 0.01$

<b>Strangers</b>	<b>Handshake</b>	<b>Cheek-to-cheek kiss</b>	<b>Embrace</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.476*		
Embrace	.497*	.911*	
Proximity	.434*	.633*	.630*

### 3.3.5.3 Reliability and validity of Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Ryder et al. (2000) established the VIA as a reliable instrument, something confirmed by various empirical studies. As part of this study, the reliability of VIA scales as they related to mainstream (adopted) and heritage (native) cultures was calculated with Cronbach’s coefficient (alpha).

Table 3.7 (below) gives the results, which conclude that for both mainstream and heritage cultures, the VIA is reliable.

Table 3.7 Internal consistencies (alphas) of VIA scales

<b>Culture</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	<b>No. of items</b>
L1 Saudi heritage culture	.914	10
L2 British mainstream culture	.857	10

### 3.3.5.4 Reliability and validity of Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)

The SF-MPQ, or Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, has 40 statements across five dimensions in its short form (see Section 3.3.2). Van der Zee et al. (2013) assessed the reliability of the short form and concluded that it was reliable. The higher a score, the more applicable that factor is (Van der Zee et al., 2013; Basow and Gaugler, 2017).

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was applied to the MPQ's five subscales to test for internal consistency. The results, seen in Table 3.8, showed consistency. The MPQ has also been tested in several empirical studies of a variety of cultural groups, as set out in this study's literature section.

Table 3.8 *Internal consistencies (alphas) of MPQ subscales*

<b>MPQ Dimensions</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>No. of items</b>
Cultural Empathy	.905	7.094	8
Open-mindedness	.879	6.674	8
Flexibility	.845	6.507	8
Social initiative	.656	5.643	8
Emotional Stability	.643	5.292	8

### **3.3.6 Statistical analysis**

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS version 25) was used to carry out data management and analysis of the questionnaires used in this study. The assumption of normal distribution of the data was tested and presented in next chapters in quantitative result sections.

### **3.4 Qualitative data:**

This study uses a sequential explanatory approach involving both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis. Qualitative data was collected to support the statistical trends identified before the study was carried out (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This was then followed up with qualitative data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews and three questions asked as part of the online questionnaire (see Appendix II). These questions asked participants to supply detail of the language they use in regular greetings and interactions with others and how many people they greet each week. They were asked to state how many people they would usually greet in a week from their native L1 community and how many from British L2 community. They

were asked to specify which language they customarily used when greeting fellow L1 speakers outside of their native country.

Data collected on greetings and the language used during them was useful in establishing how far the Saudi participants continued to live by their L1 norms when living in the UK. The data provides insight into the extent to which they were attached to their L1 and L2 cultures, how far they had developed friendships with others from both communities and what their primary cultural orientation was. The semi-structured interviews were planned to provide a deeper level of insight alongside the questionnaires. Questions were asked regarding the influence of British culture on the Saudi participants and how far they had changed their views of the appropriateness of particular L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours since moving to the UK. The questions also sought to establish the relationship between changing views, length of residence, cultural orientation and personality. As the interviews give the participants a chance to voice their opinions directly, they add authenticity to the study and help verify the statistical data gathered through the questionnaire.

The interviews were completed in July 2019 with Saudi participants who had spent at least three years in the UK and focused on establishing how their metapragmatic judgments had been influenced. Details of the participants, interviews, data collection and analysis are presented in the following sections.

### ***3.4.1 Participants***

Those who took part in the follow-up interviews were volunteers interviewed after the initial quantitative phase of the study was completed. This approach is informed by Baumann (1999) who established that interviews are necessary to gain deeper insights cannot be collected as part of the quantitative data (Creswell, Plano and Clark, 2011). Participants in the interviews were nine Saudi residents who had been in the UK for three years or more. Four were

men and five women, and they were aged between 32 and 48 ( $M = 40$ ). The participants were each well educated and speak English fluently. They had lived in the UK for between four and 15 years ( $M = 9.5$ ). They included two teachers at a bilingual Arabic/English school in London, both BA degree holders, two lecturers<sup>2</sup>, both MA degree holders (one in English Literature and the other in Management), four PhD students at UK universities, and one PhD holder. Each participant was given an alias for the study. Neither their names nor their initials were used according to their preferences, and alias, therefore, were used instead. Table (3.9) gives more details of the interviewees.

Table 3.9 Participants in semi-structured interviews

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Current residence</b>	<b>Years in UK</b>	<b>Job</b>
Rayan	M	36	UK	5	PhD Student
Amal	F	41	UK	13	Teacher
Badr	M	39	UK	4	PhD Student
Abrar	F	48	UK	14	Assistant Professor
Adeem	F	40	UK	15	Teacher
Mohammad	M	32	UK	7	Lecturer
Arwa	F	40	UK	13	Lecturer
Adil	M	39	UK	5	PhD Student
SOL	F	35	UK	4	PhD Student

<sup>2</sup> The MA holder is titled as a lecturer according to the job system of universities in Saudi Arabia

### **3.4.2 Interview sections**

#### *3.4.2.1 Interview Section 1*

Section 1 examined participants' non-verbal greetings behaviours with people across four different relational positions. It also examined how and whether there had been a shift in the participants' non-verbal greetings behaviours as a result of their time in the UK. To get a clearer picture of the participants' level of acculturation, they were asked how many English friends they had and whether they generally used English or Arabic when greeting others. Although similar questions were included in the online questionnaire, they were asked again during the interview in order to obtain a clearer view of the participants' situation, views and changes in their non-verbal greetings behaviours.

#### *3.4.2.2 Interview Section 2*

In this section, participants were asked questions that sought to establish what effect individual personality had on greetings behaviours. They were given time to speak spontaneously in an open-ended discussion of their lives and experiences living in the UK, and their encounters with both other Saudis and British people (see Appendix VI).

### **3.4.3 Qualitative data collection**

The interview participants were chosen from among those who contacted the study's author following participation in the questionnaire to indicate their willingness to be interviewed. Those who had spent fewer than three years in the UK were excluded and those who met the criteria were interviewed. All these interviews were recorded using a Sony digital voice recorder.

The interviewees suggested convenient settings for how they would like to be interviewed. Some interviews took place face-to-face, including five in London (one in November 2017, four in June 2019), one in Milton Keynes in February

2017 and one in Hull in July 2019. Recorded phone interviews were carried out in July 2019 with two participants, who lived in Kingston and York. These two interviews were conducted using an Apple iPhone and were recorded using a Sony digital voice recorder. At the start of each face-to-face interview, the participants were asked to sign a consent form and confidentiality declaration and were given information about the interview and its contents. These documents were emailed to those who were interviewed by phone. All participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed before the recordings were deleted.

All the interviews were carried out in English and analysed manually. Each was individual and lasted between 25 and 40 minutes. They were semi-structured with the interviewer acting as facilitator and encouraging free speech and open conversation. Guidance on the statistical findings of the first part of the study was given to help inform the conversation but this was kept to a minimum. The discussions that emerged broadly reflected the quantitative findings.

#### ***3.4.4 Qualitative data analysis***

The interview recordings were transcribed and then annotated with observations and impressions of the discussions both remembered from the interview and the audition of the recordings. The transcripts and coding were analysed manually using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process: 1) familiarisation with the data, 2) generation of the initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) review of the themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) production of the final report.

The analysis of the transcripts produced five main codes and fourteen sub-codes from the insights gained in line with the study's themes (see Table 3.10). There was a focus in two categories on non-verbal greetings and the differences between them in the heritage and host culture, and how far these are related to levels of attachment to each culture. Participants noted that they

had struggled when they first moved to the UK to cope with UK norms and move away from Saudi norms. One of these categories related to the participants' desire to avoid opposite-sex interaction and the other on the influence of personality on non-verbal greetings behaviours. Most of the participants stated that they had experienced pragmatic failure and communication difficulties in the UK.

Table 3.10 Categories of interviews

Codes	Sub-codes	Freq.	Rationale
<b>Non-verbal greeting behaviours in L1 and L2</b>	<b>L2 behaviours in L1 society</b>	<b>40</b>	Participants highlight their preference of using L2 way of greetings in L1 society
	<b>Potential change</b>	<b>21</b>	It refers to change in L1 non-verbal greetings affected by L2 norms
	<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>13</b>	It refers to avoidance of L1 non-verbal greetings in interactions
	<b>Struggle and Initial difficulties</b>	<b>15</b>	Participants struggle to cope with L2 non-verbal greetings upon arrival to the new country
		<b>(89)</b>	
<b>Socio-cultural aspects</b>	<b>Attachment to L1 heritage norms</b>	<b>21</b>	Participants appreciate warmth of L1 non-verbal greetings and perfectly conveying emotions
	<b>Liking L2 behaviours</b>	<b>32</b>	It refers to participants' appreciation for British greetings
	<b>Social interaction and friendship</b>	<b>33</b>	Participants discuss their network of relationships with L1 and L2 individuals
	<b>Adaptation and accommodation</b>	<b>26</b>	Participants narrate adjustment of their actual non-verbal greetings and perceptions of NVGs appropriateness
		<b>(112)</b>	
<b>Opposite-sex interactions</b>	<b>Embarrassment</b>	<b>13</b>	Participants report examples on feeling embarrassed when using L1 non-verbal greetings
	<b>Religious and cultural constrains</b>	<b>27</b>	Participants express difficulty to cope with non-verbal exchange in opposite-sex interaction for religious and cultural reasons
		<b>(40)</b>	
<b>Personality</b>	<b>Acculturation of personality</b>	<b>6</b>	Participants report change in personality characteristics over time of living in L2 culture.
	<b>Cultural empathy, sociability, open-mindedness, openness, extraversion, introversion</b>	<b>37</b>	Participants comment on how types of personality impact non-verbal greetings
		<b>(43)</b>	
<b>Communication breakdowns</b>	<b>Perceptions of L1 greetings within intercultural interactions</b>	<b>16</b>	Participants report reactions of host people towards using L1 non-verbal greetings particularly in first meetings
	<b>Pragmatic failure</b>	<b>12</b>	Participants share their experiences related to communication breakdowns
		<b>(28)</b>	

### **3.5 Managing quantitative and qualitative analysis:**

The results of the quantitative and qualitative data collection have been combined and are presented with reference to the research questions in chapters 4, 5 and 6. Each of these chapters begins with the quantitative data results and then has an analysis of the qualitative results. The results are discussed in each chapter and a conclusion is given. The qualitative data is presented alongside the quantitative data to aid understanding and offer an authentic, human interpretation of the statistical trends identified.

Some concerns have been raised about the type of approach used in this study, such as:

“[...] the qualitative items are an add-on to a quantitative instrument; the items generally do not result in a complete context-based qualitative data set”  
(Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 81)

It is true that the categories in this study are marginally defined.

“However, they provide the researcher with emergent themes and interesting quotes that can be used to validate and embellish the quantitative survey findings” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 81)

This study’s purpose is to gain insight into the experiences of Saudi residents in the UK, with qualitative analysis used to add depth and nuance to the quantitative research. The study seeks to establish participants’ levels of metapragmatic awareness and the sociocultural and psychological changes they have experienced. Given that this study’s focus is on the influence of living in an L2 culture on metapragmatic awareness, it seems logical to use a mixed-methods approach. Triangulation, or the use of multiple methodologies in one study, seeks to establish convergence in the findings used by each method. Methods are used to validate one another (Dewaele, 2015; Song et al., 2018).

This study uses validated methods to measure metapragmatic awareness in its participants (Chen, 1995) as well as participants' own reflections on their native language (McConachy, 2013, 2018). The study uses adapted forms of established, validated instruments, namely the SF-MPQ (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto, and Fietzer, 2013) to measure personality and the VIA (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000) to measure acculturation. This is in line with previous studies.

Participants were given the opportunity to speak freely about their experiences in the UK, their use of non-verbal greetings and their perception of appropriateness. The freedom given to participants to speak openly means that first-hand stories are included in the study. This was carried out through semi-structured interviews that took place after quantitative data collection. The qualitative data was not gathered as a complete context-based data set, meaning that the interviews provided valuable insights, emerging themes and quotes that helped inform analysis of the quantitative data (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

The quantitative results and analysis of them are, therefore, supported by information gathered in the qualitative interviews, in line with Creswell and Plano Clark's structure (2011, 2014). The data extracts used to illustrate the quantitative findings in the following three chapters was chosen for its relevancy, interest and ability to provide a human perspective (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014).

## CHAPTER 4

### THE EFFECT OF LENGTH OF RESIDENCE ON METAPRAGMATIC JUDGMENTS OF SAUDI NON-VERBAL GREETINGS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 4 presents the results related to the study's first research question (RQ1) (a): the effect of length of residence in the UK on Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours and their views on appropriateness and use of L1 non-verbal greetings in L2. This chapter has three sections. Section 4.1 presents the results of the quantitative research. There is a quantitative analysis of the metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, including responses of the participants to the stimuli videos. This detailed analysis covers differences in perception of non-verbal greetings in a variety of social contexts. Section 4.2 presents the qualitative results of the study as they related to RQ1(b) and Section 4.3 provides discussion of both qualitative and quantitative results and how they answer the research question 1.

#### **Research Question 1:**

**RQ1 (a):** *Does length of residence in the UK affect Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours?*

**H1:** Metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK will be different from those by Saudis in Saudi Arabia.

**H2:** Metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK will approximate those by British L1 speakers of English in the UK.

**RQ1 (b): *What are the participants' views on appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings over time of residence in the UK?***

**4.1 Quantitative data results**

**4.1.1 *Length of residence in L2 culture***

It is thought that the length of residence in L2 may have an impact on the metapragmatic judgments (MPJs) made by Saudis living in the UK. The research in this area consisted of four different stimuli videos (see Chapter 3) that relate to four social relationships, shown to the participants. They included Saudis living in the UK and two control groups – Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and British L1 English speakers living in the UK.

The analysis of metapragmatic judgments made by the three groups will be presented as follows:

1. Descriptive analysis.
2. Assumption of normality.
3. Mean comparisons between the groups.
4. Post-hoc tests to reveal differences, if any.

**4.1.1.1 *Close friends***

A descriptive analysis was carried out indicating means scores, and standard deviations for metapragmatic judgments made of Saudi L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours of close friends (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics of MPJs of close friends' NVGs

NVGs	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Handshake	437	2	5	4.58	.787
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	437	1	5	3.95	1.221
Embrace	437	1	5	4.32	.987
Proximity	437	1	5	3.97	1.153

To check the normality of the data, a Shapiro-Wilk's test was used. This showed that there was not a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). The data was skewed. It showed for handshake a skewness of  $-1.581$  ( $SE = .117$ ) with a kurtosis of  $.962$  ( $SE = .233$ ), for cheek-to-cheek kiss a skewness of  $-.850$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-.350$  ( $SE = .233$ ), for embrace a skewness of  $-1.309$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $.952$  ( $SE = .233$ ), and for proximity a skewness of  $-.812$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-.224$  ( $SE = .233$ ).

As this data is not of a normal distribution, statistical non-parametric tests were used. A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine whether there were differences between groups of participants. As differences were then found, Mann-Whitney post hoc tests were run between pairs of groups (i.e. Saudis in Saudi Arabia vs. Saudis in UK; and Saudis in UK vs. British people in the UK) (Field, 2009).

A Kruskal-Wallis test determined that there were significant differences between the metapragmatic judgments of NVGs between groups [ $H(2) = 9.755, p < .05$ ]. Mann-Whitney tests were used to confirm this finding and then a Bonferroni correction was applied, which established a  $.025$  level of significance. No significant difference was found in the metapragmatic judgments of NVGs between the two Saudi groups, but a significant difference was found between the group of Saudis in the UK and the British group. This was seen in relation to handshake [ $U = 11811, Z = -3.138, p < .025$ ], and embrace [ $U = 12494, Z = -1.852, p < .025$ ].

Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 illustrate the differences between Saudis in the UK and British L1 users of English in their MPJs of close friends' NVGs.

Table 4.2. *Mann-Whitney post hoc scores for metapragmatic judgments of close friends' NVGs by Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

<b>MPJs</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Handshake	11811.000	-3.138	<b>.002</b>
Embrace	12494.000	-1.852	<b>.021</b>

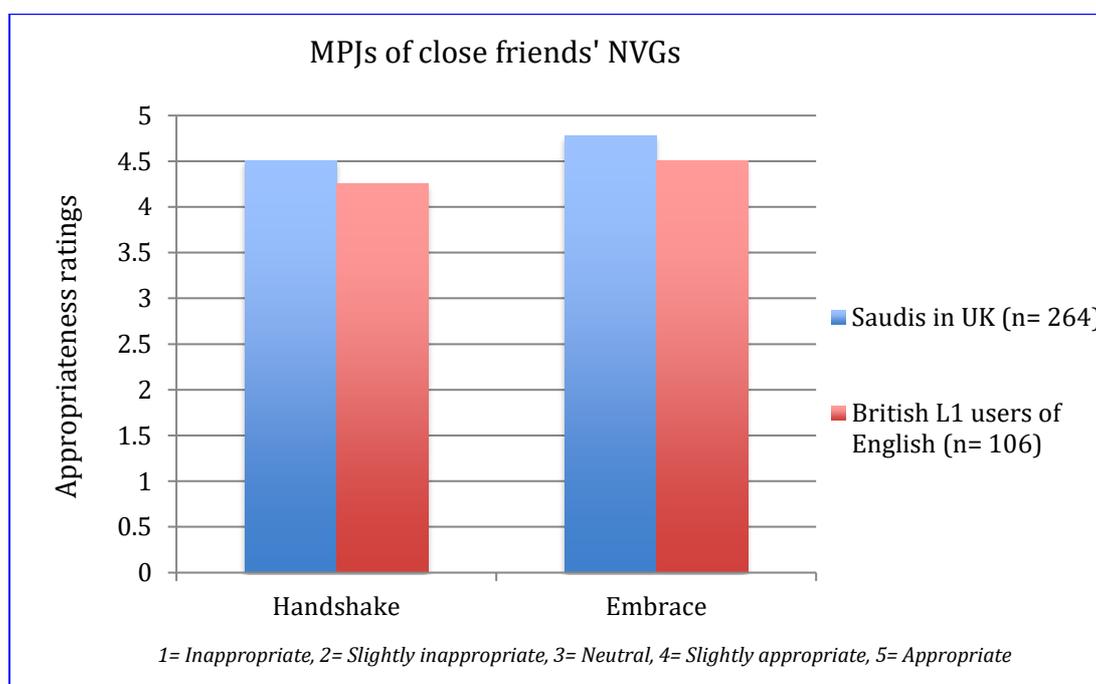


Figure 4.1. *Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of close friends' NVGs by Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

Figure 4.1 demonstrates that more Saudis in the UK felt that handshakes and embraces were appropriate among close friends (handshake  $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = .827$ ) and (embrace  $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 1.039$ ), than British people (handshake  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = .617$ ), (embrace  $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = .819$ ).

The data demonstrates that UK residence has a slight impact on the metapragmatic judgments by Saudi participants abroad.

#### 4.1.1.2 Colleagues

A descriptive analysis was carried out showing means and standard deviations for MPJs of NVGs of colleagues' interaction.

Table 4.3 shows the descriptive analysis of metapragmatic judgments of non-verbal greetings behaviours between colleagues, as shown to participants through a stimuli video.

Table 4.3 *Descriptive statistics of MPJ of colleagues' NVGs*

<b>NVGs</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Handshake	437	1	5	4.41	.938
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	437	1	5	1.60	.973
Embrace	437	1	5	1.62	.978
Proximity	437	1	5	4.07	1.061

A Shapiro-Wilk's test showed that the metapragmatic judgments of NVGs between colleagues were significantly skewed. It showed that for handshake a skewness of -1.336 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of .734 (SE = .233), for cheek-to-cheek kiss a skewness of 1.548 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of 1.766. (SE = .233), for embrace a skewness of 1.486 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of 1.572 (SE = .233), and for proximity a skewness of -.617 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of -.898 (SE = .233).

A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to establish the differences between the groups of participants and Mann-Whitney post hoc tests were run between pairs of groups to determine where those differences could be found (Field, 2009). The Kruskal-Wallis test showed statistically significant differences between groups in their metapragmatic judgments across all the non-verbal greetings

forms. These were: handshake [ $H(2) = 20.183, p < .05$ ], cheek-to-cheek-kiss [ $H(2) = 35.050, p < .05$ ], embrace [ $H(2) = 30.033, p < .05$ ], and proximity [ $H(2) = 17.273, p < .05$ ]

Mann-Whitney post hoc tests were then applied with a Bonferroni correction to report the effects at a .025 level of significance. This showed that MPJs of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between colleagues differed between the two Saudi groups [ $U = 7868.500, Z = -1.594, p < .025$ ]. Figure 4.2 shows the differences in MPJs between the two Saudi groups of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between colleagues:

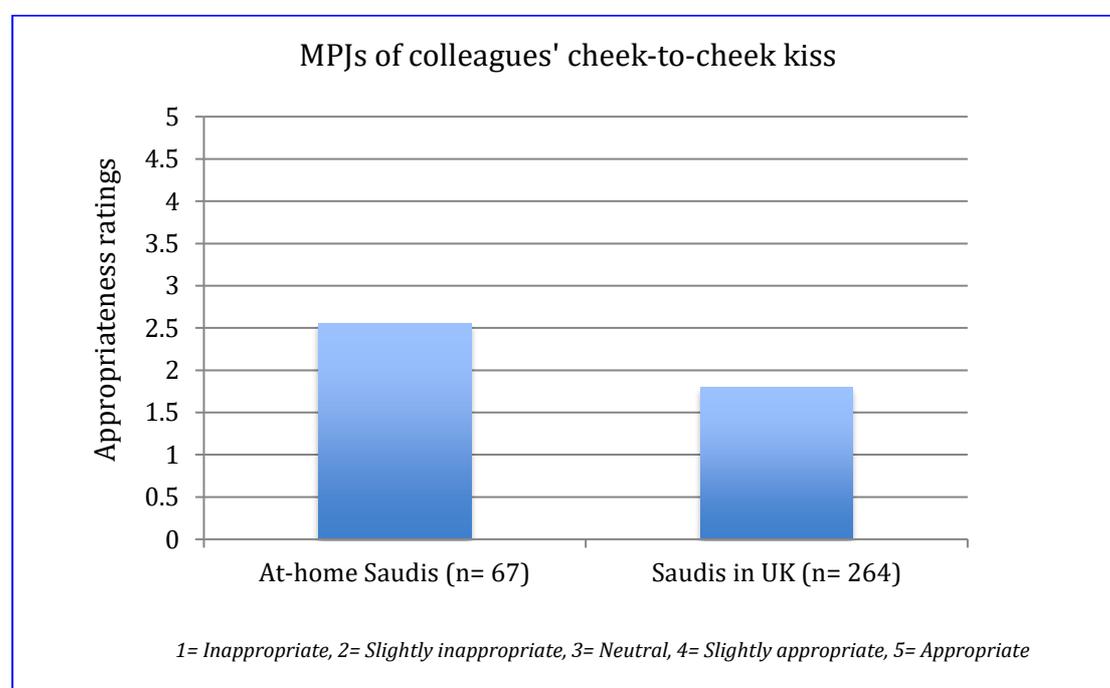


Figure 4.2. Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of colleagues' cheek-to-cheek kiss by Saudi groups

The Saudis in Saudi Arabia ( $M = 2.55, SD = .892$ ) thought that a cheek-to-cheek kiss between colleagues was more appropriate than the Saudis living in the UK ( $M = 1.80, SD = 1.084$ ). This demonstrates that living in the UK had a slight impact on the metapragmatic judgments of Saudi residents.

Mann-Whitney post hoc tests also showed that there were differences in metapragmatic judgments of all four NVGs between the Saudis in the UK and the British group. Table 4.4 and Figure 4.3 display the differences in metapragmatic judgments of NVGs between colleagues between Saudis in the UK and British people.

Table 4.4. *Mann-Whitney post hoc for metapragmatic judgments of colleagues' NVGs by Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

<b>MPJs</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Handshake	10558.500	-4.488	<b>.001</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	9429.500	-5.899	<b>.001</b>
Embrace	9707.500	-5.485	<b>.001</b>
Proximity	10533.000	-4.024	<b>.001</b>

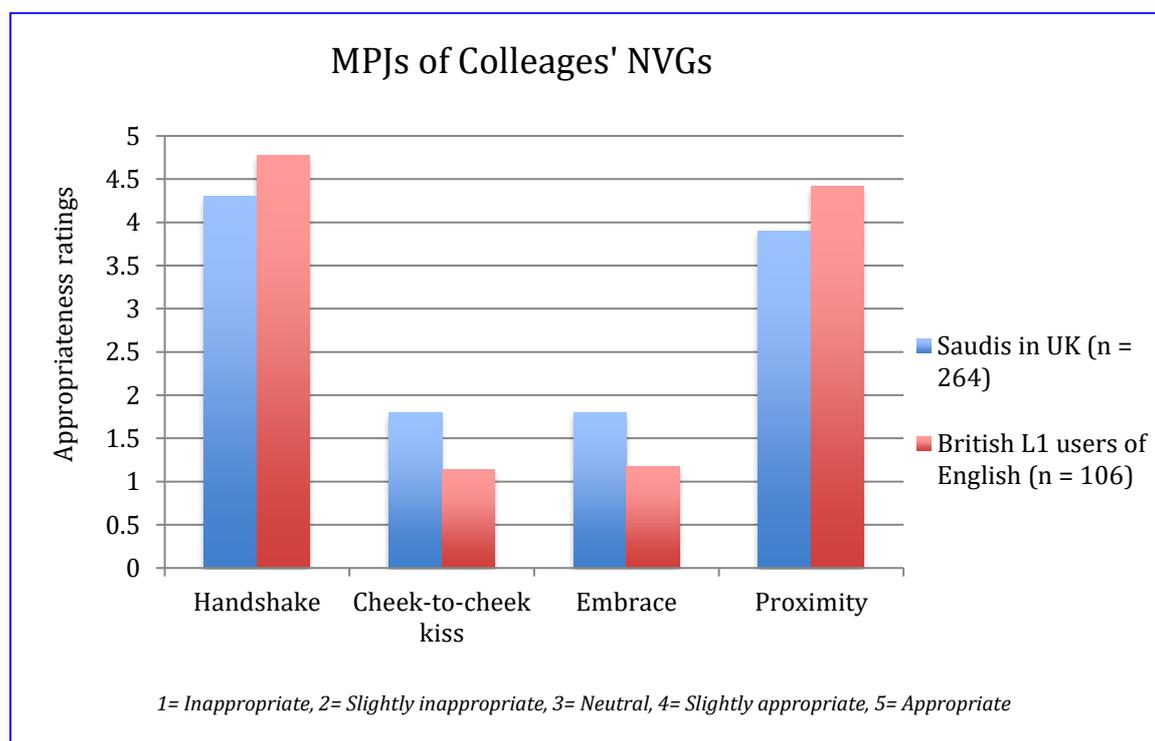


Figure 4.3. *Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of colleagues' NVGs Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

Table 4.4 shows that Mann-Whitney post hoc tests showed differences between the two groups in their judgments of the appropriateness of all four non-verbal greetings behaviours between colleagues.

Figure 4.3 displays that the British group gave higher appropriateness ratings to handshakes and proximity (handshake  $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = .590$ ; proximity  $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = .860$ ) than Saudis in the UK (handshake  $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = .970$ ; proximity  $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 1.112$ ).

However, Saudis in the UK gave higher appropriateness ratings to kisses and embraces (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 1.084$ ; embrace  $M = 1.80$ ,  $SD = 1.073$ ) than the British group (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.14$ ,  $SD = .424$ ; embrace  $M = 1.18$ ,  $SD = .474$ ). Saudis in the UK consider handshakes and one-arm's length conversational distance to be less appropriate between colleagues than their British counterparts. Saudis also considered cheek-to-cheek kisses and embraces to be inappropriate, but by a slightly lesser degree than British people did ( $M = 1.14$ , and  $M = 1.18$ , respectively). The Saudis abroad group fell in the middle between the control groups (more details to follow at 4.3).

#### 4.1.1.3. Manager and employee

A descriptive analysis was first carried out. Table 4.5 shows the descriptive analysis of metapragmatic judgments made of Saudi L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours during a manager-employee interaction.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics of MPJ of manager-employee's NVGs

NVGs	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Handshake	437	1	5	4.25	1.103
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	437	1	5	1.64	.959
Embrace	437	1	5	1.61	.918
Proximity	437	1	5	4.17	1.026

Shapiro-Wilk's test was conducted, which showed a skewed distribution of data. The test showed for handshake a skewness of -1.380 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of .1.035 (SE = .233), for cheek-to-cheek kiss a skewness of 1.300 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of .884 (SE = .233), for Embrace a skewness of 1.341 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of 1.135 (SE = .233), and for proximity a skewness of -853 (SE = .117) and a kurtosis of -.336 (SE = .233). As the data was not normally distributed, statistical non-parametric tests were applied.

A Kruskal-Wallis test was used to determine whether there were differences between groups and Mann-Whitney post hoc tests were used to establish where the differences lay (Field, 2009). The Kruskal-Wallis test showed statistically significant differences between the groups in their metapragmatic judgments of handshake [ $H(2) = 19.237, p < .05$ ]. The Mann-Whitney tests were then run with a Bonferroni correction to report the results at a .025 level of significance. The analysis showed a significant difference between the two Saudi groups in their judgment of the appropriateness of a handshake [ $U = 7519.000, Z = -2.109, p < .025$ ] and a cheek-to-cheek kiss [ $U = 43127.500, Z = -1.116, p < .025$ ] between a manager and employee.

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.4 show the differences in MPJs of NVGs between managers and employees, between Saudis at home and in the UK.

Table 4.6. *Mann-Whitney post hoc for metapragmatic judgments of manager-employee's NVGs by at-home Saudis and Saudis in UK*

<b>MPJs</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Handshake	7519.000	-2.109	<b>.019</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	9429.500	-5.899	<b>.020</b>

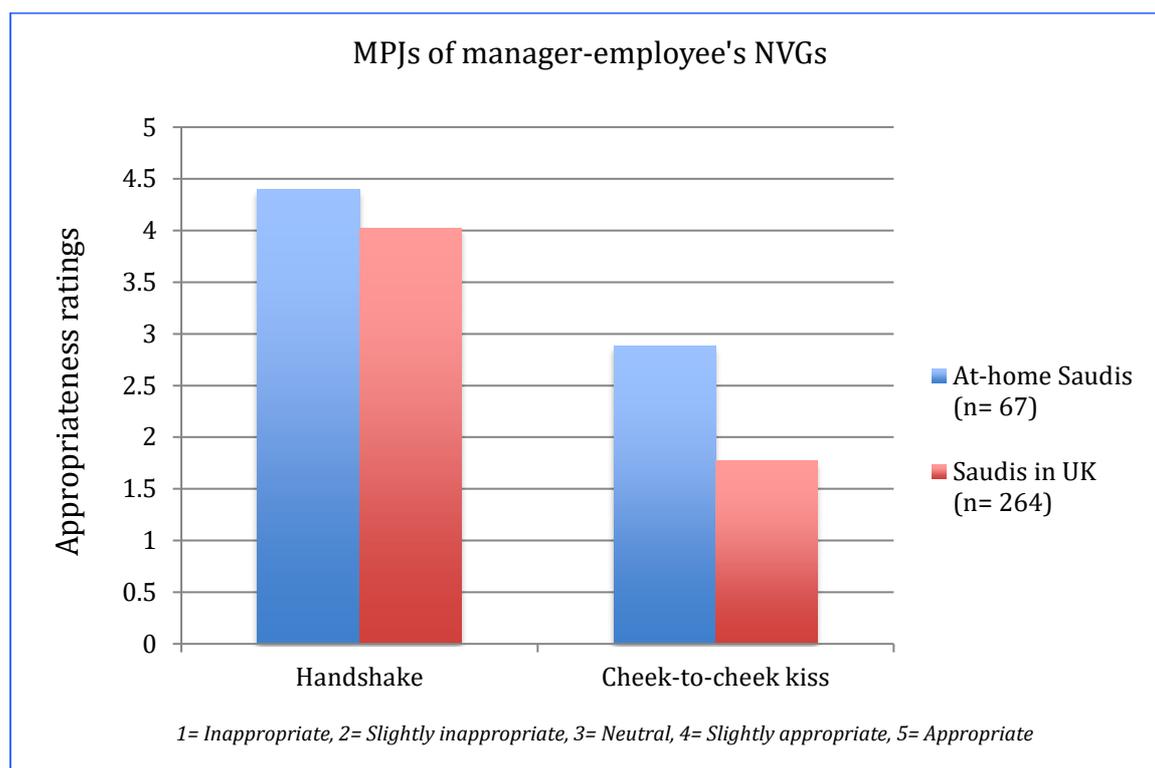


Figure 4.4. Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of manager-employee's NVGs by Saudi groups

Figure 4.4 shows the appropriateness ratings of handshake and a cheek-to-cheek kiss between a manager and employee. The rating is lower among Saudis living in the UK than those living in Saudi Arabia (handshake  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.148$ ; cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = 1.022$ ). Saudis living in Saudi Arabia thought that both behaviours were more appropriate than Saudis in the UK (handshake  $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = .970$ ; cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = .946$ ).

Statistically significant differences were also found between the Saudis in the UK group and the British group across all four NVGs. The results were: handshake [ $U = 10560.500$ ,  $Z = -4.188$ ,  $p < .025$ ], cheek-to-cheek kiss [ $U = 9275.500$ ,  $Z = -6.114$ ,  $p < .025$ ], embrace [ $U = 9392$ ,  $Z = -5.876$ ,  $p < .025$ ], and proximity [ $U = 10471.500$ ,  $Z = -4.202$ ,  $p < .025$ ].

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.5 show the differences between the metapragmatic judgments of Saudis in the UK and British people, in relation to NVGs between managers and employees.

Table 4.7. *Mann-Whitney post hoc for metapragmatic judgments of colleagues' NVGs in Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

<b>MPJs</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
Handshake	10560.500	-4.188	<b>.001</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	9475.500	-6.114	<b>.001</b>
Embrace	9392.500	-5.876	<b>.001</b>
Proximity	10471.500	-4.202	<b>.001</b>

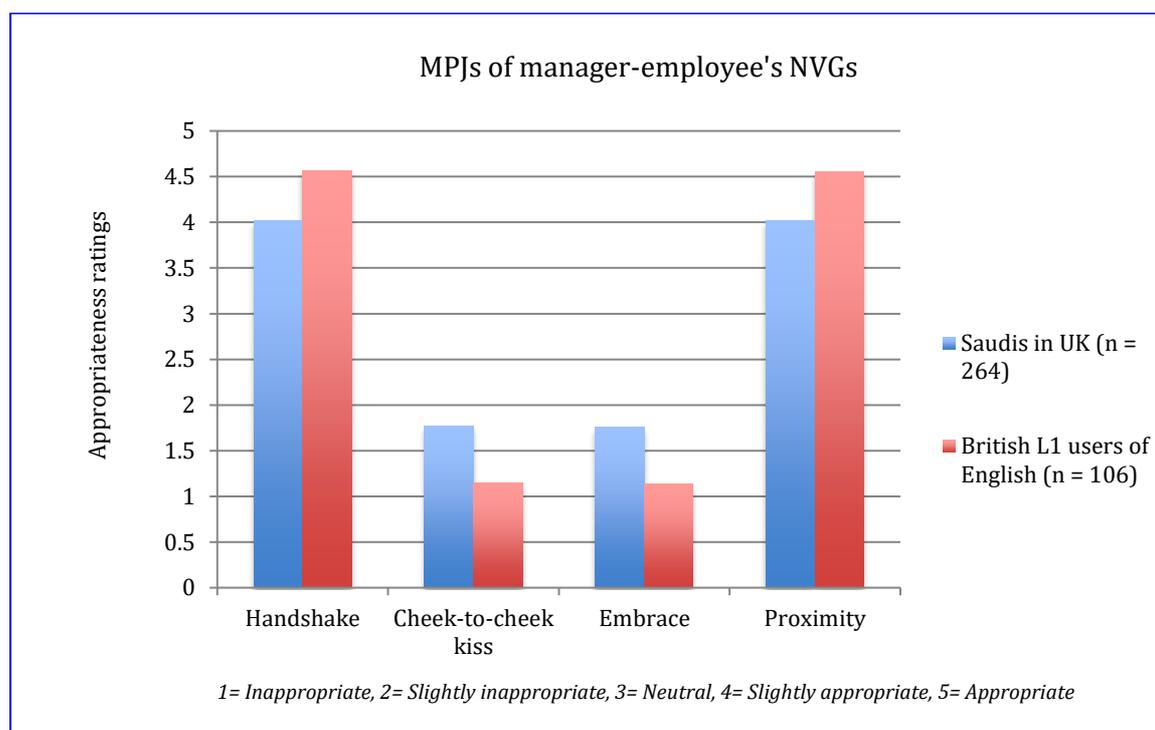


Figure 4.5. *Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of manager-employee's NVGs by Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English*

Table 4.7 demonstrates that differences were found between Saudis in the UK and British people, in terms of metapragmatic judgments of NVGs between managers and employees. As seen in Figure 4.5, Saudis in the UK saw a cheek-to-cheek kiss or an embrace as being mildly inappropriate (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.77$ ,  $SD = 1.022$ ; embrace  $M = 1.76$ ,  $SD = .999$ ). British also generally

thought that these behaviours were inappropriate to a greater degree than the Saudi group (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.15$ ,  $SD = .566$ ; embrace  $M = 1.14$ ,  $SD = .376$ ).

The British group rated handshakes and proximity more highly for appropriateness (handshake  $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = .996$ ; proximity  $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = .758$ ) than Saudis in the UK (handshake  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.148$ ; proximity  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.087$ ), but both groups thought they were appropriate. The appropriateness ratings of the four behaviours differed between the groups, though not hugely so. Saudis in the UK thought that a handshake between a manager and employee was slightly appropriate, and a cheek kiss slight inappropriate. Saudis in the UK were between the two control groups in their assessments of cheek-to-cheek kisses between managers and employees, but their ratings for handshakes were the lowest for appropriateness in a manager and employee interaction.

#### 4.1.1.4. Strangers

A descriptive analysis of the data was first carried out. Table 4.8 shows the descriptive statistics for metapragmatic judgments of non-verbal greetings behaviours between strangers.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics of MPJ of strangers' NVGs

NVGs	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Handshake	437	1	5	4.08	1.138
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	437	1	5	1.79	1.027
Embrace	437	1	5	1.77	.983
Proximity	437	1	5	4.18	1.070

A Shapiro-Wilk's test revealed that the data was not normally distributed ( $p < .05$ ). It showed for handshake a skewness of  $-1.015$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $.047$  ( $SE = .233$ ), for cheek-to-cheek kiss a skewness of  $.962$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-.031$  ( $SE = .233$ ), for embrace a skewness of  $.736$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and

a kurtosis of  $-.752$  ( $SE = .233$ ), and a skewness of  $-1.081$  ( $SE = .117$ ) and a kurtosis of  $.351$  ( $SE = .233$ ) for proximity.

Statistical non-parametric tests were then used. A Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to establish whether there were differences between groups and Mann-Whitney post hoc tests were run to establish what these differences were (Field, 2009).

The Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there were statistically significant differences in the MPJs of NVGs made by the different groups across all four behaviours: handshake [ $H(2) = 2.765, p < .05$ ], cheek-to-cheek kiss [ $H(2) = 30.179, p < .05$ ], embrace [ $H(2) = 27.203, p < .05$ ], and proximity [ $H(2) = 18.521, p < .05$ ].

Mann-Whitney follow-up tests were then used, with a Bonferroni correction to ensure that the results were consistently reported at a  $.025$  level of significance. The two Saudi groups made different judgments of the appropriateness of a handshake between strangers [ $U = 78170, Z = -1.614, p < .025$ ].

Figure 4.6 illustrates differences in metapragmatic judgments made of handshakes between strangers by Saudis living in the UK and in Saudi Arabia.

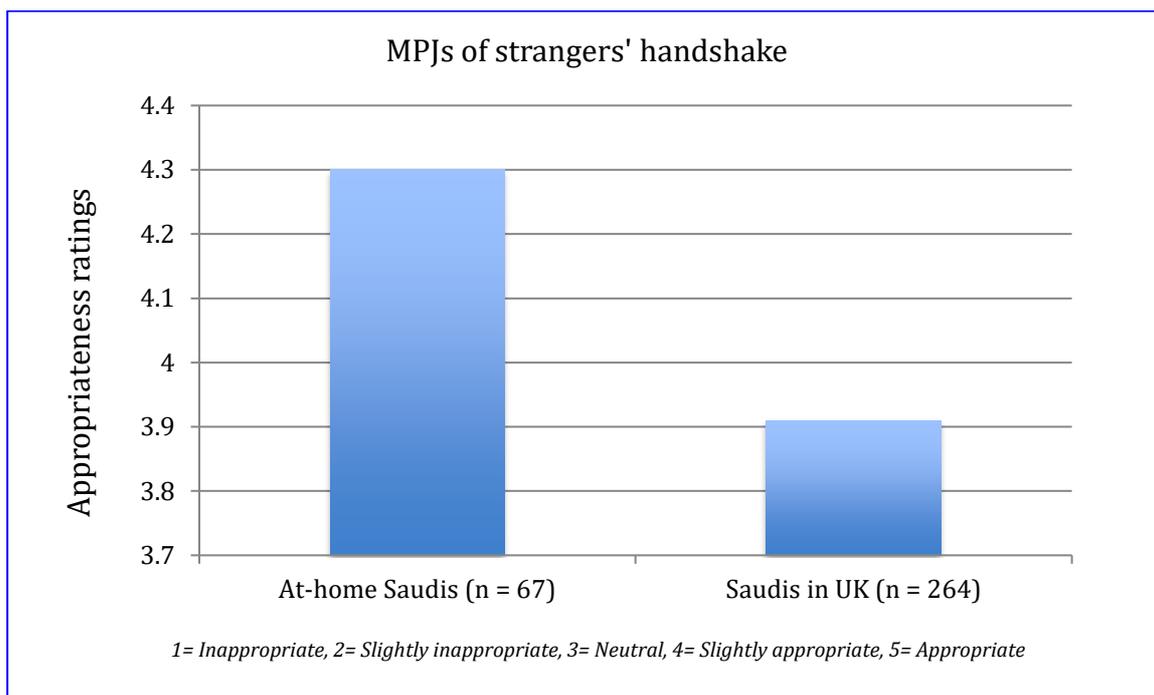


Figure 4.6. Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of strangers' handshake by Saudi groups

Figure 4.6 demonstrates the differences in the ratings of the appropriateness of handshakes between strangers, comparing Saudis living in the UK and Saudis in Saudi Arabia. For Saudis in the UK, handshake between strangers was a neutral behaviour ( $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 1.207$ ). For Saudis in Saudi Arabia, this was a slightly appropriate behaviour ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 1.015$ ).

The Saudis in the UK and British people made significantly different judgments of the appropriateness of a cheek-to-cheek kiss [ $U = 9646$ ,  $Z = -5.299$ ,  $p < .025$ ], embrace [ $U = 9806$ ,  $Z = -5.135$ ,  $p < .025$ ], and proximity [ $U = 10467$ ,  $Z = -4.224$ ,  $p < .025$ ] between strangers (see Table 4.9 and Figure 4.7)

Table 4.9. Mann-Whitney post hoc for metapragmatic judgments of strangers' NVGs in Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English

<i>MPJs</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	9646	-5.299	<b>.001</b>
Embrace	9806	-5.135	<b>.001</b>
Proximity	10467	-4.224	<b>.001</b>

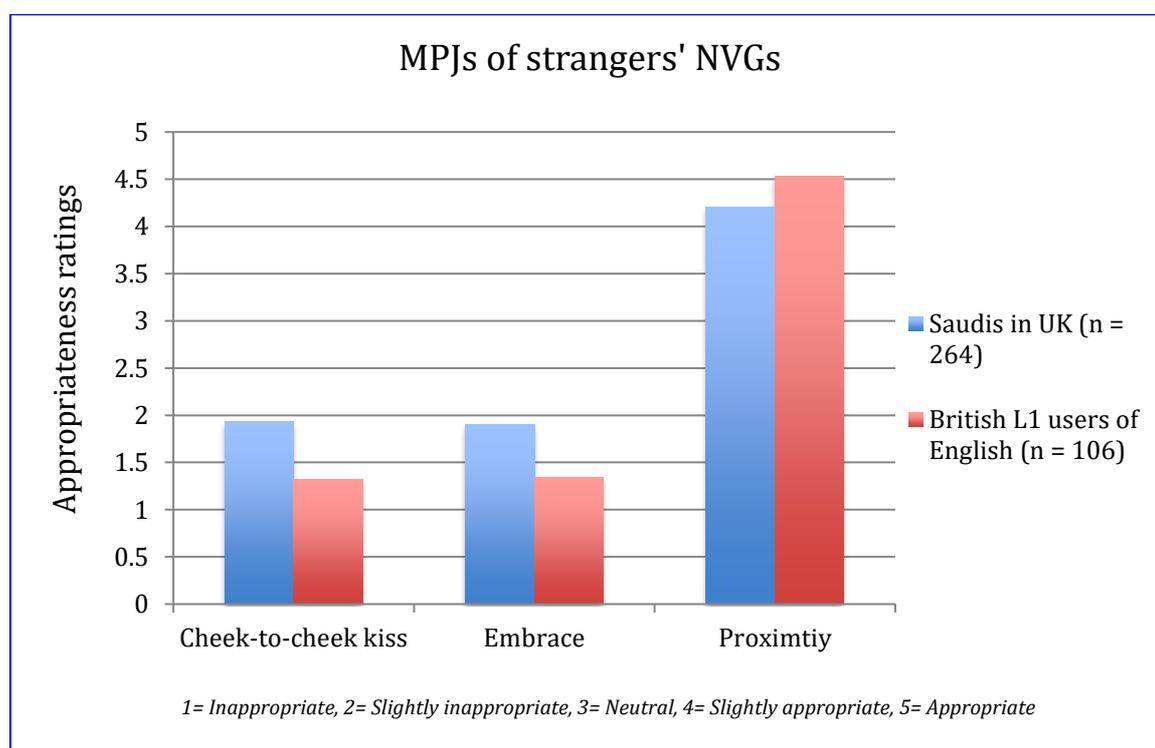


Figure 4.7. Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of strangers' NVGs by Saudis in UK and British L1 users of English

Figure 4.7 demonstrates the difference between Saudis living in the UK and British people in their judgments of NVGs between strangers. Both groups saw a cheek-to-cheek kiss and an embrace as being slightly inappropriate.

However, Saudis in the UK felt this slightly less strongly (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.93$ ,  $SD = 1.069$ ; embrace  $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = .997$ ) than British people (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $M = 1.32$ ,  $SD = .670$ ; embrace  $M = 1.34$ ,  $SD = .702$ ). Both groups thought that proximity of two arms' length was appropriate between

strangers, but British participants rated it as slightly more appropriate ( $M = 4.53$ ,  $SD = .886$ ) than Saudis in the UK ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.120$ ).

#### 4.1.2 Summary of quantitative results

The research results outlined so far indicate a difference in the attitudes towards the appropriateness of four NVGs between three different groups of participants: Saudis living in the UK for at least three years, Saudis living in Saudi Arabia (who have never lived in the UK) and British people living in the UK (who speak English as their first language). The NVGs studied were all commonly used in Saudi Arabia: handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and proximity. Four different situations were tested: close friends, colleagues, manager-employee, and strangers. The results show that the length of time Saudis have spent in the UK has a small impact on their metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours.

Table 4.10 summarises the results and shows the differences between the three groups of participants.

Table 4.10 *Differences in MPJs between Saudis in the UK and the two control groups*

<b>Social relations</b>	<b>At-home Saudis</b>	<b>British L1 users of English</b>
Close friends	None	Handshake and embrace
Colleagues	Cheek-to-cheek kiss	All 4 NVGs
Manager-employee	Handshake and cheeks kiss	All 4 NVGs
Strangers	Handshake	Cheek kiss, embrace, proximity

There is a difference in the MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours between the two Saudi groups. Though this difference is small, it does support what we expected that there would be a difference between the Saudi groups, and that living in an L2 society would affect participants' MPJs. The

metapragmatic judgments by Saudis in the UK were similar to those of the British group in some cases, though this was not seen as strongly as expected.

Figure 4.8 gives a summary of the MPJs of Saudis living in the UK of four L1 NVGs (handshake, cheek-to-cheek kiss, embrace, and proximity) in four different situations (close friends, colleagues, manager-employee and strangers). Saudis in the UK generally saw the cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace as being inappropriate between colleagues, managers and employees, and strangers. Among close friends, an embrace was seen as the most appropriate behaviour (see section 4.3).

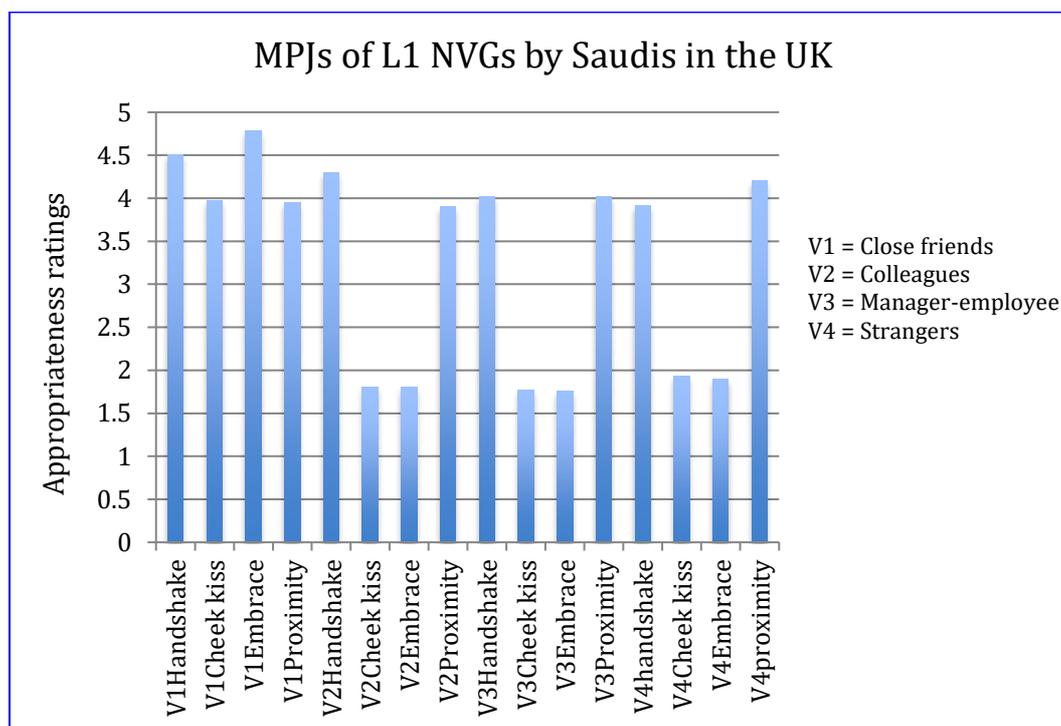


Figure 4.8 Mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudis in the UK

#### 4.2 Qualitative data results

In this section, the findings of the qualitative research carried out to complement the quantitative research will be examined. The quantitative

analysis showed that there were some differences between metapragmatic judgments made by Saudi people, with those living in the UK showed some similarity to British people in their judgments. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews carried out with nine Saudi people who had lived in the UK for at least three years. There were also three qualitative questions in the online questionnaire that related to the language used in greeting and whether the participants greeted other Saudis or British people.

#### **4.2.1 Online questions**

All of the 437 people who completed the online questionnaire answered all three of the questions asked to gather more detail about their greetings behaviours (see Appendix II). Their answers were analysed and then examined alongside an analysis of the nine interviews.

Question 1 asked participants whether they used their L1 or L2 when greeting other L1 speakers.

- 57.9% said they used their L1.
- 41.2% said they used both.
- 9% said they used their L2.

Among Saudis living in the UK, the results were similar. 54.8% used their L1 Arabic, 43.2% used Arabic and English and 2% used English only. The second question asked participants how many people they usually greeted in L1 in one week. Saudis in Saudi Arabia gave an average figure of 25 ( $M = 25.02$ ,  $SD = 4.465$ ), British people a figure of 12 ( $M = 12.31$ ,  $SD = 3.663$ ) and Saudis in the UK 7 ( $M = 6.53$ ,  $SD = 4.433$ ). The third question asked Saudis living in the UK how many British people they usually greeted in one week. They gave an average answer of 12 ( $M = 12.20$ ,  $SD = 4.243$ ). All three questions and the answers given in the interviews are provided below. Section 3.4.1 gave more details of the interviewees (see Table 3.9).

### **4.2.2 Follow-up interviews**

The nine semi-structured interviews took place following the quantitative survey. Transcripts were made and analysed, generating five main codes and fourteen sub codes, as set out in Section 3.4.4 (see Table 3.10). The nine interviewees' key characteristics are set out below. Each has been given an alias.

1. Rayan: male, 36 years old, PhD student, 5 years in the UK.
2. Amal: female, 41 years old, teacher, 13 years in the UK.
3. Badr: male, 39 years old, PhD student, 4 years in the UK.
4. Abrar: female, 48 years old, assistant professor, 14 years in the UK.
5. Adeem: female, 40 years old, teacher, 15 years in the UK.
6. Mohammad: male, 32, lecturer, 7 years in the UK.
7. Arwa: female, 40 years old, lecturer, 13 years in the UK.
8. Adil: male, 39 years old, PhD student, 5 years in the UK.
9. SOL: female, 35, PhD student, 4 years in the UK.

In each interview, two short opening questions were asked to begin the conversation before it moved on to a more open-ended discussion. These questions covered the language used in greetings, the number of Saudi and British friends they had and whether they preferred to use their L1 or L2 when greeting people (see Appendix VI). The questions were designed to establish how far they had acculturated in the UK and how far they were still attached to their native Saudi culture. The questions asked about participants' acculturation are related to research question 2, which will be covered in Chapter 5 (see section 5.2).

The qualitative interviews indicated that the social relationship between interlocutors in a conversation was vital to shaping interactions. The NVGs the interviewees reported using depended largely on who they were greeting and their relative social positions. Physical contact was most likely when greeting close friends and least likely when greeting strangers. This is in line

with the quantitative analysis of the metapragmatic judgments made on the appropriateness of NVGs.

The interviewees reported that they would use handshakes, embraces and cheek-to-cheek kisses to greet close friends. Arwa and Amal said that they would generally use all three of these behaviours, and Amal would also use a facial expression (a smile). Several others reported using two of them. Badr and Mohammad said that they would use a handshake and a cheek kiss. Abrar, SOL and Adeem said that they would use an embrace and cheek kiss. Adil said that he would use a handshake and an embrace. In general touching was common and usual for the participants when greeting close friends.

When greeting colleagues, the handshake was the most common behaviour, with six participants using it. One, Arwa, also used a cheek kiss. The other three used only verbal greetings.

When greeting a manager or another person of higher status, six participants (Rayan, Amal, Badr, Adeem, Arwa, and SOL) said that they would use a handshake and a verbal greeting. Abrar and Adil said that they would only use a verbal greeting (and, in Adil's case, a smile). Mohammad said that he would not exchange greetings with someone of higher status. All of them used only minimal touch behaviours with higher-status people. When interacting with strangers, the participants generally preferred verbal greetings. Rayan and Badr said that they would also use a handshake. Mohammad and Arwa would not exchange greetings with a stranger. Amal and SOL said they would use a smile (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 Interviewees' non-verbal greeting behaviours with different relational people

<b>Participant</b>	<b>A close friend</b>	<b>A colleague</b>	<b>A manager or employer</b>	<b>A stranger</b>
Rayan	Cheek kiss	Verbal only	Handshake	Verbal and Handshake
Amal	Smile, handshake, cheek kiss, and embrace	Handshake	Handshake	Smile
Badr	Handshake and cheek kiss	Handshake	Handshake	Handshake
Abrar	Embrace and cheek kiss	Handshake	Verbal only	Verbal only
Adeem	Embrace and cheek kiss	Handshake	Handshake	Verbal only
Mohammad	Handshake and cheek kiss	Handshake	None	None
Arwa	Handshake, cheek kiss, embrace	Handshake, cheek kiss	Handshake	None
Adil	Handshake and embrace	'Hi' and smile	'Hello' and smile	Only 'Hi'
SOL	Embrace and cheek kiss	Verbal only	Handshake	Smile and Hello

#### *4.2.2.1 Shift in non-verbal greetings of Saudis in the UK in participants' voices*

After these questions were completed, the semi-structured interviews then moved on to questions about modification of non-verbal greetings, perceptions of appropriateness and how these can change over time and across different cultural contexts.

Participants were encouraged to talk about their own experiences of non-verbal greetings behaviours and interactions with British people in the UK. It demonstrates how becoming familiar with L2 norms might impact on L1 NVGs. The extent to which the L2 impacted the L1 was established by reflecting on the participant's preference for using either their L1 or their L2, and on whether they avoided using their L1 in particular situations.

The majority of participants stated that their NVGs had changed during their time in the UK. Five (Amal, Adeem, Mohammad, Adil, and SOL) said that their NVGs varied depending on the context and cultural environment. They had tended to reduce the amount of touch that they used, even when they were in Saudi Arabia and among close friends and family. They felt that they no longer liked to use some NVGs that they would have used before they lived in the UK. SOL said that she found that she no longer used a handshake in the way that she did before, preferring an embrace or kiss.

SOL (female, 35)

I feel like I lost the handshake even if I go back home. I meet my aunts and sisters who try to shake hands and I suddenly give a hug. This change becomes a habit. I mean I do the same here and there. Hugs and kisses are close to my heart but not handshakes.

Mohammad (male, 32) also found that he preferred to use fewer touch NVGs, stating: *“I found physical contact is better kept at a minimal level.”*

Adeem (female, 40) expressed a similar view:

Sometimes I get so confused what non-verbal greetings to use in Saudi Arabia. Upon arrival when travelling back to Saudi Arabia, there are a lot of touch behaviours hugs, kisses, etc. On the other immediate day, on gathering with family members and friends, I have to greet them again. I am not happy with this habit because we greeted each other the day before or two days ago. There is no need for handshake and kisses again. I should say this change is not temporary while living here, however, I find myself prefer to lessen the use of non-verbal greetings. The good point is that my sisters and close friends recognise this change in my greeting behaviours, and I do really appreciate this.

Adeem recognises herself that her change in behaviour is not a temporary one. She also reports that, when she uses less touch, her friends and family respect

this and follow her lead.

Some of the participants reported avoiding using L1 NVGs in some situations. Amal stated that “*in some interactions I have to avoid Saudi non-verbal greetings*”, feeling uncomfortable with them because of the cultural difference between Saudi Arabia and the UK. Adil also reported avoiding L1 NVGs. After living in the UK, he sees the cheek kiss as a female behaviour.

Adil (male, 39)

When I got here, I really avoided greeting any Saudi like what I used to do in Saudi Arabia, I mean cheek-to-cheek kiss, because I thought people might see this behaviour inappropriate. I think kissing is for women not men.

Amal also stated that she avoided traditional Saudi greetings when meeting other Saudi women in the UK. She found that they would tend to ignore her when she tried to initiate a handshake.

Amal (female, 41)

I met a Saudi lady spending one year here in London. I smiled and happily initiated handshake. Unexpectedly, she did not shake my hands back. I was astonished since she is Saudi and was not able to recognise that I was ready for a handshake. I did not like her reaction and she should politely shake my hands at least in a spirit of courtesy. Such event occurred more than once in particular with Saudi women. It seems that those ladies would like to avoid handshaking and never consider it as a habit anymore. Young Saudi people also do not like non-verbal greetings even if they are in Saudi Arabia. This is to say that they are in their home country and are not affected by British or other cultures.

This suggests that many Saudi women tend to avoid traditional Saudi greetings when they are in the UK.

Rayan stated that he avoids the cheek-to-cheek kiss as he sees it as being unhealthy, especially as he has asthma.

Rayan (male, 36)

The accustomed greetings in Saudi Arabia are to shake hands and kiss cheeks which I always try to avoid for healthy reasons. Such behaviours are not safe to use but we have to. Handshake is still fine but cheek kissing is exaggeration and I think it is awful for healthy reasons obviously. I actually suffer because I have asthma and sometimes I get sick easily.

Though his non-verbal greetings behaviour had changed, Rayan said that his behaviour depended on the context: *“Not much [behavioural] change. I think adapting depends on the context of interaction.”* In L1 culture, he tried to meet Saudi expectations in non-verbal greetings. He was cautious not to be misinterpreted by his native society when avoiding L1 greetings: *“People in Saudi Arabia may judge me as arrogant or do not accept others.”*

Two of the participants stated that their L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours were the same after living in the UK as they had been in Saudi Arabia. Arwa, despite 13 years in the UK, said that she hadn't generally changed, but she did see a difference between the way she greeted English and Arab friends: *“I do not think they have changed! But I do not greet English speakers the way I usually do with my Arab friends.”*

Badr also stated that he had not changed his behaviour after four years in the UK. However, his history was slightly unusual. His home city is Makkah, where the Holy Mosque is. This means that the city's people interact regularly with the millions of visitors who come to the city each year. Having grown up surrounded by people from different cultures, he finds dealing with new cultural norms relatively easy.

Badr (male, 39)

I had this point of cultural understanding when it comes to greeting verbal or non-verbal even before I have lived abroad Saudi Arabia, particularly in Australia and UK. This is due the fact that I belong to a multicultural society, i.e. Makkah where people

from all around the world pay religious visits. This unique type of multicultural environment has made it possible for us to establish a cultural understanding toward different people who hold different ethnic background.

Badr said that he did not use the cheek-to-cheek kiss with English speakers for both cultural and social reasons. He also recognised that the degree of familiarity and social distance between him and the person he is greeting affected his behaviour.

Badr (male, 39)

I usually shake hands or wave at English native speakers but never do cheek-to-cheek kiss with them (in particular, colleagues and professors), while I do cheek-to-cheek kiss along with handshake with Saudis (depending on how close he is: if he is a close friend, I kiss cheek and shake hands, if not, handshake only).

Abrar stated that she had seen a different kind of change in her non-verbal greetings, and that she now uses more Saudi-style greetings. She has become more attached to her L1 greetings as, while she interacts with British people and culture, she felt homesick and missed her family and Saudi friends. She became emotional when talking about travelling to Saudi Arabia to visit family and attend family gatherings. Because she feels lonely in the UK, she tends to use more non-verbal greetings to compensate when she does return home.

Abrar (female, 48)

Yes, but in the opposite way. I think my physical contact with others increases. I feel alone in the UK and this may be the reason. When I was in Saudi Arabia, I just greeted with handshake and cheek kisses. With family members and close relatives I always hug. I love to give hug because it conveys my emotions and love. Over years of residence in the UK, when I travelled back to Saudi Arabia in holidays, I double my non-verbal greetings because I miss my family a lot.

The participants generally indicated that they had changed their behaviours as a result of their time in the UK. For five of them, there had been a significant effect, and their perception of their Saudi behaviours had also changed.

#### *4.2.2.2 Opposite-sex interactions*

All of the participants spoke of the difficulties they faced in handling opposite-sex communication in British culture. In Saudi Arabia, opposite sex contact is only permitted between relatives and not otherwise. A woman may greet male relatives, such as her husband, father, brothers, uncles and nephews with touch behaviours. A man may greet his wife, mother, aunts, sisters and nieces with touch. Beyond these close family relationships, touch is forbidden.

The interviewees commented frequently on this cultural difference and many of them had personal stories related to it. Both sexes had experienced embarrassment and misunderstandings when greeting a person of the opposite sex. Adeem stated that she thought that wearing a hijab helped indicate to others that she would prefer not to be touched by men.

Adeem (female, 40)

“When I just arrived to the UK, I started studying English language course. I met people from different countries. One of the students is Brazilian and he is so extravert, talkative, and gave a lot of hugs and kisses. On his last day at the school, he was sad and felt he would miss us. He greeted everyone with tears and good-bye. When it was my turn, although I was on hijab, he did not know what is hijab or for what reason it is worn! He asked me first if he could hug me! I was embarrassed and smiled saying that hug is not accepted. Then he asked for a handshake instead. I replied ‘handshake is better than a hug’. Our colleagues were watching the situation and discussing that women wearing hijab prefer not to touch or being touched by men. I think if he is open to other cultures, he might avoid embarrassing me with such request and used verbal greetings only. “

Rayan described a situation where his wife was embarrassed by a similar set of circumstances.

Rayan (male, 36)

“For me, I do not remember an embarrassing or odd experience with regard to non-verbal exchange. I remember a story happened to my wife who came with me to my office at the university to collect some stuff. She is Saudi and Muslim. Some of my friends who are non-Arabs welcomed her and intended to shake her hands but she refused. It was so awkward and I had to explain it is not acceptable in our culture to shake women’s hands or touch them. We just greet them verbally. I know it is not the case with all Saudi women but with most of them. At that moment, my friends were surprised and astonished towards her behaviour.”

Naturally, the participants sought to avoid situations where they would be embarrassed and so they reported trying to prevent themselves from getting into them. Rayan said that:

“I am not engaged in such odd situation because I do actually react not act and wait for females, in particular, to see what they prefer.”

Abrar was able to adopt a clear strategy to avoid being embarrassed by expected opposite-sex contact in the UK. She described her graduation ceremony and how she dealt with the expectation of a handshake:

Abrar (female, 48)

“I remember also, on my graduation ceremony, I told organisers that I prefer not to have a handshake with men. They were flexible and respected my desire. They asked me to keep a book on my chest as a sign of ‘Don’t shake my hands’. The situation went smoothly without embarrassment.”

While in some areas participants were able and willing to fit in with L2 norms in the UK, in this area they preferred to find ways to retain their L1 preference for a lack of physical contact with people of the opposite sex.

Mohammad (male, 39) said:

“Some of my English friends tended to shake hands with me which caused me some embarrassment especially with females which as a Muslim male not religiously allowed to have any type of physical touch. With time, I informed ladies of my religious restrictions and they accepted willingly.”

Rayan explained that he had initially felt embarrassed when dealing with the expectation of a handshake with his female supervisor. He described how both he and she adjusted their expectations to meet the other's norms.

Rayan (male, 36)

“When I came to the UK I was afraid to shake hands with my British female supervisor because it is not accepted in our culture but then I get used to it. Surprisingly, she got used to the Saudi way and never shook my hands again. I can say the opposite happened and she is adapted to the Saudi male way of greetings in which they prefer not to shake women's hands.”

Although Rayan believed that his supervisor had adapted, it may have been simply that she was following a common British habit of only shaking hands on the first meeting (Mutsomoto, et al., 2016). Adil described how he found greeting native British people, including friends and colleagues, difficult when he first arrived in the UK.

Adil (male, 39)

“I would like to mention that I struggled to greet English native friends, colleagues, and even my supervisor. I mean when started to greet them, how much loud my voice should be, and what is an appropriate response to say ‘Hi’ back to someone. It was difficult in the beginning but now less difficult.”

While the online questionnaire does not mention the effects of opposite sex interaction and does not have any questions specifically on greetings between men and women, the difficulties in navigating opposite sex contact dominated the conversations had with the interview participants. This highlights the

importance of investigating in detail the changes in L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours and changes in levels of appropriateness.

### ***4.2.3 Summary of qualitative results***

The qualitative data collected through the online questions involved in the questionnaire and the individual interviews carried provides interesting insights into the experiences of Saudi residents in the UK and changes in their greetings behaviours. The responses to the online survey indicate that over half – 54.9% – of Saudis use Arabic when greeting other Saudis outside Saudi Arabia. 43.2% use both Arabic and English. Participants greet an average of seven other Saudis and 12 British L1 English speakers every week.

The follow-up interviews helped flesh-out the statistical analysis made using the quantitative data. Nine Saudis living in the UK took part in the interviews, which were semi-structured to allow open-ended discussion. The interviewees used their interview time to discuss how their behaviour had changed during their stay in the UK. For most, there had been some change.

The interview data related to research question 1 was coded into two themes: 1) changes to non-verbal greetings behaviours, and 2) opposite-sex interactions. In each theme, sub-themes came to light. On theme 1, these were: avoidance, how L2 non-verbal greetings behaviours are seen in an L1 society, and the problems faced by participants to adjust to UK norms on first moving. On theme 2, these were: embarrassment, and difficulty with opposite-sex non-verbal greetings. One interviewee also mentioned health reasons for avoiding touch greetings.

Social relationships and relative status governed the participants' attitudes towards physical touch and other non-verbal greetings. Saudi people living in the UK reported that touch was an important part of greeting close friends for them. This was in line with the findings of the quantitative research. They used physical touch the least to greet strangers. Some of the interviewees

reported adapting their behaviour to fit the context or personal situation, while others reported that they found changing their L1 greetings behaviours on coming to the UK difficult.

The participants' thoughts about their NVGs were vital to helping to understand the results of the quantitative survey. Most of those who took part indicated that they had changed their NVGs and that this meant either avoidance of particular greetings, a reduction in greetings or a long-term change in their nature. Three of the interviewees felt that they had not changed their NVGs, although they had gained understanding of British norms and developed strategies for dealing with cultural differences. These participants demonstrated a degree of resistance to acculturation in the UK and remained more attached to their Saudi L1 greetings than many of the other participants.

Opposite-sex greetings exchanges were problematic for all of the interviewees. They described in particular problems when first arriving in the UK, when they did not expect or understand British norms and were not sure how to deal with British expectations. They had experienced embarrassment as a result, though most had found ways to adjust over time.

### **4.3 Discussion of findings**

This research examines the influence of an L2 on L1 pragmatic patterns at the metapragmatic level. Research question 1 asked whether the length of time a Saudi person had spent living in the UK influenced the way they made metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, when compared to other Saudis in Saudi Arabia and British people.

Two hypotheses were set out in relation to research question 1.

1. That metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs would be different in Saudis living in the UK compared to Saudis living in Saudi Arabia who had never lived in the UK.
2. That metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs made by Saudis living in the UK would be similar to those of native British L1 English speakers living in the UK.

Other research suggests that people who have lived in an L2 culture will find that certain aspects of their L1 are affected, including but not limited to speech acts (Paradis, 2007; Cenoz, 2003; Cao, 2016). There is also evidence that the influence of an L2 in such people extends to knowledge, skills and competence (Kecskes, 2015). Metapragmatic awareness is vital to the development of intercultural competence in L2 learners (McConachy, 2013, 2018). No other studies, to the best of our knowledge, investigating the metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings influenced by an L2 can be found.

The quantitative analysis demonstrates that: 1) there are differences in the MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings made by Saudis in the UK for three or more years and Saudis living in Saudi Arabia, 2) there is some similarity between the MPJs made by British people and Saudis in the UK of L1 NVGs, 3) social relationships determine how the appropriateness of L1 NVGs is assessed, and 4) the length of time spent in the UK made a small difference to perceptions of appropriateness.

The qualitative and quantitative data were in alignment with each other. The qualitative interviews provided valuable insight into the changes undergone in NVGs by Saudis living in the UK. The differences in MPJs made by the participants may be partly due to them shifting away from their L1 Saudi norms due to daily exposure to their L2 or an increase in awareness of the existence of L2 norms.

*Differences in MPJs between Saudi groups*

Metapragmatic awareness in L1, like other norms, can be influenced by the learning of an L2. Statistical analysis in this study showed that the MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings changed. Living in an L2 culture meant that people adjusted their MPJs (Kecskes, 2015). The NVGs examined in the study are among the most common NVGs used by Saudi people (Hassanain, 1994). Even so, Saudis living in the UK tended to rate certain behaviours slightly appropriate, such as shaking hands with a manager. They also thought that a cheek-to-cheek kiss with a colleague and with a manager would be inappropriate, despite this being common in Saudi culture.

The interviewees made metapragmatic comments that supported the findings of the quantitative data. They stated that they had a preference for minimal physical contact, especially if they were greeting someone who was of higher status. This demonstrates a change in their L1 norms (Pavlenko, 2000). The change to Saudi assessments of the appropriateness of L1 NVGs may have been a gradual one, resulting from simply using particular behaviours less often, making them seem less appropriate over time (Dewaele, 2016).

The changes to an L1 among people living in an L2 culture may be explained by “the existing L1-governed pragmatic competence becomes bilingual pragmatic competence” (Kecskes, 2015, p. 419). This refers to the change that can occur in L1 pragmatic competence following a person being exposed to a new culture and its expectations of behaviour. In response, an immigrant may combine parts of their old and new cultures (Kecskes, 2015; Grosjean, 2012). We know that Saudi people speaking English as their L2 become more interested in and receptive towards British culture the more they spend time in it (Barro et al., 1993). This leads to their L2 influencing their L1 in metapragmatic terms (Cook, 2003).

The statistical analysis carried out in this study is in line with other studies of the same subject, which show that changes do take place in the way people

interpret pragmatic behaviours. Change of interpretation of pragmatic patterns may be due to L1 pragmatics attrition (Paradis, 2007; Cenoz, 2003). However, it is unlikely that Saudi people living in the UK will have experienced a complete loss of L1 pragmatics and completely changed their views on appropriateness of L1 NVGs. Pragmatic norms do not necessarily have an absolute value and people can interpret the appropriateness of them somewhat fuzzily at times. This means that judgments of appropriateness depend on ‘interactionally-grounded evaluations’ which are individual to each person’s perception (Haugh, 2010, p. 142).

It is not always easy for people to change their L1 pragmatic norms: “socio-pragmatic norms and conventions concerning appropriateness developed through L1 are very influential and difficult to change” (Kecskes, 2015, p. 421). Living in a new culture is not necessarily enough on its own for a person’s L1 appropriateness values to change. L2 users do not usually “abandon his/her own cultural world” (Barro et al., 1993, p. 56).

However, the qualitative data gathered in this study shows that participants experienced a change in their non-verbal greetings behaviours that was likely to be long-term and retained even after they leave the country. They stated that when travelling back to Saudi Arabia, they continued to use modified greetings rather than those they had grown up with in their L1. A possible explanation could be that while bilingual people are able to ‘deactivate’ one language at times, “biculturals cannot always deactivate certain traits of their other culture when in a monocultural environment. Examples can be found in greeting behaviours, body language, eye contact, the amount of space to leave between yourself and the other” (Grosjean, 2015, p. 575).

This study showed a minimal difference between the two groups of Saudi participants (those in the UK and those in Saudi Arabia). Fewer than 25% (four behaviours) of the evaluations made of the appropriateness of NVGs differed between the two groups (these are detailed in Table 4.10). Changes to L1 pragmatic norms do happen, but the process is slow and does not come

easily (Kecskes, 2015). The change that we do see is likely to be due to Saudis living in the UK becoming gradually aware of UK norms and their MPJs changing as a result. As this happens, many people reflect on their L1 norms and as they do so, they gain intercultural awareness and sometimes change their own behaviour and ways of thinking (McConachy, 2016).

Participants in the study had all developed individual ideas around non-verbal greetings and their use in their everyday lives. They were then given video stimuli which they interpreted based on their previous experience. This process helps individuals develop understanding of social situations. Interactional experiences, whether in person's first or second language, involve interpretation. The Saudis studied who were living in the UK had knowledge of social situations, relationships and appropriate behaviour that transcended their own experience of growing up in Saudi Arabia. They were able to use their intercultural understanding to interpret situations in another culture, while still being mindful of their L1 norms. The control group of Saudis who had not lived abroad were less likely to be able to do this (Grosjean, 2001, 2015).

#### *Similarity in MPJs between Saudis in the UK and British people*

The metapragmatic judgments people make mirror their levels of socialisation in a new culture (Dufon, 1999). The Saudis made metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings that were similar to those made by British people. This suggests that they had undergone some pragmatic socialisation in British culture (Kasper, 2001). This may indicate that Saudis living abroad are aware of the differences between their own culture and the culture they live in and appreciate that they may have to overcome some communication difficulties (Blum-Kulka, 1990). The more time a person spends in an L2 culture, the more familiar they become with it and the more likely it is that their assessments of L1 behaviours appropriateness will change (Cenoz, 2003). This

was seen in this study's results as the Saudis in the UK showed similar metapragmatic judgments of NVGs to British people.

However, while the Saudis in the UK showed a change in their judgments of appropriateness that made them different from fellow Saudis who had not lived abroad, they did not make the same judgments as British people. They were somewhere between the two cultures, in a "third place" (Kramsch, 1998).

The third place does not imply that the participants remain static in an intercultural position between Saudi and British cultures. It is convenient for them to choose a path that is comfortable or beneficial according to the interactional demands in the two cultures, and this helps them live successfully in the UK (Nguyen and Benet-Martinez, 2007; McConachy, 2013). By developing the skills to move between the two cultures as needed, they are adopting an interaction strategy. Ewert (2008) found that those like bilingual people, bicultural people, develop an intercultural communication style that takes elements of both their cultures. They will use their intercultural way when interacting with others of either culture. Those who move into new cultural environments find that they start to use MPJs that are in line with their new community (Moody, 2011).

#### *Perceptions of social distance and power*

Metapragmatic judgments include evaluations of cultural practices and are also interpersonal evaluations (McConachy, 2018). Metapragmatic judgments are influenced by a range of socio-cultural variables, and these variables will change depending on the nature of and interlocutors in the interaction being judged. These socio-cultural variables include sex, age, social distance and power differences. The stimuli videos used in this study included a range of relational contexts designed to explore socio-pragmatic competence in a variety of ways. The quantitative results demonstrated differences between the three groups of participants in their perceptions of relative power and social distance. Generally, the two Saudi groups (those living in the UK and

those in Saudi Arabia), demonstrated similar views on the appropriateness of touch behaviours, with both rating significant amounts of touch and proximity as being appropriate between close friends. The British group was less likely to see this as appropriate.

The length of time a person from the Saudis in the UK group had been in the UK affected their perception of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings between people of different status levels, such as a manager and employee. Living in an L2 culture in itself seemed to influence perceptions in this case, as both the British group and the group of Saudis in Saudi Arabia thought that a handshake was an appropriate greeting between a manager and employee. The group of Saudis in the UK thought that it was slightly inappropriate.

This may be because Saudis tend to prefer to minimise physical touch when away from home, especially with those they consider to be higher status to themselves, and despite the fact that this kind of behaviour is considered appropriate in Saudi Arabia (Matsumoto, et al., 2016). The interviews carried out with Saudis in the UK support this assertion. Three of those interviewed said that they would prefer not to shake hands with a manager, using only a verbal greeting, or even no greeting. The sense of being in a third place, between two cultures, may lead to people feeling less sure of relative status and so less comfortable with touching behaviours in certain circumstances (Karmsch, 1993).

Ratings given by UK-based Saudi participants of the cheek-to-cheek kiss with people of a higher status indicated that they thought it was slightly inappropriate. This is similar to the evaluations of British people regarding the cheek kiss, whereas Saudis at home had a neutral view of the greeting. Both qualitative and quantitative results showed that Saudis in the UK generally avoid it unless they are greeting close friends. The participants justified their reduction in the use of the cheek kiss with personal, social and cultural reasons. Some felt that the behaviour was an exaggerated way to greet people. It could be that the cheek kiss is less frequent of use in British culture

(Reid, 2015). It's likely that participants avoid the cheek kiss greeting because they want to respect cultural difference when greeting those of another culture, or because they do not want to draw attention to their own culture when greeting other Saudis in public in the UK. With regard to its use between manager and employee, there are clear social reasons to avoid it.

The cheek kiss was thought to be the least appropriate greetings by Saudis living in the UK, especially when greeting a manager. A preference for reducing physical contact with those of higher status was expressed by a number of participants and reflected in their MPJs. This may be because Saudis living in the UK are likely to be sensitive to social status (Turjoman, 2005; Hassanain, 1994). Over time, they may become more similar to British people, who are not generally as status-driven (Matsumoto, et al., 2016; Tavakoli, and Shirinbakhsh, 2013).

The above implies that interaction across a hierarchical divide should usually involve fewer touch behaviours than other interactions, with only the handshake being commonly acceptable. Distance should be given to those of higher status to convey respect. The degree to which participants rated handshakes and cheek kisses with a manager as appropriate was lower for the Saudis in the UK. It may be that living in an L2 culture led to a desire to reduce the use of the cheek kiss in particular among this group, given that their rating of its appropriateness was similar to that given by the British control group.

The results show that the three groups perceived the appropriateness of social distance differently from each other. The cheek kiss and embrace were both seen as the least appropriate greetings for interactions with colleagues and strangers among Saudis in the UK. The embrace was considered the most appropriate among close friends. The two Saudi groups rated the appropriateness of the embrace similarly, and both groups rated the embrace and the handshake differently from British people. Saudis in the UK thought that both these greetings were more appropriate than the British group did.

This might be because physical greetings are generally more acceptable in Saudi culture than in British culture (Watson, 1970; McDaniel, and Andersen, 1998; Ferraro, 1990; Matsumoto et al., 2016).

Regarding interactions between colleagues and strangers, there was a large difference between the two Saudi groups in their perceptions of the appropriateness of NVGs. Saudis in the UK rated greetings in these two situations similarly to British people (Pavlenko, 2000). Statistically significant differences were seen between the British and Saudis in the UK groups, but they were within a similar range, nonetheless. For instance, Saudis in the UK and British people both said the cheek kiss between strangers was inappropriate ( $M = 1.93$ ,  $M = 1.32$ ). While there is a difference between the groups, both rated the greeting as inappropriate. The qualitative data bore out the similarity, with only one interviewee stating that they would use a cheek-to-cheek kiss with a colleague. Handshake with colleagues was the only greeting thought acceptable by five of the interviewees, while three stated that they would avoid touch greetings completely due to the status difference and lack of familiarity (when compared to friends).

This may be because being in an L2 culture influences perceptions of social distance between colleagues and strangers (Mori, 1997). Longer residence in L2 culture leads to improved socio-pragmatic competence (that is, competence related to appropriate social behaviours) (Kecskes, 2015). This is likely to be true of the Saudis in the UK group in this study.

#### *Opposite-sex interactions*

The qualitative interviews also demonstrated the importance of the participants' feelings about opposite-sex interactions, something that was difficult to ascertain via the quantitative data. Cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and the UK mean that non-verbal greetings between men and women can be challenging. Physical contact between the sexes only happens between relatives in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Middle East. Such

contact “can be considered extremely offensive, especially in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula countries” (Feghali, 1997, p. 365). Saudi culture is Islamic, with religious restrictions governing exchanges between the sexes. Physical contact between unrelated men and women is unlawful (Mulyana, 2013).

As well as sociocultural differences and uncomfortable feelings about opposite sex contact, health was given as a reason for avoiding touch greetings and for perceiving them as inappropriate. One interviewee stated that he has asthma which can become worse after physical contact, including the cheek-to-cheek kiss. This interviewee said that he would often deliberately avoid touch greetings for this reason. Lack of touch can help prevent the spread of infections and reduce allergies (Gupta and Kumar, 2018). Public health authorities should provide information to populations on the risks of physical touch, including handshakes, hugs and kisses, in order to prevent the spread of disease. However, they should be cautious not to allow this to extend to the social rejection of sick people (Oaten et al., 2011). In addition, people often take steps to avoid touch behaviours through personal choice, even though this can mean taking on social, and political risks (Dahl, 2016).

An examination of the effects on health of touch greetings is beyond this study’s scope. However, researchers in the public health field have suggested that reducing physical contact could lead to better public hygiene: “banning the [physical touch] from health care settings has been proposed, but an alternative, less contagious form of greeting must be substituted” (Dahl, 2016, p. 181).

Embarrassing experiences of miscommunication in their host society can lead to immigrants deliberately changing their behaviour, including greetings behaviour. This can include the reduction of touch behaviour and the avoidance of greetings that are normal in their native culture but not in the host culture. The influence of L2 on L1 norms can also lead to misinterpretation by other people from an immigrant’s native culture. For

example, Saudis who have changed their L1 greetings after living abroad can be thought of as arrogant or rude when they return to Saudi Arabia (Bou Franch, 1998).

#### **4.4 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter provides quantitative and qualitative results related to research question 1, which asks whether living in an L2 environment affects MPJs made of L1 NVGs. The focus of the research was a group of Saudi L2 English speakers who had lived in the UK for at least three years. The two control groups provide a baseline for comparison and allow us to determine how far living in the UK influences MPJs. The comparisons include two elements. First, the move away from the MPJs made by Saudis at home who had not had any contact with British L1 English speakers. Second, how far those MPJs had been brought into line with British norms.

Two hypotheses were set out in relation to this research question.

*H1: Metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs by Saudi residents in the UK will be different from those by at-home Saudis*

The quantitative results are complemented by qualitative data, and both support this hypothesis. There were differences seen between the two groups of Saudis studied. The differences in the judgments made of the appropriateness of four L1 Saudi greetings were seen in relation to the handshake and cheek-to-cheek kiss greeting between a manager and employee, a cheek kiss between colleagues and a handshake between strangers. This study's findings support and confirm hypothesis 1.

*H2: Metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs by Saudi residents in the UK will approximate those by British L1 speakers of English in the UK*

Hypothesis 2 complements hypothesis 1. They both measure the changes in the MPJs made by Saudis of L1 greetings and their change over time as a result of UK residence. The Saudis in the UK were found to be similar to the British group in their evaluations of the appropriateness of NVGs. Both groups rated the cheek-to-cheek kiss between strangers or between a manager and employee similarly. Though the approximations between the two groups were modest, they were statistically significant. Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported and confirmed.

In conclusion, the responses given by Saudis in the UK deviated from L1 norms and were at least partly approximated to the British control group. The judgments made of appropriateness were governed by a variety of social and cultural factors, including the participants' length of residence in the UK, their familiarity with L2 norms, their level of interaction with British people, and how far they had reduced their use of L1 greetings.

The results of this study demonstrate that the influence of an L2 on judgments of L1 greetings is amplified by a person's length of residence. However, the change is only partial rather than complete, with the judgments not being fully approximate to those of the British group but only partially so (Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002). The results of the study do not demonstrate a loss of L1 pragmatic norms but that L1 metapragmatic judgments can be subject to L2 influence (Brown and Gullberg, 2008; Kecskes, 2014, 2015).

The study's findings give empirical support to the concept of multiple competences in L2 users (Cook, 1991, 1992, 2003; Grosjean, 1980). Grosjean (1980) stated that a bilingual person cannot be seen as two monolinguals in one. Cook (1992) argued in favour of the idea of multicompetence, in which multilingual people are competent at multiple things at one time in a different way to monolinguals. Cook (1991) also stated that L2 speakers have a different

knowledge of their language than an L1 speaker of the same language. Finally, Cook (2003) also argued that an L2 can influence an L1 as well as the L1 influencing the L2 (see Section 7.2 for more on the multicompetence of L2 users).

This study has also examined how MPJs made by L2 speakers living in an L2 environment can be influenced by acculturation. This will be explored further in Chapter 5, along with results and discussion related to research question two.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE EFFECT OF CULTURAL ORIENTATION ON METAPRAGMATIC JUDGMENTS OF SAUDI NON-VERBAL GREETINGS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were both used to develop a response to research question 2. Section 5.1 offers a quantitative analysis of the relationship between metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings, made by Saudis living in the UK, and their cultural orientation. Their level of cultural orientation to both their native Saudi culture and to their adopted British culture was scored using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA). Section 5.2 provides discussion and comments taken from qualitative interviews with nine participants, which help illustrate the quantitative data. They were asked their views on how they had maintained their Saudi culture while living in the UK and how they felt about non-verbal greetings and their appropriateness in different situations.

Section 5.3 offers a discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative results and provides an answer to RQ2. When discussing the participants' native Saudi culture, the words maintenance, attachment and cultural orientation will be used. When discussing the participants' adopted British culture, the terms acceptance, adoption, embracing and cultural orientation will be used.

#### **Research Question 2**

***RQ2 (a): Does cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures affect metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?***

This question led to the formation of two hypotheses (H1 and H2):

**H1:** Saudis living abroad who have a strong orientation towards their L2 British culture will diverge **more** from Saudi norms than others.

**H2:** Saudis living abroad who have a strong attachment to Saudi culture will diverge **less** from Saudi norms than others.

**RQ2 (b): *what are participants' views on effects of maintenance of L1 culture and acceptance of L2 culture on appropriateness of Saudi L1 non-verbal greetings?***

## **5.1 Quantitative data results**

The first steps of descriptive analysis will include the scores of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia for comparison, but the results of correlations relate only to Saudis living in the UK, as they are the main focus of this study.

The data gathered was analysed and the analysis is presented as follows:

- 1) A descriptive analysis of the data.
- 2) Assumption of normality to determine the correlation test.
- 3) Correlations between the variables in RQ2.

### ***5.1.1 Descriptive analyses of cultural orientation:***

Table 5.1 gives descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation and a range of scores of cultural orientations towards both native L1 Saudi culture and L2 British culture for Saudi participants living in the UK and in Saudi Arabia.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics of L1 and L2 cultural orientations for Saudi groups

VIA	N	Min	Max	M	SD
L1 Saudi culture	331	10	90	63.58	21.502
L2 British culture	331	10	90	54.78	17.207

To answer RQ2 regarding levels of acculturation towards both L1 and L2 cultures and its effect on MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings, the two groups of Saudi participants (those in the UK and those at home) were compared. An independent samples t-test was used to compare the scores, collected using the VIA. The analysis shows a significant difference between the two groups.

Table 5.2 T-test comparisons for acculturation level of Saudi groups \*  $p < .05$

VIA	At-home Saudis (N = 67)		Saudis in UK (N = 264)		F	P	df
	M	SD	M	SD			
L1 Saudi culture	<b>64.71*</b>	22.093	63.28	21.38	.476	<b>.011</b>	329
L2 British culture	53.18	18.66	<b>55.19*</b>	16.83	.913	<b>.028</b>	329

An independent samples t-test showed significant differences between the scores of each group. The results demonstrate that Saudis living in the UK are less likely to have adopted British culture than to have maintained their native Saudi culture.

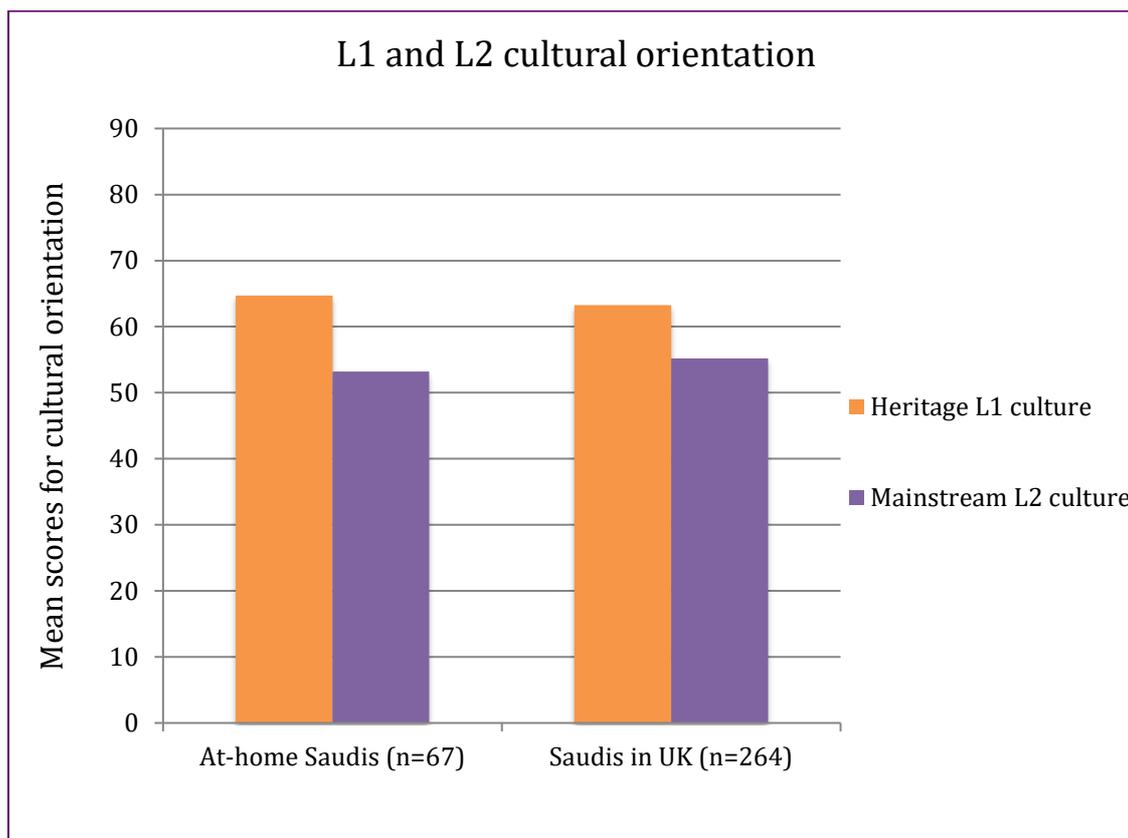


Figure 5.1 Mean scores for cultural orientation of Saudi groups ( $v = 90$ )

Figure 5.1 shows the mean scores as presented in table 5.2. They show that both groups have an attachment to Saudi culture and that, for both, this is stronger than their acceptance of British culture. Those in Saudi Arabia showed a stronger attachment to their L1 Saudi culture ( $M = 64.71$ ,  $SD = 22.093$ ) than those living in the UK ( $M = 63.28$ ,  $SD = 21.382$ ).

The Saudis in the UK showed a stronger attachment to British culture ( $M = 55.19$ ,  $SD = 16.830$ ) than their counterparts in Saudi Arabia ( $M = 53.19$ ,  $SD = 18.667$ ).

The scoring of participants' level of maintenance of L1 Saudi culture and their adoption of L2 British culture are presented in order to illustrate the relationship between MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours.

The normality of the data was determined using a Shapiro-Wilk's test. This showed that there was significant deviation from a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). The results showed a skewness of  $-.922$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-.011$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for L1 heritage Saudi culture, and a skewness of  $-.289$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-.233$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for L2 mainstream British culture.

A Spearman rank test was then conducted to establish the correlations between the participants' attachment to their L1 and L2 culture and the MPJs made by Saudis living in the UK of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The study will now examine how MPJs (as presented in Chapter 4) relate to the cultural orientation towards both L1 and L2 culture of Saudis living in the UK.

### ***5.1.2 The relationship between cultural orientation and metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK***

The relationship between the cultural orientation of Saudis towards both their L1 and L2 cultures while living in the UK, and their metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, was studied. Results are presented in four sub-sections relating to four different social relationships shown in the stimuli videos (see section 3.3.2).

#### ***5.1.2.1 Cultural orientation – metapragmatic judgments of close friends' NVGs***

A Spearman rank correlation test determined the links between the cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures and the MPJs made of appropriateness of non-verbal greetings between close friends. The test showed that there were statistically significant positive correlations between the judgments made of handshakes, embraces and proximity between close friends and the levels of acculturation the participants had towards Saudi culture. No correlation was

found between MPJs and the level of acculturation the participants had towards British culture (see Table 5.3)

Table 5.3 L1 and L2 cultural orientation ~ close friends' NVGs  $^{**}p < .01$

<b>Close friends' NVGs</b>	<b>L1 orientation Rho</b>	<b>L2 orientation Rho</b>
Handshake	.166**	-.086
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.112	-.099
Embrace	.164**	.001
Proximity	.217**	-.060

#### 5.1.2.2 Cultural orientation – metapragmatic judgments of colleagues' NVGs

A Spearman rank correlation test was conducted to establish the relationships between L1 and L2 cultural orientation and MPJs of appropriateness of non-verbal greetings behaviours between colleagues. The test showed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between MPJs of appropriateness of the cheek-to-cheek kiss greeting between colleagues and the cultural orientation of Saudis in the UK towards British culture (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 L1 and L2 cultural orientation ~ colleagues' NVGs  $^{**}p < .01$

<b>Colleagues' NVGs</b>	<b>L1 orientation Rho</b>	<b>L2 orientation Rho</b>
Handshake	.051	-.057
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.049	-.016**
Embrace	.001	.033
Proximity	.016	-.044

5.1.2.3 Cultural orientation – metapragmatic judgments of manager-employee’s NVGs

A Spearman rank correlation test was run to establish whether there is a relationship between L1 and L2 cultural orientation and MPJs of appropriateness of non-verbal greetings between a manager and employee. The results show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between MPJs made of appropriateness of handshakes between managers and employees and the cultural orientation towards L2 British culture. They also show a negative correlation between MPJs of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between a manager and employee and the level of acculturation towards L1 Saudi culture (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 L1 and L2 cultural orientation ~manager-employee’s NVGs \*\*p < .01

Manager-employee’s NVGs	L1 orientation <i>Rho</i>	L2 orientation <i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.096	.043**
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-.100**	-.018
Embrace	.065	.001
Proximity	-.051	.014

5.1.2.4 Cultural orientation – metapragmatic judgments of strangers’ NVGs

A Spearman rank correlation test was carried out to determine whether there was a relationship between L1 and L2 cultural orientation and MPJs made of non-verbal greetings between strangers. The test showed that there were statistically significant negative correlations between Saudis’ cultural orientation towards British L2 culture and their MPJs of appropriateness of handshakes, and cheek-to-cheek kiss between strangers. (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 L1 and L2 cultural orientation ~ strangers' NVGs \*\* $p < .01$

Strangers' NVGs	L1 orientation	L2 orientation
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.023	-.015**
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-.055	-.016**
Embrace	-.017	.033
Proximity	.077	-.019

### 5.1.3 Summary of quantitative results

As outlined above, the quantitative analysis showed a mixed picture of correlation between cultural orientation and MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours by Saudis living in the UK. Cultural orientation was shown to slightly affect MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings. There were positive correlations between MPJs made of a handshake, embrace and proximity between close friends and the participants' level of attachment to their L1 Saudi culture. A negative correlation was found between the participants' level of attachment to Saudi culture and the MPJs they made of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between manager and employee. There was a positive correlation between the participants' level of acceptance of British culture and handshakes between manager and employee. However, a negative correlation was found between L2 acceptance and MPJs of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between colleagues and both handshakes and cheek-to-cheek kisses between strangers.

Table 5.7 gives the mean scores for MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours (see Chapter 4) and how they correlate to the cultural orientation of Saudis in the UK.

Table 5.7 Summary for correlations of cultural orientations and mean scores for metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs by Saudis in the UK

MPJs		Close friends	Colleagues	Manager-employee	Strangers
Handshake	<i>M</i>	<b>4.51</b>	4.30	<b>4.02</b>	<b>3.91</b>
	~	<b>+L1</b>		<b>+ L2</b>	<b>- L2</b>
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	<i>M</i>	3.97	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1.93</b>
	~		<b>- L2</b>	<b>- L1</b>	<b>- L2</b>
Embrace	<i>M</i>	<b>4.78</b>	1.80	1.76	1.90
	~	<b>+L1</b>			
Proximity	<i>M</i>	<b>3.95</b>	4.42	4.02	4.02
	~	<b>+L1</b>			

Note: *M* = Mean score for appropriateness ratings (from 1 = inappropriate, to 5 = appropriate)  
 (~) = Correlation  
 (+) = Positive correlation  
 (-) = Negative correlation  
 L1 = Heritage Saudi culture  
 L2 = Mainstream British culture

Table 5.7 shows that the relationship between MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours and the cultural orientation of Saudis living in the UK is mixed. A t-test was conducted of the subscales that relate to the main scales of the VIA. This provides a more detailed insight into L1 and L2 cultural orientation. The VIA has two scales made up of 10 statements that cover attitudes to cultural traditions and values, general behaviour, marriage, social life, friends and entertainment.

The assessment is made using a nine-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 9 (1 = disagree, 9 = agree). This explains the correlations between L1 and L2 cultural orientation, and the MPJs made by Saudis living in the UK of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. Chapter 4 includes the results and analysis of the MPJs.

Table 5.8 and figure 5.2 below show the mean scores given against the 20 items on Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (see Appendix 4).

*Table 5.8 Mean scores for L1 and L2 cultural orientation scales for Saudi residents in the UK (rating range 0 – 9)*

<b>Dimensions of VIA</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
L1 Tradition	5.75	2.72
L2 Tradition	4.77	2.33
L1 Partner	7.09	2.64
L2 Partner	3.76	2.80
L1 Social Activities	6.33	2.60
L2 Social Activities	5.79	2.27
L1 Interaction	6.59	2.62
L2 Interaction	6.09	2.17
L1 Entertainment	5.55	2.77
L2 Entertainment	6.91	2.24
L1 Behaviour	5.84	2.41
L2 Behaviour	5.12	2.17
L1 Practices	5.97	2.50
L2 Practices	5.24	2.35
L1 Values	6.76	2.52
L2 Values	5.37	2.25
L1 Humour	7.08	2.40
L2 Humour	5.51	2.39
L1 Friends	6.50	2.54
L2 Friends	6.52	2.25

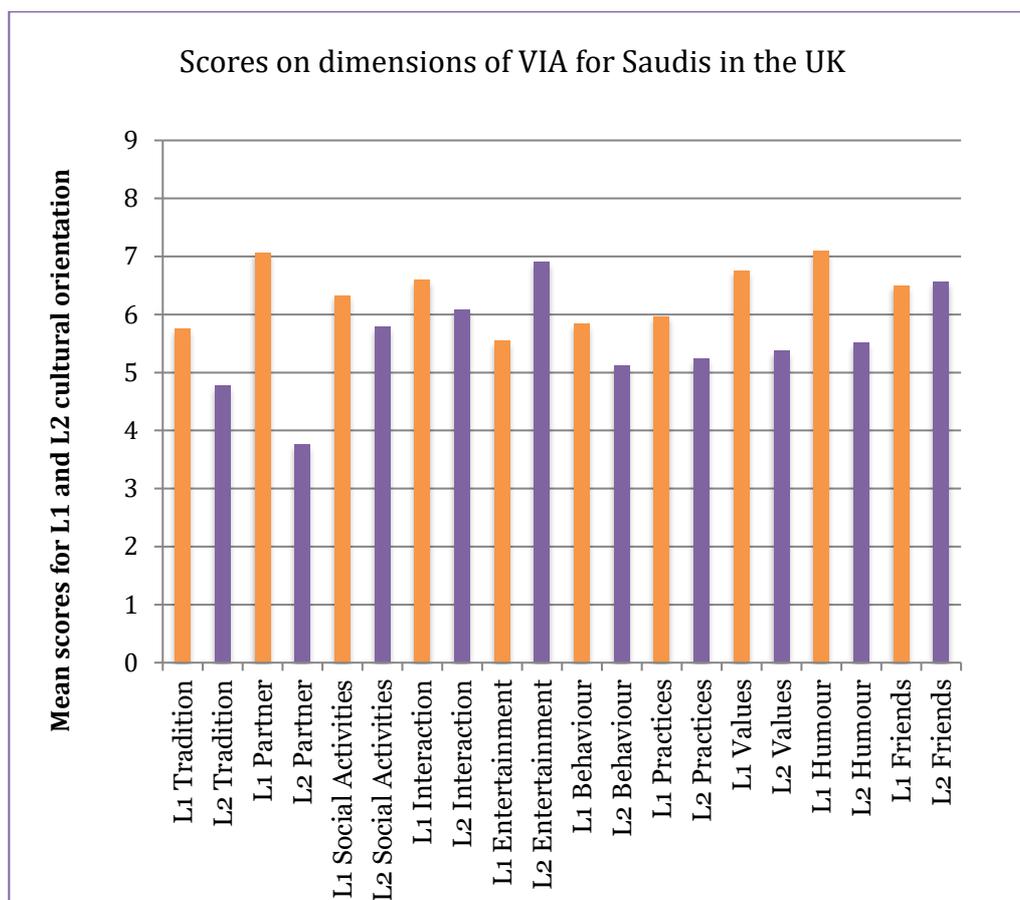


Figure 5.2 Mean scores for L1 and L2 cultural orientation scales for Saudi residents in the UK

Table 5.8 and Figure 5.2 show mean scores against dimensions of the VIA. The scores given relating to L1 Saudi culture were higher than the scores relating to L2 British culture for every dimension except entertainment.

Saudis living in the UK gave scores for L2 entertainment ( $M = 6.91$ ) that were on average higher than their scores given to L1 entertainment ( $M = 5.55$ ). Other than entertainment, the scores given on L1 paired statements were all higher than the scores given on L2 paired statements. The participants scored having an L2 partner lower than any other dimension ( $M = 3.76$ ). They scored having an L1 partner higher than any other dimension ( $M = 7.09$ ). A positive orientation towards British L2 culture would demonstrate acceptance and integration. The results show that the participants have a stronger attachment

to their L1 Saudi culture than their level of adoption of their L2 British culture (see Table 5.2).

An analysis of qualitative data collected via online survey questions and follow-up interviews follows (see section 3.4).

## **5.2 Qualitative data results**

Online questions were asked of all the study's participants, in addition to nine participants took part in follow-up interviews, as set out in section 4.2. Together, these two exercises make up the qualitative research element of this study. The qualitative analysis of data related to RQ2 focuses on Saudis living in the UK and seeks to measure the levels of cultural orientation of the participants and their relationship to MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The participants were all Saudis who had spent at least three years living in the UK (see Section 3.4.1). This length of residence was required because the initial period of time after moving to a new culture is often difficult, with people working to develop an understanding of their adopted culture and overcome psychological and socio-cultural obstacles. After three years, people usually become more relaxed and familiar with their adopted culture.

### **5.2.1 Network of relationships with L1 fellows and host people**

The online questions asked of participants how many people they greet each week. Saudis living in the UK said that they greet around seven fellow Saudis in a week ( $M = 6.53$ ,  $SD = 4.433$ ). They said that they greet around 12 British people each week ( $M = 12.20$ ,  $SD = 4.243$ ). The same questions were asked of the nine interview participants at the beginning of each interview.

Whether a person has friends from both their L1 and L2 culture is one of the dimensions of acculturation in the VIA. Interviewees responded that they had on average six Saudi and 13 British friends, however often they met up with

them. The number of Saudi friends was within the range (1 to 10) ( $M = 5.56$ ,  $SD = 5.372$ ) and the average number of British friends was within the range (zero to 25) ( $M = 12.52$ ,  $SD = 3.205$ ).

The quantitative data collected on the number of friends was similar to the data collected in the interviews. Figure 5.2 and table 5.6 show that the number of British friends reported was ( $M = 6.56$ ), slightly more than the number of Saudi friends ( $M = 6.50$ ).

The final question referred to the way that interviewees greeted both other Saudis and British people in the UK. They gave mixed answers. Five participants (Rayan, Badr, Adeem, Arwa, and Mohammad) stated that they usually used a British-style verbal greeting. Two (Amal and Adil) said that they used Saudi-style verbal and non-verbal greetings with Saudi friends and British-style verbal greetings with British friends, demonstrating a desire to balance the norms of both cultures. One participant, SOL, said that she preferred verbal greetings and waves but did not see them as typically British. Abrar reported that she used only Saudi greetings (handshake and embrace) but, crucially, she also stated that she did not have British friends.

Table 5.9 below shows the answers given.

Table 5.9 Answers for three opening questions of follow-up semi-structured interviews

Participant	Saudi friends in the UK	British friends in the UK	Language to greet Saudis (Arabic/ English)	Greeting way Saudi/ British
Rayan	2	2	Arabic	British verbal greetings
Amal	5	10	Arabic	Saudi with Saudis verbal with British
Badr	1-2	3	Both	British greeting
Abrar	5-10	Zero	Arabic	Saudi (handshake and embrace)
Adeem	10	25	Both	British verbal greetings
Mohammad	3-10	3	Arabic	British greeting
Arwa	1	3-4	Both	British greeting
Adil	1-2	2	Both	Saudi with Saudis, Local with natives
SOL	2	3	Both	Verbal and waving

Table 5.9 shows the responses given by Saudis to questions about the number of L1 and L2 friends they have and the language used to greet their Saudi friends. Five stated that they generally greet Saudi friends in L1 and L2 and four that they use only their L1 Arabic. None reported using only their L2 English.

Another question was asked about how participants like to greet other people non-verbally. The answers given varied, with participants using a range of L1 and L2 NVGs. The majority preferred to use L1 Saudis NVGs but would also use L2 English NVGs when those were more appropriate. Two said that they preferred British greetings with less physical contact. Two stated that they would choose which to use depending on the context.

### 5.2.2 Attachment to L1 Saudi non-verbal greetings

To gain significant insight into the participants' preferences around NVGs, the subject was discussed with them. Four participants said that they preferred to

use the NVGs of their native Saudi culture. They generally said that they found these greetings warmer and more emotional and that using them made them feel more connected to and accepting of others.

Abrar made it clear that she preferred Saudi NVGs and would not use British ones.

Abrar (female, 48)

“Basically I use Saudi behaviours; I do not like English way of greetings. I would like to say that the effect of living here is revers; I mean I become fond of our own greeting behaviours [.....] Saudi non-verbal greetings show love, passion, and acceptance even with strangers.”

Arwa also said that she liked Saudi NVGs and found them warmer and more personal.

Arwa (female, 40)

“I prefer the Saudi greetings where there is more warmth through handshake, kisses, and hugs. I am more openly affectionate with Saudis.”

Mohammad indicated that he found traditional British NVGs cold and unemotional, saying “*English way of greeting shows neither warmth nor emotions*”.

Living in the UK and being surrounded by British culture in some cases meant that participants found they became more attached to their Saudi L1 greetings.

Arwa indicated that she found using Saudi greetings much easier.

Arwa (female, 40)

“Greeting Saudis for me comes naturally as we have similar greeting norms. When greeting British English native people, it is a little different. I sometimes do not know how they would react. It is actually easier greeting non-English [people] living in the UK with my Saudi greeting style than English people in the UK.”

Arwa has lived in the UK for a significant period of time – 13 years. As she lives in London, she often meets others of a variety of cultural backgrounds, including other Saudis and British people. She reported finding the differences between Saudi and British culture difficult to reconcile at times and greeting British people sometimes uncomfortable. She found it easier to greet non-British people using Saudi greetings than British people.

Adil stated that he would like to use L1 Saudi greetings but he knew that cultural differences meant that they would not be appropriate *“I prefer Saudi style but it is not going to work here. I have to do like what people do here.”*

SOL also indicated that she liked L1 Saudi non-verbal greetings and found that they demonstrated cultural understanding and connection when used with other Saudis. However, SOL also indicated that she disliked some elements of Saudi NVGs.

SOL (female, 35)

“I should say it is easier to greet people of your own culture because they understand your behaviours but honestly I find it is a bit strange when somebody holds my hand for a long time. I mean a long handshake which I do not like even with Saudi people.”

### **5.2.3 Liking L2 behaviours**

Some of the participants stated that they liked or sometimes preferred L2 NVGs, particularly as they often allow for greater physical distance and

demand lower levels of touch contact. Adeem, with 13 years in the UK, and SOL, with 11 years in the USA and four years in the UK, both indicated that they felt this way.

Adeem (female, 40)

“I love British way of greeting. For us as Saudis or Arabs in general, we are more passionate which is reflected in our touch behaviours. What I notice that British people keep limits when greeting others especially if you are strange. They welcome you with distance.”

SOL said that she was not always keen on physical NVGs as used frequently among Saudis. She stated that she had become used to using verbal greetings rather than the customary Saudi handshake.

SOL (female, 35)

“I do not like too much touch behaviours. Sometimes it depends on the situation if it is just a colleague or a stranger, I do not use any touch greetings. Instead I prefer verbal greetings ‘Hello’ and ‘assalm alaikum’ [peace be upon you]. I used to it. I do not like handshake with relatives or colleagues at workplace although it is a daily behaviour for some colleagues there.”

A large part of the reason for this was that she is uncomfortable with using physical touch greetings in her mixed-sex work environment (see section 4.2.2.3).

“I work at a mixed-sex environment. This may be why I no longer prefer handshakes. As you know it is against our culture to shake hands with men. However, once I go back to Saudi Arabia, I will work in a female segregated section which may impact my behaviours including the handshake.”

SOL’s statement served to illustrate her earlier answer on the question of how she had changed her NVGs since moving to the UK (see section 4.2.2.2). She

explicitly said that she preferred L2 NVGs that did not involve touch. She had experience of living in the USA as well as the UK but did not seek to compare the two cultures and their approaches to NVGs.

Amal also stated that she liked some L2 non-verbal greetings.

Amal (female, 41)

“I find British people are respectful and meet your preference of non-verbal greetings. Sometimes they ask me if I would like to shake hands when they see me on hijab.”

Abrar, however, stated that she disliked British L2 non-verbal greetings, finding them unemotional. She stated: “*English greetings are cold, not emotional, and not expressive.*” Abrar also said that she only uses Saudi NVGs. However, it is important to note that she was the only participant who stated that she has no British friends.

#### **5.2.4 Adaptation and accommodation**

The participants indicated that they had begun to be comfortable with British culture using terms such as adjustment, adaptation, and change.

Amal indicated that she had consciously changed her cultural behaviour and begun to use verbal, L2 greetings where appropriate, even though she prefers the Saudi-style handshake greeting.

Amal (female, 41)

“In family gatherings in Saudi Arabia, I shake hands and kiss cheeks but in the UK, it is different; I just smile and greet others verbally although I like to shake hands. I never shake hands first unless others want to. I think this difference in my behaviours because of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds we meet abroad.”

Amal used a balanced approach, adopting non-verbal greetings from both British and Saudi culture. She stated that when in Saudi Arabia, she would usually use a handshake and cheek kiss to greet people. In the UK, she usually uses a smile and a verbal greeting. She was aware of the cultural difference and navigated it deliberately.

Adil, similarly, stated that he had changed his greetings behaviour consciously out of a desire to ensure that his behaviour was acceptable in British culture. He stated “*‘When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do’ and that includes greeting people*”. Adil understood that British people generally use less physical touch in greetings than Saudis, and so he had adjusted his behaviour. He stated that he had adjusted his behaviour on coming to the UK.

Adil (male, 39)

“Totally changed since I got here. It is a different country with totally different culture norms than mine. I have to adjust to the new culture to be acceptable.”

Rayan and Badr stated that they use different greetings depending on the context rather than on their personal preferences.

Rayan (male, 36)

“It depends on the situation again. When attending a conference or a workshop, for example, I usually wait for the other person to see how he/she would like to greet either verbal greetings or handshake. My preference is always verbal greetings.”

Rayan said that he preferred to use verbal greetings and handshakes on a first meeting, which indicates a departure from Saudi norms and a move away from purely touch greetings. Badr felt similarly and believed that the context was vital to choosing the right approach.

Badr (male, 39)

“I believe it is not a matter of a personal preference when such behaviour takes place in different contexts. This actually depends on how and what non-verbal greeting behaviours are endorsed in each society! For instance, when I’m in London I would shake hand or wave/ salute people (e.g. English or Europeans) rather cheek kiss them, as the latter would probably considered inappropriate to some!”

Badr’s answer indicates that he will adapt his NVGs depending on whether he is greeting Saudis or British people. With British people, he will use a verbal greeting and handshake, but no cheek kiss. He realises that, while a cheek kiss is normal in Saudi Arabia, it is not thought appropriate in the UK. Rayan stated that he changed his greeting depending on the context, but that he preferred to use British greetings behaviours (see section 4.3).

“To be honest, I like British way of greetings more because I do not like physical contact. The accustomed greetings in Saudi Arabia are to shake hands and kiss cheeks which I always try to avoid for healthy reasons.”

Rayan stated that he preferred L2 British greetings because he liked the lack of touch, but he would still use Saudi greetings when in Saudi Arabia.

“Finally, I would like to add that I like English greetings which involve less physical touch behaviours and focus more on verbal greetings. However, I could not use it in my home country with Saudi people there although I prefer it to the Saudi greetings.”

Most participants reported finding NVGs culturally specific. Two participants demonstrated that they had essentialist beliefs about different cultures and their norms. Adeem, for example, stated: “*Saudis or Arabs in general*” are passionate and thus they like to touch more”. Badr also indicated a similar ideological belief:

Badr (male, 39)

*“Arabs are likely to shake hands or kiss cheeks regardless of their nationalities due to similar cultural aspects in non-verbal greeting.”*

Saudis who had spent time living in the UK showed some variation in how far they had adapted their NVGs to fit with British norms. The participant who was the least willing to adapt and who had not adjusted well to British culture was Abrar. She was an only child who missed her family greatly and was tearful when talking about them. Retaining L1 greetings seemed to be, for her, a way of maintaining her connection with Saudi culture.

### ***5.2.5 Perceptions of L1 Saudi greetings by host people within intercultural interactions (pragmatic failure)***

The participants reported that before they adopted L2 greetings, they underwent a period of adaptation that involved miscommunication with others. They often found that it was difficult to transfer their L1 Saudi NVGs to L2 interactions. The participants demonstrated that they did not know enough about the appropriateness of L2 NVGs, even where they were proficient in the English language. They had learned English in Saudi Arabia and had not gained much understanding of British culture while doing so. They found that when they used L1 greetings with L2 people they met with discomfort and confusion.

SOL described moving to the USA and greeting an American woman using traditional Saudi NVGs, shaking hands and kissing her cheek more than once. The woman reacted with obvious discomfort.

SOL (female, 35)

“I remember once that’s funny when I moved to the US for the first time, we are used to shake hands and kiss cheeks. I met an American woman who is my husband’s colleague. When I saw her, I shook hands and kissed her. She was uncomfortable and asked ‘what’s that?’ My husband was laughing and explained that I just arrived and this is the way women greet each other in Saudi Arabia. She laughed too while I was completely embarrassed. This interaction actually impacted my way of greetings.”

This experience clearly affected SOL and led to changing her NVG behaviours to adapt to her L2 environment.

Abrar talked of a similar experience. She greeted a British woman using a hug, which was met with surprise.

Abrar (female, 48)

“On a personal occasion, I greeted an English woman with a hug and she replied ‘that’s weird’. I explained this is our way of greetings but she clarified it is not accepted in her culture and I should know that in order to avoid misperception. Later, I realise that British women greet each other verbally with waving only.”

Arwa described trying to greet a British friend with an embrace, as she was used to doing.

Arwa (female, 40)

“It happened that I once tried to hug a British friend whom I did not see for a while but she pushed me away. She seems uncomfortable with it.”

SOL found it difficult to avoid being hugged by a male professor, who was not aware that she would be uncomfortable with hugging a man.

SOL (female, 35)

“I also remember on my graduation day of my masters, one of the male professors came and hugged me. I kept pushing him away but failed. He was surprised but then I said we do not have hugs with men. Of course it is some kind of misconception but it is really funny.”

She realised that the exchange resulted from a cultural misunderstanding.

### **5.2.6 Summary of qualitative results**

Interview data related to research question 2, which focused on reflections on sociocultural aspects, was coded into five categories: attachment to L1 heritage norms, liking of L2 greeting behaviours, social interactions and friendship with L1 and L2 people, adaptation and accommodation, perceptions of L1 non-verbal greetings by L2 host people, and communication breakdowns. Analysis of the online questions on networks and friendships revealed that the number of British friends Saudi residents in the UK had was double the number of Saudi friends most had. In addition, the majority of participants expressed a preference for using British non-verbal greetings while in the UK. They then gave reasons for their preference.

Two interviewees stated that they felt it was appropriate to use L1 non-verbal greetings with their Saudi friends and British non-verbal greetings with their British friends. One respondent reported that she had no British friends, and so she preferred Saudi greetings and rarely used British ones. There was a significant attachment to Saudi cultural norms notable in the testimonies of four interviewees, who all cited the greater warmth of Saudi greetings as part of those greetings' appeal. They felt that Saudi greetings were more effective than British ones at conveying emotion and demonstrating the acceptance of others. However, two interviewees also said that they appreciated British L2 non-verbal greetings at least some of the time, as these involved fewer touch behaviours.

The interviewees demonstrated a degree of adaptation to British norms and an awareness of British greetings. They generally understood how and when to use L1 and L2 greetings. The exception was Abrar, who expressed a strong preference for Saudi greetings. However, she also stated that she had no British friends (despite having spent 14 years in the UK).

Participants spoke of communication breakdowns they had experienced in their initial intercultural meetings. These were generally caused by negative pragmatic transfer of Saudi L1 greetings behaviours onto intercultural interactions. The participants spoke of their interlocutors and how they had reacted to their attempts to use Saudi NVGs. The effect was often embarrassment and this led the participants to adapt their L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. A discussion follows of the results gained from both quantitative and qualitative analysis in relation to research question 2 around the relationship between cultural orientation and non-verbal greetings used by Saudi people living in the UK. The discussion will focus on the results in relation to theoretical and empirical literatures.

### **5.3 Discussion of findings**

This chapter has presented the results as they relate to research question 2, around the relationship between cultural orientation and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, among Saudi L2 speakers of English residents in the UK for at least three years. The first research question addressed the influence of the length of time spent living in an L2 culture on how individuals evaluate the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The length of time spent in an L2 culture is not on its own enough to change perceptions of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

Research question 2 was, therefore, formulated to examine how acculturation could change metapragmatic judgments made by Saudis living in the UK.

Acculturation was measured using an assessment scale. Maintenance of L1 Saudi culture was measured as well as the degree of adoption of British culture. The acculturation scale offers insight into whether Saudis accept British culture and how that acceptance influences their L1 metapragmatic awareness. Immigration is usually noted as being an important factor affecting L1 pragmatic norms (Kopke, 2007; Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002). Though research question 1 focused on how far the length of time spent in the UK was important, question 2 addressed the relationship between MPJs and acculturation to both L1 and L2 cultures.

The second question is designed to be a more precise and probing question, looking in more detail at acculturation rather than cultural exposure. Acculturation was measured by assessing the participants' beliefs, practice and values in relation to tradition, marriage, friends, entertainment, behaviours, social activities, interactions and humour. This means that the question is focussed on social, behavioural and cultural adaptation.

The statistical analysis showed that Saudis living in the UK were more likely to score highly for the maintenance of Saudi culture than for the adoption of British culture. Nevertheless, this group did score higher on adoption of British culture than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1). This means that the length of time spent living abroad is positively correlated to the degree of acceptance of L2 culture. This is in line with previous research. Güngör et al. (2013) found that the length of time Japanese immigrants to the USA spent there affected their levels of acculturation.

To examine the impact of acculturation further, it is important to understand the correlations between metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings and cultural orientation (see Table 5.10).

Table 5.10 Overview of correlations between L1 and L2 cultural orientation and MPJ of NVGs by Saudis in the UK

<b>Social relations</b>	<b>MPJ of NVGs</b>	<b>L1 cultural orientation</b>	<b>L2 cultural orientation</b>
Close friends	Handshake	+	<i>ns</i>
	Embrace	+	<i>ns</i>
	Proximity	+	<i>ns</i>
Colleagues	Cheek-to-cheek kiss	<i>ns</i>	-
Manager-employee	Handshake	<i>ns</i>	+
	Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-	<i>ns</i>
Strangers	Handshake	<i>ns</i>	-
	Cheek-to-cheek kiss	<i>ns</i>	-

MPJs made of a handshake, embrace or proximity greeting between close friends were positively correlated with attachment to L1 culture. The MPJs of these behaviours were similar between the two Saudi groups studied (those in the UK and those at home), with no statistically significant difference. This may be because Saudis living abroad continue to use these behaviours with their close friends. All of them were rated as appropriate behaviours (see Table 5.7 for more details of significant correlations).

In relation to MPJs of non-verbal greetings between colleagues, the cheek-to-cheek kiss was negatively correlated to the scores given to Saudis living abroad of their acceptance of British culture. Those who were most accepting of British culture were more likely to rate the cheek kiss as inappropriate. This might be because this greeting is not common in Britain among colleagues, and so those who have adopted British culture most strongly will be more likely to avoid it (Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002). Participants who avoided the cheek kiss also stated that they wanted to avoid misperception, especially in public.

Metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of a handshake between manager and employee were positively correlated with acculturation into British culture. Handshakes between colleagues of different status levels are normal in the UK, especially on a first meeting (Matsumoto, et al., 2016). This means that this behaviour was thought of as slightly appropriate by Saudi participants in the UK. It may be that Saudis are willing to use the handshake but would prefer to limit its use to particular contexts.

MPJs made of appropriateness of the cheek-to-cheek kiss between a manager and employee were negatively correlated to participants' attachment to Saudi culture. The cheek kiss is a standard interaction between manager and employees in Saudi Arabia (Hassanain, 1994). It may be that exposure to British culture influenced the participants' perception of cheek kissing and they had less desire to kiss cheeks in the L2. So they came to see it as slightly inappropriate. It should be noted that Saudis living in the UK did not rate this behaviour as strongly inappropriate, but put it around the middle of the scale, between Saudis in Saudi Arabia, and British people. This finding reflects that "the components of this 'vertical' dimension [higher and lower status] of interlocutor relations are thought to co-vary" across cultural groups (Spencer-Oatey, 1996, p. 10).

The previous correlation analysis showed that metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of handshake between strangers were negatively associated with the adoption of British culture, among Saudis living in the UK. Saudis living abroad assessed handshakes between strangers as being slightly appropriate, by contrast. The negative correlation may indicate Saudis' resistance to an L2 culture in which shaking hands with strangers is unusual (Ishihara, 2008; Kecskes, 2015; Al-Issa, 2003; Siegal, 1996). This kind of pragmatic resistance to L2 norms is discussed by Cohen (1997, p. 151), who remembers resisting L2 norms that seemed "illogical".

A negative correlation was also found between MPJs of appropriateness of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between strangers and the degree of acceptance of British

culture among Saudis living in the UK, with this group rating the greeting as slightly inappropriate. The higher the acceptance of British culture, the more inappropriate they thought the greeting was. It may be that the participants understood that a cheek kiss was likely to be misinterpreted in the UK, leading them to avoid it out of a desire to be seen as interactionally competent.

In Saudi Arabia, greetings between lower and higher status people usually involve a handshake and more physical distance than would be common among friends and colleagues. Handshakes are used daily in workplaces and between strangers. This study shows that judgments of the socio-pragmatic values of status and social distance included in the stimuli videos used differed between the two Saudi groups studied.

Living in the UK seems to have affected the greetings used by Saudis with higher-status people and others. Participants reported that they used fewer non-verbal greetings with higher-status people, colleague and strangers since moving to the UK (Table 4.11). However, their greetings practices were not the same as British people, but somewhere between the two cultures' norms. Saudis living in the UK remained different in their perception of greetings to British people living in the UK. This is in line with studies that assert that it would be difficult for a person's L2 culture to overtake their L1 (Tavakoni and Shirinbakhsh, 2013). Beebe et al. (1990, p. 68) stated that "deeply held cultural values are not easily given up." Acculturation is considered bi-dimensional by this researcher and does not assume that the L1 culture will be abandoned in favour of a new L2 culture (Flannery et al., 2001). The concept of partial acculturation, as seen in the behaviour and thoughts of this study's participants, is supported by this point of view. Saudis living in the UK had a good knowledge of socio-pragmatics and L2 interactions. They gave examples of socio-pragmatic failure in the qualitative interviews and described the steps they had taken to increase their understanding and avoid similar failures taking place again.

Saudi residents in the UK in general reported that they favoured L1 norms but accepted L2 norms. However, there was variance. This is natural, as although the participants came from the same L1 culture, they will not necessarily share views on all things with fellow Saudis in the UK, nor that they will make metapragmatic judgments in the same ways (McConachy, 2018). People with shared cultural experience have diverse frames of reference and are likely to have dissimilar views on interpersonal relationships and social behaviour. These views are constructed ideologically from a person's native culture and beyond (Jaffe, 2009; Verschueren, 2004). Convergence and integration will vary for individuals within their own lives as well as between individuals, as their modes of perception react and change (Grosjean, 2001).

Regardless of the above, living in the UK helps promote compliance with British culture and increases the influence of that culture on the participants' L1 Saudi culture. This study shows that the cheek kiss L1 greeting behaviour was rated as the least appropriate by the interviewees in the study. This is a common behaviour between same-sex people in Saudi Arabia (Hassanain, 1994; Feghali, 1997) but it is not used in the UK. Divergence from L1 greetings norms could indicate a growth in intercultural understanding among the participants. Rating a greeting that is not commonly used in the UK as inappropriate could mean that a person is gaining intercultural and interactional competence while living in the UK. Once L2 culture influences a person's L1 culture, an important development stage has been reached in that person's cultural understanding and they can undertake new forms of cultural interaction. They can be considered bicultural (Grosjean, 2015). L2 influence on an L1 provides important (though not direct) information on competence, including sociocultural and intercultural competence, and the process of second language acquisition (Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2000). In this study, clear signs of the influence of the participants' British L2 culture on their L1 MPJs of NVGs were found. Therefore, L2 influence on L1 judgments does indicate an increase in competence among Saudis in the UK (see Chapter 7).

Several participants related stories of communication breakdown during their early days in the UK. As they had very little previous exposure to British culture, they found that they enacted inappropriate greetings behaviours because they were unaware of the social and cultural rules that govern interactions in the UK. These rules can be complex and include a variety of elements relating to social distance and status that affect the appropriateness of a particular behaviour in quite subtle ways (Cenoz, 2003). Socio-pragmatic failure can result from weaknesses in EFL teaching (in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere). Such teaching often omits pragmatics and the teaching of appropriateness, so learners find their initial attempts at intercultural communication difficult.

The socio-pragmatic failures experienced by the participants may have served to help them increase their interactional awareness and improve their intercultural communication skills. During the interviews, several participants stated that they had become more aware of L2 norms as a result of a socio-pragmatic failure. The development of metapragmatic awareness among the participants suggests that they understood interactional exchanges in the UK. Metapragmatic awareness indicates not just an understanding of behaviour but of interactions and perceptions (McConachy, 2013, 2018). In addition, the participants identified changes in their own behaviour and their move away from L1 norms and towards L2 norms.

The study's findings demonstrate that the acculturation levels of participants towards their L1 Saudi culture were greater than towards their L2 British culture. It has been argued in the literature that longer exposure to an L2 culture will inevitably lead to acculturation towards it (Ward and Kennedy, 1993). However, the results of this study somewhat contradict this assertion. This could be due to cultural distance, which is "seeing one's two cultures as being very different from each other" (Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005, p. 1041). The two cultures included in this study are different from each other. Difference between Saudi and British culture is existent in language, religion, behaviours, values, and traditions (Grosjean, 1996). This significant difference

between the cultures means that moving from one to another could induce a state of culture shock, leading to anxiety, isolation, stress and disorientation (Ward and Kennedy, 1994). Therefore, their acculturation towards the L2 culture was lower despite length of exposure.

It could also be that the two cultures are not equally important to the participants: “it is rare that the two cultures have the same importance in the life of the bicultural. One culture often plays a larger role than the other” (Grosjean, 2015, p. 575). This difference is then reflected in the relative degrees of acculturation.

Though the degree of acculturation experience may have been limited, there was certainly some shift in the perceptions of participants of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings. They also stated that they had changed their own greetings behaviours. Saudis in the UK stated that they used L1 norms when greeting their fellow Saudis in Saudi Arabia, but when greeting British people in the UK use L2 norms. This demonstrates an ability to adapt and blend the two cultures (Grosjean, 2015). There is evidence in the literature of biculturalism suggests that it requires the adoption of cultural norms from both cultures into one set of behaviours (Nguyen and Benet-Martinez, 2007).

For some participants in this study, Saudi culture may not be their stronger culture after at least three years in the UK. This may lead to a degree of cultural forgetting of Saudi culture (Grosjean, 2015). This is a phenomenon that happens when a person has little or no contact with one culture for an extended period of time. The results of this study showed that for many of the participants, maintaining a connection with Saudi culture was important. These participants made efforts to keep contact with other Saudis and to continue using L1 greetings. Evidence in the literature demonstrates that continuing contact with fellow L1 native speakers while living in an L2 culture increases the degree to which a person retains links with their native culture (Ammerlaan, 1996; Ramirez, 2003).

At the same time, those who felt more strongly connected with British culture and who were more likely to socialise with British people reduced their use of touch and characteristically Saudi greetings. This is in line with Ramirez (2003) who found that the use of an L2 in everyday interactions leads to changes in the use of an L1, especially in less formal situations such as exchanges between friends.

The reasons given by participants for preferring L1 Saudi greetings were often related to those greetings conveying more emotion than British greetings. This demonstrates the importance of non-verbal greetings in conveying emotion, with such greetings having a significant capacity to communicate feelings (Burgoon et al., 1996; Matsumoto et al., 2016). Saudis living in the UK were able to compare greetings rituals between cultures emphasised how well Saudi greetings conveyed warmth and emotions. The participants studied also reported that they felt comfortable in exchanges with fellow Saudis in the UK. Participants found it easy to recognise the acceptable and appropriate behaviours they use with interlocutors of their L1 culture. There is evidence in literature that members of the same culture can interpret one another's non-verbal behaviours more accurately than those from outside (Gregersen and MacIntyre, 2017)

Investigating the influence of L1 and L2 culture on perception of greetings behaviours is difficult and complex. The two cultures in this case are very different, and the experiences of L2 speakers can vary from complete acceptance of the host culture to total rejection of it (Aguilar, 2007). The cultural orientation of the participants in this study influenced their metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. Those who had spent more time socialising with British people were more likely to actively avoid using L1 greetings and to attempt to balance and integrate both cultures.

Successful communication with people from another culture requires some divergence from L1 norms and the adoption of the norms of the host culture in at least some situations. This occurs with a shift away from L1 culture and, to a degree, conflict with it (Pavlenko, 2000; Prescher, 2007). Participants who demonstrated a high degree of connection to Saudi culture were more likely to resist the use of L2 norms. These participants were more likely to use L1 greetings, to miss Saudi culture and its customs and to favour Saudi friends over British. This group of participants were thought that they preferred to select the separation strategy while living in the UK (Berry, 2005). Immigrants who adopt this strategy avoid becoming part of their new society and continue to live by their native culture's norms and values (Demes and Geeraert, 2014). This supports hypotheses set out for research question 2.

The hypotheses related to research question 2 demonstrate that participants' cultural orientation determined how they evaluated and used non-verbal greetings. Saudis living abroad who had a strong attachment to L1 values were more inclined to want to interact with other Saudis and to use L1 non-verbal greetings more frequently. This supports the second hypothesis, that Saudis living in the UK would maintain L1 greetings provided they still felt attached to L1 culture. At the same time, Saudis living in the UK demonstrated an appreciation of L2 culture and were willing to look for contact with local people and socialise with them. This confirms hypothesis 1 which states that living in the UK would lead to cultural divergence.

Participants who felt that they belonged more strongly to L1 Saudi culture stated that this feeling was not due to lacking understating of British culture, but simply that they preferred to maintain their native culture. Those who indicated that they preferred to use British greetings tended to have a broader understanding of British culture and demonstrated a higher level of acculturation, as reflected in their metapragmatic commentary. Immersion in L2 culture can lead to a shift from L1 to L2 practice and norms, with the two cultures beginning to achieve equal importance as a person becomes

bicultural (Grosjean, 2012, 2015). This supports the results of research questions 1 and 2.

This study's findings related to research question 1 show that there is an influence of L2 on MPJs of L1 NVGs. Research question 2 demonstrates a negative pragmatic transfer in intercultural communication, showing that this influence is bidirectional (Chen, 2006; Su, 2012). Participants related experiences of using L1 non-verbal greetings with British people and also of the influence of British culture and norms on their MPJs. This study focused in the main on L2 influence on L1, but evidence of transfer from L1 to L2 was clear in the qualitative interviews.

#### **5.4 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter has included both qualitative and quantitative results related to research question 2, which asked whether there is a relationship between the metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours made by Saudis in the UK, and their cultural orientation (whether to Saudi or British culture). The chapter began with a discussion of the similarities and differences between the Saudi participants living in the UK and those in Saudi Arabia, and their relative levels of acculturation to both L1 and L2 culture. Attachment to L1 Saudi culture was stronger than adoption of British culture, for both groups of participants. However, the degree of attachment to Saudi culture was stronger for the Saudis in Saudi Arabia than for those in the UK. Saudis in the UK were oriented to UK culture more than those in Saudi Arabia.

The impact of cultural orientation on MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours was small. Those who were more attached to Saudi culture were generally more likely to rate non-verbal greetings as appropriate. Attachment to Saudi culture appears to be compatible with perception of the greetings studied as appropriate.

Regarding acculturation towards the British L2 culture, there was a negative association between MPJs made of some of the NVGs shown to the participants. This implies that those particular greetings are considered inappropriate because they are not common in British L2 culture. By not using these behaviours, the participants were demonstrating a familiarity with British culture and the interactions that are common within it. As a result, they began to see common Saudi greetings as inappropriate.

The participants demonstrated a degree of adaptation to life in the UK through the qualitative interviews. They stated that they had become aware of L2 non-verbal greetings and developed an ability to understand and deal with cultural differences. Socio-pragmatic failures happened for many of them when they first came to the UK, but they were able to learn from these, despite being embarrassed at the time.

The participants' interactions with the British community increased their awareness of their cultural similarities and differences, both in general and in terms of NVGs. There were some particularly interesting observations given by four of the participants, as described earlier, which demonstrated the development of interactional and intercultural communication. These participants were also those who were the most willing to adjust to L2 norms. The four were similar in their views of greetings behaviours and their desire to reduce the use of touch behaviours.

In the interpretation of the results around cultural orientation, we can see that for some, L1 norms and cultural patterns remained rigid and unchallenged by L2 norms. Acculturation was measured bidimensionally, as a process through which people moving to a new culture can develop their own mix of norms and cultural expressions (Nguyen and Benet-Martinez, 2007). These are distinct from both their native and adopted cultures (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000). In addition, bidimensional acculturation means that cultural orientation is not always conversely related to MPJs of a particular NVG. The results of this study support this assertion.

Research question 2 asks whether cultural orientation towards British and Saudi culture has an impact on MPJs of L1 NVGs, by Saudis resident in the UK for at least three years. The hypotheses were:

*H1: Saudis living abroad who have a strong orientation towards their L2 British culture will diverge **more** from Saudi norms than others.*

The quantitative results, illustrated by the qualitative interviews, support this hypothesis. In this study, Saudis living in the UK were found to be more accepting of British culture than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. A correlation analysis showed that high levels of acculturation to an L2 are related to judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, especially to the judgment of the cheek-to-cheek kiss as inappropriate. Participants who demonstrated an acceptance of British culture also stated that they avoided L1 greetings that involved high levels of physical contact, particularly the cheek kiss. Saudis in the UK who had adapted the most demonstrated the strongest understanding of the difference in greetings. Those who were keen to adopt British culture voiced their desire to stop using L1 greetings while living in the UK. This divergence from L1 greetings could also result from having fewer interactions with other Saudis.

*H2: Saudis living abroad who have a strong attachment to Saudi culture will diverge **less** from Saudi norms than others.*

This study supports hypothesis 2. The quantitative results show that Saudis in the UK were more attached to their native culture than to British culture. On the acculturation subscales, they were more likely to score highly for their L1 culture than for their L2 culture on the same dimension. The exception was the entertainment dimension (see Figure 5.2). The qualitative interviews showed that some participants experienced a heightening of their affection for L1 greetings while in the UK. They had only diverged from L1 greetings in

order to avoid embarrassment in certain situations, rather than out of preference. They still used L1 greetings with other Saudis in the UK.

Research question 2 (b) aimed to expand on question 2 (a), using both quantitative and qualitative data.

*RQ2 (b): what are participants' views on effects of maintenance of L1 culture and acceptance of L2 culture on Saudi non-verbal greetings appropriateness?*

The qualitative results showed that perceptions of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours varied considerably, depending on how far a person felt attached to L1 culture and how far they had adopted L2 culture. Those interviewees who reported maintaining strong links with Saudi culture spoke of how they preferred Saudi greetings and their ability to express emotion. They continued to use L1 greetings while in the UK, except where they knew that doing so would lead to misunderstanding. Those participants with a strong degree of adoption of British culture reported using L2 greetings even when they returned to Saudi Arabia, indicating a permanent change in their behaviour (supporting research question 1). A third group of participants reported an even balance of orientation towards the two cultures.

The length of time spent in an L2 country (RQ1) and participants' levels of cultural orientation (RQ2) demonstrate the influence of L2 English on metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs. This study also hypothesises that personality traits are important in the degree to which metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours change in response to life in a new culture, among Saudis in the UK. The next chapter presents quantitative and qualitative data related to relationships found between personality (measured by the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)) and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE EFFECT OF MULTICULTURAL PERSONALITY TRAITS ON METAPRAGMATIC JUDGMENTS OF SAUDI NON-VERBAL GREETINGS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents results of tests around and discussion of the effects of five multicultural personality traits on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The traits studied are Cultural empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability. As in the rest of the study, the participants were Saudi people resident in the UK for at least three years.

Section 6.1 presents a quantitative analysis of the relationship between MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings and the personality traits of the participants. There is a comparison of the two Saudi groups, those in the UK and those in Saudi Arabia, and an exploration of how personality changed over time under the influence of UK culture. Section 6.2 presents qualitative data gathered through interviews, and Section 6.3 presents discussion of the results and a set of conclusions drawn in response to RQ3.

#### **Research Question 3**

There are two parts to this research question, each leading to a hypothesis.

**RQ3 (a): *Does living abroad affect the personality traits of Saudi residents in the UK over time? If so, do Saudi residents in the UK score higher for multicultural personality traits than Saudis in their home country?***

**H1:** Compared to Saudis living in Saudi Arabia, Saudis resident in the UK will report higher scores for the MPQ traits: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative and Emotional Stability.

**RQ3 (b): *Are personality traits, measured by MPQ, linked to metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?***

**H2:** Saudis with higher scores on MPQ traits will rate L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours as being **less** appropriate.

The personality traits chosen for this study were used as dependent and independent variables (cf. Panicacci and Dewaele, 2017a). This study seeks to establish whether living in an L2 culture will influence the scores on the MPQ of L2 speakers. The expectation is that it will, as we know through the literature that personality traits are affected by acculturation (Leong, 2007; Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven, 2009). This study also seeks to establish whether scores for the five MPQ traits affect MPJs made of L1 NVGs. The expectation is that participants living in the UK who score more highly for those five traits will rate Saudi NVGs as being less appropriate than other Saudis.

### **6.1 Quantitative data results**

The quantitative results provide a descriptive analysis of the personalities of the participants. The short form of the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (SF-MPQ) was used to examine personality traits. The MPQ asks 40 questions across the five traits: Cultural Empathy, Openmindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability. Each subscale is made up of eight statements on a five-point Likert scale. They measure how far the respondent finds a particular statement applicable to them. They range from (1) totally not applicable to (5) completely applicable.

'40' is the highest possible score that can be reached on each subscale of the SF-MPQ. The responses for most participants and most questions were in the middle of the range of possible scores. Table 6.1 shows descriptive statistics

for the MPQ of both the Saudi groups studied: Saudis in Saudi Arabia (n = 67) and in the UK (n = 264). The second control group, British L1 English speakers, was not included in this part of the study (see section 3.3.2)

Table 6.1 *Descriptive statistics of MPQ scores for Saudis participants*

<b>MPQ</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Cultural Empathy	331	8	40	29.15	7.36
Open-mindedness	331	8	40	28.16	7.56
Flexibility	331	8	40	21.87	6.77
Social Initiative	331	11	38	25.80	4.52
Emotional Stability	331	11	37	24.53	5.38

Table 6.1 shows the mean scores gained on each MPQ dimension by both groups of participants. Cultural Empathy (M = 29.15, SD = 7.36) and Open-mindedness (M = 28.16, SD = 7.56) scored highest. Social Initiative (M = 25.80, SD = 4.52) and Emotional Stability (M = 24.53, SD = 5.38) were in the mid-range. Flexibility scored lowest (M = 21.87, SD = 6.77).

To answer RQ3(a), which addresses whether living in an L2 country can influence personality traits, an independent samples t-test was carried out to enable a comparison of the mean scores of MPQ traits. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups of participants in three of the traits: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness and Flexibility. The analysis did not show any statistically significant difference between the groups for the other two traits: Social Initiative and Emotional Stability (see Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1).

Table 6.2 *T*-test comparisons for personality profiles of Saudi groups \*  $p < .05$

MPQ	At-home Saudis (N = 67)		Saudis in UK (N = 264)		F	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Cultural Empathy	27.21	9.46	<b>29.64*</b>	6.65	19.995	<b>.012</b>
Open-mindedness	25.38	8.27	<b>28.86*</b>	6.54	8.885	<b>.031</b>
Flexibility	<b>24.98*</b>	7.98	21.08	6.21	8.180	<b>.028</b>
Social Initiative	25.00	4.64	26.08	4.47	.193	.661
Emotional Stability	25.52	5.56	24.28	5.31	1.186	.271

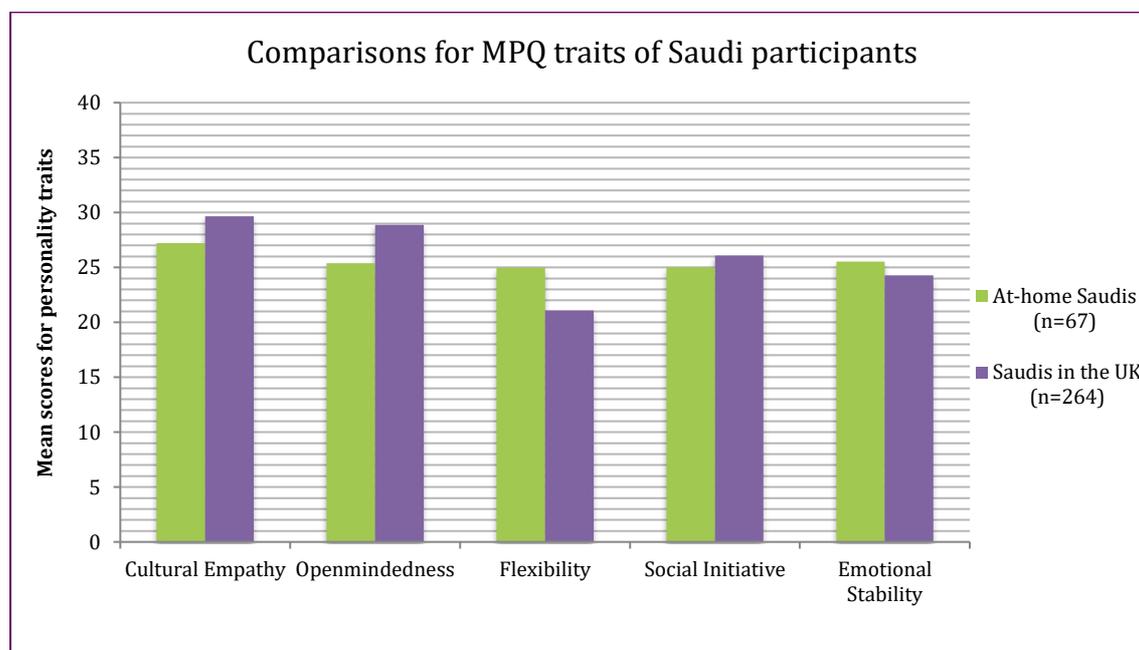


Figure 6.1 Mean scores for personality traits MPQ of Saudi groups ( $v = 40$ )

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1 show the mean scores for each personality trait, for each group. The table demonstrates the differences found in the scores for the two groups for the traits of Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness and Flexibility. Saudis in the UK scored higher for Cultural Empathy (M = 29.65, SD = 6.65) and Open-mindedness (M = 28.86, SD = 6.54) than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia (Cultural Empathy M = 27.21, SD = 9.46, Open-mindedness M = 25.38, SD = 8.27). Saudis living in Saudi Arabia scored higher for

Flexibility ( $M = 24.98$ ,  $SD = 7.98$ ). There were no significant differences between the two groups for Social Initiative or Emotional Stability.

Research question 3 (b) asked whether a correlation could be found between the scores gained on the MPQ traits and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. A correlation analysis was carried out, looking only at Saudis living in the UK. The mean scores of both groups, in the UK and Saudi Arabia, were presented in Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1, above. These figures help compare the two groups, demonstrate statistical differences between them and explain any correlation.

It was first necessary to determine whether to use a parametric or non-parametric correlation analysis. To do this, a Shapiro-Wilks normality test was carried out. This test showed that the MPQ scores of Saudis living in the UK deviated significantly from a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). The test showed a skewness of  $-1.433$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis  $2.357$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for Cultural Empathy, a skewness of  $-1.315$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis  $2.127$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for Open-mindedness, a skewness of  $.842$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis  $1.128$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for Flexibility, a skewness of  $.073$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis  $-.112$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for Social Initiative, and a skewness of  $.049$  ( $SE = .150$ ) and a kurtosis  $-.485$  ( $SE = .299$ ) for Emotional Stability.

These results led to the use of a non-parametric Spearman's rank correlation test, chosen to establish the correlations between personality traits and MPJs made by Saudis in the UK of L1 NVGs.

### ***6.1.1 Cultural Empathy – metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings***

A Spearman's rank correlation analysis was carried out to establish if there was a correlation between the scores gained for Cultural Empathy and the MPJs made of L1 NVGs. The analysis showed a statistically significant positive

relationship between Cultural Empathy and MPJs made of appropriateness of handshakes in three different relational situations: close friends ( $r_s = .145, p < .05$ ), colleagues ( $r_s = .221, p < .01$ ), and manager and employee ( $r_s = .166, p < .01$ ). There was also a strong positive correlation between Cultural Empathy and MPJs made of proximity appropriateness, in relation to interactions between colleagues ( $r_s = .171, p < .01$ ), manager and employee ( $r_s = .170, p < .01$ ) and strangers ( $r_s = .214, p < .01$ ).

Cultural empathy was negatively correlated to MPJs made of the appropriateness of cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace greetings in three situations: colleagues (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $r_s = -.241, p < .01$ , embrace  $r_s = -.255, p < .01$ ), manager and employee (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $r_s = -.223, p < .01$ , embrace  $r_s = -.188, p < .01$ ) and strangers (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $r_s = -.127, p < .05$ , embrace  $r_s = -.149, p < .01$ ) (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Cultural Empathy ~ metapragmatic judgments of NVGs \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

MPJ of L1 NVGs	Close Friends	Colleagues	Manager-Employee	Strangers
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.145*	.221**	.166**	.117
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.091	-.241**	-.223**	-.127*
Embrace	.120	-.255**	-.188**	-.149**
Proximity	.095	.171**	.170**	.214**

As shown in Table 6.4, Cultural Empathy was positively correlated to MPJs of appropriateness of handshakes between close friends, colleagues and managers and employees. There were also positive correlations between Cultural Empathy and appropriateness of proximity between colleagues, managers and employees and strangers. However, Cultural Empathy was negatively correlated to MPJs of appropriateness of cheek-to-cheek kisses and embraces between colleagues, managers and employees, and strangers.

### 6.1.2 Open-mindedness – metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings

A Spearman's rank correlation analysis was conducted to establish whether there was any relationship between the scores gained by the participants for Open-mindedness and the MPJs they made of L1 NVGs appropriateness. The test showed a statistically significant positive correlation between Open-mindedness and the MPJs made of appropriateness of handshakes in two situations: between close friends ( $r_s = .150, p < .05$ ) and between colleagues (handshake  $r_s = .131, p < .05$ ). Open-mindedness was also positively correlated to MPJs made by the participants of proximity appropriateness in two situations: between managers and employees ( $r_s = .128, p < .05$ ) and between strangers ( $r_s = .140, p < .05$ ).

There were also negative correlations found. Open-mindedness was negatively correlated with MPJs made of appropriateness of a cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace between colleagues (cheek-to-cheek kiss  $r_s = -.172, p < .01$ , embrace  $r_s = -.148, p < .05$ ) and between manager and employee (cheek-to-cheek kiss,  $r_s = -.184, p < .01$ , embrace,  $r_s = -.163, p < .01$ ) (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Open-mindedness ~ metapragmatic judgments of NVGs \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

MPJ of L1 NVGs	Close Friends	Colleagues	Manager-Employee	Strangers
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.150*	.131*	.112	.042
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-.069	-.172**	-.184**	-.069
Embrace	.062	-.148*	-.163**	-.099
Proximity	-.015	.088	.128*	.140*

Table 6.4 illustrates the correlations between the scores gained for the Open-mindedness trait as measured by the MPQ and the metapragmatic judgments made of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. Open-mindedness was positively correlated with MPJs of appropriateness of handshakes between close friends and colleagues, and of appropriateness of proximity between managers and employees, and strangers. Open-mindedness was negatively correlated with MPJs made of appropriateness of a cheek-to-cheek kisses and embraces between colleagues and manager-employee.

### 6.1.3 Flexibility – metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings

A Spearman rank correlation analysis was carried out to establish whether there was a correlation between Flexibility as measured by the MPQ and the MPJs made of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. A statistically significant correlation was found between Flexibility and judgments made of appropriateness of a cheek-to-cheek kiss between close friends ( $r_s = .125, p < .05$ ). No correlation was found between Flexibility and MPJs of appropriateness of any of the other greetings or relational situations (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Flexibility ~ metapragmatic judgments of NVGs \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

MPJ of L1 NVGs	Close Friends	Colleagues	Manager-Employee	Strangers
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.009	.024	-.071	.004
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	.125*	.106	.107	.080
Embrace	.016	.088	.052	.050
Proximity	.075	-.041	-.037	-.113

As illustrated in Table 6.5, there is a relationship between Flexibility in the participants in the study and the metapragmatic judgments they make of L1 non-verbal greetings appropriateness. Flexibility was found to be positively correlated with the appropriateness of cheek kiss among close friends.

#### **6.1.4 Social Initiative – metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings**

A Spearman rank correlation analysis was carried out to examine whether there was a relationship between Social Initiative and the metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings appropriateness made by Saudis living in the UK. The analysis showed that there was no correlation between levels of Social Initiative and MPJs made of NVGs appropriateness by the participants (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.6 *Social Initiative ~ metapragmatic judgments of NVGs* \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

<b>MPJ of L1 NVGs</b>	<b>Close Friends</b>	<b>Colleagues</b>	<b>Manager-Employee</b>	<b>Strangers</b>
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	.003	.067	.023	.002
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-.095	-.037	-.058	.013
Embrace	.011	-.022	.007	-.021
Proximity	-.089	-.073	-.012	.005

Table 6.6 shows the findings of the test – that there was no correlation found between metapragmatic judgments made of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours by Saudis living in the UK.

### 6.1.5 Emotional Stability – metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings

A Spearman rank correlation analysis was carried out to establish whether there was a relationship between Emotional Stability and the MPJs made of L1 NVGs appropriateness by Saudis living in the UK. The analysis showed no correlation (see Table 6.7).

Table 6.7 Emotional Stability ~ metapragmatic judgments of NVGs \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$  (2-tailed)

MPJ of L1 NVGs	Close Friends	Colleagues	Manager-Employee	Strangers
	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>	<i>Rho</i>
Handshake	-.092	-.112	.050	-.020
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	-.013	.075	.121	.130
Embrace	-.070	.058	.078	.116
Proximity	-.027	-.119	-.090	-.055

Table 6.7 shows that there was no correlation between levels of Emotional Stability and the metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness made by Saudis living in the UK of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours.

### 6.1.6 Summary of quantitative results

The quantitative results of the study demonstrate that Saudis living in the UK scored higher on the MPQ for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness than the control group of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. However, Saudis living in Saudi Arabia scored higher than those in the UK for Flexibility. The final two personality traits tested were Social Initiative and Emotional Stability. For these, no difference was found between the two groups. For both groups, the

scores were around the mid-range for all five MPQ traits. Saudis living in the UK recorded their highest scores for the Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness traits, and their lowest for the Flexibility trait.

The correlations made between scores on the MPQ and MPJs made of appropriateness of L1 NVGs were mixed. The score gained by Saudis living in the UK for Cultural Empathy were positively and negatively correlated with MPJs of appropriateness of a variety of L1 NVGs. This was the personality trait that affected metapragmatic judgments most strongly. Open-mindedness showed the second-strongest level of correlation with MPJs. Saudis living in the UK scored lower for Flexibility than their peers living in Saudi Arabia. This trait was shown to be correlated with metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of cheek-to-cheek kisses between friends. No correlation was shown between Social Initiative and Emotional Stability, and metapragmatic judgments made by the participants of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours.

Table 6.8 (below) shows which traits were correlated with metapragmatic judgments, and in which relational situations.

*Table 6.8 Summary for significant correlations between MPQ scores and MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings appropriateness by Saudi residents in the UK*

MPJs of L1 NVGs	Close friends	Colleagues	Manager-employee	Strangers
Handshake	+ CE	+ CE	+ CE	
	+ OP	+ OP		
Cheek-to-cheek kiss	+ FX	- CE	- CE	- CE
		- OP	- OP	
Embrace		- CE	- CE	- CE
		- OP	- OP	
Proximity		+ OP	+ OP	+ CE
				+ OP

*Note. CE = Cultural Empathy,  
OP = Open-mindedness,  
FX = Flexibility  
+ = Significant positive correlation  
- = Significant negative correlation*

To conclude, Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness and Flexibility were shown to have a statistically significant link to metapragmatic judgments of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours made by Saudis living in the UK. Social Initiative and Emotional Stability were not associated with MPJs of L1 NVGs appropriateness.

## **6.2 Qualitative data results**

The quantitative data outlined above is illustrated by the qualitative data. This is presented in a similar way to that used in chapters 4 and 5 (Sections 4.2 and 5.2). In this section, observations and thoughts given by the participants are relayed and discussed. The nine participants are all Saudis who had lived in the UK for at least three years at the time of the study (see section 3.4.1). RQ3 is focused on the relationship between personality traits and non-verbal greetings behaviours, and so the qualitative comments highlighted here are also on that subject. An analysis carried out of the interviews established that there was a primary category on personality traits and two sub-categories: the acculturation of personality and the effect of personality on non-verbal greetings behaviours.

The interviews included discussion on how personality influenced greetings behaviours, especially levels of open-mindedness, sociability, shyness, extraversion and introversion. Participants were not asked to comment on any particular personality trait, so the discussion was open-ended. They talked about how personal natural tendencies of people helped to accommodate to, settle in and adjust to a new culture, including through greetings behaviours.

The next section includes two sub-sections. The first discusses how living in an L2 culture influences personality traits and how individuals' experiences in

their adopted culture can lead to change in their personalities. The participants indicated that they did experience change as a result of acculturation. The second sub-section is focused on participants' responses to questions around whether personality traits influence non-verbal greetings behaviours.

### **6.2.1 Acculturation of personality**

Though the interviews were open-ended, they included a question on how personality traits are related to non-verbal greetings behaviours. The qualitative reflections gained through the interviews gave this study's author a vital, in-depth understanding of participants' views of how personality traits affect non-verbal greetings. The answers given by the participants demonstrated the complexity of the links between personality and non-verbal greetings behaviours.

The interviews showed each participant's views of how things had changed in their personalities. They focused especially strongly on Cultural Empathy. This is defined as the ability to understand others' intentions and make predictions of their behaviour. The participants showed a strong degree of Cultural Empathy with others of a different culture through their responses.

*Amal said "I appreciate others' choice of non-verbal greetings. We should respect people's preference."*

Arwa spoke of her dealings with non-Arabs and how her recognition that English people and Arabs have different greeting styles affected her behaviour:

Arwa (female, 40)

"I don't want to apply my Arab greeting style on English people and seem like I am imposing the way that happened with the lady whom I had not seen for months and tried hugging her. I don't want to save my face and make her or me uncomfortable."

SOL spoke of how living abroad has changed her personality and helped her gain greater cultural empathy.

SOL (female, 35)

“I think by living abroad I learn how to interact with others and accept all people and all cultures. So non-verbal greetings depend on personal preference and limits. I like not to be involved in physical touch unless I am extremely comfortable with a person in front of me. But that does not mean I do not accept or respect that person. With non-Saudis, I greet them the way they feel comfortable.”

Adeem talked about how she makes efforts to fit in with British culture and her desire not to embarrass her hosts, even where it makes her uncomfortable.

Adeem (female, 40)

“As I am engaged in interactions with English people or other cultures, I never refuse to shake hands back with men. Although such behaviour embarrasses me, I prefer not to embarrass them by refusing their handshake.”

### ***6.2.2 Influence of personality traits on non-verbal greeting behaviours in participants' voices***

The participants were asked whether they believed personality traits had an impact on non-verbal greetings behaviours. They agreed that they do and talked about the important role of personality on NVGs using intensifiers including ‘definitely’, ‘yes’ and ‘sure!’ The participants also talked about how NVGs can be affected by multiple different personality traits. Open-mindedness was identified as an important personality trait in relation to NVGs by five of the participants, speaking either about themselves or about others and their personalities. Badr talked about how he was open-minded and how this helped him understand cultural differences in greetings behaviours: *“I had this point of cultural understanding when it comes to greeting (verbal or non-verbal)”*.

SOL stated that she felt she was open-minded: *“I am openminded and love to talk to people and greet them but I am so conservative about personal touch”*.

Rayan talked about how others were open-minded and about his experience of dealing with them and how open-mindedness is, in his view, a positive trait:

Rayan (male, 36)

“I study in a multinational university and I meet a lot of people of different cultural backgrounds. I notice that openminded people always interact more informally with others. They are open and flexible and tend to use more physical contact with others. They greet people in a less official way even if they do not know them well.”

Arwa and Adeem also stated that open-minded people are open to greet others easily by recognising and accepting differences.

Arwa (female, 40)

“People who are openminded have usually exposed to other cultures and other forms of life. They become more accepting to other greetings and somehow friendlier and warmer.”

Adeem (female, 40)

“I think that the openminded person recognises difference in non-verbal greetings, and then respects others’ preference, in particular, keeping distance when greeting.”

Two participants demonstrated an essentialist view of nationality and personality, talking about how open-mindedness is typical of British culture.

Amal (female, 41)

“British people are highly openminded and they consider my desire not to have a handshake in first meetings when they see me on hijab.”

Adeem (female, 40)

“I know that British people do not like handshake. In addition, they are openminded. I remembered, for example, that I met a British man who recognises that a woman wearing hijab does not like handshake and he did not shake my hands although it was the first time we met.”

Social Initiative, which can be equated to extraversion, was the second most commonly spoken of personality trait in the interviews. The participants used the terms ‘extravert’ and ‘sociable person’ as synonyms. They frequently made comparisons of extraverted, sociable people with introverted, shy people.

Amal (female, 41)

“Sociable people are always happy to have physical touch in order to express feelings, acceptance of other people, etc. unlike shy and introvert people. We should respect preference of both types of personalities.”

Amal did not use the word extravert but spoke of sociable people. She stated that she believed sociable people were more likely to use physical touch as part of NVGs. She also thought they were more likely to be able to accept physical greetings from others and talk about how they felt about them. Abrar spoke of the differences between introverted and extraverted people and how these differences are demonstrated through non-verbal greetings. She reiterated her previously stated view that non-verbal greetings are essential to the communication of emotion.

Abrar (female, 48)

“Introvert individuals are unable to express their feelings when greetings. They just nod or smile whereas extraverts are open and use more non-verbal greetings reflecting their desire to contact others. Non-verbal greetings also reflect personality traits of people as polite, sociable, open, shy, and passionate. Non-verbal greetings

also are a key for personality because they convey our own messages and emotions to others.”

Mohammad and Adil talked about the effects of personality on the non-verbal greetings used. They both stated that they believed more sociable people were likely to use touch greetings more often. Mohammad said “*the more sociable a person is, the more physical he or she greets others and vice versa*”. Adil agreed:

Adil (male, 39)

“I agree that personality traits affect non-verbal greeting behaviours. For example, shy person finds it difficult to greet people than sociable person.”

Arwa stated that she thought that the extraverts are more able to use non-verbal greetings compared to introverts who are keen to save their social image.

Arwa (female, 40)

“Extraverts might probably be able to express their greetings physically more, I am just assuming, while introverts might perhaps be a little more shy and reserved. In a way not publicly, they show their feelings to avoid face loss or to keep distance from others. They might probably seem aloof.”

SOL told of her sociable brother and how his personality leads him to insist on exchanging kisses with her whenever they meet, even though she would prefer a verbal greeting. She also talked of how personality can sometimes change over time, and that people can behave differently with some people than others.

SOL (female, 35)

“Extraverts and introverts act differently. That is why some people shake hands while others do not and prefer to stand away, smile, and greet verbally only. However, over time I think personality, as well as behaviours, changes when interacting with others. Again I think personality traits have a big role in your behaviours. For example, my brother is a very sociable person. Every time he leaves the house, he kisses me. For me I exchange ‘Hi, how are you?’ but find him kiss me. So, I exchange kisses with him too.”

Adeem stated that she thought that Saudi women who choose not to wear hijab when they are in an L2 culture are generally more extravert than those who continue to wear hijab when outside Saudi Arabia. She stated that she thought these women were more likely to use touch greetings, including with men and non-Saudis.

Adeem (female, 40)

“There are Saudi women shake hands and hug their male friends particularly if they are not Saudi. It is a matter of personal choice not culture-specific behaviour. Almost these women do not wear hijab and are more sociable and extravert. “

Another personality trait was identified by the participants as being vital to the process of acceptance in an L2 culture: open-mindedness. Adeem saw open-mindedness as vital to accepting and adapting to a new culture. She stated that she thought simply living in an L2 culture was not enough on its own to gain acceptance. Instead, interaction was needed and without it, people would tend to become isolated.

Adeem (female, 40)

“On the other hand, there are Saudis living in the UK longer period than me but they are not open to the new community. They remain isolated, which affects their behaviours. Length of residence is not a strong motivation to accommodate to or accept the new culture. I think they are not able to balance both cultures.”

Badr also spoke about the importance of openness. He relayed the story of a Saudi student who he met in Australia and stated that he thought people with only one culture were less able to adapt to a new culture and more prone to cultural shock when moving between cultures.

Badr (male, 39)

“Personality traits have a role to play towards accepting or dealing with the other. This is evident when I personally observed a Saudi student in Australia who came from a rural area in Saudi Arabia where there is [...] monocultural norms and customs. People in these areas are less open to other cultures. So he had a cultural shock in the way he greets people in Sydney.”

### **6.2.3 Summary of qualitative results**

The qualitative responses show that four of the participants felt that their personalities had changed as a result of living in the UK. They identified cultural empathy, social initiative and open-mindedness as key personality traits that were important to this process. They all demonstrated a significant degree of cultural empathy, showing that they understood that people of different cultures would behave differently from each other. They showed a willingness to alter their own behaviour to fit the norms of their L2 culture. One, for example, made it clear that she would take steps not to embarrass others due to cultural differences by using her L1 non-verbal greetings. She recognised that people from a different culture might be uncomfortable with these. The participants also indicated a degree of open-mindedness and they were able to use this to interact successfully with people of a different culture and avoid embarrassment.

The relationship between non-verbal greetings behaviours and personality traits was discussed by participants. They identified some traits in particular as relevant to NVGs: open-mindedness, sociability, introversion and extraversion. They frequently compared extraverts and introverts with regard

to their non-verbal greetings behaviours. They tended to state that more extravert and sociable people were more able to use touch greetings. They were also more successful at greetings in general, accepting others more readily and being able to respect their choice of non-verbal greetings. The participants generally stated that those with more introvert, reserved personalities were more likely to use non-touch greetings, such as nods and smiles. They used touching behaviours less often than extraverted people. They also often found it hard to talk about their feelings with others and so would tend to maintain a greater physical distance between themselves and others.

The length of time spent in an L2 culture was not thought of as particularly important, compared to personality traits. Openness to a new culture and level of interaction with it were thought to be much more influential on how well a person could adapt to and integrate with their L2. The participants also felt that coming from a background where they had interacted with other cultures was helpful in adapting to life in an L2 culture, and people from monocultural backgrounds would often struggle.

### **6.3 Discussion of findings**

Chapter 6 thus far has included a presentation of the results of the study related to research question 3. This question asked what the relationship is between personality traits and MPJs of L1 NVGs made by Saudis living in the UK. The question has two parts. RQ3 (a) drew on evidence in the literature of the acculturation process and how this influenced and is influenced by personality (Güngör, et al., 2013; McCrae et al., 1998; Zhang et al., 2010; Tracy-Ventura et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2013; Dewaele and Wei, 2012; Allik and McCrae, 2002). The hypothesis that emerged from this research question was that Saudis living in the UK would score more highly for particular personality traits than Saudis in Saudi Arabia. Personality dimensions of the MPQ were used as dependent variables.

The personality traits of L2 learners and immigrants have an effect on their L2 pragmatic competence: production and perception (Verhoeven and Vermeer, 2002; Kuriscak, 2006; Taguchi, 2014c). The MPQ is designed as a diagnostic tool examining people's ability to transition to and integrate with a new culture. This study's author predicted that intercultural competence would be associated with higher levels of intercultural adaptation (Leong, 2007, p. 556).

Research question 3 (b) and its associated hypothesis were developed using the assumption that there would be a correlation between particular personality traits and judgments of appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The assumption was made that personality traits would not all have an equal influence on the MPJs made of L1 NVGs by Saudis living in the UK.

#### *Acculturation of personality*

There is a relationship between cultural transition and personality in L2 speakers. This study focuses on two groups of Saudis, one living in the UK and one in Saudi Arabia, and uses the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) to assess their personalities. The study showed that there were only two personality dimensions of the MPQ in which Saudis in the UK scored higher than Saudis in Saudi Arabia: Open-mindedness and Cultural Empathy. This finding was in line with previous research, which demonstrates that immigrants experience a change in personality during their time in an L2 culture. Leong (2007) found through a longitudinal study that a group of Singaporean students on a study abroad programme scored higher on Flexibility, Social Initiative, Emotional Stability and Open-mindedness than their peers who had not studied abroad.

Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven (2009) found that Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness were higher among teenagers living in London who had

been born abroad, compared to their peers who had been born and always lived in London. However, this was in contrast to Leong's (2007) study, which did not find that there was any increase in Cultural Empathy as a result of immigration. This study found that Saudis living in the UK scored higher than Saudis living at home on two dimensions, rather than the four that featured in Leong's study. It should be noted that the Leong study looked at young adults studying abroad, a self-selecting group that may have a tendency to have particular personality traits for reasons other than experience of living in an L2 culture. Cultural Empathy means the ability to understand others' cultural perspectives (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2001; Van der Zee et al., 2013). People who score highly for Cultural Empathy are able to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of other cultural-background people easily.

This study's participants scored highly for Cultural Empathy on average. They appear to be aware of the cultural behaviour of British people and adjust to the new culture, in particular after living for a longer period (Yakunina et al., 2012). The same is true for Open-mindedness, with open-minded people better able to adjust to new norms. This study found that Saudis living in the UK were more open-minded than those living in Saudi Arabia and are therefore more likely to be open and tolerant to cultural difference.

The qualitative data on acculturation and personality supports this study's quantitative findings. Participants spoke via interview about their own increases in Cultural Empathy and how these manifested. Cultural Empathy was often demonstrated by the degree to which people recognised others' emotions and altered their behaviour accordingly (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001). More open-minded participants demonstrated that they respected the way that others chose to greet each other. Being open-minded helped participants adapt to and accept UK cultural norms. Kim (2008) stated that more open-minded people are able to interpret new situations without bias and prejudice. This study's findings were in line with

Kim's research. Saudis living in the UK on average accepted British culture more readily than the Saudis living in Saudi Arabia (Table 5.2).

This study and other research support the notion that personality undergoes acculturation when people move to a new culture. Personality changes in response to social, cultural and environmental factors. They are particularly prone to changing as a result of cultural sympathy and Open-mindedness (Wilson et al., 2012; McCrae and Costa, 2003; McCrae et al., 1998). Personality traits are also seen through emotions and behavioural change (Wilson et al., 2012).

There are complex processes of interaction involved in personality change. Personality traits interact with the milieu over time to shape habits, skills, values, behaviours and relationships (Van der Zee et al., 2013). Personality reflects innate tendencies but it is nevertheless subject to change, because personality traits are "designed to respond to the requirements of the environment" (Allik and McCrae, 2002, p. 304). This study demonstrates that Saudis living in the UK are likely to have higher levels of Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. It is these two traits that are the biggest predictors of a person's ability to adapt to and be successful in their L2 culture (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2001).

These two traits have been argued to have a significant association with multiculturalism and the ability to enjoy living in a multicultural environment. Cultural Empathy and openness are linked strongly to positive associations with cultures other than one's own (Yakunina, et al., 2012). Being open to a variety of cultural norms is likely to help individuals adjust to life in a new culture, including those participating in this study.

The quantitative research element of this study finds that Saudis living in the UK are less likely to demonstrate Flexibility than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. Leong's (2007) study, by contrast, found that over a four-month period, students studying abroad became more flexible. People who score low

on the MPQ for Flexibility usually prefer to retain established behavioural patterns that they trust and they struggle to adapt to change (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Despite this, the Saudis living in the UK who were part of this study reported being able to adjust their L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours with relative ease. However, when we look at their statements in detail it is clear that the shifts they made away from their L1 norms were only partial (see Chapter 4). The partial nature of the participants' adjustments to British culture means that this study's findings are indeed consistent with other research (e.g. Pavlenko, 2000; Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002).

Participants' scores for the final two traits included on the MPQ, Social Initiative and Emotional Stability, did not show a statistically significant difference from the control group of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. Social Initiative is similar to extraversion, a trait that participants spoke of frequently in interviews.

One would expect a high level of Social Initiative to be important for an immigrant. Possessing social initiative helps people to develop stronger connections with other immigrants and local people in their adopted community and aids the process of making friends and developing networks (Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven, 2009; Leong, 2007). Saudis in the UK in this study stated that they had an average of 13 British friends (Table 5.7). They also stated that they greeted an average of 12 British people and 7 Saudis each week (see Section 5.2.1). While the number of local British friends might indicate a higher level of Social Initiative, this is not necessarily the case. Tracy-Ventura et al., (2016) found that the Social Initiative levels of multi-lingual people remained the same after a year living abroad.

The length of time spent abroad was not shown to influence the Emotional Stability levels of Saudis living in the UK. They had a level of Emotional Stability, as tested by the MPQ, similar to that of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia. This finding is in opposition to the findings of several other studies, that showed that time spent living abroad does tend to lead to an increase in

Emotional Stability (Leong, 2007; Yakunina et al., 2012; Tracy-Ventura et al., 2016; Basow and Gaugler, 2017). Each of these studies showed that certain personality traits, including Emotional Stability, increased during time spent living abroad, significantly so in some cases. A study by Zimmerman and Neyer (2013) used the Big Five personality questionnaire rather than the MPQ and found a decrease in levels of neuroticism after time living abroad. Neuroticism (or the lack of it) is the trait on the Big Five Inventory that can be most closely approximated to Emotional Stability. It may be that the different results of this study and those mentioned is that the other studies tended to be of young adults and teens who were deliberately seeking change and self-development. This study's participants were mostly in their 30s and 40s. The process of leaving one's own country and moving to a new culture is often stressful, and many people struggle to cope with acculturative stress (Ward and Rana-Deuba, 2000; Leone et al., 2005). Spending time living abroad leads to uncertainty and stress and many people struggle to adjust to life in a new culture ( $M = 24.28$ ). Low levels of Emotional Stability can lead to low levels of acculturation, and it may be that this was experienced by this study's participants (see Table 5.1).

In sum, acculturation is a difficult experience. Being able to fit in with people in a new culture and use a non-native language can help strengthen the multicultural personality traits of Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness. Hypothesis 1 is partially supported by the findings.

#### *The relationship between the MPQ traits and non-verbal greetings*

Research question 3 (b) tests the hypothesis that MPQ personality dimensions will influence the metapragmatic judgments made by Saudis in the UK of L1 non-verbal greetings. This study found that those with higher scores for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness were likely to make different metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings than those with low scores.

To understand the relationship between MPQ scores and metapragmatic judgments, we should look again at the MPQ scores of Saudis living in the UK and how they correlate to judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours (see Figure 6.2, and Table 6.9). The correlations were established only for Saudis living in the UK – the tests were not run for Saudis living in Saudi Arabia.

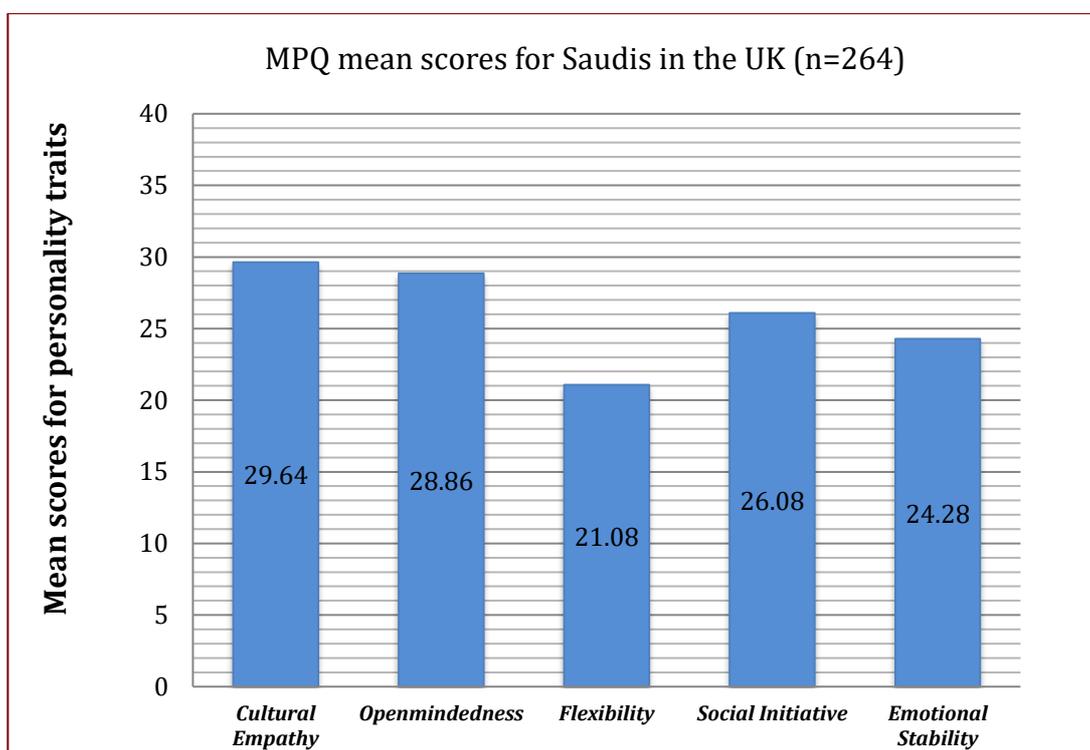


Figure 6.2 Mean score for MPQ dimensions for Saudi residents in the UK

Figure 6.2 shows that Saudis living in the UK have high levels of Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness, as scored on the MPQ. It also shows lower levels of Social Initiative, Emotional Stability and Flexibility.

It was expected that the highest-scoring traits as scored on the MPQ would be related to the metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours among Saudis in the UK. This study showed that this was the case for some behaviours, namely, handshake and proximity. There was also a negative correlation shown between participants with higher scores on the MPQ and

judgments of some L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, namely, the cheek kiss and embrace.

Table 6.9 (below) summarises the correlations found.

Table 6.9 Summary for correlations between personality traits and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK

MPQ	MPJs of L1 NVGs	Close friends		Colleagues		Manager-employee		Strangers	
		~	M	~	M	~	M	~	M
Cultural Empathy	Handshake	+	4.51	+	4.30	+	4.02		
	Cheek-to-cheek kiss			-	1.80	-	1.77	-	1.93
	Embrace			-	1.80	-	1.76	-	1.90
	Proximity			+	4.42	+	4.02	+	4.02
Open-mindedness	Handshake	+	4.51	+	4.30				
	Cheek-to-cheek kiss			-	1.80	-	1.77		
	Embrace			-	1.80	-	1.76		
	Proximity					+	4.02	+	4.02
Flexibility	Cheek-to-cheek kiss	+	3.97						

Note. M = Mean score for appropriateness ratings (from 1 = inappropriate, to 5 = appropriate)  
 (~) = Correlation  
 (+) = Significant positive correlation  
 (-) = Significant negative correlation

This table demonstrates the relationships between a variety of personality traits as measured by the MPQ and metapragmatic judgments made by the participants. Three personality traits were shown to have a significant correlation with the participants' metapragmatic judgments of NVGs – Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness and Flexibility. A deeper analysis showed that an increase in Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness among

Saudis living in the UK was related to an increase in the degree to which they thought handshake and proximity were appropriate greetings in three different relational situations.

### *Cultural Empathy*

The correlation between personality and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours was showed through an analysis. A link was found between Cultural Empathy and the participants' metapragmatic judgments of the appropriateness of handshake and proximity as non-verbal greetings behaviours (see Table 6.9). Higher levels of Cultural Empathy among the participants in the study were linked strongly with high ratings of the appropriateness of handshake and proximity.

There is, therefore, some similarity between Saudi and British interpretations of the meaning of handshake and proximity as cultural greetings. Saudis living away from Saudi Arabia usually think of both these greetings as being appropriate. This may be partly because they have gained cultural empathy over time and so have come to understand that, as well as these behaviours being appropriate in Saudi culture, they are also appropriate in British culture. This understanding then leads to even greater Cultural Empathy, intercultural understanding and then to intercultural competence (Wilson et al., 2013).

Cultural Empathy was shown to be linked negatively to how appropriate participants thought the cheek kiss and embrace greetings were. As the participants had spent time in the UK, and their Cultural empathy grew, they began to rate these common Saudi greeting as less appropriate than Saudis living in Saudi Arabia (Hassanain, 1994; Turjoman, 2005). A high degree of Cultural Empathy helps people to identify with others of distinctive cultural background and tolerate cultural differences more easily. The cheek-to-cheek kiss and the embrace are rarely used in the UK (Reid, 2015). Because of this,

people living abroad will find it easier to adjust to their adopted culture if they can develop the Cultural Empathy to understand when these greetings are appropriate and when they are not (Dewaele and Wei, 2012).

### *Open-mindedness*

The study found that Saudis living in the UK scored higher for Open-mindedness than those living in Saudi Arabia. Open-mindedness was positively correlated with assessments of handshakes as being an appropriate behaviour between close friends and manager and employee, and proximity as being appropriate between strangers (see Table 6.9).

The high degree of Open-mindedness seen in Saudis living in the UK indicates that they are more likely to see these behaviours as appropriate and use them in the UK. Open-mindedness helps aid successful cultural transition, especially with regards to the degree to which people are willing to adopt new behaviours and be open to changing attitudes (Wilson et al., 2013). Kim (2008) argued that more open-minded people are usually less prejudiced than others and are able to make relatively neutral interpretations of situations. They are less resistant than other people to the adoption of new norms.

High levels of Open-mindedness were also found to correspond to lower appropriateness ratings for cheek kisses and embraces between colleagues and between manager and employee. This could be because open-minded Saudis who have moved to the UK have begun to adopt British cultural norms, and so they see these greetings as strange, even though they are common in Saudi Arabia. This is in line with Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002), who found that L2 learners who scored highly for openness to experience on the Big Five scale (similar to Open-mindedness) had a stronger desire to integrate into their adopted culture and be seen as part of it. This desire meant that they began to alter their views of usual Saudi greetings so that their perceptions became modified.

The participants in the study had tended to be more open-minded and were therefore open to changing their behaviours and altering their views of particular behaviours (see Section 4.2.2.2). This process was part of their attempts to fit in to their new culture (see Figure 4.8). This is in line with Kim (2001) who found that open-minded people are more likely to be willing to adopt new norms. So, the Saudis in this study were willing to reduce their use of cheek kisses and embraces after moving to the UK where these greetings are rare (Reid, 2015).

Open-mindedness on the MPQ is broadly equivalent to openness to experience on the Big Five scale (Basow and Gaugler, 2017, p. 40). It means being open to trying new experiences, carrying out new activities, being influenced intellectually and being willing to examine and think about a variety of social, political and cultural ideas (Wilson et al., 2013). Being open to experience is, therefore, a vital precursor to sociocultural competence. Open-mindedness came through in the qualitative interviews as being vital to the development of cross-cultural understanding. Participants mentioned the importance of being open-minded in developing such understanding and stated that they respected others' preferences. Some of the participants used the term 'open-minded' specifically, giving this as a reason for their own awareness of the need to adjust their NVGs.

Open-mindedness allows people to react to and work with others without bias or prejudice, even if they are from a different culture and operate according to different norms and values. Similar to Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness helps people understand others and how they think and feel. It's vital to managing life well in a new culture. Low levels of Open-mindedness were seen in two participants who gave an essentialist view of British culture. They both stated that they believed the British to be generally open-minded, which is itself a stereotype and demonstrates a lack of Open-mindedness (Kim, 2008; Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2002).

Saudis living in the UK were found to score in the middle of the range on the MPQ for Open-mindedness. They are able to put their own culture in perspective and are open to the ideas, values and norms of other cultures, including in regards to their perceptions of the appropriateness of L1 NVGs (Panicacci, and Dewaele, 2017a).

### *Flexibility*

The study demonstrated a weak correlation between Flexibility and MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings. Levels of Flexibility of Saudis abroad was found positively related to their MPJs of cheek kisses between close friends. Saudis living in the UK were seen to judge a cheek-to-cheek kiss between close friends as appropriate. The same group assessed a cheek-to-cheek kiss in other situations (colleagues, and manager and employee) as being inappropriate. But scoring low for Flexibility meant that Saudis in the UK tended to continue using the behaviour between close friends. This is consistent with their low Flexibility score, as continuing to use this greeting is sign of a desire to maintain trusted behaviour patterns and of being unable or unwilling to change behaviour in response to life in a different culture (Wilson et al., 2012; McCrae et al., 1998). The Saudis living in the UK in this study tended to prefer to maintain their cheek kiss between close friends, even though it is not the norm among British people (Reid, 2015).

This study has shown that Saudis living in the UK for at least three years demonstrate some adaptation of their MPJs of L1 NVGs and of their greetings behaviours (Chapter 4). They did not adapt their traditional greeting between close friends, the cheek-to-cheek kiss. This may be because they felt a desire to continue life as they had lived it in Saudi Arabia in at least some areas, and preserving this greeting meant maintain a link to their L1 culture. Saudis living in the UK might also use the cheek-to-cheek kiss as a way of strengthening their friendships with other Saudis in the UK. They lacked Flexibility in this behaviour, and resisted the loss of it (Kope, 2007). They did

not react to their new culture and instead sought to maintain their native culture. This result supports the view that bicultural can develop the skills to move between the two cultures as needed (Ewert, 2008). Saudis living in the UK who were less flexible to adapt their perceptions of cheek kisses between close friends were thought to be able to use their intercultural way when interacting with others of either culture.

### *Social Initiative*

Social Initiative was not shown to have any link to MPJs of appropriateness of L1 NVGs for Saudis living in the UK. The results of this study showed that Saudis living in the UK scored in the middle of the range on the MPQ for social initiative (M=26.08) (see Figure 6.3). Saudis living in Saudi Arabia scored similarly, with no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Social Initiative is the tendency of people to take an active approach to social situations (Van de Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Taking an active approach means being able to connect with others easily across cultures and make new friends. The quantitative research element of this study found that Saudis living in the UK greet seven other Saudis in a week on average, and 12 British people (see Section 4.2). According to the qualitative data, Saudis living in the UK have an average of six Saudi friends and 13 British friends (see Section 5.2.1).

The data demonstrates a willingness to make friends and network within their L2 culture for Saudis in the UK. However, this initiative does not correlate with MPJs of L1 NVGs. One could conclude that this lack of correlation implies a lack of willingness to make new friends in the UK, but the data does not bear that out. In addition, Saudis in the UK scored highly for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness, both qualities that would tend to imply a

willingness to integrate. The lack of correlation can be resulted from using the short form of the MPQ. Furthermore, there was some conflict between the qualitative data and the quantitative results of Social Initiative. Because the personality factors were assessed using the short form of the MPQ rather than the original scale, it is possible that the shortened Social Initiative subscale may capture somewhat different personality traits than the fuller one (Basow, and Gaugler, 2017).

Social initiative is synonymous with extraversion and sociability in the Big Five model (Basow and Gaugler, 2017, p. 40). The majority of the interviewees made comments around the importance of extraversion and how this affects the willingness of people to undertake touch greetings. In general, extraverted people are thought of as being more sociable, happy and open to experience than introverts (Allik and McCrae, 2002). They are also more willing to accept and give touch greetings and tend to be more accepting of others. Extraverts are shown to be more proactive than introverts in developing relationships. These are behaviours that help people integrate into a new culture and can be used strategically for doing so.

For those that took part in the qualitative interviews, there was a clear link between extraversion and NVGs. They frequently compared introverts and extraverts and their non-verbal greetings behaviours. They tended to say that introverts use non-touch NVGs such as smiles and nods, whereas extraverts are more likely to use touch. They commented that introverts might find it hard to connect with others and therefore struggle to adapt to a new culture (Leong, 2007). Introverts might also find it hard to develop rapport with others and therefore struggle not to lose face in a new community (Wilson et al., 2013).

Though the quantitative results of this study do not demonstrate any significant relationship between levels of Social Initiative and MPJs of L1 NVGs, the interviewees asserted that Social Initiative and similar traits including sociability and extraversion were influential in determining people's

approach to NVGs. They also determined how people interact more broadly, including their ability to make friends when in an L2 culture. Introverts are more likely to be reserved and to avoid touch greetings.

### *Emotional Stability*

The study's results did not show any significant correlation between levels of Emotional Stability and MPJs of L1 NVGs. Emotional Stability is the opposite of neuroticism (one of the Big Five traits). Neurotic, or of low Emotional Stability people are prone to anxiety, depression and irritability (McCrae et al., 1998). People who demonstrate a high degree of neuroticism will tend to struggle under pressure and react badly in stressful situations. They will lack the ability to deal well with change, including the psychological and emotional discomfort involved in moving to a new culture. The study's participants may experience lack of means and social support that are necessary to cope with pressure.

Emotional Stability is known to be important in the development of intercultural effectiveness (Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven, 2000). Those who build successful lives in a new culture tend to be those with high Emotional Stability. However, much of the research into the impact of Emotional Stability focuses on coping skills and the ability to deal with stress (Ward and Kennedy, 1994).

Part of the reason for the influence of Emotional stability on success in a new culture may lie in the effects of anxiety and instability on a person's ability to take part in social activities and exchange greetings. Because those with lower levels of emotional stability are less likely to socialise, the links between Emotional Stability and "the acquisition of culture-specific skills are somewhat tenuous" (Wilson et al., 2013, p. 905). This may be the reason that this study failed to find a link between Emotional Stability and MPJS of L1 NVGs made by Saudis living in the UK.

While emotional instability is likely to lead to lower levels of socio-cultural adaptation, the findings of this study do indicate that Saudis in the UK had reached some degree of adaptation. Leone et al. (2005) defined the correlation between the Big Five traits and those of the MPQ. Emotional Stability was defined as being related to agreeableness (and in turn to Cultural Empathy), and Open-mindedness to be related to openness to experience. The scores of the participants of this study were highest for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness. This means that, despite the lack of statistical difference found for emotional stability, we can't conclude that Saudis living in the UK feel anxious or insecure. The lack of a significant score for Emotional Stability may simply mean that other social or cultural variables were more important.

In sum, personality traits relate to metapragmatic judgments in a variety of ways, and the results of this study are mixed in this area. Personality is complex and can be difficult to analyse. Based on the MPQ, the research found that Saudis living in the UK are more likely to be interested in exploring a new culture and to respect others' cultural choices of greetings, indicating Open-mindedness. They tend to understand that others from different backgrounds may react differently to them, suggesting Cultural Empathy. The qualitative research indicated a focus on the importance of extraversion and making friends, indicating Social Initiative.

All these traits indicate a willingness to adjust to a new culture, including adjusting their judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. With regard to Flexibility and Emotional Stability, the research was not able to draw reliable conclusions, in lines with previous research of Lee and Ciftci, (2014) who concluded that these both dimensions – Flexibility and Emotional Stability – might be inadequately measured by using the short form of MPQ.

#### **6.4 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter has provided the results of research around RQ3, which addresses the impact of personality traits – whether they change once a

person moves to an L2 culture and how they impact metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. The participants in the study were Saudis who had lived in the UK for at least three years.

Comparisons were drawn between Saudis in Saudi Arabia and those in the UK, in an effort to establish if there was a difference between the two groups in their personalities as scored on the MPQ. There was an increase in levels of Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness seen in Saudis who had moved to the UK. The Saudis in Saudi Arabia showed higher levels of Flexibility. There was no statistically significant difference in terms of Social Initiative or Emotional Stability.

The results of this study, therefore, partially support hypothesis 1, which was:

*H1: Compared to Saudis living in Saudi Arabia, Saudi residents in the UK will report higher scores on MPQ traits: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability.*

The quantitative data obtained through the research undertaken was in partial support of the hypothesis. The data showed that Saudis in the UK scored more highly for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness than those who had not moved away, but lower for Flexibility. No difference was found for the other two personality traits: Social Initiative and Emotional Stability.

The qualitative data supported the quantitative data. It showed that participants increased their levels of Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness during their time in the UK. They were generally aware of cultural differences and understood that emotional reactions to particular behaviours would differ between cultures.

*H2: Saudis with higher scores on MPQ dimensions will rate L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours as being **less** appropriate.*

The quantitative data gathered partially supports hypothesis two. The Saudis living in the UK scored more highly for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness than those at home country, and this was related to their judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours. Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness were positively correlated to MPJs made of handshakes and proximity greetings and negatively associated with MPJs made of cheek-to-cheek kisses and embraces. Handshake and proximity are greetings common in UK culture, so the participants' Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness led them to consider them appropriate. At the same time, they considered cheek kisses and embraces as less appropriate, as these are not common in the UK culture. This indicates a degree of cultural adjustment and acceptance.

This hypothesis was developed with an understanding that higher scores on MPQ dimensions imply a high degree of intercultural awareness. It was expected that high scores on the MPQ would correlate with judgments of the inappropriateness of the cheek kiss and embrace, and not with the same judgments of handshake and proximity. The interviews with participants in the qualitative research were not in agreement with the quantitative data on Social Initiative and its effect on non-verbal greetings. Social Initiative, a term usually taken to be synonymous with extraversion (Basow and Gaugler, 2017, p. 40), supports touch-based greetings.

The interviewees did not specify any personality trait as being important, but they did talk about how participants' natural personalities might make it easier or harder to adjust to life in a new culture. It is worth mentioning that every individual will respond in a different way to each situation. Every person has different instincts, values and histories that inform their understanding of an L2 culture and make up their whole personality. It is difficult to analyse personality traits separately, and this can lead to data that is "far less

conclusive, indicating that not all traits have an equal effect” (Taguchi and Roever, 2017, p. 155).

The data collected in this study does not suggest that personality traits will stop individuals from engaging with a new cultural environment and from making their life in a new culture a success. Personality may not necessarily change dramatically in response to life in an L2 culture but may develop naturally and slowly: “what is seen as a change in personality is simply a shift in attitudes and behaviours corresponding to a shift in situation or context” (Grosjean, 2015, p. 584).

The environment in which people find themselves influences their beliefs, values and behaviours. Adapting to a new culture includes not only understanding cultural diversity but also being willing to appreciate it. This means that attitudes to NVGs can help indicate cultural shift in individuals.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter summarises the research and gives the study's findings in regard to each research question. Subsection 7.1.1 deals with research question 1, subsection 7.1.2 with research question 2 and subsection 7.1.3 with research question 3. In section 7.2, the multicompetence of L2 users is discussed. Section 7.3 considers the practical implications. And 7.4 presents the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research.

The purpose of this study is to explore how an L2 could influence L1 norms in relation to life in an L2 culture and changes in metapragmatic awareness. The study examines how an L2 influences judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours made by Saudis living in the UK. The study's participants were 264 Saudis who had lived in the UK for at least three years and two control groups. The control groups were 67 Saudis who had never lived abroad and 106 British L1 speakers of English who had never been to Saudi Arabia.

All participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire that asked about the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours and sought to determine levels of acculturation via the VIA and personality traits measured by the MPQ. In addition, qualitative research was carried out via nine semi-structured interviews with Saudis living in the UK. The research sought to establish what their experiences of adjusting to L2 life had been and how their judgments of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings had changed over time.

The data gathered was analysed in response to the three research questions and their corresponding hypotheses.

**Research Question 1:**

**RQ1 (a):** Does length of residence in the UK affect Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours?

**H1:** Metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs by Saudi residents in the UK will be different from those by at-home Saudis.

**H2:** Metapragmatic judgments of L1 NVGs by Saudi residents in the UK will approximate those by British L1 speakers of English in the UK.

**RQ1 (b):** What are the participants' views on appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings over time of residence in the UK?

**Research question 2:**

**RQ2 (a):** Does cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures affect metapragmatic judgments of Saudi non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?

**H1:** Saudis living abroad who have a strong orientation towards their L2 British culture will diverge **more** from Saudi norms than others.

**H2:** Saudis living abroad who have a strong attachment to Saudi culture will diverge **less** from Saudi norms than others.

**RQ2 (b):** What are participants' views on the effects of maintenance of L1 culture and acceptance of L2 culture on appropriateness of Saudi non-verbal greetings?

### **Research Question 3**

**RQ3 (a):** Does living abroad affect the personality traits of Saudi residents in the UK over time? If that is the case, do Saudi residents in the UK score higher on personality traits than Saudis in the home country?

**H1:** Compared to the at-home Saudis control group, Saudi residents in the UK will report higher scores on MPQ traits: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness, Flexibility, Social Initiative, and Emotional Stability.

**RQ3 (b):** Are personality traits, measured by MPQ, linked to metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?

**H2:** Saudis with higher scores on MPQ dimensions will rate L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours as being less appropriate.

## **7.1 Major findings**

### **7.1.1 Research question 1**

*Does the length of residence in the UK affect Saudis' metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greeting behaviours?*

Considerable variation was found in the MPJs made of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudis living in the UK and the two control groups of Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and British people. The two Saudi groups were found to make different MPJs of L1 non-verbal greetings between colleagues, manager and employee, and strangers. The judgments the Saudis in the UK group made of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings were similar to those made by British L1 English speakers between close friends, colleagues, manager and employee, and strangers.

The difference seen in L1 non-verbal greetings behaviour between the Saudis living in the UK and Saudi Arabia were largest in relation to cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace. These were rated as being the least appropriate of the behaviours studied when used between colleagues, manager and employee and strangers. However, despite the clear difference, the participants had not made a complete shift to standard British perceptions and retained much of their Saudi metapragmatic awareness. The study focused on Saudis living in the UK and compared them with British people. Comparisons between the two groups showed that their MPJs of a few L1 non-verbal greetings were similar. The quantitative data was backed up by qualitative interviews, in which Saudis in the UK reported that they had been able to understand differences between Saudi and British cultures and cope with them.

The interviewees spoke about how they had adapted their approach to non-verbal greetings. They talked of avoiding some behaviours, reducing the use of some or simply changing their preferences. The cheek-to-cheek kiss in particular was often avoided, as it was frequently misunderstood by British people. The change in their behaviour varied depending on the context and the people they were interacting with. Other participants were more resistant to changing their behaviour. These participants were those who were more attached to Saudi culture and greetings behaviours. The length of time spent in the UK had a small impact on the likelihood of resistance.

The qualitative findings demonstrate the impact of sex differences in the interactions. Saudis living abroad often face difficulty with the expectation of physical contact with people of the opposite sex, something that is forbidden in Saudi Arabia, except among close family. This could lead to embarrassment and communication problems, though these issues were usually worked through. The process of doing so served to improve the intercultural awareness of Saudis living in the UK.

To conclude, the data related to RQ1 showed some influence of an L2 on L1 metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings (Cook, 2003, 2002;

Pavlenko, 2000; Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002; Grosjean, 2001, 2012; Kecskes, 2015). The data shows that Saudis in the UK make different judgments of the appropriateness of L1 greetings behaviours than Saudis living at home. How far this was the case depended on various factors, including the length of time spent in the UK, levels of interaction with British people and familiarity with British norms.

The results show that an L2 has an influence on L1. L2 speakers will have been gradually influenced by their L2 environment and made a slow shift towards their adopted culture's norms. However, the change in them is not complete and the Saudis studied fell somewhere between other Saudis and British people. While their metapragmatic judgments of L1 norms had been influenced by their L2 culture, they had not lost any of their L1 pragmatic norms (Brown and Gullberg, 2008; Kecskes, 2014, 2015).

### **7.1.2 Research question 2**

*Does cultural orientation towards L1 and L2 cultures affect metapragmatic judgments of Saudi non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?*

The research findings related to this question indicates that there were differences between the two Saudi groups in terms of acculturation. Both groups scored higher on their attachment to Saudi culture than on their adoption of British culture. Saudis living in Saudi Arabia scored higher for attachment to their heritage Saudi culture and those in the UK scored higher for acceptance of British culture. The quantitative results demonstrated that an attachment to L1 Saudi culture generally had a positive correlation with appropriateness ratings given L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours by the group of Saudis in the UK. Greater cultural orientation towards Saudi culture affected which non-verbal greetings participants considered to be appropriate.

Those who were more oriented to British culture made negative judgments of some L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours, seeing these as less appropriate because they are not behaviours experienced in L2 culture. The behaviours in question include the cheek-to-cheek kiss. As a greeting seldom used in the UK, this was not considered appropriate by those who had some British orientation.

Participants often mentioned in interviews that they would prefer to avoid physical contact when greeting people. They identified various reasons, including health, social, cultural and psychological. Being in an L2 culture and interacting with L2 people gave the participants an awareness of what was usual in that culture and helped the participants to understand their own cultural difference. Saudis living in the UK tended to want to reduce touch contact in order to be able to fit in better with British social expectations.

Cultural orientation impacts L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours to a degree, but its impact is narrower than expected. Acculturation is measured in this study in a bidimensional sense (Ryder et al., 2000), which allows measuring people's orientations towards two cultures independently of each other. This model leads immigrants to develop a variety of norms that fit between the two cultures, distinguishing them from monocultural people. Bidimensional acculturation is not always linked to metapragmatic judgments of non-verbal greetings.

Metapragmatic judgments of NVGs varied in the study. They depended on how far a person was attached to L1 culture and how far they had adopted L2 culture. Those who scored highly for attachment to Saudi culture also conveyed that they preferred Saudi greetings, which they considered more emotional and expressive. Even this group, however, said that they avoided Saudi greeting that they knew would be frowned upon in the UK. Saudi people living in the UK with a high degree of acculturation to L2 British culture tended to say that they preferred L2 greetings in many situations and even

used them with other Saudis. This indicates a permanent behaviour change and an ability to balance both L1 and L2 culture effectively.

### **7.1.3 Research question 3**

*Are personality traits, measured by MPQ, linked to metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings by Saudi residents in the UK?*

The data collected in relation to research question 3 shows a statistically significant difference between Saudis living in Saudi Arabia and those in the UK on three of the personality traits defined in by the MPQ: Cultural Empathy, Open-mindedness and Flexibility. Those in the UK scored higher for Open-mindedness and Cultural Empathy, while those in Saudi Arabia scored higher for Flexibility. There were not statistically significant differences seen between the groups for Social Initiative and Emotional Stability.

The quantitative data partially supported this question's first hypothesis. The analysis of qualitative data supported the statistics on Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness, demonstrating that Saudis in the UK understand cultural differences and similarities in relation to non-verbal greetings.

The quantitative findings and qualitative interviews partially supported hypothesis two on the relationship between multicultural personality traits and metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings. Saudis in the UK were shown to have high scores for Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness, and these were related to particular metapragmatic judgments of non-verbal greetings behaviours. High scores on these personality traits were positively correlated with high appropriateness ratings for handshake and proximity greetings, and negatively correlated with low appropriateness ratings for cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace greetings. So, people with strong Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness were more likely to think that handshake and

proximity were appropriate greetings and that cheek-to-cheek kiss and embrace were inappropriate greetings.

These last two greetings involve a high level of physical contact, which is less common in greetings in the UK but more normal in Saudi Arabia. This shows that people who are culturally empathetic and open-minded are more likely to adapt their behaviour to fit their L2 culture. The results of the qualitative interviews countered the quantitative survey results with regard to Social Initiative, a personality trait that can be considered equivalent to extraversion (Basow and Gaugler, 2017, p. 40). Interviewees frequently mentioned the importance of extraversion and that it led to more physical contact in greetings exchanges.

To conclude, the relationship between multicultural personality traits and non-verbal greetings behaviours is complex. Research into personality demonstrates that analysing personality traits separately is less reliable than together, as not every trait as effects equal to other traits. Changing scores on personality tests can reflect changes in attitudes, feelings and behaviours due to a change in context or environment, rather than a true personality change.

This study found that being exposed to L2 British culture influenced the metapragmatic judgments made of Saudi L1 greetings behaviours by Saudis living in the UK. Some scholars believe that this influence of L2 on L1 demonstrates multicompetence (Cook, 2003, 2002; Pavlenko, 2000; Pavlenko and Jarvis, 2002; Kecskes, 2015; Grosjean, 2001, 2012). Accordingly, this author suggests that Saudis in the UK develop various aspects of communicative competence, including socio-pragmatic, pragmatic, intercultural, interactional, and social.

## **7.2 Multicompetence of Saudi L2 users of English living in the UK**

This study shows that an L2 can influence an L1 through exposure to the L2 culture, changes in cultural orientation and the development of multicultural personality traits. All these can affect perceptions of the appropriateness of L1 non-verbal greetings. The degree of divergence and convergence, level of acculturation, degree of acceptance of L2 culture and scores on multicultural personality profiles were all shown to influence metapragmatic judgments made of L1 greetings by Saudis living in the UK. This study is a good example of the multicompetence paradigm (Cook, 1992, 2003). It demonstrates that Saudi speakers of English as an L2 living in the UK showed transformations in their competence and that this affected their metapragmatic judgments.

Second language speakers are known to be different from monolingual speakers. A second language speaker has a different perspective and knowledge of their first language compared to a monolingual speaker of that first language (Cook, 2002a). This study demonstrated that the metapragmatic judgments made by Saudis who had lived in the UK for at least three years were different to those made by Saudis living in Saudi Arabia.

The change in judgments of appropriateness of NVGs should not be considered as a deficiency (Cook, 2003) but an important development. It could be reversible in people who return to live in Saudi Arabia. The metapragmatic judgments made of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours were similar to first-language English speakers living in the UK. This demonstrates that moving to live in the UK caused the Saudi participants studied to shift away from their L1 norms and increase their understanding of L2 norms. The differences in judgments of appropriateness between the two groups of Saudis studied indicates that the UK resident group had experienced changes in their levels of metapragmatic awareness and developed a degree of communicative competence in English.

Being aware of cultural differences between their native Saudi and adopted British cultures helped the participants to develop communicative competence. The development of socio-pragmatic competence in English contributed to the changes seen in metapragmatic judgments made by the Saudis in the UK. Several mentioned during interviews that they had experienced socio-pragmatic failure when they first came to the UK and began interacting with L1 English speakers. They did not yet understand the cultural differences in social factors that govern greetings behaviours (Cenoz, 2003).

The participants reported using L1 non-verbal greetings in early interactions with native English speakers, which caused communication difficulties and confusion. There were differences in perceptions of social distance and status and their influence on non-verbal greetings. The participants studied had all spent at least three years in the UK, which meant that some progression could be found. They had time to understand and reflect on their own changes in greetings behaviour and social interaction. This might lead to an increase in their socio-pragmatic competence. Furthermore, through the qualitative interviews, it was established that the participants' willingness to make local friends and socialise regularly with British people helped them to overcome communication difficulties and gain cultural understanding. This, then, led to an increase in socio-pragmatic and sociocultural competence.

In this study, there were similar perceptions of appropriateness of non-verbal greetings between Saudis living in the UK and British L1 speakers of English. This study showed the Saudis in the UK were better able to understand and accommodate to L2 culture norms, suggesting that living in the UK had led members of that group to develop sociocultural competence. Sociocultural competence is defined as the ability to identify, perceive and engage in verbal and non-verbal behaviours of social interactions (Dewaele and Pavlenko, 2002). Thus, it could be thought that sociocultural competence increased in this group following interaction with their L2 community. Moreover, cultural competence means the acquisition of the skills needed to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds and live successfully in a non-native culture

(Wilson et al., 2013, p. 900). This study showed that cultural competence could increase over time.

The group of Saudis in the UK viewed L1 non-verbal greetings differently to Saudis in Saudi Arabia. Their perceptions of these greetings were influenced by the fact that they had regular social interactions with British people. Furthermore, their score on acceptance of British L2 culture was higher than Saudis in Saudi Arabia. This indicates that they had developed a degree of intercultural competence that enables to overcome cultural transition difficulties with relative ease. This was partly because they had been in the UK for some time but also because they had developed an active social life.

Interactional competence is considered a component of communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell, 1995). More precisely, interactional competence is considered as a vital element of pragmatic competence (Ren, 2018). It means the ability to understand another person's communicative intent by interpreting their speech act sets. It includes the acquisition of non-verbal competence, including body language, proxemics and touch. In this study, the participants indicated that they changed their non-verbal greetings behaviours as they came to understand that these made a significant difference to their communication. The term interactional competence cannot be used to describe one individual's ability (Kasper and Ross, 2013) but we can assume that being repeatedly part of L2 social interactions helped this study's participants develop it (Young, 2011; Celce-Murcia, 2007; Dings, 2007; Ishida, 2009).

This study demonstrates that Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness helped Saudis living in the UK to develop intercultural effectiveness, intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), and social competence (Van Ek, 1986). Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness meant that participants could take part in social events willingly and minimise their own resistance to them (Kim, 2001).

The various competences discussed are, in fact, not separate. There is considerable overlap between them and they are dependent on each other. It is possible to gain them through deliberate acquisition of knowledge and an increase in understanding of culture, tradition, history and literature. Immersion in an L2 culture strongly supports the development of competence, ideally preceded by good preparation (both in linguistic and socio-cultural terms), effective observational abilities and a willingness to interact with others and socialise in the L2 culture.

In conclusion, Saudi L2 users in the UK studied had their judgments of appropriateness of the non-verbal patterns seen in interactions in their own L1 culture changed influenced by their adopted L2 British culture (Hymes, 1972; McConachy, 2018). People can be competent communicators depending on their perceptions of verbal and nonverbal behaviours (Ting-Toomey, 2012). This, then, led to an increase in communicative competence of Saudis L2 speakers in the UK in our sample.

### **7.3 Pedagogical implications**

This study demonstrates the influence of an L2 on an L1 in terms of the metapragmatic awareness of L1 non-verbal greetings, made by Saudi people with English as their L2, living in the UK. The study finds that competence in an L1 is prone to change as part of the adoption of a second culture. This has implications for cross-linguistic interference and mutual influence between an L1 and L2.

L2 learners should acquire knowledge of the cultural values that are part of the language they are learning. This should include developing the skills needed to gain further knowledge, adapt to changing environments and communicate within them (Barro et al., 1993). L2 teachers should understand L2 pragmatic practice, and communicative and cultural repertoire if they are to be effective (Kasper, 2001). However, balance is important and the need for it presents a pedagogical challenge. For example, learners who gain

knowledge of vocabulary and standard phrasing may become fluent, but without understanding of non-verbal communication patterns will not be effective at interacting with others and will have limited intercultural competence.

Alcón and Safont-Jordà (2008) stated that by learning a second language, one must also learn about L2 pragmatics and the associated culture. To do this, a learner must be willing to alter or suspend their own worldview to enable the learning of new pragmatic rules. The interactional elements of a target culture should be taught through pragmatic instruction. Pragmatic failure results from a lack of understanding of appropriate communication in an L2 culture. Standard, teacher-led classroom learning does not lead to a real understanding of dynamic, genuine interactions. Learning about non-verbal communication, including touch, exposure of the body, eye movement and other facial expressions can only be taught and learned effectively in small groups or pairs. Video can be used to demonstrate behaviour and how it works alongside speech (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Teachers should also seek to focus on their students' reflections on all aspects of communication, both verbal and non-verbal.

McConachy (2013, 2018) suggests that the development of metapragmatic awareness in the classroom can be furthered through dialogue tasks. Teachers should encourage their students to develop an understanding of language and its use in practical, cultural terms. Analytical tasks can help learners to develop a metapragmatic commentary, as seen in the interviews carried out as part of this study. In particular, participants demonstrated a strong awareness of greetings exchanges during the course of conversations in the qualitative interviews. Several of them told the researcher about incidents of communicative breakdown during early meetings with native British people. This can draw out cultural assumptions that might otherwise remain unvoiced.

Non-verbal greetings such as touch and proximity are culturally patterned and context-dependent. Factors including culture, social relationship and setting may influence how far particular behaviours are acceptable. Therefore, it is important for L2 learners to understand that non-verbal greetings behaviours and their appropriateness may change and that there are no rigid rules that can be learned to govern every situation. They should also know that if they find their own L1 behaviours changing in response to gaining L2 competence, they should not consider that a problem or deficiency (Cook, 2003; Kecskes, 2015).

This study shows that living in an L2 culture can lead to changes in L1 non-verbal greetings and assessments of their appropriateness. Though a change in L1 behaviour may be considered attrition or L1 loss, it lifts competence in the L2 and social interactions within it in particular. Teachers can help students gain understanding and competence by designing learning activities that use both L1 and L2 non-verbal greetings in a variety of contexts. These can be linked to cross-cultural and intercultural contexts, with classroom learning supporting the students to gain real-world experience and interaction.

In this study, we established that non-verbal greetings behaviours (in this case the cheek-to-cheek kiss) could become less favoured in an L1 because of their lack of use in an L2. This means it is important for L2 learners to obtain a real awareness of L2 social interaction so that they avoid communication breakdown.

The results of this study demonstrate that there is a link between Cultural Empathy and Open-mindedness and pragmatic awareness. This link has also been demonstrated in previous research. Greater levels of Open-mindedness imply that people are more likely to accommodate other cultures and recognise cultural difference without conflict (Martínez and Haritatos, 2005). Teachers should encourage students to become more aware of cultural difference and open to new environments. Pairing students with others

returning from the L2 culture could be an effective way to support intercultural learning, especially for students planning to move to the L2 culture themselves. The pairs could discuss difficulties in communication, socio-cultural and psychological struggles, and cultural difference.

This research may be useful to study abroad programme directors. Study abroad programmes are intended to help students develop academically, professionally and culturally. Participants in this study stated that they had faced difficulties in communication when they first moved to the UK, especially in dealing with opposite-sex interactions. Study abroad directors could pay more attention to cultural specifics such as these to prepare their students for cultural and communication differences.

#### **7.4 Limitations and directions for future research**

This mixed-methods study included both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The follow-up interviews support the study's statistical findings and help to illustrate and investigate them further. This broadened the study's scope but meant that there were compromises to be made.

Mixed-methods studies are common in applied linguistics and second language acquisition (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, 2011; Dewaele, 2019). They are also often used in other areas (Dewaele, 2005; Dörnyei 2007). However, there is some debate about appropriate and effective sequencing and whether the focus of a study should be on its quantitative or qualitative element. This study involves some limitations as follows.

Firstly, the self-reported data used in the study may not be fully accurate (Lee and Ciftci, 2014). Self-reported data is known to be prone to exaggeration or lack of detail due to embarrassment to reveal private details. The Flexibility and Emotional Stability subscales asked questions that could be considered to

be personal in nature, about subjects such as tension, stress and nervousness. Some participants may not be entirely honest in response to such questions.

Measures of acculturation ask respondents to report their own level of attachment to their L1 and L2 cultures. We cannot be certain that they will always select the correct level. More generally, online questionnaires have limitations. Some elements of the online questionnaires could not be controlled, including the testing environment, the possibility of respondents selecting neutral options inappropriately, respondents selecting the wrong box and being unable to change their answer, being distracted and responding faster towards the end of the questionnaire. It is also likely that the respondents would have some degree of bias and would be keen to impress or please researchers, giving the answers they believed would be 'correct'.

Secondly, the study's sequential explanatory design meant that the quantitative analysis came before the qualitative. Researchers can choose qualitative participants if they would like to (Creswell and Clark, 2011; Dewaele, 2019), but in this study, they were volunteers, in accordance with Baumann (1999). This allows for information to be gathered and insight gained (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Any further studies could instead use the quantitative results to choose participants for the qualitative phase who would be best placed to provide the most useful responses.

Thirdly, the participants did not represent the population which means that the findings cannot be generalised. The study represents a snapshot and does not adequately assess how perceptions change over time. A longitudinal study focused on a wide range of individual differences (such as L2 proficiency, psychological state, and social support) would provide such insight.

Fourthly, the study examined only the participants' perceptions. However, intercultural communication is two-way, and the success of people seeking to integrate into an L2 culture will depend on the host culture's willingness to accept them as well as their own perceptions and behaviour. Discrimination

and other factors will play a part and further research would be beneficial to explore the influence of an L2 on L1 culture, with a range of independent variables to include discrimination on linguistic, cultural and religious grounds.

Lastly, the qualitative data gathered through interviews provided perspectives that were not examined in the quantitative research, particularly the influence of opposite-sex interactions. Further research should focus on gathering a larger amount of qualitative data to gain more comprehensive insight.

Despite these limitations, this study provides insight into how an L2 can influence an L1, including how it affects metapragmatic awareness after several years of exposure to L2 culture. It is an in-depth examination of cultural orientation and personality and how they affect perceptions of L2 and L1 norms, focusing on metapragmatic judgments of L1 non-verbal greetings behaviours.

The study found that L2 users begin to move away from the assumptions of their native culture and towards those of their adopted culture. Acculturation and personality interact in complex ways, and the findings in this area are original. The analysis of experiences of L2 speakers in an L2 culture provides valuable insight into the communication difficulties faced by immigrants.

I am a Saudi L2 English speaker, with five years experience of residence in the UK. My own L1 non-verbal greetings have changed, as have my judgments of appropriateness. I no longer use many touch greetings with Saudi female friends, such as the embrace and cheek kisses. In opposite-sex greetings, I tend to use some non-verbal contact, whereas in Saudi Arabia I would not have done this. When greeting British L1 English speakers, I use British, no-touch greetings with neighbours, colleagues and strangers. On first meetings I will use the British handshake greeting, including in opposite-sex interactions, though I would otherwise avoid handshakes with men.



## APPENDIX I Web Questionnaire – Consent and confidentiality

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This study focuses on appropriateness of nonverbal greeting behaviours. If you agree to participate in this survey, it will take you around 25 minutes to complete it. All the information you provide during completion of the tasks on this website will be used for research purposes only and treated in strict confidence. You are free to stop filling in the survey and withdraw at any time. Your participation in the study is voluntary. Failure to participate will not have any negative consequences for you. You are not required to insert your name or contact details. Your other data will be anonymous and will be dealt with utmost confidentiality. The analysis of your participation will be written up in a report of the study. You will not be identifiable in the write up or any publication which might ensue.

There will be follow-up interviews for this study. If you are interested to participate, contact the researcher at [halbiso1@mail.bbk.ac.uk](mailto:halbiso1@mail.bbk.ac.uk). You should be Saudi and have spent three or more years in the UK. Your email address will be anonymous.

If you accept to continue, please click the Yes button below to begin; otherwise you will be redirected to the homepage.

I accept to participate      YES / NO

**APPENDIX II**  
**Web Questionnaire – Demographic Data**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

	<b>PAGE 1/7</b>
Q1- 1	Age:
Q1- 2	Gender:
Q1- 3	Nationality:
Q1- 4	Occupation:

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Q1- 5	Country of current residency:
Q1- 6	How many years of residency in the UK?
Q1- 7	What is your native language? <i>1. Arabic    2. English    3. Other (specify)</i>
Q1- 8	How many languages can you speak?
Q1- 9	How many years have you spoken English?
Q1- 10	Which language do you use to greet someone who speaks your native language in a foreign country?  <i>1. The native language (L1)</i> <i>2. The language of the host country (L2)</i> <i>3. Both languages (L1 &amp; L2)</i> <i>4. Not applicable</i>

Q1- 11	How many people do you greet in your native language in a week?
Q1- 12	If you are residing in a foreign country, how many local people (i.e. British) do you greet in a week? <i>1. Number ( )      2. Not applicable</i>

## APPENDIX III

### Web Questionnaire – NVGs Appropriateness

You are going to watch four short videos on nonverbal greeting behaviours in four relationships. Use the scale below to decide on the degree of appropriateness of nonverbal greeting behaviours

- (1) = Inappropriate
- (2) = Slightly inappropriate
- (3) = Neutral
- (4) = Slightly appropriate
- (5) = Appropriate

#### **PAGE 2/ 7      CLOSE FRIENDS**

Q2- 1	Close friends' handshake	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 2	Close friends' cheek-to-cheek kiss	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 3	Close friends' embrace	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 4	Close friends standing on one-arm spatial distance	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

#### **PAGE 3/ 7      COLLEAGUES**

Q2- 5	Colleagues' handshake	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 6	Colleagues' cheek-to-cheek kiss	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 7	Colleagues' embrace	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 8	Colleagues standing on more than one-arm distance	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

#### **PAGE 4/ 7      A MANAGER AND EMPLOYEE**

Q2- 9	Manager-employee's handshake	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 10	Manager-employee's cheek-to-cheek kiss	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 11	Manager-employee's embrace	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 12	A manager and an employee standing on two-arm spatial distance	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

#### **PAGE 5/ 7      STRANGERS**

Q2- 13	Strangers' handshake	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 14	Strangers' cheek-to-cheek kiss	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 15	Strangers' embrace	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q2- 16	Strangers standing on more than two-arm distance	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

## APPENDIX IV

### Web Questionnaire – Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Please choose one of the numbers below each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement using the scale below. Many of these questions will refer to your heritage culture, meaning the original Saudi culture. The mainstream culture refers to British culture that you have studied, travelled to, or lived in for a period of time.

<b>PAGE</b> 6/7	<b>Vancouver Index of Acculturation</b>
Q3- 1	I often participate in my heritage Saudi cultural traditions.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 2	I often participate in mainstream British cultural traditions.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 3	I would be willing to marry a person from my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 4	I would be willing to marry a person from mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 5	I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage Saudi culture as myself.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 6	I enjoy social activities with typical British local people.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 7	I am comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage Saudi culture as myself.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 8	I am comfortable interacting with typical British local people.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>

Q3- 9	I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 10	I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 11	I often behave in ways that are typical of my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 12	I often behave in ways that are typical of mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 13	It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 14	It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 15	I believe in the values of my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 16	I believe in the values of mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 17	I enjoy the jokes and humour of my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 18	I enjoy the jokes and humour of mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 19	I am interested in having friends from my heritage Saudi culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>
Q3- 20	I am interested in having friends from mainstream British culture.  <i>Disagree</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Agree</i>

## APPENDIX V

### Web Questionnaire – Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (SF-MPQ)

To what extent do the following statements apply to you?

*(Please circle the answer that is most applicable to you)*

(1) = Totally not applicable

(2) = Hardly applicable

(3) = Moderately applicable

(4) = Largely applicable

(5) = Completely applicable

PAGE 7/ 7	<b>Multicultural Personality Questionnaire</b>	
Q4- 1	Pays attention to the emotions of others	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 2	Is a good listener	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 3	Senses when others get irritated	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 4	Getting to know others profoundly	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 5	Enjoys other people's stories	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 6	Notices when someone is in trouble	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 7	Sympathises with others	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 8	Sets others at ease	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 9	Works according to strict rules	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 10	Works according to plan	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 11	Works according to strict scheme	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 12	Looks for regularity in life	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 13	Likes routine	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 14	Wants predictability	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 15	Functions best in a familiar setting	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 16	Has fixed habits	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 17	Takes the lead	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 18	Leaves initiative to others to make contacts	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 19	Finds it difficult to make contacts	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 20	Takes initiative	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 21	Is inclined to speak out	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 22	Is often the driving force behind things	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 23	Makes contacts easily	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 24	Is reserved	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 25	Worries	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 26	Gets upset easily	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

Q4- 27	Is nervous	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 28	Is apt to feel lonely	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 29	Keeps calm when things don't go well	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 30	Is insecure	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 31	Is under pressure	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 32	Is not easily hurt	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 33	Tries out various approaches	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 34	Is looking for new ways to attain his or her goal	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 35	Starts a new life easily	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 36	Likes to imagine solutions to problems	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 37	Is a trendsetter in societal developments	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 38	Has feeling for what's appropriate in culture	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 39	Seeks people from different backgrounds	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)
Q4- 40	Has broad range of interests	(1) - (2) - (3) - (4) - (5)

## APPENDIX VI

### Qualitative Data: Questions of semi-structured Interviews

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#### *PARTICIPANT DECLARATION*

- I have been informed about the nature of this interview and willingly consent to take part in it.
- I understand that data from this interview will remain anonymous and I will not be identifiable in the write-up of the data nor in any publication that may ensue.
- I understand that I may request to terminate the interview at any time.
- I understand that the interview will be recorded and that the recording will be destroyed as soon as it has been transcribed.
- I am over 18 years of age.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

*How many years have you spoken English?*

*How many years have you resided in the UK?*

*Which language do you use to greet someone who speaks Arabic in a foreign country?*

1. *L1 (Arabic)*
2. *L2 (English)*
3. *Both L1 & L2*

*1. What are the nonverbal greeting behaviours you use to accompany your verbal greeting?*

*2. How do you greet “nonverbally” the following people?*

- a. *Close friends*
- b. *Colleagues*
- c. *Boss or manager*
- d. *Strangers*

*3. Do you think that your nonverbal greeting behaviours have changed since you arrived in the UK?*

*4. Do you think that a person’s personality affects his/her greeting behaviours? If yes, how?*

*5. Can you talk about your experience on using nonverbal greeting behaviours abroad?*

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