

Perception in Intercultural Communication

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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce pojednává o interkulturní komunikaci a percepčních bariérách, které s sebou přináší. Teoretická část se zabývá definicí interkulturní komunikací a její historií. Autorka věnuje velkou pozornost komunikaci, kultuře, vnímání a poté samotnými bariérami. Praktická část se zabývá metodologií, kde jsou vyhodnoceny výsledky dotazníkového šetření. Cílem této bakalářské práce je prokázat, jak vnímání ovlivňuje mezikulturní komunikaci mezi studenty.

Klíčová slova: interkulturní komunikace, kultura, komunikace, vnímání, bariéry, kulturní rozdíly, kvantitativní výzkum, kulturní hodnoty, etnocentrismus.

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis deals with intercultural communication and with the psychological barriers which it yields. The theoretical part describes the definition of intercultural communication and its history. The author pays great attention to communication, culture, perception and the barriers themselves. The practical part focuses on the analysis, where the results of the questionnaire research are evaluated. The aim of this bachelor's thesis is to analyze how perception affects intercultural communication among students.

Keywords: intercultural communication, culture, communication, perception, barriers, culture differences, quantitative research, cultural values, ethnocentrism.

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

”Culture makes people understand each other better. And if they understand each other better in their souls, it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers. But first, they have to understand that their neighbour is, in the end, just like them, with the same problem, same questions.”

Paulo Coelho

As a result of growing globalization and national economic merging, intercultural communication and its barriers have nowadays become a much more discussed topic. People began to be more in touch with people from different cultures either at work, at school or in any other situations requiring little communication.

The increasing mutual interactivity among people is accompanied by misunderstandings between communicators. As a matter of fact, these misunderstandings happen for various reasons, such as the language, physical barrier or distraction. However, this bachelor’s thesis only focuses on perception in intercultural communication because the psychological aspects during intercultural communication are very important as well.

Nevertheless, perception is an inherent part of intercultural communication and communication itself. What people feel, see and how people perceive each other is the significant matter of fact. People often forget to consider the diversity of cultures thus they speak and listen only from the perspective of their culture and do not understand from the other’s point of view.

The bachelor’s thesis is divided into two main parts which are related to the subject. The first part of the thesis is based on a theory which describes the intercultural communication using a description of communication, culture and barriers to intercultural communication. The second, analytical part is based on author’s own study developed on quantitative research.

I. THEORY

1 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The first chapter focuses on the definition of the concept of intercultural communication. In the beginning, the section familiarizes the readers with the issue of the topic and then introduces several definitions from numerous authors. It continues with the history of studying intercultural communication. The subchapters explain the origin and history of intercultural communication. Ultimately, it mentions the intercultural competence which plays an important role in intercultural communication.

1.1 Definitions of intercultural communication

People vary as a result of their differences from the start of the civilizations because every ethnic community differs with their own language, attitudes and prejudice to a different ethnic group (Průcha 2010, 14).

Moreover, intercultural communication is defined by William B. Gudykunst, the professor of communication studies and writer, as a study of face to face communication between people from different cultures and studies how people with the various cultural background can communicate with one another (Gudykunst 2002, ix).

In reference to intercultural communication, the term cross-cultural communication is typically used and confused with intercultural communication. Many authors use these two terms as synonyms, but there are those authors who see a giant difference in them. While “intercultural communication happens when at least two partners are culturally different, interact together and communicate”, the cross-cultural communication means “comparison and contrast between two cultural groups” (González, n.d.).

1.2 History

According to Průcha, intercultural communication features a long history but as a separate discipline began to form only recently in the 20th century. The origin of intercultural communication ranges back to the beginning of human civilization, when there were interactions within an ethnic group, nation or different languages. He continues that the historical research of intercultural communication producing evidence which shows that individuals within the ancient societies varied in different languages or prejudice towards the opposite antique group (Průcha 2010, 14).

As an example, Průcha described the behaviour of the Greek nation. Every foreigner, according to the Greeks, was a barbarian because they spoke with a ridiculous language. Another key point he noted was that Plateaus, who was the author of the many comedies, in his play sets out a situation during which a Carthaginian businessman speaks his mother tongue - Punic with two Romans who answer him in Latin. Romans made fun of the businessman because he could not speak Latin as they could (Průcha 2010, 15).

As a study, intercultural communication is very young and can be traced back to 1959 when an author Edward T. Hall published his famous book *The Silent Language*. Edward Hall primarily dealt with intercultural communication in his book, it is important to comprehend, he was the first person who used the term “intercultural communication” therefore he is referred to as the founding father of the discipline called “intercultural communication”. Hall believed that the people were inherently ethnocentric thus they are observed and judged by other cultures. Hall also stated that “culture is communication” (Neuliep 2011, 22-23).

1.3 Intercultural competence

In the context of intercultural communication, the term intercultural competence or transnational competence appears. Průcha defines intercultural competence as the ability of an individual to carry out effective communication. Specifically, it is important to cooperate with members of other cultures by using knowledge of ethnic cultures and relevant communication skills. Therefore, intercultural competence is based on the language skills of the individual and respect for the cultural specificities of the partners (Průcha 2010, 46).

In other words, intercultural competence is the capability to understand your culture and other cultures in order to hold an effective conversation. It is important to point out, intercultural communicative competence is inherent in personality (Kurylo 2012, 47).

Moreover, some people are able to communicate better than others, however, intercultural communication competence allows people to learn those skills if they want to (Remland, Jones, Foeman and Arévalo 2014, 29).

2 COMMUNICATION

Communication plays a major part in intercultural communication; therefore the theoretical part of the bachelor's thesis pays attention to it within the second chapter. At first, the chapter introduces the definitions and forms of communication as well as the communication process.

2.1 Definitions of communication

According to Barker, the origin of the word communication can be reached in Latin "*communis*" meaning common or shared, therefore he stated that the definition of the communication is "the process of creating shared understanding" (Barker 2006, 1-2).

Communication is likewise explained by Sarbaugh as "process of using signs and symbols which elicit meaning in another person." He continues that communication does not always require face-to-face interaction but also through telephone or mass media (Sarbaugh 1993, 2).

Moreover, Cleary defined communication as "the process of creating meaning between two or more people through the expression and interpretation of the messages." Additionally, understanding the communication process help communicators achieve effective conversation (Cleary 2008, 1-2).

2.2 Communication forms

Communication studies determinate five major forms, which are described below:

1) Intrapersonal communication

This type of communication occurs when a person talks to himself and does not send the message to another person. The sole participant is the individual who does not send the information directly to the second person. The sole participant basically speaks to himself.

2) Interpersonal communication

Secondly, interpersonal communication arises between two people who talk to another person face to face. Communicators can see one another and are able to respond to messages. The exchange of data is provided with a non-verbal type of communication, for example, gestures.

3) Small group communication

Small group communication refers to communication within a small group of three and more participants. People in groups usually share the same goal which brings them together. As interpersonal communication, the members in a small group can interact with each other and give the messages with feedback.

4) Public speaking

This type of communication happens when the participant talks to the audience in a public environment. Public speaking is more formal and sometimes the audience cannot give a feedback.

5) Mass media

Mass media communication is a type where people do not interact with each other at the same place but via the internet or social media. For the mass media, we also distinguish a message which reaches the receiver via radio or the internet.

(Steinberg 2007, 62-63)

2.3 Communication process

The process determines the major five key elements which illustrate the following model of the communication process and will be explained below. Furthermore, the communication process could be a guide to effective communication and it only works if there are all elements (Cleary 2008, 3).

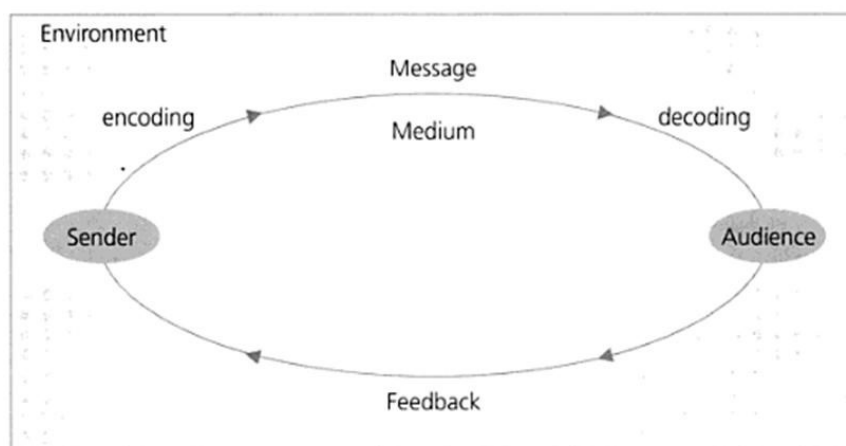


Fig. 1 Communication process (Source: Cleary 2008, 3)

According to Samovar, communication between individuals or group takes place in physical and contextual environment. Physical environment refers to the actual location where communication occurs. On the other hand, the conceptual is abstract and have an influence on the used style of communication (Samovar 2014, 8).

A sender initiates the communication by the idea which he wants to communicate to the audience. The sender is defined also as a source or an encoder. Before the sender communicates the idea, the message has to be encoded. This message contains the information which sender wants to use to create meaning and it is up to the source in which form the message is sent. The audience receives encoded messages which are transmitted via a channel chosen by the sender (Cleary 2008, 3-6)

Decoding is a process of an audience receiving the message and understanding an encoded message. The receiver assigns a meaning to the message which may or may not be what the sender intended to send. The last part is feedback which provides communicators with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the message. In other words, the feedback is the audience's response to the message (Cleary 2008, 7).

3 CULTURE

Culture is one of the main social sciences and its definition is very difficult to clarify. To understand culture better, the following chapter covers the definition of culture as well as its origin. The subchapters deal with Hofstede's national dimension and the manifestation of culture.

3.1 Definitions of culture

Culture is the subject of many complex and abstract definitions but still, the meaning has no eventual explanation and culture's experts are still searching for the united form. The word "*culture*" comes from the original Latin expression "*cultura*" which means to cultivate the ground (Samovar 2014, 9).

According to Leo Parvis, the way how people perceive the culture differs from place to place. He claims that "the culture is shaped by the same traditions, values, heroes and criteria within the realm of family or friends." Culture is formed by people with equal values and on the contrary, people's lives are shaped by culture (Parvis 2005, 1).

Additionally, Geert Hofstede describes culture "as the collective programming of the mind that differentiates the members of one group or category of people from another." Furthermore, he admits that the definition is not complete, but it quite covers what he was able to measure. He analyzed the mind as a part of the culture, in which the head stands for thinking, heart for feeling, and hands for acting, with consequences of beliefs, attitudes and skills. Values become more evident in the behaviour but are unable to be seen before (Hofstede 2001, 9-10).

Moreover, Fred Edmund Jandt explains that people have knowledge and experience only of their own culture, hence the knowledge and experiences of other cultures are limited. To put it in another way, the individual has the most knowledge of that culture in which he lives (Jandt 2010, 8).

Culture and communication are connected with the values which are prioritized in every culture; therefore the values and belief systems create the conditions upon which cultures form their reality around them. Patel emphasizes that "individuals of one cultural perspective or worldview often determine how members of that culture interpret the communication events around them" (Patel 2011, 19).

3.2 Hofstede national dimensions

Professor Geert Hofstede stated that the values are influenced by culture. His research was gathered between 1967 and 1973 and data covered more than 70 countries. His research resulted in the Hofstede's model of national culture which consists of six dimensions which represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries from each other. Then it was extended to the other two dimensions. The Hofstede's model consists of power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long vs. short term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint. The bachelor's thesis covers first four dimensions (Lukášová 2010, 47).

3.2.1 Power distance index (PDI)

This dimension is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally.” To put in other words, the power distance measures the relationship to authority in countries or social groups (Lukášová 2010, 47).

In countries with low power distance, people are relatively independent, and superiors or subordinates are considered to be equal. On the other hand, groups with high power distance are quite dependent and the hierarchy is to be widely seen. Superiors and subordinates are not equal, and in a way, people want it. Superiors have special benefits and more special things than subordinates who wait for the superiors to tell them what to do (Lukášová 2010, 47).

3.2.2 Individualism vs. collectivism (IDV)

Geert Hofstede defined it “as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework.” Individualism is characterized for countries where the relationships between individuals are free. Individuals are expected to take care of themselves or their relatives. On the other hand, collectivism is completely the opposite thing. It prefers tightly-knit social framework in which the individuals can expect the loyalty and safety from the group they are integrated (Hofstede-insight, n.d.).

3.2.3 Masculinity and femininity (MAS)

This dimension presents the masculinity and femininity as “preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success” (Hofstede-insight, n.d.). This dimension can be used as one of the characteristics of those cultures where it is absolutely clear where the place of men and women is (Lukášová 2010, 48).

In masculine countries, men are imagined to be self-confident and focused on material success, unlike the women who should be modest and oriented on the quality of life. Children in these countries are raised to be ambitious, competitive or modest. In direct opposition to masculine countries, the role of men and women is equal in feminine countries (Lukášová 2010, 48).

3.2.4 Uncertainty avoidance (UA)

Geert Hofstede defines it “as a degree to which the members of a society feel in danger in uncertain situations.” As a matter of fact, the feeling in large degree has no particular cause; therefore it is given as a cultural inheritance and supported by the institutions (Hofstede-insight, n.d.).

Members of culture with the high degree of uncertainty avoidance are active, emotional and they need to predict what will happen and what they should expect. They fear the unknown and consider it dangerous. In addition, uncertain feelings are highly connected with anxieties and stress. These members do not like new things or innovation and express different behaviour and thinking (Lukášová 2010, 48).

Cultures with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance seem to be calmer. The uncertainty is for them an ordinary thing in their lives and it does not result in stress or emotional breakdown. Unlike cultures with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance, these people are looking forward to innovation (Lukášová 2010, 48)

3.3 Manifestation of Culture

Geert Hofstede created an onion diagram in order to emphasize the differences between cultures which can be explored through the perspective of manifestations of culture which are symbols, heroes, rituals and values.

Symbols refer to the words, gestures, images which are best understood only by the members of cultures. Symbols such as jargon belong here as well as the language. According to Geert Hofstede, the old symbols can be easily changed and replaced by new symbols as a result of copying other cultures (Hofstede 2001, 10).

Heroes are another element which stands for person alive, dead, real or not real. These people went down into the history and earned the respect of others, and that is why they serve as the models of behaviour. The rituals are collective activities and are considered socially important because they bind members together. Moreover, symbols, heroes and rituals are called practices (Hofstede 2001, 10).

Elements are visible to the outside and are interpreted in a particular way by insiders. At figure 2, in the middle of the circles are values which are hidden and invisible until they become apparent in behaviour. Only the members of a given culture can interpret values. Hofstede defines the values as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (Hofstede 2001, 5).

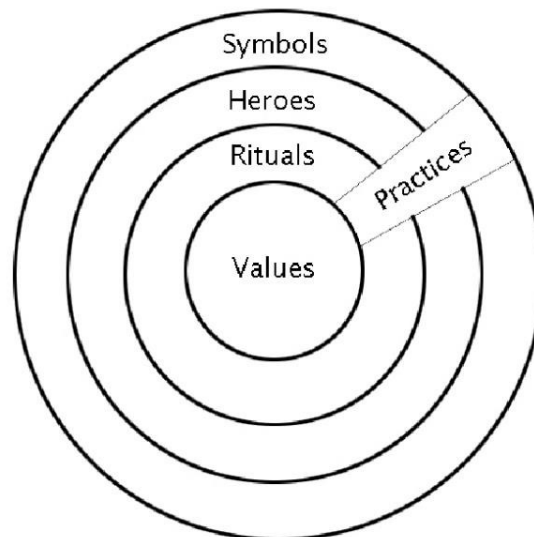


Fig. 2 Manifestation of culture (Source: Hofstede 2010, 8)

4 PERCEPTION

In previous chapters, communication and culture were covered. This section, however, deals with perception during intercultural communication. The concept of perception will be explained together with the perception process and theories.

4.1 Definitions of perception

According to Sheila Steinberg, our understanding of situations or other people depend on the way we perceive the things that are around us. Perception is the process of acquiring information about the environment which surrounds us through five senses, such as seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling (Steinberg 2007, 69).

In other words, perception is our interpretation of reality. Julia Wood works with the definition that perception is process selecting, organizing and interpreting people as well as things or situations. Our perception is developed by the individual's personality and what experiences the person has achieved (Wood 2007, 45).

Rubin's vase shows a good example of how people can see things differently. It is the most famous and frequently presented as a black-white image. Rubin's vase interprets one vase or two faces looking at one another. It may be seen only one or the other, it is impossible to see both at the same time. Rubin's vase highlights the important differences in the perception of figures (Thompson 2016, 66).

4.2 Perception process

According to Jandt, people generally sense things, but cultures help how to process and further understand information acquired from our senses. The information comes through physical senses of sight, smell, taste and touch. Perception process has three stages (Jandt 2010, 67).

4.2.1 Selection

The first phase of the perception process is selection. In our surroundings, there are various stimuli that cannot be perceived all at once. People are not able to focus on everything at the same time and that is why they just choose those stimuli which they feel are significant, it can be a smell, a feeling, a sound or something else. At this stage, the aspects are forming, and the barriers arise. Two people who are communicating with each other may see things differently which results in different opinions (Weintraub, Thomas-Maddox and Byrnes 2015, 31-32).

4.2.2 Organization

Organization is the second phase of the perception process which follows selecting. After we select the aspect to which we pay our attention, the aspects need to be organized in a way that makes sense to the communicators. What has been received we can connect to something we have already experienced. As a part of the process we categorize the information that we have accepted. Once we have received, we move to the interpretation phase (Weintraub, Thomas-Maddox and Byrnes 2015, 31-32).

4.2.3 Interpretation

The final step is an interpretation which is the phase where we attach meaning to what we have selected and organized. Our personal experiences may also influence how we interpret a message. We may interpret what individual says to us differently than if someone else said it based on our relationships with others. Factors influence interpreting and organizing (Weintraub, Thomas-Maddox and Byrnes 2015, 31-32).

For instance, the Rubin's Vase illusion was explained earlier, people will interpret the information as a vase, but some people will interpret it as faces. It is almost impossible to see both at the same time. An individual sees only one thing first, a vase or faces.

4.3 Processing theories

Some psychologists argue that perceptual processes are not direct, and it depends on previous knowledge and individual's expectation and the information presented within the stimulus (McLeod 2008).

Ulric Neisser also called the "father of cognitive psychology", came up with his famous Cyclic Theory which combines features of the direct (bottom-up) and indirect (top-down) approaches to perception. Perception involves top-down processes as well as bottom-up processes (Eysenck 2017, 87).

4.3.1 Top-down processing

Top-down processing works in a way that if we want to interpret an ambiguous information which we have processed, it requires more wide-ranging cognitive information from the past experience or information stored into long-term memory in order to find out what we are currently perceiving (Carroll 2007, 56).

4.3.2 Bottom-up processing

Bottom-up processing defines that people perceive things from the lowest level to the highest. Bottom-up processing is the opposite of top-down where people do not need earlier experiences. First of all, the process begins with an analysis of sensory inputs, where the information is transmitted to the retina and then to the brain where the responses are triggered until the final processing takes place (McLeod 2008) and (Carroll 2007, 56)

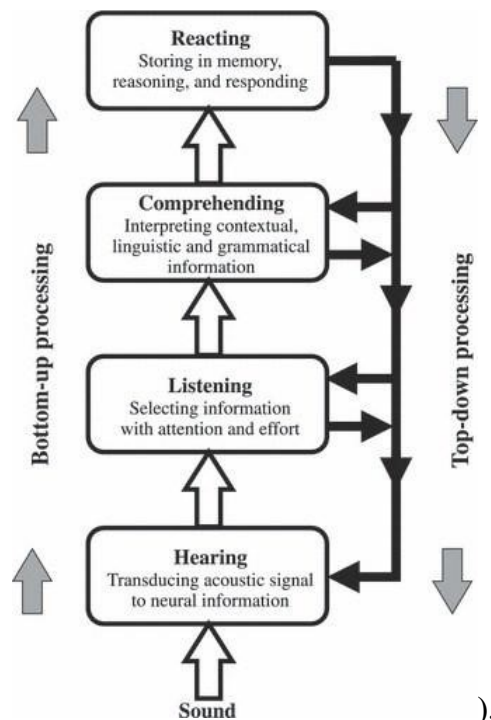


Fig. 3 Perception process (Source: Stenfelt, S. and Rönnberg, J. 2009, 386)

Figure 3 shows the perception process in which the bottom-up processing starts with hearing, when a person hears an acoustic signal. Hearing is followed by listening, in which a person selects that information which is paid attention to. Comprehending is a process of interpreting contextual, linguistic and grammatical information and the last is reacting which means, a person can store the information in the memory and they he can respond to the information.

5 BARRIERS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

This chapter deals with the barriers which can occur in intercultural communication. These barriers come up as a result of many causes, for example lack in language. However, this chapter focuses mainly on the psychological side during intercultural communication. In previous chapters, we learned what perception is and how it affects communication. In this part, we will learn the way how perception and culture have a negative effect on communication, which implies the inefficiency of conversation.

While people with different cultural background are communicating, the problems can arise very quickly as a result of not recognizing the uniqueness of the individual or not focusing on the message as well as not understanding the belief systems and values upon which culture are established. Patel continues that “people are considered to be a key complex in all communication within the message; therefore, the human affects interpersonal communication” (Patel 2011, 17).

Průcha states that the greater the diversity of cultures, the higher is the possibility of occurrence of the communication barriers. In fact, the barriers differ in circumstances where the language by which one of the partners speaks mother tongue and it is different when both partners use intermediate language which is not the mother tongue of any of the partners (Průcha 2010, 63).

LaRay Barna had developed six such barriers which arise as a result of the intercultural communication which are described below.

5.1 High anxiety

Feeling anxiety is one of the main barriers to intercultural communication which is also referred to stress or tension. The anxiety occurs when one feels uncomfortable or uncertain during a given situation. Anxiety is a mental state which is accompanied by physical tense therefore the tension is closely linked and often underlies the other stumbling blocks. Moreover, people who are supposed to speak with a language that is not their mother tongue, feel more anxious in conversation because they cannot sustain a normal flow of communication (Barna 1994, 342-343).

Often when people communicate face to face and feel anxious, they can limit themselves. They do not say exactly what they want and sometimes they cannot even say something or say it correctly.

5.2 Ethnocentrism

The origin of the word ethnocentrism comes from the Greek “*ethnos*” which means nation and “*ketron*” meaning the center of a circle. Ting-Toomey explains that people stick to their standards and naturally make the judgments about other group based on own cultural values (Ting-Toomey 2012, 157).

Ethnocentrism can be explained as negatively judging another culture by the principles of their own culture. In other words, people believe that their culture is more superior than other cultures. In addition, less intense type of ethnocentrism is cultural near-sightedness and neglecting cultures (Mohanthy 2005, 69). Moreover, ethnocentrism can often lead to underestimating other cultures and make them subordinated (DeVita 2008, 60).

Ruhly argues that everyone is ethnocentric in all cultures because people have a strong belief in their values which are natural and correct according to their perception (Schmidt 2007, 36-37) In addition, extreme ethnocentrism rejects the knowledge of other cultures therefore successful communication is not achieved (Jandt, 2010, 86).

5.3 Cultural relativism

Průcha states that cultural relativism presents unique socio-cultural systems which could be understood just in context to own cultural values, norms and ideals. He continues that it is a willingness to admit that there are more equal cultures than just one own. This knowledge puts aside the judgment of other different cultures (Průcha 2010, 54-55). To keep this in mind, Edmund Jandt emphasizes that it does not exactly mean that everything is equal (Jandt 2010, 85).

To put in other words, cultural relativism is based on trying to understand the behaviour and notion of others within the context of their culture (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton and Wardrope 2007, 36-37).

5.4 Preconceptions

Preconceptions influence intercultural communication to a large extent. In order to understand how culture shapes perception is important to realize that people have preconceptions. Culture raises preconceptions in each of us from the birth (Novinger 2001, 28).

It is important to point out that people carry the expectations or preconceptions into cross-cultural communication. Not only the prejudice but also the stereotypes are preconceptions (Novinger 2001, 28).

5.4.1 Stereotypes

Stereotyping is a selection process which simplifies perception of others and exposes our beliefs about members of cultures (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton and Wardrope 2007, 35).

Moreover, stereotypes generalize the identity of groups and build expectations how people could behave and that we, unaware of doing it, process the information based on stereotypes while we are communicating. Authors emphasize that not only the stereotypes affect our communication to a large extent, but also the initial predictions about others are based on stereotypes that we have about their culture (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton and Wardrope 2007, 35).

There are two types of stereotypes which are recognized. First, there are autostereotypes which stand for what people think about themselves as a group, and then heterostereotypes which refers to what individual think about other groups (Ting-Toomey 2012, 158).

However, Lewis points out, “stereotypes are imprecise when individuals have worked in international business or have lived or studied abroad because they will display increased differences from their national cultures” (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton and Wardrope 2007, 35).

5.4.2 Prejudice

Stereotypes and prejudice can be easily confused but these two terms show differences. While the stereotype is a belief that something is perhaps true, a prejudice is an attitude or an evaluation (Schmidt, Conaway, Easton and Wardrope 2007, 36).

To put it another way, it is behaviour which is not uncommon for people to make opinions about other people. Individuals make prejudice before they get to know individuals more closely and before they find out if their opinions are true (Sharma 1997, 196).

Furthermore, prejudice can result from ignorance which leads to creation of various forms of wrong beliefs and assumptions about other people with different cultural background. As another fact, favorable prejudice leads to acceptance of people while an unfavorable or hostile prejudice is accompanied by disapproval or rejection of people or groups (Sharma 1997, 198).

5.5 Assuming similarity instead of difference

People assume that their cultures are similar and they do not realize the differences. If one has no subconscious knowledge of a new culture or does not know how people behave in their country or what their traditions are, it is easy to assume that one's country is similar to other country and therefore individuals behave same as in own country. It must be remembered, every culture is in some way unique and different (Mohanthy 2005, 68).

Furthermore, the opposite can be a barrier as well. When people assume difference instead of similarity it can lead to not identifying important things that cultures share (Mohanthy 2005, 68).

5.6 Racism and xenophobia

Racism can be recognized through jokes or racial slur. According to Leone, racism "is the belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race. It denies the basic equality of humankind and correlates ability with the physical composition" (Jackson 2014, 171).

Moreover, Ting-Toomey and Chung define racism as a belief in the cultural superiority only of one race. In addition, the result of racism is basically a strong hate of a person of other skin colour and this hate is also contained in communication. Racists feel more confident and dominant (Jackson 2014, 171-173).

The origin of the word xenophobia comes from the Greek "*xénos*" which means foreigner or stranger and "*phóbos*" which stands for fear (Bordeau 2009, 4).

Xenophobia is described as the fear of stranger or distrust of anything perceived as foreign. It is associated with racism and ethnocentrism. Hofstede founded that xenophobia is stronger in countries with high uncertainty avoidance where the uncertainty is understood more dangerous than in countries with low uncertainty avoidance where the xenophobia is defined as interesting (Gudykunst 2005, 308).

Xenophobia and racism are easily confused. Racism is connected to prejudice on ethnicity but on the other hand, xenophobia means fear of an individual or a group which is perceived as being different (Jackson 2014, 173).

5.7 Ethnophaulisms

Communication barriers can be caused by various reasons such as stereotypes, which were explained earlier, but it was not mentioned that stereotypes are divided on ethnic stereotypes and national stereotypes. Whereas ethnic stereotypes are characterized as attitudes of one ethnic group toward another ethnic group, national stereotypes represent people's attitudes toward another nationalities. The expressions of these stereotypes are called ethnophaulisms which express a negative and hostile attitude (Průcha 2010, 64-65).

Průcha emphasizes that ethnophaulisms occur in every cultures and languages. He continues that ethnophaulisms in connection with intercultural communication are used as a negative judgment about people of another group, for instance, the word "*negro*" was used for expressing the person of black skin, and the word "*black*" was a racist expression (Průcha 2010, 64-65).

Ethnophaulisms are also created as a result of the urge to name the member of another nation by a multitude of distinctions and by the urge to name abusively and offensively the members of another nation (Průcha 2010, 66-67).

6 METHODOLOGY

The last chapter of the theoretical part of the bachelor's thesis deals with the research questions as well as the goals of the research that are needed to be achieved. Furthermore, the chapter contains research methods and procedure, advantages or limitation of the selected research survey.

6.1 Research goal

The main goal of this research is to find out the major psychological barriers to intercultural communication and to suggest ways of how to eliminate them.

The results of the research will help to identify perceptual barriers in students and therefore, this research helps to improve the elimination of the barriers.

6.2 Research questions

To meet the main research goal, the following research questions were chosen, and they need to be answered:

RQ1: Do students of Business English perceive difficulties in intercultural communication?

RQ2: Do students of Business English avoid intercultural communication due to perceptual barriers?

6.3 Research methods

In order to collect data for the bachelor's thesis and to achieve the research goal, the method of quantitative research was suitable for the research. For the research, a questionnaire designed according to Likert Scale, which is the type of the questionnaire that is widely used nowadays, was chosen.

The Likert scales are very popular ways of gathering data because they express not only the extent and strength of opinion but also a direction (Sullivan 2009, 293). The questionnaire relies on the respondents to whom specific statements are given and who are supposed to indicate the amount to which they agree or disagree with the variety of statements. In other words, they are supposed to provide ratings showing how strongly they feel positive or negative about an issue (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfield and Booth-Kewley 1997, 43-44).

It is important to point out that the statements are randomly lined up in order to eliminate the “blind responding” which is the tendency of respondents to rating the statement in any position in the scale. Additionally, respondents have tendencies to count the points therefore now the scales are reduced into four rates (Adanza 1995, 115-116).

The Likert scale measures attitude or opinions which also can have variety of forms. For the research, the agreement type of scale was chosen:

Tab. 1 Likert Scale (Albert, William and Tullis, Thomas 2013, 123)

Response set	1	2	3	4
Agreement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

6.3.1 Advantages of the Likert Scale

According to Kothari in his book “Research Methodology”, the Likert Scale is easy and quick to construct. In addition, Likert Scale is a simpler way to collect information and the data are easy to be compared and therefore to analyze.

Moreover, the advantages also include reliability due to responding to each statement and it is widely used for an opinion research (Kothari 2004, 86).

6.3.2 Limitations of the Likert Scale

Not only the advantages but also disadvantages accompany the Likert scale as well. Kothari claims “there is no basic belief that the five positions indicated on the scale are equally spaced”. To put it in another way, the space between intervals may not be equal. Respondents may be undecided about the topic. Furthermore, it is possible that respondents answer not according to how they really feel but how they should feel (Kothari 2004, 86).

In conclusion, the questionnaire designed by the Likert Scale is the appropriate tool to measure people’s attitude, feeling as well as their opinion in the study case.

6.4 Research characteristics

6.4.1 Target group

The target group of the research is young adulthood, more specifically students at Tomas Bata University who study English for Business Administration. The aim of the research is to find out if they have the communication barriers, even if they have better knowledge of English. The research includes the first year, second year and third-year students including Erasmus students.

The objective was to analyze those students who have been studying English for many years therefore they have an advanced level of speaking. The main criterion for filling the questionnaire was the experience of communicating with a foreigner. Gathered data were compared.

6.4.2 Research procedure

The questionnaire was directed to the age group 20-26 years, to students at the Tomas Bata University in the Czech Republic. Overall, 196 students participated in the research and only 4 questionnaires were not valid which means that in these cases the country or nationality with which the students have the communication experience were not filled. These questionnaires were invalid because the statements were evaluated based on the country.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was available from 14th February to 10th March 2019 and filling them took about 10 minutes in seminars.

The questionnaire consists of the overall 17 closed questions and 1 open question. In closed-ended questions students should choose from options. Respondent was supposed to answer the statements by circling the option which best characterizes how they feel about the statement. Respondents should be careful, honest and unbiased because the information will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. On the other hand, the open-ended question required more thought about the answer.

To summarize, the questionnaire was mainly built from anonymous closed-ended questions because they are believed to be an appropriate tool to assemble data. In addition, the questionnaire enables responses to be gathered relatively quickly, honestly and efficiently. The open-ended question enables students to write on their own with whom they have experienced communication and based on that the three most common countries were selected. Depending on the countries, the responses were evaluated.

II. ANALYSIS

7 THE ANALYSIS

The analytical part deals with the findings of the research conducted on a selected research group. Furthermore, it discusses answering research questions as well as it displays the research conclusion.

7.1 Gender structure

Figure 4 illustrates the gender proportion that participated in the questionnaire. Overall, more women completed the questionnaire (70%) in comparison to men (30%). This corresponds specifically to 134 women and 58 men. This analysis begins by looking at the findings from the questionnaire discussing the open-ended question.

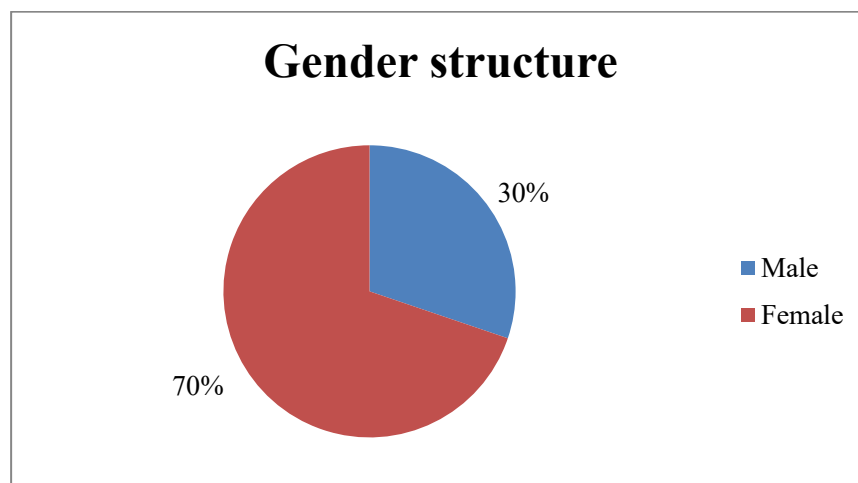


Fig. 4 Gender proportion (Source: Own research)

7.2 Country structure

According to the questionnaire, one of the 17 questions is open-ended and asks from what country the students have communication experience. Therefore, the students were supposed to fill the specific countries from which the foreigners with whom they communicated in the past were. The most repeated answers were chosen, counted and coded.

Moreover, figure 5 shows the most common countries that were written in the questionnaire. The first country which was mentioned was Great Britain which 23% (43) students had written. Secondary, 18% (35) of the questioned had communication experience with a foreigner from the United States while 15% (29) wrote Germany in the questionnaire. There are several countries under the heading “others” e.g. Norway, Finland, Ireland,

Malaysia, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, and many more. Overall 44% (85) of participants belong to this category.

It is important to note, in the evaluation of each statement, only the graphs of Great Britain are seen, and the other graphs are shown in Appendix 1 to Appendix 48.

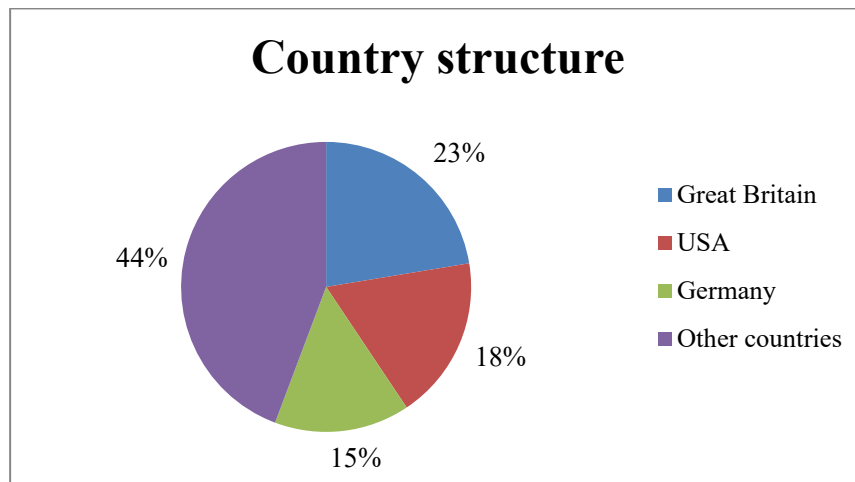


Fig. 5 Country structure (Source: Own research)

7.3 Statement 1: We felt relaxed and spontaneous during the conversation.

The opening question asked students about how they were feeling throughout the communication. As figure 6 shows, only 9% (4) of the respondents strongly agree that during communication with the British they felt relaxed and spontaneous and 68% (29) agree that they felt that way. Another 21% (9) of respondents disagree and 2% (1) of respondents strongly disagree.

Compared with Americans, 23% (8) of students of English strongly agree and 51% (18) agree that they felt comfortable while speaking with the people from the United States. Overall, 26% (9) of students disagree which means they did not feel comfortable.

From all respondents who have communication experience with the German, 10% (3) of students strongly agree, 62% (18) agree and 28% (8) disagree. As far as the other countries are concerned, 18% (15) of students strongly agree, 59% (50) agree, 21% (18) disagree and 2% (2) strongly disagree.

The overall analysis of the question shows that the majority of the English students feel comfortable or spontaneous when they communicate with people coming from a different background. It is important to point out that comparing these three countries, the answers do not differ so much as it may seem.

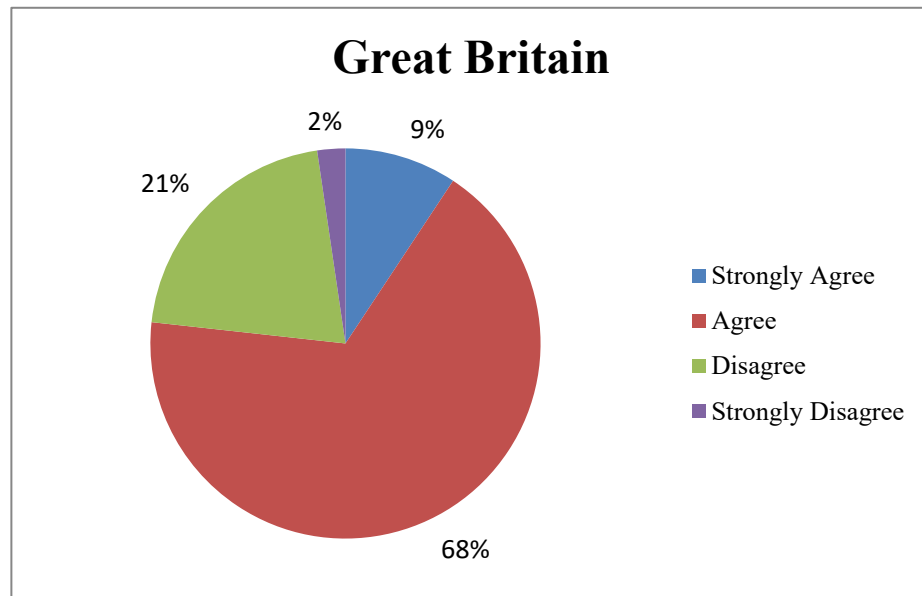


Fig. 6 Statement 1 (Source: Own research)

7.4 Statement 2: Our conversation was well organized.

The second statement asked students whether their conversation was well organized meaning having good and effective organization in communication. Moreover, organized communication creates an efficient exchange of information.

As figure 7 depicts, from the overall results, 72% (31) of respondents who have communication experience with the British agree and 28% (12) of students disagree. Eventually, no one strongly agrees or strongly disagrees with the statement.

The United States is the second most mentioned country in the questionnaire, where 6% (2) of respondents strongly agree, whereas 60% (21) of students agree. On the contrary, from all, only 3% (1) of respondents strongly disagree, while 31% (11) of respondents disagree with the statement.

Compared with the students who have communication experience with the German nationality, only 3% (1) strongly agree and 52% (15) of students agree their conversation

was well organized. Although no one strongly agrees with the statement, 45% (13) of respondents disagree.

Concerning how the communication was well organized with the other countries, only 2% (2) of students strongly agree and 2% (2) strongly disagree. Furthermore, from all students 59% (50) agree, and 37% (31) disagree with the statement.

Given the fact, almost half of the people with the experience with foreigners from Germany replied their communication was not efficient and therefore not well organized. In addition, high number is shown by people with experience with other countries.

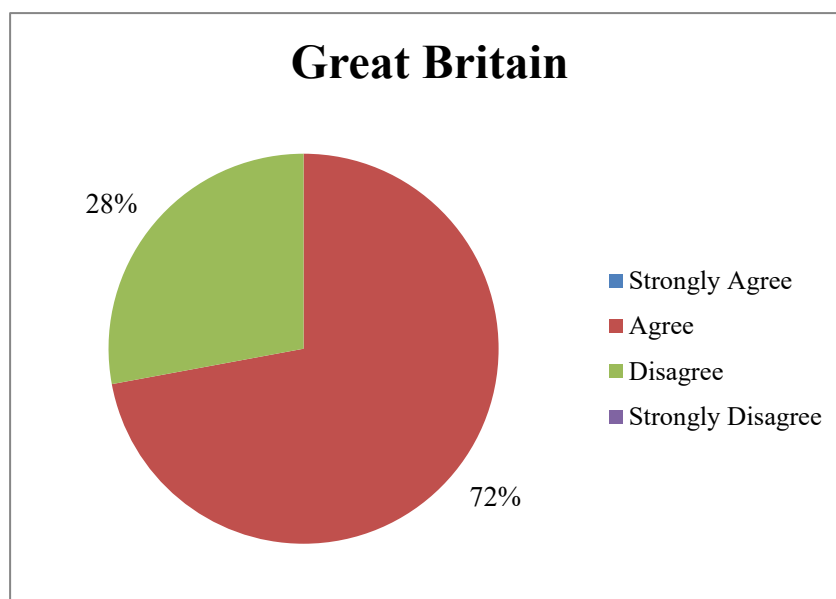


Fig. 7 Statement 2 (Source: Own research)

7.5 Statement 3: We were on the same page and we did a great job of clearly communicating with each other.

The third statement focuses on evaluating conversation with another person with a different cultural background. The statement asked if the communicators did a great job of clearly communicating with each other.

As it can be seen in figure 8, 9% (4) of students of English strongly agree while communicating with the British and 63% (27) of them agree with the statement. In contrast, 28% (12) of students evaluate their conversation negatively.

To continue, 14% (5) of respondents strongly agree, while in total 63% (22) of students agree while communicating with Americans. In addition, only 20% (7) of students disagree and 3% (1) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

Compared with the students who communicated with the German, 7% (2) strongly agree, while 76% (22) of them agree. Besides that, 17% (5) of students claim they did not have a good dialog.

Decoding the last targeted group, we can see that 14% (12) of students who have communication experience with other countries strongly agree, while 66% (56) agree with the statement. On the other hand, 19% (16) of respondents disagree, while 1% (1) strongly disagrees with the given statement.

To evaluate the results, a greater proportion of students studying English for Business Administration agree they did a great job of communicating clearly. The most problematic targeted group are the students who have communication experience with other countries.

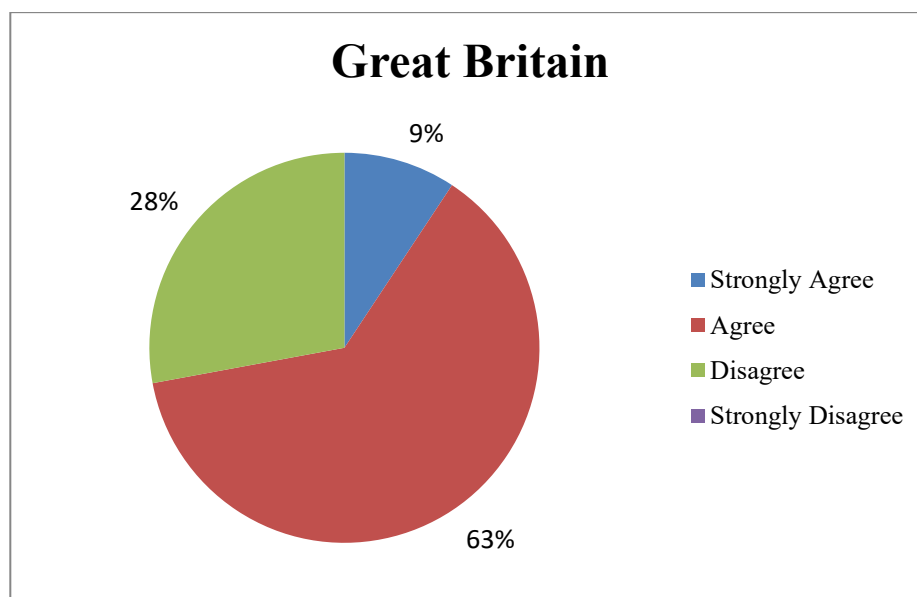


Fig. 8 Statement 3 (Source: Own resource)

7.6 Statement 4: If requested, we could probably repeat and summarize what we already said.

The statement focused on understanding the information obtained from the other speaker specifically, it means if asked, speakers could probably repeat back what the person said in the conversation.

As figure 9 highlights, 28% (12) of students with the British partner strongly agree whereas even more students, specifically 63% (27) of them, agree. Besides that, only 9% (4) of students could not repeat or summarize what the other had said.

To point out, the results show very positive data also with the American speakers. Exactly, 37% (13) of students strongly agree, and 51% (18) of respondents agree they would repeat the information provided by the other speaker. Only 9% (3) of respondents disagree and 3% (1) of students would not repeat and summarize what they spoke about.

Moreover, only 31% (9) of students with the German speakers strongly confirmed that they could repeat the information. With an increasing number, 59% (17) of students of English agree with the statement. Furthermore, the data reveal only 10% (3) of students who had issues with understanding what the other person said.

As far as other countries are concerned, 33% (28) of students of English agree, consequently, 54% (46) of students agree with the statement. In addition, only 13% (11) of respondents could not repeat the information.

In conclusion, from the total number, only 11% (22) of students could not repeat the information, which means it is a very low number from the number of questionnaires.

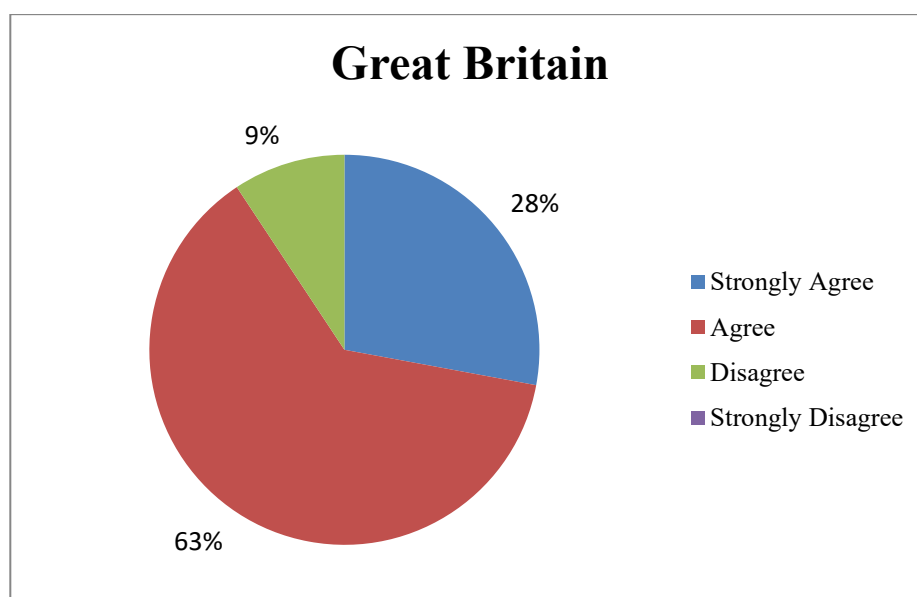


Fig. 9 Statement 4 (Source: Own research)

7.7 Statement 5: We chose simple words to avoid misunderstanding.

Although the students of English have a higher language level, the statement was trying to figure out whether the students prefer to use simple words to avoid misunderstandings instead of words and sentences that would correspond to their language level and knowledge.

As figure 10 illustrates, 30% (13) of students with the communication experience with the British strongly agree, moreover, 51% (22) of students agree with the statement. Subsequently, 19% (8) of students are not afraid to use challenging words.

Experience with the Americans shows that 46% (16) of students strongly agree, whereas 46% (16) agree they chose their words carefully to avoid misinterpretation. Additionally, 8% (3) of students of English disagree with the statement.

To compare with the Germans, the results are expressed similarly. In total, not only 31% (9) of respondents strongly agree, but also 48% (14) of people agree with the statement. On the other hand, 17% (5) of students fail to agree and 4% (1) strongly disagree that the student would choose simple words while communicating with a German.

Conversation with other nationalities displays that 34% (29) of students strongly agree, in addition, 44% (37) of respondents agree with the statement. Overall, 22% (19) of students do not use simple words.

To keep this in mind, although the language level of students of English is higher, the research proves that the majority of the students purposely choose simple words to avoid misinterpretation regardless of the nationality of the second communicator.

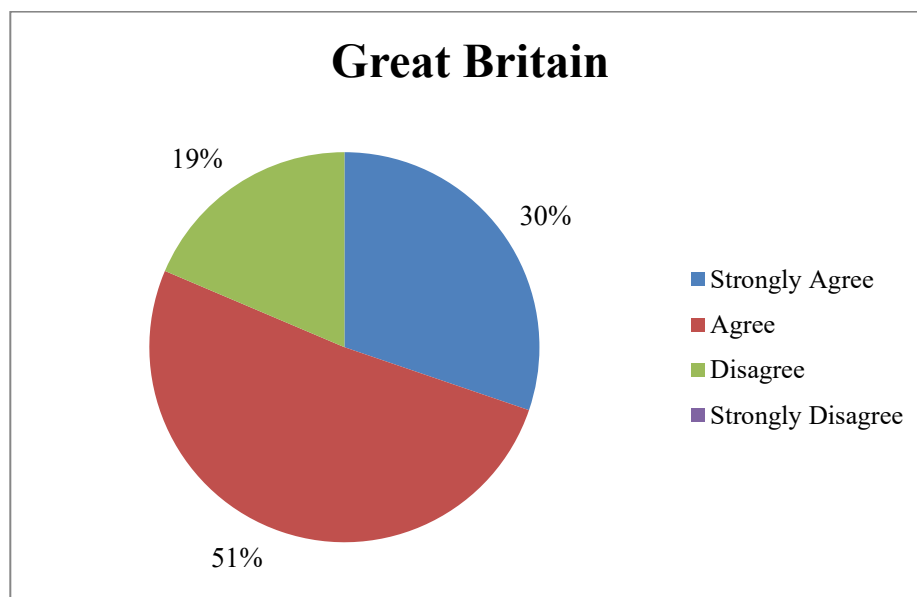


Fig. 10 Statement 5 (Source: Own research)

7.8 Statement 6: We had difficulties understanding each other.

The sixth statement also deals with understanding; in particular, it asked directly if the communicators had trouble understanding each other.

As figure 11 depicts, 9% (4) of students with the experience with the British nationality strongly agree and 72% (31) of students claim they do not have the difficulties understanding while communicating. Moreover, 19% (8) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

On the contrary, 14% (5) of respondents with the American speakers also agree, meanwhile 69% (24) of students disagree and 17% (6) of them strongly disagree that they had difficulties understanding each other.

In addition, conversation with the Germans also turned out to be positive, when only 17% (5) of respondents agree with the statement. As a matter of fact, 59% (17) of students disagree; while 24% (7) of students strongly disagree they had trouble understanding.

Moreover, 2% (2) of students who have communication experience with other cultures strongly agree and 18% (15) of them agree they had difficulties with understanding. Together, 62% (53) of respondents did not have difficulty understanding, while 18% (15) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

All things considered, the results of the analysis turned out well, although there were a few students who had trouble understanding. The majority of data submitted by students, more than half of the respondents in total claim they have no trouble with a given matter.

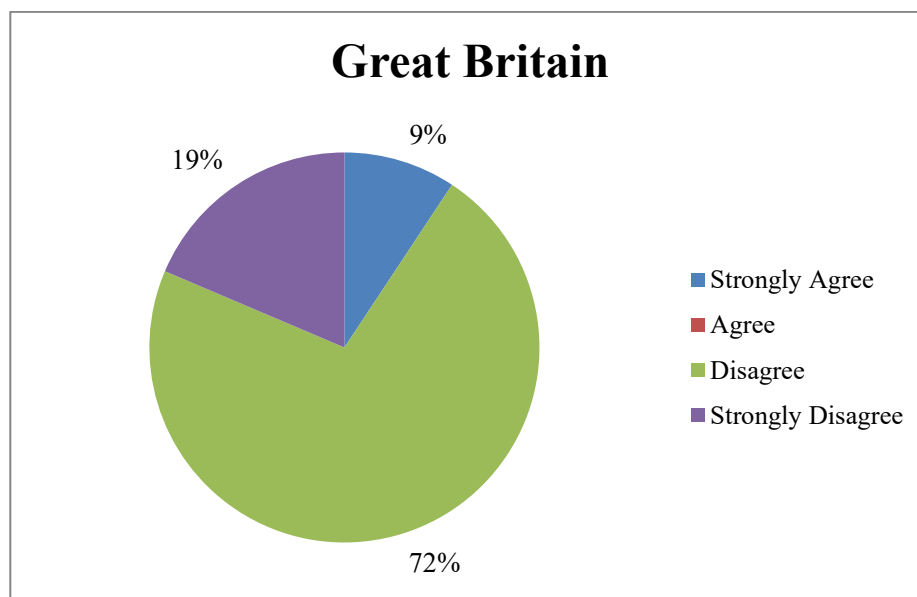


Fig. 11 Statement 6 (Source: Own research)

7.9 Statement 7: We have experienced communication failure.

As figure 12 displays, from all students who have communication experience with the British, only 2% (1) of students strongly agree that the respondent experienced a communication failure. However, 30% (13) of students agree with the statement, while on the whole 47% (20) of respondents disagree and 21% (9) of students strongly disagree.

Compared with Americans, 6% (2) of participants strongly agree and 26% (9) of them agree they had a communication breakdown. With an increasing number, 51% (18) of students disagree, whereas 17% (6) of students strongly agree with the statement.

Overall, 28% (8) of students communicating with the German speakers experienced a communication failure, but as far as concerned, there is no one who strongly agrees with the statement. Above all, 55% (16) of students disagree and 17% (5) of students strongly disagree they have experienced a communication failure.

To continue with responses from students who communicated with other nationalities, 5% (4) of students strongly agree, whereas 35% (30) of participants agree with the statement. On the other hand, 42% (36) of students disagree, while 18% (15) of students strongly disagree that they had experienced a failure during communication with other nationalities.

To sum up the results, the results of respondents who have communication experience with other cultures are very close to one another. However, the decoded data prove that even though students from each category have experienced communication breakdowns, again the greater part consists of students who had no failure in the conversation.

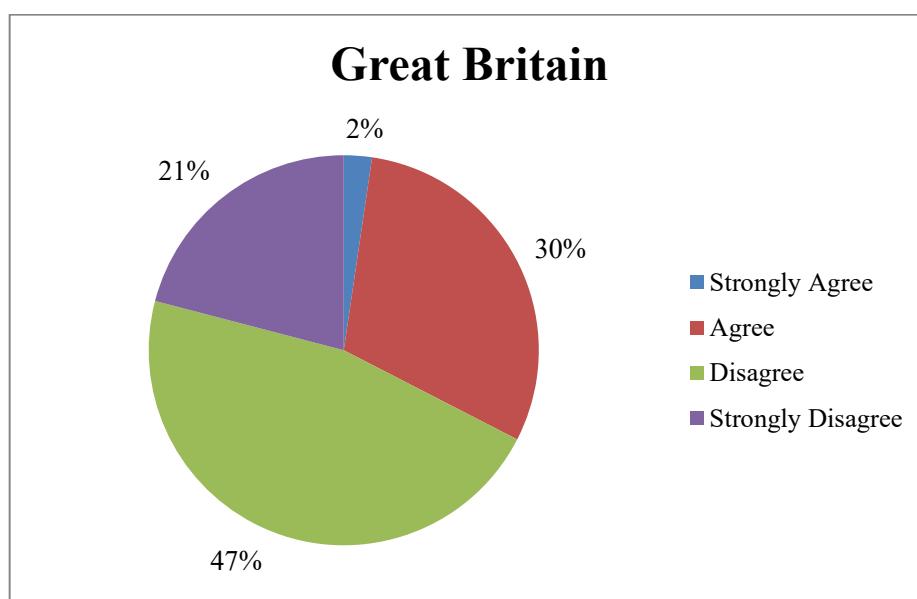


Fig. 12 Statement 7 (Source: Own research)

7.10 Statement 8: Sometimes we got lost in the communication we could not follow each other.

The next statement in the questionnaire asked clearly if sometimes the communicators could not quite follow another person in the conversation.

As figure 13 shows, 5% (2) of students strongly agree, and 37% (16) of students agree to be lost in communicating with the British speakers. Furthermore, 46% (20) of students disagree, while 12% (5) of students strongly disagree that they got lost in the communication.

With comparison with the respondents with the communication experience with the Americans, the numbers at this point are quite similar. To summarize, 3% (1) of respondents strongly agree and 37% (13) of students also admit they have trouble following other people, while 49% (17) of respondents disagree. In addition, only 11% (4) of respondents strongly disagree which means they do not have problems following the second speaker.

Furthermore, the data indicate 3% (1) of students with the communication experience with the German nationality strongly agree, moreover, 24% (7) of participants agree with the statement. On the other hand, 59% (17) of students disagree, whereas 14% (4) of students strongly disagree that they sometimes got lost in the conversation.

In the same way, the analysis of students whose communication experience was with other countries demonstrates that 5% (4) of students strongly agree and 40% (34) of them agree they could not follow the second speaker because the student was lost in the communication. Additionally, 40% (34) of students disagree and 15% (13) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

Although the data have shown only a few people who agree with the statement, especially in conversation with other nationalities, it still prevails that students who study English for Business Administration are able to follow in the conversation.

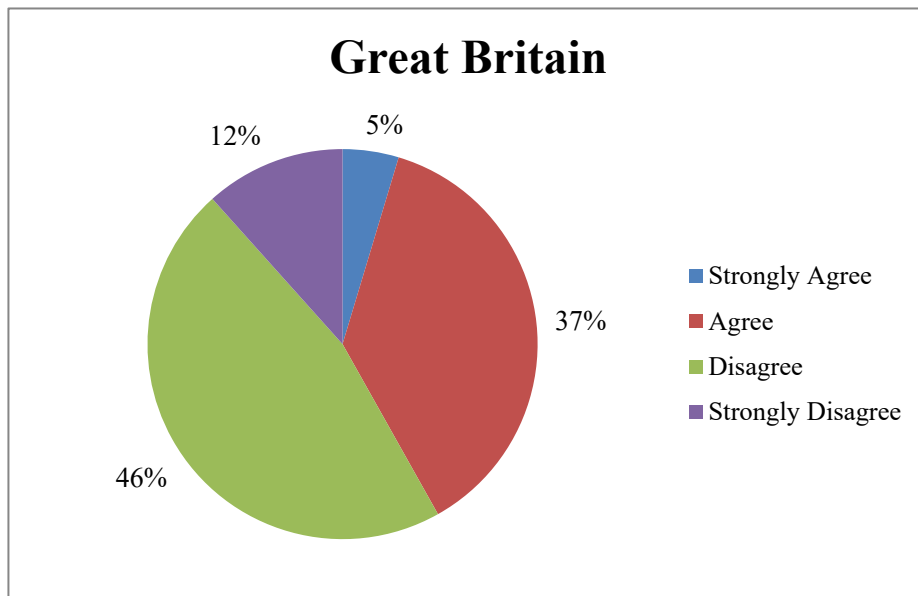


Fig. 13 Statement 8 (Source: Own research)

7.11 Statement 9: If we had time, we would discuss more different topics.

The following statement concentrated on the distribution of the conversation, more specifically, if given time, they could have discussed a wider variety of topics.

As it can be seen in figure 14, 30% (13) of respondents with the experience with the British nationality strongly agree with the statement, while 51% (22) of them agree. Moreover, 14% (6) of students do not agree they would discuss more topics even if they had more time and even 5% (2) of students strongly disagree.

Overall, 29% (10) of students strongly agree, while 51% (18) of students agree with the statement during communication with the Americans. On the other hand, only 17% (6) of respondents disagree and 3% (1) of strongly disagree with the statement.

More positive data show, that 35% (10) of respondents with the experience with the German nationality strongly agree and 48% (14) of students would speak about more issues. On the contrary, 14% (4) of students disagree and 3% (1) of strongly disagree with discussing more topics.

To continue, the analysis reveals 31% (26) of students with communication experience with the other countries who strongly agree, moreover, 42% (36) of students agree with the statement. Alternatively, 21% (18) of students disagree and 6% (5) strongly disagree, they would talk about more subject matters.

To simplify the results, although 18% (35) of all participants in the analysis claim they would not talk about any other further topics, most of the remaining students would discuss more subjects.

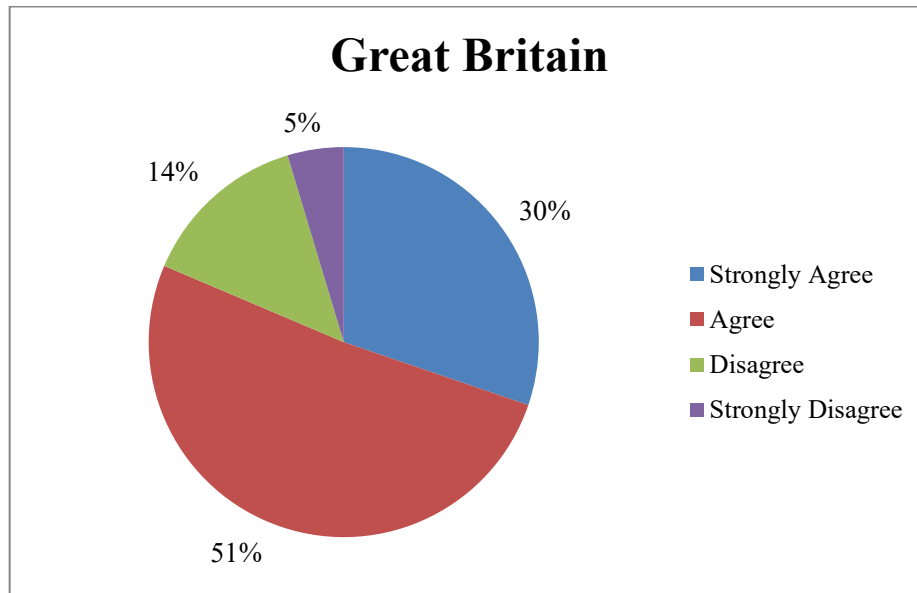


Fig. 14 Statement 9 (Source: Own research)

7.12 Statement 10: We usually changed topics because we did not know what to talk about.

This statement follows the previous which focuses not so much on the topics as on the continuity of the communication and flow. As the foregoing analysis of the statement, this also begins with the analysis of the students who have the communication experience with the British.

As figure 15 outlines, there are 16% (7) of students who agree with the statement but no one who strongly agrees. Out of the total number of students, 70% (30) of the respondents disagree and 14% (6) of them strongly disagree.

Furthermore, only 3% (1) of students who have communication experience with the Americans strongly agree, while 37% (13) of students agree with the statement. To bring the numbers to the surface, 51% (18) of the respondents disagree, while 9% (3) of students strongly disagree.

The analysis of students who have communication experience with the Germans show 31% (9) of students agree with the statement. Although 55% (16) of respondents disagree, 14% (4) strongly disagree with the statement.

The data established from the students who have communication experience with other countries show that 4% (3) of people strongly agree, while 21% (18) of students agree they

often had to change the topics. Additionally, 54% (46) of students did not have to shift the topics whereas 21% (18) strongly disagree.

In other words, the statement seeks to get information from students to get a wider picture of which people have difficulty communicating. The analysis proves that students when speaking to someone do not have a habit of changing subjects. The negative numbers show students who communicated with Americans.

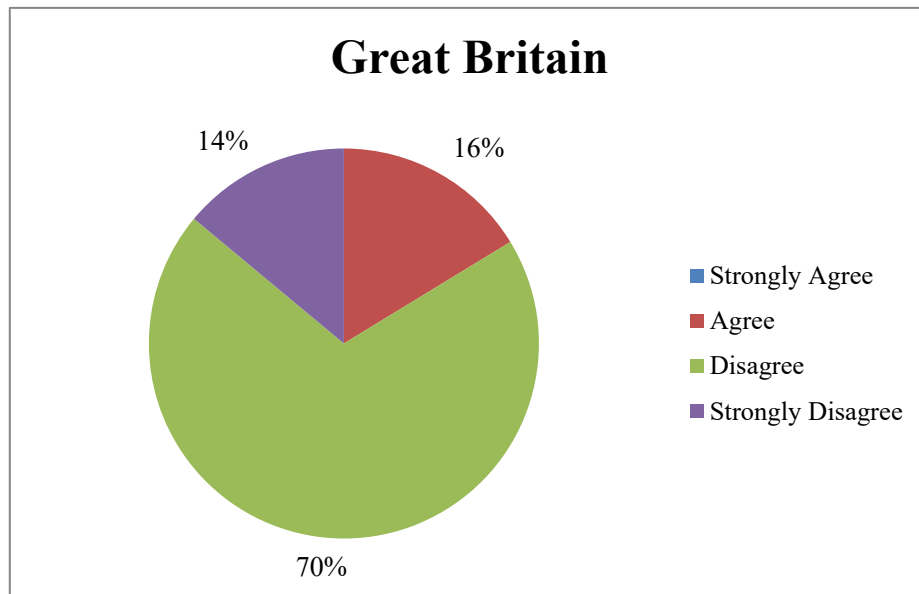


Fig. 15 Statement 10 (Source: Own research)

7.13 Statement 11: Our conversation was awkward and uncomfortable.

Equally important as the other statements, is statement number eleven, which tries to approach the moment of communication, the feeling of the speakers during the conversation. In other words, the statement asked whether the conversation was strained or awkward.

As the figure 16 shows, 9% (4) of students who have communication experience with the British agree with the statement. It continues by positive data showing that 44% (19) of students disagree and 47% (20) of them strongly disagree.

The results of the second studied group, which are the students who have communication experience with the Americans, say that 3% (1) of students were found who identify with the fact that the respondent feels awkward and uncomfortable during the conversation, while 8% (3) of respondents agree. On the other hand, 66% (23) of students disagree, and 23% (8) of students strongly disagree.

Almost the same results are also in the third group in which there are students who have communication experience with the Germans where no single student strongly agrees, but, 17% (5) of students who identify with the statement. Moreover, 52% (15) of students disagree, and 31% (9) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

The analysis of the last group which are the students who have communication experience with other countries shows slightly higher negative numbers than the previous results. More specifically, there were found 5% (4) of students who strongly agree and 10% (9) of students who agree with the statement. Yet, there are 52% (44) of students who disagree and 33% (28) who strongly disagree with the statement.

Conversation can be uncomfortable due to factors which are the part of the first section of the thesis. All things considered, only 10% (22) of students of English do not feel well during the communication, therefore we rate it as very optimistic compared to the total number of students. Most respondents do not feel well with people who are from other countries.

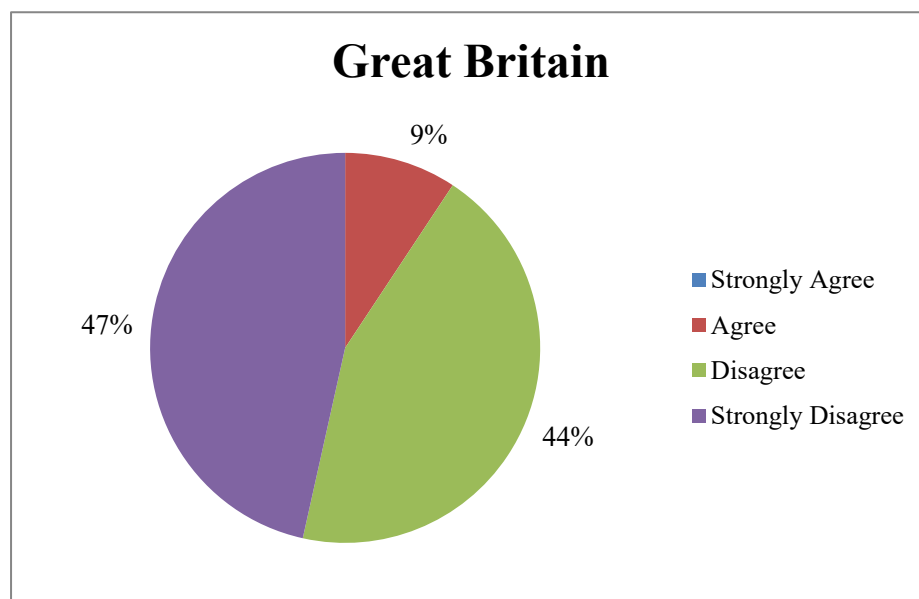


Fig. 16 Statement 11 (Source: Own research)

7.14 Statement 12: We soon had nothing to talk about.

To begin with figure 17, 12% (5) of the students who have communication experience with the British, agree, while 56% (24) of students disagree with the statement. Moreover, 32% (14) of students strongly disagree, they would soon have nothing to talk about.

Furthermore, 6% (2) of students who have communication experience with the Americans strongly agree, 20% (7) of students agree with the statement. To emphasize, overall 54% (19) of students disagree, while 20% (7) of students strongly disagree that they had nothing to talk about.

According to the analysis of the third group, in detail, students who have communication experience with the Germans, also no one indicated that they strongly agree, however, 21% (6) of students agree they ran out the topics. Besides that, while 58% (17) of respondents disagree, 21% (6) of students strongly disagree with the studied statement.

In addition, 15% (13) of students who have communication experience with the other countries agree and only 3% (2) of students strongly agree with the statement. Overall, 54% (46) of strongly agree, while 28% (24) of students strongly disagree that they had soon nothing to talk about.

To summarize, the students of English language have a good conversation because they do not have to worry they would have soon nothing to talk about. On the other hand, the analysis shows that students communicating with the British have the slightest trouble in this field.

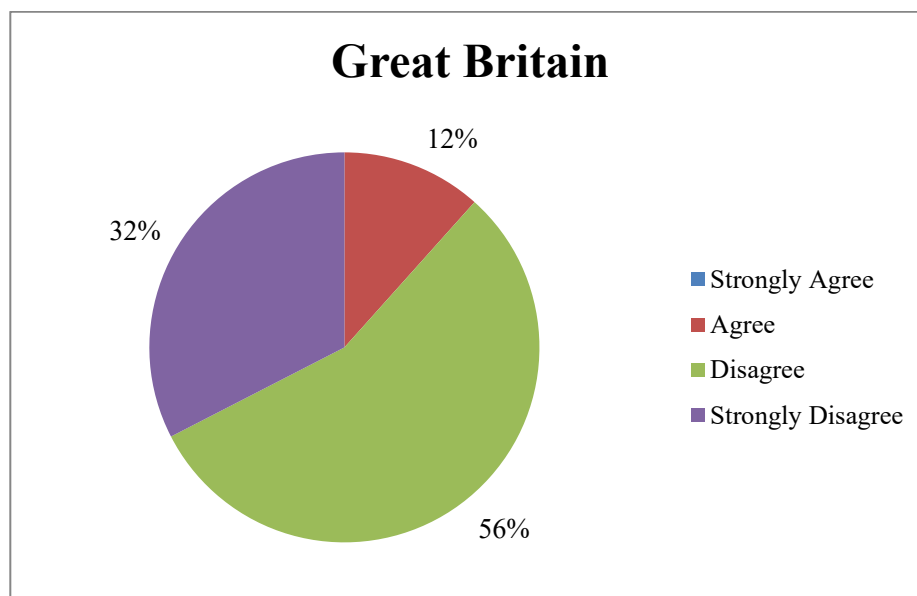


Fig. 17 Statement 12 (Source: Own research)

7.15 Statement 13: It was difficult to recognize when the other was serious or joking.

The statement directs to the understanding of the communication, whether speakers recognize how things are meant, moreover, whether they recognize when the other speaker is serious or joking.

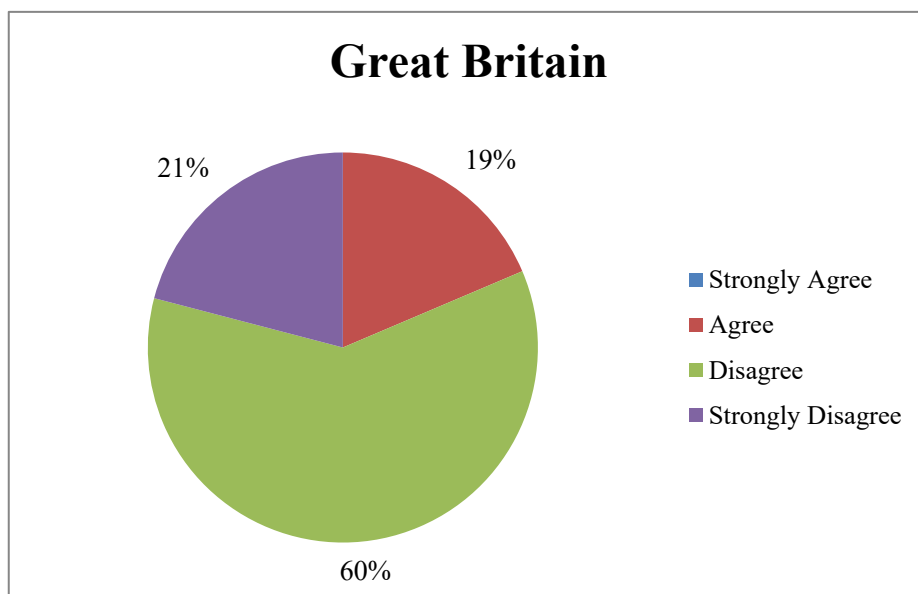
First of all, as graph 18 indicates, 19% (8) of students with the British speakers identify with the statement, while no one strongly agrees. On the contrary, 21% (9) of students strongly disagree, whereas 60% (26) of students disagree with the studied statement.

The data taken from the students with the American partners lead to 3% (1) of students who strongly agree and 14% (5) of participants who agree with the subject matter. The analysis shows, 66% (23) of students disagree and 17% (6) of students strongly disagree with the problem of distinguishing between seriousness and joking.

As well as the previous groups, data taken from the students who have communication experience with the Germans were evaluated. Although 10% (3) of students agree they do not understand the tone of the conversation, no one strongly agrees. Moreover, only 21% (6) of students strongly disagree and 69% (20) of students disagree, they would have a problem to realize when the other was serious or joking.

To sum up the last group of students who have communication experience with the other countries, 5% (4) of students strongly agree, while 28% (24) of students strongly disagree. Above all, 16% (14) of students agree, while 51% (43) disagree with the statement.

All things considered, the data show that students have not difficulties to realize if someone is generally serious or on the other hand, when people are joking. Only 18% (35) of respondents in total agree with the statement. Furthermore, students who have



communication experience with other countries agreed the most.

Fig. 18 Statement 13 (Source: Own research)

7.16 Statement 14: I felt anxious during the conversation.

It is also important to emphasize this statement for the reason that one of the psychological barriers discussed in the first part of this thesis is that people often feel anxious when talking to other nationalities. This section, therefore, focuses directly on this barrier.

As depicted in figure 19, 5% (2) of students strongly agree and 21% (9) of students agree when communicating with the British. On the other hand, 46% (20) of students disagree, moreover, 28% (12) of students strongly disagree they feel anxious when talking to someone else.

Other positive numbers are shown in the analysis of the students who have communication experience with the Americans, whereas 5% (2) of students strongly agree and 23% (8) of respondents agree with the statement. However, 46% (16) of students disagree, while 26% (9) of students strongly disagree they feel stressed out during the conversation.

From the whole number of students who have communication experience with the Germans, 10% (3) of students strongly agree, whereas 31% (9) of students agree with the statement. At the same time, 38% (11) of students argue to disagree and 21% (6) of students strongly disagree.

The analysis of the students who have communication experience with the other countries refers to 2% (2) of students who strongly agree and 19% (16) of students who agree they feel uneasy throughout the communication. In addition, the data indicate 29% (25) of students who strongly disagree and 50% (42) of students who disagree with the statement.

To conclude, as in the previous evaluations, this evaluation also uncovers very positive information. The majority of the respondents do not agree that they experience anxiousness or stress when communicating also with British or Americans and Germans. The most problematic conversation in which the students feel anxious throughout the communication is with the other countries.

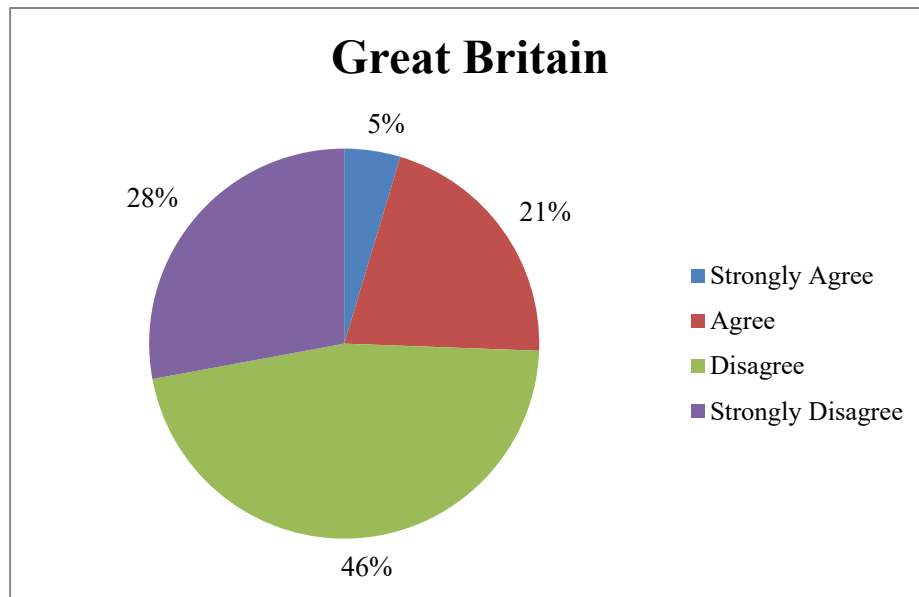


Fig. 19

Statement 14 (Source: Own research)

7.17 Statement 15: Due to our cooperation, the conversation went smoothly.

Last but not least, the present statement asks if due to the mutual cooperation, the conversation was generally smoothly flowing.

As can be seen in figure 20, the analysis found only 19% (8) of students who have communication experience with the British who strongly agree with the statement, on the other hand, a higher number is shown in the students who agree their conversation went smoothly, specifically 67% (29). Likewise, positive numbers were revealed during decoding the questionnaires when only 14% (6) of students disagree, in addition, no one has occurred who would strongly disagree with the statement.

Decoding the survey, that was handed by the students who have communication experience with the Americans, data show that 20% (7) of students strongly agree, while 66% (23) of students agree with the statement. The analysis found 11% (4) of students who disagree and unluckily, there are 3% (1) of students who claim that even due to mutual cooperation, the communication did not go well.

The analysis focuses on the students who have communication experience with the German nationality as well. To start, 10% (3) of students strongly agree and 76% (22) of students agree with the statement. To continue, 14% (4) of people disagree their conversation was easy to communicate.

Participants with the communication experience with other cultures claim that 19%

(16) of them strongly agree, whereas in total 66% (56) of students agree that the communication experience flowed well. To continue, while 14% (12) of respondents disagree, 1% (1) of students strongly disagrees with the placed statement.

To recapitulate, the analysis of the information obtained from the students of English has been published in bright numbers. Only a small proportion of students disagree that communication went well, even though both sides helped each other. Most of these answers consist of students who have communication experience with other countries.

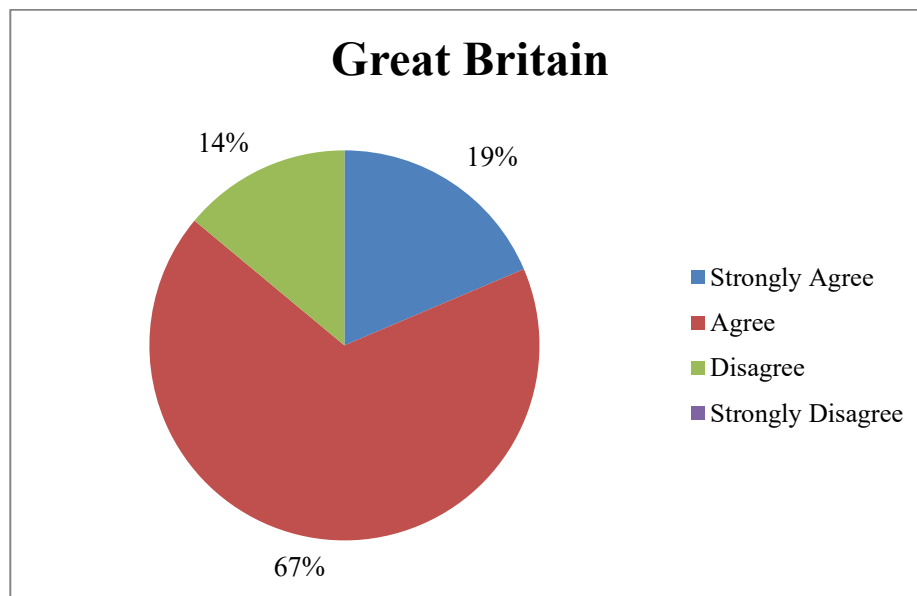


Fig. 20 Statement 15 (Source: Own research)

7.18 Statement 16: I am trying to avoid communication with foreigners.

The final statement directly asked respondents if they are trying to avoid communication with people who have different cultural background due to using a different language. Even though students studying English have sufficient knowledge of English, they may be afraid to speak to foreigners and therefore may avoid communication with them.

As it can be seen in figure 21, the results of the students who have communication experience with the British show that 2% (1) of students strongly agree, and 7% (3) of respondents agree they are trying to avoid communication with foreigners. Moreover, in total, 35% (15) of students disagree; whereas 56% (24) of participants strongly disagree they would try to avoid communication in different language.

Analyzing the group of students who have communication experience with Americans shows 3% (1) of students who strongly disagree and 14% (5) of students who strongly agree with the statement. In addition, 26 % (9) of students disagree, and 57% (20) of students strongly disagree with the present statement.

Overall, 7% (2) of students with communication experience with Germans confirmed that they strongly agree, and 17% (5) of students claims they agree with the statement. On contrary, 31% (9) of participants disagree, whereas 45% (13) of students strongly disagree, and they do not try to avoid communication.

Final group consists of the participants who have communication experience with other countries. The data displays 4% (3) of students who strongly agree with the statement therefore they have a big problem speaking to people in different language. In addition, there are 13% (11) of students who claim they also agree with the statement. Although this may be true, 29% (25) of respondents disagree, whereas 54% (46) of students strongly disagree with the statement.

All things considered, after the evaluating the final statement, the results are quite positive. It turned out that students who participated in the questionnaire survey had the least problem with speaking with the British or Americans. Respondents who communicated with Germans had a slightly bigger problem. The data determine the students who have communication experience with other cultures, who prove the most problematic, specifically, 36% (71) of students in total do agree they are trying to avoid communication.

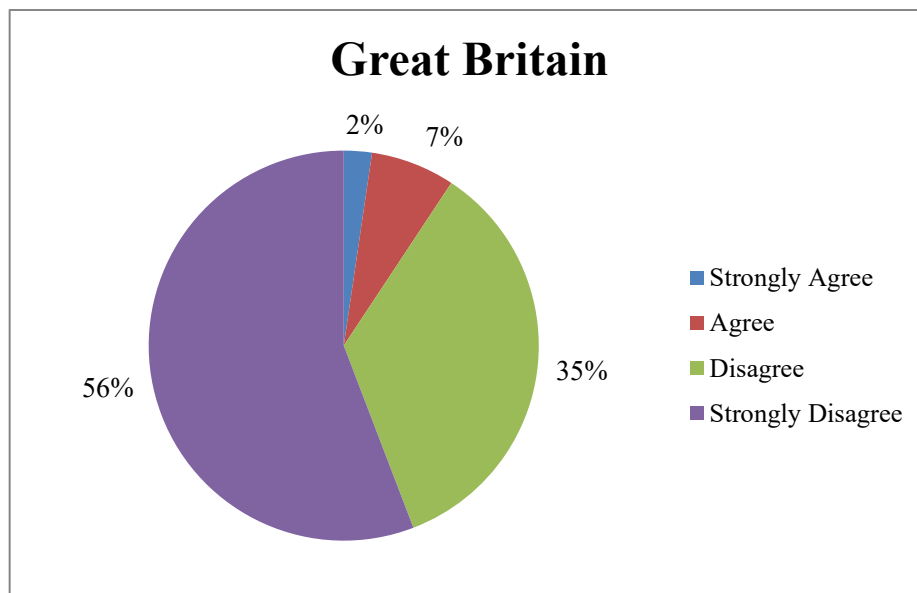


Fig. 21 Statement 16 (Source: Own research)

8 ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After reconstructing the evaluation of the questionnaire survey, we will move on to the next part of the bachelor's thesis. In the following chapter, the research questions stated in the methodological part will be reminded and answered. Further, the research questions are repeated again:

- 1) Do students of Business English perceive difficulties in intercultural communication?
- 2) Do students of Business English avoid intercultural communication due to perceptual barriers?

The results of the research proved to be very encouraging; as the students of English have revealed, intercultural barriers do not affect them on an enormous scope. To be more specific, in most of the studied statements, students claimed that they do not find difficulties which could jeopardize effective communication between them and foreigners. The majority of students responded very positively to the statements, regardless of with whom they had communication experience with. It is important to emphasize, a minority of students appeared in questionnaires that reacted negatively to statement, but overall, the results are more than acceptable.

The target research group are students who have an excellent level of English, yet we studied whether students avoid speaking with foreigners. Once more, the results are favorable and promising. To mention the numbers, precisely 36% of respondents confirmed their avoidance of foreigners, and therefore the rest (64%) do not avoid communication in English.

I assume that the English level and perception of students of English have increased to a level above average and shows us that perceptual barriers to intercultural communication are decreasing in young students nowadays.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

After answering the research questions, the thesis will continue by making a recommendation for improvement.

Among the biggest difficulties that students have manifested was statement 5, which asked students if they choose simple words to avoid misunderstanding. In this case, up to 156 students agreed. This evaluation was very interesting as students have a high level of English but are afraid to use more complex connections. Focusing on vocabulary extension would be suggested.

There was also a big negative response in statements 2 and 3, which asked students if their conversation was well organized and if they were lost in conversation with other people while speaking English. Thinking in a foreign language should be advised.

It was also confirmed that intercultural barriers still affect a minority of English students, it is important to remove perceptual barriers. I made recommendations for students and the whole class separately.

9.1 Recommendations for students

Developing student's confidence by improving their language skills, both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (talking and writing) is suggested. By improving these parts, the students gain wide vocabulary which helps them to be more ready to use it in conversation. In addition, students who do not feel comfortable while speaking to other people are recommended to learn more about cultures including cultural differences and respect them.

To reduce unclear conversations or being lost in what the other person says it is recommended to not be anxious to ask people to repeat themselves. Moreover, students should be more open to engage in situations and meeting new people to remove prejudicial barriers. In order to reduce the difficulties with recognition when foreigner is serious or joking, I suggest perceiving non-verbal communication, learn about it and use it.

9.2 Recommendations for English classes

Teachers should encourage their students to talk to reduce the teacher talking time and raise the level of the student talking time. The teacher should persuade the students to actively participate in classes with international students. In order to make the students more relaxed while talking to foreigner, they should make more relaxed atmosphere to create a place of

trust. The teachers should prepare activities requiring students to work in pairs or groups and form mixed groups – e. g. groups consisting of both the Czech and international students.

CONCLUSION

Intercultural communication is nowadays quite necessary. We live in a world full of opportunities. Opportunities to live and work abroad, to travel or to study. On the other hand, there are also barriers connected to intercultural communication that undermine the efficiency of conversation.

The theoretical part of the bachelor's thesis presented intercultural communication, then culture and communication itself as well as perception. Furthermore, it continued by explaining and giving a list of barriers to intercultural communication. On the other hand, the practical part dealt with the evaluation of the questionnaires completed by students of Business English.

The main goal of the research was to find out whether young students of English studying at Tomas Bata University are affected by the perceptual barriers in intercultural communication. The survey showed that most of the respondents do not have difficulties with the barriers to intercultural communication and only a small percentage showed deficiencies in communication, which I consider very favorable.

However, we cannot forget that the analysis was only applied to students who have been learning English for many years, so perceptual barriers may exist in other groups which were not studied.

In conclusion, this bachelor's thesis was meaningful because the findings that have been proven show that the perceptual barriers are progressively eliminated nowadays thanks to young students who are not afraid of the differences of other cultures. It is important to realize that we have detected a big step forward in our society. The research questions were answered, and the goal of this bachelor's thesis was met.

“In many ways, effective communication begins with mutual respect, communication that inspires, encourages others to do their best”

Zig Ziglar

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PDI	Power Distance Index
UAI	Uncertainty Avoidance Index
IDV	Individualism
MAS	Masculinity
e.g.	Example gratia

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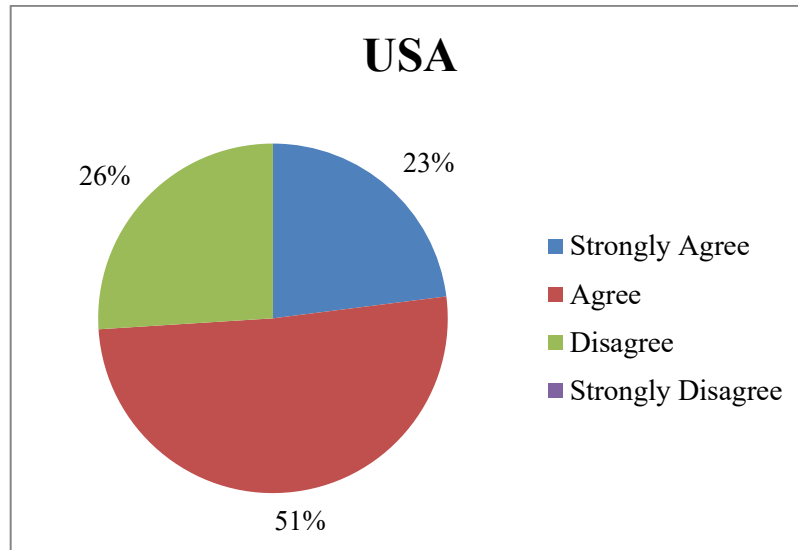
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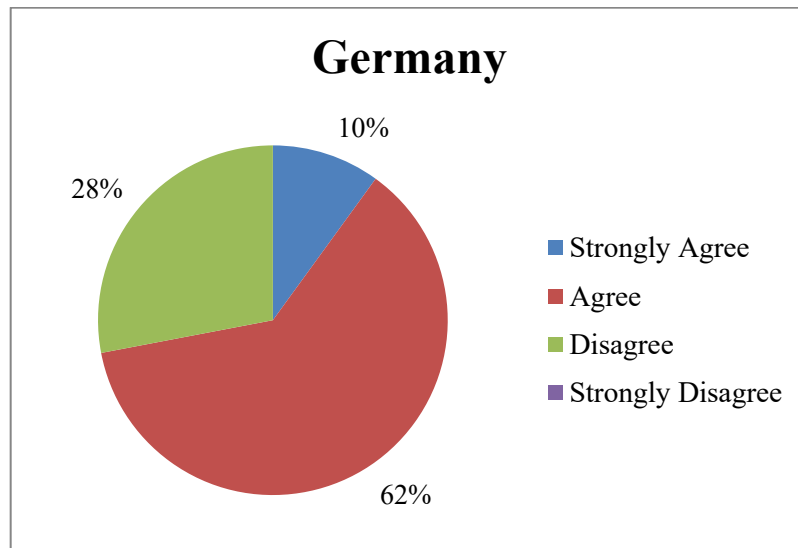
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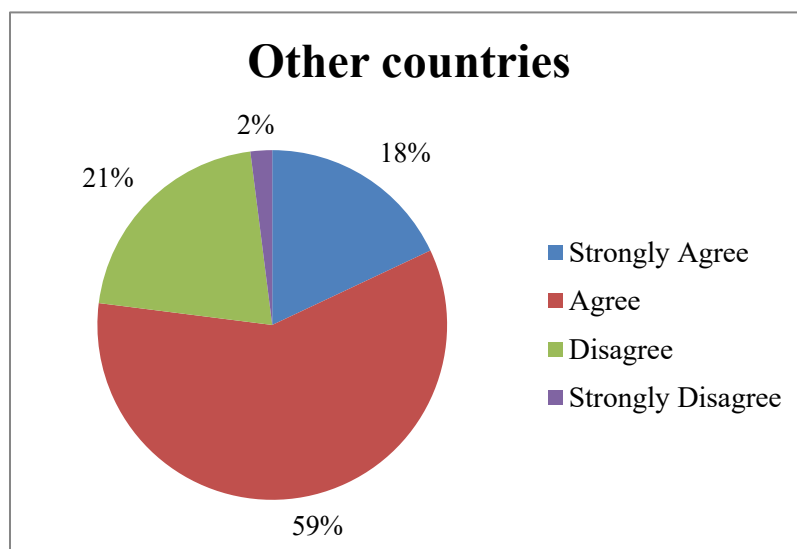
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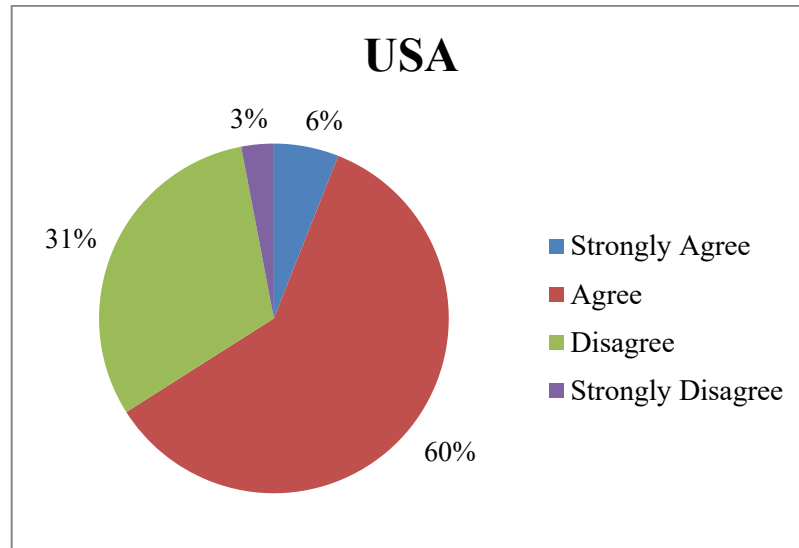
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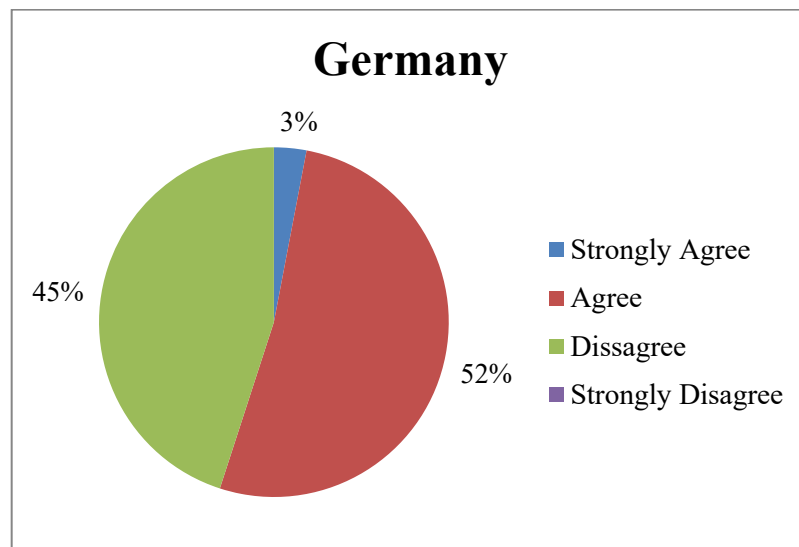
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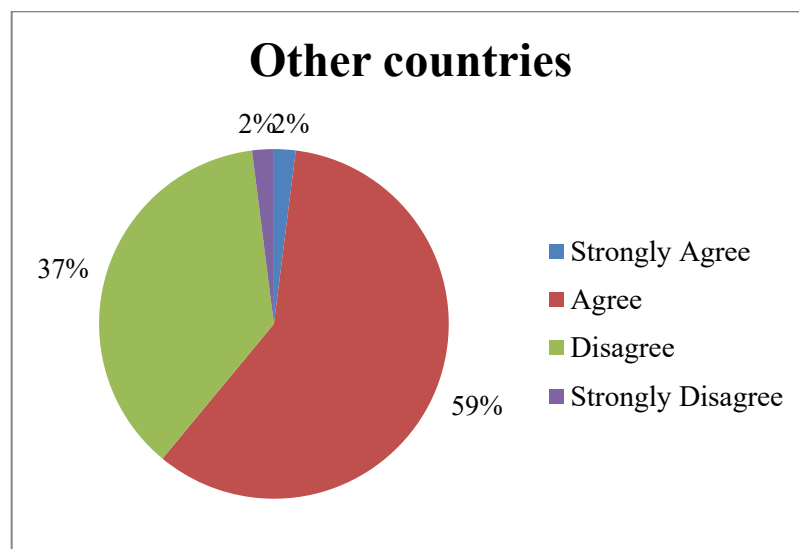
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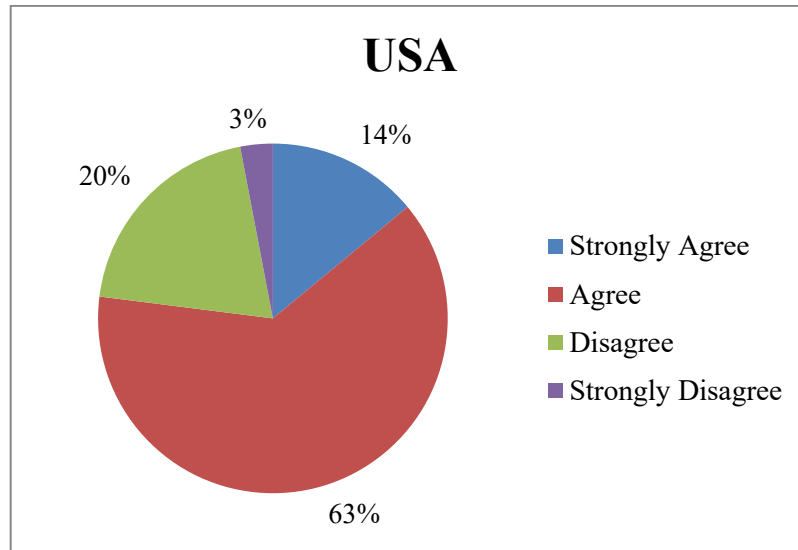
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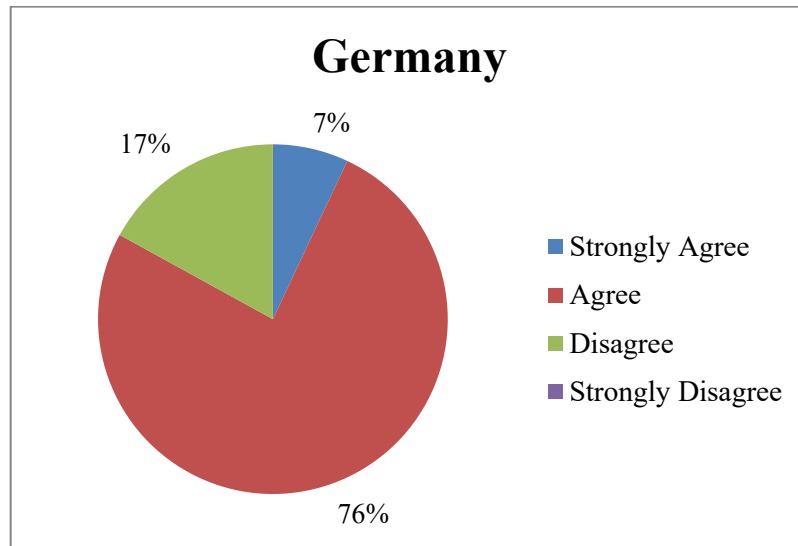
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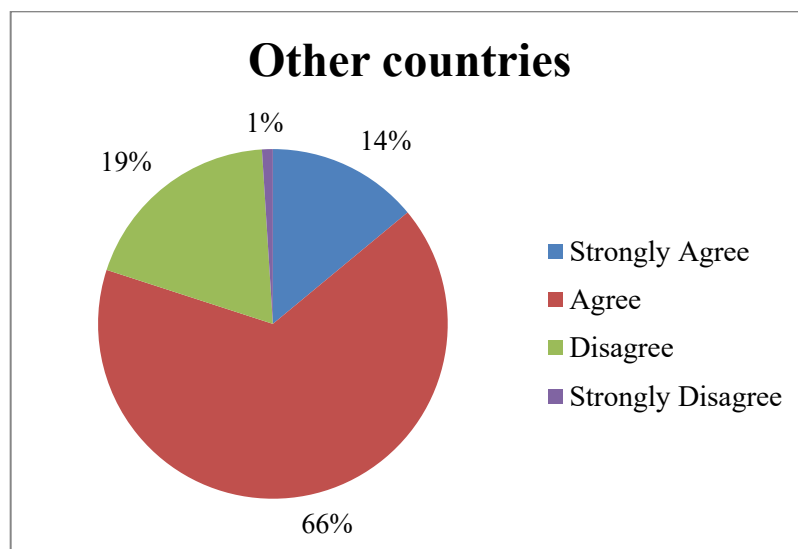
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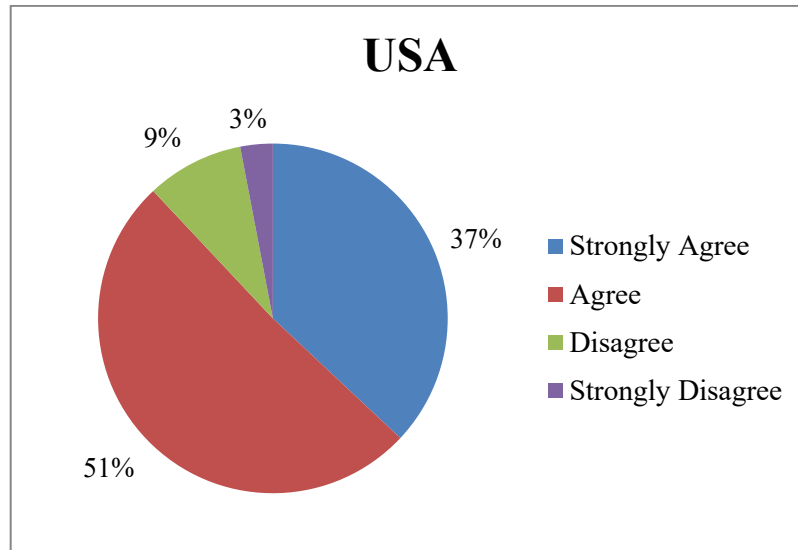
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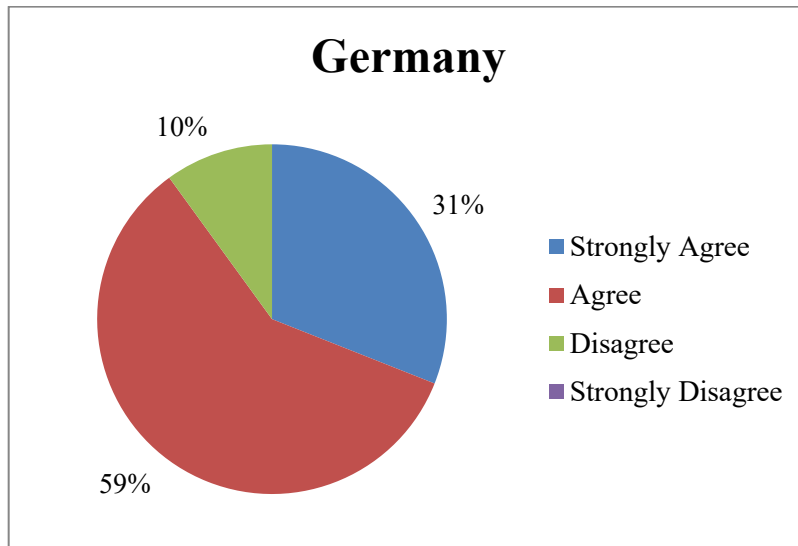
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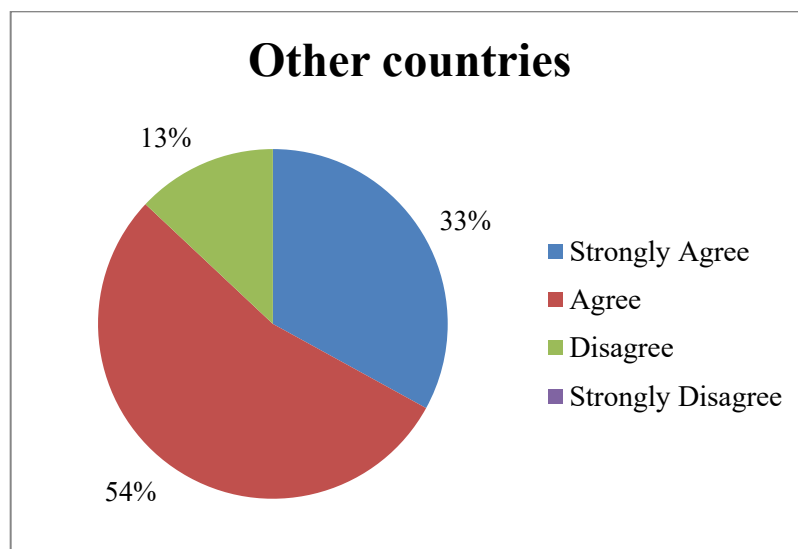
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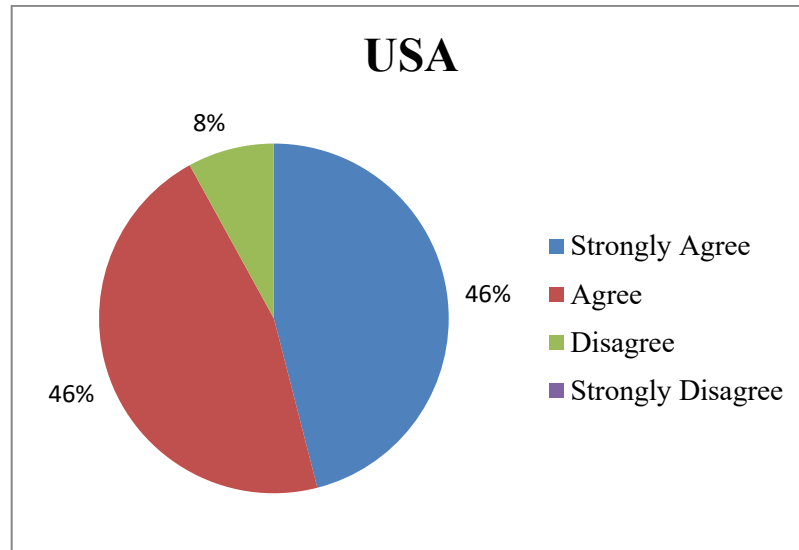
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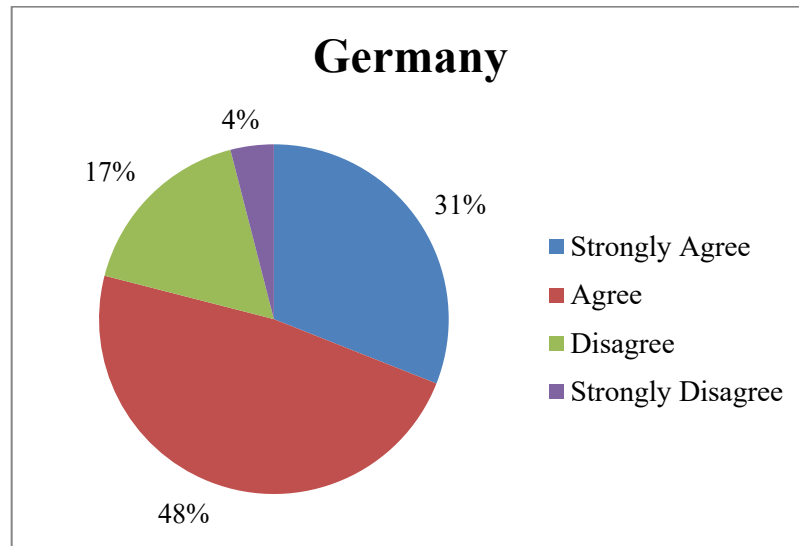
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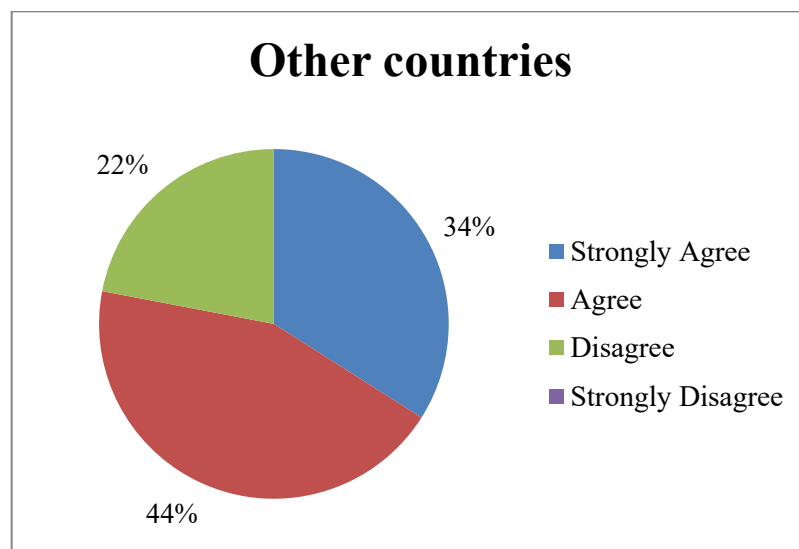
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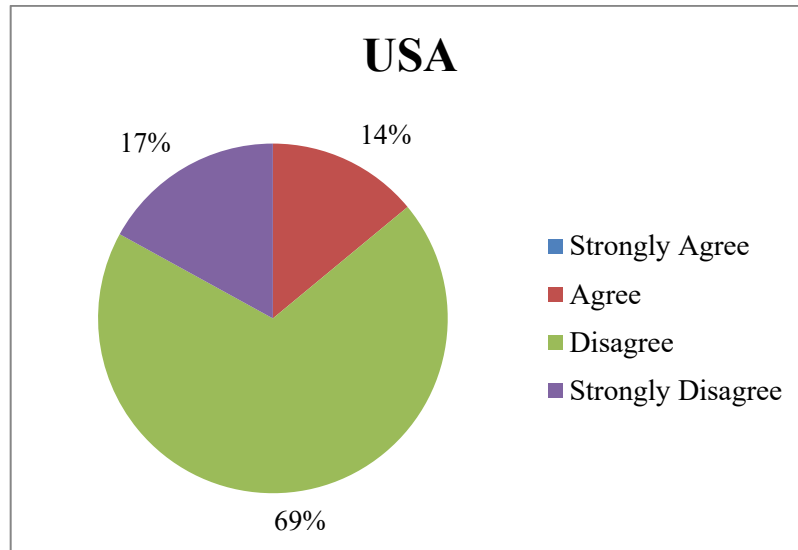
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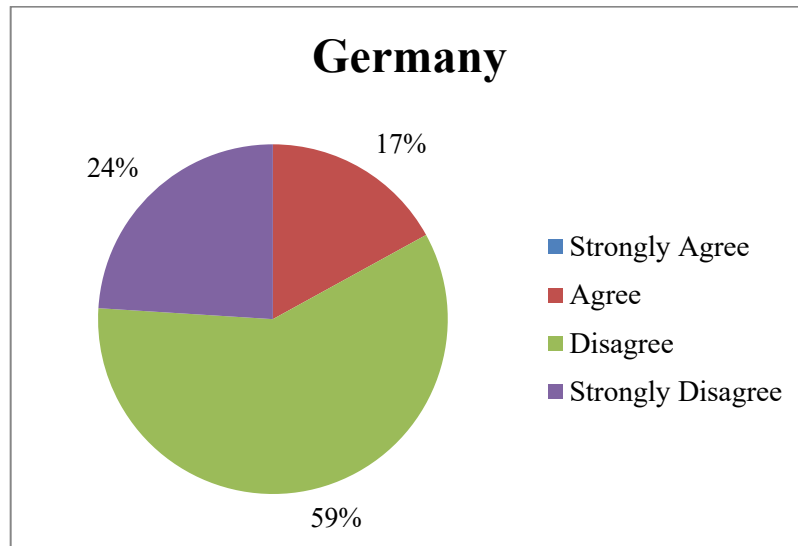
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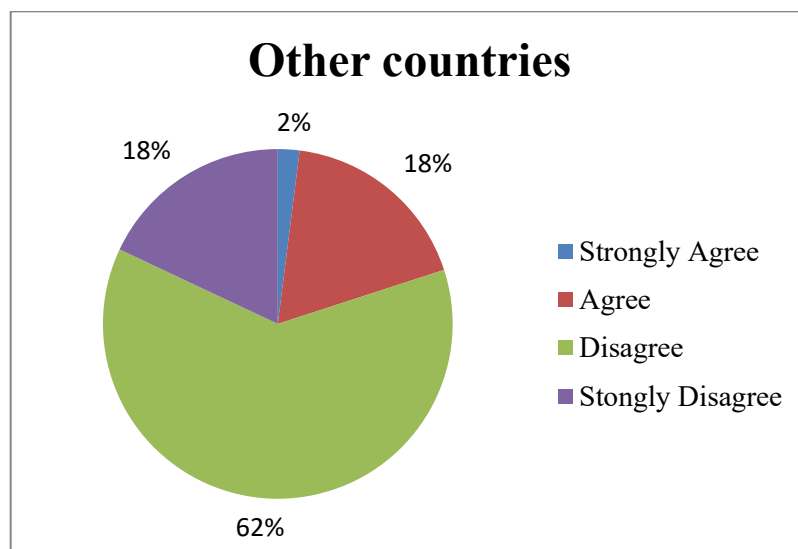
Appendix 15: Statement 5_ Other countries



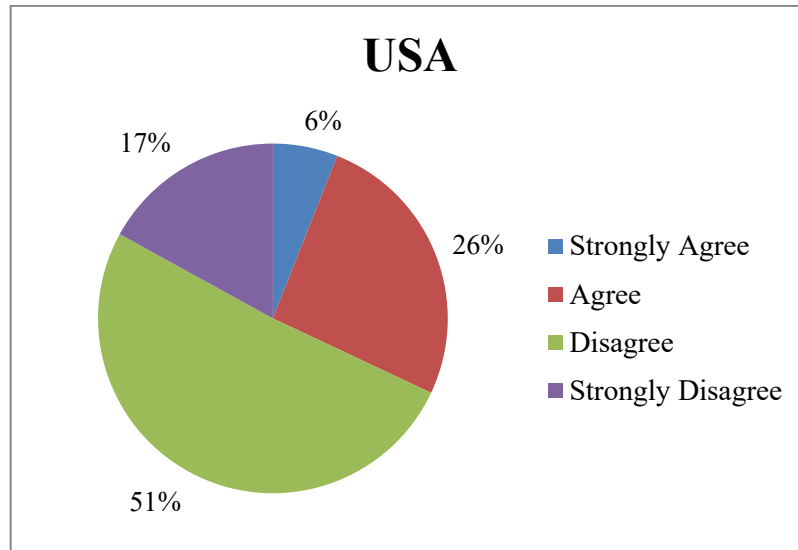
Appendix 16: Statement 6_USA



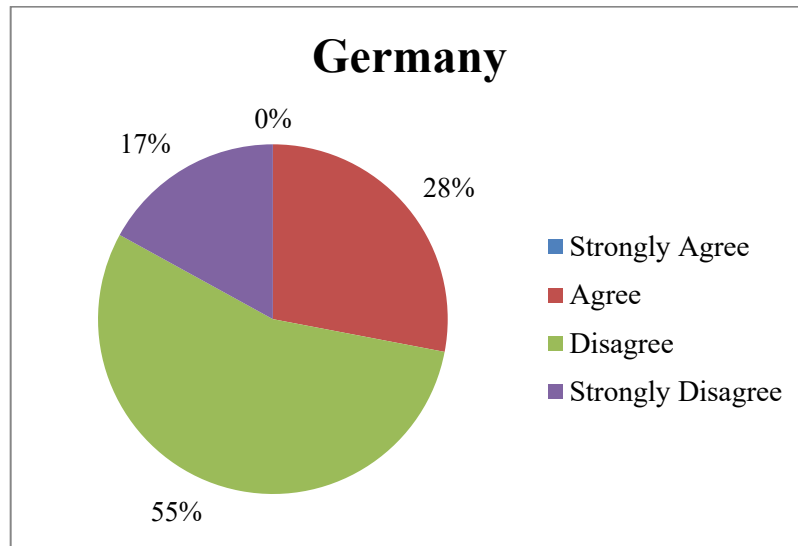
Appendix 17: Statement 6_Germany



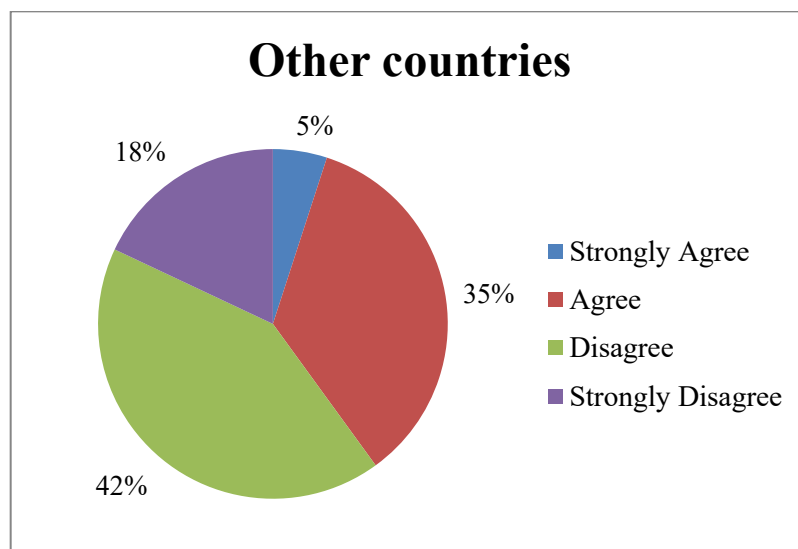
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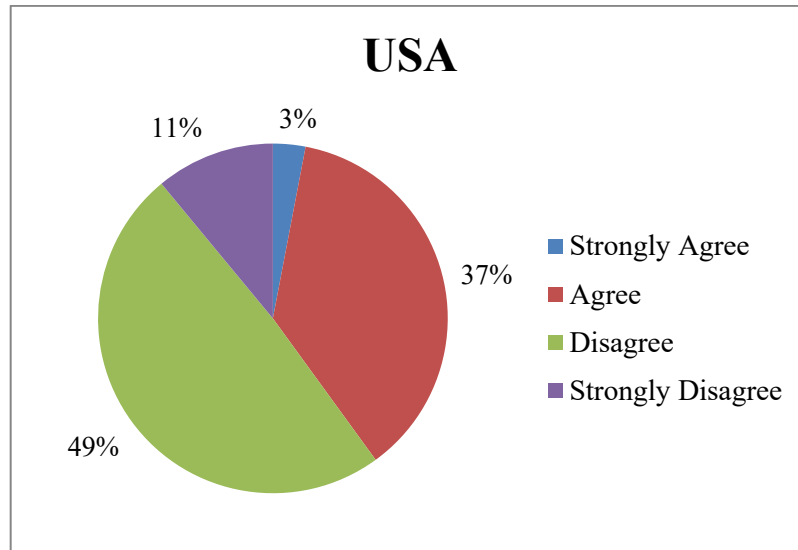
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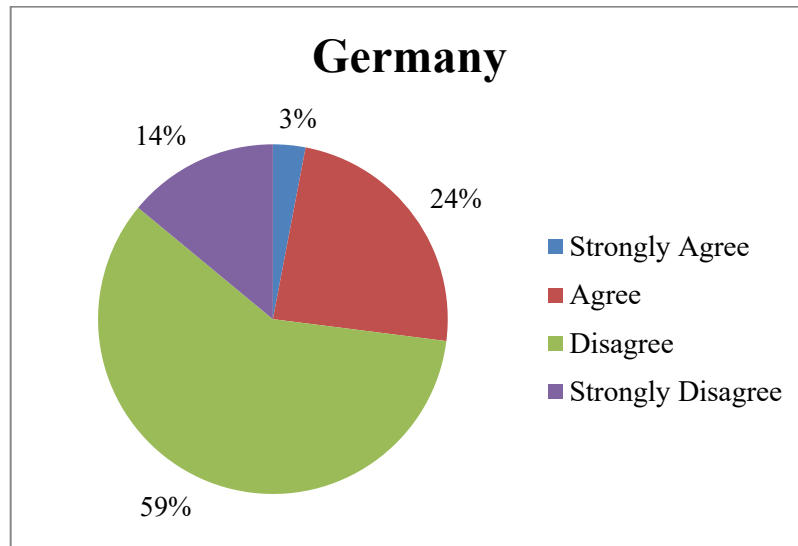
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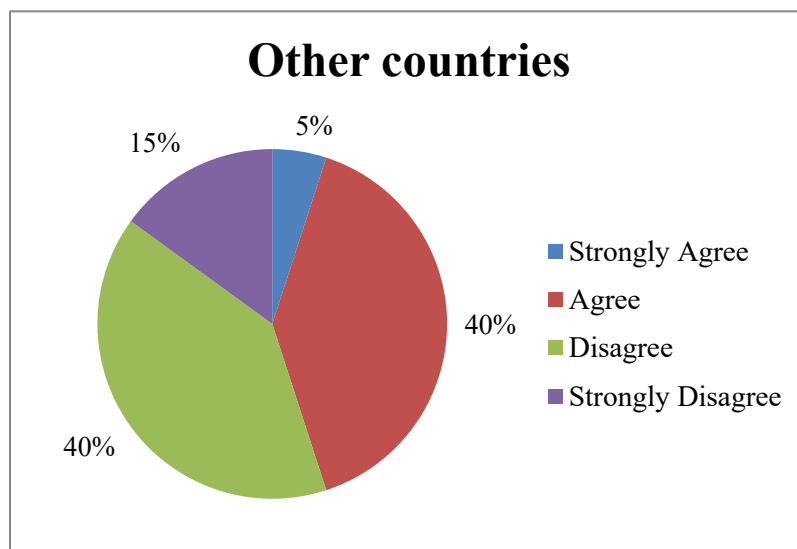
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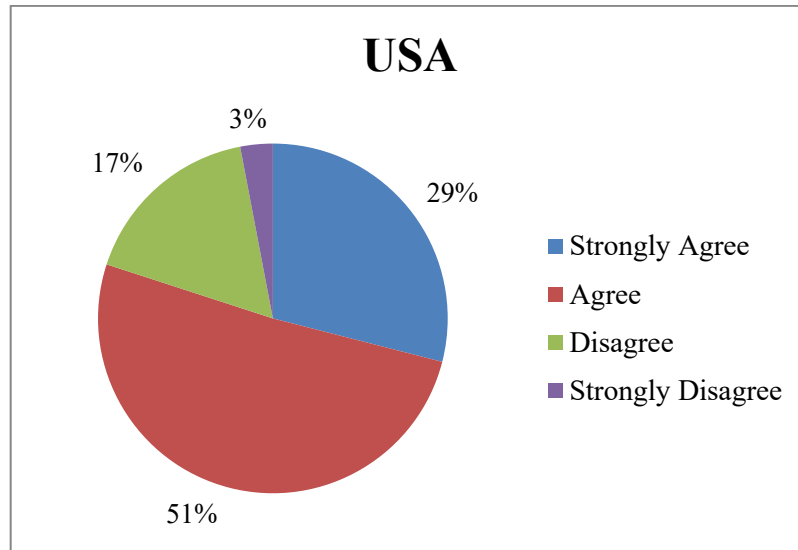
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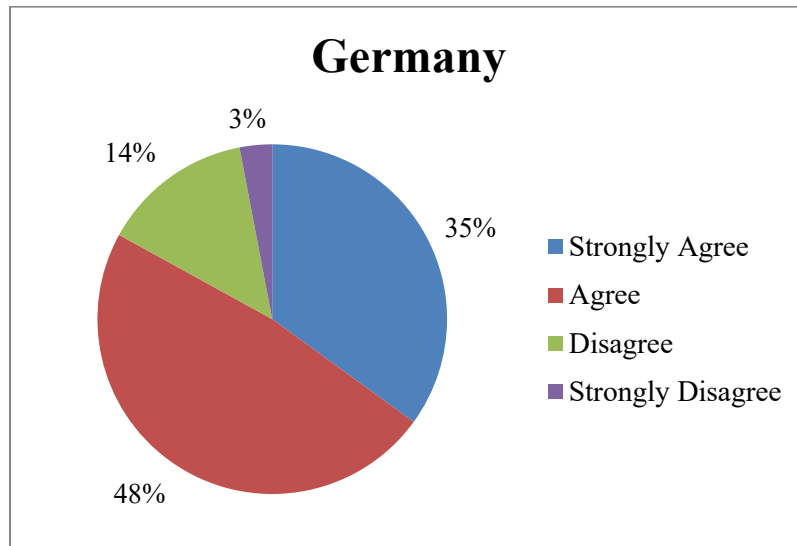
Appendix 23: Statement 8_Germany



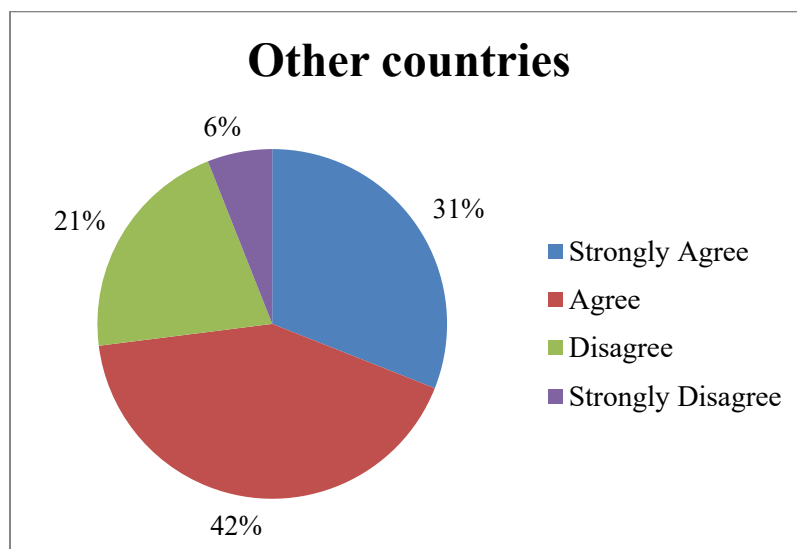
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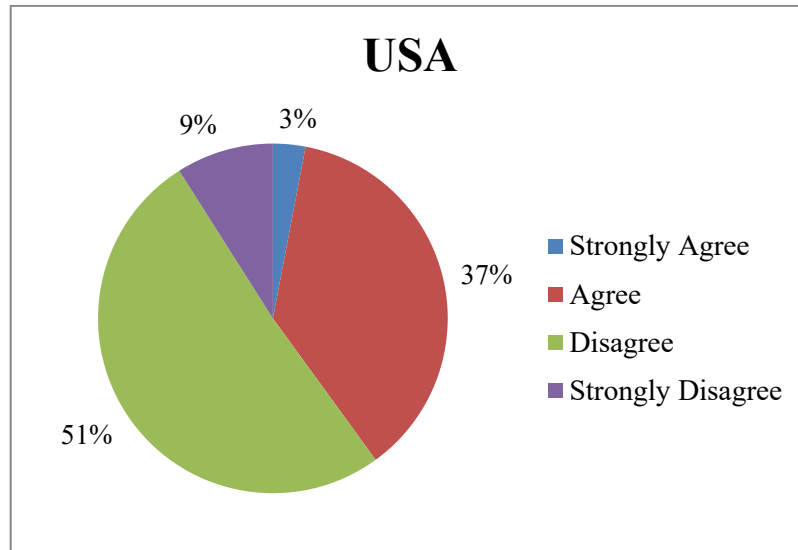
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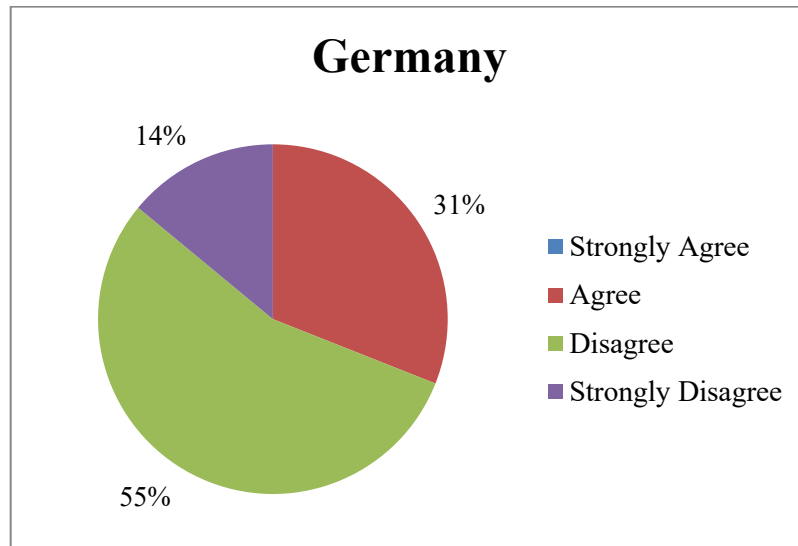
Appendix 26: Statement 9_Germany



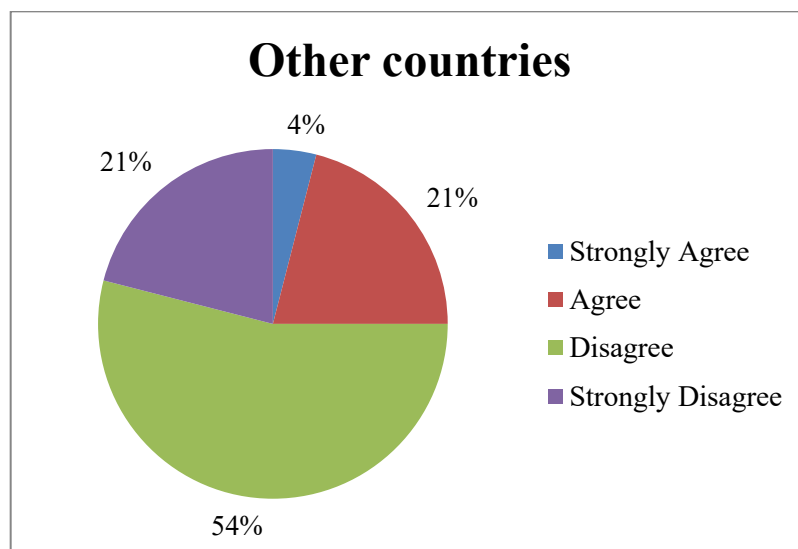
Appendix 27: Statement 9_Other countries



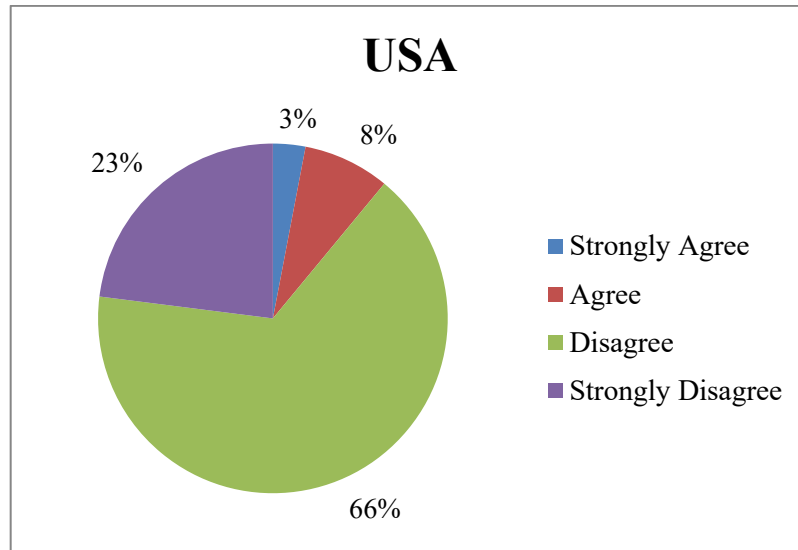
Appendix 28: Statement 10_USA



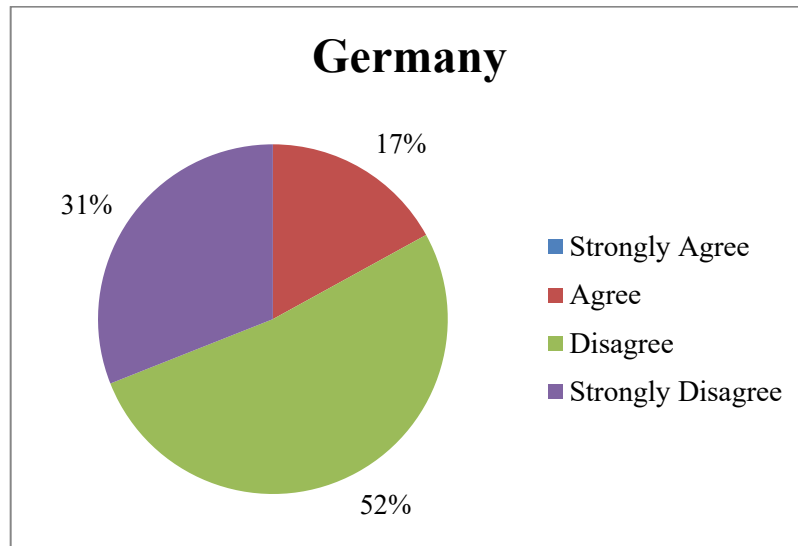
Appendix 29: Statement 10_Germany



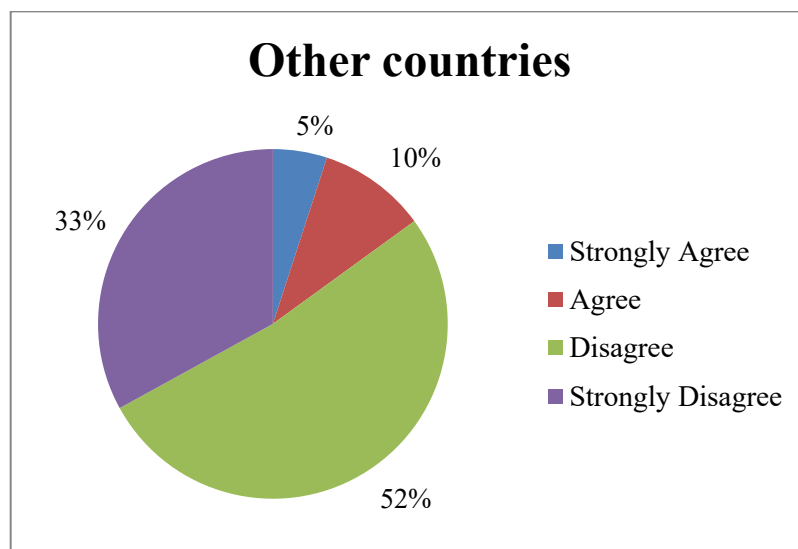
Appendix 30: Statement 10_Other countries



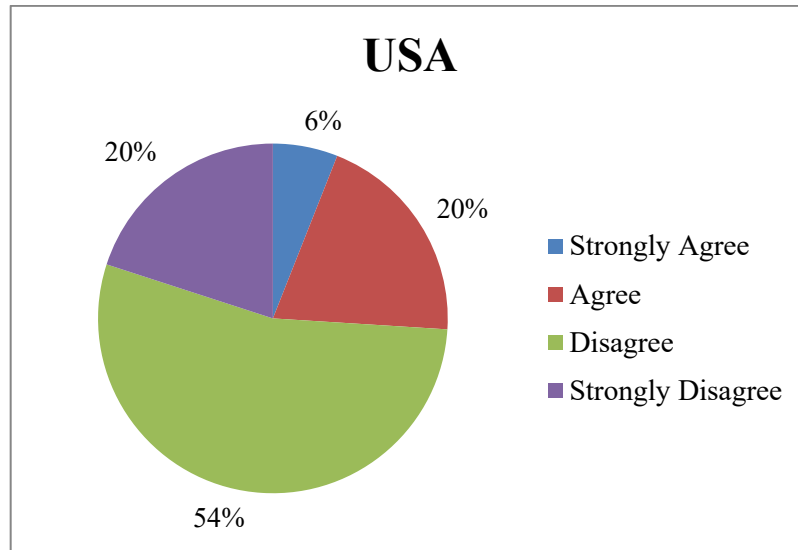
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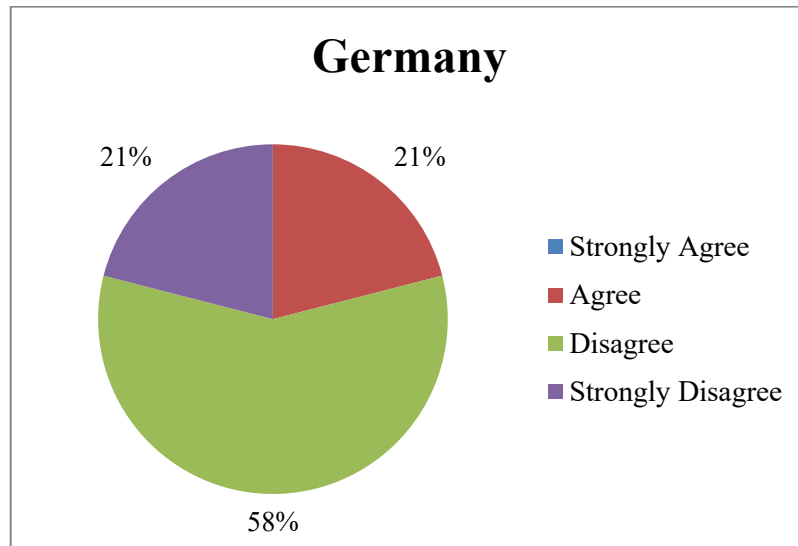
Appendix 32: Statement 11_Germany



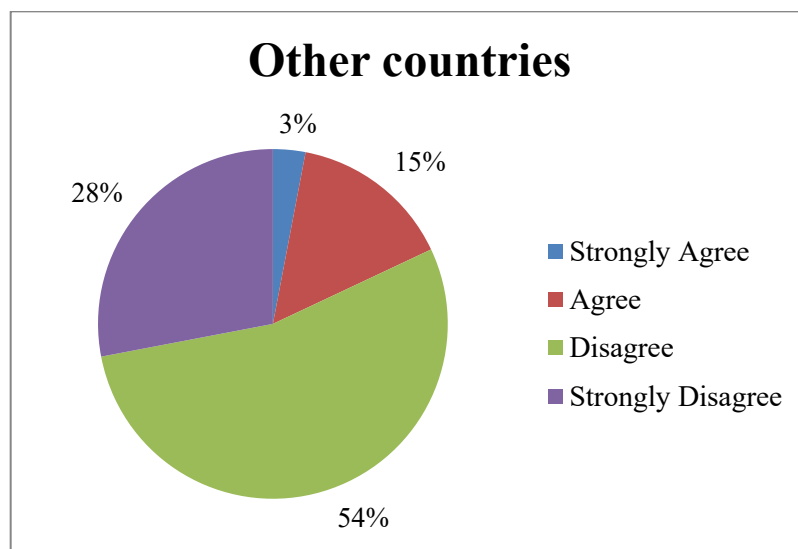
Appendix 33: Statement 11_Other countries



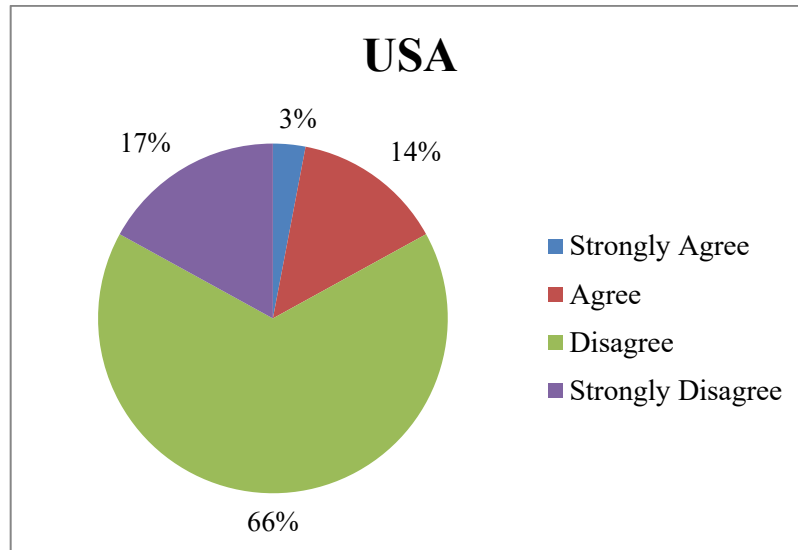
Appendix 34: Statement 12_USA



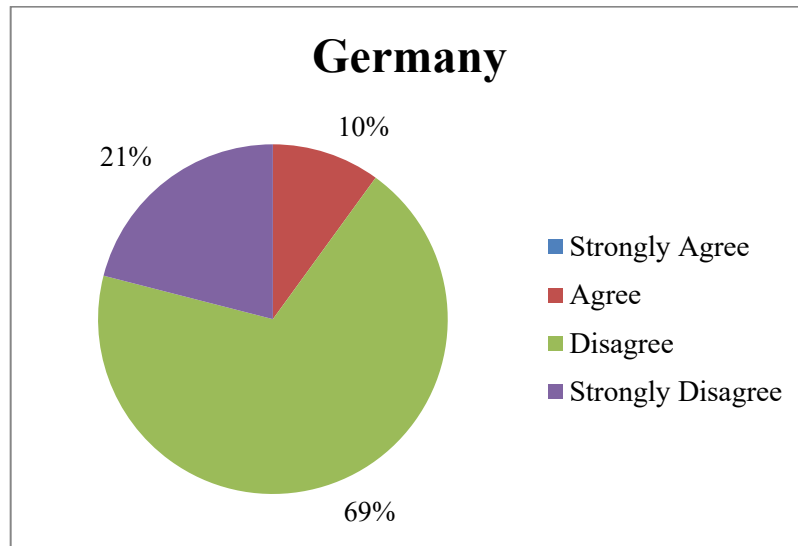
Appendix 35: Statement 12_Germany



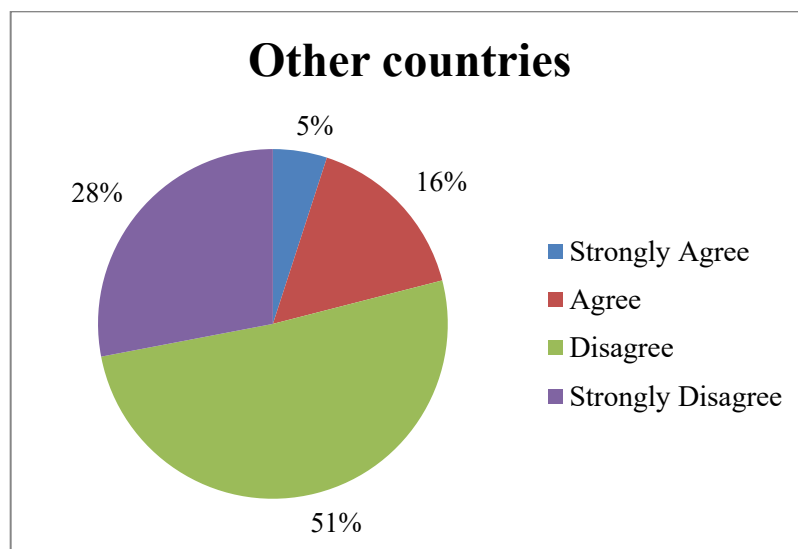
Appendix 36: Statement 12_Other countries



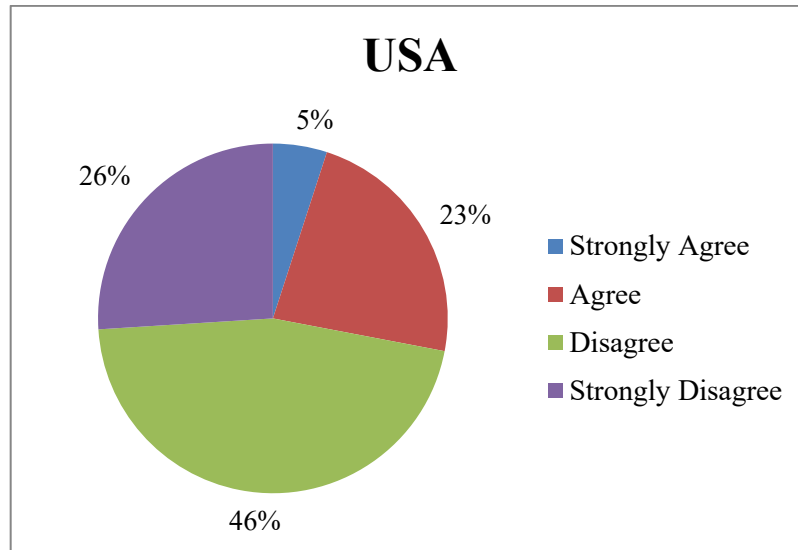
Appendix 37: Statement 13_USA



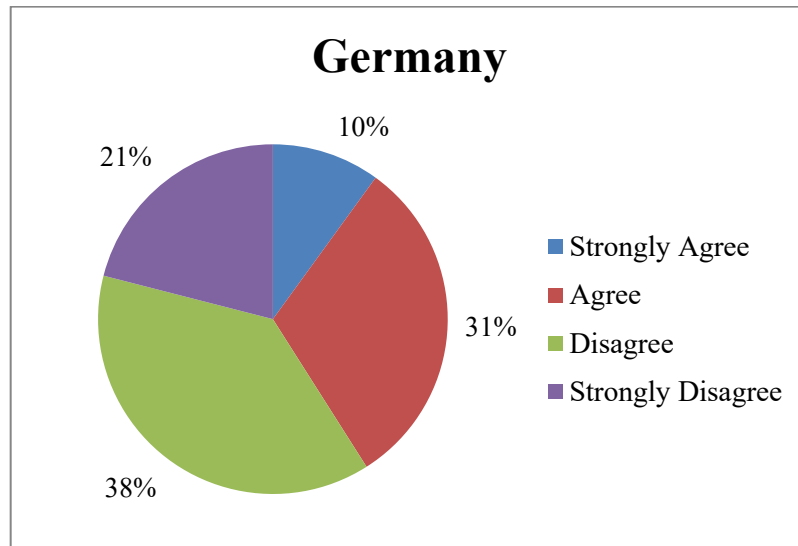
Appendix 38: Statement 13_Germany



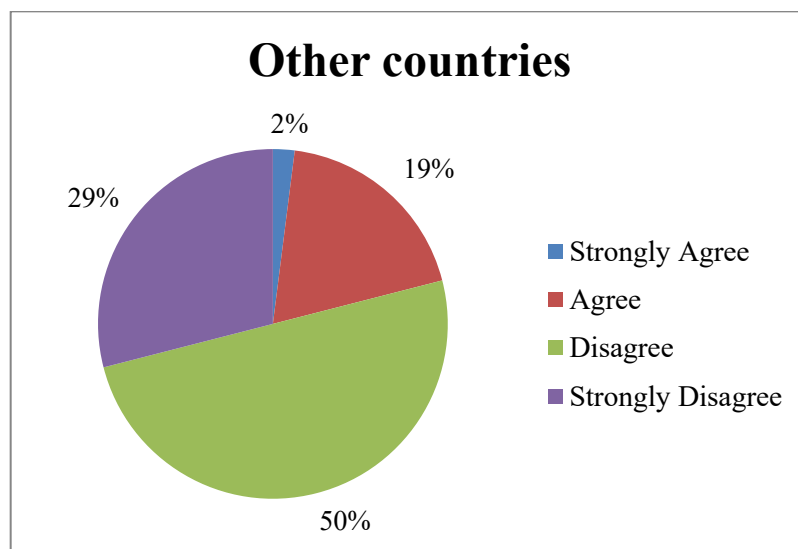
Appendix 39: Statement 13_Other countries



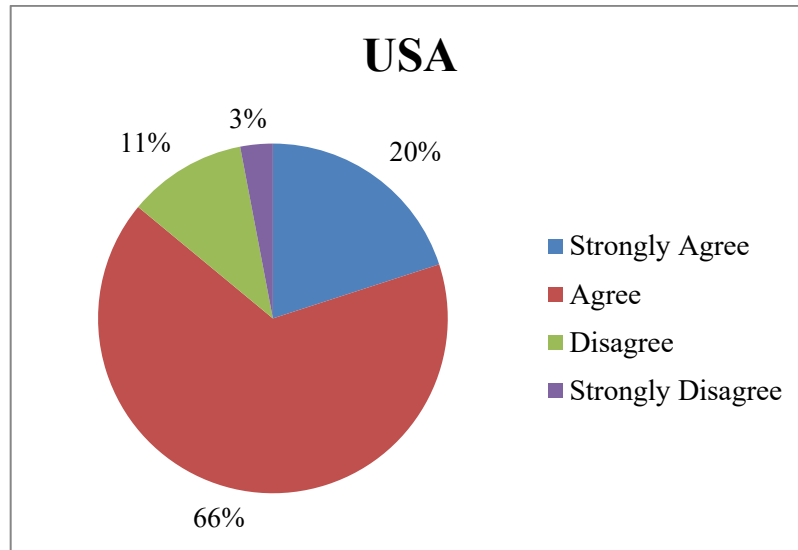
Appendix 40: Statement 14_USA



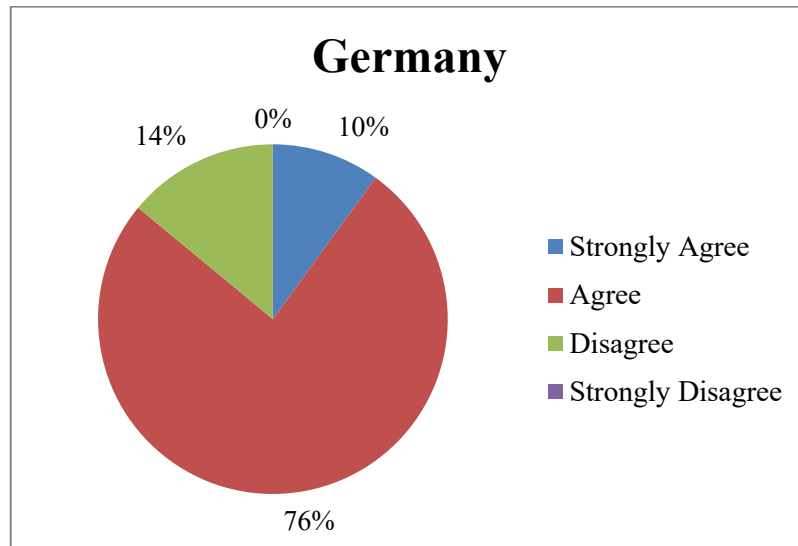
Appendix 41: Statement 14_Germany



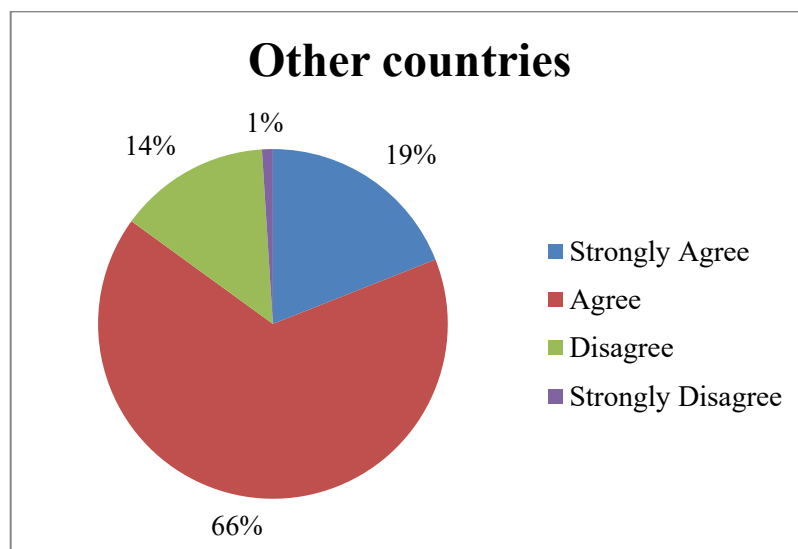
Appendix 42: Statement 14_Other countries



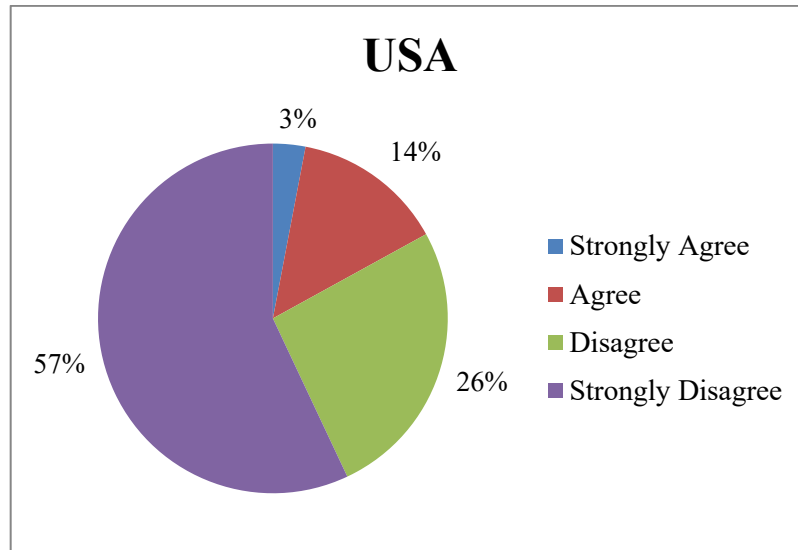
Appendix 43: Statement 15_USA



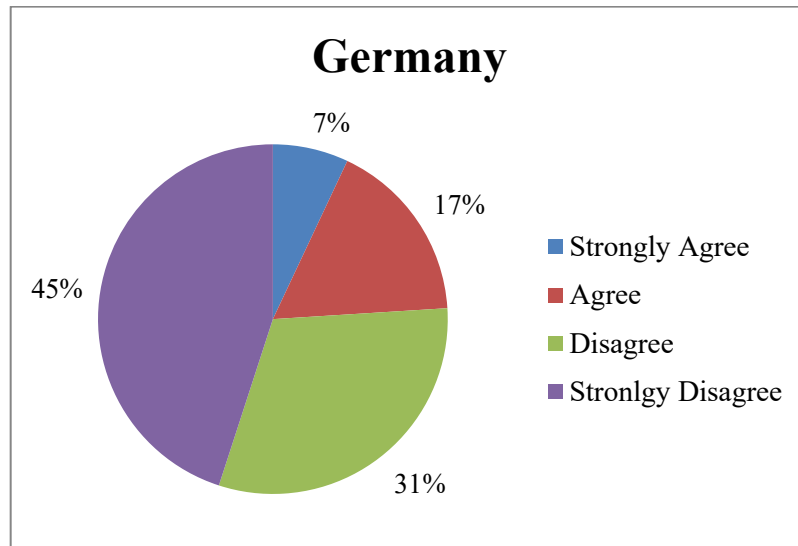
Appendix 44: Statement 15_Germany



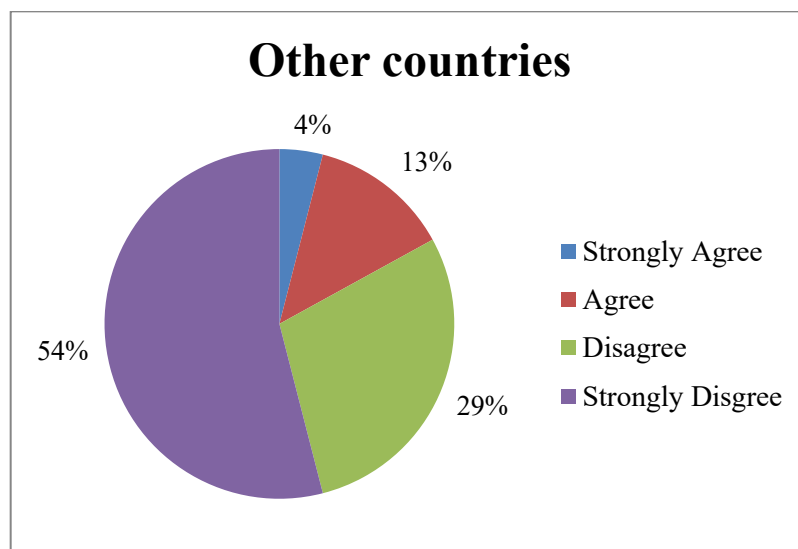
Appendix 45: Statement 15_Other countries



Appendix 46: Statement 16_USA



Appendix 47: Statement 16_Germany



Appendix 48: Statement 16_Other countries

APPENDIX 49: QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, my name is Kateřina Šánková and I am a 3rd year student at the Tomas Bata University studying English for Business Administration. I am currently completing my bachelor thesis on Perception in Intercultural Communication focusing on psychological barriers which make conversation unsuccessful and therefore I formulated this questionnaire.

For each of the statements below, please **circle** the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where 1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree, it will help me a lot. Try to be **careful, honest and unbiased** with your answers. Your information will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. We felt relaxed and spontaneous during the conversation.	1	2	3	4
2. Our conversation was well organized.	1	2	3	4
3. We were on the same page and we did a great job of clearly communicating with each other.	1	2	3	4
4. If requested, we could probably repeat and summarize what we already said.	1	2	3	4
5. We chose simple words to avoid misunderstanding.	1	2	3	4
6. We had difficulties understanding each other.	1	2	3	4
7. We have experienced communication failure.	1	2	3	4
8. Sometimes we got lost in the communication and we couldn't follow each other.	1	2	3	4

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. If we had time, we would discuss more different topics. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. We usually changed topics because we didn't know what to talk about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Our conversation was awkward and uncomfortable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. We soon had nothing to talk about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. It was difficult to recognize when the other was serious or just joking. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I felt anxious during the conversation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Due to our cooperation, the conversation went smoothly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I am trying to avoid communicating with foreigners (even I have basics of English). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

17. I have communication experience with foreigner from _____

18. I am Male Female

Thank you for your time and support.