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University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

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Master thesis

Multilingualism and interculturality in international or interregional projects and work environments

Qualitative research within the NetMe-In project

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České Budějovice 2019

DISSERTATION ASSIGNMENT

(PROJECT, ART WORK, ART PERFORMANCE)

First name and surname:	**Kateřina BENDOVÁ**
Study program:	**N6237 Regional and European Project Management**
Identification number:	**E17637**
Specialization:	
Topic name:	**Multilingualism and interculturality in international or interregional projects and work environments**
Assigning department:	**Department of Regional Management**

R u l e s f o r e l a b o r a t i o n :

Objective:

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and evaluate the daily practice and strategies of dealing with multilingual and intercultural interactions with international/interregional projects. In particular, the use of a project-internal lingua franca and/or translation practices and accommodations of various contributing cultures will be analysed.

Methodological approach:

Data triangluation through document analysis, interviews, and/or recordings of specific interactional data should be used to demonstrate the structural and individual strategies of managing multilingualism within an international/interregional team.

Framework structure:

1. Introduction. Objectives.
2. Review of literature.
3. Methods.
4. Results, potentially discussion.
5. Conclusion.
X. References
X. List of Annexes (if any)
X. Annexes

Scope of graphic works: **As necessary**

Scope of work report
(scope of dissertation): **50 - 60 pages**

Form of dissertation elaboration: **printed**

Language of dissertation elaboration: **English**

List of specialized literature:

Kotthoff, H.; Spencer-Oatey, H., (eds), (2009), Handbook of Intercultural Communication. Berlin, New York.

Kuster, J. et al. (Ed.), (2006), Handbuch Projektmanagement. Berlin, Heidelberg.

Matveev, V. A. & Nelson, P.E. (2004) - Cross cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance. GUNY and North Dakota State University.

Thije, Jan D. ten & Maier, R., (eds), (2012), Managing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Multiple Organisational Settings: editorial. Special issue of Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 33(7), 629-641.
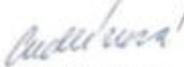
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Department of Regional Management

Date of dissertation assignment: **13 December 2018**

Date of dissertation submission: **15 August 2019**

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STATEMENT

I hereby declare that, in accordance with Article 47b of Act No. 111/1998 Coll. in the valid wording, I agree with the publication of my Master thesis, in full form to be kept in the Faculty of Economics archive, in electronic form in publicly accessible part of the IS STAG database operated by the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice accessible through its web pages. Further, I agree to the electronic publication of the comments of my supervisor and thesis opponents and the record of the proceedings and results of the thesis defence in accordance with aforementioned Act No. 111/1998 Coll. I also agree to the comparison of the text of my thesis with the Theses.cz thesis database operated by the National Registry of University Theses and a plagiarism detection system.

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Bc. Kateřina Bendová

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I would like to use this opportunity to deeply thank my Master thesis supervisor, Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fetscher, for all the valuable support, professional guidance, constructive recommendations and enthusiastic encouragement that she has provided me with throughout the entire process. Prof. Dr. phil. Doris Fetscher was and remains a wonderful role model to me as a professor, a mentor as well as a human being.

Secondly, I would like to express a special appreciation to my interview partners from the NetMe-In project who provided me with the possibility to realize my Master thesis. I would like to offer my deepest thanks to them for their willingness to execute the interviews and to share their project experience with me. This work would have not been completed without their generous contribution. Many thanks to all of them because they enabled me to reach the goal for which I been striving for my whole master studies.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the people who mean the world to me, my loved ones, because they have always supported me. Furthermore, they managed to keep me focused and harmonious. Words cannot express how grateful I am for the patience, unfailing support, faith and constant encouragement I have gotten from their side. This accomplishment would have been impossible without them standing behind me. Therefore, I dedicate this Master thesis to them. Thank you.

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1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a globalized world, where societies, their cultures and languages are intertwined. Over the years, it has become crucial to acquire the capability of coexisting in our interconnected society, that faces a continuous process of changes. As Hofstede wrote (2001: 15) "*the survival of mankind will depend to a large extent on the ability of people who think differently to act together*".

Furthermore, collaborative international projects managed by geographically dispersed teams have been getting more and more frequent. However, coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a progress. And finally working together is a success. (Henry Ford, 2017: 2)

International teams have to fight off many challenges, nevertheless, in this Master thesis I will mainly deal with language and cultural diversity. More specifically, the topic of my Master thesis is the following one: "*Multilingualism and interculturality in international or interregional projects and work environments*".

I study a Joint Master Degree program focused on "Regional and European Project Management". It is a trinational degree, that takes place at Université Bretagne Sud in France, Westsächsische Hochschule Zwickau in Germany and Jihočeská univerzita in the Czech Republic and therefore connects French, German and Czech students who can benefit from the multilingual and intercultural context. My studies provided me with interdisciplinary knowledge. Firstly, I gained profound theoretical and practical knowledge of project management at the international, European and regional levels. Apart from project management and economics classes, I had the opportunity to learn more about social sciences, mainly focused on interculturality and multilingualism. Finally, this study program enabled me to achieve a proficient level in the English and French languages and an intermediate level in German. Hence, my Master study degree provided me with a plethora of knowledge, abilities and skills I could all apply in my Master thesis.

In order to conduct qualitative research regarding my topic, I needed to find a real international cross-cultural team, consisting of members who reside in different countries, speak different languages and have carried out a common project. Hence, I decided to concentrate my Master thesis on a European project bearing the name NetMe-In. My thesis is focused on this particular project because it meets all my requirements

and furthermore I actively took part in the project during my studies at Université Bretagne Sud in Lorient in France and therefore I was already familiar with the project as well as some members of the team. Consequently, I designed the following research question: "*How is the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance perceived by the NetMe-In project partners?*"

The purpose of this work is to conduct qualitative research to find out how the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance is perceived by the NetMe-In project team. Hence, my Master thesis aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the NetMe-In project participants´ experiences via descriptions of their opinions, perspectives and views. Regarding my research methodology, I use semi-structured Skype interviews with the project participants in order to get the needed data for my qualitative analyses.

My Master thesis is divided into several parts. Firstly, I will focus on the theoretical part, where I will draw your attention to four main topics: project, team, interculturality and multilingualism. Secondly, I will provide a detailed description of the NetMe-In project. Thirdly, I will concentrate on the explanation of my research methodology. Fourthly, I will focus on the empirical part, in particular, I will carry out an analysis and interpretation of the results of my interviews. Lastly, I will deal with the discussion part in which I will include my metareflexion, recommendations and will interpret the significance of my findings in order to explain the insights emerging from my research.

2 THEORETICAL PART

The current section deals with theory. In the first part, the phenomenon of projects and EU projects will be described. In the second part, attention will be drawn to the teams. This section will explain what teams are and bring a description of EU collaborative project teams as well as ERASMUS+ teams. Subsequently, the emphasis will be put on virtual and international cross-culture teams. In the third part, the focus will be put on interculturality. This section will develop more in details following subchapters: national cultures, team culture and intercultural competence. Lastly, particular attention will be paid to multilingualism. This last, but not least, section will be divided into three subchapters dealing with English as lingua franca in EU collaborative teams, the role of language proficiency and Globish.

2.1 Project

The phenomenon of projects represents indicative characteristics for contemporary organizations. Nowadays, projects serve for solving tasks and work assignments no matter type or size. (Engwall, 2003: 789)

Concerning the definition of the term "project" itself, Project Management Institute (2013: 3) describes a project as "*a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result*". However, it is worth mentioning that the use of the word "temporary" does not indicate that the project duration is short but only points out that every project has a definite beginning and a definite end. Regarding the nature of the project outcomes, it can be tangible or intangible.

In addition, the International Project Management Association (2006: 3) explains that a "*project is a time and cost constrained operation to realise a set of defined deliverables up to quality standards and requirements*". Hence, the project scope is intended to fulfill its objectives.

Furthermore, PRINCE2[1] (2005: 7) summarizes the significant characteristics of a project as following:

– *A finite and defined life cycle*

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[1] PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments) is a process-based method for effective project management.

- *Defined and measurable ... products*
- *A corresponding set of activities to achieve the ... products*
- *A defined amount of resources*
- *An organization structure, with defined responsibilities, to manage the project*

Apropos of defining a project, every project has a life cycle. It simply represents the path, in other words, the series of phases which a project goes through from its initiation until the closing stage. In general, a project life cycle structure consists of: 1) starting the project, 2) organizing and preparing, 3) carrying out the project work and 4) closing the project. In the following diagram, the generic project life cycle structure, which can be applied basically to all projects, can be seen.

Figure 1: Generic project life cycle structure
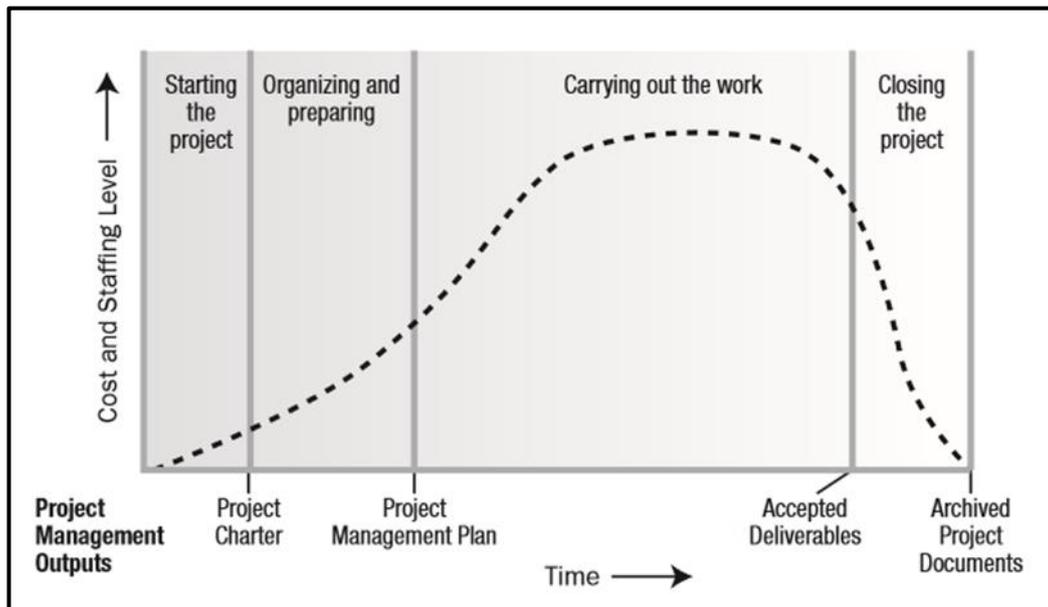
(A guide to the project management body of knowledge, 2013: 39)

Besides the definition of the project and its life cycle, phases of the project should not be neglected either. As far as the phases are concerned, their numbers, as well as their names, depend on the nature of the project itself. Fundamentally, a project phase represents a group of logically connected, time-bounded activities, which leads to the finalization of the project deliverables. Even though there is not any generic structure applicable to all projects, a common practice is the process in the following diagram.

Figure 2: Generic project phases
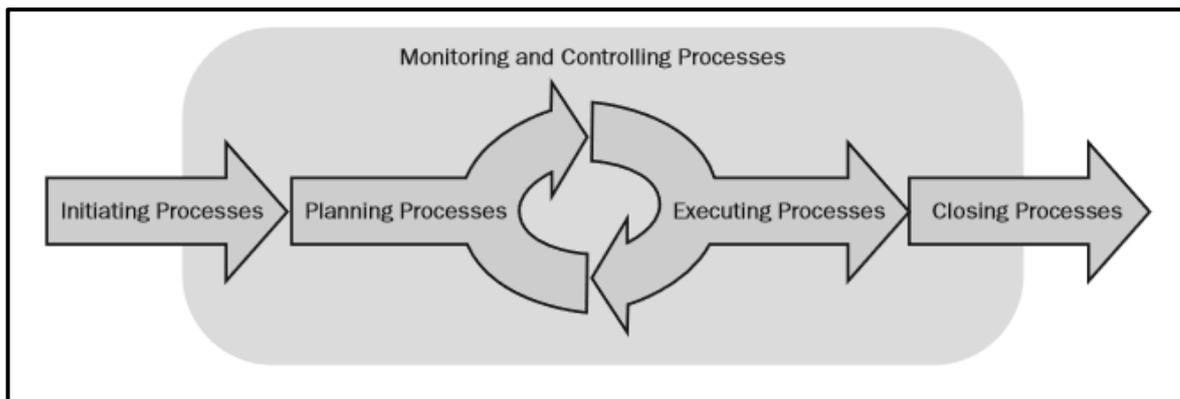
(A guide to the project management body of knowledge, 2013: 42)

Regarding EU projets, every year the European Commission, the executive branch of the European Union, receives thousands of submitted project proposals for EU calls from organizations performing in various areas all over Europe. Those who successfully pass the evaluation process are later provided with financial support from EU´s grants. (Ec.europa, 2019: 4)

Concerning an official definition of EU projects, Project cycle management guidelines (2004: 8) bring the following definition: "*A project is a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time-period and with a defined budget*". Therefore, it can be noted that the EU definition shares similarities with the generic project definitions provided by various project management organizations.

Moreover, Project cycle management guidelines also specify that EU projects should always possess:

- a precisely defined target group, stakeholders, as well as the final beneficiaries
- accurately and carefully identified management, coordination, and financing
- a well-developed system for monitoring and evaluating the project
- an adequate degree of economic and financial analysis, in order to demonstrate that the benefits surpass the project costs

After having defined the EU projects themselves, it is important to briefly introduce a typical EU project life cycle as well. On the European scale, the general guidelines bear the name Project Cycle Management (PCM), which is not compulsory, but highly recommended for projects funded by EU funds. PCM is a collection of management activities as well as decision-making procedures to be done within the life-cycle of an EU project.

In general, the EU´s project has a cycle made out of 5 phases: 1) programming, 2) identification, 3) formulation, 4) implementation, 5) evaluation and audit. In addition, some versions add the sixth phase called financing. These phases are generally consecutive in nature. They are applicable to the program as well as the project level. In addition, every single phase has a "phase gate", key tasks, a series of key documents to be executed and decisions to proceed. (Fuster, 2006) A generic EU project cycle is displayed in the following diagram.

Figure 3: EU project cycle
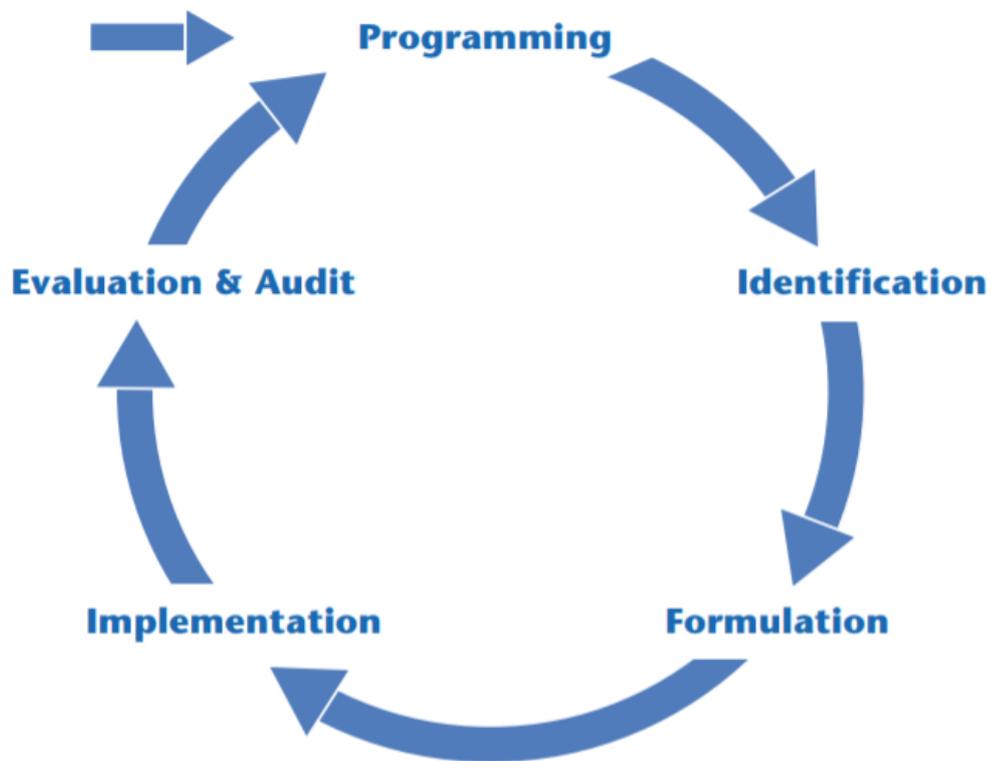
(Ec.europa, 2004 : 16)

2.2 Teams

Since ancient times, the need to succeed has been essential to our survival, and it is not much of a surprise to note that the better the team was, the better chances were to survive. (Crother-Laurin, 2006: 5) However, regarding modern teams, their development started in the 1960s as an answer to scientific management. (Nilsson, 2000: 276) Nowadays, teams have become a common way of organizing people.

According to Kolajová (2006: 12), the word "team" can be understood as an acronym standing for:

- **T**ogether
- **E**veryone
- **A**chieves
- **M**ore

As far as the definition of teams is concerned, academic literature, project management organizations, as well as popular literature sources, offer multiple ways of defining a team. However, only some of them will be pointed out. Firstly, from an academic point of view, teams can be defined as "a *small collection of interdependent individuals working together towards a common goal and sharing responsibility for specific outcomes of their organizations"*. (Sundstrom, DeMeuse, & Futrell, 1990: 120)

Secondly, the International Project Management Association (2006: 52) briefly describes the meaning of team as a group of people, who are brought to perform together to realize specific objectives.

Thirdly, PRINCE2[2] (2009: 34), defines a team as *a temporary structure specifically designed to manage a project to its successful conclusion* and describes fundamental principles for designing a project team as following (2005: 31): a team is made of the right people in the right place with the needed responsibility, authority, skills, experience, knowledge and decision making abilities in a timely manner.

Lastly, Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge issued by the Project Management Institute (2013: 35) explains that a project team normally consists of a project manager, project management staff and other team members who act together in

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[2] PRINCE2 (PRojects IN Controlled Environments) is a process-based method for effective project management.

executing the work of the project to pursue its objectives. These individuals have specific subject matter knowledge as well as skills set to conduct the project. Even though the team structure may vary, depending on many factors, such as scope, organizational culture or location of the project, the role of project manager always remains as the leader of the team. The project team together carries out the project activities such as: initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling as well as closing in order to accomplish the project´s objectives.

However, it is worth mentioning that teams do not have only shared objectives and common interests as described above. They are also bound together by a sense of belonging. (Cartwright, 2002: 62) Hence, the power of unity plays a significant role in teams. Thus, the popular catchphrase "*all for one, one for all*" stands for united people in a team performing as a whole.

Yet, the development of a synergistic team is a process that requires some time. Professor Bruce Tuckman (1965) established four stages of group development consisting of following stages: forming, storming, norming and performing, as shown below.

Figure 4: Group development stages
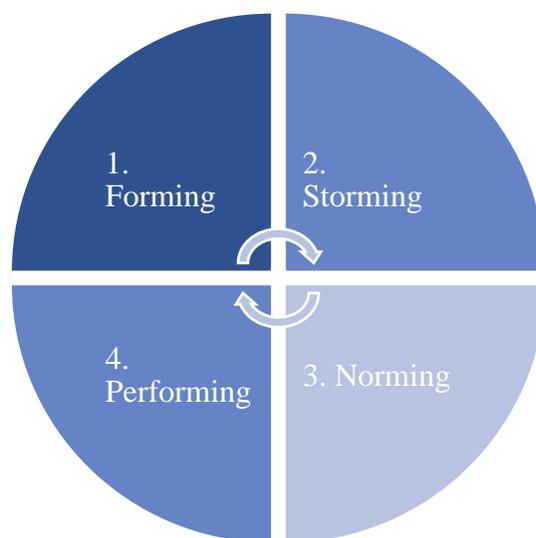
Source: Author

According to Professor Tuckman, every team experiences these stages. The forming phase has team members to test themselves and to identify their interpersonal and task boundaries. The next phase is labelled storming and it is typically distinguished by polarization around interpersonal issues and conflicts. The norming stage is characterized

by overcoming the resistance from the previous phase. Ingroup feelings, new standards and cohesiveness are developed here. Moreover, in this phase the team adopts new roles. Finally, when the team reaches the last phase labelled performing, the interpersonal structure turns into the tool of task activities. All the team roles are functional and flexible. All the structural issues are resolved and therefore the team can perform its task. (Tuckman, 1965: 396)

2.2.1 EU collaborative teams

Regarding cooperation within the European Union, Article 4 of Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union (Eur-lex.europa, 2012) states that the EU seeks to enhance sincere cooperation in full mutual respect and assistance. Hence, partnerships and common collaborative projects between countries are strongly supported by the EU.

As a matter of fact, nowadays, most projects funded by the European Union are collaborative projects involving collaboration between different organizations. Any research organization, company or non-governmental organization, can become a partner in EU collaborative projects. They can be partners regardless of where the organization is based, but they are obliged to prove their financial viability and qualification to carry out the tasks specified in the project proposal. (Ec. Europa, 2019a)

Due to the fact that the present Master thesis is focused on the NetMe-In project, which was developed under Erasmus+, the EU´s program and specifically under the key action 2: Strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth, a description of designing a collaborative team for this kind of EU projects will be provided.

According to the general rule, these collaborative projects target the cooperation between organizations established in "Programme Countries[3]". Nevertheless, organizations whose status is "Partner countries[4]", can be involved as well. However, they are allowed to be partners only, not applicants. Regarding the number of participating organizations, these projects are transnational and require the involvement of a minimum of three organizations from three different Programme Countries. There is not any maximum number of organizations. (Ec.europa, 2019b: 108)

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[3] Countries that can fully take part in all the actions of the Erasmus+ Programme.
[4] Countries that are allowed to take part only in certain actions of the Erasmus+ Programme.

Concerning the roles in such European collaborative teams, these projects are executed by consortia, which are made up of coordinators and project partners. (Ec.europa, 2019b: 314) In general, they are in charge of the following tasks.

Coordinating organization:

- is responsible for gathering relevant partners together
- coordinates editing of the project proposal and submits the application form for European calls on behalf of the consortium
- is the contact person
- is legally responsible for compliance with the terms of the Erasmus+ grant
- checks the project´s progress as well as the content of its deliverables
- coordinates and motivates the team
- ensures financial management

Project partners:

- are the participating organizations that team up to prepare, implement and follow up the project
- check the adequacy of the project with their internal strategy
- respond to the requests from the coordinator
- execute their project tasks and provide technical deliverables
- ensures distribution of the results of the project and their exploitation

(Europe en Hauts de France, 2019)

All in all, the EU collaborative projects foster the creation of international cross-culture project teams that are based in multiple countries and therefore they are remote and dependent on virtual communication. Hence, the next two subchapters will cope with the specificities of the phenomena of such international multicultural and virtual teams.

2.2.2 Virtual teams

Fundamentally, a virtual team can be defined as an interdependent group of people that regularly work for common objective across the following dimensions: distance, time and organization. Moreover, a culture is sometimes added as the fourth dimension. (Serrat, 2017: 620)

Even though the term "virtual" can be misleading and suggest a sort of unreality, virtual teams are real and have the same characteristics and demands as the traditional ones. (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003: 377) However, unlike traditional face-to-face teams, virtual teams find themselves separated but perform across all the boundaries mentioned above to deliver knowledge and skills required for the project. Moreover, they are characterized with links strengthened by webs of communication technologies. (Lipnack & Stamps 1997: 7) Thus, the interactions of this kind of team strongly rely on electronic communication channels; as examples, e-mail, video and audio conferencing as well as other web-based tools. (Edwards & Wilson, 2004: 6)

Generally said, virtual teams can be either a competitive advantage or a considerable challenge. Concerning the pros of virtual teams, one of their unique features is the fact that they are less limited by geographical constraints and therefore they are characterized by a bigger potential to acquire the needed "human capital", knowledge, capacities and skills to accomplish a project. Hence, flexibility created by a reduction of geographical restrictions represents a significant benefit of virtual teaming. Another advantageous feature of virtual teams is their potential for generating "social capital" referring to the quality of networks that such a team can execute in its operating environment. Thanks to the team´s extended boundaries, they have greater access to social contacts and therefore possibly a larger impact than conventional teams. (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003: 380)

Regarding cons of virtual teams, this kind of team typically suffers from a lack of physical interaction and therefore they are forced to deal with a low trust, low team cohesion as well as a lack of shared understanding among team members and their tasks.

All in all, geographically dispersed teams do have general pros and cons. However, it is important to reach a certain balance between them and to keep the process losses to a minimum, while putting emphasis on maximizing the benefit of team diversity. (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003: 379)

2.2.3 International cross-cultural teams

As far as the multicultural teams are concerned, they have become a central focus for theory as well as a practice of project management.

Professor Geert Hofstede, a world leader in intercultural management research, defined multicultural team (1997: 321) as a team whose members come from various cultural

background, because of the fact that they originate in distinct countries. Thus, the members of multicultural teams are characterized by the fact that they have spent formative years in different countries and therefore they have acquired a knowledge of different languages, values and behaviors. (Hambrick, Davison, Snell & Snow, 1998) In spite of differing from each other in their ways of behaving, thinking and communicating, the members of multicultural teams act as a "glue" over their countries. (Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander & Maznevski, 2010: 444)

In general, there are many definitions of multicultural teams in academic literature, for instance, the *Effective Multicultural Teams* book interprets this kind of teams as: *"a collection of individuals with different cultural backgrounds, who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems, and who manage their relationships across organizational boundaries and beyond."* (Tirmizi, 2008: 5)

On the one hand, multicultural teams have the opportunity to take advantage of their cultural diversity, but on the other hand they have to fight off their challenges as well.

Concerning the bright side of multicultural team diversity, it is worth noticing that its power can lead to the positive team outcomes. What is more, the cross-cultural dynamics in teams provides them with many positive key aspects such as increased flexibility and responsiveness, great creativity in solving complex problems as well as sharing of information, knowledge, resources and the best practice across boundaries. (Saee, 2007:277) In addition, Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander & Maznevski (2010: 444) state that creating interpersonal bonds across cultures may, in fact, result in an improvement in the team communication effectiveness, member satisfaction, project commitment and overall long-term operational effectiveness. Moreover, it might also be noted that multicultural team diversity brings the teams a significant tactical competitive edge. (Scarlat, Zarzu & Prodan, 2014: 174)

Despite all the aforementioned benefits, managing a multicultural team is exposed to multiple difficulties. Firstly, when one leads an international team, it is necessary to be aware of the team heterogeneity because it can be the root cause of many misunderstandings, disagreements and potential disputes which can very often result in hindering effective teamwork. (Glinkowska, 2016: 61) Furthermore, cross-culture teams

are more prone to deal with barriers such as language and different communication styles. (Sogancilar & Ors, 2018: 261) As a matter of fact, the greatest reason for project failures is said to be the lack of communication in the cross-cultural teams. Hence, quality communication can eliminate a work duplication, non-productive effort and reduce mistakes. Therefore, a successful communication is of crucial importance. (Saee, 2007: 259) What is more, if it is not drawn enough attention to the multicultural team cohesiveness, the team is more likely to be exposed to issues such as a lack of commitment, empathy, understanding, trust and therefore the project has to face the resistance, disconnection, frustration and the potential alienation, as well as deadlock. Hence, all of the points mentioned above can be consequent on a poor team performance and can have devastating effects on the project outcomes. (Lewis, 2006: 141)

All in all, there are many direct and indirect factors affecting cross-boundary team interrelations and performances. For instance, Sağa, Kaynaka & Sezena (2016: 61) dealt with these factors and defined relationships between them and their effects on the team. Thus, according to them, the performance of the cross-boundary teams is affected by following factors:

- Societal factors: national culture, subculture and social identity, cultural standards
- Institutional factors: sector of work industry
- Organizational factors: organizational culture, structure and arrangements
- Team factors: size, type and objectives
- Informational diversity: knowledge base and perspectives
- Cultural intelligence of members: flexible understanding and learning
- Education: educational background
- Language: mother tongues and language diversity
- Management: management and leadership dealing with challenges
- Team culture: bridging cultural boundaries, coping with cultural diversity by creating one shared team culture
- Team climate: shared perceptions of practices procedures and behaviors, implication of cohesion, commitment, trust and efficacy

To conclude, it may be said that managing cross-boundary teams requires relevant intercultural managerial skills. In addition, to be successful in a multicultural environment, one has to acquire knowledge of cultural awareness, sensitivity and

flexibility to cope with its diversity. Hence, the more efficient the intercultural team management is, the greater performance is. (Caganova, Cambal & Weidlichova Luptakova, 2010: 53)

2.3 Interculturality

From time immemorial, interculturality has been a part of a human society. However, with an increasing globalization, the issue of interculturality has become crucial. (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt, 2013 : 1)

In point of fact, most people possess numerous identities because they belong to the several cultural groups at the same time. Hence, the society faces to cultural hybridity. Thus, cultural identity is, in general, ambiguous and dependent on the context. (Koegeler-Abdi & Parncutt, 2013 : 7)

Concerning the common European definition of interculturality, it is based on Jean-Michel Leclercq´s work, where he described it as *"a set of multi-faceted processes of interaction through which relations between different cultures are constructed, aiming to enable groups and individuals to forge links between cultures based on equity and mutual respect. It is also linked with the idea of hybrid identities and fusion cultures, in which people and groups create and recreate new cultural patterns that take up elements of formerly distinct and separated norms, values, behaviours and lifestyles". (*European Commission and Council of Europe, 2018)

2.3.1 National cultures

Despite the claim we live in a globalized intercultural society without any borders, national cultures are still a relevant term. In fact, it is said that national cultures are highly resistant to globalization and transculturality. (Witchalls, 2012: 15) In addition, Hofstede states that "*national culture cannot be changed, but you should understand and respect it*". (Hofstede-insights, 2019)

Regarding national cultures, one of the most comprehensive studies focusing on "*how values in the workplace are influenced by culture*" was executed by Professor Geert Hofstede. Furthermore, he brings the following definition of culture: *"the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others"* and he invited also six basic dimensions of national cultures:

1) power distance
2) individualism
3) masculinity
4) uncertainty avoidance
5) long-term orientation
6) indulgence

Firstly, power distance is defined as the extent showing how less powerful members of institutions and organizations agree to accept and expect the unequal distribution of power. Secondly, individualism is described as the extent of independence that people feel. Hence, one is expected to make individual decisions and choices. It is the opposite of interdependency on larger wholes. Thirdly, a masculinity is defined as the extent of the force used in society. This dimension describes in particular what gender role is expected to possess the power. Fourthly, uncertainty avoidance copes with a tolerance of society for ambiguity and uncertainty. This dimension describes how society perceives the unknown and until which extent one prefers fixed rituals and habits as well as knowledge of the truth. Fifthly, long-term orientation addresses changes. Long-term oriented cultures focus on preparation for the coming future because they see the word as it is in flux while short-term oriented cultures perceive our world differently. They believe that the past is a provider of a moral compass and adhering to it is morally appropriate. Lastly, indulgence deals with the perception of good things in life. Being free, behaving according to your impulses, having friends and a life that makes sense to one is of great importance in an indulgent culture. Whilst a normal state of being in a restrained culture is represented by one´s perception of a hard life, duty and lack of freedom.

In order to demonstrate in practice the Hofstede´s dimensions of national cultures, the following bar charts showing the comparison of the NetMe-In project partners´ national cultures were incorporated. As it can be seen in the bar charts, each dimension is expressed on a scale from 0 to 100. What is more, on a closer inspection one can notice that there is certain diversity among the nations. (Hofstede-insights, 2019)

Graph 1: Dimensions of national culture according to Hofstede

Dimensions of national culture according to Hofstede:
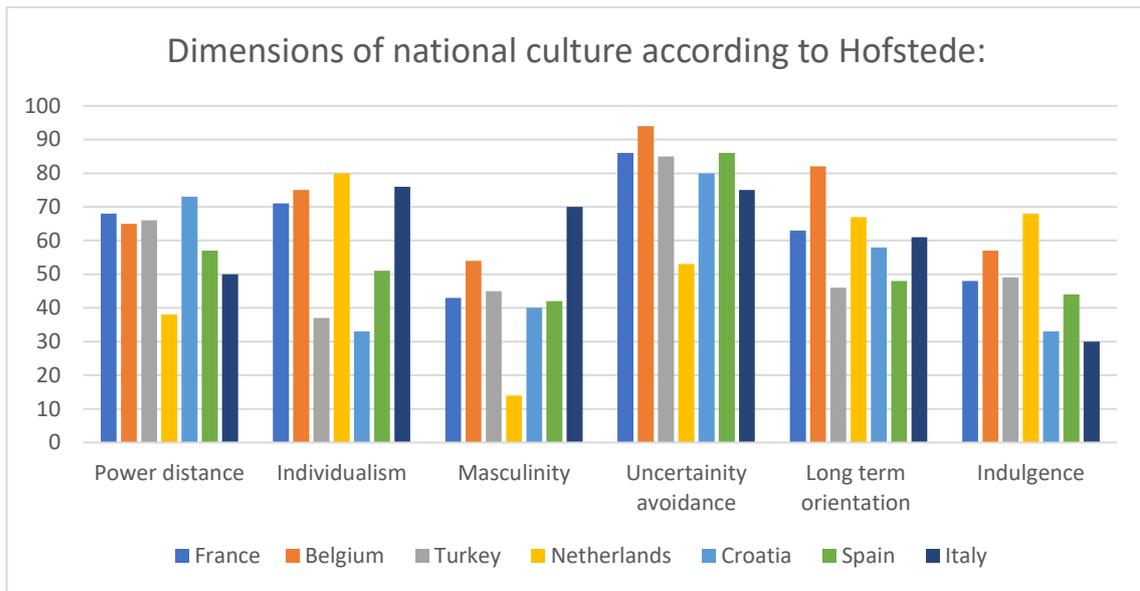
Regarding relevance of this work, for instance, Bhagat and McQuaid (1982) state that it is "*undoubtedly, the most significant cross-cultural study of work-related values*". (Jones, 2007: 2) In spite of common usage of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, his theory faces the criticism as well.

Firstly, it is worth mentioning that one of the most criticized points is the Hofstede´s assumption of cultural homogeneity. He is of the opinion that population is a homogenous whole and ignores the fact that nations are made of groups of ethnic units. Secondly, some researchers claim that the work is out-dated and does not respond to today´s rapidly evolving society. Thirdly, the number of cultural dimensions is criticized as well. Some researchers state that six dimensions do not suffice to provide enough information about cultural diversity. Additionally, many researchers criticize the relevance of the study because they allude that a survey is an inappropriate instrument for a determination of cultural differences. Furthermore, Hofstede´s "one company approach" reaps criticism as well because of the fact that his study, focused only on one company, cannot provide a relevant source of information for the description of the entire cultural system. The others draw criticism due to possible sensitive political influences having an impact on society at the particular timing of the survey. Among others, Hofstede's statistical integrity receive some arguments against as well. (Jones, 2007: 5)

2.3.2 Team culture

As described in a previous chapter, international teams have to deal with different national cultures of their team members. Therefore, developing a common culture when managing a team, especially the international one, turns out to be one of the fundamental factors for enhanced team performance. As far as its definition is concerned, it may be defined as *"a primitive set of variables with psychological content that shape the long run evolution of norms and behaviour in the group, jointly with other technological and distributional fundamentals"*. (Calabuig, Olcina & Panebianco, 2016: 2)

Moreover, the *Global Leadership Foundation* (2019) describes what building a team culture entails:

1) Building team identity
2) Creating a shared team vision and direction
3) Agreeing values, practices and behaviors
4) Setting goals and facilitating for results
5) Appreciating and using team differences
6) Strengthening team capabilities
7) Being mutually accountable
8) Exploring possibilities and perspectives
9) Driving for results and challenging the process

In general, the team culture is likely to shape the team effectiveness. Firstly, common norms and values within a team enhance behavioral consistency among the team members. As a result, it fosters collective efforts leading to common achievements. Secondly, thanks to the shared team culture, team members similarly perceive and interpret events happening within the project. As a consequence, it increases common understanding and accelerates solving the problems. Lastly, the team culture improves the outcomes of the team members by diminution frictions and ambiguities in various work processes. Furthermore, it endows the team with a particular team identity that supports a common sense of connectedness. All in all, team culture is an important element fostering the work environment while ensuring a clear sense of expectations and therefore the team members fulfill successfully their assigned tasks and thus it causes enhanced team performance. (Shin, Kim, Choi & Lee, 2016: 233)

2.3.3 Intercultural competence

Over the years, collaborative international projects have been getting more and more frequent. Despite the fact that the team establishes a common team culture that facilitates the whole project development, it is also necessary to obtain the relevant ability for interactions in international encounters. This ability, also known as intercultural competence, certainly entails some challenges, but it is by no means insurmountable because it may be inherent as well as learned thanks to training. (Kenon & Palsole, 2019: 286)

Regarding the definition of intercultural competence, Donald Tewksbury is one of the first people who made an attempt to describe it. As a matter of fact, in 1957, he created a list representing 21 characteristics of a mature international person. Below you can see some of the characteristics:

1. *"One who has deep, active, and successful roots in one's own culture.*
2. *One who has examined objectively the strengths and weaknesses of his own culture.*
3. *One who is eager to consider seriously what other peoples think of his culture.*
4. *One who is not too sensitive about criticism of his own culture.*
5. *One who is able in traveling, to identify with other peoples and to listen and learn from them.*
6. *One who has international friends in one's own specialized profession or occupation.*
7. *One with whom persons from other countries can be frank and in whom they may have confidence.*
8. *One who can discuss other cultures without bringing in name-call, stereotyping, and extreme categorization.*
9. *One who is actively concerned with promoting the exchange of contributions between one's own and other countries.*
10. *One who has examined his own motivations for being international- minded, and also the nature of his internationalism.*
11. *One who has an elementary familiarity with the family of languages and sees his own language as one member of this family.*
12. *One who does not wish to make over other people and cultures in his own image.*
13. *One who can for the moment become another person and enter empathetically into the thoughts and feelings of other people.*
14. *One who finds it natural and satisfying to live as a member of the "family of man" because he has experienced the common bonds that unite people of different cultures…"*

(Kenworthy, 1970: 22)

Since then, the term "intercultural competence" has been debated. What is more, a myriad of definitions and terms has been created and put in use such as global competence, cross-

cultural competence, global citizenship, intercultural sensitivity and so on. (Deardorff, 2004: 14) As far as the definition with the biggest consensus among experts is concerned, it is the one provided by Deardorff who concluded that intercultural competence is the *"ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural attitudes, knowledge and skills"*. (British Council, 2014: 12) A detailed description of this ability can be found below:

Figure 5: Intercultural competence according to Deardorff

Attitudes	Knowledge & Comprehension	Skills	Internal outcomes	External outcomes
• Respect • Openness • Curiosity • Discovery	• Cultural self-awareness • Deep culture knowledge • Socio-linguistic awareness	• Listening, observing, evaluating • Analyzing • Interpreting • Relating	• Adaptability • Flexibility • Ethnorelative view • Empathy	• Effective and appropriate communica-tion • Behavior in an intercultural situation

Source: Author using data from (Deardorff, 2006: 256)

All in all, cross-cultural competence enables to overcome many challenges that an international team has to deal with. Hence, team performance is greatly influenced by the development of the ability to communicate within a team, to work all together and to create a team synergy.

What is more, in 2009 Congden, Matveev & Desplaces carried out a study that identifies a positive overall relationship between national culture, cross-cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance. As a result, they stated that national culture has an impact on a cross-cultural communication competence whereas the communication competence is mutually related to the multicultural team performance. (Congden, Matveev & Desplaces, 2009: 78) The following diagram shows how these elements are related:

Figure 6: Relationship between national cultures, cross-cultural communication competence and multicultural team performance
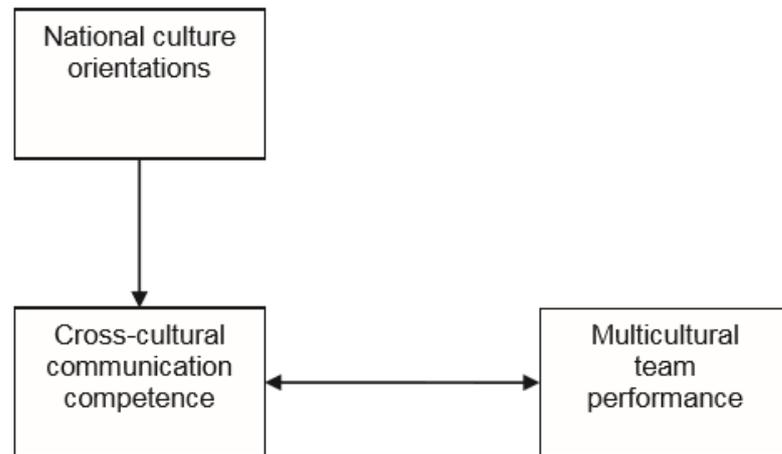
(Congden, Matveev & Desplaces, 2009: 79)

2.4 Multilingualism

Regarding the phenomenon of multilingualism, it is as old as mankind. In fact, there is no exact worldwide statistics, but it is claimed that nowadays the world´s population is either bilingual or multilingual rather than monolingual. (Viorica & Shook, 2012: 1)

Concerning the definition of multilingualism, a lot of scholarly attention has been drawn to it in recent years. However, different scholars from different areas provide various definitions. (Arronin & Singleton, 2012) Since this Master thesis is concentrated on the EU based project, the official definition provided by the EU will be used. It states that "*multilingualism refers to both a person's ability to use several languages and the co-existence of different language communities in one geographical area*". (Eur-lex.europa, 2005: 3)

Generally speaking, multilingualism plays an important role in the EU. Thus, there is no wonder that the EU´s motto is "*united in diversity*". As a matter of fact, it is said that "*it is this diversity that makes the European Union what it is: not a 'melting pot' in which differences are rendered down, but a common home in which diversity is celebrated, and where our many mother tongues are a source of wealth and a bridge to greater solidarity and mutual understanding*". (Eur-lex.europa, 2005: 2) Hence, multilingualism in the EU is strongly encouraged and represents a significant element in the EU´s competitiveness.

2.4.1 Multilingual communication practices used by international teams

Nowadays, many multilingual teams are formed thanks to EU collaborative projects. As previously explained, they come from linguistically diversified backgrounds. In spite of their different language abilities, the EU project members need to interact one another because as Paul Watzlawick´s famous axiom says (1967: 30): "*one cannot not communicate*". Therefore, they turn to various multilingual practices in order to ensure successful communication and mutual intelligibility.

Firstly, English is used by members of the EU projects as the prime language for their interactions, in other words, English became the EU projects' lingua franca. (Olivares-Beltrán & Morell, 2017: 135) As a result, English is regarded as a practical tool for making oneself understood in an international environment and enabling a person to communicate with other people who do not speak their mother tongue. (House, J., 2003: 559) Hence, English is now more and more used as a language for international encounters and intercultural communication. (Sharifian, 2017)

Despite the dominance of English, there are also other multilingual communication practices that international teams adopt. Secondly, besides English as a lingua franca, international teams employ, for instance, receptive multilingualism, which was defined by Rehbein, Thije and Verschik (2010: 2) as *"a mode of multilingual communication in which interactants employ a language and/or a language variety different from their partner´s and still understand each other without the help of any additional lingua franca".* It follows from the above that it is a mode of interaction in which one person understands the language of its interlocutor even though they both speak different languages.

Thirdly, code-switching is considered as another multilingual communication practice. Poplack (2001: 1) defines it as*: "mixing by bilinguals (or multilinguals) of two or more languages in discourse, often with no change of interlocuter or topic".*

Lastly, translation is sometimes a preferable way of communication in international teams due to the fact that speakers can rely on their mother tongues or any other preferred languages and therefore they express themselves easier and faster. (MacKenzie, 2014: 396)

2.4.2 Role of English in international projects

Regarding English, good knowledge of the language in written, as well as spoken form, became a must in the EU collaborative projects. (Aritt centre, 2019) Despite the fact that the members of these international teams are not native speakers, they are more or less proficient in English. In fact, English has become a worldwide communication means. Concerning global statistics, the non-native speakers far outweigh the native English speakers. What is more, the number of non-native English users is projected not to cease to grow in the future.

The following pie chart deals with an international use of English. The chart shows that the majority of users of English are, in fact, non-native speakers, while only 4% represent the interaction between native English speakers. (Globish, 2019)

Graph 2: International use of English
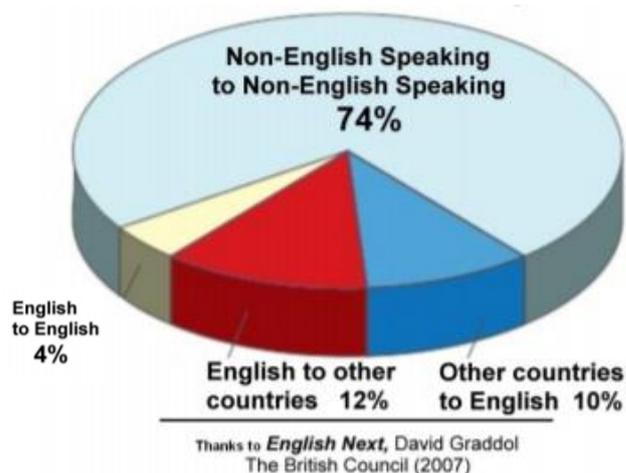
Globish, 2019

2.4.3 Role of language proficiency in multicultural teams

It is worth noticing that language proficiency of non-native speakers plays a crucial role in the efficiency of international teams. Regarding language proficiency, it is important to mention that language represents a factor that determines influence and power in international teams. Generally speaking, competent speakers are placed in a less vulnerable, favorable position when dealing with people from different countries. In addition, being a proficient speaker means being able to contribute to meetings and important discussions in a more expansive extent and therefore voicing her/his participation in a more adequate way. Hence, language power leads to higher

engagement. Moreover, it also minimalizes communication conflicts and misunderstandings.

It is said that the one having access to the language possesses access to the information as well, thus the person holds the power. All in all, a relevant command of the language empowers the team members and therefore makes a key element in a team communication. (Mendéz García & Pérez Cañado, 2005: 96)

2.4.4 Globish

As far as the global English used by non-native speakers is concerned, in 2004 Jean-Paul Nerrière came up with the idea of the term "Globish". This former international marketing executive for IBM and other major multinational companies noticed the necessity to bridge the language proficiency gaps in order to satisfy the needs of international communication and to ensure smooth mutual understanding. As a matter of fact, he created an approach using the basic English grammar rules and fundamental vocabulary dedicated to international interactions. In general, a proficient Globish level corresponds to the B1 category in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In general, Globish is based on four principles:

1) Short-sentence based language
2) Employing stripped-down and common vocabulary
3) Simplicity as the priority
4) Encouragement of visual aids and body language

Globish is similar to English because it uses common pronunciation, spelling, letters as well as fundamental grammar. Moreover, Globish puts emphasis on a frequent usage of active voice, maximum of 15 words per sentence and sporadic usage of figurative language as well as humor. (Li-Tang Yu, 2013)

3   PROJECT AND TEAM DESCRIPTION

This chapter will draw attention on the project to which author's qualitative research is focused. Hence, a description of the NetMe-In project itself as well as an introduction to all project partners will be provided.

3.1   Introduction to the NetMe-In project[5]

The NetMe-In project, subtitled as building a digital identity for a rewarding journey to work, started 1st September 2015 and ended 1st September 2018. Therefore, the project lasted 36 months.

Regarding the financing of the project, NetMe-In was funded with support from the European Commission. More specifically, the NetMe-In project fell within Erasmus+ which is the EU's program contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy[6] as well as ET 2020[7] and aiming to support education, training, youth and sports in Europe. (Ec.europa, 2019f). Concerning the structure of Eramus+, the program achieves its objectives thanks to the implementation of the following actions:

1) Key action 1 – Mobility of individuals
2) Key action 2 – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
3) Key action 3 – Support for policy reform
4) Jean Monnet activities
5) Sports

The project NetMe-In was developed under the key action 2 which concentrates on cooperation for developing, sharing best practices and exchanging innovative approaches.

As far as the reason for initiation of NetMe-In is concerned, the project was inspired by the outcomes of the Acrojump project, launched and led by the same coordinating organization, FREREF, between 2012 and 2014.

The NetMe-In project responded to the state of employment of young people in Europe whose current situation remains poor and worrying. However, there are disparities from one region to another, from one country to another. The main struggles are high rates of unemployment, difficulties to find the first job as well as to get a stable job and especially

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[5] This chapter is based on information from the internal project vademecum.
[6] The EU´s strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion.
[7] The EU's strategic framework for education and training.

the situation of NEETs[8], an acronym that represent the common abbreviation for young people *"neither in employment nor in education and training"*. So far, many initiatives concerning these issues have been created and now the exchange of experiences among the actors involved in these actions is of great importance.

The principal objective of the NetMe-In project was to help the young to find their place in the labor market through the usage of appropriate professional social networks, efficient management of their digital professional identity as well as support by experienced accompanying networks.

The intellectual outputs of the NetMe-In project are:

1) Building networks to accompany young people at risk and NEETs in their journey to work

The project placed great emphasis on the building of local accompanying networks which was significantly easier to start and to animate. Subsequently, NetMe-In proceeded to the next point which was building European accompanying networks that enabled to build common knowledge and tools to exchange practices and to learn together at the European level.

2) Knowledge building caps to gain abilities in a digital professional identity management and efficient use of professional social networks

It was based on the Internet availability that enabled fostering less formal learning. The aim was to create small, attractive on-line learning modules illustrated by tangible examples, videos and pictures.

3) Capitalization

It relied on the idea that the project firstly created a value which was afterward multiplied all along the project by project´s partners as well as its target audience during dissemination activities such as multiplier events, seminars and conferences, networks, NetMe-In Days, pilot actions, learning mobilities etc. Hence, the process of capitalization relied on the implication of all parties, collaboration, commitment and making the value as explicit as possible

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[8] *"The indicator of young people neither in employment nor in education and training, abbreviated as NEETs, corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training"*. (Ec.europa, 2019e)

Concerning the target audience, NetMe-In took into account the European dimension and in particular addressed three main groups. Firstly, the project focused on young people at risk, NEETs and former NEETs in order to increase their trust, self-esteem and to value their experiences such as summer jobs, family business, sports, etc. Secondly, NetMe-In concentrated on field accompaniment actors such as teachers, trainers and professionals who took care of guidance, inclusion and access to employment. Thirdly, the last target audience consisted of actors of the economic world such as recruiters, counselors, interim agencies, social economy as well as entrepreneurs.

3.2 Introduction to the project partners

It is worth mentioning that more than half of the project partners have already worked together on previous projects. Regarding the total number of project partners, there are nine with one coordinating organization. The NetMe-In project composition can be seen in the following organizational chart:

Figure 7: The NetMe-In project organizational chart

Source: Author

NetMe-In is an international project whose partners come from all over Europe. Altogether, six different nationalities are involved in the project: French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Turkish and Croatian. The team composition according to countries can be seen on the following map:

Figure 8: The NetMe-In project partners composition marked on a map
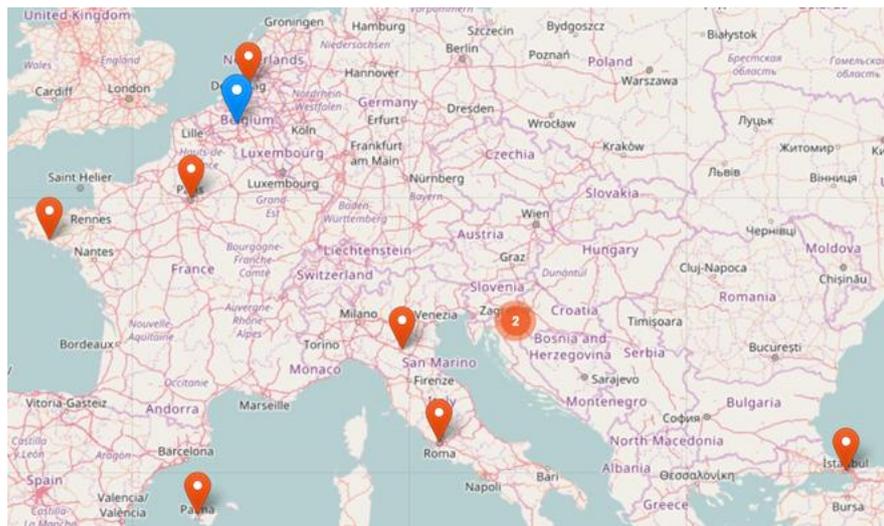
(Ec.europa, 2019d)

1) **FREFER**

FREREF is the leader of the NetMe-In project and stands for the Foundation of European Regions for Research in Education and Training. This initiative, gathering around 30 organizations, regional bodies and regions is located in Rillieux-la-Pape in France. FREREF concentrates on regional as well as European levels and aims to support and to promote life long learning development by fostering interregional cooperation built on peer-to-peer learning and practice sharing. (Life long learning platform, 2019)

2) **Université Bretagne Sud**

Université Bretagne Sud is a public institution of scientific, professional and cultural nature. It is situated on the coast of Brittany in France. More specifically, the university campus is located in three cities: Lorient, Vannes and Pontivy. The total number of students studying at Université Bretagne Sud is 9600. (Univ-ubs, 2019)

3) **Réseau des Cités des Métiers**

A Cité des Métiers is an international network based in Paris. The concept of this network rests on the partnership by different stakeholder organizations that strive for making an open place to anyone who searches for information on how to build up one's career. Hence, the main mission of this network is to guide and support job seekers as well as provide them with:

- Documentation on employment, careers and vocational training
- IT resources and sessions

- Interviews with professionals
- Symposia and meetings with external partners (Réseau Cités des Métiers, 2019)

4) Stichting Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work (DFW2W)

The Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work also known as DFW2W is an independent, non-profit organization. It is based in the Netherlands and provides support for young people as well as professionals to fulfill their potential in the fields of youth employment, youth work, traineeship, job matching and mobility, income, education, social innovation, welfare, inclusion and young entrepreneurship quality of life. (Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work, 2019)

5) Fundació Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears

Fundació Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears is a Spanish non-profit organization gathering together Universitat de les Illes Balears and local companies. The organization puts focus on:

- University offer promotion
- Participation in European, national, regional and local initiatives and programs
- Continuous training in the business sector including monitoring and impact assessments
- Employability and labor insertion of university postgraduates

(Fundació Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears, 2019)

6) Cooperativa Sociale Ceis Formazione

Ceis Formazione is an Italian training and research institution aiming to create a connection between academic education and practice. Ceis Formazione is an active participator in EU projects. It is a provider of training for teachers, vocational training for professionals as well as regional vocational training for special target groups such as people suffering from AIDS, serious psychiatric pathologies, eating disorders, homeless people, migrants, refugees, minors, the elderly, disabled people and addicted and convicted people. (Ec.europa, 2019c)

7) Associazione Sophia R&I

SOPHIA Research & Innovation is based in Rome, Italy. The main mission of this consulting association is to promote the participation of organizations and the public in R&D and Innovation programs, especially the European ones. Sophia R&I does not only provide high-standard consulting and management services but also participates in real projects focused on methodological and technological innovations, in particular, in the field of education and training. (Linkedin, 2019)

8) Boğaziçi University

Boğaziçi University is a higher education institution based in Istanbul, Turkey. The total number of students studying at Boğaziçi University is 17, 337. There are four faculties, six graduate and research institutions and two schools. The local life long learning center is in charge of developing, directing and coordinating vocational training programs and has extensive experience in vocational guidance. (Boun.edu, 2019)

9) Technicka Skola Karlovac

Technicka skola Karlovac stands for Technical School Karlovac located in Croatia. This academic institution has a long tradition in education and the upbringing of vocational and technical occupations and currently is attended by 645 students. The school intensively pays particular attention to the introduction of new technologies in educational programs and participates actively in a technical development of European projects. (Technicka-Skola-Karlovac, 2019)

10) Cistoca d.o.o. Karlova

Cistoca d.o.o. Karlova is a Croatian company focused on comprehensive waste management. The company puts emphasis especially on environmental protection and sustainable development. Among other things, the company uses digital technology in business and makes E-learning modules for citizens. (Cistocaka, 2019*)*

3.3   Internal and external communication within the project[9]

Regarding the internal communication within the project, partners met face-to-face at transnational project plenary meetings called European Multi-territorial Days. There were five meetings in total.

1) Kick-off meeting
2) Networking meeting
3) Meeting focused on knowledge building and sharing
4) Meeting focused on capitalization and path towards success
5) Meeting concentrated on sustainability connected with the final NetMe-In conference called the Multiplier Event

Besides these face-to-face meetings, on-line steering committee meetings, made of one partner per organization, were held every month except every trimester when online meetings took place. These three monthly Skype meetings were open to a wider number of participants.

As far as the tools for internal communication are concerned, the NetMe-In project team used the following means:

1) Skype
2) Cell phone
3) E-mail
4) Whatsapp
5) Moovia collaborative platform
6) Google drive

Concerning external communication towards their target audience, it was based on the following communication channel's; Twitter (social network); Project website; Facebook (social network); Youtube (video chanel); and posters and flyers. Besides that, the project addressed its target audience on the local, regional and national levels through carrying out NetMe-In Days, local accompanying network activities and knowledge building caps. What is more, the project reached the European audience through the creation of the European Community of Practice as well as three Multiplier Events; final conference and

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[9] This chapter is based on information from internal project vademecum and other project documentation.

two summer schools. In the following pictures some examples of the support for external communication are displayed.

Figure 9: Communication channels for external communication

4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, my research methodology will be presented. First of all, I will focus on my research method that I applied on my interviews. Secondly, I will briefly introduce my recording equipment. Then, I will carry on with the description of my interviewees and interview settings. Lastly, I will concentrate on the description of my interview transcriptions.

4.1   Research method

As far as my research method is concerned, I opted for conducting qualitative research in order to answer my research question "*How is the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance perceived by the NetMe-In project partners*?".

I decided to focus my Master thesis on the NetMe-In project because the project consisted of international team members who reside in different European countries and therefore possess various cultures as well as speak different languages. Thus, it follows from the above that the team is suitable for my research question focused on a language and cultural diversity in teams. Moreover, I actively took part in and contributed to the local project outcomes during my studies at Université Bretagne Sud in Lorient in France. Hence, I was already familiar with the project as well as some members of the team, which facilitated the whole process of my research.

The purpose of my qualitative research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants who took part in the NetMe-In project via the description of their opinions, perspectives and views. In order to obtain the needed data, I carried out Skype interviews because I evaluated online interviews as the most ideal data collection tool for such cases. Interviewing the project partners in the traditional face-to-face interview conditions would have been time and money consuming.

Firstly, conducting Skype interviews allowed me to easily obtain the data I needed for my qualitative analysis. Secondly, it gave me the opportunity to get real project experience when working in geographically dispersed teams.

After the careful consideration of all possible types of interviewing, I decided to use the semi-structured one which enabled me to prepare some standardized questions,[10] but also

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[10] Examples of the English as well as French version of my interview questions are in annexes.

to change the order, explore some questions further or avoid certain questions during the actual interview. In total, I conducted five Skype interviews. Additionally, one of the partners did not manage to find a suitable time in his schedule and therefore this partner answered my questions in written form.

Furthermore, I was also allowed to use internal project documents such as the project vademecum, mid-term, and final internal as well as external evaluations. I used this source of data to better comprehend the project functioning and to create relevant interview questions. I did not use it for the empirical part itself due to the fact that this part was solely based on the real perceptions and experiences narrated by the project participants during the interviews.

Regarding the online Skype interviews, all of them were carried out in a very friendly but professional interview ambiance. In order to capture all the verbal and non-verbal cues, I recorded not only audio but also video if accepted by the interviewees. Hence, besides verbal responses, I observed also interviewees´ body language in order to indicate the level of enthusiasm or discomfort with the topic. What is more, all the interviewees´ emotions and behaviors, captured during the interview, gave me the opportunity to go deeper and understand better the way my interview partners perceived the topic.

As in the majority of the interviews we had a synchronous communication at the same time and "a place", the interviewees were spontaneous, open and very candid. Hence, their narrations described their subjective perceptions of happenings. As a result, that was a flow of thoughts and consciousness in their minds.

4.2   Recording equipment

As far as my interview recording equipment is concerned, I did not have access to any professional equipment and therefore I recorded voice memos via two mobile phones. Moreover, I recorded the Skype call directly in the application. Hence, in order to avoid losing my recorded interviews, I kept three different recordings of each interview.

Before we proceeded to conduct the interview, I always clarified to the participants the purpose of the interview and I asked them to give me a permission to record the interview and later on use it for university purposes.

4.3   Interviewees

As previously explained, I conducted five interviews in total. As far as the order of my interviews is concerned, I conducted the interviews with the partners according to their time availability.

Firstly, I made an interview with a French representative from Réseau des Cités des Métiers[11]. Secondly, I conducted an interview with a French representative from FREREF[12], the coordinating organization. Thirdly, I interviewed an Italian project partner representing Cooperativa Sociale Ceis Formazione[13]. Then, I carried out an interview with a French participant from Université Bretagne Sud[14]. Lastly, I interviewed a Dutch representative from Stichting Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work (DFW2W)[15]. Moreover, I received written answers from a Spanish representative coming from Fundació Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears[16] .

I opted for interviewing these project representatives because all of them were fully involved in the NetMe-In project. Therefore, they all partcipated in the same project and got the same project experience that they perceived from their individual positions. As a result, I could analyze their specific perceptions and experiences while comparing them to each other.

4.4   Interview settings

As previously explained, I conducted all the interviews on Skype. I did the first interview on the 25th April, 2019 and finished the last one on the 16th May, 2019. In total, I had five interviews with four project partners and one with a representative from the coordinating organization. Additionally, I had one interview what was done in written form. Unfortunately, two partners were not interviewed due to lack of their time availability and two other partners were unreachable all along the period of conducting the interviews.

As a matter of fact, besides one exception, I had to reschedule all the interviews at least once or more. It gave me the opportunity to experience how challenging managing an international team can be. What is more, apart from the time availability issues, I had the

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[11] Project partner indicated as P4. Due to technical problems, this interview was analyzed as the forth one despite the fact that this partner was interviewed as the first one. Hence, it is named P4.
[12] Project partner indicated as P1.
[13] Project partner indicated as P2.
[14] Project partner indicated as P3
[15] Project partner indicated as P5.
[16] Project partner indicated as P6.

chance to experience the language diversity issues as well. In order to make the partners more comfortable, I addressed French-speaking partners in French while I maintained English as a lingua franca with the others. As a result, I always had to write two different language versions of emails, interview questions and so on. All in all, my decision to keep the language diversity turned into the double work and a time-consuming activity.

In order to ensure quiet, safe, comfortable and professional interview conditions, I conducted the interviews from my University dormitories. What is more, to provide my interview partners with a quiet place without any distractions and background noises, I eliminated as many disturbing elements as possible from my side. However, the interviews were in several cases disturbed from the interviewees´ sides. For example, some interviews were interrupted by work colleagues of the interviewees, phone calls, bad Internet connection, poor sound quality, car sounds and bad microphone equipment.

All in all, I managed to conduct all of the planned interviews and succeeded in getting the needed data for my qualitative research.

4.5 Interview flow

Regarding the interview flow, in general, all of the interviews went smoothly. The interviews lasted around 35 minutes each including the introduction to the interview as well as the concluding talk. The longest interview lasted 56 minutes while the shortest one lasted 28 minutes.

Concerning the role of interviewee and interviewer, me as an interviewer, I tried to follow the Charmaz's advice (2006) saying that: "*The interviewer is there to listen, to observe with sensitivity, and to encourage the person to respond. Hence, in this conversation, the participant does most of the talking*". I focused on active, non-judgmental listening and attempted to remain as neutral as possible. I actively spoke only when asking new questions and providing a transition between major topics. What is more, in order to encourage the interviewees' responses, I occasionally nodded my head and said some filler words such as: *"um", "ah", "perfect", "good", "okay"* and so on.

As already explained, I recorded the audio as well as the video versions of the interviews. Hence, I did not make any notes during the actual interviews which enabled me to be fully present and focused on the deep exploration of the participants' thoughts during the interviews.

Concerning the interview flow itself, before I proceeded to carry out the interviews, I created English and French versions of the interview questions. These lists of questions served as a common order of prepared questions[17] for all the interviews. However, since I did semi-structured interviews, I primarily used the prepared questions but then I always added some adapted questions depending on the context.

In general, interviews were divided into several sections:

- – Introduction
- – Warm-up questions
- – Team performance
- – Team cohesion
- – Team communication
- – Multilingualism
- – Interculturality
- – Concluding talk

It was always the interviewer who started the conversation. It ensured that the interviewee got more time to feel at ease sharing his/her project experiences. I always proceeded from the general topics and facts towards more personal opinions and controversial matters. In the end, I spurred the interviewees on to provide additional project experiences, perceptions as well as impressions of the interview.

Each time after having carried out the interview, I filled field notes[18] in and made meta-reflections. Hence, I summed up all the moments including the critical ones that occurred during the interview in order to take actions necessary for encouraging or avoiding them in the next interviews. Every single time I proceeded exactly the same way.

4.6 Transcription

Regarding transcription, I used the Folker transcription tool which was introduced in a tutorial as a part of my class entitled Methodology of Qualitative Research. The Folker transcription tool was developed to enable the ability to transcribe natural multi-party interactions at the Institute for the German Language. Despite the fact, that this transcription tool was developed for current use of German corpus of spoken language,

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[17] You can consult the English and the French version of the interview questions in annexes.
[18] You can consult the field notes in annexes.

whose purpose is to use it for research and teaching (Schmidt & Schütte, 2010), I managed to use an English version to transcribe my interviews in English and French. In addition, in order to ensure a clear understanding of the French transcribed interview excerpts, I maintained usage of the French accents. Due to a large amount of data from the five conducted interviews, I decided not to transcribe the entirety of the interviews, but only selected parts relevant for my qualitative analysis.

Concerning transcription conventions, I got a tutorial on how to work with GAT 2 as part of my Methodology of Qualitative Research class as well. In the following table, you can see a brief summary of GAT 2 transcription conventions that I used.

Figure 10: GAT 2 transcription conventions

Sequential structure	[ ]	Overlap or simultaneous talk
In- and outbreaths	°h / h°	In- / outbreaths of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
	°hh / hh°	In- / outbreaths of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
	°hhh / hhh°	In- / outbreaths of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration
Pauses	(.)	Micro pause, estimated, up to 0.2 sec. duration appr.
	(-)	Short estimated pause of appr. 0.2-0.5 sec. duration
	(--)	Intermediary estimated pause of appr. 0.5-0.8 sec. duration
	(---)	Longer estimated pause of appr. 0.8-1.0 sec. duration
	(0.5)/ (2.0)	Measured pause of appr. 0.5/2.0 sec. duration
Other segmental conventions	ah, eh, oh	Hesitation markers, so-called "filled pauses"
Laughter	haha	Syllabic laughter
	((laughs))	Description of laughter
	<<:-)> so>	Smile voice
Continuers	hm, ehm	Monosyllabic tokens
Other conventions	((coughs))	Non-verbal vocal actions and events
	(xxx)	One or two unintelligible syllables
	((…))	Omission in transcript
Accentuation	SYLlable	Focus accent

(Gesprächsforschung, 2011)

In order to distinguish speakers, I used abbreviations P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 for the interviewed project partners[19]. Below you can see the samples of my English and French interview transcriptions:

{26:56} P5 no i do not think so [eh] i am not easily shocked because i am dutch haha ((...)) usually we do not really care what somebody does if it does not hurt anybody

{42:08} P1 il y a plein de cultures là °hh il y a des cultures nationales [eh] il y a des cultures professionnelles parce que tout le monde n'a pas le même métier ((...)) [eh] il y a des cultures projet et il y a des cultures par rapport au contenu

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[19] As previously explained, one project partner (P6) sent me the answers to my interview questions in written form. Hence, I did not transcribe this interview, I only used excerpts from the text.

5 EMPIRICAL PART

In this section, I will firstly concentrate on sequential analysis. Then, I will highlight my selection of categories. Lastly, I will analyze and interpret all the categories I have chosen in the previous part.

5.1 Sequential analysis

In order to analyze and interpret the collected data, I made a sequential analysis. Since I did not transcribe all the interviews but only selected parts, I put a larger concentration of effort into my sequential analysis. Hence, I provide the readers with clear and profound interview details that offer an insight into the process of interviewing the project partners.

First of all, I did the very first sequential analysis of all interviews on paper without any help of technical devices. After that, I created tables[20] with columns representing eight sections: phase, sequence, sub-sequence, time, speakers, content, memo, relevance for the research question + annotations.

In the first, "*phase*" section, I indicated whether it was initiation, questioning or the concluding phase. The following section described interview "*sequences*". Concerning the number of the sequences, I divided all interviews into seven sequences. Regarding the longest sequences, they are displayed in the following table.

Table 1: The longest interview sequences

Project partner	Sequence	Length of sequence
P1	Team cohesion	13:22
P2	Team communication	10:28
P3	Team communication	9:20
P4	Team performance	7:58
P5	Interculturality	8:18

Concerning the shortest sequences, they are displayed in the following table.

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[20] You can consult the detailed sequential analysis in annexes.

Table 2: The shortest interview sequences

Project partner	Sequence	Length of sequence
P1	Final talk	4:15
P2	Final talk	1:27
P3	Introduction talk	3:42
P4	Introduction talk	3:18
P5	Introduction talk	1:50

Besides the sequences, I divided the interview into different "*sub-sequences*" as well. The total number of sequences are shown in the following table.

Table 3: Total number of sub-sequences per interviews

Project partner	Number of sub-sequences
P1	27
P2	26
P3	24
P4	26
P5	24

The next section called "*time*" displays the exact length of the individual sub-sequences. This section facilitates the orientation in the interview content and the work with data afterward. The following section is focused on "*speakers*". It simply serves to indicate who talks. Then, there is a section entitled "*content*" in which the most important topics of each subsequence are explained. After that, there is a "*memo*" section, which indicates remarks which are interesting but do not fit into the last category dealing with "*relevance for the research question and annotations*". This last, but not least, section is dedicated to relevant statements and useful remarks for analysis and interpretation of the interviews.

5.2 Selection of categories

After having finished the sequential analysis, I proceeded to the next phase bearing the name "*selection of categories*". In order to analyze and interpret my 6 interviews, I decided to select 5 main categories, which I divided into 15 subcategories. Personally, I think that these selected categories and subcategories represent the most interesting and

relevant parts of the interviews for the research question. Selected categories are displayed in the following diagram:

Figure 11: Selection of categories
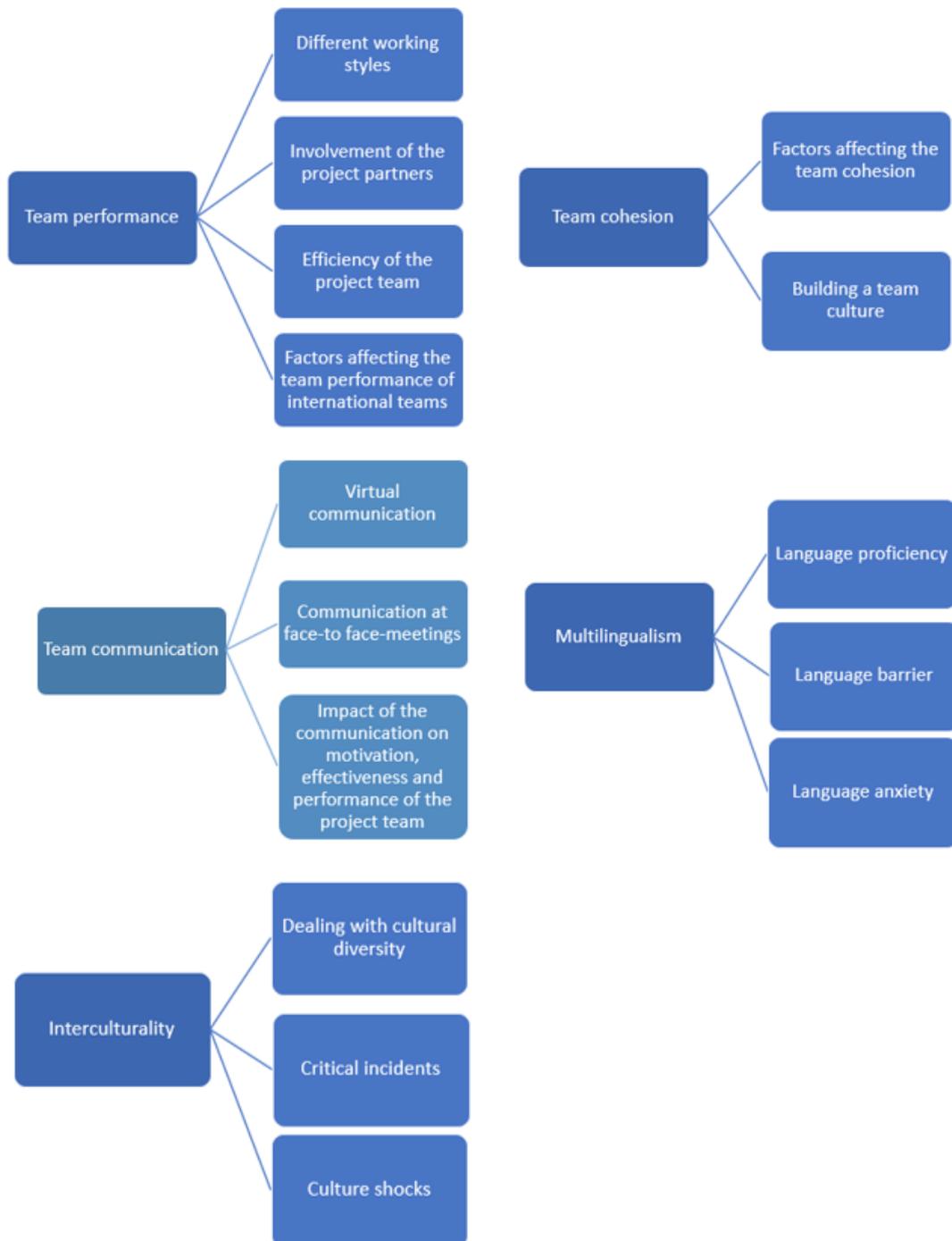
In the majority of the cases, selected categories and subcategories which are shown above correspond to my interview questions. It is a result of the well-thought-out interview questions that I created after careful consideration of the specificities of the team as well

as the detailed research in the literature. In my opinion, the number of categories and subcategories that I opted for ensures clarity of the content and preserves the logical structure as well.

5.3 Analysis and interpretation of categories

In this section, I will take one category after another in order to provide you with relevant analysis and interpretation of my interviews. I will use selected excerpts from all six interviews in order to demonstrate the interviewees´ experiences, perceptions, views, and opinions. Regarding the language of the interview excerpts used in the following section, I will keep the initial language of the interviews. Hence, the excerpts will be either in English or French. I decided to use the original versions in order to keep the nature of the interviews as well as not to lose the meaning in translation. In addition, as I study a Trinational Degree focused on "Regional and European Project Management" taught in English and French, I find using bilingual interview excerpts as a suitable way to prove my linguistic skills.

5.3.1 Team performance

In general, project partners evaluated team performance as good and they said that the team performance evolved gradually within the project. Furthermore, P6 added that the smooth development of the team performance was enabled by the work of the coordinating organization.

{07:49} P2 i saw a positive development in performance within the project

{02:14} P5 i think that which is usual is that at the beginning of the team performance the team need to get to know each other to see what kind of expectations people have [eh] and during the project they get the connection and then the performance goes smoothly

P6: The performance of the team was good in general terms, thanks to the work of the project leader as coordinator of the consortium. Only some partners were delayed in carrying out the activities and this made the work of the other partners more difficult. It was more difficult to deliver the work at the scheduled time, especially at the end of the project.

In addition, P1 says that both external and internal evaluations showed a quality performance within the project team. Moreover, according to P1, the high project performance was mainly caused by the dynamic, cohesive and engaged project team.

{13:24} P1 l'avis des 2 evaluations aussi bien interne qu'externe c'est que le projet a très bien performé et s'il a très bien performé c'est parce que l'équipe de projet a été très dynamique, soudée et engagée.

5.3.1.1 Different working styles

All interviewees agreed on the fact that all the project partners had different working styles. As a matter of fact, partners explained that the differences were not caused only by the different national cultures, but that they originated from the distinct organizational culture background. However, the presence of different work approaches did not stop the team to cooperate and carry on working on the common project.

{09:51} P1 chaque partenaire est vraiment spécifique [eh] tout le monde est différent [eh] tout le monde a sa culture [eh] je parle même pas de culture de pays je parle de culture projet [eh] tout le monde a sa façon de travailler °h les gens ne travaillent pas pareil

{08:17} P2 we were different partners from different countries and obviously we had different working styles [ehm] we were [ehm] from not only different countries but also from different (.) working environment

{07:38} P4 des différences il y avait forcément [eh] du faite qu'il y avait des différentes cultures ce qui n'empêche pas de travailler ensemble

P6: I perceived from the beginning that the working styles of the project partners were individual. Each partner has a particular way of working and organizing.

What is more, P2 considered different working styles within the team as a significant strength for the project.

{09:07} P2 i think that this kind of differences were a very important strength for the project

5.3.1.2 Involvement of the project partners

The interview showed that the project partners were aware of the involvement inequality among the partners. They described that the majority of the team was characterized by high engagement to the project while the minority, one or two partners, was less committed.

{09:47} P2 in general i can say that from my perception the involvement was quite equal maybe one or two partners had some difficulty

{05:54} P3 une implication très différente avec une implication [eH] très forte de certains et très lointaine pour d'autres

P6: Like any project, there are partners that participate more and others that participate less. Some were involved and even assumed roles that were not their direct responsibility, in order to be able to advance in the project. On the other hand, others worked less and in addition other partners had to help them carry out their activities.

However, P3 as well as P4 commented that EU project teams often have to deal with low commitment from some of the project partners.

{06:04} P3 ça c'est très souvent comme ça que ça se passe malheureusement dans les projets européens

{08:20} P4 la grosse majorité a été impliquée et la minorité désimpliquée, ce qui arrive dans ce type de projets haha

5.3.1.3 Efficiency of the project team

Regarding the efficiency of the project team, partners evaluated the project being overall successful. Furthermore, P1 explained that the project, in fact, surpassed the expected outcomes in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In addition, Erasmus+ agency estimated that the project was implemented at 98%. P6 agreed and put emphasis on how crucial role the representatives from the coordinating organization played when the project faced partners´ low engagement issues and they had to put the team performance back on track.

{12:09} P1 après ce qu'on peut dire c'est que le projet a rempli ses engagements donc en gros ((...)) tous les livrables ont été livré [eh] tout a été fait dans le temps conformément à ce qui était prévu

{12:40} P1 on a produit plutôt plus que ce qui était prévu en terme de qualitatif °h et même en terme quantitatif puisque on a touché beaucoup plus de gens que ce qui était prévu

{06:56} P4 au bout du projet l'agence erasmus+ a estimé que le projet a été realisé à 98% ce qui est un très bon résultat

P6: In general, it was effective, although there were times when some partners did not accompany the team project, making it difficult for the project to evolve. The work of the project leader was decisive in making the work efficient.

Furthermore, P3 highlighted the quality and diversity of the project content that the team was able to disseminate. Moreover, P2 stated that it was the best possible timing to come up with such a project due to the fact they had sent the application in 2015, when there was a huge need for the digital identity projects.

{06:31} P3 on a réussi à faire un travail de qualité et notamment comme je le dissais par la diversité du contexte dans lequel nous sommes intervenus [eh] nous avons pu vraiment beaucoup diffuser [eh] disseminer les résultats du projet

{06:55} P3 je dirais qu'on a eu de la chance que l'actualité nous soit très favorable parce que [eh] quand on a déposé ce projet en 2015 °hh c'était presque pile le moment où il y a eu une explosion en matière de besoin sur la thématique de l'identité numérique

5.3.1.4 Factors affecting the team performance of international teams

Firstly, among the positive factors affecting the team performance, the project partners mentioned regular face-to-face reunions. Moreover, the partners´ performance was considerably driven by the project topic in which they were all highly interested.

{08:15} P3 ce qui a beaucoup fait progresser c'est la mobilité [ah] clairement le pouvoir de se retrouver physiquement plusieurs fois dans le projet et vraiment apprendre à se connaître pour travailler ensemble ça c'est vraiment le facteur qui est le plus important

{08:37} P3 le deuxième facteur c'est les réseaux dans lesquels nous avons tous été très investis les réseaux du numérique ((...)) ça c'était aussi un vrai facteur de réussite

Secondly, P4 put emphasis on a commitment, maintaining the same level of engagement to the project as meeting project time specifications.

{09:48} P4 je dirais que c'était l'investissement c'est-à-dire ((...)) respecter l'engagement en terme d'investissement dans le projet et les deadlines imposées [eh]

Thirdly, P1 thought that another factor of success affecting team performance was the fact that there were two project coordinators with two significantly different approaches that enabled the team members to always found a way to work that suits them the best.

{24:45} P1 axel qui est donc le coordinateur avec moi [eh] on n'a pas du tout le même style ((...)) on ne fonctionne pas du tout de la même façon et du coup ça c'est un facteur qui est bien parce que comme ça les gens s'y retrouvent

In addition, P3 considered the number of KBC´s[21] and the diversity of the situations which could be applied to the project as other indicators of quality of performance.

{04:57} P3 ensuite la performance c'est également porté sur le nombre des résultats que nous avons pu produire et en particulier le nombre des capsules pédagogiques que nous avons réalisées et la diversité des situations que nous avons pu aborder

Despite the number of positive factors mentioned above, the team performance was influenced also by negative factors. They were characterized by the long distance, external factors such as technical issues, business of the partners in their home organizations, staff changes and difficulties to agree with activities and common strategies.

{12:33} P2 maybe hh° external factors (...) we were from different countries and different realities and so external factors like when partners had a lot of work, had technical problems or for example our general manager left during the project

{04:36} P4 du fait qu'il y a une distance [eh] ça peut ralentir la mise en oeuvre de la production intellectuelle

P6: The difficulties related to the creation of some activities and agreeing on the strategy to be developed.

5.3.2 Team cohesion

According to the project partners, team cohesion is crucial for the successful development of international projects. The more partners from different countries are, the more important team cohesion is.

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[21] KBC is an acronym for Knowledge Building Caps.

P6: In general terms, cohesion is essential as part of the successful development of an international project, due to the large number of partners from different countries and regions. Forming a cohesive team where there is an exchange of ideas and proposals to carry out the activities allows to develop better the activities and learn more from other partners.

What is more, P3 and P2 pointed out that team cohesion was particularly good in the NetMe-In project. In addition, they said that having a strong team cohesion in European projects always represent a key to success. However, not every European project reaches such suitable cohesion.

{04:44} P3 on a réussi à créer vraiment beaucoup de liens entre les partenaires au-delà du contexte du projet et ça dans un projet européen c'est toujours une marque de réussite

{13:36} P2 [oh] i think it was great from my side ((laughs)) ((..)) i worked in some projects in which team cohesion was not so good but in netme-in project the team was very (---) yes [ehm] very good

Despite the very good and strong human connection which seemed to be favorable for the project, P3 thought that the cohesion of the project content was average.

{09:33} P3 humainement la cohésion était très forte et très bonne déjà parce que dans l'équipe du projet il y a des personnes qui se connaissaient depuis longtemps et qui avaient une habitude de travailler ensemble et donc l'ambiance était très positive [eh] c´était très favorable

{10:25} P3 on a pas réussi à produire vraiment conjointement des résultats chaque partenaire individuellement a produit ses propres résultats mais nous avons eu beaucoup de difficulté à produire ensemble

{10:53} P3 même si la cohésion humaine a été très forte et très bonne cette cohésion de travail elle a été assez moyenne

5.3.2.1 Factors affecting the team cohesion

Concerning the factors affecting the team cohesion, P1 found it to be very important to start to build the team cohesion at the project kick-off meeting in order to motivate the team to carry on working until achieving the project objectives.

{23:12} P1 très important c'est le kick-off meeting °hh il faut tout de suite y mettre une bonne ambiance et il faut vraiment arriver à créer l'ambiance dès le départ pour que les gens aient vraiment envie de continuer dans le projet [eh] c'est créer l'envie

In addition, P2 and P4 were of the opinion that the real team cohesion was established and maintained thanks to the face-to-face meetings within the NetMe-In project.

{14:26} P2 i think for example that the project meetings [eh] the learning mobilities [eh] the occasion to meet personally were very important to build the team cohesion

{11:40} P4 les meetings où on s'est retrouvé physiquement [eh] ça s'est passé très bien [eh] là on a créé une vraie cohesion

What is more, P1 considered the innovative brand-new project content as one of the main factors that made participants feel a connection between them.

{16:25} P1 je pense que ce qui a vraiment fait la cohesion c'est le contenu du projet ((...)) c'était un truc qui plaisait à tout le monde ((...))tout le monde était intéressé par le côté innovant du projet et donc je pense que la cohesion est bien là

In addition, P1 stated that a sense of pride felt among the participants toward their outcomes represented a factor of cohesion as well.

{17:31} P1 un autre facteur de cohesion c'est que les gens étaient très contents et très fiers de leur production

5.3.2.2 Building a team culture

According to the project partners, building a common team culture is fundamental because it shapes the team. What is more, the partners referenced that leading a project without any common culture remains a significant difficulty.

{13:04} P3 s'il y a pas de culture d'équipe une culture du projet c'est très difficile d'ammenner un projet à son terme

{15:24} P2 it is fundamental because if we have to work in a team we must have a common view a common culture ((...)) each one of us can add something and do something different and [hm] give to the others competences and so on but there must be some common point.

{08:26} P5 i think it is pretty important to find [ehm] a framework of the culture that people know what to do and where they are going

P3 and P4 were of the opinion that team culture has the ability to make projects to develop further and facilitates the process of defining of project targets. Moreover, P3 thought that it was the team culture that brought motivation to the team members to work with and for the rest of the team.

{13:58} P4 c'est fondamental [eh] c'est la base de tout [eh] c'est ce qui fait que le projet va se mettre en marche à continuer à progresser

{12:19} P3 l'importance d'avoir une culture d'équipe elle est très forte parce que c'est en partageant une culture commune qu'on avance mieux ensemble

{12:36} P3 on arrive à se positionner les uns par rapport aux autres et on a une connaissance de ce que les autres doivent réaliser dans le projet ((..)) et c'est quelque chose qui crée une dynamique et une envie car on a envie de travailler avec et pour les autres

Furthermore, P4 explained that the friendship among the partners has actually enabled them to finish the project, while meeting the time specifications.

{19:41} P4 cet esprit positif de camaraderie a permis vraiment d'aller au bout de ce projet et de rendre tous les outputs en respectant les deadlines

5.3.3 Team communication

Regarding the team communication in general, P3 stated that communication is necessary for every project and P3 also added that team communication should never be neglected. Furthermore, P2 pointed out that open dialogue is a key to quality project results.

{17:16} P3 la communication doit être une activité à parte entière ((...)) c'est vraiment une activité qu'il ne faut pas négliger

{17:31} P2 open dialogue ((...)) is fundamental to obtain good results

5.3.3.1 Virtual communication

Since the NetMe-In project was made up of a geographically dispersed team, the participants, most of the time, had to rely on virtual communication. However, virtual communication is dependent on the quality of Internet connection which often limited the team. In addition, P3 stated that virtual communication was not 100% reliable and P3 also added that it was not an optimal tool for working, communication, or for online decision making.

{20:43} P3 au fil du projet la communication interne quand on a utilisé skype pour les rendez-vous travail c'était difficile parce que la qualité de la communication était souvant pas très bonne

{21:10} P3 quand on est plusieurs à se connecter et qaund il faut faire passer des documents et qund il faut réagir en ligne prendre des décisions etc il y a quand même eu souvent des problème de connections de réseaux et autres donc ça c'était quand même pas optimal

To conclude, P4 pointed out that it is insufficient to organize only two face-to-face meetings per year and the rest of communication keep online. In his opinion, the NetMe-In project team would deserve more interactions at the face-to-face meetings.

{12:15} P4 c'est pas suffisant de se voir que deux fois physiquement

5.3.3.2 Communication at face-to-face meetings

Concerning the communication at the face-to-face meetings, the team turned to various multilingual practices. Firstly, the team opted for English as the official lingua franca.

{33:53} P1 pendant les réunions la langue officielle c'est l'anglais mais après il y a toujours des gens dans les coins qui parlent italien catalan ou français

In spite of the fact that English was defined as the team´s working language, project partners tended to switch to other languages from time-to-time.

{18:08} P4 principalement l'anglais [eh] l'anglais on va dire à 90%

{13:06} P5 usually i used english but some people spoke french that i can understand a little bit but not very well so it was mainly english and sometimes french

{18:14} P4 parfois ça c´est passé que moi j'ai conversé avec les partenaires italiens en italien par exemple [eh] j'ai conversé espagnol avec les espagnols

{25:31} P2 maybe during the informal communication we sometimes stopped to speak english with some partners ((…)) i like very much speaking other languages so haha if i had the chance to speak french with the french partners it was very good

Moreover, the Spanish and Italians partners spoke between each other in their native languages without any help of additional lingua franca. Hence, they employed receptive multilingualism into practice.

{25:52} P2 with spanish partners I was used to speak italian and they spoke spanish and we understood each other with no problems

Lastly, P5 explained that the team led the participants to speak their native languages as well. Hence, the speakers could express themselves much faster and easier. However, this communication practice required subsequent translation.

{16:04} P5 i think it is good for people to also talk in their own language [ehm] so you can make more clear what you mean so anybody else can translate it a little bit better

{16:26} P5 so that helps [ehm]

{16:35} P5 i think that it is what we used a lot otherwise english of participants was at pretty good level

5.3.3.3 Impact of the communication on motivation, effectiveness and performance of the project team

Regarding the impact of communication within the project team, P3 stated that communication is linked with motivation, team effectiveness as well as quality performance.

{27:25} P2 if you have good communication within your team you can [ehm] make them understand what they have to do and you can see if there are some problems

{27:44} P2 if you can communicate and be clear with everybody they are also more motivated more efficient and their performance is better

Furthermore, P1 stated that communication is an essential aspect in teams because of the fact that quality communication ameliorates the general team ambiance and makes the team members more candid and open.

{35:03} P1 c'est essentiel c'est ça qui fait que le projet marche bien qu'il y a une très bonne entente [eh] les gens sont sincères et ouverts

P6 also found communication an important aspect that fostered and improved the process of achieving the results, executing tasks and in the end, this led to the higher efficiency of the team. Nevertheless, P6 commented that in several cases communication actually had a negative effect on the team motivation.

P6: It was important, although not decisive. The communication in team allowed to orient better the execution of the activities carried out in each region and favoured a greater effectiveness of the project. It did not always increase the motivation, since in some moments it generated the opposite effect, due to the difficulties posed by some members of the team.

5.3.4 Multilingualism

As far as the multilingualism within the team is concerned, the interviews showed that the project partners see multilingualism as a strength and a weakness for European projects at the same time. Some thought that multilingualism connects European citizens while others commented that despite the wide opportunities that multilingualism provides, it represents a certain barrier in intelligibility.

{21:55} P4 c'est une force [eh] c'est ce qui montre notre communauté européenne qui montre qu'on fait partie de la même région européenne

{24:58} P3 ce côté multiculturel c'est toujours une force parce qu'on apporte tous une vision et on s'en nourrit les uns les autres

{16:58} P5 [uh] i would say both i would not say that it was a strength or weakness

{17:06} P5 you know the multilingual ability is probably good because you can get into texts ((...)) but weakness it is sometimes when everybody can not follow what has been said ((...)) because if you do not understand it makes it hard to participate

P6: The impact of multilingualism is essential. It allows better communication with the members when the main language is not completely mastered. In my opinion, multilingualism is a strength. The language is a vehicle of communication.

On the one hand, multilingualism used in the dissemination process enabled to reach the local target audience in its mother tongue. On the other hand, it caused difficulties to understand the content of the individual organizations. Hence, the insufficient involvement of language diversity in local project outcomes resulted in incomprehensibility for the team.

{32:22} P2 i think that at the local level the multilingualism was fundamental more than in the in the partnership

{19:39} P3 quand on a organisé des réunions de travail des réunions présentations avec nos réseaux d'acteur en bretagne on ne pouvait pas du tout se permettre d'utiliser l'anglais cela n'aurait pas être compris du tout ((...)) nous avons utilisé le français dans 95% des cas pour la communication interne

{23:58} P3 la difficulté elle s'est trouvé plutôt dans la compréhension des résultats du projet parce que nous nos résultats étaient en français [eh] les croates ont fait la même chose les turques aussi sauf moi je ne parle ni turque ni croate ni italien

{26:26} P3 les films produits avec les collègues hollandais sont assez difficile à exploiter parce qu'il y a très peu de considération de l'aspect interculturelle

5.3.4.1 Language proficiency

The interviewees are of the opinion that all of the participants were proficient enough in English to use as the working language. They were able to communicate and express themselves. In fact, they call English their project language.

{23:40} P3 les gens qu'on avait autour de la table étaient tous de bons anglophones ((...)) avec une vraie capacité à communiquer en anglais et échanger en anglais

{24:55} P2 we mainly used english and all the partners could understand communicate [eh] express themselves °h maybe someone speaks more or better english but we did not have misunderstandings

{36:45} P1 tous les gens qui étaient là parlaient suffisamment anglais [eH] l'anglais en tant que langue de projet [hah]

P2 explained that there was a supportive ambiance in the team. When participants had difficulties in expressing themselves, other partners or the project leaders took care of translations and they repeated what had been said, in order to ensure the same level of understanding.

{34:18} P2 if a partner could not express in english exactly the idea [eh] another partner or the coordinators intervened to understand better and explain it to the other partners

What is more, P2 described that in general international teams tend to create their own kind of English they are all able to understand. Hence, they reverted to Globish.

{28:25} P4 ce qui est intéressant c'est qu'au dèla de la langue il y a une autre language qui se met en place naturellement parce qu'on ne maîtrise pas totalement la langue

In order to smoothly overcome a different language proficiency of the participants and to ensure a good level of understanding within the project, the team always used various kinds of support at the face-to-face meetings. As an example, they used PowerPoint presentations as a visual to help. In addition, the team was regularly provided with reports that served as summaries of the meetings.

{23:04} P4 l'avantage c'est que tous les meetings étaient basés sur les documents écrits des powerpoint [eh] des préparations avec les objectifs etc [eh] et un compte rendu de la réunion qui a été faite

5.3.4.2 Language barrier

First of all, P1 and P5 pointed out that poor English proficiency was a barrier that limited some partners to participate in the project. Hence, a good knowledge of English was the basic premise for being able to take part in the project.

{37:50} P1 il y eu ça au début avec l'entreprise croate car il y avait un qui parlait anglais et traduisait pour les autres mais ils ont arrêté assez rapidement de venir aux réunions

{17:43} P5 if you do not understand it makes it hard to participate

In addition, partners stated that different pronunciations, varying from nation to nation, sometimes resulted in restricted speech intelligibility among the team. P6 added the point that when mixing languages, you risk losing track due to the reduced capability to understand and to be understood.

{33:17} P2 maybe sometimes pronunciation of some partners was very different so you needed some time to understand what they want to say

P6: As far as I remember, there was not this case, since I understand the English, French and Italian language. Well, the fact that you do not control these languages with great precision, could influence at some point not understanding exactly what were the next steps to follow in the project.

As a matter of fact, the team had to face the language prejudices regarding the deficient language abilities of the French participants, which were revealed right after the start of the project. Hence, it represented a hypothetical language barrier.

{25:44} P3 les partenaires hollandais considéraient notamment au début du projet [eH] ((...)) ils ont pensé que les français sont vraiment pas bons en langues étrangères et que c'est toujours compliqué de travailler avec eux

5.3.4.3 Language anxiety

As already explained in the language proficiency part, the majority of the partners mentioned that the project participants mastered English really well. Therefore, the usage of English as a lingua franca did not trigger any major problems with language anxiety, insecurity or embarrassment.

{24:45} P4 tous les participants ont déjà eu une bonne pratique de la langue anglaise

P6: Everyone knew or mastered the English language. In general, few partners do not know this language.

However, according to P5, some participants were not fully comfortable when speaking English in front of the project team even though they had a good level of English. P5 believed that it did not have any significant impact on the project.

{19:21} P5 yeah i know for sure that some people were afraid of using the working language english because they were not comfortable enough

{19:33} P5 even on a good level you can still see people afraid of doing presentation in english

Overall, P4 was of the opinion that instead of anxiety, the team was full of open ambiance, curiosity, interest and motivation.

{25:22} P4 c'était plutôt la curiosité de l'intérêt et la motivation que l'anxiété

5.3.5 Interculturality

Regarding interculturality, P1 gave an explanation of how many cultures are present in international projects. As a matter of fact, there is a clash of cultures: national culture, professional culture, project culture and content culture.

{42:08} P1 il y a plein de cultures là °hh il y a des cultures nationales [eh] il y a des cultures professionnelles parce que tout le monde n'a pas le même métier ((...)) [eh] il y a des cultures projet et il y a des cultures par rapport au contenu

All of the participants thought similarly and found interculturality as an important enriching aspect for international projects. All in all, they share a common positive opinion about interculturality and see it as a strength because it enables teams to broaden their horizons on the professional and individual levels.

P6: Interculturality is important in an international project, since it enriches the activities, encourages greater debate, makes it possible to have different points of view when developing a project and allows greater learning on a specific topic ((...))It is true that sometimes, different points of view can create a problem, but generally they contribute more than they subtract.

{28:51}P4 pour moi c'est une grande force qui permet d'apporter une ouverture professionnelle et individuelle

{49:18} P1 très nettement c'est une force c'est ce qu'on recherche dans ce projet en même temps [eh] on cherche la diversité

{29:05} P3 ça a été une vraie force du projet ((...)) et que c'est aussi ça ce qu'on cherche dans les projets européens

5.3.5.1 Dealing with cultural diversity

Regarding the management of cultural diversity, it is important to be open-minded towards different mentalities. Even though the team speaks one common language, it does not mean that they all share the same behavior and customs. Hence, it remains crucial to

become internationally aware as well as cross-culturally adroit when working in international teams.

{32:32} P2 but ((...)) language and culture are very linked so [hm] maybe in the partnership you do not speak your native language but you show your culture

{22:07} P5 the way you communicate is of course different for example we say that dutch people are pretty direct we say that they speak their mind but it does not necessarily mean that they are impolite [eh] and it is also the same thing with the french people ((...)) they look like starting an argument which is not that [eH] if you come to another country it is not an impoliteness, but it is just the way culture talks and it is important to know that

The interviews show that international teams require a certain adaptability, open-mindedness and willingness for compromise. For instance, it is necessary to be flexible when it comes to eating hours because the time when people take breaks and eat may vary by country or region.

{37:60} P2 we have to find a middle way [ehm] sometimes it is not so easy but if you stay open-minded and try to understand the point of view of the other person you can work together

{45:33} P1 les horaires de repas par exemple quand vous allez en Hollande vous mangez à 6 heures du soir et quand vous allez aux baléares vous mangez à 11 heures du soir mais bon ça c'est facile de s'adapter quand on est pas trop rigide

Since correct and polite greetings can be a tricky issue, it is another example of a need for culture adaptability and accepting foreign habits. The way people greet each other varies according to countries as well as regions. Hence, P5 recommends that it is better to agree whether you do or do not "la bise", kiss on both cheeks and if yes, how many times.

{47:53} P1 il y a des gens à qui vous faites la bise et il y en a d'autres à qui vous la faites pas

{23:47} P5 we just [eh] sort of say three times with dutch we made an agreement with everybody two kisses and with the dutch it was three and then everybody knew it was three

P2 stressesed the importance of cultural diversity awareness when working in an international environment and highlighted how beneficial it was organizing a culture awareness event for the team.

{36:52} P2 if you are in general in a european project you must be aware about the fact that you are working with people that have different experiences and work in different environment and have different culture

{38:31} P2 it was very interesting for example during the mobility in Modena ((…)) we organized a culture evening where each partner brought something to eat from their country and we had a dinner together and shared the culture

{39:09} P2 it was the occasion to understand the culture of the partners and thanks to that we also understood the mentality

In the end, P5 recommended to always ensure yourself to share a common understanding within your international team. In addition, P5 encouraged international teams to create a common handbook providing the team with detailed definitions and explanation of key project terms because they can vary culture from culture.

{24:44} P5 it is more like ((…)) finding out what others mean it is always in different cultures because people speak their mind and you have to ask in-depth questions to make sure that you understand

{25:05} P5 if people talk about guidelines dutch people think that it is something you have to do but in a lot of countries it is something which is advised but you do not have to necessarily do it

{25:21} P5 it is important to make a guideline or a handbook

5.3.5.2 Critical incidents

The majority of the participants did not remark about any specific critical moment. Yet, P2 stated that humor, used by some partners to lighten up situations, was a root cause of several tense moments and therefore it can be considered as the trigger of critical incidents within the project. To sum up, some of the partners intended to create a less informal work environment. However, the others did not accept these intensions and required only formal work approaches.

{40:05} P2 there was one big misunderstanding [eh] a critical point because some partners used to be funny haha ((…)) but maybe it is just the culture

{40:33} P2 maybe in some culture it is normal to be more informal and joke and in others it is more strict

5.3.5.3 Culture shocks

In general, partners referenced that they did not experience any particular culture shock within the project.

{42:08} P2 i do not remember any culture shock

{26:56} P5 no culture shock [eh] no i do not think so [eh] i am not easily shocked because i am dutch haha ((…)) usually we do not really care what somebody does if it does not hurt anybody

However, P1 shared that the Dutch cuisine that project participants tasted during the kick-off meeting taking place in the Netherlands represented a real cultural shock.

{23:50} P1 le kick-off meeting a été en Hollande et par exemple un truc qui nous est tous resté c'est la cuisine hollandaise qui n'est pas la cuisine

{50:02} P1 la cuisine hollandaise c'est vraiment un choc culturel

In addition, P1 and P3 added that they were shocked in a rather positive way pertaining to how developed Croatia, one of the project partner countries, was. Hence, the project experience broke their expectations, broadened their cultural horizons and expanded their knowledge.

{50:11} P1 peut-être le pays qui nous a le plus surpris c'est la croatie

{31:57} P3 avec les collègues croates ((...)) ça a été effectivement un choc ((..)) les personnes y vivent dans une modernité incroyable et dans un apport à l'europe

{32:50} P3 je n'attendais pas du tout à une découverte comme celle-là et à découvrir un pays aussi en avance avec une capacité d'action aussi forte

To conclude, P3 explained that the consequences of the geopolitical situation in Turkey, after the terrorist attacks in 2016 and 2017, were a certain shock for the team, in particular for the French representatives because they did not get a permission to go to Turkey and participate in the planned project meetings due to the attacks. As a result, many cultural discussions and reflections within the team were raised.

{29:20} P3 la seule vraie difficulté que nous avons eu notamment à l'université bretagne sud c'est entre 2016 2017 avec les attentats et les lourds problèmes géopolitiques qui se déroulaient en turquie ((...)) c'est un pays dans lequel nous avions interdiction de nous déplacer ((...)) ça c'était très dur parce qu'on avait prévu dans l'organisation du projet de se rendre à istanbul plusieurs fois et donc ça n'a pas pu se faire ((...)) en fait ça génère beaucoup de réflexion

6   DISCUSSION

In this section, I will focus on the critical reflection of my qualitative research. Firstly, I will critically comment on my research methodology and its suitability towards my qualitative research. Secondly, I will concentrate on developing a critical overview of my findings. Hence, I will make comments about my findings compared to already existing research papers in the same fields. Apart from that, I will explore possible improvements and develop solutions applicable to the NetMe-In project or another similar project.

As far as my research methodology is concerned, I carried out qualitative research to answer my research question "*How is the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance perceived by the NetMe-In project partners*?". I opted for the NetMe-In project due to the fact that the project was made up of international cross-cultural team members living in different countries, who managed to carry out a common project. The NetMe-In team members spoke different languages and possessed various cultures and therefore the team was suitable for my research dealing with language and cultural diversity in international teams. Moreover, I actively took part and contributed to the local project outcomes during my studies at Université Bretagne Sud in Lorient in France and therefore I was already familiar with the project as well as some members of the team. What is more, the NetMe-In project already finished in September 2018 and therefore the participants perceived their overall project experiences with reflection and better clarity enabling them to see the project from a deeper critical perspective. All in all, I can state that NetMe-In was a convenient project for my qualitative research.

The purpose of my qualitative research was to obtain a profound understanding of the NetMe-In project participants´ experiences via description of their opinions, perspectives and viewpoints. In order to get the needed data, I decided to use the semi-structured type of interview. Thanks to this kind of interview, I could prepare some standardized questions in advance but also change the order, explore some questions further or avoid certain questions during the actual interview. In my opinion, the semi-structured interview suited perfectly to my research. In my opinion, I would never get such detailed answers either with structured, or unstructured interviews.

Regarding the interview settings, I opted for carrying out Skype interviews. Since I needed to conduct several interviews with a geographically dispersed team, I evaluated online Skype interviews as the most ideal data collection tool.

On the one hand, using Skype to carry out interviews had many pros, among the most important ones I considered:

1. Cheap solution
2. Geographical flexibility
3. User-friendly tool
4. Option for audio recording directly in the application
5. Option for chatting when some problems occur

On the other hand, interviewing via Skype had cons as well. Among the most important ones I considered:

1. High dependency on Internet connection and technology
2. Occasional poor sound quality
3. Occasional time lags in the conversation
4. Difficulty to perceive all non-verbal cues
5. In case of audio call only, total loss of nonverbal communication

I think that Skype enabled me to gain the needed data in a comfortable, fast and reliable way. In my opinion, interviewing the project partners in the traditional face-to-face interview conditions would have cost me too much money and time.

Concerning the interviews themselves, I conducted five Skype video and audio interviews and got answers in written form from one partner. Hence, in total, I interviewed six project partners. All of them were fully involved in the NetMe-In project and therefore they could provide me with their individual perceptions of the same project. The fact that they all worked together on the same team and on the same project allowed me to easily analyze their opinions, views, perceptions, and experiences and compare them to one another.

Unfortunately, I did not manage to interview all the project partners. In particular, I think that interviews with Turkish and Croatian partners could have been very interesting and beneficial in terms of project experiences. However, I had difficulties in contacting them and in the end, these partners were not interested in being interviewed. As a matter of fact, apart from the issues with reaching some of the partners, I had to reschedule all the interviews at least once or more. From my point of view, these communication obstacles gave me the opportunity to experience how challenging managing a real international team can be and enabled me to get deeper into the project itself. In addition, I also had

the chance to experience the language diversity issues within the team. I addressed French-speaking partners in French, while I maintained English as a lingua franca with the others. As a consequence, I had to handle a double work load that turned out into time-consuming translations. On the other hand, I believe that providing the partners with the possibility of expressing themselves in their native language resulted in the fact that the French interviewees were the most candid and talkative ones.

As far as the transcription of my interviews is concerned, I decided not to transcribe the entire interviews but only selected relevant parts for my qualitative analysis due to a large amount of data. Regarding the language of the transcribed interview excerpts, I kept the original versions. Hence, I transcribed the interviews either in English or French. I opted for the bilingual interview excerpts to keep the nature of the interviews as well as avoiding the loss of the meaning in translation. Moreover, since I am a student of trinational degree focused on "Regional and European Project Management" taught in French and English, I think that using bilingual interview excerpts represents a good way to show and prove my linguistic skills.

As I did not transcribed all of the interviews completed with the project partners in their entirety, I put a great emphasis on my sequential analyses that offer clear and deep interview details and provide you with insight into the process of interviewing the project partners. As far as I am concerned, I believe that the detailed sequential analyses are sufficient to give a profound understanding of the whole interview process.

In addition, to analyze and interpret my interviews, I selected the following five main categories: team performance, team cohesion, team communication, multilingualism and interculturality. I proceeded this way because I wanted to make the interviewees feel comfortable to share their experiences. I also wanted to find out and to understand the overall project perceptions. I started with the most general topics and gradually specified my questions towards multilingualism and interculturality. It seems that this strategy was logical and led participants to go deeper and deeper into the details of their project experiences.

I divided the categories mentioned above into 15 subcategories. In my opinion, these selected categories and subcategories represent the most interesting and relevant parts of the interviews for my qualitative research. What is more, most of the selected categories and subcategories correspond to my interview questions. From my personal standpoint,

it is the result of the well-thought-out interview questions that I designated after having carefully considered all specificities of the team as well as the detailed research in the literature. Regarding the number of the categories and subcategories, I think that such a high number of them enables substantial clarity of the content and preserves the logical structure.

In the following paragraphs, I would like to focus on every single category, then sum the whole category up and compare it with existing research papers in the same fields and suggest possible improvements and solutions.

It is worth mentioning that I noticed that one can find only a limited number of research papers based on the management of European projects. In my opinion, most of the existing research papers that are based on EU projects neglect the project management aspect as well as the impact of multilingualism and interculturality connecting to team performance. Hence, I am of the opinion that my Master thesis contributes to filling existing gaps, which literature has not previously adequately described in the field of management of European collaborative projects. In particular, I would like to highlight that my Master thesis provides an exclusive insight into the functioning of European collaborative projects funded by Erasmus+ and, in particular, puts emphasis on the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on the European project teams.

As far as the first category, called team performance, is concerned, I can state that the project participants evaluated the overall team performance as good and smoothly evolving during the entire time of the project. In addition, the interviews showed that the quality team performance was a result of the strong leadership provided by the coordinating organization. Hence, the interviewees pointed out the importance of the relationship between leadership and team performance. This finding can be proven, for instance, by Pınar, Zehir, Kitapçı, Tanrıverdı (2014). What is more, the interviews demonstrated that obstacles may negatively impact the team climate, which is strongly related to the overall team performance. However, the project leaders have the ability to counterbalance it and reduce the negative effects on team performance. This finding is consistent with the research study made by Pirola-Merlo, Härtel, Mann & Hirst (2002). Hence, the leaders of the team had a critical role. They had the ability to guide, shape, enhance as well as significantly influence the team processes, outcomes, and therefore, the team performance.

In reference to team performance, I have to mention the different working styles among the project partners. The interviews showed that the distinct working habits partly originated from national cultures, but mainly from different organizational cultural backgrounds. This finding agrees with the research paper carried out by Schneider, Ehrhart, William, & Macey (2013) who stated that national culture is likely to be influential but not determinant while organizational culture is the one that profiles the employees.

In the NetMe-In project, team performance was significantly influenced by insufficient and unequal involvement of some project partners. In general, the majority of the team was highly committed to the project, while the minority was characterized by low engagement. My interviews manifested how crucial the role of representatives from the coordinating organization were when the project faced partners´ low engagement issues and the leaders had to put the team performance back on track. Nemiro, Beyerlein, Bradley & Beyerlein (2008) described this obstacle in their *Handbook of High-Performance Virtual Teams* and reported that the freedom, that geographically dispersed teams are provided with, may sometimes weaken the bond among the team members and result in a reduction in commitment. As a consequence, team performance decreases because it mirrors the low commitment. As far as I am concerned, I believe that it is important to create a strong commitment to the project since the very beginning and then work on maintaining it via supporting the team, performing effectively and displaying integrity throughout the whole project. Moreover, my opinion is in line with earlier research of Xu & Cooper-Thomas (2011) that demonstrated that there is a strong link between the leader's approach and willingness of a team member to be fully engaged in her/his work role. Hence, this team performance factor should never be underestimated by the team leaders.

Apart from the crucial role of project team leaders and the importance of sense of commitment, I would like to mention the impact of geographical dispersion among the team members and the low frequency of face-to-face meetings on team performance. All interviewees agreed unanimously on the positive influence of face-to-face meetings and pointed out that regular physical reunions had the greatest positive impact on the team itself and its performance. Moreover, the interviewees explained that virtual meetings had to face connection difficulties that complicated their team communication while the face-to-face meetings always were of great quality. This finding is in line with Hakonen &

Lipponen (2008) whose study says that "*rare face-to-face meetings and dispersion in many locations may reduce traditional means of getting relational information*".

As far as the second category, called team cohesion, is concerned, the interviewed project partners believed that team cohesion is crucial for the successful development of international projects. Moreover, they stated that the more project partners from different countries participate in a project, the more important the implementation of team cohesion is. These findings are in accordance with findings reported by Mach, M., Dolan, S. & Tzafrir, S. (2010) saying that high level of cohesion and harmony within the team has the ability to improve the team's performance and therefore team cohesion plays a positive role in the effectiveness of teams in a virtual setting. On the contrary, the project team environment in which members do not trust each other is likely to have poor team performance. In addition, among factors affecting team cohesion, the project partners refered to interactions at physical reunions, the content of the project as well as the sense of pride the participants felt for their outcomes. A similar pattern of results was obtained in research carried out by Joo, Song, Lim & Yoon (2012) that described team cohesion as referring "*to the degree to which team members exhibit interpersonal attraction, group pride and commitment to their tasks*".

In regards to team cohesion, I can not forget to mention the closely related team culture and its building. According to the project partners, building a common team culture is fundamental. Furthermore, they believed that leading a project without any common culture remains very difficult and the projet partners also stressed the fact that team culture holds the whole team together, makes the project progress further and enables the team to finish the project while meeting the project specifications. A similar conclusion was reached by Shin, Kim, Choi & Lee (2016) who are of the opinion that team culture represents a common sense of connectedness and it is likely to foster the work environment while ensuring a clear sense of expectations and therefore the team members successfully fulfill their assigned tasks.

As far as the third category, called team communication, is concerned, the project partners emphasized the fact that team communication should never be neglected because they believed that open dialogue is a key to quality project results. In addition, the interviewed project partners expressed their positive opinion about a linkage between motivation, team climate, team effectiveness and the overall quality of team performance. A similar

finding, pointing out the importance of communication in driving innovation and project performance, is iterated in the research paper conducted by Hirst & Mann (2004). What is more, Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock (2012) provided empirical evidence for a linkage between team interactions at team meetings and team success. Hence, their research paper showed that regular and quality team communication are strongly linked with increased team satisfaction, productivity and success.

Regarding communication and language practices in the NetMe-In multilingual team, the project partners mentioned four basic multilingual communication practices they used within the project. Firstly, they defined English as the official team lingua franca. Secondly, they tended to switch languages from time-to-time into French or any other language depending on the speaker. Thirdly, Spanish and Italian partners spoke between each other in their native languages without any help of additional lingua franca and therefore they employed receptive multilingualism in practice. Lastly, the team also turned to translations in order to provide the project participants with the possibility to express themselves in their native languages. This facilitated and accelerated the whole communication process. These noteworthy findings, describing the implementation of different multilingual practices in order to bridge linguistic barriers and in order to enable the transfer of information among the project partners, are in line with the research paper carried out by Grzeszczyk (2015) as well as the one completed by Yanaprasart (2016).

As far as the fourth category, called multilingualism, is concerned, the project partners found multilingualism within their European project as a strength and a weakness at the same time. On the one hand, the interviewees perceived multilingualism as a factor that connects European citizens and offers many opportunities. On the other hand, they pointed out that multilingualism represented a barrier in intelligibility.

The interviews demonstrated that the project partners were more or less proficient in the project working language, English. Moreover, they all were aware of the fact that they did not possesses native speaker language skills, but they employed an internationalized form of English, also known as Globish. Furthermore, the project participants explained that they, in fact, established their own kind of English that they were able to understand. Nickerson (2005) dealt with this topic and conducted studies focused on the dominance of English as lingua franca in international encounters, in particular, in international business.

Concerning language proficiency, the majority of the team members was sufficiently proficient in English. The team members were able to understand, express themselves, be understood and therefore participate in the project. Hence, clear communication was good enough for the team and it represented the basic premise for being able to take part in the project. However, those participants who did not master English were disadvantaged and could not fully participate in the project and therefore were left behind. This finding agrees with a study provided by Tenzer & Pudelko (2017) which explores the significant influence of languages on power dynamics within international teams. What is more, my finding is in accordance with Siiskonen (2015) whose work proves that language proficiency creates an unequal distribution of power which sometimes can result in negative consequences in project team performance.

Moreover, the team faced language prejudices concerning bad proficiency in English of project partners of one participating nationality. Even though this misleading prejudice was revealed right after the start of the project, it certainly influenced the team climate and jeopardized the NetMe-In project team performance. This finding of the negative effect of prejudiced attitudes and stereotypical beliefs in multilingual teams corresponds with the *Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers in Workplace,* study written by Jenifer & Raman (2015), who focused on cross-cultural barriers such as stereotypes and prejudices. In addition, Jenifer & Raman attributed these issues to the lack of intercultural communicative skills and insufficient cultural knowledge and recommended organizing adequate cross-cultural communication training to eliminate these barriers.

Regarding language anxiety, project participants said that the usage of English as a lingua franca did not trigger any major problems with language anxiety, insecurity or embarrassment. As a matter of fact, they explained that instead of anxiety, the team was full of friendly ambiance, curiosity, interest and motivation. Despite the overall positive opinions, some partners pointed out that some project participants did face linguistic anxiety and the lack of comfortableness when speaking English in front of other members of the team. This finding represents a common issue in multilingual teams. For instance, Tenzer & Pudelko (2013) executed a study that demonstrated that language barriers, such as embarrassment, anxiety, the fear of negative performance appraisals, stress, frustration and shame can foster a rise of negative feelings due to restricted communication skills. This also causes that the team has to face some potential negative team climate which ultimately leads to reduced performance outcomes.

To conclude this category, I would like to mention a few of my findings that could be possible solutions for the linguistic issues within international teams. I believe that quality team communication is based on positive friendly ambiance within the team. In addition, the team leaders should create a supportive environment that motivates members to freely express themselves without fear. Team leaders should play the role of moderators who supervise the usage of lingua franca in formal situations, but they also should allow code-switching and translations when they feel it is needed. Furthermore, I believe that the role of team leaders as moderators should also include active allocating of speaking time to all team members, even the less fluent ones. I also found it important to ensure a good level of understanding within the project team and therefore I think that multilingual teams should put emphasis on various kinds of communication support at the meetings such as PowerPoint presentations, reports and so on. Moreover, I am of the opinion that the creation of a common dictionary containing definitions of the most common terms can be a simple, but effective tool. Lastly, I strongly support all kinds of language training as well as cross-cultural communication training, organized as soon as the team is gathered, in order to avoid all possible linguistic barriers within the team.

In the last, but not least, category called interculturality, the interviewees perceived that different cultures were present within the team. The project partners mentioned cultures, such as national culture, professional culture, project culture as well as content culture. Generally speaking, all of the project participants found interculturality as an important enriching aspect for international projects and saw it as a strength, because it enabled the team memebers to broaden their horizons on the professional and individual levels. In addition, the interviews showed that even though the project participants did not use their native language in formal situations and made an effort to create one team cohesive culture, their own cultures always showed up. This finding is in line with Henderson's work (2005) that showed that the individual team members often operate across languages in multilingual contexts, despite the fact that they are monolingual on the surface level. Hence, Henderson's research demonstrated that non-native English speakers have the tendency to perceive communication from their national monocultural perspective. In addition, he appeals to team leaders to address the consequences of language diversity.

Regarding the management of cultural diversity, the project participants highlighted that it is of great importance to stay open-minded towards different mentalities when working in a multicultural team and emphasized how crucial it is to become internationally aware

as well as cross-culturally adroit. My interviews demonstrated that international teams require adaptability, open-mindedness, and the willingness for compromises within project management but also within specific issues such as eating hours and the correct and polite ways of greeting each other. Concerning eating habits, my findings corresponded with Lindén & Nyberg (2009) whose findings proved that food traditions and eating customs are important markers of cultural identity and therefore these markers represent an aspect that should not be neglected by leaders of multicultural teams. Concerning the appropriate greetings, interviews showed that it is advisable to make an agreement within multicultural teams in order to avoid this tricky cross-cultural issue because the etiquette of greeting colleagues may vary from culture to culture. Appropriate greetings are an integral part of team members' cultural intelligence. Hence, it is not surprising that the interviewees highlighted how beneficial for the team was to organize a cultural awareness event which allowed the team to deeply comprehend the national cultures of the project partners. This finding is supported by Sinha (2008) who stated that multicultural teams are more likely to fail if there is only a little awareness of the diverse factors that enrich them as well as the specific challenges that these teams have to face. In addition, Sinha pointed out that in case of lack of willingness to acknowledge these conditions and to invest in the development of the multicultural teams, the teams risk getting into unnecessary cultural discords and conflicts.

Regarding critical incidents within the NetMe-In project, team did not face any major problems apart from several tense moments caused by humor. In this case, humor was used by some partners to lighten up team climate and as a result, it triggered some minor critical incidents within the project. This finding is consistent with Plester (2009) who dedicated her work to boundaries of workplace humor and fun. Her study showed that humor represents a subjective aspect that can be interpreted differently from culture to culture and therefore showed the tricky side of humor in multicultural teams. On the other hand, Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen (2014) investigated the relationship between team performance and humor patterns in the multicultural workplace and proved that teasing and humorous joking may, in fact, have a positive impact and deepen the bonds among the team members. I would personally suggest to set and open team atmosphere since the very beginning of the project and to openly discuss the critical moments as soon as they appear, try to comprehend them and find a compromise that suits both sides.

In conclusion, I would like to make a comment about culture shocks within NetMe-In. In general, few culture shocks were experienced by the team. My interviews demonstrated that the Dutch cuisine which project participants tasted during the kick-off meeting taking place in the Netherlands represented a negative cultural shock for some of them. Hence, it was the food, that triggered culture shock. Furthermore, some interviewees experienced a positive culture shock when they visited Croatia, one of the participating countries. Thanks to a meeting organized there, they broke their prejudices, broadened their cultural horizons and expanded their knowledge. All in all, the participants' culture shocks were reactions to an unfamiliar environment. My findings are in line with the study conducted by Rajasekar & Renand (2013) who documented different forms of culture shocks such as food, work environment, language, religion, etc. and demonstrated that primary reason for culture shocks is the unfamiliarity with the specificities of the cultures.

7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this Master thesis is to execute qualitative research. The general topic of my thesis is as follows, "*Multilingualism and interculturality in international or interregional projects and work environments*". More specifically, I responded to the research question "*How is the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance perceived by the NetMe-In project partners?*". Therefore, the aim of my Master thesis is to gain an in-depth understanding of the NetMe-In project participants´ experiences via description of their opinions, perspectives and viewpoints, in order to find out, analyze and evaluate how the NetMe-In project team perceived the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on their team performance.

My Master thesis is divided into several parts. First of all, I focus on the theoretical aspect by putting emphasis on four main topics: project, team, interculturality and multilingualism. Subsequently, a detailed description of the NetMe-In project itself and an introduction to all project partners are provided. Then, the research methodology is presented, consisting of following subchapters such as the research method applied for my interviews, my recording equipment, the description of my interviewees, the interview settings and the description of the interview transcription. Afterwards, I concentrate on the empirical section in which I carry out the analysis and interpretation of the interview results. Finally, I deal with the discussion part in which I focus on a critical reflection of my qualitative research. Hence, I comment on my research methodology and develop a critical overview of my findings while comparing them to existing research papers in the same field. Additionally, possible improvements and solutions applicable to the NetMe-In project are developed in this section as well.

With regards to the results of my qualitative research, they show that the overall performance was good and that it evolved smoothly throughout the project. Furthermore, the quality of the performance was highly dependent on the leadership provided by the coordinating organization. Therefore, in the case of cultural, linguistic or any other issues, the project leaders played a critical role because they had the ability to counterbalance the issues. This allowed them to significantly reduce the negative impacts on team performance.

The research also demonstrates how team cohesion was crucial for successful team performance and therefore it played a positive role in the effectiveness of the team and

the development of the project. Consequently, it is not surprising that the team recognized that building a common team culture as fundamental. Thus, the common team culture supported team connectedness, fostered team performance and enabled the team to finish the project in line with the project specifications.

Furthermore, my results proved that there is a link between the quality of regular team communication and increased team satisfaction, motivation and overall performance. In terms of the language practices within the NetMe-In multilingual team, the project partners used four basic multilingual practices: English as the official team lingua franca, switching languages, receptive multilingualism and translations. The implementation of the different multilingual practices enabled the team to bridge potential language barriers and to transfer all information needed among the project partners. This therefore led to a greater common understanding and to better team performance.

Concerning multilingualism, the project partners found it to be a strength and a weakness at the same time. On the one hand, they considered multilingualism as a factor that connects European citizens and offers wide opportunities. On the other hand, they pointed out that multilingualism represents a barrier in intelligibility. In addition, the research shows that the team used an internationalized form of English, also known as Globish. Generally speaking, the majority of the team members was sufficiently proficient in English. As a matter of fact, English skills represented the basic premise for being able to take part in the project. Thus, those people who did not master English, were disadvantaged, could not fully participate in the project and were therefore left aside. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that the team faced language prejudices. Even though this misleading prejudice was revealed right after the beginning of the project, it undoubtedly affected the NetMe-In team climate and jeopardized the team performance. All in all, the team did not experience any major problems with language anxiety, insecurity or embarrassment which would otherwise have significantly influenced the performance of the team.

Regarding interculturality, the project partners faced a clash of cultures within the project such as national culture, professional culture, project culture and content culture. In general, the team found interculturality an important aspect for international projects and considered it a strength and enriching aspect for NetMe-In. Furthermore, the research highlighted that since the team was international, it required adaptability, open-

mindedness and ability to compromise within the project. In addition, the team did not face any major critical cultural incidents apart from several moments of tension triggered by usage of humor. Regarding culture shocks, the NetMe-In project team dealt with only minor ones such as unusual food and broadening cultural horizons when visiting a new country.

To conclude, it may be said that multilingualism and interculturality undoubtedly affected the team performance of the NetMe-In project partners, but they did not represent a barrier that could not be surmounted.

In my opinion, my findings have a number of implications for future research. Firstly, I noticed that only a limited number of research papers, based on the management of European projects, exist within the field. During my research in literature, I found out that most of the existing research papers, based on EU projects, neglect the project management aspect as well as the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on the team performance. Therefore, I believe that my Master thesis fills the gap that literature had not previously adequately described. I am of the opinion that my Master thesis offers an exclusive insight into the functioning of European collaborative projects. Thus, this field is full of potential that has not been exploited yet and therefore I believe that it represents a significant implication for future research. In general, I think that it could be interesting to concentrate more on EU project teams, in particular, on the evolution of EU project teams and their performance over the time. Apart from general EU project topics, I found several other topics with possible implications for future research. For instance, team culture as a tool for overcoming project obstacles could be interesting for further research. Concerning multilingualism within project teams, the role of English proficiency as a requirement to participate in EU projects, the use of Globish and language anxiety as a barrier in international projects caught my attention. I considered them to be interesting topics that could be further analyzed in a future research project. Regarding interculturality, I found the role of humor and the impact of linguistic and cultural prejudices within international projects another area for future research.

Regarding limitations of my study, my qualitative research is focused only on one project team. I believe that it could be even more intriguing to widen the scope on more EU projects, in order to be able to compare them to each other. Furthermore, my research is limited by empirical evidence based only on interviews. I think that the research could be

more profound if I actively observed, analyzed and evaluated the daily practices of the team throughout the whole project. Despite all the limitations mentioned above, I believe that this Master thesis is a valuable contribution to the field.

8   SUMMARY

This Master thesis deals with the research question that follows "*How is the impact of multilingualism and interculturality on team performance perceived by the NetMe-In project partners?*". The purpose of this work is to carry out qualitative research in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences of the NetMe-In project. The Master thesis is made up of a theoretical part, project and team description, research methodology, empirical part and discussion.

Firstly, the theoretical part is focused on four main topics: project, team, interculturality and multilingualism. Secondly, a detailed description of the NetMe-In project itself as well as an introduction to all project partners is provided. Thirdly, the research methodology is presented including the author's research method, the recording equipment, the description of interviewees, the interview settings and the description of the interview transcription. Fourthly, the empirical part puts emphasis on analysis and interpretation of the results of the author's interviews. Lastly, the discussion is concentrated on the author's critical reflection of the qualitative research including comments on the author's methodology and the research findings.

In the Master thesis, individual aspects having an impact on team performance are analyzed and evaluated in detail. On the one hand, the author's qualitative analysis demonstrates that the team performance of the NetMe-In project team was undoubtedly affected by multilingualism and interculturality. On the other hand, it is worth noticing that neither linguistic nor cultural diversity represented an insurmountable barrier that would prevent the project from being concluded.

Key words

Project, team, interculturality, multilingualism, virtual team, international cross-cultural team, EU collaborative project, NetMe-In

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ANNEXES

English version of the interview questions

1) Warm-up question

Main question:	- Could you please introduce yourself?
Possible explanation and extra questions:	- Where do you come from? - What are your linguistic competences? - What was your role in the NetMe-In project?

2) Category 1: Team performance

Main question:	- Could you describe how team performance developed from the very beginning till the end of the project?
Possible explanation and extra questions:	- How different did you perceive the individual working styles of the project partners? - How equal did you perceive the involvement of the partners within the project? - How efficient did you perceive performance of the NetMe-In project team? - What factors affected the team performance the most, according to you?

3) Category 2: Team cohesion

Main question:	- How would you describe the cohesion of the project team?
Possible explanation and extra questions:	- What factors affected team cohesion the most, according to you? - How important is the creation of a team culture, according to you? - Could you please evaluate the role of team cohesion in the overall performance of the project team?

4) Category 3: Team communication

Main question:	- Could you describe how internal as well as external communication took place in the project?

Possible explanation and extra questions	- Could you describe online communication among the project team members?
	- Could you describe communication during face-to face meetings?
	a) Formal communication
	b) Informal communication during breaks
	- Could you describe communication with target groups of the project?
	- How big was the impact of team communication on motivation, effectiveness and performance of the project team, according to you?

5) Category 4: Multilingualism

Main question:	- Could you describe the impact of multilingualism on performance of the project team?
Possible explanation and extra questions	- Did multilingualism in the NetMe-In team represent a strength or a weakness for the project?
	- Could you please describe whether you experienced a situation affected by language barrier between partners?
	- How did the project team deal with communication problems and misunderstandings triggered by language diversity?
	- Could you tell me whether the project team had to deal with language anxiety, insecurity or embarrassment triggered by usage of English as lingua franca?

6) Category 5: Interculturality

Main question:	- Could you describe the impact of interculturality on the performance of the project team?
Possible explanation and extra questions	- How did the project team deal with cultural diversity?
	- Did interculturality in the team represent a strength or a weakness for the project according to you?
	- Could you tell me whether you experienced any misunderstandings/critical incidents caused by cultural difference during the project?
	- Could you tell me whether you experienced any culture shock during the project?

French version of the interview questions

1) **Une question brise-glace**

La question principale:	- Pourriez-vous vous présenter?
L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- D'où venez-vous? - Quelles sont vos compétences linguistiques? - Quel a été votre rôle dans le projet NetMe-In?

2) **La catégorie 1: La performance de l'équipe**

La question principale:	- Pouvez-vous décrire l'évolution de la performance de l'équipe depuis le début jusqu'à la fin du projet?
L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- Quelle différence avez-vous ressentie dans les styles de travail individuels parmi les partenaires du projet? - Comment avez-vous perçu l'implication des partenaires dans le projet? - Comment avez-vous perçu l'efficacité de la performance de l'équipe du projet NetMe-In? - Quels sont les facteurs qui ont le plus affecté la performance de l'équipe, selon vous?

3) **La catégorie 2: La cohésion de l'équipe**

La question principale:	- Comment décririez-vous la cohésion de l'équipe du projet?
L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- Quels facteurs ont le plus affecté la cohésion de l'équipe, selon vous? - Quelle est l'importance de la création d'une culture d'équipe selon vous? - Pourriez-vous évaluer le rôle de la cohésion d'équipe dans la performance de l'équipe du projet?

4) **La catégorie 3: La communication d'équipe**

La question principale:	- Could you describe how internal as well as external communication took place in the project?

L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- Pouvez-vous décrire la communication online parmi les membres de l'équipe du projet? - Pouvez-vous décrire la communication lors de réunions en face à face? a) La communication officielle b) La communication informelle pendant les pauses - Pouvez-vous décrire la communication avec le groupe cible du projet? - Quel était l'impact de la communication d'équipe sur la motivation, l'efficacité et la performance de l'équipe du projet, selon vous?

5) La catégorie 4: Le multilinguisme

La question principale:	- Pouvez-vous décrire l'impact du multilinguisme sur la performance de l'équipe du projet?
L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- Pouvez-vous décrire si vous avez vécu une situation affectée par la barrière linguistique entre partenaires? - Comment l'équipe du projet a-t-elle géré les problèmes de communication et les malentendus causés par la diversité linguistique? - Pouvez-vous me dire si l'équipe du projet a dû faire face à l'anxiété linguistique, à l'insécurité ou à la gêne provoquée par l'utilisation de l'anglais en tant que lingua franca?

6) La catégorie 5: L'interculturalité

La question principale:	- Pouvez-vous décrire l'impact de l'interculturalité sur la performance de l'équipe du projet?
L'explication possible et les questions supplémentaires :	- Comment l'équipe du projet a-t-elle géré la diversité culturelle? - L'interculturalité dans l'équipe a-t-elle représenté une force ou une faiblesse pour le projet, selon vous? - Pouvez-vous me dire si vous avez vécu des malentendus ou des incidents critiques causés par la diversité culturelle pendant le projet? - Pouvez-vous me dire si vous avez vécu un choc culturel pendant le projet?

Field note of the interview with P1

Interviewer:	Kateřina Bendová
Date of interview:	26/04/2019
Time of interview start:	15:30
Interviewee's name:	P1
Interviewee's nationality:	French
Location of interview:	Skype
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
Permission for usage for university purposes:	Yes

Themes that emerged, memorable quotes, anything that stood out:
- It seems to P1 that every project partner is specific because everyone has a different project culture and works in a different way. Moreover, P1 thinks that different cultures allow the team to learn from each other and to motivate the team.
- According to P1, the biggest factor affecting team cohesion was represented by the project content itself due to its innovative brand-new approach. (partners' satisfaction and pride for the outcomes)
- The majority of the project partners already knew each other and therefore it facilitated the whole integration process.
- P1 explains the fact that there were two different project coordinators with two totally different work approaches. (positive impact on the team cohesion)
- P1 highlights that it is important to create a good ambiance right at the kick-off meeting to motivate the partners to work on the project and then to continue regularly tracking the progress.
- The interviewee is of the opinion that all team members had a sufficient level of English, English as "project language". Only at the beginning of the project, one organization was represented by one English speaker and several non-English users who needed translations. However, they stopped attending the meetings soon because they could not participate in.
- P1 thinks that national cultures were more likely to be an interesting topic for discussions than a barrier and added that culture and language diversity is a strength for what we search in EU projects.
- P1 considers Dutch cuisine as the biggest cultural shock.

What worked:
- The interview went smoothly.
- We had a very good internet connection, good Skype conditions without any distractions and background noises.
- The ambiance was really pleasant which had an impact on the openness of P1. As a result, P1 was very honest.
- The interview was conducted in French, native language of the interviewee. Hence, the interviewee felt comfortable. Moreover, it encouraged the interviewee to share very openly project experience without being limited by the usage of a foreign language.
- P1 answered all the questions and shared some extra experiences from previous projects.
- Video included (It enabled more vivid interactions with the interviewee)

What did not work:
- Interviewee tended to lead the interview at the beginning because I provided P1 with the interview questions via email to make it easier when having the Skype meeting. Unfortunately, it disrupted a little bit the planned structure of the interview.

Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:
- Evolution of EU project teams and their performance over time.
- Role of English proficiency as a requirement to participate in EU projects

Field note of the interview with P2

Interviewer:	Kateřina Bendová
Date of interview:	29/04/2019
Time of interview start:	9:30
Interviewee's name:	P2
Interviewee's nationality:	English
Location of interview:	Skype
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
Permission for usage for university purposes:	Yes

Themes that emerged, memorable quotes, anything that stood out:
- P2 thinks that every meeting and basically every action contributed to building the strong team.
- P2 highlights that since the project partners come from different countries as well as different working environment, they all have significantly different personal working style. P2 considers these differences as an important strength for the project.
- P2 finds the team efficient, even though they had difficulties to show out the performance.
- Since the partners come from different countries and different environments, external factors, such as a lot of work on other projects or technical problems, influenced the performance the most.
- When speaking about the team cohesion, P2 says that it was literally "great".
- P2 compares the project NetMe-In with other EU projects and says that the team cohesion is not always so good due to the fact that it highly depends on the level of engagement in the project.
- The interviewee explains that the common team culture is fundamental in international teams.
- Moreover, P2 finds important to have a common view and a common culture. Each team member can add some values, competences, and share it with others but there must be some common point.
- P2 highlights that the project coordinators moderated the meetings and encouraged everybody to express themselves and to share comments.
- The interviewee finds the communication during breaks as a strong point for team cohesion and thinks that informal communication enabled a better understanding of local projects.
- P2 speaks several foreign languages. Hence, P2 used French with the French, communicated in Italian with the Spanish partners, who spoke in Spanish with P2, and they perfectly understood each other (passive bilingualism). In addition, English was maintained as lingua franca with the other partners.
- P2 explains that English was the language of the project management while national languages were used for dissemination of the project results.
- P2 describes a successful event called culture evening. The interviewee describes it as a very important point in the project because it fostered culture awareness and enabled a deeper understanding of different mentalities.
- Several critical incidents were caused by humor. Some partners acted at meetings less formally and used humor to lighten up situations while others were more strict. (conflict of approaches)
- All in all, all project partners tried to respect all the requests of the coordinating organization and adapt local actions to the common project time plan.
What worked:
- The interview went well, without any major problems. Furthermore, P1 answered all the questions.
- We had a good Skype connection without almost any distractions and background noises.
- The ambiance was friendly. P1 felt comfortable and was very open and candid.
What did not work:
- Background noises in the end of the interview were the only problem. P2 was sitting in an open space office where such kind of situation is inevitable.
- Video only at the beginning, then it was turned off due to bad Internet connection.
Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:
- Role of humor in international teams.

Field note of the interview with P3

Interviewer:	Kateřina Bendová
Date of interview:	2/05/2019
Time of interview start:	15:00
Interviewee's name:	P3
Interviewee's nationality:	French
Location of interview:	Skype
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
Permission for usage for university purposes:	Yes

Themes that emerged, memorable quotes, anything that stood out:

- The key success factors: regular face-to-face meetings, the fact the partners were motivated, very interested in and driven by the topic.
- The number of outcomes carried out by the team, the number of KBC´s and the diversity of the situations applicable to the project represent indicators of quality of the performance.
- P3 perceived significantly different implication among the project partners.
- Human cohesion was strong, the ambiance was very positive and favorable for the project.
- Despite the good human cohesion, the working/project cohesion was quite average.
- Having a team culture is of great importance because it is the shared common culture that makes a team to progress.
- Team culture creates a certain dynamism. Thanks to the team culture, the team is more motivated to achieve the results together. If there is no team culture, it is very difficult to manage a project.
- Insufficient usage of common tools to sum up all partners´ actions.
- P3 finds the way, how the team diffused the results of the project outside of the network of the partners, not satisfying. P3 says that *"in numbers, it wasn´t enormous"*.
- Communication is a must part of the whole project and it should be followed by encouragement and support. Communication is really an activity that should not be neglected.
- Skype meetings were often complicated due to a bad connection. P3 says that virtual communication was not always optimal.
- On the other hand, plenary face-to-face meetings were always of excellent quality.
- Informal communication enabled to consolidate the team culture. Thanks to it, they could better get to know each other and understand better others´ work.
- Difficulties to understand local project results because of usage of mother tongues (slow, difficult)
- Besides multilingualism, there is always a multicultural side which is always a force.
- Dealing with prejudices: *"The Dutch thought at the beginning of the project that the French partners are not proficient in foreign languages and that it is always complicated to work with the Frenchs."*
- Some projects contained only little consideration of the intercultural aspect" (difficult to use)
- There were communication problems among the coordinators and the project partners. (need for translator/ negotiator to explain problematic topics and made both sides understand)
- P3 does not make a difference between multilingualism and interculturality. P3 thinks that both were a strength for the project and that it is something we search for in EU projects.
- The project was affected by terrorist attacks in 2016-2017 and geopolitical problems in Turkey.
- P3 says that interculturality allowed inter-knowledge and facilitated the common culture.

What worked:

- The whole interview went smoothly, without any problems.
- We had a good Skype connection without any distractions and background noises.
- The ambiance was very friendly but professional at the same time. P3 felt comfortable and was very open and frank. P3 answered all questions.
- Video included. (It helped me to better understand the interviewee´s reactions and act more logically)

What did not work:

- No problems at all.

Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:

- Team culture as an enabler of overcoming project obstacles
- Impact of prejudices in international projects

Field note of the interview with P4

Interviewer:	Kateřina Bendová
Date of interview:	25/4/2019
Time of interview start:	17:00
Interviewee's name:	P4
Interviewee's nationality:	English
Location of interview:	Skype
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
Permission for usage for university purposes:	Yes

Themes that emerged, memorable quotes, anything that stood out:

- P4 says that the distance between partners was the main factor that slowed down the realization of the individual project outcomes.
- P4 thinks that almost every partner respected the deadlines, only a minority of partners failed to keep the pace.
- The Erasmus+ agency estimated that the pro 98% of the project was realized. P4 finds it an excellent result.
- There was a mixture of cultures in the team, but it did not stop the team members to work together.
- The majority of partners was committed to the project while the minority was less active within the project.
- P4 says that the biggest factor that influenced the team performance was engagement and the ability to follow the plans and the deadlines.
- P4 thinks that it is not sufficient to see each other face-to-face only twice a year and the rest of the communication keep on Skype. He put emphasis on the need of more physical meetings.
- P4 explains that building a team culture is fundamental. That is the basis of everything.
- P4 is of the opinion that the fact that there was a spirit of friendship shared by all participating partners showed the quality of cohesion and team communication.
- The team used mostly English. P4 says that 90% of the communication was in English. Besides English, the team members often switched the languages.
- Positive spirit of friendship allowed the team to achieve the end of this project while following the deadlines.
- P4 thinks that if you do not communicate in your mother tongue, it undoubtedly slows down the project and adds that lingua franca can be an obstacle, but it is a strength at the same time.
- *"Multilingualism is a strength, it shows our European community"*.
- In general, misunderstandings were not related to linguistic diversity but to the insufficient commitment to the project.
- The communication was more about curiosity, interest, and motivation rather than anxiety.
- *"The team was a mixture of cultures and experiences"*.
- P4 finds interesting that when working in an international team where nobody is a native English speaker, the team members tend to create their own "English" because nobody speaks perfectly.
- P4 thinks that interculturality in projects is a significant strength that brings professional and individual enrichment.

What worked:

- The whole interview went smoothly.
- The ambiance was very open. P4 felt comfortable and was candid.
- P4 answered all the questions.

What did not work:

- The Skype connection was mostly good, but there were some parts of the interview that were unintelligible.
- We lost connection and had to restart the interview.
- No video

Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:

- Usage of Globish in international teams

Field note of the interview with P5

Interviewer:	Kateřina Bendová
Date of interview:	16/05/2019
Time of interview start:	15:00
Interviewee's name:	P5
Interviewee's nationality:	English
Location of interview:	Skype
Permission to audio-record:	Yes
Permission for usage for university purposes:	Yes

Themes that emerged, memorable quotes, anything that stood out:

- P5 thinks that as usual, at the beginning of the project, the team needed to get to know each other, to see what kind of expectations people had. Later during the project, the connection among team was established and therefore the performance evolved over the time.

- According to P5, the project partners had significantly different working styles.

- Like the other partners, P5 mentions the unequal level of commitment to the project.

- Like the other partners, P5 thinks that the face-to-face meetings and learning mobilities were very important for the team performance.

- P5 used English only. The team used mainly English but sometimes people spoke French as well.

- When they switched the language, P5 asked them to switch it back otherwise P5 did not understand what the rest of the team talked about.

- P5 says that it can really help if you can explain stuff in your native language and then let somebody else to translate and to explain it to the others. P5 thinks that it is what the NetMe-In project team did a lot even though everyone knew English.

- P5 considers multilingualism as a strength and a weakness at the same time because it brings bigger access to sources as well as to audience. On the other hand, it can happen that somebody can not follow what has been said due to insufficient language proficiency.

- Some of the Croatian partners did not understand English and that made it hard to participate.

- P5 thinks that even though the project partners were proficient in English, there were some people who were afraid of using English as a working language.

- P5 considers the presence of interculturality in NetMe-In as a positive point and says that interculturality represents the added value of European projects.

- P5 explains differences among different national cultures: Dutch are direct, they speak their mind but it does not necessary mean that they are unpolite, while French people, for example, look like they start an argument all the time.

- *"If you go to another country, you cannot take that as an impoliteness it is just the way how culture talks".*

- It is always like that in different cultures, people behave differently, and you have to ask in-depth questions to make sure that you understand.

- For example, when you speak about guidelines. For Dutch people, it is something you have to do while in other countries it is something that is advised, but you do not have to necessarily follow it.

- It is important to always ensure that everybody clearly understands.

- P5 thinks that face-to-face meetings are always better and more professional than online Skype meetings.

- *"I am not easily shocked because I am Dutch. We usually do not care what others do if it does not hurt anybody".*

What worked:

- The whole interview went smoothly.

- We had an average Skype connection with occasional distractions and background noises.

- The ambiance was very friendly and mostly professional. (P4 uses vulgar words like "shitty" etc.)

- P1 felt comfortable and was very open, frank and answered all the questions.

What did not work:

- Bad Skype connection, background noises, some parts of the interview were unintelligible.

- No video.

Areas for possible follow-up or further exploration:

- Switching languages in international teams and language anxiety as a barrier in international projects

Sequential analysis of the interview with P1

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
Initiation	Introduction talk	Preparation and adjusting to the interview environment	0:00-2:02	K/P1	- P1 needs time to get ready before the beginning of the official interview		
		Introduction of interviewer	02:02-02:51	K/P1	- Brief introduction of the interviewer - Permission to audio-record - Permission to use the content for university purposes		
		Summary of the current progress of the interviews with other project partners	02:51-04:37	K/P1	- Summary of the current progress of interviews	Discussion initiated by P1	
		Introduction of the interviewee	04:37-05:55	K/P1	- P1´s CV - P1´s language competences - P1´s role in the project	Interviewee tends to lead the interview	- P1 speaks fluently only French and English. - P1 understands a little Italian, Catalan and knows the basics of German. - P1 thought that English skills were enough for the project because everybody spoke English. - There was a big group of French speakers in the team. Plus, Italians and Catalans understood each other.
Questioning phase	Category 1: Team performance	Division of the project team	05:55-9:30	K/P1	- P1´s roles in the NetMe-In project - Description of the team - Positive impact of division of the team	Interviewee tends to lead the interview again and asks herself questions	- There were 2 teams: the project team (consortium) and the community of practice. -The two teams worked separately and met each other during the last meeting. - The creation of these 2 groups was important for the dynamism of the project.

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Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Perception of working styles of the project partners	9:36-10:16	K/P1	- Differences in work habits within the team - Positive side of working differently	Inter-viewee tends to lead the interview again	- Every project partner was specific. - Everyone had a different project culture and worked in a different way. - It allowed them to learn from each other and to motivate the team.
		Implication of the project partners	10:16-12:08	K/P1	- Level of commitment of the partners to the project - Evaluation of the outcomes - Management issues		- Everybody was committed to the project. - All together they created good quality outcomes. - Only 2 project partners were a little bit complicated to manage. - In the end, they all managed to finish their tasks.
		Perception of the team performance	12:08-13:42	K/P1	- Comparison of plans/ expectations and reality - Better outcomes than it had been planned - High quality performance - Comments about internal and external evaluations		- Project fulfilled its targets. - All planned outcomes were delivered. - Everything was done on time and specifications in accordance with what had been planned. - Partners evaluated their performance better than expected. Moreover, they found that they produced more than expected in both qualitative and quantitative terms. - Project worked well thanks to the dynamic and committed team.
		Factors affecting the team performance	13:42-16:08	K/P1	- Team ambiance - Positive atmosphere		- Convivial ambiance within the team. - People got along with each other well. - Since the kick off meeting, people were friendly and compatible with each other.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	16:08-18:02	K/P1	- Factors affecting the team cohesion - Innovative topic leading to motivation, satisfaction and pride		- The biggest factor was the content and the topic of the project. - It was an innovative and brand-new theme for all of the partners. - Partners felt satisfaction and pride for the outcomes.
		Team culture	18:02-21:35	K/P1	- Only positive experiences - Memories from former projects - Factors leading to the better inclusion		- P1 has been working on EU projects for 25 years and has had only very positive experiences with EU projects and their team culture. - In this project, the majority of the team already knew each other, and the rest of the team got integrated well. It was a factor of inclusion.
		Recommendations for building a team culture	21:35-26:03	K/P1	- Kick-off meetings - Division of project activities according to the kind of meetings - Crucial importance of building a good ambiance since the very beginning - Importance of regular project progress tracking - Benefits of regular evaluations - Creating a balance in teams		- P1 recommended working on the content of the project when having face-to-face meetings while dealing with management stuff within online meetings. - Physical meetings were for workshops, working together and discovering the local culture. - It was important to create a good ambiance right at the kick-off meeting to motivate partners to work on the project and then it was necessary to be really interested in what the team was doing throughout the whole project. - Regular evaluations allowed the team to see whether there were problems or not. - Balance in team: 2 coordinators of different age, work approaches and experiences.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Specificity of EU projects	26:03-27:28	K/P1	- Importance of connection between organizations´ focus and the EU project topic - Importance of possibility to reutilize the project within the organization		- You always work more than you are paid for in EU projects. - It is important that projects are closely related to partners´ work where they can reutilise it later. - Then the partners work for both their organizations and the project which are closely connected.
	Category 3: Team communication	Internal communication	27:28-29:30	K/P1	- Description of communication tools used for internal communication		
		External communication	29:30-33:32	K/P1	- Description of external communication for which every partner was in charge on the local/regional/national levels		- External communication, also known as dissemination, was carried out in local languages in order to reach the local target audience. - Project had a budget dedicated to translations. - Project hired its own graphist.
		Communication during face-to-face meetings	33:32-34:50	K/P1	- Usage of English - Presence of language diversity - No difference in style of communication		- Official language of reunions was English. - There were always some people speaking their native languages, but it did not make any problem. - P1 did not perceive any differences between formal and informal communication. - Perfect combination of academic and professional sphere.
		Impact of team communication on motivation, effectiveness and performance	34:50-35:45	K/P1	- Positive impact of open communication in teams		- Communication is essential in projects. - If we have good communication, partners are sincere and say things how they see them. - There was no feeling of embarrassment.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 4: Multilingualism	Usage of languages within the project	35:45-37:00	K/P1	- Working language - Presence of passive bilingualism - Sufficient knowledge of English		- The main communication was all in English because nobody knew all languages of all project partners. - Italians and Catalans understood each other reciprocally. (passive bilingualism) - Everybody had a sufficient level of English, "*English as project language*". Hence, there was no need for special translations.
		Language barrier	37:00-38:10	K/P1	- No language barrier experienced in this project - Non-English speakers		- P1 had linguistic problems in the former project but not in this one. - At the beginning of the project, one organization was represented by one English speaker and several non-English users. The English speaker had to translate everything to the rest of his team, but they soon stopped attending the meetings. According to P1, it was not a problem, they just could not participate in.
		Multilingualism: strength or weakness	38:10-39:20	K/P1	- Position of English within the project - Language usage in informal situations		- Majority of the time the team spoke English. - There was a big group of French speakers, who spoke French but only among them, not in official situations. - When the team was in restaurants, they were normally sitting in small groups according to languages they were able to interact in. It was easier in such situations but in reunions the team kept English as working language.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Communication problems and language anxiety	39:20-41:47	K/P1	- No problems - Smooth communication - No fear to ask for explanations		- There were not any communication problems in the project. - When somebody did not understand, she/he just simply asked for clarification. - Everybody had a sufficient knowledge of English to be able to work in the language. - Even when the team traveled to the partners´ countries, everything was international, and English was enough for the team to use.
	Category 5: Interculturality	Interculturality within the NetMe-In project	41:47-47:26	K/P1	- Different kinds of cultures present within the international team - Interculturality as richness of the project - Importance of flexibility and agile approaches within international projects		- There were many cultures: national, professional and project cultures. - That is the purpose of Erasmus project to put together people from different countries and make them work on a common project. - There were northern and southern countries, plus two "exotic" countries: Turkey and Croatia. - Project (working) culture was more likely to block the team than national cultures. - National cultures were more likely to be an interesting topic for discussions than a barrier. - Cultures represented the richness of the project, not a problem or a barrier. - Time, when we eat, can be a complication but it is all about adaptation, flexibility and not being too rigid. - Plus, when having face-to-face meetings, everybody made effort to make it work smoothly.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Greetings	47:26-49:06	K/P1	- Factors influencing how we greet people		- Greetings depended more on a person. Some people greeted each other with a French "bise", others not. - Naturally, women did it more than men. - P1 thought that it was not linked with national cultures but with the relationship the project partner had with the other person.
		Interculturality: strength or weakness	49:06-49:39	K/P1	- Interculturality as the strength of EU projects		- P1 thought that it was a strength. - Diversity is what we search for in EU projects.
		Critical cultural incidents within the project	49 :39-49:41	K/P1	- No critical incidents found		- No, nothing.
		Culture shock	49:41-52:02	K/P1	- Dutch cuisine - Visit of new EU places within the project		- P1 finds the Dutch cuisine as the biggest culture shock. - P1 was also very surprised by Croatia because P1 did not know the country before and its cultural richness made a positive impact on P1.
Concluding talk	Final talk	Final talk	52:02-56:17	K/P1	- Final remarks		- P1 has had only positive experiences with European projects so far.

Sequential analysis of the interview with P2

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
Initiation	Introduction talk	Preparation and adjusting to the interview environment	0:00-0:33	K/P2	- P2 needs some time for preparation before the beginning of the official interview		
		Introduction of interviewer	0:33-1:35	K/P2	- Brief introduction of the interviewer - Permission to audio-record - Permission to use the content for university purposes		
		Introduction of the interviewee	1:35-6:34	K/P2	- P2´s studies and professional background - Description of the organization - P2´s language competences - P2´s role in the project		- P2 speaks Italian, English, French, German, Chinese and understands Portuguese. - In the NetMe-In project, P2 preferred to use French language with the French coordinators but when there were all partners, they spoke English to let other partners understand as well. - P2 was not involved in the NetMe-In project from the very begging. P2 joined the project 8 months later. - P2´s colleague left and therefore P2 got the responsibility for the project till the closing project phase.
Questioning phase	Category 1: Team performance	Team performance	6:34-8:05	K/P2	- Main factors contributing to building a team - Positive development of team performance		- Every meeting, every action contributed to building the team. - It was the first project for the organization, they did not know other partners before, but they learned how to work best together. - P2 saw a positive development in performance within the project.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Perception of working styles of the project partners	8:05-9:40	K/P2	- Presence of differences - Personal working styles - Differences as a strength for the project - Need for combining the styles		- P2 explains that they were different partners from different countries and obviously they had different working styles due to personal characteristics. - They were not only from different countries but also from different working environment. Each of them had its personal working style. - P2 thinks that these differences were an important strength for the project. -Sometimes some of the project partners worked more or less but they tried to work together and to combine the different styles.
		Implication of the project partners	9:40-11:14	K/P2	- Equal involvement - High commitment - Better outcomes than initially planned		- From P2´s perception, the involvement was quite equal. - 1 or 2 partners had some difficulties but in general every partner was involved and committed to the project. - Partners wanted to do their best and to deliver even more than expected. - Partners focused on adding values to the project.
		Perception of the team performance	11:14-12:12	K/P2	- Efficient performance - Difficulties to show all outcomes		- P2 thought that the team was efficient even though they had difficulties to show out the performance.
		Factors affecting the team performance	12:12-13:19	K/P2	- External factors affecting the team performance the most		- P2 thinks that since the partners came from different countries and different environments, external factors, such as a lot of work on other projects or technical problems, influenced the performance the most.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	13:19-14:24	K/P2	- Particularly good team cohesion - Comparison with other projects		- Team cohesion was literally "great" - P2 has participated in other projects in which team cohesion was not so good. - The NetMe-In project worked really well because all the people were very committed to the project.
		Factors affecting team cohesion	14:24-15:12	K/P2	- Enablers of the strong team cohesion		- Project meetings, learning mobilities and meeting partners face-to-face enabled to build the strong team cohesion and constantly improve it.
		Team culture	15:12-16:58	K/P2	- Importance of creating a team culture - Creation of a culture that connected project target audience		- Creating a common team culture was fundamental for the project. - P2 thought that when working in a team, we must have a common view, a common culture. Each of us can add something different to the team and share it with others such as competences but there must be some common point. - NetMe-In did not create only a common team culture but also a culture connecting the target audience.
		Role of the team cohesion in overall performance	16:58-18:12	K/P2	- Cohesion as a crucial factor for boosting team performance - Openness in team communication		- The "climate" within the team is of great importance. - It is important to have cohesion and a common culture when managing a team. - It is necessary to be open to understand others, to make a dialogue with them and to make them feel free in a team to say what works and what does not. - The NetMe-In partners were sincere with each other. It was fundamental to obtain good results.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 3: Team communication	Internal communication	18:12-19:58	K/P2	- Open sharing - Agile approach - Regular support from coordinators		- The communication was based on sharing. - When necessary, they organized more online meetings than initially planned. - Coordinators responded to every raised question in few hours.
		External communication	19:58-23:54	K/P2	- Individual approaches towards external communication		- Each partner chose its proper strategy. - P2´s organisation shared information on their website, involved the target audience in meetings and communicated with local schools and municipalities. - The local team published the latest information in local press and social media.
		Communication during face-to-face meetings	23:54-25:42	K/P2	- English as lingua franca - Encouragement at meetings - Different language proficiency - Crucial importance of informal communication		- English was the team's common language and was used for the formal communication. - Project coordinators led the meetings and encouraged everybody to express themselves and to share comments. - All the partners were able to express themselves in English. Some spoke better than others but there were not any misunderstandings. - During breaks, the communication was good thanks to the strong team cohesion. - P2 thinks that the informal communication outside of the meetings was crucial to understand deeply what was really happening in the local projects.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Language usage	25:42-27:06	K/P2	- P2´s language proficiency and interest in foreign languages - Passive bilingualism - English as lingua franca		- P2 likes speaking foreign languages and practising them if there is an opportunity. - P2 used French with the French partners. - P2 communicated in Italian with the Spanish partners, who spoke Spanish and they perfectly understood each other. (passive bilingualism) - With the other partners P2 maintained English as lingua franca.
		Impact of team communication on motivation, effectiveness and performance	27:06-28:40	K/P2	- Connection between quality communication, motivation and high team performance		- If you have a good communication within your team, you can make them understand what is needed to be done and explain the current problems. - If you communicate with your team, the members are more motivated, efficient and they perform better. - Good communication leads to a clear understanding of project targets. Proper understanding then leads to a motivated team and the motivated competent team enables high quality performance.
	Category 4: Multilingualism	Multilingualism within the team	28:40-33:04	K/P2	- Usage of English on the EU level - Usage of local languages on the national level		- P2 was not sure whether multilingualism was a strength for the project. - For example, even the main website was available only in English and NetMe-In YouTube channel provided also videos only in English or French. - National languages had bigger impact on a local level when addressing the local target audience. It would have been difficult on a linguistic level to address them not in their native language.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Multilingualism within the team	28:40-33:04	K/P2	- Language of dissemination - Relationship between culture and language		- The project management itself was based on English while the process of dissemination was made in partners' national languages. - Language and culture are closely related. Even though, you use English within the project, you behave accordingly to your cultural habits all the time.
		Language barrier	33:04-33:56	K/P2	- No specific language barrier		- P2 does not remember any examples. - Some partners had different pronunciation to which was sometimes difficult to understand.
		Language anxiety	33:56-35:05	K/P2	- Issues to properly express ourselves		- Sometimes, when some partner could not clearly express herself/himself in English, other partners or coordinators intervened to explain the topic. P2 thinks that it is a good point because in other projects, language could be a real barrier.
	Category 5: Interculturality	Interculturality	35:05-36:26	K/P2	- Importance of respecting the general project specifications - Adaptation to the common project time plan and requests		There were differences because partners came from different countries. Plus, the performance was different according to the country. However, the team tried to respect all the requests of coordinating organization and to adapt the local actions to the common project time plan.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Recommendations how to deal with cultural diversity	36:26-39:30	K/P2	- Cultural and language diversity awareness - Need for compromises - Impact of the culture evening on increasing the project participants' culture awareness		- If you are in EU project, you need to be aware of the fact that you work with people from different cultures, who speak different languages and have different experiences. - You have to be open-minded. It is always important to find a compromise. - Diversity is very important element for EU projects. - During learning mobility in Modena, in Italy, the team organized a culture evening. It was a very important point in the project because it fostered culture awareness and enabled deeper understanding of different mentalities.
		Critical cultural incidents	39:30-41:31	K/P2	- Humor as a trigger of critical incidents		- Humor caused several critical incidents, when some partners tried to make fun and to be less formal when working, while others were more strict. - P2 thinks that it was probably a part of culture.
		Culture shock	41:31-42:23	K/P2	- No experience		- P2 did not experience any culture shock during the project.
Concluding talk	Final talk	Final talk	42:23-43:50	K/P2	- Conclusion of the interview		

Sequential analysis of the interview with P3

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
Initiation	Introduction talk	Greetings, introduction of the interviewer	0:00- 1:09	K/P3	- Brief introduction of the interviewer - Permission to audio-record - Permission to use the content for university purposes - Presentation of the Master thesis topic		
		Introduction of the interviewee	1:09-3:42	K/P3	- Professional background - P3´s language competences - P1´s role in the project		- P3 speaks English, Spanish, French and Breton. - P3 explained that the previous project called Acrojump resulted in the NetMe-In project.
Questioning phase	Category 1: Team performance	Indicators of quality of team performance	3:42-5:48	K/P3	- Development of the team performance - Learning mobilities - Key success factors		- The team performance developed a lot during the project. - Unlike in other projects, there were 6-day learning mobilities where the project partners spend the whole time working on the project while using one common language; English. - P3 considers the fact that the team had regular face-to-face meetings as a key success factor because this enabled to create a strong bond among the partners. - The number of outcomes carried out by the team, the number of KBC´s and the diversity of the situations applicable to the project represented the indicators of quality of team performance.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Perception of working styles of the project partners	5:48-6:30	K/P3	-Unequal commitment of project partners		- P3 perceived significantly different implication among the project partners. Some of them were very committed to the project while others were less active and interested in. However, P3 says that this situation is very common in EU.
		Perception of team performance	6:30-7:57	K/P3	- High quality project outcomes - Diversity of outcomes - Convenient timing for the project		-The team managed to create quality outcomes. In particular, P3 highlighted the diversity of the content that the team was able to disseminate. - P3 explains that it was the best possible timing to come up with such a project due to the fact that the team had send the application in 2015 when there was a huge need for the digital identity projects. - P3 says that the team picked up the best time to work on this meaningful project.
		Factors affecting the team performance	7:57-9:12	K/P3	- Learning mobilities as success factors - Interests and topics likely to drive the partners		- Learning mobilities, when the team had an opportunity to meet and to get to know each other in order to be able to cooperate, were clearly the most important success factor. The second success factor was the fact that the partners were very interested in the topic.
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	9:12- 12:02	K/P3	- Human cohesion - Strong bond - Positive ambiance		- Human cohesion was strong and very good. There were people who already knew already each other and were used to working together. Hence, the ambiance was very positive and favorable for the project.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	9:12- 12:02	K/P3	- Unequal commitment of project partners - Difficulties to create common project outcomes, not only the local ones - Average project cohesion		- On the other hand, there was an imbalance in level of commitment in the project and therefore the project partners had to deal with difficulties in order to understand each other, to have the same interests and to create the same outcomes. - The team did not succeed in creating common results. Each partner organization created its own results, but the team had difficulties to create common results. For example: common KBCs were very complicated to deliver. - Despite the good human cohesion, the working/project cohesion was quite average according to P3. - Then, the team had difficulties to cooperate with 2 partners.This inconvenient situation could have been overcome only thanks to the strong human cohesion. - In fact, the team bonded so well that the team members are still in contact.
		Team culture	12:02-13:35	K/P3	- Advantage of having a common team culture		- Team culture facilitated the process of positioning, designing and determining what the team had to deliver.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Team culture	12:02-13:35	K/P3	- Team culture and motivation		- Team culture created dynamism and made the team members motived to work with and for the team. - Thanks to the team culture, the team was more motivated to achieve results together. - If there is no team culture, it is very difficult to manage a project.
	Category 3: Team communication	Internal communication	13:35-16:00	K/P3	- Importance of regular meetings - Insufficient usage of common tools to sum up all partners´ actions		- P3 said that communication among partners was quite good because of regular contact either on Skype or face-to-face meetings. - However, P3 thinks that the team did not use common tools to sum up all their actions sufficiently.
		External communication	16:00-17:14	K/P3	- Unsatisfying external communication		- P3 finds the way, how the team diffused results of the project outside of the network of the partners, not satisfying. P3 says that *"in numbers, it was not enormous"*. - P3 said that the external communication was mostly good, but the team could have done better.
		Recommendations for team communication	17:14-17:40	K/P3	- Importance of quality communication		- Communication is a necessary part of the whole project and it should be followed by encouragement and support. - P3 thinks that communication is an activity that should not be neglected.
		Online communication	17:40-19:40	K/P3	- Description of the team's online communication		X

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Internal language use	19:40- 20:22	K/P3	- Use of local languages within local teams		- P3 explained that the team used English within the EU NetMe-In team. - When organizing a reunion with the local network, the national team used French in 95% of all cases. It meant that they had to do a lot of translations later.
		Communication at face-to-face meetings	20:22-22:00	K/P3	- Difficulties when using Skype - Bad Internet connection - Excellent quality of face-to-face meetings		- Within the project team, the project partners used Skype for meetings. It was a difficult tool to manage because the quality of connection/ communication was often quite bad in there. - P3 explained that when there were several people connected at the same time and they had to make plans, decisions, it was difficult to maintain good quality of communication because of the Internet connection. Hence, virtual communication was not optimal. - On the other hand, P3 thinks that plenary face-to-face meetings were of excellent quality and that each partner always made perfect overview presentations of their local project outcomes.
		Informal communication	22:00-22:55	K/P3	- Communication as an enabler of deeper understanding - Communication problems within the project partners and the coordinators		- Informal communication enabled to consolidate the team culture. Thanks to this, the team members could get to know each other better and understand others´ work deeper. - Communication between coordinators and some partners was sometimes really complicated, but both sides always manage to find a way how to solve problems and how to overcome all communicational obstacles.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 4: Multilingualism	Use of languages within the project	22:55-25:23	K/P3	- Positive impact of multilingualism - Difficulty to understand certain local projects		- Multilingualism had many influences on the project but P3 saw only the positive ones. - The team accepted the game in order to speak English within the project. Moreover, P3 said that all the project partners were very good English speakers. - Understanding the project results represented a bigger problem because e.g. French results were in French, Turkish project outcomes were in Turkish. - However, P3 does not speak other partners' languages (Croatian, Italian, neither the Turkish language). - Hence, this made the process of comprehension of the local project outcomes difficult. - P3 said that besides multilingualism, there is always a multicultural side which is a strength because both multilingualism and interculturality enrich international projects.
		Language barrier	25 :23-27 :09	K/P3	- Prejudices towards national cultures - Insufficient consideration of intercultural aspects		- At the beginning of the project, Dutch participants thought that the French partners were not proficient in foreign languages and that it was always complicated to work with French people. - On the other hand, the Dutch project results were the most complicated to use due to little consideration of the intercultural aspect.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Communication problems	27:09-27:59	K/P3	- Communication problems among the coordinators and the project partners - Need for translator/negotiator		- There were communication problems among the coordinators and some of project partners. Fortunately, P3 knew them well and therefore P3 had the role of translator/negotiator which tried to explain problematic topics and made both sides understand.
		Language anxiety	27:59-28:38	K/P3	- No problems with language anxiety		- The team members never talked about it.
	Category 5: Interculturality	Interculturality within the NetMe-In project	28:38-31:37	K/P3	- No difference between multilingualism and interculturality - No permission to travel to one partner´ home country because of terrorist attacks - Inter-knowledge and facilitation of the development of the common culture		- P3 did not make a difference between multilingualism and interculturality. P3 thought that both were a strong aspect for the project. - The only difficulty that the team had to deal with was the situation affected by geopolitical problems in Turkey and terrorist attacks between 2016-2017. - French partners did not get a permission to travel to Turkey. - Hence, the project plans were impossible to accomplish since the team was supposed to have several face-to-face meetings in Istanbul. - This situation generated many cultural reflexions and discussions because the fact of not being able to travel to certain country was unpleasant for the team. - P3 said that interculturality brought certain inter-knowledge to the team and facilitated the development of the common culture.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Critical cultural incidents within the project	31:37-31:50	K/P3	- No critical incidents		- P3 did not experience any critical cultural incident within the project.
		Culture shock	31:50-33:25	K/P3	- Culture shock in Croatia		- P3 experienced a culture shock with the Croatian partners. - The team went on a meeting in a small city called Carlovac in Croatia. - This visit was a real culture shock for the team because the city was one of the many cities, which were not rebuilt after the war. There were many signs that stayed there. - However, people live there in a modern society that is strongly linked to Europe. - It was a shock for P3 because P3 did not expect to find such a discovery, to see the country so far ahead.
Concluding talk	Final talk	Final talk	33:25-37:40	K/P3	- Final talk about project experiences, interviewer's studies, future work and plans		- P3 highlighted that it is necessary to keep promoting the importance of advantages of European mobilities.

Sequential analysis of the interview with P4

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
Initiation	Introduction talk	Greetings, introduction of the interviewer	0-3:18	K/P4	- Brief introduction of the interviewer - Permission to audio-record - Permission to use the content for university purposes - Professional background - Language competences - P1´s role in the project		- P4 speaks the following languages: English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French.
Questioning phase	Category 1: Team performance	Indicators of quality of team performance	3:18- 7:30	K/P4	- Different roles within the project - Impact of working in distance on the team - Meeting the project specifications and deadlines		-P4 considered the distance between the team members the main factor that slowed down the realization of the individual outcomes. - It was important to follow deadlines. If the realizations did not follow the plans and the team members were not able to meet at face-to-face meetings, it was up to the local leaders to take their own initiatives. - Almost every partner respected deadlines, only a minority of partners failed to keep the pace. - All in all, the Erasmus+ agency estimated that the project was implemented at 98%. P4 found it to be an excellent result.
		Perception of the working styles of the project partners	7:30-8:17	K/P4	- No big differences among the partners		- P4 perceived different work styles within the team but these differences did not stop the team to work together. - P4 did not perceive a big difference and felt, in fact, a certain resemblance among the partners.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Commitment to the project	8:17-8:48	K/P4	- Commitment of majority of the partners		- Majority of the partners was committed to the project while the minority was in the project less active. P4 explained that this always happens in similar kind of projects.
		Efficiency of the team performance	8:48-9:38	K/P4	- Estimation of high efficiency of the team		- P4 perceived the team performance very efficient. - P4 said that the project met all the requirements while respecting the deadlines.
		Factors affecting the team performance	9:38-11:16	K/P4	- Engagement/ commitment - Ability to follow plans and deadlines		- P4 said that the biggest factor was engagement to the project and the ability to follow the plans and the deadlines.
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	11:16-12:30	K/P4	- Importance of regular face-to-face meetings		- P4 thought that it was not sufficient to see each other at face-to-face meetings only twice a year and the rest of the communication keep on Skype. P4 was of the opinion that it is necessary to meet personally more often.
		Factors affecting the team cohesion	12:30-13:34	K/P4	- Engagement and distance		- P4 explained that the biggest factor affecting the team cohesion was engagement and distance.
		Team culture	13:34-14:57	K/P4	- Importance of building a common team culture		- Building a team culture is fundamental. - Team culture ensured that the project worked well.
	Category 3: Team communi-cation	Internal communication	14:57-16:00	K/P4	- Successful communication - Description of communication tools		- P4 evaluated the team communication as successful.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		External communication	16:00-16:45	K/P4	- Smooth communication with already known target group		- P4 said that the communication towards the target group was very natural because the team worked with the target groups that the project partners already knew.
		Communication at face-to-face meetings	16:45-18:04	K/P4	- Spirit of friendship as the factor affecting the quality of cohesion and team communication		- The spirit of friendship shared by all participating partners represented a factor affecting the quality of cohesion and team communication.
		Use of languages	18:04-18:47	K/P4	- Use of English - Code-switching		- P4 said that 90% of the communication was in English. - P4 sometimes spoke Italian with the Italian partners and Spanish with the Spanish partners.
		Impact of communication on motivation, effectiveness and performance	18:47-20:06	K/P4	- Spirit of friendship		- This spirit of friendship was shared by all partners and it did have an impact on the realization of the project. - There were two face-to-face reunions every year that concerned a lot of things: budget, project management, intellectual production as well as the political dimension. - The positive spirit of friendship allowed the team to reach the end of the project while following the deadlines.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
	Category 4: Multilingualism	Use of languages within the project	20:06-21:55	K/P4	- Slowing down the project by use of lingua franca - Advantages and disadvantages of use of lingua franca		- P4 explained that if the team members do not communicate in their mother tongue, it undoubtedly slows the project down. - P4 said that using a foreign language as a lingua franca can be an obstacle but at the same time it is a strength because it makes the team think and act in another language. It simply requires a linguistic gymnastics.
		Multilingualism strength or weakness	21:55-22:25	K/P4	- Multilingualism as a sign of the European spirit		- P4 considered multilingualism a positive aspect. - Multilingualism shows that we are part of the same European region.
		Language barrier	22:25-23:54	K/P4	- Support of documents - Reports		- The main conversion was in English - All team meetings were based on written documents, PowerPoints, etc. - Moreover, every single meeting the project team made a report summing up the meeting. As a result, these reports allowed the team to understand and to perfectly follow what had been discussed at the meetings.
		Communication problems	23:54-24:24	K/P4	- Insufficient commitment as a trigger of misunderstandings		- In general, misunderstandings were not related to linguistic diversity but to the insufficient commitment of certain partners.
		Language anxiety	24:24-25:34	K/P4	- Good language proficiency		- All project participants spoke good English.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Language anxiety	24:24-25:34	K/P4	- Description of situations affected by an average English speaker at meetings - Curiosity, interest, and motivation rather than anxiety		- P4 invited an external partner who was not proficient in English. - The external visitor got used to the language quite quickly. In the end, this situation encouraged everybody to lose the fear and to express herself/himself in English. - The communication within the team was more about curiosity, interest, and motivation rather than anxiety.
	Category 5: Interculturality	Interculturality	25:34- 27:48	K/P4	- Different cultures and different systems - Mixture of cultures and experiences		- P4 said that there was a mixture of cultures and experiences within the NetMe-In project team.
		Management of cultural diversity	27:48-28:46	K/P4	- Easy management of cultural diversity - Creation of the team's "own English"		- The team managed the cultural diversity easily because the team members were all used to working on this type of European projects. - Misunderstandings were more likely to be related to the language than culture. - P4 explained that it is interesting to observe how international teams tend to create their "own English".

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Interculturality: strength or weakness	28:46- 29:06	K/P4	- Interculturality as a strength that enriches the team		- P4 explained that interculturality in international cross-cultural projects is a significant strength that brings professional and individual enrichment.
		Critical culture incidents	29:06-29:42	K/P4	- No critical culture incident		- There was not a particular problem.
		Culture shock	29:42-32:30	K/P4	- No culture shock		- P4 did not experience a particular culture shock.
Concluding talk	Final talk	Final talk	32:30-38:34	K/P4	- Additional comments about European projects - Future plans - Ongoing dissemination of the project outcomes - Current progress of author's Master thesis		- P4 mentioned that everybody was influenced by its own national culture and its specificities. - P4 says that he cannot say anything but positive comments on European projects.

Sequential analysis of the interview with P5

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
Initiation	Introduction talk	Greetings, introduction of the interviewer and the interviewee	0-1:50	K/P5	- Brief introduction of the interviewer and the interviewee - Permission to audio-record - Permission to use the content for university purposes - Presentation of the Master thesis topic - P3´s language competences		- The interviewee speaks the following languages: Dutch, English, German, a little bit Spanish.
Questioning phase	Category 1: Team performance	Indicators of the quality of team performance	1:50-3:16	K/P5	- Continuous development of team performance		- P5 said that, as usual, at the beginning of the project the team needed to get to know each other and to see what kind of expectations people had. - Later the connection among the team members was established and therefore the performance evolved more smoothly.
		Perception of the working styles of the project partners	3:16-4:30	K/P5	- Significantly different working styles - Unequal level of the commitment to the project		- P5 said that very different work styles within the team existed. - P5 is of the opinion that only few people were dominant in the project team. - Some project partners were less involved than others.
		Efficiency of the team performance	4:30-5:33	K/P5	- Evaluation of the project efficiency		- P5 explained that the performance was efficient. - The interviewee said that the team created a lot of outputs regarding the digital identity but P5 thought that the project results could have been better.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Factors affecting the team performance	5:33-6:44	K/P5	- Importance of face-to-face meetings		- P5 explained that the face-to-face meetings and learning mobilities were very important for the team performance.
	Category 2: Team cohesion	Team cohesion	6:44-7:40	K/P5	- Positive evaluation of the team cohesion		- Besides the insufficient engagement of the two partners, there was a good cohesion within the team.
		Factors affecting the team cohesion	7:40-8:18	K/P5	- Crucial importance of face-to-face meetings		- Face-to-face meetings and learning mobilities were crucial for the team cohesion.
		Team culture	8:18-9:40	K/P5	- Importance of creation of team culture - Development of team culture		- P5 thought that it was very important to create a team culture that serves as a framework in the team. - P5 thought that culture appears always in the end of the project because P5 believed that culture is developed during the project.
	Category 3: Team communi-cation	Internal communication	9:40-10:38	K/P5	- Description of the internal communication		- Different communication tools were used. - Everybody communicated smoothly within the project.
		External communication	10:38-11:11	K/P5	- NetMe-In Days - Creation of a network		- P5 thinks that the NetMe-In days was a great event to connect the team as well as target audience.
		Online communication	11:11-13:00	K/P5	- Online communication tools		- Description of the communication tools used within the project: email, Skype, Movia, Google drive, WhatsApp.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Communication at face-to-face meetings	13:00-14:18	K/P5	- Use of English and French - Switching of languages at the meetings		- Some project members spoke French but since P5 could not understand perfectly French, P5 used only English. - When the project partners switched the language, P5 asked them to switch it back because P5 did not understand what the team talked about and therefore could not follow the conversation.
	Category 4: Multilingualism	Multilingualism within the project	14:18-15:32	K/P5	- Positive side of multilingual teams - Use of native languages at meetings -English proficiency		- P5 explained that it is good for team members to also talk in their native language. - P5 thought that the use of national languages can really help the team because the team members can explain stuff in their native language and then let somebody else to translate and explain it to others.
		Multilingualism: strength or weakness	15:32-16:59	K/P5	- Strength and weakness at the same time - Multilingualism as an access to wider number of sources		- P5 considered multilingualism a strength and weakness at the same time. - P5 thought that the positive aspect of multilingualism is that the team can access more sources because the project members are not limited by English. - P5 explained that the weakness of multilingualism was that everybody could not follow what had been said. - Some of the Croatian partners did not understand English and as a consequence they had difficulties to participate in meetings.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Language barrier	16:59-18:10	K/P5	- No experience		- P5 did not experience any problems within this project.
		Language anxiety	18:10-19:05	K/P5	- Presence of language anxiety		- P5 explained that some of the project partners were afraid of using English as working language. - Even though they were proficient in English, they were afraid of presenting in the language. - In general, this minor language anxiety did not affect the project because the team members were always able to express themselves.
	Category 5: Interculturality	Interculturality	19:05-20:37	K/P5	- Positive impact of interculturality on team - Added values - Different perspectives of different cultures.		- P5 considered the presence of interculturality in NetMe-In a positive point. - P5 thought that interculturality represents the added value of EU projects.
		Interculturality: strength or weakness	20:37-21:34	K/P5	- Strength		- P5 considered interculturality a strength.
		Misunderstandings and critical incidents caused by cultural differences	21:34-21:52	K/P5	- Differences in communication styles - Importance of cultural awareness		- P5 explained that the team members behaved accordingly their cultures. - E.g. "*Dutch are direct, they speak their mind, but this does not necessary mean that they are unpolite. While French people look like they start an argument all the time. If you go to another country, you can´t take it as an impoliteness it is just the way culture talks.*" - It is important to be aware of these differences otherwise it is hard to make the project team work smoothly.

Phase	Sequence #	Subsequence #	Time	Speakers	Content	Memo	Relevance for the research question + annotations
		Greetings	23:43-24:28	K/P5	- Agreement of how to greet each other within the team		- French people greeted each other with 2 kisses while the Dutch were used to greeting people with 3 kisses. Hence, the team made an agreement to kiss everybody twice. The Dutch partners represented an exception because they required a different style of greeting.
		Additional comments to previous topics	24:28-26:48	K/P5	- Importance of maintaining the same level of understanding within the team - Different meaning of the term "guidelines" in different cultures		- P5 explained that it was important to make an effort to understand the rest of the team and not to be afraid of asking for additional explanations. - P5 pointed out that e. g. different cultures understand differently the term "guidelines". *"For Dutch people, it is something you have to do while in other countries it is something that is advised but you don´t have to necessarily follow it."*
		Culture shock	26:48-27:23	K/P5	- Resistance to culture shocks of Dutch people		- *"No, I do not think so, I am not easily shocked because I am Dutch. We usually do not care what others do if it does not hurt anybody"*
Concluding talk	Final talk	Final talk	27:23-28:50	K/P5	- Concluding talk		X