The Assessment of the Intercultural Competence (IC) of Saudi English Language Teachers

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Doctor of Philosophy

University of York

Education

February 2023

Abstract:

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the necessity of equipping teachers with intercultural competence (IC) for effective engagement in a multicultural context is increasingly acknowledged. This study seeks to assess the IC levels of Saudi English language teachers, exploring the hypothesis that exposure to diverse cultural contexts correlates with heightened cross-cultural communication abilities. Three different sets of participants were selected: one group with prior exposure to various cultures through an international school immersion program (Khebrat), another with exposure primarily through travel experiences, and a third group with no prior intercultural exposure or training. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach incorporating interviews, observations, and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), the study evaluated participants' IC. Findings reveal a discernible association between limited exposure to diverse cultures and intercultural training and lower IC levels, consistent with existing literature. Moreover, an exploratory study involving 184 male teachers to assess their IDI levels yielded similar results. These insights bear significance for the advancement of English language education in Saudi Arabia, offering valuable perspectives on teachers' competencies and areas necessitating further development.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

I dedicate this thesis to the soul of my late father, Ayed Alqahtani, who left this world so early but left within us a lot to endure life's journey.

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1.1 Introduction

In our increasingly interconnected world, the ability to navigate and communicate effectively across cultures has become a vital skill. Intercultural competence (IC), defined as the capability to interact and communicate appropriately and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, has garnered significant attention in various fields, including education. Among educators, particularly English language teachers, the importance of IC cannot be overstated, given their role in preparing students to thrive in a multicultural and multilingual global community.

English Language Teaching (ELT) has evolved beyond merely imparting language skills; it now encompasses fostering intercultural awareness and understanding among students. With English being a lingua franca (ELF) in many international contexts, English teachers are not only tasked with teaching language proficiency but also with promoting intercultural competence. ELF acknowledges the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of English speakers worldwide and emphasizes effective communication across these differences.

In this introduction, we delve into the significance of IC for English teachers globally, exploring how it enhances teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. The concept of ELF and its implications for English language education is also discussed, highlighting the crucial role of IC in facilitating successful communication in diverse English-speaking environments. The critical need for English teachers to develop and enhance their intercultural competence to meet the demands of our increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse world is acknowledged.

In a monocultural society like Saudi Arabia, educators find it challenging to exhibit Intercultural Competence (IC). IC can broadly be described as the "knowledge of others;

knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviours; and relativizing oneself and linguistic competence plays a key role" (Byram, 1997, p. 34). As IC shapes a vital essence in any community especially a monocultural and conservative community like Saudi Arabia we should understand what IC as a first step is and how people in such a community conceptualise it. The concept of IC is debatable, arguably because it has been researched in many different fields and thus it comprises several overlapping concepts. Several scholars from different disciplines have contributed many definitions of IC and this makes it a controversial and complex topic. As explained by Deardorff (2006: 258) "definitions and assessment methods of IC need to be reassessed on an ongoing basis. Just as cultures are ever-changing, scholars' opinions on IC change with time. It is important for research and practice to stay current with scholars' research and thought processes on this construct".

Culture constitutes a set of commonly accepted values, beliefs, practices, and societal norms which are well-documented to influence individuals' way of life (Little et al., 2014). Also, most importantly, language is a core component of culture because it allows community members to express these ideas, beliefs, and values. Saudi Arabia comprises a monocultural community where society members are usually not exposed to diverse cultures. Arabic and Islam are the predominant language and religions, respectively. Restrictions by the state on both inward and outward mobility also have impeded potential opportunities for individuals to interact with different cultures over the past 100 years. Before the start of the Saudi government initiative 'Vision 2030', which seeks to encourage an ambitious nation, thriving economy and vibrant society to lead the community to the globe, different sectors, including education, have consequently been negatively affected. Educators and students alike exhibit low intercultural awareness (Havril, 2015). Likewise, with limited training and education programs, teachers' levels of intercultural competence remain unknown (Havril, 2016). In 2017, the Saudi Ministry

of Education announced the first intercultural training program, called the 'Khebrat Building Leadership for Change', as a contribution to the reform agenda set out in the country's Vision 2030 strategy (UCL, 2020), where teachers are sent to foreign countries to spend a year of academic training and cultural exchange along with their families. The Khebrat program is also called the Leaders of Change, and it is evident that those who are involved are trying to change and open SA up to the world. Although the Khebrat training program was initiated by the government, only a limited number of teachers have participated, and it has been limited to teachers who have mastered the English language. This could be problematic due to the large population and the increasing number of schools in SA.

Given the above, the main purpose of this study is to explore teachers' IC within this monocultural context. The study will further seek to examine how English language educators conceptualize IC and the extent to which IC influences their teaching practices, particularly given the inextricable link between language and culture. In doing so, the study will illustrate the importance of IC in crafting global students who are more capable of interacting and communicating in multicultural environments, particularly in foreign countries. The study's findings will also underpin many recommendations which aim to improve IC among teachers and their teaching methodologies in an attempt to allow for effectiveness in transferring information and knowledge.

1.2 Background

Saudi Arabia, a predominantly monocultural society with a rich heritage and tradition, has witnessed rapid socio-economic development in recent decades, fuelled by its vast oil reserves. As part of its modernization efforts, the Kingdom has recognized the importance of English language proficiency as a key driver for global engagement and economic diversification. English occupies a central role in the Saudi education system, where it is introduced as a

compulsory subject from the elementary level through tertiary education. The Ministry of Education has placed a strong emphasis on English language learning, recognizing its significance in facilitating communication, accessing global knowledge, and fostering international partnerships. Moreover, proficiency in English is often a prerequisite for Saudi students seeking to study abroad, pursue higher education, or participate in international exchange programs.

In this context, Saudi English teachers play a crucial role in equipping students with the language skills and cultural awareness necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. However, despite the recognition of the importance of English language education, there remains a need to enhance the intercultural competence of Saudi English teachers.

Intercultural competence (IC) is essential for Saudi English teachers to effectively engage with diverse learners, understand their cultural backgrounds, and promote cross-cultural communication in the classroom. Given Saudi Arabia's increasing integration into the global economy and its participation in international initiatives, such as Vision 2030, which emphasizes the importance of cultural exchange and collaboration, the development of IC among English teachers becomes imperative.

Currently, teacher training programs in Saudi Arabia aim to enhance English language teaching skills but often lack a specific focus on intercultural competence. While these programs provide valuable pedagogical training, there is a growing recognition of the need to incorporate IC into teacher education curricula. Efforts are underway to integrate IC components into pre-service and in-service teacher training programs, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, empathy, and effective communication strategies in diverse educational contexts. The Saudi context underscores the significance of English language education and the need for Saudi English teachers to develop intercultural competence to meet the demands of an increasingly

interconnected and multicultural world. Efforts to incorporate IC into teacher training programs are essential for preparing Saudi English teachers to navigate the complexities of cross-cultural communication and promote global citizenship among their students. Incorporating intercultural competence (IC) into teacher education is crucial for preparing educators for diverse classrooms. Research highlights several key aspects such as integrating intercultural language teaching and experiential learning, such as involving guest speakers in EFL classes, significantly enhancing students' intercultural competence and reflective awareness (Lee et al., 2023). Also, concerning teacher cognition reservice teacher studies indicate that teacher cognition is critical for implementing intercultural teaching. Curricular innovations should embed intercultural aims deeply into teacher education (Gong et al., 2022). These findings highlight the need for comprehensive IC training in teacher education to meet the demands of multicultural classrooms.

From a global perspective, Saudi Arabia in the past can be seen as an almost isolated country, especially about the assimilation of, and integration with, other cultures. The state comprises a closed community because the government until recent years emphasized the need to minimize movement out of and into the country. Muslims used to be the only individuals allowed to enter Saudi Arabia, mainly to visit the holy city of Mecca. Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world which restricted driving only for men until recently women started to drive cars in 2017(Chodrow et al., 2016). Thus, the state has historically been unreceptive to foreign cultures, with encouraging few immigrants. This in turn meant that there has been little opportunity for the introduction of new worldviews and cultures and for the potential promotion of cultural shifts. Such restrictions and the conservative nature of the state leadership illustrate that Saudi Arabia is not a culturally diverse country. Islam is the predominant religion, and Arabic is the primary language. Despite this, it has become mandatory to learn English as a second language in the educational system since the oil production started in Saudi Ariba by

the Arabian American Oil Company in 1958 (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Such limited exposure to outside cultures influences the character and personalities of the Saudi people, with the majority of the community members being unreceptive to foreigners and their cultures. Unsurprisingly, the lack of understanding of foreign languages impedes their communication skills and ability to interact with global communities (Alamri, 2019). Therefore, Saudi Arabia usually distances its culture from outsiders to create a conservative or monocultural society that relies on one language and maintains uniformity regarding cultural practices(Zaher & Al-Ban, 2016). Since English is the language used mostly by Saudi people to communicate with others from different cultures as a global language, it is arguably important to investigate IC in the context of English language teaching.

Despite overall low levels of intercultural awareness in the population, according to Farooq, et al. (2018), teachers do acknowledge the importance of IC for effective English teaching practices, especially for college students, although the education system does not support teachers in implementing IC in their classrooms. Furthermore, in this study teachers stated that they believe that IC has the potential to positively impact the development of their students' linguistics abilities, yet on the other hand, they feared a negative impact on their students from exposure to other cultures. For instance, curriculum considerations are unsupportive of different cultures and English as a global language. Alsamani (2014) confirmed that such restrictions are perhaps due to the fear that introducing new cultures and languages into the classroom might contradict the religious and cultural orientations of the Saudi people.

Given increasing globalization, one could argue that the importance of IC is similarly increasing. Some researchers highlight the value of IC, stating that from a societal perspective, it has potentially multiple positive impacts on communities and the quality of life. On an individual level, IC can contribute to personal growth because it enhances empathy and the

principles of humanity, as well as a sense of inclusion and diversity. IC may improve the economy and increase successful global engagement (Byram et al., 2013). Globalization increases the likelihood of cultural exchange and integration, especially because Saudi Arabia will increase its economic, political and social interactions with countries across the world. Recently, the state has set out initiatives whose aim is to promote cultural diversification, easing some of the regulations that have restricted migration in the past. For example, the Saudi government launched the 'Saudi Open Hearts, Open Doors' initiative to increase the mobility of international visitors and non-Saudi citizens residing in the country (Ministry of Tourism, 2017). Such programs expose the community to cultures across the world. Notably, such movements have the potential to increase the level of intercultural competence among Saudi citizens, which may in turn influence the educational sector. Even so, the primary reason necessitating the need for such an approach was to develop and expand opportunities across different sectors, such as health, industry, technology, education and, generally, the Saudi economy (Farooq et al., 2018). Therefore, globalization is an exceptional facilitator for improving intercultural awareness for educators. By the same token, with an increased number of Saudi students seeking to study abroad, such policies can support the educator's role in fostering intercultural competence to prepare students to communicate and integrate within multicultural environments or foreign countries.

Although some students are taking advantage of such opportunities to study abroad, Saudi teachers and students alike are experiencing minimal exposure to programs that may promote intercultural competence, as evidenced by the lack of programs that support the acculturation of different customs and languages. Ideally, to experience smooth integration within foreign cultures, orientation programs organized domestically prove instrumental in sharpening intercultural competence. Available studies (Obaid,2015; Alqahtani,2011; Asmari,2008) indicate that students who are engaged in cultural orientation programs before travelling abroad

can live and study with relative ease in foreign countries. IC can be used as a tool in these cultural orientation programs to prepare people to adapt to cultural differences and ahead prepared for these expected changes. Before the start of Khebrat program in 2016, a research by Mahboob and Elyas (2014) indicates that Saudi Arabia lacks proper and sufficient training programs for teachers and international students in this area. The lack of intercultural training in Saudi Arabia is worrying for educators. It illustrates the need for more research on the impact of training on improving intercultural competence among English language teachers, as English is the only foreign language that is taught in the public schools of Saudi Arabia. By failing to include intercultural competence in their teaching practice, teachers may be less able to prepare students for future different cultural experiences (Al Khateeb, 2018). Available studies reveal that more than 90% of Saudi Arabian learners are unexposed to intercultural training, thus leading to limited intercultural competence (Obaid, 2015). In Saudi Arabia's educational curriculum, English is the only language that is taught as a second language across all levels of education. Students perceive the English language as a foreign language not as a global language or lingua franca, and it is not until the college level that the language is an obligatory part of the curriculum(Al-Nasser, 2015). Some educators feel threatened by the language since they worry that it may negatively impact Arabic as the national language, and they would like Arabic only to be used in formal educational contexts (Nouraldeen & Elyas, 2014). A study by Obaid (2015) also reveals that students in Saudi Arabia are ill-prepared by teachers to manage cultural diversity in foreign English-speaking countries. Obiad (2015) studied the engagement of Saudi students in the UK with their non-Saudi peers through implementing interviews, observations and surveys. The study concludes that the Saudi education system does not contain intercultural courses, and, hence, students demonstrate low intercultural awareness (Obaid, 2015). This in turn means that students pursuing studies abroad often experience low confidence levels due to their inability to cope with foreign cultures.

Therefore, teachers arguably need to include intercultural competence in their teaching methods to support a proper learning experience and ensure students capitalize on their full potential in their studies (Fadda, 2012). All the aforementioned studies reviewed were undertaken before the start of the Khebrat program which began in 2016 as a first step to develop the cultural exposure and knowledge of the Saudi teachers.

1.3 My personal and professional background

I was born in 1984 in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, where I grew up in a large family with seven sisters and two brothers. The socio-cultural landscape of Saudi Arabia during the 1980s posed significant challenges for women seeking education and pursuing their aspirations. Despite the gradual societal shifts towards greater educational opportunities for women, deeply entrenched cultural norms, particularly within tribal and conservative communities like mine, presented formidable barriers. However, my upbringing was different. My parents, recognizing the importance of education regardless of gender, were determined to defy prevailing societal norms. They made remarkable efforts to ensure that all their children, including their daughters, had access to quality education. This unwavering support laid the foundation for my academic journey. In 2006, I completed my bachelor's degree, specializing in English language literature and translation. This marked the beginning of my career as an English language teacher. Despite my academic achievements and teaching experience, I had yet to fully comprehend the significance of intercultural competence in today's interconnected world. It was not until I ventured to the United Kingdom to pursue my master's degree in 2015 that I began to grasp the profound importance of intercultural competence. Immersed in a new cultural milieu, I encountered unforeseen challenges that tested not only my academic acumen but also my adaptability and open-mindedness.

Living and studying in the UK exposed me to diverse cultures and perspectives, fostering a deeper appreciation for the value of intercultural competence. I realized that effective communication and meaningful interactions across cultures require more than just language proficiency—they demand empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a willingness to embrace differences.

As I navigated the complexities of life in a foreign country, I found myself drawing on essential life skills such as tolerance, acceptance, and the ability to withhold judgment. These skills not only helped me navigate cultural differences but also enriched my personal and academic experiences.

Inspired by my journey and motivated by the glaring gap in intercultural competence within our community and English language teaching practices, I embarked on a doctoral research endeavour. I aim to explore and promote intercultural competence among English teachers in Saudi Arabia, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more inclusive and culturally sensitive educational environment.

Through my research, I seek to empower teachers to integrate intercultural competence into their teaching practices, equipping them with the tools to prepare students for success in an increasingly interconnected world. By embracing diversity and cultivating intercultural competence, we can build bridges across cultures, promote mutual understanding, and create a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

1.4 Problem Statement and Knowledge Gap

In Saudi Arabia, where the community used to be predominantly closed off from the influences of diverse cultures, teachers often find themselves operating within monocultural classrooms, with limited exposure to foreign languages. Consequently, there exists a notable gap in understanding how educators can enhance their intercultural competence (IC) and

cultivate the same in their students. This deficiency becomes particularly problematic when Saudi students venture abroad for further education, as they may struggle to navigate unfamiliar cultural contexts due to their lack of exposure and understanding (Karolak & Guta, 2015)

For instance, a dearth of knowledge regarding global cultures associated with the English language can impede students' communication skills and IC when interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds. Such challenges may adversely affect students' academic performance, especially in English-based curricula. However, by integrating IC into the syllabus and curriculum, teachers can facilitate positive educational outcomes for Saudi students pursuing higher education abroad.

The current study aims to address this critical knowledge gap by examining IC within Saudi foreign language classroom settings. Drawing on evidence that highlights the manifold benefits of IC, including enhanced cultural empathy and proficient communication skills, the study positions IC as essential for English language teaching in Saudi Arabia (Baker, 2011). Specifically, it investigates how teachers' practices and beliefs concerning IC influence their pedagogical approaches and impact student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, there is a notable lack of research on multicultural practices within English language classrooms in the Saudi Arabian context. Thus, the study seeks to elucidate the potential benefits of intercultural training and cultural exposure on teachers' IC levels. Moreover, it explores how educators can foster intercultural awareness in monocultural classroom environments.

Notably, there is also a paucity of evidence on the assessment of IC among teachers in conservative countries like Saudi Arabia. Previous studies have predominantly focused on the benefits of IC in enhancing teaching methodologies and promoting intercultural awareness

among students in other countries (Jiang et al., 2021). Therefore, this study represents a pioneering effort to examine the levels of IC among educators in Saudi Arabia and assess its impact on teaching practices and student outcomes.

Existing research on English language teaching in Saudi Arabia has primarily concentrated on cultural content within textbooks, overlooking educators' IC levels. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to provide insights into teachers' strengths and weaknesses in teaching within monocultural classrooms. Ultimately, it is hoped that the findings will inform strategies to enhance teachers' IC, thereby equipping them to cultivate globally competent students capable of thriving in multicultural settings.

1.5 Research Aim

This research aims to examine teacher's IC and its impact on their beliefs and practices in a monocultural setting. Foreign language educators should ideally possess effective intercultural skills, in addition to verbal competence and linguistic ability. Teachers of languages should not only teach grammar/lexis, etc., but also, pass on cultural knowledge because language and culture cannot be disentangled. For example, when teaching English as a second language, these skills and competencies enable teachers to play a mediator role between two sets of cultures. Specifically, within the Saudi context, teachers must demonstrate fluency in English in the classroom when teaching students accustomed to the local culture with minimal or no exposure to different languages or cultures. At the same time, the educator's knowledge of a foreign language will further influence the school curriculum, syllabus, and other teaching materials and mechanics. In light of this, intercultural competence as it relates to understanding foreign languages is a pivotal aspect in the process of teaching within multicultural settings. Accordingly, the current study seeks to shed light on the impact of intercultural competence on teaching practices of English as a second language to students based in Saudi Arabia classrooms.

1.6 Objectives

The assessment of IC among Saudi teachers specializing in English is contingent upon initiating the first step towards strengthening IC's presence in a monocultural society such as Saudi Arabia. English is the only foreign language in Saudi Arabia which is taught in public schools and used as a second language across the country in most government institutions. Therefore, English is considered as the language that connects Saudi Arabia to the rest of the globe. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has recently focused on the importance of promoting international cooperation in its teachers in order to improve societal change to be competent and multicultural global citizens. As noted above, the multicultural training program "Khebrat" was launched, and it was the first of its kind in the context of a monocultural community such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A limited number of teachers in Saudi Arabia were invited to travel abroad to foreign countries and experience different cultures and were expected to be interculturally competent. In the current study, a group of these teachers who joined the Khebrat program were selected, to look in depth at the results of the programme and to compare them to other teachers who had never experienced training or travel. Given that most teachers show minimal exposure to different cultures, it is important to examine the level of IC according to the exposure to multiple cultures associated with English as global language. This study also seeks to determine how teachers' IC knowledge affects their IC levels, teaching practices, and patterns of communication and interaction with students. In other words, the research looks at the role of Saudi teachers in inculcating IC first among themselves and towards their students in a role. Ideally, effective teachers should be able to promote cultural assimilation to facilitate global student skills and development.

In this study the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), is a framework developed by Bennett (1993) , which is here used for the first time in the Saudi context, in addition to the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment tool that was generated from the DMIS model. The DIMS framework and the IDI assessment tool that is associated with it, is appropriate to apply in a context like Saudi Arabia. The model focuses on how cultural differences are viewed through multiple lenses. It allows us to determine the level of IC through these stages. After the completion of the IDI tool, a diagnostic report is generated for each participant that demonstrates their IC level. The DIMS model is effective because it helps with shifting perspectives of cultures from negative states to positive states by influencing cognitive as well as emotional awareness in relation to culture. In this light, the theoretical framework helps illustrate the participants' level of IC, whether they show an ethnocentric orientation or ethnorelative orientation. This is also useful in the investigation of the observational behaviour of the teachers in classes and during their interview. Therefore, these tools are critical in achieving the main objective of the current study. Accordingly, the research incorporates the theoretical models within the specific study objectives to assess teachers' intercultural competence levels.

The specific objectives of this study are set out below, as follows.

1. To explore how Saudi English language teachers, understand the role of IC in the teaching of the English language.

2. To explore Saudi English language teachers' beliefs and attitudes of IC.

3. To evaluate Saudi English language teachers' IC using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) developed by Bennett (1986, 1993) and using the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) tool.

4. To identify the methods used by Saudi teachers to practice teaching IC.

5. To identify and recommend best practices in teaching intercultural competence by English language teachers.

6. To examine the DMIS according to its ability to interpret and measure IC in the Saudi Arabian context.

1.7 Research Questions

To comprehend the level of (IC) among the teacher participants in this study, it is imperative to explore their understanding of IC's role in their English language teaching practices. The DMIS and IDI tools hold promise in explaining teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding IC in foreign language classrooms. Given the novelty of DMIS usage in a context like Saudi Arabia, its application in the data analysis and research result discussions is arguably valuable. Furthermore, it is hoped that the teachers' interviews and observations of their teaching methods will provide insights into whether Saudi educators can better cultivate intercultural environments within their faculties and classrooms.

Aligned with the study's specific objectives, the following research questions guide the investigation:

1. What factors affect Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence?

2. How do Saudi teachers understand the role of intercultural competence on the teaching of the English language, including teachers' beliefs and practices?

3. How do Saudi teachers perceive their role in promoting intercultural competence among educators and students?

4. Which stage of the DMIS scale best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers?

5. Are Saudi English language teachers well prepared to teach and train colleagues and students about intercultural competence?

6. What are the views of Saudi English language teachers on the assessment of intercultural competence?

1.8 Overview of the Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method approach, drawing from existing literature on (IC) to identify factors that limit teachers' awareness of cultural diversity. Central to the methodology is the utilization of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment tool to gauge teachers' IC levels and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to analyse their behaviour in classroom settings (Castro et al., 2010).

The sampling strategy encompasses intensity, quota, and convenience sampling methods. Ten participants are selected and categorized into three groups: Group TT (Teachers Trained), Group TE (Teachers Exposed), and Group T, based on specific criteria. Group TT comprises teachers with intercultural immersion experience, Group TE consists of teachers who have encountered different cultures through travel, while Group T comprises teachers with no exposure to diverse cultures. Qualitative data is collected through interviews using the DMIS tool, with a deductive research approach employed for analysis. The study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative analyses of interview responses, correlating assessments with teachers' statements. Quantitative analyses involve the use of the IDI tool for online assessment of teachers' IC levels. Additionally, multivariate analyses are employed to explore the quantitative data. Complementing this, qualitative analyses provide deep structural explanations derived from the qualitative data.

As an extension of the main study on intercultural exposure among teachers, this exploratory study focuses on male teachers in Saudi Arabia. The objective is to examine whether gender influences the level of intercultural competence among teachers. Due to gender segregation in the Saudi Arabian educational system, this study exclusively involves male participants. Using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to measure their intercultural competence, this study aims to establish a baseline for comparison with future research involving female teachers.

The IDI assessment tool not only facilitates the measurement of teachers' IC levels but also aids in exploring male participants in the research, despite challenges posed by gender segregation in the Saudi education system. Efforts are made to include male samples in the study, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of IC among Saudi English language teachers.

In the following chapter, relevant literature in the field is presented and an in-depth exploration of the existing literature pertinent to this study is provided. Section 2.1 introduces the chapter, setting the stage for an examination of the research landscape. In Section 2.2, the research context is elucidated, offering insights into the specific environment and circumstances within which this study operates. Section 2.3 delves into the theoretical perspectives that underpin the investigation, providing a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon of interest. Subsequently, Section 2.4 focuses on Intercultural Competence Research, reviewing relevant studies and theories in this domain. Finally, Section 2.5 offers a comprehensive summary of the literature review, synthesizing key findings and identifying gaps that warrant further exploration. Through this systematic review of the literature, this chapter lays the foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the research topic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, English language teachers have carried the responsibility of developing IC for learners (Baker, 2009;Dogancay-Aktuna, 2005;Deardorff, 2009; Lazarević, 2018). Due to the development of information technology and globalisation, many people around the world communicate in English, which is an internationally recognised global language spoken by millions of people. As language cannot be separated from culture, English teachers have a considerable responsibility: becoming mediators of culture and developers of future global citizens. Therefore, the key to enhancing communities' IC starts with interculturally competent teachers. Educational organisations and scholars across the globe have increased their efforts to provide teachers with frameworks and training programmes to help them teach IC. Organisations such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Council of Europe all consider teachers as cultural mediators (e.g., UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education, OECD Global Competency for an Inclusive World, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters). Do teachers believe in and act as cultural mediators? Are teachers aware of their own IC? Do teachers consider the development of their own IC and of their learners? Do they think that IC is important? Do teachers implement strategies to navigate future intercultural interactions that learners might face in their lives? Despite its apparent importance, IC is still a controversial topic, particularly regarding its definition, what it comprises, and how it is best assessed. In a globalised world, there are cultural differences and commonalities. Therefore, preparing learners to live and interact successfully and peacefully with other members of different

cultural backgrounds is crucial. Cusher and Mahon (2009) contend that 'the teacher is obviously a vital link to the development of intercultural competence in young people' (p. 309).

The acquisition of IC is arguably necessary not only to help us adapt to those differences but also to embrace and enjoy cross-cultural variations. It is said that 'intercultural competence can be conceived as one of the long-term goals of intercultural education, if not its primary objective' (Cusher & Mahon, 2009, p. 312). Deardorff (2009b) has vividly explained how crucial IC is, stating that 'as humanity faces many daunting issues that impact our very survival, the development of intercultural competence becomes even more urgent. Teachers who have been adequately prepared play a vital role in developing interculturally competent citizens of the world' (p. 15).

It is well recognised that the development of IC is related to high proficiency in linguistic skills (Grin & Faniko, 2012), and higher proficiency in foreign language skills is associated with greater and higher cultural empathy. Furthermore, Rings and Allehyani (2020) revealed that developing IC is relevant to the enhancement of effective communication styles and positive personality traits such as conscientiousness and openness. Accordingly, personal traits like openness and conscientiousness are directly related to developing people's abilities to adopt and integrate into new cultures(Wilson, Ward, & Fischer, 2013). Similarly, higher foreign language skills are associated with greater open-mindedness, higher cultural empathy, and social initiative. Various studies have been conducted to explore the link between language and culture (Kavakli, 2020). Despite extensive cultural studies, a single definition of the concept of 'culture' has not been agreed upon in the literature. Kavakli (2020) suggested that agreement should be highlighted in the concept of culture when all accept that culture and language are generated by one place and one society. Moreover, it is vital to acknowledge that there are two types of culture: an

observable objective culture where one can see differences between oneself and other cultures in terms of food, clothes, and architecture, for instance, and a subjective culture which encompasses beliefs, values, and attitudes (Berger & Luckmann, 1996). Binford (1965) offered broad definitions of culture. According to Binford, the 'ideal' definition defines culture as a state of human perfection with respect to commonly accepted values; 'documentary', wherein culture refers to a form of scholarly and imaginative effort to record, an individual's beliefs and experience; and lastly, a 'social' definition wherein culture refers to a certain way of life expressing meanings and values guiding learning and the ordinary behaviour of individuals. Thus, culture refers to a set of ideas, attitudes, and beliefs commonly shared by a group of individuals. However, as noted by Birukou, Blanzieri, Giorgini, and Giunchiglia (2013), culture can be seen as a slippery and ubiquitous concept that evolves as societies develop over time. Notably, language occupies a central position in any culture, as it is necessarily a social phenomenon; it is a means of communication among individuals and the key method for the transmission of cultural values. Thus, language is a fundamental means by which individuals conduct their social existence, and language is linked with culture in numerous intricate ways, as has been examined in many studies (Kramsch, 2013; 2013; Mckay, 2003). This research suggests that language teachers have the desire to learn and incorporate IC in their teaching, but they are not equipped with the right IC theoretical and practical content as mentioned in the literature (Sasani, 2018; Al Mawoda, 2011).

2.2 The Research Context

Saudi Arabia represents a significant context in assessing and developing IC for numerous reasons. Saudi Arabia can be described as an isolated, closed community which did not accept many foreign cultures (FC) for many years (Alshahrani, 2016). Recently, in

September 2019, the government allowed visits from foreigners from only 47 countries (Okaz, 2019). Before this 'historical moment', as described by the Saudi prime minister of tourism, Mr. Al-Khateeb (Arab, 2019), entering Saudi Arabia had been primarily restricted to workers and Muslim pilgrims visiting the holy mosques in Mecca and Medina. This situation has potentially limited the majority of the Saudi community's cross-cultural encounters to the local level and kept Saudi culture ambiguous to the world. This policy may have been a result of misinterpreting Islamic Sharia law and the conservative nature of Arabic values that Western perspectives might see as extreme (Taylor, 2015). Further, the fact of gender segregation in Saudi culture is significant compared to other countries in the Arabic region; the entire public sector has been constructed based on male and female separation. Unlike other communities around the world, the Saudi Arabian community is, to a large extent, not culturally diverse and not linguistically diverse. Saudi culture is classified on the Hofstede cultural model as having a high level of collectivism, masculinity, ambiguity, and uncertainty (Hofstede, 2011). It is possible that a monocultural conservative community with one religion and one language, almost completely sharing the same social values, has made people in Saudi Arabia reluctant to accept others' differences. This lack of exposure to other-language speaking foreigners and cultural differences can potentially lead to poor communication skills in Saudi students, which may result in a lack of confidence to pursue their studies abroad (Al Fadda, 2012). The community has been, to some extent, distant from the rest of the world and has not been exposed to many intercultural interactions that can exist locally among foreigners inside Saudi Arabia, which makes the Saudi Arabian context different and worthy of study.

The recent governmental reformations in Saudi Arabia, which aim to improve human rights and be open to the world, are becoming apparent, particularly for Saudi women, who were given the right to drive and to travel without restrictions only recently, in 2017

(Alexander, 2017). Such recent attempts to be an open free country can also be seen in educational reformations such as the Khebrat (Leaders of Change) programme which provides full scholarships for teachers to travel abroad around the world for intercultural exchange. These changes have had a massive impact on the Saudi community's attitudes, behaviour, values, and culture(Alhazzani, 2021). Especially with the recent movement of the government called 'Saudi Open Hearts, Open Doors' for international visitors and non-Saudi citizens living in Saudi Arabia. These impacts are apparent in social change, like the empowerment of women regarding their rights and equality. Additionally, the work on tourism and the heritage of Saudi culture highlight the importance of reaching out to the globe and opening up the country (https://www.vision2030.gov.sa). All these reformations have been driven by Saudi Arabia's vision of improving the country across all sectors by 2030, including health, education, the economy, and culture, and explicitly calling for the creation of opportunities for international cultural exchange. With such rapid and recent changes in Saudi culture, it is hoped that studying such a context will enrich how IC is perceived from a significant Islamic and Arabic perspective.

2.2.1 Khebrat programme

Khebrat, a qualitative professional development programme, is run by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia through the National Centre of Educational Programme Development (NCEPD) with the participation of leading universities in the host countries. It was initiated in 2016 as one of the developmental programmes that supports the 2030 Saudi vision in the educational sector. Khebrat means 'experiences' in Arabic, which highlights the importance of life and work experience provided by the programme through cultural immersion and educational practices. Teachers who have completed this programme are named 'Leaders of Change', which shows the Ministry of Education's determination to encourage teachers to be intercultural and to lead the change when they return to their home

country. The Khebrat programme is the first and only training programme that has targeted teachers' intercultural experiences and which is designed specifically for teachers to explore and learn about other cultures. The programme aims to train in-service teachers by immersing them in different countries so they can practice teaching in new contexts and explore and be exposed to different cultures from around the world. Because teachers are sent to different countries, English language teachers are the focus of the Khebrat programme, but other teachers who teach maths, history, and literature can also participate with a minimum number depending on their ability to master the English language. More than 50% of available places in the programme are assigned to English language teachers, which reflects the importance of the English language and shows that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia is attempting to help teachers reach out and integrate into the world by offering this training throughout the immersion in different countries. The programme includes 47 cities around Saudi Arabia, and the largest number of teachers registered on the programme come from Riyadh, the capital city, which is the location of the current research. According to Almoqbel (personal communication, December 11, 2018), the general supervisor of NCEPD, the Khebrat programme has three main points of focus:

1. The first component supports the teachers' English language ability, allowing them to refresh their linguistic abilities in an educational context, that is, in academic writing (linguistic component).

2. The second part concerns the teachers' knowledge of the culture and context, the philosophy of education, and the challenges facing education in the country where they spend time. It also asks the teachers to consider how they value this experience and to learn about the newest trends in education in the country where they spend time (cultural component).

3. The third part relates to the direct experience teachers have through immersion, which involves observations they make while participating in the schools as teaching assistants and learning new teaching methods to use when they return to Saudi Arabia (experience component).

According to programme leader Almoqbel (personal communication, December 11, 2018), the Khebrat programme has gone through three phases. Khebrat 1 started in 2016, sending 700 teachers from 47 cities in Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom, the United States, Finland, Canada, and Australia. Khebrat 2, which was launched in 2017, sent 1,200 teachers to the same countries, and in 2018, Khebrat 3 sent around 500 teachers to those countries and also to Singapore. Riyadh (2018) reported that:

> '[T]he candidates will be directed to universities in the participating countries as trainees, and upon their return, each will implement a plan to transfer the impact of their experiences. After their return from the nine-month experience distributed between the school in the targeted country and the university participating in the program. Teachers will localise the experiences from the developed countries and will transfer successful practices to our schools. The school immersion will enrich teachers' cultural experience and will improve their performance by increasing the effectiveness of their teaching strategies.' (p. 1)

2.2.2 English language teaching in Saudi Arabia.

The beginning of ELT in Saudi Arabia was in 1920, just after a short period of the discovery of oil and before the establishment of Saudi Arabia as a state in 1939 (Alshahrani, 2016). However, some scholars refer to 1949 as the start of ELT in Saudi Arabia, which was the year of the initiation of the Saudi Arabian and American Oil Company (Aramco) and the year when the Americans developed economic interests in Saudi Arabia (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017). Since the 1940s, the oil industry and the Saudi Arabian government's desire to integrate with the global community have had a significant impact on the development of English language use, and English has become more relevant to Saudi economic and social development. ELT in Saudi Arabia has gone through many reformations, and it was

introduced to the community gradually. Initially, people saw learning English as a threat to their Islamic and Arabic identities, and they were worried that, through the English language, Western culture would affect the younger generation(Alshahrani, 2016). Thus, public schools introduced the English language into curricula only to the intermediate and secondary stages (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Additionally, English as a subject was not compulsory for progression to subsequent years. As Al Haq & Smadi state:

> 'Learning English does not corrupt one's religious commitment in contrary, Islamic teachings urge the learning of a foreign language. Islam advises that one should gain knowledge, and language is arguably important in this aim. Many Quranic Verses and prophetic sayings stress the quest for learning as a duty incumbent upon every Muslim.' (1996, p. 313)

Following this, the notion of using English as a tool to spread Islamic values to the world increased after it was included as an objective of English as a subject in textbooks, and people started to be much more interested in learning English(Nouraldeen & Elyas, 2014).English in Saudi Arabia has been a compulsory subject for intermediate and secondary students since the 1960s, and it is required for them to pass their studies. In 2000, English was introduced in public schools for learners at the primary stage, and ELT started to garner much attention from both the Ministry of Education and the Saudi community (Elyas, 2008). People began to realise the need for linguistic skills in English to allow them to meet the requirements of and access to high-rated jobs and the admission criteria of universities locally and internationally. Later, and since the millennium, the situation has changed, and the tension of transmitting Western values and culture through learning English has lessened among the Saudi community.

More recently, with increasing numbers of Saudi people studying different types of specialisations in different parts of the world, the function and role of the English language have continued to change. It has transformed from being a foreign language with a perceived negative impact on the Saudi community to a second language that can potentially convey Saudi cultural and Islamic identities to the world (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017). Although the ELT field in Saudi Arabia considers English as a global language in terms of science and business, people have not yet considered English as a lingua franca, that is, a language shared by people with different cultural backgrounds and not exclusive to a specific country or culture.

2.2.3 Saudi Arabia and English as a lingua franca (ELF)

English is the only foreign language imparted in the curriculum in all Saudi Arabia's educational establishments. Particularly at the college level, it forms an obligatory part of the curriculum. However, Arabic culture has specific history, customs, and taboos associated with any language being taught other than the native language. Turkish was the first foreign language which was ever taught in Saudi Arabia during the war known as the Ottoman/Egyptian-Saudi War between the years 1811–1818. The locals resented and boycotted Ottoman-operated schools as Turkish was used as the medium of teaching and regarded Turkish as the language of the invaders (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Saddat, 2002, cited in Elyas & Picard, 2018). Thus, the Saudi community was observed to have a negative outlook concerning any foreign language teaching.

However, this has changed as Saudi Arabia advanced in the twentieth century, and to be updated with changing needs, it encouraged Saudis to attain Western education and to travel abroad. In my opinion, the Saudi educational system changed their perspective on the

English language through many stages. First, from being a foreign language to a second language, when they required English to be taught at secondary and intermediate levels only starting at age 12. There were concerns that English might negatively affect younger Islamic identities and Arabic culture (Alrabai, 2018). The second phase arguably occurred when English started to be seen as a global language and therefore necessary to develop global citizens. Public schools introduced English to the curriculum from the first grade (at age 6); this occurred recently, in the academic year 2021–2022 (https://moe.gov.sa/en/pages/default.aspx). The Saudi Arabian government has clearly tried to integrate itself into the global economy, and therefore it has aimed to allow for conducting foreign business in Saudi (Qobo & Soko, 2010). I believe that English should be considered a lingua franca and a medium of communication regardless of one's cultural background. It should not be considered a threat to people's identities or religious affiliations, and work towards developing IC in Saudi should begin.

However, until now, English has been perceived by Saudi Arabian scholars as a foreign and international language (Al-Seghayer, 2014). In Saudi, the English language was previously treated as an outsider's language, and it is now considered an official language of daily use in the public sector of hospitals, airports, government offices, etcetera. Aljohani (2016) found that some researchers consider English as a second language inSaudi Arabia , while Mahboob and Elyas (2014) found that others see it as a threat towards their first language (Arabic language).

As recommended by Baker (2009), the English language should be considered a global language in IC research and the field of ELT studies. This reconsideration is an attempt to change the notion of the anglophone-exclusive culture of the English language to consider the English language a lingua franca that holds global cultures and represents people and different identities from around the world.

When the Saudi community starts to consider English as a lingua franca and not a foreign language which threatens their identity, the importance of the IC can come to light. Additionally, it would arguably be a step forward in the initiation of innovative concepts and goals of IC by using English as a lingua franca that might not be familiar to the Saudi Arabian context(Aldawsari & Karakaş, 2021). The shift from people in Saudi Arabia considering English as a foreign language to considering it as a global language and lingua franca could be the first step toward the development of IC importance in ELT.

Since the Saudi Arabian government has opened its doors more to foreign business, its adult professionals are also seeking opportunities to learn English to exploit the advantage which English has to offer in the business world. In contrast to the current study, which focuses on teachers, previous research on IC in Saudi Arabia has been undertaken to investigate students' perceptions of intercultural awareness and their needs for intercultural training and preparation courses so far conducted in Western contexts (Alqahtani, 2011; Alhazmi & Nayland, 2010; Obaid, 2015). For instance, Obaid (2015) explored how Saudi students who were studying at U.K. universities were adapting to cultural integration. They conducted interviews with 10 students and obtained questionnaire data from 67 participants. The author reported that the main concerns of all the participants related to their linguistic skills, doubts as to their academic abilities, and concerns about adjusting to life in a different culture. None of the participants had undertaken any cultural training before or after arriving in the United Kingdom. In discussing the results, Obaid (2015) recommends that enhancing students' IC in the host country can increase the chances of their success in learning and adapting to the U.K. culture. However, it is difficult to assess the findings in the Obaid (2015) study and the importance or relevance of the students' IC to their reported concerns, because the IC level of the participants was not clarified nor assessed. The current research assesses IC levels. Similarly, Alqahtani (2011) investigated the preparedness of Saudi

Arabian higher education students for U.K. culture. In this study, he conducted interviews with the Saudi learners to investigate the challenges to learning and adapting to the culture they faced. He also observed students' behaviour during their classes to identify any difficulties they appeared to face during the academic semester. The results showed that most of the research participants were not culturally prepared with orientational courses, neither in Saudi Arabia nor after they had arrived in the United Kingdom. Alqahtani (2011) recommended that the success of their learning experience depended on their cultural preparation to adapt before arriving in the United Kingdom, but again, this study did not examine the participants' levels of IC. In the same vein, Alhazmi and Nayland (2010) investigated how Saudi Arabian students attending Australian universities experienced the transition from the segregated gender environment of Saudi Arabia to a mixed-gender environment in Australia. They found during interviews and descriptions provided by the research participants that the culture of segregation affected the participants' learning experience and their intercultural engagement, as these Saudi students are experiencing a change from a gender-segregated environment to a mixed-gender one in Australian universities. Findings of this research reported that the main challenge was the process of adaptation to a new culture for these students, especially for women, who said that a mixed culture environment could be intimidating. Therefore, it is highly recommended by previous studies on Saudi students abroad that cultural training or IC preparation courses may help students experience a better learning experience and better learning outcomes. These results are why Saudi teachers' IC should arguably be assessed locally, and they should be trained to teach IC together with language in their English classes. This instruction may play a vital role in helping students thrive in different cultures during their international educational experiences and to interact successfully with foreigners locally in Saudi Arabia.

EFL has not been discussed in the literature from a 'function perspective' wherein English is used for intercultural communication amongst speakers with different first languages. In their individual descriptions of their experiences, previous research has established that IC had a significant influence on the participants' use of English as a lingua franca of communication (Baker, 2011). Most of the literature involving discussions on IC has avoided a mainly essentialist view of culture, wherein culture is condensed to a language. The essentialist view would, for instance, describe English as 'containing' the anglophone culture (Baker, 2009; Ehrenreich, 2010). In addition, a view of the English language and the nations correlated to it is a challenge to the ability to change to a broader context of various cultural settings which are not intrinsically linked with any specific country. However, drawing on House (2013), it is difficult to indicate that the English language represented communication in a culturally neutral way. Each communication encompasses participants, backgrounds, reasons, and other options as a communicative means, and none of these are found to be culturally neutral (Baker, 2011). Thus, this clash requires such communication to be viewed through English as a lingua franca with a more intricate outlook than just being culturally diverse and not culturally exclusive.

2.2.4 Connections to English Language Teaching (ELT) in Saudi Arabia

In the current study, the English language is highlighted as a lingua franca and as the only foreign language that is taught formally in Saudi Arabian schools. Therefore, the focus of this study is on Saudi Arabian teachers of the English language. It is argued that IC is a tool that has the potential to enhance the function of the English language by understanding how to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds using English, which is what links IC to ELT. As noted by Baker (2011), ELT is the setting in which teachers and learners engage in multilingual and multicultural practices, and it provides a

good environment in which to develop intercultural awareness and prepare users of English to communicate in global contexts.

With the effect of globalisation on Saudi Arabia, opportunities for intercultural interactions are likely to increase considerably, which has become an important factor in teaching the English language. Consequently, this affects English teachers regarding how they teach English and use it as a language shared by people from all over the world, not only to study a particular culture. Since 1975, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education has provided international scholarships every year for high school students to attend universities around the world to complete their higher education or to learn new languages (https://moe.gov.sa/en/pages/default.aspx). The latest statistics in 2023 show that the number of Saudi Arabian students studying abroad in countries in Europe, America, Africa, and Asia has reached 122,531 (https://moe.gov.sa/en/pages/default.aspx). After they arrives in these countries, the Saudi Cultural Affairs Offices based at Saudi Arabian embassies offer administrative and financial support for students. Currently, no cultural orientation programmes have been offered to Saudi students to help them adjust to the cultures of the countries where they live and study before they leave Saudi Arabia and even after their arrival.

Because of the previous lack of intercultural training, an IC assessment for teachers is needed to guarantee the existence of intercultural elements in ELT that will prepare learners to thrive in a globalised world by implementing successful intercultural communication. Therefore, intercultural training can potentially foster the application of the IC skills learned in the classroom in real-life situations of intercultural exchange in daily life(Kim, 2020). Baker (2011) has contributed to the understanding of intercultural awareness and its relevance to ELT, explaining it as the ability to translate lively cultural references into successful IC. For example, 'the ability to use linguistic and other communicative resources

in the negotiation of meaning, roles and relationships in the diverse sociocultural setting of intercultural communication through English' (Baker, 2011, p. 2). Until now, standard British or American English was still considered to be a desirable and prestigious variety of the English language in Saudi Arabia (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). It is therefore unsurprising that some teachers include only British or American culture in their teaching and exclude any other cultures. That is, they are unlikely to view English as a global language which is used across many cultures around the world. English can no longer be considered the property of the inner circle of traditional nations like the United States or the United Kingdom(Baker, 2009). Therefore, an association between the English language and the cultures of countries like the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and Canada has begun to weaken, and English has started to include the cultures of more than two billion non-native English speakers (Crystal, 2008). Bennett (1993) argues that limiting English to a specific culture (such as British or American) is teaching a student to become a 'fluent fool', which is 'someone who speaks a foreign language well but does not understand the social or philosophical content of that language' (p. 16). One could therefore argue that developing Saudi Arabian English language teachers' IC in public schools, especially at the high school level, could allow teachers to prepare their students to be ready for any different cultural experience in the future. Saudi English language teachers can change how students use English from using it as a second language to using it as a lingua franca, including multicultural aspects. In turn, this could highlight the importance of including all cultures and every nation around the world in the teaching and promoting IC skills and attitudes such as empathy and respect, and support the concept of lingua franca as a language that represents all users from different cultural backgrounds.

2.3 Theoretical perspectives

2.3.1 The conceptualisation of intercultural competence.

In the 1970s, new pedagogical approaches to language teaching, such as the communicative method, contributed to what can be described as a 'cultural turn' in language teaching(Byram, Holmes, & Savvides, 2013). Work in the sociology of international business during the 1980s also affected this development, such as Hofstede's (1984) work on the cultural dimensions of management in different countries. In the 1990s, the phrase 'intercultural communicative competence' emerged as an umbrella term which was conceptualised as involving 'the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures' (William, 2002, p. 298). Alternative definitions have focused not just on the individual but also on the setting; for example, the definition suggested by Neuliep (2009) is 'the degree to which you effectively adapt your verbal and nonverbal messages to the appropriate cultural context' (p. 393).

IC, in its broadest sense, therefore, refers to the capabilities which are to be used suitably and effectively while interacting with other individuals who are culturally and linguistically distinct from oneself (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Researchers, throughout the available literature, make use of various related concepts to examine and explain IC, such as 'intercultural sensitivity' and 'intercultural communicative competence'. A further definition proposed by Sample (2013) of how to treat IC is that 'in any circumstance, global or local, developing intercultural competence means usefully integrating cultural commonalities and differences in ways that let us both devise common visions and then approach them with creative vigour' (p. 2).

The muddiness of multiple terminologies associated with IC concepts not only threatens the validity and reliability of study results but also affects IC training courses (Chen & Starosta, 1997). Therefore, it is vital to highlight the similarities and differences between these concepts and how they function in the literature. Chen and Starosta (1997) suggest that the intercultural communicative competence concept should be viewed as the umbrella term for three subcategories: intercultural sensitivity at the cognitive level, IC at the behavioural level, and intercultural sensitivity at the affection level. Intercultural sensitivity at the cognitive level relates to cultural awareness; the behavioural level leads to IC and the affection level deals mainly with emotions. Chen and Starosta (1979, p. 5) defined intercultural sensitivity as 'an individual ability to develop positive emotions towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural communication'.

Guilherme (2002) views IC as an intercultural speaker who possesses the ability to interact effectively with individuals from cultures which one understands as distinctive from one's own. Thus, it is observed that scholars have indicated that the concepts of culture, language, and learning are interlinked and inseparable components of a learning process and have a main role in foreign language teaching.

> One of the most significant changes over the past few decades has been the recognition of the cultural dimension as a key component of language studies. This has transformed the nature of the experience of teaching and learning languages to a great extent and the traditional aim of developing linguistic skills modelled on the norms of native speakers has lost ground (Atay, Kurt, Çamlibel, Ersin, & Kaşlıoğlu, 2009, p. 131).

Liddicoat (2004) further argues that these concepts are essential in the curriculum of a language course because, as explained byByram, Gribkova, and Starkey, (2002), when students learn about a language, they learn a culture, and as they learn to use the new language, they learn to communicate with other individuals from that new culture.

2.3.2 Theories and models of intercultural competence.

Scholars from different disciplines have proposed several theories and models for explaining and testing IC over the years. Although there is no one fixed leading model of IC, some well-defined theories are worth highlighting. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) reviewed IC theories in the literature, presenting the categorising models as an attempt to simplify the theoretical complexity. They presented and categorised these models with reference to their function and real-world practicality as compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and casual-path models. Thus, practice defines the theories, and the presentation of related IC theories in the next section will be according to their models' functions.

The intercultural communication competence model of facework management proposed by Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) represents an example of a compositional model, which is an update of the face-negotiation theory put forth by Brown and Levinson (1987). The compositional models represent the IC as an asset of traits and characteristics of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. It was an attempt to translate the concept of 'face negotiation' into a theoretical framework that resulted in the formulation of the facework-based model of IC. Ting-Tommy and Kurogi (1998) refer to IC as a 'set of communicative behaviour that people use to regulate their social dignity and support or challenge the others' social dignity' (p. 188). The facework-based model of IC was the first model created from an Asian perspective in the English language in the combined work of researchers from China and Japan. The facework-based model mainly consists of four elements: knowledge, mindfulness, interaction skills, and facework competence criteria. The association and the relations among components of this model are connected, and they interact with every aspect in every component, which is what distinguishes this model from the others (Sptizberg and Changnon,

2009). This model examines the IC as a behavioural phenomenon and thus will not suit the aim of the current study, which intends to focus on attitudes towards people of different backgrounds and different cultures.

Mindfulness Dimention	**Knowledge Dimention**
Mindful reflexivity	Iniviualisim-collectivisim
Openness to novelty	Small/large power distance
Muliaple visions analytical empathy	"Self/face" models
Mindful creativity	Facework communication styles

Interaction Skills	**Facework Competence Criteria**
Mindful listening	Preceived appropreatness
Mindful observation	Percivied effectiveness
Facework managment	Mutual adaptability
Trust buliding	Mutual satisfaction
Collabrative dialogue	

Figure 1: Facework-based model of intercultural competence proposed by Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998), adopted from Spitzberg and Changnon (2009)

The co-orientational model can be viewed as having a central place in all IC models, as it represents the detailed constructs of the IC. Its primary function is to provide clarity and understanding between interlocutors. These factors are vital, and they embody the first challenge for people who are trying to communicate in a new culture (Sptizberg and Changnon, 2009). Byram's (1997)model of intercultural communicative competence is based on viewing language learning as a communicative, interactive, and meaningful process. It describes the factors involved in successful IC as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions to act. This model was built upon the ideas presented in a paper by Byram and Zarate (1996) that was written in relation to the Council of Europe's project to develop a 'Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning and Teaching' in the 1990s (Hoff, 2020). Indeed, as Byram's model focuses on the foreign language learners' encounters with documents and events from other cultures, as well as his or her ability to

participate and mediate in intercultural exchanges profoundly and engagingly, the relationship between self and other lies at the core of the concept(Hoff, 2020). Byram's model (1997) not only unifies selfhood with other but also combines the distinctly linguistic and cultural abilities of one's own and of others. Thus, Byram presented a conceptual model that explains the characteristics of a competent intercultural speaker. He identified these characteristics as a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions, as follows:

- Savoir: knowledge of self and others, of interaction, and of the individual and society.

- Savoir être: attitudes, relativizing self, and valuing others.

- Savoir comprendre: skills of interpreting and relating.

- Savoir apprendre/faire: skills of discovering and/or interacting.

- Savoir s'engager: political education and critical cultural awareness (adapted from Byram, 1997, p. 34).

This model focuses on the language learner who meets the criteria of IC, which is also not in line with the aims of the current study. Therefore, it was not used for the current study because it is focused on the language learner, whereas the current study deals with the language teachers.

Developmental models of IC can be used for individuals or groups, and they can work for both at the same time. The broad purpose of developmental models is to recognise competencies that develop over time(Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Likewise, Bennett's (1986) DMIS is a practical example of a model where intercultural competencies are assumed to evolve over time. It was built by implementing the theoretical concept of sensitivity towards culture, and it developed from a grounded theory approach(Bennett, 2004). Chen and Starosta (1997) proposed a clear conceptualisation of intercultural sensitivity stating that 'it is an individual's ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural

communication' (p. 5). From the sequence set of stages on how one sees cultural differences from a personal perception, Bennett (1986) suggested six stages of intercultural sensitivity where people develop their worldview from three ethnocentric orientations: denial, defensive, and minimisation and three ethnorelative orientations: acceptance, adaptation, and integration worldviews (Bennett, 2004). The DMIS 'is indicative of a particular worldview structure, with certain kinds of attitudes and behaviour vis-a-vis cultural difference' (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003, p. 234)

2.3.3 The theoretical framework of this study.

As described above, the literature is rich in many relative IC theories and models, and it was challenging to decide which was suitable for the current study. Coming from an educational background and having been a teacher for more than 14 years, I believe that intercultural sensitivity in developing IC is crucial for a successful learning process. Moreover, I believe that human emotion is the power that supports people to improve their cognitive abilities, which can result in sophisticated behaviour. Intercultural sensitivity is 'an individual's ability to develop emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural communication' (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 5). In other words, developing people's intercultural sensitivity involves practicing empathy and developing respectful attitudes towards people from different cultures. Thus, the DMIS has been adopted in the current research due to a number of reasons: (1) The development of the DMIS from ethnocentric to ethnorelative, which covers the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional orientations that need to develop IC. (2) The DMIS base builds on determining and specifying people's experiences of cultural differences, which is what I aim to explore and assess among the study participants. (3) Many leading theorists of intercultural studies have stressed the importance of recognising cultural differences, and

they back Bennett's DMIS (e.g., De Vita, 2007; Deardorff, 2006). (4) Bennett's (1986) DMIS has been highly influential in the international sector due to its contribution in guiding the education professional on how to choose what is suitable for various learning contexts according to cultural differences. (4) A more practical reason for choosing this model as the theoretical framework for this study is its association with a highly developed assessment tool, the IDI (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). By choosing an established and well-researched instrument like IDI, it is hoped that a deeper picture of the teachers' IC levels can be acquired. The IDI assessment tool has been carefully developed and extensively tested in terms of its reliability and validity (Hammer, 2011). However, it has not been used in the context of SA teachers, which is one of the main research gaps to be filled by this current research.

Chen and Starosta (1997) have described Bennett's DMIS as 'a route of transformation', because it mainly changes one's personal worldview from a negative state to a positive state cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally via six stages: (1) Denial of cultural differences: people do not show interest in cultural differences, even if they have to distinguish one from another. Bennett (2004) explained the state of denial by giving an example of some Americans who cannot differentiate between Chinese and Japanese cultures or between Gulf state Arabs (e.g., Kuwaitis), Fertile Crescent Arabs (e.g., Syrians), and Persians (e.g., Iranians). Accordingly, people at this stage can develop only by noticing cultural facts. Bennett (2004) stressed that facilitators of this recognition must understand that denial is the inability to notice various features of new cultures; it does not necessarily mean refusal of a specific culture. (2) Defence against cultural differences: people tend to see their own culture as the most viable culture in the world. Although they can recognise cultural differences, they lack experience with human equality. People tend to stereotype at this point, and consequently, the sense of superiority of a person's own culture is higher at this stage, so

they are threatened by cultural differences (Hammer et al., 2003). (3) The minimisation of

cultural differences: people are associated with the idea of cultural similarities and are aware

of cultural differences, yet they relate them to what is called universalism. People in the

minimisation stage usually classify others' behaviour according to what is acceptable

according to their own cultural standards(Hammer et al., 2003). (4) Acceptance of cultural

differences: people start to deepen their perceptions of others' behavioural differences that

underlie cultural differences (Chen & Starosta 1997). Acceptance here does not mean

agreeing, because people might still judge other cultural differences negatively, so it is vital

for people in this stage to be aware of different values that control other cultures (Bennett,

2004). (5) Adaptation: people expand their views of the world to include cultural aspects of

others' worldviews. Adaptation is considered the phase in which people go through the lived

experience of empathy with other cultures (Bennett, 2004). (6) Integration of cultural

differences: people apply ethnorelativism to their own identities, meaning that they can

interpret themselves within a variety of cultures (Bennett, 1986). Table 1 illustrates the IDI

statements in relation to each stage of the DMIS:

Table 1:Statements from IDI and Bennett's DMIS adapted from Klak and Martin (2003).

Ethnocentric Constructs	Example Statements From the IDI
1. Denial	• I see no compelling reason to pay attention to what happens in other countries.
2. Defence	• The rest of the world should look to my culture for answers to solving their problems.
3. Reversal	• I have very little respect for people from my own culture.
4. Minimisation	• People are the same despite outward differences in appearance.
Ethnorelative Constructs	
5. Acceptance	• It is appropriate that people from other cultures do not necessarily have the same values and goals as people from my own culture.
6. Adaptation	• When I come in contact with people from a different culture, I find I

	change my behaviour to adapt to theirs.

Each stage in Bennett's DMIS model indicates the status of participants' IC in the current study. This process entails a movement from the ethnocentric stage towards ethnorelative stages, which indicates a development in their IC (see Table 2). The model is examined according to its applicability in interpreting and measuring IC in a Saudi Arabian context.

*Table 2 :The stages of Bennett's model and their operationalization in the survey instrument, adopted from*Klak and Martin (2003).

Orientation	Stages of Bennett's Model	Constructs in the Survey Instrument

Ethnocentric	1) Avoidance
	  a) Isolation
	  b) Separation
		1) Avoidance

Ethnocentric	2) Protection
	  a) Denigration
	  b) Superiority
	  c) Reversal
		2) Protection

Ethnocentric	3) Minimisation
	  a) Physical universalism
	  b) Transcendental universalism
		3) Reversal
		4) Minimisation

Ethnorelative	4) Acceptance
	  a) Behavioural relativism
	  b) Value relativism
		5) Acceptance

Ethnorelative	5) Adaptation
	  a) Empathy
	  b) Pluralism
		6) Adaptation

Ethnorelative	6) Integration
	  a) Contextual evaluation
	  b) Constructive marginality
		7) Background evaluation
		8) Cultural marginality

2.3.4 Intercultural competence in the current study.

An established explanation of culture is the 'iceberg model', where the tip of the iceberg represents visible cultural categories like art, clothes, dance, architecture, language, food,

gestures, and greetings(Hall, 1976). The invisible bottom of the iceberg represents deeper cultural patterns, such as worldviews, religious beliefs, tolerance for change, and attitudes towards the differences of others. In this view, none of the visible elements can ever make sense without an understanding of the drivers behind them, and these are hidden at the bottom of the iceberg. These invisible elements are the underlying causes of what is manifested at the visible 'tip'. For example, wearing a niqab or covering one's face in Arabic Islamic culture is a visible element of culture, and the motive or belief behind wearing it is the invisible cultural element.

In the current study, the conceptualisation of IC is considered a subjective element of culture (the bottom of the iceberg) and is the target category. The objective elements of culture (the tip of the iceberg) are not the focus of this study. Thus, developing IC includes the development of a deeper knowledge of the differences in cultures around the world and how to approach and deal with these differences.

Deardorff (2006) indicated that acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ensure appropriate behaviour and communication is what constitutes IC. Deardorff's (2006) pyramid model of IC (see Figure 3) discusses the components of IC and its desired outcomes, but it does not fully explain how a person can examine his or her own personal experience of cultural differences and understand the self-view of the world before communicating with others. That is, he or she interprets cultural differences from an ethnorelative perspective or an ethnocentric one. Since Deardorff's (2006) model provides an explicit category of IC, it is operationalized in this study as the definition of IC and as an explanation of what IC consists of.

Figure 2: Deardorff's pyramid model of intercultural competence, adapted from Deardorff (2006).

Desired External Outcome

Behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately (based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to achieve one's goals to some degree.

Desired Internal Outcome Informed frame of reference/filter shift

- Adaptability (to different communication styles and behaviours; adjustment to new cultural environments)
- Flexibility (selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviours; cognitive flexibility)
- Ethnorelative view
- Empathy

Knowledge and Comprehension

- Cultural self-awareness
- Deep understanding and knowledge of culture (including context, role and impact of culture, and others' worldviews)
- Culture-specific information
- Sociolinguistic awareness

Skills

- Listen
- Observe
- Interpret
- Analyse
- Evaluate
- Relate

Requisite Attitudes

- Respect (valuing other cultures; cultural diversity)
- Openness (to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures; withholding judgment)
- Curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty)

When considering the characteristics of the Saudi Arabian context, it is relevant to start building an IC understanding from the teachers' personal worldviews of cultural differences. Reflecting on the author's own experience in the field of ELT for 10 years and being a Saudi Arabian woman, the author is better able to interpret how the female Saudi mindset might understand and operate IC. Teachers' IC for this study will be examined based on ethnorelative and ethnocentric worldviews as suggested by the DMIS (Bennett, 1986).

Thus, IC means building an ethnorelative personal perspective while experiencing differences when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. The ethnorelative worldview is in contrast with the ethnocentric perspective, where a person believes that their own culture and values are most valid and should be applicable to others (Bennett, 2004). Intercultural competence works as a tool that helps people interpret others' cultural differences in a healthy way (i.e., equipping people with cultural lenses that help them understand themselves and how they view the world before they try understanding others to ensure quality communication). Klak and Martin (2003) note that the DMIS is characterised by three major aspects: firstly, IC can be learned; secondly, people and cultures are different and not fixed; and thirdly, IC does not mean gaining knowledge about a specific culture but rather gaining 'phenomenological knowledge', in which a person's experiences help her or him to develop skills which ensure successful intercultural interactions. When one learns the skill of tolerance toward unfamiliar cultural differences, one may be prepared for any cultural shock. For instance, having tolerance when a woman does not shake hands with male friends can help in understanding that this situation is the norm in Saudi Arabian culture.

Most of the theorists who have defined IC have offered models that ignore self-awareness in cultural interactions (e.g., Byram, 1997; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Self-awareness in IC refers to how people view their reactions during intercultural interactions when they judge and face cultural differences. For example, people perceive themselves and their cultures as superior to others because they believe that they are representative of their model culture, which is called the stage of defence in the DMIS.

Additionally, most IC theories in the literature are derived from a Western perspective of how and what IC is constructed from. Therefore, applying the DMIS theory, which works on developing IC in the Saudi context, is beneficial because it results in approaching the

theory critically to examine its validity and motivates the presentation of new theoretical aspects of IC that reflect the reality of IC from an Arabian perspective.

2.4 Intercultural Competence Research

Defining IC can be a difficult endeavour. Learners and teachers come together with a very heterogeneous set of motivations, beliefs, and approaches to language learning. This problem of differing perspectives permeates the question of what it means to communicate successfully across and between cultures, and it raises difficult issues in measuring or assessing such competencies. Various studies have been undertaken on the theme of the influence that IC may exert on second language(Sinicrope et al., 2007) . More recently, many researchers have questioned whether IC goes far enough in theorising the challenges that face teachers and students while living in an increasingly globalised environment. Some theorists perceive the challenge in developing IC to be related to learners' maturity(King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), while others emphasize the teacher's specific beliefs and practices (Young, 2011) or the teacher's mediating role (Kohler, 2015). Oriented intercultural experiences abroad are recommended as a strategy for prompting trainee teachers to re-examine their own cultural identity (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). Nevertheless, these studies mainly offer a limited understanding of the sociocultural problems encountered by Saudi Arabian students studying in Western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom and do not offer a measurement of the participants' IC levels (either before or after their exposure to different cultures), which is the focus of the current study.

A study by Adelman & Lustig (1981) undertaken in Saudi Arabia attempted to explore the intercultural communication problems that occurred between the businessmen of Saudi Arabia and the United States (). The data was collected via a questionnaire and

gathered from 37 male respondents from a multinational corporation to identify the main communication problems between these two nationalities. The questionnaire included items about communication skills such as appropriateness in speaking, control of objectivity, and tactfulness in dealing with others. The study noted that both groups faced significant challenges in organising ways of intercultural communication, suggesting intercultural training approaches are needed for addressing these challenges. Although this study offered significant insights into IC levels and what problems occurred when native English speakers and speakers of Saudi origin tried to interact, it is to be noted that the study is relatively old, and it would have to be reconsidered or updated when being applied in a present-day context.

Another study, conducted by Alhazmi and Nayland (2010), attempted to investigate the essence of Saudi international students' experiences of being in a mixed-gender environment in Australia and how this experience impacted the participants' cultural identity. In-depth interviews were conducted with four Saudi male and female students; however, the interviews mainly focused on the effects of gender segregation on their cultural identity and learning differences between the two contexts. The IC concept needs to be considered while conceptualising suitable abilities, attitudes, and assessments, which have been neglected and overlooked in the Saudi context.

2.4.1 Assessing Intercultural Competence

The assessment of IC encounters the dilemma of its multivalve nomenclature, that is: global competence, international competence, multiculturalism, biculturalism, and so forth (Fantini, 2009). Thus, it is challenging to assess because it is complex to define. As a result, in the literature, the assessment tools have multiple foci according to their objectives, for example, lingual, cultural, and national (Fantini, 2009). Knowing precisely what to assess within the broad concept of IC is the first step towards the right assessment tool (Deardorff, 2006). Deardorff (2011) has suggested incorporating IC approaches into assessment plans,

involving, for example, critical reflection, observing performance, electronic portfolios, interviews, and interventions. Today, with many assessment tool options available, the challenge is to set the criteria on which researchers and educators choose to base their selection. Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, and Liu, (2016) reviewed more than 30 existing IC assessment tools in the literature and provided detailed information on their format, mode of delivery, items, themes, and the topics included in each one. He reviewed only the tools associated with IC and intercultural sensitivity, according to their relevance to the model used in the current study (see Table 3).

Table 3:*Existing Assessment Tools of IC*

IC Assessment Tools	Pattern
Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006)	• Self-report; 6-point Likert scale (not at all competent to extremely high competence) • Online survey • 54 items (4 subscales;11–19 items per scale) • Includes four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and critical awareness
Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS; Chen & Starosta, 2000)	• Self-report; 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) • Online survey • 24 items • Measures intercultural sensitivity through five factors: interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, and interaction attentiveness
Intercultural Competency Scale (ICS) Elmer (1986)	• Self-report; response scale unknown • Online survey • Measures intercultural effectiveness through 12 factors, such as approachable intercultural receptivity, positive orientation, forthrightness, social openness, enterprise, shows respect, flexibility, perseverance, cultural perspectivism, venturesome, and social confidence
Inventory of Cross-Cultural Sensitivity (ICCS; Mahon & Cushner, 2014)	• Measures cultural integration, behavioural response, intellectual integration, attitudes towards others, and empathy • Self-report 7-point Likert scale; strongly disagree to strongly agree • 32 items 5 subscales 5 to 10 items for subscales • Pen and paper/online survey test

Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale (CCSS; Pruegger & Rogers, 1993)	• Measures the valuation and tolerance of different cultures • 24 items total two equivalent forms with 12 items each paper and pencil • Self-report 6-point Likert scale strongly disagree to strongly agree
Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI;Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992)	• Measures individualism versus collectivism and flexibility/open-mindedness • 46 items;14–16 items per subscale; individualism versus collectivism are asked in relation to own or other culture • Self-report: 7-point Likert scale; very strongly disagree to very strongly agree

Note. Adopted from Griffith et al., (2016).

Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) recommend aiming for a tool that helps transform the practices of teachers and enriches the learning process outcomes for the students. How the concept of IC is conceptualised can affect the way in which this is achieved. Deardorff (2006) listed useful questions to aid researchers in finding the right assessment tools as follows: (1) Is it in line with the current study goals? (2) Is it based on a theoretical background? (3) Is it suitable for any ethnic context? (4) Is it appropriate for the targeted participants' ages? (5) Is it logistically affordable? I started investigating the literature bearing in mind the tips mentioned above and concluded that the IDI is the best method to study the development of the participants' IC due to several reasons. First, the IDI is theory-based; unlike other tools that measure separate personal characteristics (e.g., open-mindedness, flexibility), the IDI allows one to see an individual's or group's progression along a continuum of cross-cultural competence. Because of this, the IDI can potentially provide in-depth insights on how individuals and groups make sense of cultural differences, and how they respond to cultural differences. Secondly, the IDI measures both one's intercultural mindset and intercultural skill set (Hammer, 2012). The IDI has been applied across a wide range of cultures and it has been validated to provide a robust and accurate profile of respondents' orientations toward a wide range of 'other culture' groups, including

nationality, ethnicity, gender, and other diversity categories (Hammer, 2011). However, this has not been the case in the Saudi Arabian context. The IDI has been rigorously validated to apply across cultures but has not been used in a Saudi context; it has been psychometrically tested and found to possess strong validity and reliability across diverse cultural groups (Hammer, 2012). The IDI is customised for educational and organisational use and is available in two versions: one for educational institutions and the other for organisational settings. Each version is customised with different demographic questions as well as customised analysis of individual and group profile results. Fourth, the IDI assesses IC via a 50-item questionnaire, which is available online and can be completed in 15–20 minutes. In addition, more than 60 publications and over 66 PhD dissertations have been completed using the IDI (Hammer, 2012). A wide range of studies within educational contexts have used the IDI (Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Sample, 2013). It is important to note, however, that the authors of these studies have stated that there are some doubts as to the cross-cultural transferability of the IDI as a model for understanding worldviews concerning differences in cultures other than Western cultures. These doubts demonstrate the potential importance of the current study's contribution through the examination of Bennett's DMIS in the Saudi Arabian context and the definition of a new dimension of IC from a Saudi Arabian cultural perspective. Arasaratnam (2020) confirms that researching and assessing IC from multiple perspectives is necessary for a broader scope.

2.4.2 International studies of intercultural competence.

The literature on IC assessment is prolific, and it has also been debated due to globalisation, which has encouraged a demand for increasing IC in the educational sector (Rahimi, 2019). Some scholars propose a need for IC assessment due to ethical issues. For instance, Borghetti (2017) argued that IC ought to be treated as a value, akin to politeness and honesty, which can be then enhanced by teachers in the classrooms. Therefore, teachers should have IC and

practice it to set an example for their learners to possess such competence or values.

Borghetti (2017) stated that:

> teachers can make the difference in the development of intercultural competence through their behaviours, critical attitudes, motivations, expectations and so on, just as they do for other values, which are not marginal simply because they are not assessed (p. 1,404).

Other scholars are calling for the necessity of assessing IC, especially in the education field, because any communication accrued in language learning is intercultural (Sercu, 2004). The field of foreign language education has in particular witnessed much research considering IC as the main factor of effective global language usage. Recently, studies have considered the English language as a shared global language and that IC could be the tool that will enhance behavioural appropriateness in intercultural contexts (Baker, 2015). In the field of foreign language education, Zülküf (2018) conducted a study in Turkey to assess the IC of pre-service English language teachers through implementing the ISS developed by Chen and Starosta (2000; see Table 4).

Table 4: *The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale*

5 = strongly agree 4 = agree 3 = uncertain2 = disagree1 = strongly disagree
Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the blank before the statement:
1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. 2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded. 3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures. 4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. 5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures. 6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures. 7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures. 8. I respect the values of people from different cultures. 9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures. 10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures. 11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts. 12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures. 13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures. 14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.

15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.
21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.
22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.
24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

The questionnaire was distributed after the completion of the intercultural course, and of the 70 respondents, 54 were female, 16 were male, and the age ranged from 21 to 32.

> The 24-items questionnaire was based on 5-likert scale, and the choices were: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=uncertain, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. The 24-item model consists of five sections: (1) interaction engagement (7 items), (2) respect for cultural differences (6 items), (3) interaction confidence (5 items), (4) interaction enjoyment (3 items), and (5) interaction attentiveness (3 items) (Zülküf, 2018. p. 7).

The main finding of the study indicated that the pre-service teachers had high intercultural sensitivity according to the scale, and the researcher claimed that gender did not influence pre-service ELT teachers' IC. This type of assessment did not offer a complete picture and one could argue that the results were somewhat unrealistic because the evaluation of IC should be performed with qualitative methods that can provide more in-depth facts that are not dependent on a 5-point Likert scale. The issue in the Zülküf (2018) study was not only the limited sample but also that the researcher failed to report the suitability of the ISS in Turkish culture. Following the development of the Chen and Starosta (2000) scale in the United States, a study was conducted by Fritz et al. (2005) to determine if it could be empirically replicated. The participants were selected from a university in the United States and a university in Germany. Fritz et al. (2005) collected 188 American and 179 German respondents to the ISS. In the American sample, the participants comprised 122 men and 66 women, and there were 123 men and 56 women in the German sample. The study found that

the German sample did not show the same results as those in the American context. The scale was basically successful in the American sample but not in the German sample, which raises some doubts about its validity. The Chen and Starosta (2000) scale has since been used in other contexts, such as the collectivist cultures of Malaysia (Tamam, 2010) and Taiwan (Wu, 2015). These two studies found contradictory results, which led the authors to propose alternative models and measures drawn from the original to suit their contexts.

2.4.3 Studies assessing intercultural competence with the Intercultural Development Inventory

Valdivia and González (2018) assessed Spanish teachers' IC use of the IDI, complemented by a group discussion with those teachers. The quantitative IDI findings indicated that, regardless of the presence of multicultural students at schools, participant teachers overestimated their level of intercultural sensitivity; there was a tendency to emphasize similarities in all cultures, and they appeared to be at the stage of minimisation. In fact, this study focused only on the IDI as an IC assessment and failed to introduce a deeper understanding of teaching practices or teachers' behaviour throughout observations or interviews, which was implemented in the current study.

Similarly, Zerzová (2016)assessed the IC of English language students as future teachers at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno. The research aim was to examine the departmental students' IC at the beginning of their studies (autumn 2011), compare it with their level of IC at the end of their studies (autumn 2016), and to investigate the influences that played a role in their IC development. Since this instrument is not currently being used for academic or corporate purposes in the Czech (or Slovak) Republic, a secondary aim of the article was to introduce it to the wider academic community. The results indicate that students tend to overestimate their level of IC and find themselves in ethnocentric stages of intercultural development at the beginning of their university studies.

The Zerzová (2016) study targeted only students, whereas the current study focuses on teachers, who are the basis for developing the IC for any future global citizens.

Likewise, Lantz-Deaton (2017) examined the factors related to the intercultural development of university-level students in the United Kingdom from 31 different countries (European Union and non-European Union). In this study, the researcher looked at internationally diverse campus and university intercultural experiences in a longitudinal study to examine students' intercultural development over time. The researcher used the IDI developed by Hammer et al. (2003) to assess students' development of IC, which is the same tool that was used in the current study. The data were gathered on multiple occasions, starting at the beginning of the semester with a follow-up assessment near the end of the semester after six months. The aim was to look at the variables and factors associated with the research participants' intercultural experience. The study revealed that there were no correlations between variables. That is, ethnicity, being from a bi- or multicultural family, U.K. or non-U.K. status, different socio-economic levels, were not found to be significantly correlated with the developmental level of participants' IC. Only one variable (gender) showed slightly significant difference, as women appeared to have higher scores in IC levels than the male participants. Most of the participants (69%) in the study were at the minimisation level, in which people are associated with the idea of expecting similarities and rejecting any cultural differences. In sum, more than half (57.4%) of the students remained at the same developmental stage; more than one-quarter (27.9%) shifted down one or more stages, while only 14.8% moved up one or more stages. Although the number of participants was low, the longitudinal nature of the study allowed the researcher to interpret the factors that may have impacted the intercultural development of the students. The findings indicated that cultural immersion and studying aboard for a period did not contribute to the development of IC. The large percentage of the participants who were at the ethnocentric level is an indication that it

may not only be experience that is needed to effectively develop IC but also IC training, which was addressed in the current study, in which the participants have varying levels of cultural exposure, including a group who have undertaken IC training.

Similarly, all the above-reviewed studies used the IDI to assess the IC of their participants, and their findings indicated low levels of IC. Participants in all these studies appeared to be in the minimisation stage, and it was suggested that factors like intercultural immersion did not affect the development level of IC. These studies all targeted students, and none of these researchers assessed IC using multiple methods, in contrast to the current mixed-method study with teachers.

2.4.4 Saudi Arabian studies on intercultural competence

All previous studies on IC in the Saudi Arabian context have been conducted on Saudi learners in Western contexts and have not focused on the study of teachers. To date, there is no single study which has investigated teachers' IC within the Saudi context, as far as I am aware. Obaid (2015) investigated the preparedness of Saudi students by their institutions or by the Saudi government to deal with cultural diversity in the United Kingdom. She raised the critical question of whether the schools in Saudi Arabia adequately prepared Saudi learners before they were exposed to a new culture. The sample of the study was Saudi university-level students in the United Kingdom of all genders. Using a mixed-methods approach, she first interviewed 10 participants to explore their cultural perceptions, investigating the participants' fears, concerns, and expectations before arriving in the United Kingdom. Following this, she obtained quantitative data from 67 respondents via a questionnaire. Half of the respondents had not attended any intercultural orientation courses in Saudi Arabia, to prepare them to adapt to U.K. culture, which can be seen as an indication of low cultural awareness of the Saudi educational system. The innovative part of the Obaid

(2015) study was the in-depth investigation into how the 10 participants were attempting to engage with their non-Saudi peers and how they could communicate successfully in a different culture. Obaid (2015) attempted to help raise the workshop attendees' awareness of British culture to overcome any cultural adaptation difficulties. She concluded from the study findings that one of the main fears that the participants faced was the ability to adapt to British culture. However, the findings suggested that supporting students to become interculturally competent by preparing them through IC training in their home country or the host country may help the learners reach their full potential and enjoy their learning experience more fully. This study would have been more impactful if the participants' IC level had been assessed to identify their initial position to develop interculturally. Thus, the need is rising for English language teachers to develop IC to prepare their students locally in Saudi classrooms for future intercultural experiences, whether they are for educational, political, economic, or touristic purposes.

Similarly, Alqahtani (2011) investigated the cultural impact of being in the United Kingdom on Saudi learners and their language needs. Although he focused on the participants' level of English proficiency, he presented a question relating to the cultural training that the participants had received in the Saudi educational system before coming to the United Kingdom. The focus of this study was on the language needs of Saudi students and the impact of the cultural experience that being in a U.K. postgraduate programme had on them. The data showed that 91.9% of the questionnaire respondents did not attend intercultural training or orientational courses in Saudi Arabia that may have prepared them for living in a different culture, which is higher than what was observed in the Obaid (2015) study. Although the emphasis in Alqahtani (2011) was on the challenges faced by Saudi postgraduate students in the British higher education cultural setting and their requirements for the development of their academic language proficiency, it fails to offer much

understanding of the challenges that may have been encountered by undergraduate students. Moreover, it does not explain the consequences for students who do not have knowledge of the cultural contexts in which they will study or of the prevailing social and behavioural norms, attitudes, and beliefs of the culture relevant to the new language. Alqahtani (2011) overlooks the fact that the English language is not only associated with anglophone cultures and that it is considered a lingua franca. Baker (2015) refers to the problematic 'pull of native speaker ideologies' (p. 145) in the context of ELT. Baker (2009) further contends that 'we need to move beyond the traditionally conceived target language – target culture relationship to incorporate an awareness of dynamic hybrid cultures and the skills to successfully negotiate them' (p. 567). Moreover, what teachers and students need should be considered not just what researchers think is theoretically better.

Farooq, Soomro, and Umer (2018)explored the perceptions and practices of university-level Saudi and non-Saudi English language teachers from a multicultural background in Saudi Arabia. They questioned how teachers perceived the target culture of the English language and what complications they faced while teaching English. They also asked whether these factors might lead to an intercultural ELT classroom. The researchers found that despite the teachers' high awareness of the important role of intercultural classroom practices, they were limited by curriculum considerations towards the targeted cultures. In other words, it was shown that some English texts mainly focus on a specific culture, like American or British, while ignoring others. The study dealt with English language learning in the Saudi Arabian context from a new perspective. Unlike previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia, the researchers looked at English as a lingua franca, which deals with various cultures. One of the weaknesses of the study was the failure to address the potential cultural complications English language teachers face in their classrooms. Although they perceived English as a global language, they still introduced the

culture during language learning exclusively in Arabic and English-speaking countries, thus neglecting a critical component of English as a lingua franca to provide an international worldview. Another issue in the Farooq et al. (2018) study was the superficiality of the questions in the study instrument regarding assessing teachers' IC. The study did not assess teachers' IC or explain teachers' beliefs and perceptions of IC. It also included many superficial cultural elements that did not investigate whether the teachers themselves were interculturally competent. The questionnaire covered statements about cultural aspects that teachers deal with in the foreign language classroom, their familiarity with the target culture in classroom practices, and their perceptions of the target culture. An example of superficiality of cultural aspects is dealing with topics such as food clothes and any materialised cultural differences However, overall, the findings of the Farooq et al. (2018) study support those of Asmari (2008), which revealed that pre-service teachers' education lacks IC training before service and during their teaching experience. There is somewhat of a large gap in time between these two studies, yet the findings are nevertheless similar. This result might refer to the absence of awareness about the important role of IC in teachers' training for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

Asmari (2008) stated that 'despite the high conceptual awareness of the inseparability of language and culture developed clearly by the instructors, the place of the target culture in language teaching was found minimal, incidental, and inconsistent' (p. 4). In this study, the researcher explored the place of FC in the policy and practice of Saudi pre-service EFL teacher education in general, although the study sheds light on critical issues that challenge the presence of FC in English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia. Asmari (2008) identified three challenges. One involves the introduction of content from anglophone cultures after the dramatic events of 11th September into the sensitive Muslim and Arabic context, which might be problematic in general and, in particular, in educational policy. Second is the absence of a

common framework for deciding what is acceptable and what is not as regards what to include in cultural lessons. Third, it relates to the lack of research on the place of FC in classroom practices. He examined the place of FC in pre-service Saudi EFL contexts and investigated teacher education via the analysis of relevant public and official documents. Asmari (2008) employed semi-structured interviews to investigate deeply pre-service EFL teacher education stakeholders' perceptions and views about the place of FC in EFL education. The participants of this study were 16 selected informants falling into three categories: three policymakers, seven academic EFL instructors, and six pre-service EFL teachers. He also investigated the perceptions of policymakers, EFL teachers, and pre-service EFL teachers via interviews and classroom observation. Asmari (2008) stated:

> 'The findings revealed that at the conceptual level, the place of foreign culture needs to be reconceptualized interculturally by valuing the significance of both native culture and foreign culture. This entails that emphasizing foreign culture in language education is a national and theoretical demand rather than being perceived as global/political. Drawing on the cultural risks expected from the currently unguided exposure to FC, consequences of cultural sheltering (i.e., censorship) and deemphasizing foreign culture (i.e., ethnocentrism) displayed in policy and practice constitute a real threat not only to foreign culture, but also to native culture simultaneously. Clearly then, formal, and guided integration of foreign culture following intercultural concepts becomes a way of maintaining native culture. Also, reconceptualizing foreign culture dynamically establishes a solid place for foreign culture in language teaching and learning by emphasizing it in the language macro skills and pedagogy.' (p. 6)

One drawback of this study is that the findings are, in the main, dependent on the researcher's personal and, therefore, subjective interpretation of the data. Despite this limitation, the researcher investigated an interesting sample of teachers who share the same cultural background and education. However, akin to the studies mentioned above, Asmari (2008) did not provide an actual assessment of the IC of the teachers, which is problematic given that they are situated within monocultural, conservative contexts like Saudi Arabia. This is addressed in the current study.

Alsamani (2014) targeted three main subject categories: students, teachers, and experts in the EFL teaching field, with the aim of assessing their cultural awareness. The study collected quantitative data through the use of two tests. The Culture-Awareness Diagnoses Test (CADT) and Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment Questionnaire (CANAQ). The CADT test offers insights into the level of cultural awareness students have about English-speaking people. It includes 50 items in two parts: the first comprises 10 dimensions: introduction and greeting, verbal communication skills, daily lifestyle, social behaviours, personal relationships, family values, history and politics, education, nonverbal communication skills, and finally, cultural conflict and adjustment. The second part, a multiple-choice test, consists of 20 hypothetical intercultural situations in which students are supposed to decide, if they know, how to react to such situations (Alsamani, 2014, p. 147). The CANAQ assessment questionnaire consists of three parts: the first part gathers students' personal information and their foreign language knowledge background. The second part targets the assessment of cultural aspects that students might need to learn about in their foreign language classes. These aspects include 10 domains: introductions and greeting styles, verbal communication skills, nonverbal communicative skills, daily lifestyles, social behaviours, personal relationships, family values, education, history, and politics, and finally, knowledge of some aspects of cultural conflict and adjustment when integrating into the FC. The third part concerns the sources of information relating to the FC, and it consists of five items: school curricula, college courses, audio and audio-visual media, printed media, and the Internet. In two yes/no columns, students were asked to indicate their responses next to each item. In sum, the data revealed that the research participants had a very low level of cultural awareness, and the study of the foreign language in classrooms did not provide students with cultural knowledge. Therefore, investigating teachers' IC is crucial, and reconsidering English as a lingua franca is necessary. English should be considered a global language that

represents all cultures from around the world and is not limited to the targeted FC of the language, as seen in the Alsamani (2014) study. One drawback of the Alsamani (2014) study is that it could be argued that it was limited to the explanation of the concept of culture and its relation to English language learning as a global language or as a lingua franca. Such a limited understanding of culture can in fact be viewed as evidence of the low IC levels and global awareness of Saudi English language research, which is addressed in the current study.

Azimami (2016) conducted a study of the IC of Saudi Arabian participants in a Western context. The participants were graduate students of a TESOL programme in the United States. The researcher used a mixed-methods study, as it gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) assessment tool. The IES tool was developed by the Kozai Group to support learners in universities and workers in companies and other organisations in measuring global competency. This online assessment tool has multiple scales that aim to measure intercultural effectiveness and focuses on three main competency measures that are assumed to be crucial in creating an intercultural environment. Continuous learning incorporates the assessment of a person's curiosity in learning about other cultures; interpersonal engagement assesses people's interest in understanding other people's viewpoints; and hardiness evaluates people's capacity to cope with the emotional stress of interacting with people from other cultures. The qualitative data were collected through the participants' activities of interacting through the online platform, Wiki. Azimami (2016) assessed seven Saudi students (among others from a different cultural background) using the IES. This survey aims to support people in developing their global competencies. It provides results that are categorised into three sections: low, moderate, and high global competency on the IES scale. Although the details of the scale used in this study were not presented clearly,

the results showed high IC among the participants. Azimami (2016) concluded that this type of assessment is needed and that it is crucial for the development of IC for learners.

Havril is the only scholar who has explored IC in the Saudi Arabian context and who has conducted several studies on intercultural matters (Havril, 2015, 2016, 2018). For instance, Havril (2015) studied the IC of 5,600 female university students in the English language department at Jazan University in Saudi Arabia. She used qualitative methods, which involved in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, and fieldwork case studies, which allowed for a rich data set. Havril applied Deardorff's (2006) model to track students' IC development through its components, such as the exploration of the participants' attitudes towards the value of cultural diversity, their knowledge and skills (for instance, their ability to manage conflicts), and their desired internal and external outcomes. The researcher identified several changes of her own IC as a lecturer and in the IC development of her Saudi students. For instance, the change of respect in her attitudes regarding calling the students 'ladies', and in return, they receive it as manner of respect. Additionally, as a lecturer, she began wearing the Saudi female dress code of Abaya, which was the Saudi female students' custom as an integration into the Saudi culture. Havril (2015) offered in depth explanations of changes in the IC development of her students' behaviour in the study and managed to critically explain the theoretical framework of IC and its function in the Saudi context, and she stated:

> 'Theories and models heavily reflect a Western perspective and an Anglo-Saxon orientation. In the framework of cultural pluralism, these theories all highlight an open, liberal, and tolerant attitude of a Western participant in the intercultural situations who is capable to adapt to different cultures. Unfortunately, the receptive or host participant is missing from each model, though we should accept that most daily interactions, verbal, and non-verbal communications, usually happen between two or more people with different cultures. We should consider a two-actor model of intercultural competence in the future, where we also emphasize the extension and the above-mentioned components of the host participant in the intercultural situations.' (Havril, 2015, p. 559)

Havril (2015) presented clear aspects of Saudi cultural dimensions and offered a deeper explanation of the monocultural context of Saudi Arabia around the globe. Havril (2016) studied an isolated, far-south Saudi female culture and conducted in-depth interviews and fieldwork visits to families in their villages for this research, and thus she gathered highly interesting results. The Havril study revealed eight basic cultural aspects that she assumed were vital to acknowledge to engage Saudi culture around the globe. However, one can argue that, despite the strengths of this study, the work could be deeper because it comes only from a Western perspective. Each cultural group can be explained deeply if it is introduced from the perspective of their own associates in their community, as the current study investigated.

To date, no study has yet been conducted which aims to assess English language teachers' IC level in Saudi Arabia. Although extensive research has focused on culture and the English language in Saudi Arabia, no single study exists which examines the IC of English language teachers. Focusing on teachers rather than students is arguably highly important because it has the potential to help increase teachers' own IC by identifying their strengths and addressing the challenges they may face, which could have a positive impact on teachers' classroom practices and thus benefit students. Therefore, what makes this current study significant is the attempt to assess English language teachers' intercultural sensitivity, which is the heart of IC, as they represent the main factor in teaching English as the medium of global communication. Bennett (2004, 2011)contends that intercultural sensitivity is the factor that can transform not only an individual's affective and emotional status towards cultural differences but also his or her behaviour and cognitive status. The current study seeks to gather data which will help address these research gaps. It is the first to investigate teachers' IC levels in a monocultural context. Additionally, it hopefully adds to the growing research in intercultural studies by providing more insight into the IC status in Saudi Arabia.

Locally investigating teachers' IC levels to engage with potential global citizens in the future and assessing the IDI in the Saudi Arabian context are necessary.

This research aims to investigate the experiences and perceptions of Saudi English language teachers with respect to their IC and how it manifests in their respective English language classrooms. The data will be used to support and recommend reforms in the present English curriculum to enhance IC among learners and teachers alike. The study aims for the results to be a springboard towards the formulation of reforms or changes in the current curriculum. It determines the level of knowledge and preparation which teachers have when promoting IC in their respective foreign language classrooms and the impact of teachers' experience with other cultures and exposure to the Khebrat training programme. The study also examines whether there is a gap between how teachers perceive the importance of IC and their actual experiences and practices in teaching English, as has been found in earlier studies. The findings may be used to suggest or make recommendations for teacher training or the development of workshops to enhance teachers' appreciation of IC.

2.5 Literature Review Summary

The literature review is an extensive exploration of the multifaceted landscape of intercultural competence (IC) in the context of English language education, with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia in each major component:

1. Global Significance of IC in English Language Education:

The review underscores the pivotal role of teachers not only in imparting language skills but also as cultivators of intercultural competence, contributing to the development of global citizens. It emphasizes the global importance of English as a language for communication and the responsibility of educators to foster intercultural understanding in learners.

2. Controversies and Definitions of IC

The section critically engages with the controversies surrounding IC, acknowledging the challenges in its definition, the diverse components that constitute it, and the various methods employed for its assessment. This nuanced discussion sets the stage for a comprehensive understanding of IC and its implications.

3. Saudi Arabian Context:

The literature review provides a detailed examination of the unique characteristics of Saudi Arabia. It covers the historical context of the country's isolation, limited exposure to foreign cultures, and recent governmental reforms aimed at opening up the nation. Cultural characteristics, gender segregation, and the impact of reforms on societal attitudes and values are explored, providing a rich contextual backdrop for the study.

4. Khebrat Program:

The introduction of the Khebrat program adds a practical dimension to the review. This professional development initiative, launched as part of the Saudi 2030 vision, reflects the government's commitment to enhancing intercultural competence among teachers. The program's focus on linguistic, cultural, and experiential components indicates a concerted effort to prepare educators for the challenges of a globalized world.

5. Historical Development of ELT in Saudi Arabia:

The historical overview of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia traces the evolution of attitudes towards the English language. It highlights the transformative journey from perceiving English as a potential threat to Islamic and Arabic identities to its current status as an essential global language for economic and social development.

6. Saudi Students' Intercultural Experiences Abroad:

The literature review touches on the experiences of Saudi students abroad, emphasizing the need for cultural training. This discussion contextualizes the challenges faced by students in

adapting to new cultures, setting the stage for the importance of intercultural competence among educators.

7. Theoretical Frameworks for IC:

Various theories and models related to IC are introduced and categorized based on their functions and real-world practicality. This comprehensive overview includes compositional, co-orientational, developmental, adaptational, and causal-path models. Specific models such as Ting-Toomey and Kurogi's facework-based model and Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence are discussed, providing a theoretical foundation for the study.

8. Bennett's DMIS:

Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is chosen as the theoretical framework for the study. The review explains the rationale behind this selection, highlighting the model's ability to encompass cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions.

9. The Concept of IC within the Study's Context:

   - The review introduces the concept of IC within the study's specific context, employing the "iceberg model" analogy. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the subjective element of culture and the need for teachers to cultivate an ethnorelative perspective.

10. Assessment of IC:

 The challenges in defining IC and the need to assess its impact on language learners are thoroughly discussed. The review provides an overview of existing assessment tools and justifies the selection of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) for the study.

11. Review of Previous IC Studies in Saudi Arabia:

The final section summarizes previous studies conducted in the Saudi Arabian context, primarily focusing on English language learners and teachers. Gaps in teacher education and the need for curriculum reforms to enhance IC emerge as recurring themes. In essence, the

literature review is a rich tapestry that weaves together theoretical perspectives, contextual nuances, and practical considerations. It serves as a foundation for this current study on highlighting the main research gap of the non-existence of assessing intercultural competence among English language teachers in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The thesis presents a case study of ten Saudi English language teachers who have different intercultural experiences. Reviewing the relevant literature on the assessment IC guided me to choose a mixed-method approach. On the qualitative side, I undertook interviews to explore in-depth teachers' knowledge and their attitudes to IC, and classroom observation was used to explore their educational practices in action. In order to gather quantitative data, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was chosen, allowing me to assess IC.

3.1.1 Study Aims and Research Questions

This study evaluates teachers' IC using multiple research methods in Saudi Arabia. The current study aims to contribute to the growing body of research informing the new perspective of intercultural knowledge in an Arabic region. It also aims to provide insights for teacher education and the intercultural development of teachers, particularly English language teachers in Saudi Arabia.

3.1.2 Research Questions

The research problem being addressed is the lack of knowledge on how intercultural competence is promoted by English language teachers in the context of the Saudi foreign language classroom. The research questions the study intends to answer are as follows:

1. What factors affect Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence?

2. How do Saudi teachers understand the role of intercultural competence on the teaching of the English language, including teachers' beliefs and practices?

3. How do Saudi teachers perceive their role in promoting intercultural competence among educators and students?

4. Which stage of the DMIS scale best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers?

5. Are Saudi English language teachers well prepared to teach and train colleagues and students about intercultural competence?

6. What are the views of Saudi English language teachers on the assessment of intercultural competence?

3.2 Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to explore teachers' IC and data collected in three phases. The first phase involves observing the teachers in the classroom during selected lessons which involved cultural topics to explore the teachers' IC practices in the classroom. In the second phase, the teachers completed the IDI assessment online. In the third phase, teachers were interviewed to allow for a deeper investigation into their levels of IC. The teachers are divided into three groups depending on their intercultural experience, a group who had no

cultural exposure outside of Saudi Arabia, a group who had had some exposure due to travel outside the country, and a group who had undertaken the Khebrat programme. A significant advantage of adopting a mixed-methods study is "the strength of confirmatory results drawn from quantitative multivariate analyses, along with deep structure explanatory descriptions as drawn from qualitative analyses" (Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010). One of the main factors that led to the choice of a mixed methods approach is the research problem of this study. IC is a complex concept to explore, and it requires multiple perspectives for a better understanding. Many researchers have used a mixed-methods approach to investigate IC (e.g., Lantz-Deaton, 2017; Mahon, 2009).

By employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and practices of IC. Additionally, teachers' IC will be explored using a variety of tools (observations, interviews, reflective journals and questionnaires), which will provide a clearer understanding of teachers' IC. Mixed-methods studies reduce the weaknesses of using each approach alone. One of the main strengths of conducting mixed methods research is the possibility of triangulation, i.e. the use of several means and data sources to examine the same phenomenon. Triangulation allows the researcher to define the aspects surrounding a phenomenon more accurately by approaching it from multiple angles using different methods and techniques. Successful triangulation also requires careful analysis of the type of information provided by each method, including its strengths and weaknesses(Azorín & Cameron, 2010). In this study, the quantitative tool (IDI questionnaire) can offer a clear indication of the IC level of each teacher, but it will not allow an in-depth exploration of teachers' practices and applications of IC. If I had used only the IDI questionnaire, the teachers would have been limited to the items represented in the questionnaire, which would not reflect their actual beliefs and practices if unaccompanied by the qualitative tools (observations and interviews).

In this study, the participant teachers of the English language were divided into three groups:

1. **Group TT:** Three teachers who had direct intercultural immersion in the Khebrat programme.

2. **Group TE:** Three teachers who were exposed to different cultures, e.g., by travelling.

3. **Group T**: four teachers who were not exposed to different cultures.

The selection of these teachers was determined to test a variety of teachers with different intercultural experiences including those with no intercultural exposure, indirect cultural exposure, and direct cultural experience through an immersion programme (Khebrat). All teachers from each group were exposed to the IDI intervention. During the piloting phase, I found that even teachers with cultural experience and cultural training of the Khebrat programme were not aware of their IC as a concept, as a term and as a practice.

3.3 Population

3.3.1 The population attributes

To explore possible relations between teachers' exposure to different cultures and teachers' IC, I grouped the participants, who were all in-service Saudi English language teachers, into three groups according to their intercultural experience: (1) teachers who had experienced direct intercultural immersion (in the Khebrat programme) using English language cultures, (2) teachers who were exposed to different cultures of any part of the world, e.g. by travelling, and (3) teachers who had not been exposed to different cultures via either the Khebrat programme or via travel to other countries. It is assumed that people who have spent time in countries with different cultures may be more interculturally competent than people who never been away from their home culture. A comparison to the teachers' IDI results will reveal any significant differences between teachers of the Khebrat programme and the other teachers to test this assumption.

3.3.2 Participants Backgrounds

In the realm of language teaching, intercultural competence plays a pivotal role in fostering effective communication and understanding among diverse cultural groups. The backgrounds and experiences of teachers significantly influence their level of intercultural competence, shaping their approaches to teaching and interaction with students from various cultural backgrounds. In this chapter, we examine the diverse backgrounds of ten English language teachers in Saudi Arabia and explore how their individual experiences may impact their intercultural competence levels.

1.   Teacher TT1

TT1 is a 38-year-old Saudi English language teacher with 10 years' experience in Riyadh K.S.A. TT1 has a bachelor's degree in English Literature and a master's degree in linguistics. Both her educational and work experience is based in Saudi Arabia. TT1 was exposed to different cultures domestically and internationally during her lifetime. Locally within Saudi, TT1 was not originally from Riyadh she was born and raised in the southern area of SA. During her childhood, she lived in different foreign countries due to her father works with the embassy i.e., India Egypt and the US. With exposure to different cultures domestically and internationally during childhood, TT1's intercultural competence might be relatively high. Her first-hand experiences living in foreign countries and interacting with diverse cultural groups could provide valuable insights into understanding and appreciating cultural differences.

2.   Teacher TT2

TT2 holds a bachelor's degree in English language and a master's degree in linguistics. The teacher has 13 years of experience in teaching English in Saudi Arabia. The teacher's cultural diversity is attributed to the training that was taken in the U.S. Khebrat program. TT2 spent her life in S.A. studying and working and never travelled until she became a teacher and

independent woman. TT2 took a teaching strategies training in the USA that entailed intercultural awareness. In this experience, the teacher increased her knowledge and awareness about individuals from different cultural settings, which further impacted positively on her worldviews. She started travelling when she reached 30 clearly because of her conservative family. TT2 has great interest in exploring different cultures and meeting foreign people.

Despite limited travel experience until adulthood, TT2's intercultural competence is likely enhanced by her intercultural training and interest in exploring different cultures. Her exposure to diverse cultural settings through training and travel may contribute to a nuanced understanding of cultural nuances and communication styles.

3.   Teacher TT3:

T3 has specialized in teaching English literature spanning a period of more than 10 years. The Saudi-based teacher graduated from Taif University in Saudi Arabia in 2000 with a bachelor's degree. She has travelled only to countries across the Gulf region for tourism. The teacher's first foreign cultural experience was bolstered when she joined the Khebrat training program that was conducted in the USA in 2016. Through travelling and training, TT3 demonstrates intercultural awareness and acknowledges the differences that exist between Western cultures compared to Saudi culture. She expected that such experiences would be critical to the current study and impact positively her teaching practices. TT3's participation in the Khebrat training program and tourism experiences have likely broadened her intercultural awareness. Although her exposure to Western cultures may be limited compared to other teachers, her willingness to engage with different cultural perspectives may positively impact her teaching practices.

4.   Teacher TE1

TE1 is a 45-year-old female teacher in Saudi Arabia with a 28 years' experience of teaching the English language in a high school located between Jeddah and Riyadh. With no intercultural training, TE1 loves to travel, and she has gone on trips to the USA and Arab and non-Arab countries like Egypt, United Arab of Emirates, Lebanon, United States and several European countries like the UK, Germany and Italy. While TE1 has extensive travel experience, her lack of formal intercultural training may result in a lower level of intercultural competence. However, her first-hand exposure to various cultures through travel could still provide valuable insights into cultural diversity and communication.

5.   Teacher TE2

The Saudi-based teacher TE2 has 24 years' experience in teaching the English language. After graduating in 1999, she embarked on this career. From a cultural perspective, this teacher has travelled to different countries like European countries and gulf Arabic countries to enjoy the different weather, people, climate, and foods. TE2's extensive travel experience to different countries may contribute to a moderate level of intercultural competence. Her exposure to diverse cultural environments and interactions with people from various backgrounds likely shape her understanding of cultural differences and communication dynamics.

6.   Teacher TE3

The 41-year-old teacher has vast experience in teaching the English language lasting for more than 16 years. The teacher has not received any intercultural training after graduating in 2000 from King Saud University. Nonetheless, travelling has expounded the teacher's cultural experience, particularly in the U.S. where TE4 stayed for one and a half years. Despite limited formal intercultural training, TE3's travel experiences, particularly her extended stay in the U.S., may enhance her intercultural competence. Her first-hand exposure to Western

culture and interactions with diverse populations could inform her teaching practices and intercultural sensitivity.

7.   Teacher TE4

TE4 was born in Saudi Arabia and has amassed 11 years of teaching experience after graduating in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in the English Language. TE4 has not received any training on intercultural competence. She argued that she is interculturally sensitive after travelling to different countries across Europe and the Middle East. Akin to TE3, TE4's travel experiences across Europe and the Middle East may contribute to a moderate level of intercultural competence. While lacking formal training, her exposure to diverse cultural contexts likely fosters an understanding of cultural diversity and communication dynamics.

8.   Teacher T1

T1 is 45 years old. The teacher is a holder of both bachelor's and master's degree in English language in 2003 and acquired her masters in 2017. Currently, she is an English language teacher with nine years of experience in the field. T1 has not travelled or been exposed to different or foreign cultures in person, and she has not acquired any intercultural training and her cultural exposure is derived from media, books, and TV. T1's reliance on media, books, and TV for cultural exposure may result in a lower level of intercultural competence compared to teachers with first-hand experiences. However, her educational background in English literature and linguistics may provide a foundation for understanding cultural nuances in language and communication.

9.   Teacher T2

T2 was born in 1986 in Saudi Arabia, she is 36 years old. The teacher graduated from the University of Riyadh College of Education after completing a bachelor's degree in the English language in 2011. T2 has taught English for the last eight years. The responses given

by the teacher are quite short thus providing limited information about the teacher's intercultural competence. T2 never travelled abroad or been exposed to different or foreign cultures in person and her cultural experience based on her workplace where she used to work in a multinational company. T2's limited exposure to different cultures outside of the workplace may result in a lower level of intercultural competence. Without first-hand experiences or formal training, her understanding of cultural diversity may be relatively limited.

10. Teacher T3:

The 42-year-old teacher has taught English Language in secondary schools for eighteen years and graduated from King Saud University in 1999. T3 has not experienced travelling abroad due to family commitments, and her experience of other cultures is based on limited sources, like the media or books. Like T1 and T2, T3's lack of travel experience and reliance on media and books for cultural exposure may contribute to a lower level of intercultural competence. However, her extensive teaching experience may provide opportunities for cross-cultural interactions and learning.

The diverse backgrounds and experiences of English language teachers in Saudi Arabia significantly influence their intercultural competence levels. While some teachers possess first-hand experiences and formal training that enhance their understanding of cultural diversity, others rely on indirect exposure and professional experiences. Recognizing the individual backgrounds of teachers is essential for fostering intercultural competence in language education and promoting effective communication across diverse cultural contexts.

Table 5: Background info and factors affecting the IC level

Teachers Codes	Background info and factors might affect the IC level
TT1	Age38 10 years' experience Bachelor and MA degree in English

	Khebrat intercultural training Cultural exposure through tourism Childhood abroad in different countries
TT2	Age36 Bachelor's degree and a master's in English language Experience13 Khebrat program. Conservative family
TT3	Age38 bachelor's degree in English language Experience 10 Khebrat programme
TE1	Age50 28 years' experience Bachelor' degree in English No cultural training Exposed to other culture by traveling
TE2	Age47 24 years' experience Bachelor's degree in English No cultural training Exposed to other culture by traveling
TE3	Age41 16years experience Bachelor's degree in English No cultural training Exposed to different culture by travelling
TE4	Age36 11 years' experience in teaching English No cultural training Exposed to different culture through travelling
T1	Age45 15 years' Experience No cultural training No exposure to different cultures Master degree
T2	Age35 8 years' experience No cultural training No cultural exposure Bachelor's degree
T3	Age42 18 years of experience No cultural training No cultural exposure Bachelor's degree

3.3.3 Sampling

I adopted the Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007) sampling scheme which provides a framework for developing sampling designs in mixed methods research that informs approaches of the sample size considerations and recommendations for each research design. Because the aim of the current study is not to generalise to wider contexts, but instead to obtain deeper insights into the research topic, purposeful sampling was chosen, as suggested by Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007). Thus, the eligible female teachers who matched the selection criteria were identified using the following sampling purposes as follows:

1. **Intensity sampling: Teachers were selected based on their intercultural experiences and their teaching of the English language.**

    a. Teachers who participated in the Khebrat programme were selected because of their exposure to different cultures and the direct and indirect intercultural training they received, which prepared them to live in and adapt to different cultures.

    b. English language teachers who have intercultural experience through travelling for reasons other than participation in the Khebrat programme, e.g. tourism.

    c. Teachers who have experience in teaching the English language, but they have never travelled outside the country or been exposed to intercultural training.

2. **Convenience sampling: Teachers who were available and willing to participate in the study.**

Given that teachers' time is usually occupied by teaching and training, it was difficult to determine how many teachers would be willing to participate. I kept the log open for any number of teachers to join according to their availability and their willingness to participate. In addition, as the segregated nature of the schools in Saudi Arabia led to limited access to the schools, the sample of qualitative data included only female participants as the researcher conducting this study is female.

3. Quota sampling: Selecting the desired characteristics and the quota of participants.

Participants for the study were selected from a sample of female English language teachers who joined the Khebrat programme and other teachers who were not involved in intercultural training or had never been exposed to different cultures before.

The main advantage of adopting a (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007) sampling framework is to control the complexity of mixed methods studies, where selecting an appropriate sampling scheme was based on meeting the research goals, objectives, and purposes of the study to grant answering the research questions (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The steps of the mixed methods sampling process allowed me to approach the essential bases of the study critically by reviewing them in the following six steps: (1) Determine the goal of the study which is to examine the effectiveness of the DMIS and the IDI Guided Development to assess and develop English Language teachers' IC in Saudi Arabia. (2) Formulate research objectives which are and defining and developing teachers' IC throughout evaluating the implemented DMIS theory of the study to explore its ability to assess and develop IC. (3) Determine the research methodological process which is complementary sequential where the tools will be implemented sequentially first observation then interviews and questionnaire for the pre-intervention phase. (4) define the research design which is a sequential mixed-methods design. (5) Select the sampling design which is Intensity, convenience and quota sampling designs were adopted. For each teacher I have observed 2 lessons and the list of total number of classrooms observations, interviews, and IDI conducted as shown in below table 5:

Table 6: list of the total number of observations, interviews and IDI conducted in the study

Participants' attributes	Number of participants	Number of classroom observations	Number of questionnaire respondents	Number of teachers interviewed
Group TT	3	6	3	3
Group TE	4	8	4	4

| Group T | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 10 | 20 | 10 | 10 |

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 The quantitative tool (IDI) and its justification

Reviewing quantitative assessment tools for assessing the IC was not an easy task, considering the content of the tests and the targeted responders. Most tests were designed for specific contexts that failed to meet the current research aims or and did not suit the study participants' culture. For example, the Cross-Cultural Sensitivity Scale CCSS (Pruegger & Rogers,1993) is designed to target particular cultures and includes items such as 'Fewer non-white immigrants should be taken into Canada', and the Intercultural Adjustment Potential Scale (ICAPS;Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013)which has been used to measure taboo topics under the concept of flexibility, uses statements such as 'I think women should have as much sexual freedom as men - I would not object to my husband or wife having friends of the opposite sex'. These statements might be suitable in many cultures, but they could have a negative impact on this research project, which will be conducted in a conservative Saudi Arabian culture.

Many intercultural tests already exist in the literature; thus, instead of developing a new scale, I chose a test that aligns with the current study aims and which best suits the research context. During the process of choosing the right scale, I considered the following criteria: (a) includes items free of cultural biases, (b) includes items free of sensitive taboo topics and (c) includes indicators that can offer descriptive levels of IC. After evaluating the available tests, I chose the IDI developed by (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) for the following reasons:

1. The IDI is theoretically grounded and built on the DMIS(Bennett, 1986b), which provides precise dimensions of IC through a sequential progression of a worldview. Bennett (1986) presented his theory after years of observing intercultural encounters between people in academic and business contexts (Paige et al., 2003). It assumes that

people's orientations towards cultural differences go through six stages: Denial, Polarization(defence/reversal), Minimisation, Acceptance, Adaptation and Integration (Bennett, 1986). The DMIS theory also argues that people's intercultural experiences are guided by constructing boundaries of the self and the other throughout the conceptualising of difference (Bennett, 2017).

2. IDI as a tool focuses on the intercultural sensitivity that is considered to be the foundation of IC (Chen & Starosta, 2000) and the fundamental element of motivation to understand, appreciate and accept cultural differences.

3. The IDI generates individual and group reports of the participant's results, which include the following:

    a. The **developmental orientation (DO)** outlines the participant's results by showing his/her stage on the continuum of DMIS.A Developmental Orientation (DO) – where the IDI places them. Range between 55 – 145 for Denial from 55 to 70, Polarization from 70 to 85, Minimization from 85 to 115, Acceptance from 115 to 130 and Adaptation from 130 to 145.

Figure 3: The IDI levels and scores adapted form (IDI,2024) recourse guide
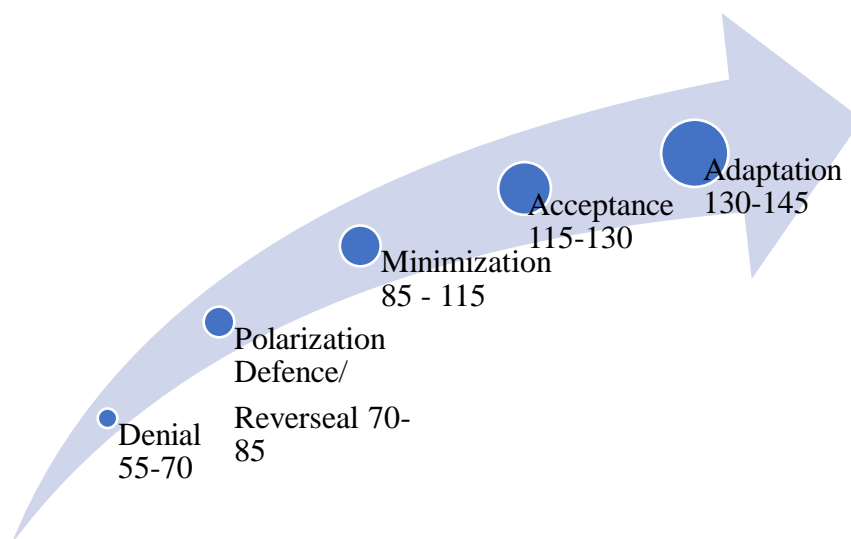
4. The IDI can be used only if the administrator (test user) attended the certifying course provided by the developer(Hammer, 2015) and is thus qualified to guarantee the quality of the implementation of the tool with people. As a certified administrator of the IDI tool, I can use the generated individual and group reports of the IDI results. I also practised interpreting IDI results with the participants and determining how to apply the customised developmental plan with the responders of each IDI stage.

IDI assesses the respondents according to their attitudes towards cultural differences on a developmental continuum of stages. Scholars in several studies such as (Klak & Martin, 2003) have defined the core concepts of the DMIS, which is presented as stages which a person goes through while experiencing different cultures or dealing with people from different cultures. Klak and Martin (2003) claimed that Bennett designed the DMIS to interpret people's responses towards cultural differences in similar situations, meaning that even though people face similar scenarios when they are exposed to different cultures, their reactions differ. Since I intended to use the intervention in this study to assess teachers' IC, a developmental theoretical model such as the DMIS can be argued to meet the aims of the current study. The IDI has the potential to provide a clear indication of the teachers' current IC levels before and after implementing the training. Accordingly, the DMIS and IDI was evaluated critically by measuring how applicable it is found to be in the particular context of the study. In their assessment of cross-cultural competence, Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) reviewed more than 30 intercultural tests and found that the IDI provided a positive result particularly in terms of training efficacy. In their handbook of IC, Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) reviewed more than 47 tests available in the literature and concluded that what can align with the outcomes of what the researchers aim to achieve then it is considered a valid tool. The IDI can guide the

development of the teachers' results profile and approach the development path critically by relating it to past intercultural experiences. At the same time, a teacher can reflect on his or her teaching practices considering the DMIS and can then discuss whether the suggested theoretical framework of Bennett's (1986) DMIS can work in the classroom context.

Greenholtz (2005) raised some valid issues with regards to the transferability of the IDI across languages and cultures and questioned its ability as a potent tool in cultures other than American. For example, Greenholtz (2005) suggested that it may be difficult to translate some items of the IDI to the Japanese language without affecting the real meaning of it in English; however, this difficulty was considered not to be problematic in the current study, since the SA participants are specialised in the field of English and there was no intention to use an Arabic translation. Paige et al. (2003a) stated that the IDI is 'a sound instrument, a satisfactory way of measuring intercultural sensitivity'. Additionally, Engle and Engle (2004) provided positive feedback on the application of the IDI, noting that 'this assessment instrument is well-reputed, widely used, easily administered, and independently evaluated' (p.229). Nevertheless, Perry and Southwell (2011) argued that 'one possible critique of the DMIS is that it assumes that individuals develop intercultural sensitivity in a stepwise fashion, omitting the possibility that individuals may move backwards as well as forwards in the six stages' (p. 455). This drawback of the DMIS models was considered and explained by the instructor in the certifying training held in October 2018 in Germany when I became a certified IDI user. What we have been discussing in the IDI training workshop that people could be in acceptance and after situation of racism or exclusion might go backward and be defensive. So, we agreed that learning and assessing the IC should be an ongoing process and people must reflect on their understanding of self before understanding others.

3.4.2 The Qualitative Tools Justification for classroom observations

The DMIS assumes that people can develop along a continuum of six stages: denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Each level offers a descriptive characteristic of people towards cultural differences. In the section below, before conducting the classroom observations I created predicted statements (see Table 6) below. These statements that teachers might say during the discussion of the reading passage with their students, which can also be used as an indicator built on Bennett's (1986) DMIS framework as an intercultural scenario-based (ICSB). These items can aid in the assessment of teachers' IC by observing their practices in the classroom when they are teaching intercultural material. According to Armon, Wolfeld, Griffith, Liu and Rios (2016), ICSB items can be employed in the current context to focus on the specific skills of the framework, such as those in the proposed lesson plan in the below section.

Window to the World is a module in grade three of the Saudi English language textbook at the high school level, which is mainly aimed at achieving intercultural awareness. The selection of this cultural topic in lesson 2a (Hero) see (Illustration 1) and in lesson 4b (Cultural Differences) see (Illustration 2) see Appendix E&F used to explore teachers' attitudes and strategies, to determine how they deal with cultural lessons and to evaluate their intercultural teaching practices.

The is the reading text of lesson 2a (Hero) used a story of Salah Al din and King Richard as follows:

> Sometime in the 12th century, there lived an incredibly brave and sensible man named Salah al-Din. It was a time of war between men of different religions. Salah al-Din led the Muslim soldiers against their enemies and managed to defeat them at the Battle of Hattin in 1187 and freed Jerusalem. Crowds of Muslims gathered to cheer their victory. The war continued for many years, still Salah al-Din remains in history as a supporter of the Muslim culture, as a great leader and as an honest man whose careful plans and many skills won the respect even of his most famous enemy, King Richard I of England. For two years Salah al-Din and king Richard fought against each other, the former protecting and the latter trying to win Jerusalem. One day, word got around that King

Richard was wounded. His men gathered round the tent in which their King lay hidden. It was unknown whether the King was in pain or was suffering from an injury his men sat on the ground, looking extremely upset. While they were trying to find out more about the King's health, something unexpected happened. Some soldiers are approaching,' shouted a knight. Silence fell. As the strangers were galloping towards them, the King's men were nodding to each other. Five Muslim men greeted them. The knights raised their swords and lifted their shields in the air. shields in the air. What is the meaning of this' said one of them. We are here for the King,' one of them announced. Salah al-Din sent us. 'We come in peace,' said one of them. I am Salah al-Din's doctor. Salah al-Din knows your King is ill and sent me here to help him.' The knight removed his helmet. He then noticed that the men were carrying fruit for the King as well as ice to help with his fever. It was then that all of them realized that what they heard about Salah al-Din's goodness was true.

Therefore, lesson 2a, which is related to a cultural conflict topic, was observed and the teachers' discussions were recorded. In the reading text, there are pictures attached which are intended to trigger several discussions. Although most of the lessons represent objectives and surface knowledge of different cultures like food or clothes, if the teacher is interculturally competent, he or she will draw the learner's attention to different types of subjective cultural knowledge, for example, respect, tolerance, and empathy. A pitfall arises in the curriculum when its activities do not meet with its aims. According to the writer of the textbook, intercultural awareness is one of the main goals of the syllabus. However, the activities in the student book and the teacher's guidebook did not target developing intercultural skills. It was mainly about developing vocabularies and grammatical structure of the sentences.

Lesson 4b Cultural Differences, see (Illustration 2) in appendix 2 also is a reading lesson included text about three people from the United States who encountered situations of cultural shook and the student have to read and discuss these texts with the teacher as follows:

While I was in Saudi Arabia on a business trip, I was invited to a Saudi friend's house for lunch. It was the first time I had been to a Saudi house, and I was impressed by the spectacular decoration. At lunch time, my friend, Ibrahim, showed me into the dining room, where I met his four sons. The boys were talking cheerfully about their day when

a man came in the room, silently carrying a beautiful cup with something burning in it. I was curious about it. I was about to ask Ibrahim to tell me more about it when a wonderful smell interrupted my thoughts. Ibrahim explained that it is a custom in Saudi Arabia to burn bakhoor, a kind of scented wood, to create a pleasant atmosphere. It is also polite to use bakhoor w have guests.

John, Boston

I'm from Wisconsin, and when we meet someone for the first time, we usually shake hands. Well, I had a big surprise in Belgium. When I was introduced to my friend's brother, something occurred, which made me feel uncomfortable. I said 'hi' to him, extending my hand, and he came up to me and kissed me on the cheek, not once, but three times, going from one cheek to the other! Of course, I went red and they started laughing at me. In Belgium, it's common to greet someone by kissing three times.

Jack, Madison

Last year, I was invited to Japan by my friend Daiki. On the second day of my visit, Daiki asked me if I wanted to go to his house for dinner and of course I said 'yes'. It was really enjoyable, but halfway through the night, I got something in my eye. So, I tried to remove it with my finger. Daiki's brother saw me and he got really upset. I couldn't understand why though. I asked Daiki why his brother was angry with me and he told me that in Japan when you pull the skin down under your eye, it shows that you find something boring. Later in the evening, I apologized to Daiki's brother and tried to clear up the misunderstanding, but I'm not sure he believed me.

Peter, Miami

All types of questions that teachers present during the discussion determined the teacher's level of IC; for example, the techniques that the teachers employed to discuss a sensitive cultural topic, such as accepting different religions and how students are supposed to act, were observed. The teachers' abilities to deliver IC skills for their learners are assumed to be positively reflected in the teaching strategies and activities they implement in their classroom. Additionally, I compared the teachers' IDI results with findings from the classroom observations to explore any corresponding or inconsistent results. Furthermore, during the interviews, I was able to discuss classroom practices and the reasons behind the teaching strategies used in the observed classrooms.

3.4.3 Indicators of the predefined observed lesson for in-classroom teaching practices

3.4.3.1 Indicators of Denial

According to Bennett's (1986) DMIS, 'people with denial worldview generally are disinterested in cultural differences when it is brought to their attention' (p. 424). Those teachers who discussed only the presented topic without any reference to cultural concepts were to be diagnosed as being in the stage of denial based on the DMIS.

The following are some statements that I developed for the observed lesson to represent the stage of denial:

Table 7:Predicted statements or discussions that indicate Denial stage

Lesson	Predicted statements or discussions that indicates Denial
2a	➤ In this lesson (The Story of Salah Al-din), teachers in the stage of Denial will neglect to point out at any cultural differences between Western and Eastern cultures in the characters or the setting of the story during the reading discussion. They might continue reading the story focusing solely on the linguistic skills.
4b	➤ In this lesson (Cultural Differences), teachers in the stage of Denial will ignore pointing to any cultural difference or they will focus only of superficial difference like clothes or food.

3.4.3.2 Indicators of Polarization (Defence &Reverse)

People may be defensive in a superior way, meaning that 'one's own culture is experienced as the only valuable one' (Bennett, 1986, p. 424). People might be in the state of reversal if they believed that other cultures are superior to their native culture. Therefore, people in defence tend to experience any cultural differences as a threat, while people in the state of reversal identify other cultures as ideal and better than their own. The following are some potential statements that indicate teachers in the stages of defence and reversal:

Table 8: Predicted statements or discussions that indicate the Polarization stage

Lesson	Predicted statements or discussions that indicates Polarization
2a	➤ A teacher might comment only on the culture of Muslims in the story ➤ Muslim culture represents the power and control ➤ A teacher might comment only on the Christian values in the story

	➢ Christian culture is more precious and higher than any other cultures
4b	➢ Stanger customs of different cultures might refer as disgusting or wired

3.4.3.3 Indicators of Minimization

Bennett (1986) assumes that people in minimisation are likely to experience their cultural worldview as universal and consider differences to be negative: 'People at Minimization expect similarities, and they may become insistent about correcting others' behaviour to match their expectations' (p. 425). The following are some potential statements that teachers are predicted to use in the stage of minimisation during the reading discussion.

Table 9: Predicted statements or discussions that indicate Minimization stage

lesson	Predicted statements or discussions that indicates Minimization
2a	➢ Muslims and Christians are the same ➢ Christians and Muslims cultures share many common aspects
4b	➢ Teachers might focus on similarities of cultures traditions or customs more than differences

3.4.3.4 Indicators of Acceptance

According to Bennett's (1986) DMIS, people in the stage of acceptance identify cultural differences between cultures. In other words, 'people at acceptance can construct culture-general categories that can allow then to generate a range of relevant cultural contrast among many cultures' (Bennett, 1986, p. 425).

Table 10:Predicted statements or discussions that indicate Acceptance stage

lesson	Predicted statements or discussions that indicates Acceptance
2a	➢ Muslim and Christian cultures both have distinctive, rich and exciting aspects that we can learn from like many other cultures around the world.
4b	➢ Teachers in stage of acceptance will focus on accepting cultural difference of believes traditions etc.

3.4.3.5 Indicators of Adaptation

According to Bennett's (1986) DMIS, people in the stage of adaptation 'are able to express their alternative cultural experience in culturally appropriate feelings and behaviour' (p. 425).

Table 11:Predicted statements or discussions that indicate Adaptation

lesson	Predicted statements or discussions that indicates Adaptation
2a	➢ Conflicts can occur between any people, even if they represent the same religion. ➢ What can be learnt from this story is that we have to respect each other as humans even in times of tension and conflict.
4b	➢ Teachers in stage of adaptation might speak about how people can enjoy and embrace their difference, and how can people thrive in these differences as human

3.4.4 The justification for conducting interviews

As noted by key intercultural scholars, interviews are the most effective tool to assess IC and are successful if accompanied by another method such as observations (D. K. Deardorff, 2006a). I conducted interviews to enhance the understanding of teachers' IC knowledge and its relation to the development of their IC levels. I constructed the topics of the interview questions in order to address to the first research question, and to explore in general what the teachers' situations were concerning IC. A semi-structured interview assures that the predetermined topic will be discussed that the participants receive the same order of questions and that open-ended responses are included (Cohen et al., 2007). Further to this, I constructed indicators built on the DMIS for the participants' possible responses, which can be related to their IC levels, and which can then enrich the analysis of the data obtained from all tools used in the study.

3.5 Data collection process and analysis steps

The data collection process for this study involved a combination of observation, interviews, and the integration of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) tool. This comprehensive approach allowed for the exploration of teachers' backgrounds, experiences, and intercultural competence levels in teaching the English language in Riyadh.

1. Participants Selection:

Ten female teachers in Riyadh were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate, ensuring diversity in teaching experience, educational background, and exposure to different cultures.

2.   Pre-Assessment with IDI Tool:

Before observation and interviews, participants received the IDI assessment via email to measure their intercultural competence levels independently and objectively. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and voluntary nature of completing the assessment, ensuring honest responses reflective of their true perspectives.

3.   Observation:

Observations took place during regular teaching hours in the participants' schools, capturing teaching methodologies, classroom dynamics, and interactions with students. Detailed notes were taken to record observations relevant to intercultural competence and teaching practices.

4.   Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants in their teachers' offices, exploring their backgrounds, experiences, and perceptions of intercultural competence. Specific questions were included in the interview guide to inquire about participants' experiences with the IDI assessment and their perceptions of intercultural competence in teaching.

5.   Integration of IDI Tool into Interviews:

Participants were asked about their experiences with the IDI assessment and its relevance to their teaching practices during interviews. Insights gained from the IDI results were discussed in relation to participants' self-perceived intercultural competence levels and teaching approaches.

6.   Duration:

The data collection period spanned three months, from June to August 2021, allowing for multiple observations and interviews with participants. Interviews were scheduled at convenient times for participants within this timeframe, ensuring minimal disruption to their teaching responsibilities.

7. Ethical Considerations:

Prior ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and measures were taken to protect their privacy throughout the study.

3.5.1 Data Analysis steps:

I analysed the qualitative data in this study by applying a deductive approach, in which the researcher collects data to test a hypothesis-driven by a theory. 'Deductive reasoning is a theory-testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances' (Hyde, 2000,p.83).

The deductive approach for analysing my qualitative data is considered to be the most appropriate because the DMIS of Bennett's (1986) grounded theory provides explicit concepts that categorise people's orientations towards cultural differences. The deductive approach helps to identify indicators used to interview and observe the research participants, to test such concepts in DMIS theory and to explore any development in the teachers' IC. Hyde (2000) stated that implementing a deductive approach is only relevant under two conditions: first, the concepts to be studied should be defined clearly; and second, hypothesised relationships between these concepts can be stated before starting the data collection.

The analysis of the main study data involved integrating the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) results with observational data and interview transcripts. This process aimed to triangulate findings and gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' intercultural

competence levels and teaching practices. The data analysis method employed in this study was based on the conceptual framework proposed by Felipe et al. (2011), known as the Integrated Mixed Method (IMM) approach. The following sequential steps of the IMM analytical procedures facilitated a systematic transition between quantitative and qualitative data during the analysis:

Step 1: Focus of the Research Question and Eliciting Responses:

At this stage, I outlined six points of focus related to the main research questions, including participants' knowledge of intercultural competence (IC), perceptions of IC, beliefs in IC, attitudes toward IC, practices of IC, and IC levels according to the IDI scale before and after their training. This step aimed to establish clear focus areas for data collection and analysis, aligning with the research objectives.

Table 12: Example of Step 1(Focus of the Research Question and Eliciting Responses of Data Analysis)

Research Question	1. What factors affect Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence?	2. How do teachers understand the role of ICC in ELT (believes-practices)?	3. What do teachers think of their role (believes-practices) in promoting IC of themselves and their students?	4. Which stage of the DMIS scale best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers?	5. Are Saudi teachers prepared and trained to teach IC?	6. What views do teachers have on the assessment of IC?
TT1	• Age38 • 10 years' experience • Bachelor and MA degree in English • Khebrat intercultural training • Cultural exposure through tourism Childhood abroad in different countries	Although, TT1was not familiar with the terminology of intercultural competence, she recognized the function of ICC and was able to implement it during her classes. TT1 highlighted the concept of differences between people and avoid misunderstanding which considered one of the main	TT1 believed that English language teaching and culture are related due to the fact that English Language is considered a foreign language for the community, so culture is a must aspect during her classes. TT 1 believes that he plays a vital role in	Data revealed from interviews and observation backed up the existence of both mindsets intercultural and monocultural mindset. The IDI result of 79. 07 shows that TT1 is on the stage of Polarization which indicates a mono cultural mindset.	Data showed that TT1 welling to teach and implement ICC in her teaching, but she believed she was not trained to teach it during in-service and before.	TT1 thinks that intercultural competence assessment is not possible due to human ongoing and unique experiences. But instead, it could be observed. For the IDI (intercultural Development

		categories of ICC. TT1 professed that language alone will not enable people to communicate, she believed that ICC should be used as an essential tool to interact among people from different cultures. (Positive believes and practices)	promoting her students' intercultural competence by spending more time getting to know her students cultural background so she is applying ICC as a tool. TT1practiced ICC by highlighting tolerance and respect between different religions and different people in both lessons. TT1 confirmed that she was practicing and teaching ICC but she was not aware of its term. (Positive believes and practices) Cultural past experiences through story telling (teacher and student reflection)	Interview and observation confirmed that TT1 I on the stage of Adaptation. No data showed any indication of monocultural orientation.		Inventory) TT1 faced ambiguity and could not understand some of the questions in the inventory. Although, TT1 confirmed the significant of the questionnaire and the values of it content.

Step 2: Identifying Response Codes:

Using the NVivo program, relevant quotations from the data were encoded to identify response codes that answered the focus questions. Participants' case IDs were coded with their attributes, distinguishing between teachers who had been interculturally trained (TT), exposed to different cultures (TE), and those who had not received training or exposure to different cultures (T). This step facilitated the organization and categorization of data for further analysis.

Step 3: Creating Thematic Categories:

Thematic categories were created to organize and analyse the coded data. This process involved identifying common themes and patterns across the responses to attain an optimal solution capturing all relevant themes expressed by the participants. Thematic categories provided a structured framework for exploring the relationships between different aspects of intercultural competence and teaching practices.

Step 4: Data Analytical Approach:

In this step, associations between textual evidence of qualitative thematic themes and quantitative results of the IDI scale were analysed. The IDI results, representing participants' levels on the developmental continuum of intercultural competence, were compared and contrasted with qualitative insights from observational data and interview transcripts. This integrated approach allowed for a holistic examination of participants' intercultural competence levels, perceptions, and practices, providing a nuanced understanding of the findings.

By integrating quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods within the IMM framework, this study enhanced the depth and richness of insights into English language teachers' IC in Saudi Arabia. The systematic approach facilitated the exploration of complex relationships between different variables, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.5.2   Data handling and ethical consideration

Ethical Considerations:

Ensuring ethical conduct in research involving human participants is paramount to safeguarding their rights, privacy, and well-being. In this study, ethical considerations were meticulously addressed, including obtaining ethics approval and securing informed consent

from all participants, both male and female electronically sent to their email before submitting their IDI assessment and handing the participants by hand prior to interviews and class observation. Participants have adhered that recordings will be used for research purposes and they were well informed about the research projects.

1. Ethics Approval Procedure:

Before commencing the study, approval was sought from the relevant institutional ethics committee responsible for overseeing research involving human subjects. I prepared a detailed research proposal outlining the study's objectives, methodology, potential risks, and benefits to participants. The proposal included measures to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, and adherence to ethical guidelines outlined in institutional policies and regulatory frameworks. University of York ethics committee reviewed the proposal to assess its compliance with ethical standards and potential implications for participants. Upon approval from the ethics committee, the researcher was granted permission to proceed with data collection and analysis in accordance with the approved protocol.

2. Informed Consent Process:

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, both male and female, before their involvement in the study. Participants were provided with a detailed information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, potential risks and benefits, and procedures for data collection and confidentiality. The information sheet emphasized voluntary participation, ensuring participants understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants were given sufficient time to review the information sheet and ask any questions they had about the study before providing consent. Consent forms were then distributed to participants, asking them to sign and date the form to indicate their voluntary agreement to participate in the study. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential, and data would be anonymized and used only for research purposes.

3. Gender Sensitivity:

Gender sensitivity was maintained throughout the research process to ensure equal treatment and respect for all participants, regardless of gender. I made efforts to address any potential biases or stereotypes related to gender and cultural backgrounds, fostering an inclusive and respectful research environment. Male participant who-involved in the IDI process only also were well-informed about the research project .Measures were taken to ensure that male and female participants felt comfortable and empowered to express their perspectives and experiences without fear of discrimination or judgment. By adhering to rigorous ethical standards and obtaining informed consent from all participants, this study upheld the principles of respect, beneficence, and justice in research involving human subjects. Ethical considerations were integral to maintaining the integrity and validity of the study's findings while prioritizing the well-being and rights of participants.

4. Data Handling

Effective data handling procedures are essential for maintaining the integrity, confidentiality, and accuracy of research findings. In this study, meticulous data handling practices were implemented throughout the data collection, storage, and analysis stages to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. All collected data, including observational notes, interview transcripts, and IDI assessment results, were securely stored to protect participants' confidentiality and privacy. Electronic data files were encrypted and password-protected to prevent unauthorized access. Physical copies of data, such as consent forms and field notes, were stored in locked file cabinets in a secure location accessible only to authorized personnel.

5. Data Retention and Disposal:

Data retention policies were established to determine the length of time data would be retained after the completion of the study. Personally, identifiable information was securely retained for a specified period following University of York policies and regulatory requirements. At the end of the retention period after submitting the thesis, data were securely disposed of using appropriate methods to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

By implementing rigorous data handling procedures, this study ensured the reliability, validity, and ethical integrity of the research findings. These practices facilitated the systematic analysis and interpretation of data, ultimately contributing to a robust understanding of English language teachers' intercultural competence in Riyadh.

3.6 The Pilot Study

3.6.1 The aim

The main aim of the pilot study is to ensure that the methods used for research are appropriate such as the research questions, and the research tools andalso, the effectiveness of the analysis used for the data to answer the research questions. It was a very beneficial stage in my research journey as it showed me the reality of the research process and the possible difficulties that I might face ahead and how I am going to avoid such obstacles.

3.6.2 The process

The pilot study was conducted with five participants grouped as follows: first group TT as teachers who have been trained interculturally throughout (Khebrat). The second group of TEs is teachers who have only been exposed to different cultures without training.

Table 13: classification of participant teachers in the pilot study

Participant Codes	Experience	Gender	Nationality	Occupation	Total no

		Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	
1. TT.1 Ten years		Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	
2. TT.2	Nine Years	Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	
3. TE.1 Nineteen years		Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	
4. TE.2 Twenty-eight years		Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	
5. TE.3	24 years	Female	Saudi	English Language Teacher	5

I chose English language teachers because teaching a language always has a cultural element given that language and culture cannot be separated. Also, because the English language is considered a global language, people from all over the world speak English and thus English can be said to belong to different cultures. Therefore, English language teachers have to provide the right environment for their learners to be interculturally competent and the first step towards achieving that is to assess the teachers' intercultural competence. I assumed that teachers in Saudi Arabia are not necessarily (explicitly) aware of the concept of intercultural competence. I wanted to familiarise myself with the teachers' situation with what do they know about IC. I precisely wanted to explore their knowledge, attitude, perceptions, and practices of IC. All of the teachers who participated with me at this stage were fully motivated and interested in the research topic.

Group 1 (TT)

The first participant (TT1) taught English at the secondary stages for ten years. The second participant (TT2) taught English at the secondary stage for nine years. Both worked in public schools in Riyadh Saudi Arabia.

Group 2 (TE)

The third participant (TE1) taught English to students of different ages from intermediate to secondary for 19 years. The fourth participant (TE2) taught English to secondary students for 28 years. The fifth (TE3) also taught the English to secondary school students for 19 years. All of the teachers work in public schools in Riyadh Saudi Arabia.

3.6.3 The authorisation of school access

I gained authorized access from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia before conducting the interviews by submitting the interview questions, the research project information sheet and University of York ethics documents. The general supervisor of English showed great interest in this project and offered me a place to conduct the study intervention and motivated me to do the workshop at any time in the Education and training Centre of the Ministry of Education in Riyadh.

3.6.4 The interview procedure:

All of the interviews were carried out in Riyadh Saudi Arabia during my annual leave in their schools except one (TT2) we had a video call on Skype because she was in Australia doing her studies with Khebrat programme. Interviews were held in the teachers' offices. The interview sessions took no longer than fifteen minutes each. I started the interview by explaining my research project and handing out the research information sheet with the consent letters and reminding the teachers that they were able to withdraw their participation at any time and that

their data would be kept fully confidential. They were informed that the interview would be recorded. I thanked them all for their contribution, and they all showed their interest in participating in the study.

All interviews were held in English. I explained to the teachers that they had a choice to speak whichever language they preferred, and since they were English language teachers, it was not a problem. After recording the interviews, I uploaded all of the recordings into my account on Trint - a web-based transcription software which is secured by a password and linked to my email. One of the main advantages of using Trint software is that you can listen to the recording and edit any errors in text at the same time.

3.6.5 The outcome of interviews:

After conducting the interviews, I observed that the sequence of research tools should be changed. Instead of interviewing participants first and then sending the questionnaire, I should do the opposite. This was because I noticed that the information discussed in the interviews affected the participant responses in the questionnaire. So, I decided to conduct the observations at first and after that then the IDI and then interviews. For question no 12 and 13, I noticed that all of the teachers could not answer it until it was rephrased.

Table 14: the list of changes in interview questions from the pilot study to the current study

The old version	New version

Q.10 Do you interact willingly with people from the different cultural backgrounds?
 	
    If, yes How
    If, No Why
	Do you have a friend from different cultural backgrounds, or do you have any relations with people from different countries?

Q.12 To what extent do you think Intercultural Competence is an important objective to work towards?	Do you think IC is important in English classrooms and for your learners and why?
Q14. Do you think intercultural competence can be assessed? If yes, How If no, why	Do you think Can we evaluate or examine other peoples' intercultural competence? If yes, How If no, why

The table below (table 15) shows the organization of the data collection in order to answer the research questions after undertaking the pilot study.

Table 15:List of research questions and the method used to answer it

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THE METHOD USED TO ANSWER IT
1. What do Saudi English language teachers know about intercultural competence?	interviews
2. What is the stage that best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers on the scale of the Developmental Model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS)?	The Intercultural Development Inventory (Pre IDI-Scale)
3. What is the effect of the teachers' intercultural competence level on their teaching?	classroom observation
4. What is the effect of no exposure to different cultures on teacher's intercultural competence? (IDI)	classroom observation+ IDI scale)
5. What is the effect of exposure to different cultures on teacher's intercultural competence?	classroom observation+ IDI scale)
6. What is the effect of the training on the teachers' intercultural level and their teaching practices?	classroom observation+ IDI scale)
7. To what extent can intercultural competence be assessed in the Saudi Arabian context?	interviews

3.6.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis for both main and pilot study is based on the conceptual framework proposed by Felipe et, al. (2011) known as the Integrated Mixed Method approach (IMM). The sequential steps of the IMM analytical procedures allowed for a linking between the quantitative and qualitative data during the analysis.

Step1: The focus of the research question and eliciting responses

At this stage, I identified six focuses related to the main research questions, which appeared as follows:

a. The participants' knowledge of IC

b. The participants' perceptions of IC

c. The participants believe of IC source of

d. The participants' attitudes of IC

e. The participants' practices of IC

f. The participants' IC levels according to the IDI Scales

Felipe et al. (2011) indicated that the main advantage of this first step is to relate the identified relevant response which answers the specific focus question.

Step2: Identifying Responses Codes

Throughout identifying responses codes by using NVivo program, I encoded relevant quotes from the data that answers the research questions and coding participants' case ID with their attributes.

The pilot participants coding was:

   (T T) Teachers who have been interculturally trained.

   (T E) Teachers who have been exposed to different cultures.

In the piloting stage, I interviewed five teachers two who have been interculturally trained and three who have been exposed to different cultures.

Step3: Creating Thematic Categories

The benefit of creating thematic categories is "to attain an optimal solution, which is one (a) that consists of the same or similar thematic categories identified across independent coders

and (b) that captures all relevant themes as expressed by the participants" (Felipe et, 2011).

See table 16 of the themes.

Table 16: thematic categories and codes of the pilot study

Themes	Codes
Theme one: The nature of teachers' exposure to different cultures: Some of the teachers had been exposed to a different culture by travelling to different countries (tourism), and some had already an intercultural training by joining a training program called (Khebrat) aimed to provide immersion in a foreign culture. There was no indication for any kind of exposure to different cultures within their home country in Saudi. **Codes (Evidence):** ➤ **TE.1**: I have travelled as a tourist to Europe and Egypt, Turkey. (Reference 1: 1.81% coverage). ➤ **TE.2**: I travelled. My husband had a scholarship in the USA for around one and a half years. That was in 2004 for 2005 (Reference 1: 2.04% coverage). ➤ TE.3: Yes, Just for tourism (Reference 1: 0.73% coverage). ➤ TT.1: I went to Canada. I was there for a training course. Something related to education. It is a kind of training course which is related to immersion in Canadian school. On to check how education is there it's called Khebrat (Reference 2: 1.42% coverage). ➤ TT.2: Not too much. Sometimes I travel with my family's just to spend some days for tourism, and almost all of them are in Arabic countries. I joined to Khebrat program in last August 2018. Khebrat program means that transfer other experiences and new methods and new strategies from modern schools around the world and international schools and to transfer it to other schools inside Saudi Arabia (Reference 2: 4.18% coverage)	a. Exposure through tourism b. Exposure through training or studying
Theme two: Teachers' conceptuality of Intercultural competence **Codes (Evidence):** ➤ TE.1: I think this is when you accept another culture in another with other people customs and other people when you accept these You are very open mind to accept their actions and reactions and different religions different actions and reactions (References 1-5: 3.76% coverage) ➤ TE.2: I think Intercultural competence is when you have different cultures, and you put this in your mind when you teach because people are not the same. And culture. Has an influence on people? So, when we teach, we should put this in our mind (References 3-4: 2.89% coverage). ➤ TE.3: I do not have much idea about this, but I think cultural means a difference diversity between people (References 1-3: 3.07% coverage).	a. Acceptance b. Open-mindedness c. Religious d. Cross-culture e. Knowledge of other f. Respect g. Difference h. Foreign culture i. Diversity j. Inheritance k. Behavior
Theme three: Teachers readiness to interact with people from different cultural background ➤ TE.1: I usually have friends within the journey, but I do not have the relation a strong relationship because I'm busy. They are busy too, but we have we had a very nice time with us (Reference 1: 2.67% coverage). ➤ TE.2: Yes, of course. I think. I enjoy it because I understand What is the culture for them and. What are the new things that I learned from them, I just keep it in my mind that is a new experience for me or new things or new teaching methods new information about me and about other cultures (Reference 1: 4.49% coverage). ➤ TE.3: Yes, I have an Algerian friend, and we still in contact. But here in Saudi Arabia, I did not have friends from other countries.	a. Interacting with people from a different cultural background in Saudi (Locally) b. Interacting with people from a different cultural background (internationally)

Theme four: Cultural topics discussed with the learners in English language classrooms ➢ TE.1: We discuss, for example their developments if they are developed for example. Theirs react with People, for example, their reactions sometimes, Celebrations and holidays in different cultures sometimes their food (Reference 1: 3.34% coverage) ➢ TE.2: In my teaching, I try my best to put this in my mind, like teaching. I always try to show them to show my students that it is OK to be different. OK. No problem. The best thing is to be it to see it to be kind to each other and to understand that we are not the same (Reference 2: 0.02% coverage). ➢ TE.3: Yes. So, we have a unit about diversity, and they talk about in this unit they mentioned some diversity between cultures and eating in food in clothes and gestures and everything (Reference 1: 5.41% coverage)	a. Objective(surface) cultures b. Subjective (deep)cultures
Theme five: cultures should be presented in English language classrooms ➢ TE.1 I think American and British sometimes Australian. You have to read about these people because when we teach English you sometimes you have reading that we have now to realize some words or speaking especially speaking some words which is just like slang, and sometimes the figure of speech and so you have to read about these people, and sometimes they talk about something they don't understand well what they are you know you understand the meaning, but you don't understand what they mean in semantics meaning. You know some words have different meanings. So, you have to read about these cultures all these people to understand to realise the English language (Reference 1: 12.59% coverage). ➢ TE.2: Of course not. No. This is a big mistake. We should put in our mind that to show all the cultures in our books and just in English even in other subjects also Including Saudi Culture (Reference 1: 5.25% coverage). ➢ TE.3: No, I think no need to present the Saudi culture; it is an English lesson. Cultures from China the most diverse taking from China. They always talk about China culture (Reference 1: 2.16% coverage)	a. Exclusivity in presenting specific cultures b. Inclusivity in presenting cultures from all over the world
Theme six: Teachers preparedness to teach intercultural competence ➢ TE.1: No. (Reference 1: 3.59% coverage) ➢ TE.2: I never had something like this (Reference 1: 4.68% coverage). ➢ TE.3: No (Reference 1: 7.27% coverage)	a. positive b. negative
Theme seven: The application of teaching intercultural competence ➢ TE.1: Yes, of course, when the learners or my students learn about the difference between the other, they are not shocked, or they are not surprised about the other. They know about them. They realise them so they, of course, they know how to react with them, how can they contact with them can be OK. They have an idea of before (Reference 1: 7.04% coverage). ➢ TE.2: Most of the time during discussion I always try to draw their attention to their differences and cultures, and we should respect people whatever they are from no matter their language their religion their races. I always try but as like work or something really no I do not remember. because I when I teach, I like all those tools talk a lot to advise but I because in my opinion speaking is that this is what it is the most important skill in teaching English. (Reference 3: 12.70% coverage). ➢ TE.3: Yes. So, we have a unit about diversity, and they talk about culture in this unit they mentioned some diversity between cultures and eating in food in clothes and gestures and everything (Reference 1: 5.41% coverage).	
Theme eight: Teachers perceptions of how to use the English language	Using the English language as:

	a. Second language b. Additional language c. Foreign language d. Global language
➢ TE.1: I think that the English language is an official. Yes, of course, an official. I think the ones that do not know English. You cannot access any section as especially in the university so English I think this is a basic now is basic (Reference 1: 5.89% coverage). ➢ TE.2: Second language, I say (Reference 1: 3.24% coverage). ➢ TE.3: It is a global language, because it is the language of technology and science in everything we need it everywhere (Reference 1: 3.40% coverage).	
Theme nine: The possibility of assessing intercultural competence ➢ TE.1: yes. Sometimes people can accept everything, and they are very easy. So, you can observe it from their behavior from their speaking from their life relation, friendships (Reference 1: 4.93% coverage). ➢ TE.2: Yes, it can be. I think by making questionnaires maybe. We can decide, or we can evaluate this(Reference 1: 1.81% coverage). ➢ TE.3: No.(Reference 1: 4.82% coverage)	
Theme ten: The relationship between cultures and teaching the English language ➢ TE.2: Of course, it is deeply related to each other. Why because the English language now it is the language of maybe half of the planet speak English so we should always when you speak English it means that you can talk to many different people with different cultures different languages different religion. So yes, it has big connection yes between culture and English language (Reference 1: 7.94% coverage). ➢ TE.3: No, I do not think there is a relationship between them. Reference 1: 1.72% coverage.	
Theme eleven: The status of the IC ➢ TT.1: I believe it is important. Yeah, I guess it is important. We have to like you know that my students are always more like attentive they are much more interested when I give them like examples that I did this when I was in Canada when I visited a friend of mine told me that. They start to pay attention. They are much more interested. (Reference 3: 5.68% coverage) ➢ TT.2: Yes of course. I think it is very important for any teachers to learn it. But I did not know about it and I did not have any courses in it, and I want to apply it in my country inside my school, and I want to transfer that experience with other teachers. I think it is very important for everyone. (Reference 3: 8.48% coverage)	

Step 4: Data analytical approach

Step 4 involved the analysis of the relations between the textual evidence of the qualitative thematic themes and the quantitative results of the Intercultural Development Inventory Scale. These are available in the form of levels on the developmental continuum see tables 17,18,19,20,21 below:

Table 17: Case TE1 analytical storyline and the textual evidence

Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline

Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline
TE.1	71.47 Polarization More Defence-like and less Reversal. A judgmental orientation that views cultural difference in terms of "us" and "them" This ranges from (1) a more uncritical view toward one's own cultural values and practices coupled with an overly critical view toward other cultural values and practices (Defence) to (2) an overly critical orientation toward one's own cultural values and practices and an uncritical view toward other cultural values and practices (Reversal).	"I think American and British sometimes Australian. You have to read about these people because when we teach English." "I think the ones that do not know English. You cannot access any section as especially in the university so English I think this is a basic now is basic."	a. TE.1 selective choice of including particular cultures to teach in her classroom show a judgmental stand. She recommended that Saudi culture must be avoided in English language classroom is evidence that her orientation toward cultural differences is within Polarization, reflecting an "us and them" judgmental viewpoint toward cultural differences and I think her stand reversal not defence. b. Reversal, in which other cultural practices are less critically evaluated, and cultural practices within one's own group are likely to be judged from an overly critical standpoint. ➢ There is a precise match between her IC developmental level and textual evidence indications.

Denial | Polarization: Defense/ Reversal | Minimization | Acceptance | Adaptation

55   70   85   100   115   130   145

71.47

Table 18: Case TE2 analytical storyline and the textual evidence

Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline
TE.2	92.15 Minimization Developmental Orientation Score indicates that the primary orientation toward cultural differences is within Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions and behaviours.	"All the cultures from all over the world. All countries should be included. Cultures from Africa, Asia and Europe everywhere so, we should put this in our minds while teaching" "We should put in our mind that too. to show all the cultures in our books and just in English even in other subjects also	TE.2 text shows her focus on cultural differences and her appreciation of how she encourages her learners to be aware of their differences. The concept of including all cultures in her teaching is evident and especially the inclusion of the Saudi culture appreciation on self and others. ➢ The contradictory is apparent in her IDI score and the IC level. People in minimisation usually highlight commonality that masks equal recognition of

		Including Saudi Culture".	cultural differences due to less cultural self-awareness which is contradicting to her text. 8
		"I always try to make them proud of themselves. And at the same time, I want them to respect the other cultures".	
		"I always try to draw their attention to their differing differences and cultures, and we should respect people whatever they are from no matter their language their religion their races."	

Table 19: *Case TE3 analytical storyline and the textual evidence*

Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline
TE.3	22.51 Denial This Developmental Orientation Score indicates that the primary orientation toward cultural differences is within Denial, an orientation that recognizes some observable cultural differences (e.g., food), may not notice a deeper cultural difference (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences.	"We have a unit about diversity, and they talk about in this unit they mentioned some diversity between cultures and eating in food in clothes and gestures." "Yeah, but still they are Arabs like from Egypt they are Arabs not very different. Or we used t to see their culture. We do not find their differences."	a. TE.3 recognises (objective culture) surface culture topics for example food clothes etc b. TE.3 did not recognise the differences between cultures. ➢ TE.3 IC level reflected her textual evidence and supported it.

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22.51
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55   70   85   100   115   130   145
Denial   Polarization: Minimization   Acceptance   Adaptation
            Defense/
            Reversal

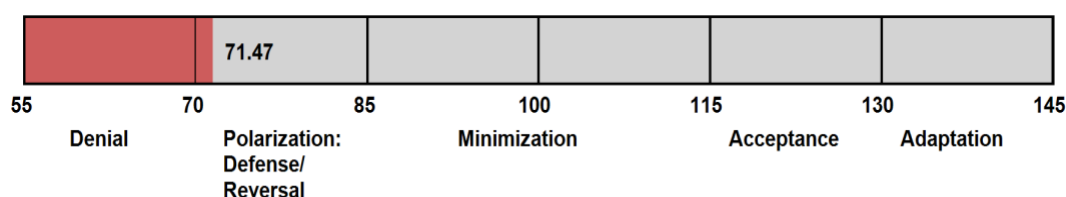*Table 20: Case TT1 analytical storyline and the textual evidence*

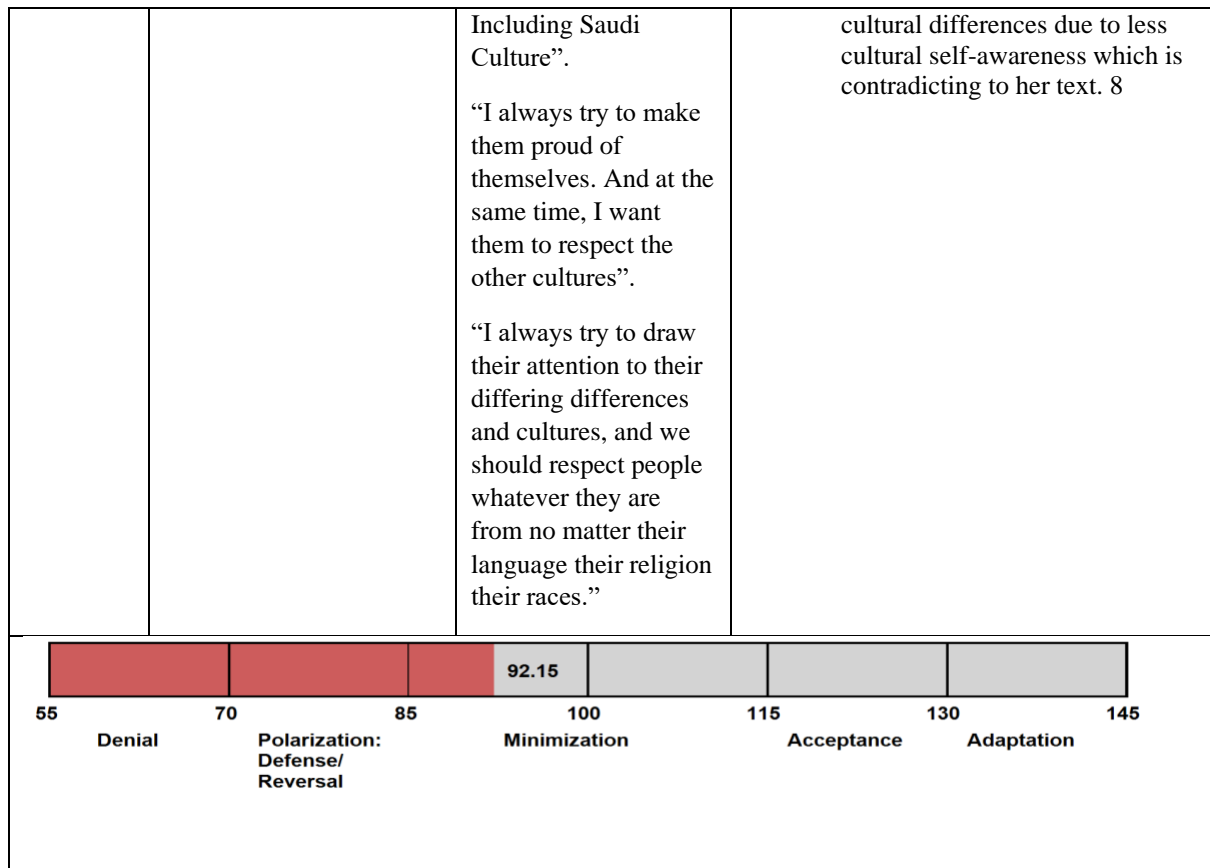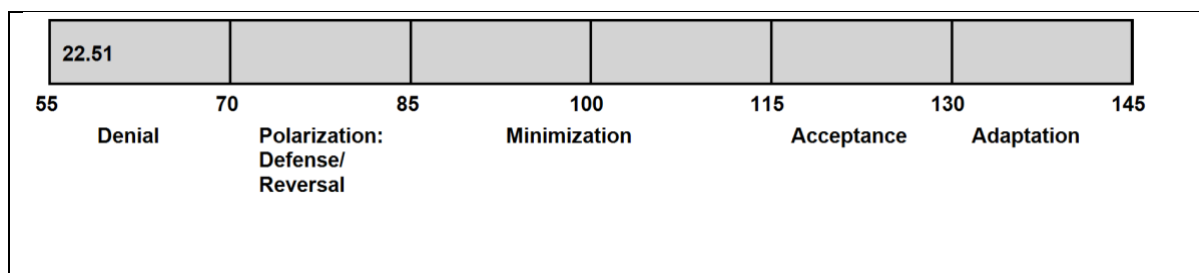| Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline
TT.1	98.34 Minimization Developmental Orientation Score indicates that the primary orientation toward cultural differences is within Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions and behaviours.	"The knowledge let say respecting other cultures, acceptance". "The focus is much more on Islamic events the characters there are even if they a foreign Names or American or English names or so on, but the main idea let's say there is no mention for topics related to Indian festivals. It's about Eid Alfetr Eid Alhaj Islamic festivals Islamic events without any reference to other festivals we as the teacher we try always to mention other things other festivals or other cultures But we try to avoid the religious topics". "I believe that the Chinese and Indian cultures should be presented because you know when I was there in Canada a for the Khebrat program I was surprised because I saw many Indian and many Chinese people. They were they were like part of the of the Canadian culture. So, I find that I find out that some diversity there is what makes them is an element of their strength. We have to focus on cultures like the Indian the Chinese because they are, I believe that they are dominating the future dominating countries or power".	a. TT.1 expressed subjective deep cultural concepts like acceptance and respect, but showed some exclusivity about cultures should be presented in her classrooms about the dominance and cultures are stronger than others and this indicates an evaluation of superiority of dominant culture. This orientation happened to people developing polarisation perceptions about different cultures weather is defence or reverse, and this contradicts her IC level.
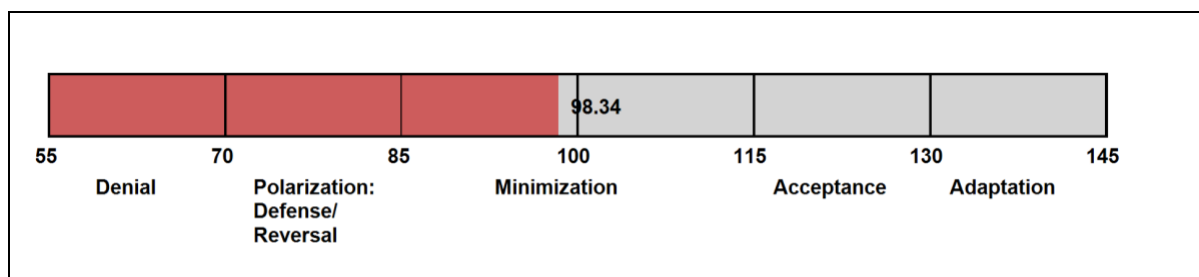
Table 21: Case TT2 analytical storyline and the textual evidence

Case ID	IDI Level	Textual evidence	The analytical storyline
TT.2	63.03 Denial This Developmental Orientation Score indicates that the primary orientation toward cultural differences is within Denial, an orientation that recognizes some observable cultural differences (e.g., food), may not notice a deeper cultural difference (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences.	"When I watch that video, I understand. What is the meaning for it, but, I didn't know about it before, and it does have any place in my teaching and Saudi Arabia." "In my opinion it is very useful that when we bring another culture and our teaching. But in my opinion, also I think that's an English (British)culture is suitable for us. Because we are already teaching this language. I think it is suitable for me and other teachers If we learn more about that culture".	a. TT.2 was not familiar with what IC is, but after I explained to her she Indicates the exclusivity of introducing only a specific culture in her teaching (the British English culture)

IDI Group Profile

Range of Developmental Orientations

Table 22: Pilot Study IDI Group Results
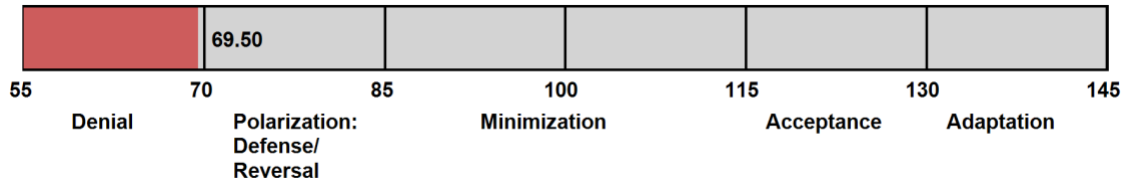
Scale and Subscale Statistics

Table 23: IDI Scale and Subscale Statistics of Pilot study Group

	# of Respondents	Mean Score	Standard deviation
Perceived Orientation (PO)	5	113.71	12.27
Developmental Orientation (DO)	5	69.50	29.99
Orientation Gap Score (+ = PO greater than DO; - = DO greater than PO)	5	44.21	17.89

Demographic Summary

Table 24: Demographic Summary of the pilot study Group

	# of Respondents	% of Respondents	
Education level (completed):			
Other	0	0.00%	
Ph.D. degree or equivalent level graduate degree	0	0.00%	
M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	2	40.00%	
Post-Secondary (university) graduate	3	60.00%	
Secondary (high) school graduate	0	0.00%	
Did not complete secondary (high) school	0	0.00%	
SAUDI ARABIA		5	100.00%
Current position in your educational institution:			
Other		0	0.00%
Volunteer		0	0.00%
Student		0	0.00%
Staff		3	60.00%
Faculty		2	40.00%
Administration		0	0.00%

Figure 4: Demographic Summary of the Pilot Study Group

Demographic Information

1. Education level (completed):
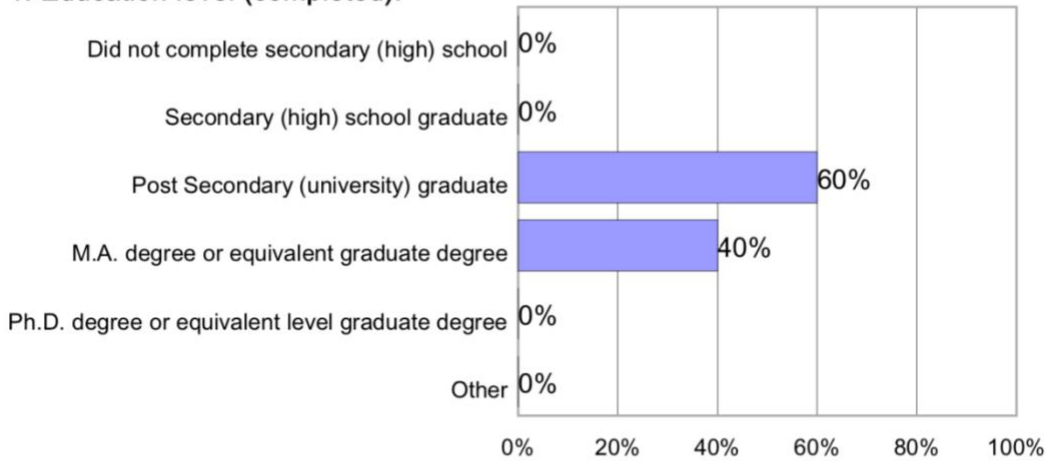
Did not complete secondary (high) school	0%
Secondary (high) school graduate	0%
Post Secondary (university) graduate	60%
M.A. degree or equivalent graduate degree	40%
Ph.D. degree or equivalent level graduate degree	0%
Other	0%

(0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

2. Country of citizenship (passport country). Indicate the country that you consider your primary country of citizenship.

SAUDI ARABIA — 100%

(0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)
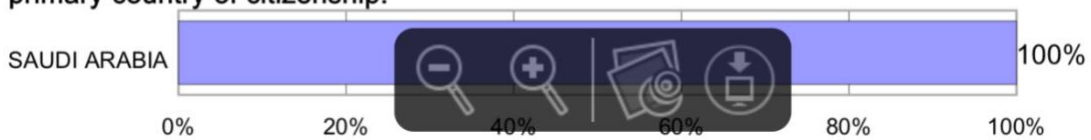
Figure 5: IDI Developmental Orientation Profile Scores

Range of Developmental Orientations

Percentage Developmental Orientation

Adaptation	0.0%
Acceptance	0.0%
Minimization	40.0%
Polarization	20.0%
Denial	40.0%

(00% 05% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45%)

117
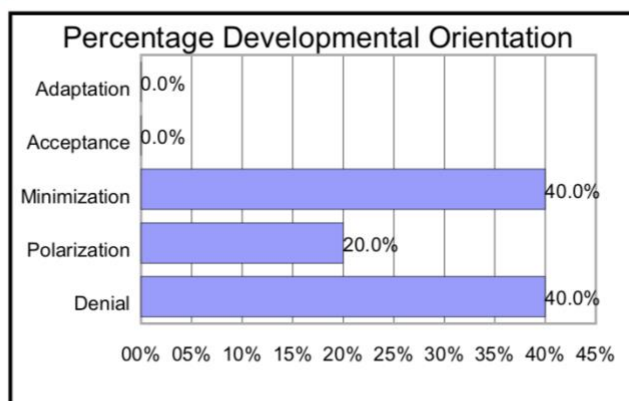
IDI Developmental Orientation Profile Scores

When discussing the results of the study, it is important to note that the IDI Developmental Orientation profile scores ranged from 55 to 145. The Developmental Orientation profiles provide standardized (z-score) scores in which "100" represents the mean (50th percentile) with a standard deviation of 15. This standardized profile score is thus presented in the same format as other measures (e.g., IQ, where "100" represents the average IQ of individuals). (Hammer, 2015).

Orientation score ranges on the Intercultural Development Continuum were:

- Denial orientation scores range from 55.00-69.99.

- Polarization: Defence/Reversal orientation scores range from 70.00 to 84.99.

- Minimization orientation scores range from 85.00 to 114.99.

- Acceptance orientation scores range from 115 to 129.99.

- Adaptation orientation scores range from 130.00 to 145.00.

Determining the feasibility of the research design in the pilot study guided me to choose the right sequence of conducting the research methods in a way that would not affect the participants' viewpoint. In this phase of the pilot study, I started interviewing the participants first and then observing them in classrooms which led me to notice that they were affected by the topics discussed in the interviews during the classroom observation. So, in the main study, the sequence changed to observing the participants first then conducting the IDI assessment and later interviewing them to also allow the participants to offer some insights on the IDI or any teaching practices that occurred during the classroom observation.

3.6.7 Conclusion

The pilot study was a critical phase that alerted me to the challenges that I could face before and during the collection of data for the main study. It also allowed me to make sure that the methods I intended to implement for the main study would allow me to answer the main research questions. In addition, the pilot study provided the needed reflection on the type of questions and classroom observation that will get me to answer the research questions ahead. In the following chapter, the research findings of the main study are presented and discussed. The research findings presented in this chapter offer valuable insights into English language teachers' intercultural competence levels, perceptions, practices, and experiences in Saudi Arabia. By building upon the insights gained from the pilot study, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on intercultural competence development in language education and highlights the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate diverse classroom environments effectively.

Chapter Four: Research Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the main study, aiming to provide comprehensive insights into the factors influencing Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence. To facilitate a thorough understanding of the collected insights, the questionnaire data are presented together within thematic sections. This approach enables a holistic examination of the data, showcasing the similarities, differences, and patterns observed across all participants. By organizing the findings in this manner, we ensure that every participant's perspective is duly considered and accounted for.

The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. What factors affect Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence?

2. How do Saudi teachers understand the role of intercultural competence in the teaching of the English language, including teachers' beliefs and practices?

3. How do Saudi teachers perceive their role in promoting intercultural competence among educators and students?

4. Which stage of the DMIS scale best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers?

5. Are Saudi English language teachers well-prepared to teach and train colleagues and students about intercultural competence?

6. What are the views of Saudi English language teachers on the assessment of intercultural competence?

The data analysis approach employed a deductive method, wherein data were collected to test hypotheses driven by theory. Deductive reasoning, as described by Hyde (2000), involves testing established theories or generalizations against specific instances. In our case, we applied Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) theory, which provides explicit concepts for categorizing and diagnosing people's orientations towards cultural differences.

The deductive approach proved compelling as it allowed us to identify indicators used for interviewing and observing research participants, test concepts from the DMIS theory, and measure the development level of teachers' intercultural competence. As Hyde (2000) noted, implementing a deductive approach is relevant when concepts are clearly defined, and hypothesized relationships between these concepts can be stated before data collection begins.

Furthermore, through our data analysis process, several themes emerged, which will be elucidated in subsequent sections of this chapter. These themes provide additional depth and context to our findings, enriching our understanding of Saudi English language teachers' perspectives on intercultural competence.

4.2 The Research participants:

Ten teachers participated in the main study. They were grouped according to their experience and/or exposure to other cultures. The first group comprises three interculturally trained English language teachers who are coded by (TT). They all had completed the Khebrat teacher training in English-speaking foreign countries, TT1 in New Zeeland and TT2, TT3 in the United States between 2017, 2018 and 2019. The second group consisted of four English language teachers who were exposed to foreign cultures through travelling and tourism and coded by (TE1, TE2, TE3 and TE4), but who had not had any formal IC training. The third group consisted of three teachers who had not had any intercultural training, nor had they ever been exposed to different cultures by travelling, and they were coded by (T1, T2 and T3).

Firstly, the IDI questionnaire was sent to all the participants and the completed questionnaires were returned by the end of December 2019. The classroom observation sessions began in January 2020, in Riyadh Saudi Arabia, organised according to the teachers' schedules and availability. Two particular lessons (Cultural differences and Hero) were chosen to elicit cultural teaching practices by the teachers. Following the classroom observation session, interviews were held with the teachers and were completed by the end of March 2020.

4.3 The Intercultural Competence Levels (IDI) Of Saudi Female Teachers

4.3.1 TT Group

This section outlines the DIMS levels of all research participants including the ten teachers and presents a detailed explanation of each IDI stage. In the case of TT1, there appeared to be

some contradictions as well as consistencies between the data revealed from (the IDI assessment) compared to the data obtained from the interview and class observation. TT1's IDI score placed her at the level of Polarization with (79.68) with more Defense-like and less Reversal:

Figure 6: TT1's IDI score

79.02				
55	70	85	100	115	130	145
Denial	Polarization: Defense/ Reversal	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation
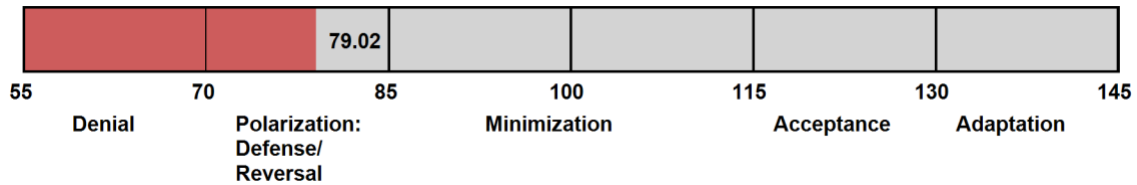
In contrast, the data from the interview and class observation showed that she is at the stage of acceptance. At the same point there were data also shows her at the stage of polarization which revealed that it was in a line with the IDI result.

> TT1: "<u>we should focus on the British and American Culture and lifestyle, so students in English classes could have proper pronunciation and accent of the language</u>".

The use of the word "proper pronunciation" reflected Defense/Reversal: "Tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one's own, exemplified by "going native" among long-term sojourners or the "false ally" among some dominant-culture seekers of minority approval (Bennett, 2011.p,3). Which means that TT1 can be argued to believe that British or American culture, at least regarding the accent or the English language, is superior in comparison to other cultures or other accents. In this light, it is perhaps the case that TT1 associates proper pronunciation of the English language with cultural superiority. Similarly, in this case, this excerpt reveals from observational data shows TT1 is more into the stage of Defence/Denigration: explained as "the existing cultural worldview is protected by negatively evaluating persons with different cultural behaviors or values (Bennett, 2011.p,3). During TT1's lesson 4B (Cultural differences), she let her students describe an African custom as disgusting and she did not highlight her students' judgmental views towards differences:

> TT1: good job you are right the gestures might have different meanings and might be misunderstood.
>
> Students: there is an African they have a very weird tribe who spit on each other as a greeting way when they meet.
>
> TT1: can you tell us what's the name of this country?
>
> Students: I think it is in Zimbabwe.
>
> TT1: you mean it is a small society in that culture do they think that is a bad behavior?
>
> Students: yeah it is disgusting.

The teacher ignored her student's comment on this and did not explain to her that this could be a negative judgment on the cultural practice of a different culture.

On the other hand, contradicting data from the interview showed that TT1 interacted willingly with people from different backgrounds. Individuals at the acceptance stage develop a deep understanding of different perceptions about other cultures that are different from their own. For example, they respect the values and beliefs of individuals practising a different religion. In TT1's case, the teacher explained that she easily interacts with people who are Christian even though she is a Muslim.

> She stated, " I am a social person in the first place, and I have a lot of friends from all over the world I have made many friends in New Zeeland and we are still in contact until this moment even if they are practicing different religions, I always have the curiosity to know more and learn new things".

Thus, if TT1 is not prejudiced and does not feel threatened by people from different cultures, this contradicts the previous finding from her IDI score. This inconsistency of data revealed from the IDI assessment compared to her data obtained from observation and interview could have been the result of many different factors. One is that the IDI assessment is designed for a different context and a different culture. This raises the question of its validity, that is, whether it applies to other contexts. TT1 had a view on this; when asked her opinion about the IDI assessment she stated:

TT1: "the questions were not clear to me some questions are ambiguous, but I felt other questions were more value and have deep concepts, thoughts and perception of difference"

Figure 7: TT2's IDI score

TT2's IDI result was also inconsistent with data gathered from her interview and from the classroom observation. The IDI placed her on the Minimization stage with the score of 109.22.
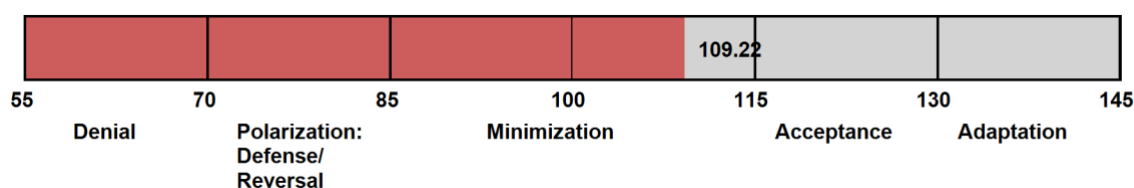
There was no single indication of monocultural orientations spotted in the data gathered from the interview or class observation. According to the interview data, the teacher values the intercultural experiences that she has gained through traveling and training. Her willingness to associate with people from different cultural backgrounds further illustrate that the teacher is comfortable when engaging with diverse cultures besides Arabic, as seen in data below taken from the interview:

TT2: Although my parents did not allow travelling or meeting strange or foreign people when I was young, but I have always wanted to break these family laws and go to explore the whole world. My only way to escape this was the internet I used to make friends from all over the world through online chatting and avoid Saudi people so I could explore new cultures and different thoughts.

During the observation in the Hero lesson, TT2 showed advanced levels of IC and intercultural sensitivity. Here during the class, she stopped the discussion which had been about one specific culture because she noticed the discomfort of one of her students. Later in the interview I asked her about what happened and why she stopped the discussion and she replied:

TT2: <u>Because once we had a conversation about Egyptian culture and the Egyptian girl in the class was so embarrassed, I felt she did not want to be different from other Saudi classmates.</u>

Adaptation, which is classified as an advanced level of IC orientation on the scale of DMIS, involves attitudes like empathy to other cultures. Empathy, in such cases, involves expanding one's worldview about different cultures and striving to identify with individuals from diverse cultures irrespective of underlying differences or conflicts. TT2's ability to empathize with another perspective, in turn, allows her behaviour to flow naturally from past experiences. For example, TT2's reaction to her student when she refused to embarrass her student demonstrates that IDI assessment result which was in Minimization stage contradicts with her intercultural orientation and her practice of intercultural teaching. People in the Minimization stage tend to assume that people are alike. They emphasize the commonality of human beings in terms of physiological similarity to approach different cultures. TT2's cultural sensitivity and her ability to differentiate between her student's emotions towards their cultural identity demonstrated that she is in the stage of Adaptation according to DIMS.

TT3 IDI assessment indicated that she is in the Denial stage with a score of (40.31).

Figure 8:TT3' IDI score
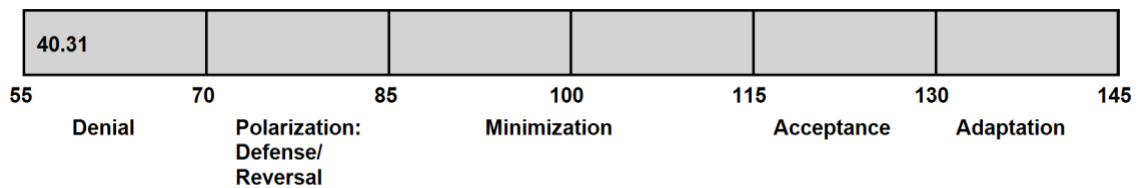
People in the Denial stage have a lack of recognition of more complex cultural differences. This index presumes that the teacher's teaching practices would be indicative of a person at the denial stage. For instance, it would be expected that during the lesson, the educator will fail to pinpoint the differences between Western and Eastern cultures. In contrast, the data from the classroom observation reveals that this is not the case, since the teacher is aware of

cultural differences and highlights them during the reading of lesson Cultural Differences.

TT2 highlighted the concept of diversity and equality she stated:

> TT2: we are all equal regardless of how you look regardless of where you come from we all have the right to learn to study to work to do everything you are no better than anyone because you come from this place or that place so equality is not like similarity we are different we are not the same but we are equal to each other this is the idea of the diversity.

Similarly, the responses from the interview are indicative of a person with adaptation

orientations.

> TT2: To know others that means you accept others, you accept the differences between us, especially here in our class we have different nationalities do you think that it is healthy or not?
> Students: yes, it is healthy
> TT2: why?
> Student: it prevents racism and hate, and it is interesting to explore other cultures
> TT2: thank you so much excellent, so why do you know are there differences? and are the differences bad or good?
> Students: to respect each other.
> TT2: yes excellent, if we know our differences, we will respect each other and why it is healthy.
> Students: to know how to deal with other people
> TT2: yeah because will deal with other different levels of people, traditions and customs. Okay girls before we start the reading passage what do we usually scan the text for what?

TT3's cultural judgment of herself and others during their time experiencing foreign culture

(Khebrat) demonstrated a high level of an Ethnorelative mindset. Throughout her

interview and during her teaching practice in classes I observed on several occasions,

a deep understanding and a comfortable bridging across cultural differences.

> TT3: as you can see the nature of my school which is located in the middle of Riyadh, it is a mix of cultures. I always try to highlight the acceptance of each other and try to limit any poetical racist acts or hate also to focus on our values of equality and inclusion and teach them that difference does not affect friendliness.

Two out of the three teachers who had undertaken the Khebrat program (TT2 and TT3), had similar contradictory results between their DIMS level measured by the IDI, and from what was observed during the classroom observations and/or in the interviews. However, for TT1, there were also some parallel results across all the data. For the IDI all teachers appeared to be from an ethnocentric orientation towards differences in cultures. While data from the interviews and classroom observations suggests the opposite. What can be concluded from these results is that assessing intercultural competence is not necessarily conclusive and is a very sensitive and complicated task (Borghtti, 2017). As a researcher, I was able to assess the teachers' IC by observing their behavior and their teaching practice in the classroom. Also, assessing teachers' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about IC and how interculturally competent they think they are. The DMIS helped to categories concepts and identify the teachers' specific practices of IC, and yet the IDI appeared not to elicit results similar to those found using the qualitative methods. The following (table 20) compared the IC level generated from the qualitative data of interviews and observations to the assessment level generated from the qualitative tool of the IDI.

Table 25: TT Teachers' comparison of IC level from IDI, interview, and class observation

Teacher code	DMIS level of IDI	DMIS level of qualitative data
TT1	Defense stage scored 79.02	Defense and Acceptance
TT2	Minimization scored 109.22	Acceptance
TT3	Denial scored 40.31	Adaptation

4.3.2 TE group

TE1 mentioned an interesting fact about her personality. She stated that although she was judged for her dark skin color by many in her community, she never felt negatively toward this situation but, instead, she even used it as an example to her students when it comes to topics like racism. This is a clear indication of a higher level of IC, people in the stage of

Adaptation are able to adapt behaviour by shifting negative perspectives of cultural differences into positive views.

> TE1: "I usually point to judgments that I faced according to my skin colour as an example of racism during my classes trying to bring lively examples to my students"

Interestingly, TE1's IDI Score was 82.16 which indicates that she is on the stage of Polarization (Defense) orientation, which contradicts data revealed from the observation and interview.

Figure 9: TE1's IDI Score

Figure 10:TE2's IDI Score
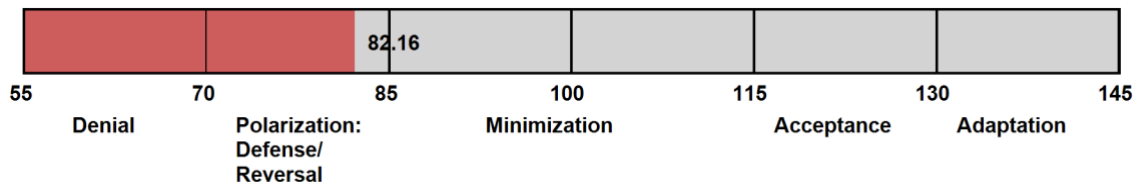
Unlike previous teachers, TE2's IDI results of 97.03 appeared to be in alignment with data extracted from interviews and classroom observations.
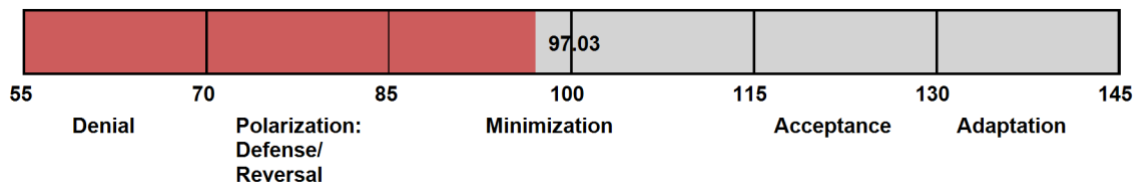
TE2's data showed that she is in the stage of Minimization where "The familiar cultural worldview is protected by believing that deep down we are all alike, either physically/psychologically or spiritually/philosophically. This assumption of similarity is then invoked to avoid recognizing one's own cultural patterns, understanding others, and eventually making necessary adaptations. The assumed commonality with others is typically defined in ethnocentric terms: since everyone is essentially like us, it is sufficient in cross-cultural situations to just be yourself" (Bennett,2011, p.5). TT2 almost neglected the looking at concepts of intercultural competence. There were no practices of intercultural teaching on any

occasion during the classroom observation. TE2 intentionally refused to focus on cultural differences as she believes that it is a negative act. During the interview, she stated:

> TE2: I see now the world is becoming a small village or a global village we could understand each other from the movies, YouTube. I became aware of the other people's likes and dislike and how other people's deal with each other. I feel the world and the cultures became similar even in clothes and food.

By minimising cultural differences as above mentioned in her interview, this educator's IC level from both the IDI and the qualitative data is consistent. This observational note during the classroom is rather congruent with the IDI findings because such behaviour by the teacher reciprocates those of an individual at the minimization stage, that is, those who are disinterested in other people's different cultures since she believes that people of different cultures have more in common than they differ.

Figure 11:TE3's IDI Score
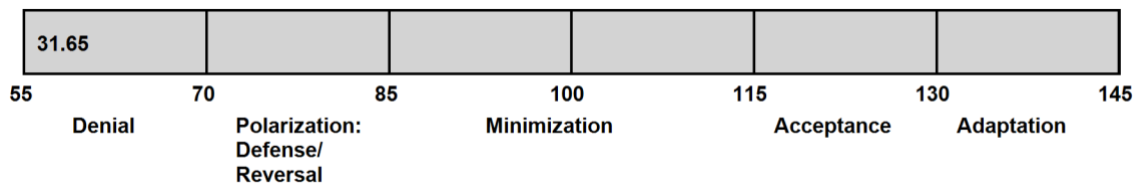
TE3's IDI result was the lowest score registered among all of the ten teachers. The IDI placed her in the stage of Denial with a score of 31.65 and people with this mindset may express disinterest in and/or avoidance of acknowledging the role of cultural differences(Bennett, 2011). This was also noticeable during the interview and TE3's classroom observation. TE3 seemed to exhibit a sense of superiority towards other cultural practices and cultural differences, and this is considered a monocultural mindset of Polarization specifically Defense.

> TE3: The enhancement of Islamic morals that appeared in the story and how the Hero Salah Al din helped an enemy who are different in their religion although he became a big help. I believe I have a good ability to accept all differences as long as they are in line with Islamic teachings.

According to the DIMS of (Bennett 1993, 2004) Polarization is a judgmental orientation towards culture and Defense is the uncritical attitude towards one's own culture and being overly critical toward other cultural practices

> TE3: "I believe I have a good ability to accept all differences as long as they are in line with Islamic teachings".

The above statement clearly indicates that TE3 does not understand or acknowledge the differences in existing cultures. The teacher seems only to appreciate cultures that fit with Islamic teaching, and very few do so. The teacher believes that Muslims belong to a superior culture, thus these views encompass those from the notion of universalism. According to TE3, she can only relate and accept individuals who conform to the beliefs, customs, and practices that are acceptable within the Islamic culture. This evidence moves TE3 from denial towards minimization since she is aware of the cultural differences but remains unwilling to accept contradictory worldviews.

TE4 has an IDI assessment result of (72.19). This shows that she is in the stage of Polarization, a more defensive orientation of a monocultural mindset which was also consistent with data extracted from the interview and classroom observation.

Figure 12: TE4's IDI Score
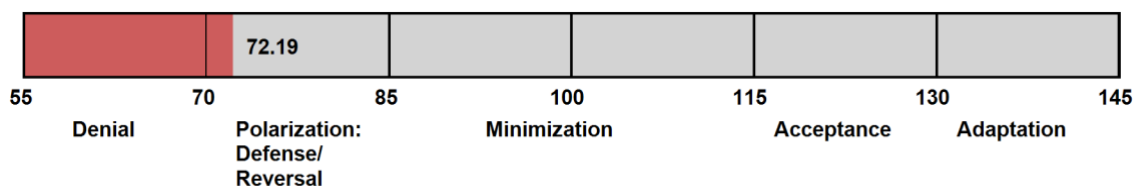
People in the stage of Polarization tend to have a judgmental orientation towards other culture. Defence is the uncritical attitude towards one's own culture and the overly critical attitude towards other cultural practices. The IDI result for TE4 was congruent with the data gathered from the interview and classroom observation which also showed her to be in

Polarization stage. The teacher implores her students to disregard cultural aspects that are inconsistent with the Islamic culture. Moreover, she emphasizes that other people's cultures may contain negative aspects that could threaten acceptable norms within the Islamic culture, perhaps illustrating a state of defending Muslims. For example:

> TE4 : "I teach my students that your power lies within your real identity as Muslim female when they are exposed to new different cultures, they must have the awareness of knowing what to take and what to avoid and what will benefit you and what will harm you so they should build up a confidence of how to choose or follow what they see from different cultures even if these cultures are presented in movies or T.V."

On the DMIS this could be seen as a defensive attitude towards different cultures to see the self-culture as the best and other cultures are threatening or wrong.

Table 26: TE Teachers' comparison of IC level from IDI, interview and class observation

Teacher code	DMIS level of IDI	DMIS level of qualitative data
TE1	Defense	Adaptation
TE2	Minimization	Minimization
TE3	Denial	Defense
TE4	Defense	Defense

All teachers (TE2, TE3, TE4) in this group had an identical IC assessment from both methods except for TE1 (see Table 21) above. Data from observations and interviews indicate the Ethnorelative stage of intercultural competence for TE1, while IDI result presented her at the stage of Defense which was not noticeable at all from observing her attitudes, behavior and her teaching practice.

4.3.3 T group

T1 IDI assessment score was 56.46 and her orientation towards cultural differences is within the level of Denial, an orientation that recognizes some observable cultural differences (e.g.,

food), may not notice deeper cultural difference (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences. On the other hand, some of the data from her interview and classroom observation shows that T1 has more of a judgmental orientation, which is overly critical toward other cultural practices, and this is considered at the Polarization stage. In the denial stage, consistent with the IDI scale, this teacher appears to not be interested in other people's cultures. Overall, the evidence suggests that the teacher is unable to articulate the slightest distinctions in cultural variations, which is confirmed by the score of 56.46.

Figure 13: T1's IDI score
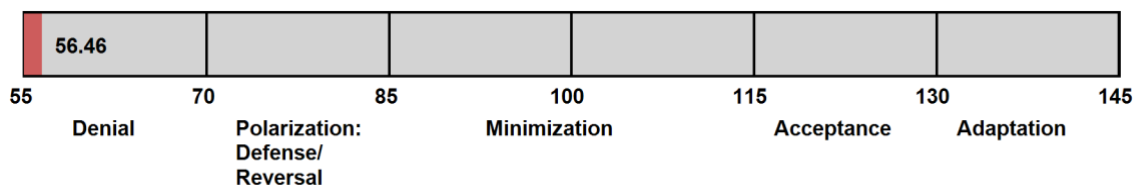
During the classroom observation of the Hero lesson, T1's Defense orientation was clear when she explained that all Muslims must have an enemy and any negative reactions toward this enemy is acceptable.

> T1: We as Muslims who our enemy usually is?   to be honest so usually Muslim enemies are the disbelievers or in general if your enemy in front of you and he was hurt what you will going to do? Student: I will treat him as human and help him. Student: I will take the chance and. Kill him. Students: all laughed. T1: this is her opinion you must understand it.

From this observation, The teacher appears hostile towards nonbelievers, asserting that Islam is the most viable culture worldwide. This sense of threat from other cultures leads her to constantly defend her personal culture. This can be deduced that Muslims are often rejected by those of other religions due to a sense of superiority.

T2 has an IDI score of 87.53, which indicates her orientation toward cultural differences is within the level of Minimization, reflecting a tendency to highlight commonalities across cultures that can mask important cultural differences in values, perceptions, and behaviors. At this point, the teacher is associated with cultural universalism, where one culture must be similar to all other cultures in the world. This was also noticeable in the data extracted from the interview and class observations. T2 appeared to avoid any intercultural discussion during her teaching and in the interview, she did not show any awareness of this matter and she seems to minimize the importance of differences believing that all human is the same.

Figure 14: T2's IDI score
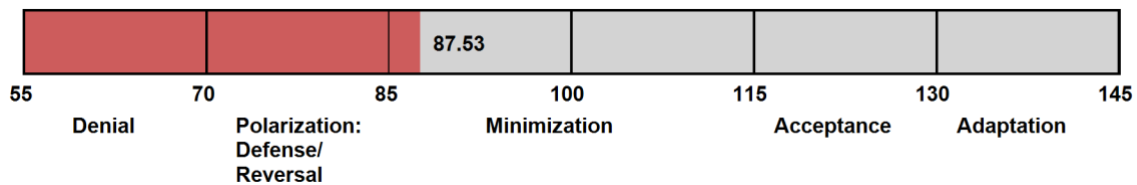
The evidence from the IDI tool suggests that the teacher is at the minimisation stage. However, there are some qualitative that indicate the teacher might be in an advanced IC stage. Specifically, her responses from the interview indicate that the teacher values cultural differences.

> T2:I I worked in a multinational company before I became a teacher and I made a lot of friendship with many people from UK, Canada India and so many.

Furthermore, the teacher states that learning about the differences in culture can positively influence a person's ability to interact and communicate with other people. Considering such evidence, the teacher can be argued to accept and be able to adapt to new cultures,

recognizing cultural differences as well as its role in promoting effective communication within an intercultural setting.

T3's IDI score of 46.56 indicates that her orientation toward cultural differences is within the level of Denial, an orientation that recognizes some observable cultural differences (e.g., food), may not notice deeper cultural difference (e.g., conflict resolution styles), and may avoid or withdraw from cultural differences.

Figure 15: T3's IDI score
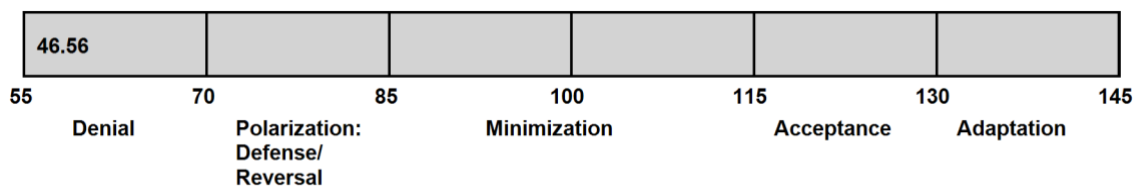
The relatively low IDI score suggests that T3 may lack interest in other cultures. The teacher is accustomed to the Saudi culture, and she is unwilling to learn about existing cultural differences. Data from the interview and the classroom observation was consistent with her IDI score, as also places her in a monocultural orientation, at the stage of Polarization (Defence). In particular, the teacher values Islamic principles, customs and practices. During the lesson, it was observed that the teacher encourages students to acknowledge these values because they are central to a person's identity. In this way, the educator strives to protect the Islamic culture and dissuades students from learning about other cultures, which might impede their growth in this religion.

> T3: I think we should include the Saudi culture, but we should focus more on developing our selves towards globalism but at the same time keeping our traditions and culture we must be selective, and we must keep our roots our pride and our religion. Like what happened in my class when you were observing one of the students hated our tradition of marriage practice, I could not stand against what the

> parents and what the society approves these are very sensitive. I avoid the discussion to avoid problems.

The above extract from the interview reveals that the T3's main focus is on reinforcing acceptable cultural norms in the Saudi culture. The teacher does not encourage her students to learn about new cultures and this in turn may hinder the development of their communication skills in the future. Also, the teacher believes that other cultural beliefs corrupt the Islamic religion and traditions. For such reasons, the teacher appears to believe that it is critical to ensure that young learners uphold these cultural beliefs and practices. Such assertions showcase an individual at the defence stage striving to protect one's individual culture against interference from other cultures. Below in (table 22) the comparison of IC levels of this group from the three different assessment methods.

Table 27: T Teachers comparison of IC level from IDI, interview and class observation

Teacher code	DMIS level of IDI	DMIS level of qualitative data
T1	Denial scored of 56.46	Polarization (Defense)
T2	Minimization scored of 87.53	Minimization
T3	Denial scored 46.56	Polarization (Defense)

4.4 Teachers' Knowledge, Beliefs and Practices of Intercultural Competence

4.4.1 Group TT

In this section I set out how the TT group of teachers, who have all undergone training via the Khebrat program, appear to conceptualise IC, regarding its terminology, meaning, and how they define it, with evidence taken from extracts from the observational data and interviews.

TT1 believes that she has vast cultural experience garnered from her travels and interactions with people from multiple cultural backgrounds. Despite not having prior knowledge about IC, TT1 demonstrated a full grasp of the concept. As she explained, "it is related to my understanding of the difference between me and other people from other countries, and how I can avoid misunderstanding." This definition implies that the teacher is aware of what needs to be done to function and communicate effectively in a multicultural setting. TT1 associates her understanding of cultural differences with IC. Ideally, IC involves demonstrating awareness of the existing cultural differences and employing such knowledge when coming into contact with people from diverse cultures to smoothen or ease the interaction process (Bouslama & Bouhass Benaissi, 2018; Lei, 2020). She stated:

> TT1: I think culture or as you said IC is related to English language because for us it is a foreign language not our mother language so there must be a factor of culture in English language classes. For the place of IC in my classes I am not sure about it but I always incorporate cultural topics in classes always because as I said it is a foreign language.

In this case, TT1 would appear to exhibit the acquisition of the competence and skills necessary to engage socially or culturally with other people. More specifically, the teacher can appropriately interact with people from other cultures without any misunderstanding. Hence, this definition reflects on the teacher's beliefs and understanding about the skills and competencies that must be applied to showcase effective IC.

TT2's cultural awareness is showcased by the teacher's perceptions of IC. Although the teacher reveals that she cannot exactly articulate the meaning of the IC as a term, her definition comes close to the definitions found I the literature, for instance that of Hammer et al. (2003, p. 422) who defines IC as "the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways." TT2 defined IC as:

TT2: The term intercultural competence is new for me but It means having ability to maintain or to have some sorts of skills like tolerance because not anyone has the ability to adapt to new cultures or new contexts.

IC relates to the ability to understand different cultural perceptions and to communicate effectively across different cultural situations(Mellizo, 2017). TT2, accordingly, emphasizes that this concept relates to a person's capacity to manage cultural differences. The teacher further states that this aspect requires certain levels of skill sets and attributes, mainly tolerance, to be able to adapt to new cultures and new contexts and all these can be taught and learned.

TT2: These skills can be learned or taught from exposure or the interactions from these two places we can acquire intercultural competences.

Therefore, the understanding of TT2 about IC focuses on two key aspects, namely competencies and skills. TT2 reveals that understanding cultural differences must be accompanied by the ability to demonstrate awareness when interacting with people from different cultures. Tolerance is a critical virtue, according to this educator, because of the differences or conflicts that can occur when one's culture is under threat. "Tolerance is one of the few viable solutions to the tensions and conflict brought about by multiculturalism and political heterogeneity: tolerance is an essential endorphin of a democratic body politic" (Gibson, 2006 a, p. 21).This explanation illustrates that the teacher is willing to accept and identify with individuals from multiple cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this demonstrates that the teacher is at an advanced level of adaptation considering her versatile knowledge about intercultural competence.

When TT3 was asked TT3 about the meaning of IC, she replied:

"To be honest with you I have never heard of this term, but I think it is the openness to other and to different cultures and accepting these differences I also think it is a skill that one can learn it"

TT3 articulated both the skillset and mindset necessary to show IC and intercultural sensitivity. According to TT3, this concept (IC) relates to an individual's openness and acceptance of different cultures. Moreover, the teacher claims that IC pushes individuals towards being more flexible in their assessment of other people, a trait which facilitates fluent and effective interactions with people from different cultures. Thus, "a flexible intercultural communicator is willing to suspend evaluative, snap judgments concerning culture based verbal and nonverbal style differences"(Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005). TT3 was able to identify the concept of IC to a lively example when she explained how she managed to reduce existing cultural barriers during her Khebrat training program.

> TT3: during the beginning of our training with Khebrat in America we were very narrow-minded, very closed and conservative, but by the end of the training they have changed they have started to be more open and flexible to strange things of different cultures they have accepted thoughts that they have rejected before. Also, I have become a friend of two colleagues in the program they were Sheaa'a, not Sunna Muslim

TT3 was able to assess her personal situation before and after the Khebrat training and foreign cultural exposure. TT3 showed that she had deeply analysed both herself and her friends, in forming her reactions to the challenges and changes she has faced during the experience. TT3 was able to transfer the meaning of IC from a term to action or in other words a skill. That is, her confession that she had had a change of behaviour and feelings towards the Sheaa colleague during the training, can be argued to be an indication of Adaptation, where a person can shift cultural perspective and adapt their behavior to a specific cultural context. People in the adaptation stage are conscious of the reframing of cultural information and observations in various ways. Saudi and Islamic principles guide this teacher, as shown by the fact that TT3 upholds values, such as generosity, respect for the elders, hospitality, and good morals. However, at the same time, she showed the same attitudes towards others from a different

religion orientation. Bennett (2004) explained that "people at adaptation can engage in empathy–the ability to take perspective or shift frame of reference vis-à-vis other cultures".

4.4.2 Group TE

Despite not having heard about intercultural competence before, TE1 explains that the concept implies the skills necessary to enable a person to interact with various and different cultures. Consistent with the accurate definition of IC, the teacher further emphasizes that this concept incorporates the ability to understand different cultures, thereby indicating the mindset aspect of IC.

> TE3: I believe that this skill can be acquired throughout the person interacting with varieties of different cultures. The intercultural skill or competence means that the person has the ability to understand the different culture whether you agree with it or you do not agree by understanding, respecting and accepting those cultures.

TE1 believes that her role is to raise the awareness in her students towards vital intercultural issues like racism and diversity, especially in monocultural communities like Saudi. At this point, the teacher demonstrates enhanced cultural awareness and behaviour that underlies the concept of intercultural competence.

> TE1: "I tried to teach my students about racism and discrimination because I believe it's my role to raise my student's awareness about these deep concepts in life specially in Saudi such a conservative context, I have to relate our lessons to our lives"

TE2 has limited knowledge of intercultural competence. According to this teacher, this concept is the connection that exists between different cultures. Further to this, she relates IC to cultural awareness, indicating a lack of knowledge of the attributes and skills required to be interculturally sensitive.

> TE2: "Speaking of the term itself (IC) I have not heard of it before, but when you brought it up and we are talking about it I think it is the interrelated cross cultures

> between each other , I see now the world is becoming a small village or a global village we could understand each other from the movies , YouTube"

TE3 admits that even though she holds the Saudi culture in high regard, she enjoys learning about other traditions and customs. For example, the principles of honesty, trust, respect, and humility are some of the main Saudi-based values that guide her. These beliefs, however, have not held the teacher back from exploring other cultural patterns. For instance, TE3 explains:

> "I am interested in seeing other cultures and other countries, I always wanted to know what outside Saudi Arabia is, I wanted to know what other people's customs and traditions in food clothes. I think the most important thing about IC is understanding how other people think which will lead to peaceful interaction and communication between us."

The excerpt above reveals that the teacher is cognizant of the cultural differences that exist across the world. Consistent with IC capabilities, the Islamic values that TE3 holds do not deter her from exploring other beliefs and practices. Her conviction to the learning and understanding of how other people think reflects cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity. Accordingly, these practices influence how the TE3 interacts with people in a multicultural setting.

TE4 was the second teacher who was familiarised with the terminology of IC. She identified the basic categories of IC, and believed that it is a valuable aspect of life in general. TE4 demonstrates awareness of intercultural concepts and according to TE4, this concept entails "exchange of information or experiences in many levels, for example, in trading or cultural practices." Notably, by referring to the exchange of information, this teacher is accustomed to the communication demands and ability to interact with different people from different cultural backgrounds.

T1 sees English as both a foreign and a second language. She also only considers the attributes and the meaning of IC, and she is ignorant of the skillset required to support develop IC. Despite this, T1 believes that IC is highly important for the community and the students. In this case, she considered IC as acceptance only and stated:

> T1: "This competence in general is a concept or the knowledge of other culture that I face in which I accepted and learn from these cultures also I take from these cultures what is beneficial for me and leave what is not useful".

T1 does not believe that IC is important in the English classroom, especially since students live and learn in a monocultural setting. According to the educator, IC entails the knowledge about other cultures.

> T1:I believe IC is highly important to combine in the language classes to encourage my students or even the community around me to become interested in getting to know more about other cultures to enrich their abilities and skills.

The teacher is also receptive to cultural differences, but only when cultural practices and norms are beneficial. The interview data indicates that the teacher sees English as a second language and feels that students are not obligated to learn the language.

> T1: The community of Saudi Arabia used to see the English language a foreign language and some still think that, but today I believe English become a second language

However, the teacher, in some cases, strives to incorporate other cultures in the classroom setting, especially the Western cultures of the US and Britain.

> T1: Because I am specialised in English language teaching, I tried to include cultures from America and British cultures.

Also, this teacher reveals that traveling is critical to IC, because it is a means to improve intercultural awareness.

T2 did not show any interest in traveling or having any interaction with people of different cultures. Furthermore, she asserts that she has not received any training and neither has she heard about the term of IC. The teacher reveals that IC is as a term and concept is relatively new.

> T2:I have not heard of this term before, but I know culture

At the same time, T2 says that culture is important for everyone as a means to increase their knowledge about different cultures and to facilitate positive and effective interaction as well as communication.

> T2:For me culture is very important each one of us should increase his or her knowledge of other cultures so he/she could interact and communicate with others language alone will not help you communicate. even in our life culture is really an interesting topic

T3 is strongly guided by Islamic principles of humility, kindness, and tolerance. T3's intercultural sensitivity is drawn only from her eight-year experience in education dealing with students from different backgrounds locally in her class.

> T3:I always enter into my teaching cultures such as the culture of tolerance and sophistication in dealing with other , and I do not see small things. We must be upscale in our vision, respect others and respect views even if they are opposite. Because I am teaching English I try to include British cultures, American, Australians because their life style is international and like to introduce developed ones and they are mix cultural and they are more developed than us but I am very selective and I focus on sensitive topic especially religious topics to be on the safe side anything might affects their Islamic believes I try to avoid it.

Moreover, T3 showcases lack of global competency, judging by her choices as to which cultures should be included in her class, as she stated above. T3's cultural awareness also might have exclusively been obtained from the various books that she has read and via socialization

with people from her own culture only. At this juncture, it can be argued that T3 is presenting at a low IC level.

> T3: "I understood that if I went to any place in the world or saw any civilization in the world and found something that fits with me and matches with me, I see it and accept it and I will implement it. I f the culture does not match my religious teachings, my moral, and my logic I will leave it"

T3 sees the IC from a monocultural view, labeling what is right and what is wrong from her own cultural background and from Islamic teachings, rather from a multicultural view. This is mainly the orientation of people in the stage of Polariton according to the DMIS and is specifically at the Defense stage where people see themselves as superior to the others.

4.5 Positive and Negative practices of teaching Intercultural Competence

4.5.1 Group TT

Educationalists who are able to incorporate IC into their teaching practice must firstly demonstrate a critical understanding of this concept (Barrett et al., 2013). This involves personal engagement in training and an analysis of IC teaching deficiencies and challenges before incorporating the necessary materials within the syllabus. Also, they ensure that there is harmony in their beliefs, teaching practices, and perceptions to resolve unanticipated challenges, especially in English language classrooms (Estaji & Rahimi, 2018). While observing TT1 during the lesson 4b (cultural differences), she managed to present both subjective and objective aspects of culture. Subjective cultural components refer to aspects in life, including attitudes, roles, beliefs, and values. Objective or physical culture involves tangible external aspects of life such as food and clothing.

She discussed tangible aspects of cultures such as customs, traditions, and gestures which were presented in the curriculum. However, TT1 also introduced to her students a real-life experience of intercultural competence.

TT1:   "Yeah if you misunderstand anything in the new culture you might put yourself in a bad situation or embarrassing situation like for example what happened to me when I was in New Zealand in the park a little girl came next to me and she was so cute I was talking to her and then I hugged her and then their parents came and took her and they looked really angry so I felt so uncomfortable then I realized that it might not be acceptable in western countries to talk or to touch their children, unlike our Saudi culture."

TT1 used her story as a teaching method of IC and she was able to show them how to be aware of differences and how to act, even though she was not yet consciously aware of the IC. That is, TT1 practised IC, and appeared to believe in the importance of IC while she was not aware of it as a term. In the ELT context, TT1 is able to fully incorporate IC within her teaching methodology. This was evident during the classroom observation. Consistent with IC's main competency levels, the educator demonstrates capacity to be open, address knowledge gaps, interpret stories and events, and evaluate perspectives about different cultures (Bouslama & Benaissi, 2018). The teacher's attitudes towards Western culture is receptive. She also recognizes differences about her beliefs compared to those of a different culture showed in the extract below, taken from the observational data. Moreover, she interprets the story and past experiences in relation to cultural differences. Most importantly, she influences her students to discover, analyse, and evaluate knowledge as well as cultural practices that are inconsistent with the Saudi culture. This excerpt reveals these competency components in relation to TT1's knowledge, beliefs, and teaching practice.

TT1: "so, girls today we have come across many cultures from everywhere around the world and I also learned new things from you, things that I have not heard about it before. If we heard or read about new things or information about other cultures what we should do?
Student: we should respect it.
TT1: great we must respect it and we should embrace these differences and enjoy it because it is valuable for you to expand your knowledge and your relationships, and you will understand why and how things are happening in these ways you will build up the logic of your understanding do you agree?
Students: Yes of course.
TT1: what else we should do?

> Students: before travelling anywhere we should learn and read about their culture so
> we could avoid any troubles or mistakes."

For TT2, during the observation of the lesson 4b (cultural differences), she focused on the

concept of diversity more than the concept of differences. TT2 emphasized the value of

equality regardless of differences. In this way, the educator emphasizes her belief that there is

no cultural superiority. She then touched upon subjective (deep) cultural patterns which

confirm her Ethnorelative mindset and her advanced level of IC, as seen in the below extract

from her observational data.

> TT2: Very good we notice differences in shapes, backgrounds, even within Saudi
> Arabia we come from different areas, so we have different background some people
> live with their parent, some people not, so we are different we have to agree with that.
> We are all different we look different but are we all equal? we are all equal regardless
> of how you look regardless of where you come from, we all have the right to learn to
> study to work to do everything you are no better than anyone because you come from
> this place or that place so equality is not like similarity, we are different we are not the
> same but we are equal to each other this is the idea of the diversity. Diversity means
> that we are different, but we are equal to each other.

In this regard, TT2 demonstrates knowledge of cultural differences that are critical in the

communication and interaction between people with different cultural orientations. For one,

the educator kick starts the class by explaining that regardless of the differences in culture, all

people are the same, perhaps illustrating the educator's awareness about inconsistencies in

cultural beliefs that could impede interaction.

Also, during this lesson (cultural differences), TT2 appears to increase her students' cultural

awareness by asking them to reflect on their past personal experiences and/or previous

knowledge. She practices with them intercultural competence as a skill by enhancing the idea

of what might be accepted in one place, but which might be rejected in other places. Her

question motivated a lot of students to share their stories and thoughts. She then discusses

what might be appropriate behaviour or attitudes in these situations. TT2 manages to even

reflect on her own cultural practices in the local culture of Saudi, which might not be acceptable to other cultures. This shows a high level of IC where the educator acknowledges the differences in attitudes, beliefs, and practices in different cultures. Also, the teacher's interpretation of the text and individual experiences further demonstrate Ethnorelative orientations of self and others.

> TT2: Let's speak about the cultural differences ok I want you think about a situation in which something happened, or something is accepted in one place but not in the other place ok can you think about it ok do you have anything in mind?
>
> TT2: yeah, it might be not welcomed in other cultures also Bakhoor we see it as a fancy smell and a way to show respect for guest, but others might find it wired and not acceptable.
>
> TT2: should we show our real feeling towards what we find weird or unacceptable or should we hide it? What should we do towards our customs and our culture or our traditions like Hijab which might not be acceptable to others?

During lesson 2a (Hero), it was noticeable that TT2 did not on any occasion mention a religious difference between the story's main characters. She avoids any indication of King Richard religion and focused on the idea of an unbalanced fight between a strong leader (Salah Al din) and an ill leader (King Richard). It seems that TT2 is intentionally avoiding speaking about religions in the story which might be an indication of Intercultural sensitivity. She does not want to raise a sensitive topic that might cause a misunderstanding of discrimination against a specific religion. To expound on this excerpt, the educator does not associate one religion with power and control over the other.

> TT2: It was difficult for me to point at king Richard as a hero as well in his culture not only Salah Al din but because they are still young, I was afraid they will misunderstand me.

However, it is difficult to clearly articulate the teacher's intention from this observation. For instance, the educator does not acknowledge the richness or different aspects of both religions. This failure to tell the students about the distinctive aspects in religions makes it challenging to classify the educator as an Ethnorelative individual. Thus, the specific stage of cultural orientation and how the level of IC influences beliefs about IC in TT2's teaching practices cannot be ascertained.

> TT2: I always prefer to focus on the idea of unity among my students I try all the time to make them feel that they are equal, and I try to stop any discussion about topics like religion or sensitive topics because I'm not sure what is my student's orientation so I would like to be in the safe side.

The underlying subsets, including respect for behavioral differences and respect for value differences, can explain the placement of TT2 in the acceptance stage. Respecting behavioral difference ideally involves recognizing that communication and orientation tend to differ from one culture to another. Moreover, these individuals are cognizant of the various communication styles and nonverbal behavior that exist in different cultural settings (Bennett, 2017). To this end, TT2 showcases these capabilities, particularly through her teaching pedagogy as in this observational extract:

> TT2: Let's speak about the culture differences, have you ever been to a place and you feel like they did something or you did a certain thing and you find that it is weird people do not accepted ,ok I want you think about a situation in which something happen then its accept in one place but not in the other ok can you think about it ok do you have anything in mind?
> Student: In China, they eat bugs I mean they eat insects.
> TT2r: so, it is unacceptable for you, but it is acceptable there in China let's say in the Asian culture, so we can do it but because we do not belong to that place we do not accept that any other ideas?

Throughout her lessons, TT3 kept attempting to motivate her students to recognize the value in the exploration of different cultures. TT3 simplified the first step to become interculturally

competent, suggesting that it is to have the desire to know more and be curious about different cultures:

> TT3: To know others that means you accept others, you accept the differences between us, especially here in our class we have different nationalities do you think that it is healthy or not?

This statement is not only indicative of IC but also reveals the positive impact that the teacher's IC level has on her teaching practice. The educator encourages the students to acknowledge and respect cultural differences. Inculcating such knowledge would be critical to the learners' ability to identify and interpret cultural diversities within multicultural settings. TT3 was fully aware of her student's backgrounds in her classroom, which indicates her Ethnorelative mindset. On this note, she empathizes and appears to aim to set up a comfortable environment where there is no segregation on the basis of culture. Additionally, her state of adaptation in the teaching practices where she intentionally understands her students and attempts to deal with them accordingly. In this way, she acknowledges that the learners demonstrate different cognitive and behavioural orientations that could impact their learning behaviours. Thus, her actions to facilitate positive interaction and to create a conducive as well as inclusive learning environment are consistent with IC incorporation in the classroom setting. The next section will outline the teacher agreement on the importance of IC in motivating the leaners of the language.

4.5.2 Group TE

There were several signs that were noted during the classroom observation of TE1 that indicated deep cultural awareness and an advanced level of IC. Although TE1's class comprised entirely of students from a Saudi Arabian background, she managed to show her students detailed differences even if they are a one community.

TE1: now let's imagine that people are the same and everyone are similar what do you think the world would be like? of course, it is going to be very boring that's why Allah made us different so we could enjoy our differences. Even if we are from the same place, we will still exhibit differences like now we are all in the class from Saudi Arabia, but we still have our differences. There are many regions in Saudi central west east north and south the people form one area are different.

During the lesson of Salah Al din, TE1 established her argument of values and respect in the story depending on her student's strong attachment of the Islamic teachings. TE1 succeeded in capturing the attention of her students by focusing on their cultural identity and this is considered a core characteristic of an individual in the stage of Adaptation according to the DIMS theory. People in the adaptation stage are conscious to reframe cultural information in various ways (Bennett, 2011)

TE2 reported that she did not know that intercultural competence could be acquired by learning and teaching. This is perhaps unsurprising because she is at the stage of Minimisation. The teacher maintains a negative teaching practice on IC, which may limit the students' capabilities to expound their knowledge about intercultural competence as well as its benefits in a multicultural setting. During the interview, TE2 revealed:

TE2: "To be honest, I have not dealt with culture as a skill only when we have a lesson about culture and I usually teach it as a content of a linguistic skills only like the ability of reading but, not how the student should act when she faces cultural differences. I was not aware of it"

During the observation of TE2 in both lessons, it was found that she followed only those activities that were in the textbook and did not discuss cultural topics with the students to deepen their understanding. This finding from the classroom observation confirms the idea that she is not practising any IC in her teaching. She does not play the mediating role of a teacher to enable students identify the cultural differences between Islamic culture and other

cultures. Additionally, TE2 focused only on the linguistic skills of her students, and, in this process, the teacher overlooked the benefits of IC in a both lessons 2a (Hero) and 4b (cultural differences).

Throughout the observation of TE3 in the classroom, there were several occasions where polarization orientation was in evidence. Specifically, she appeared to take a Defence approach, where she represented the Saudi culture as superior to other cultures. For instance, when she explained to the students that the hero of the story in the reading passage is the Muslim leader only and the other Christian leader is not. Such teaching behaviours that elevate the status of a character who conforms to one's own culture in this way is arguably imparting a sense of superiority of tis culture among students. In this way, the teacher reinforces the narrative that Muslims are heroes while Christians are villains. This idea minimizes the students' capacity to bolster IC when interacting with individuals from other cultures.

> TE3: excellent, so who was the true hero in this story?
> Student: Salah Al din
> TE3: right great

TE4 observed lessons did not bring out much deep discussions between her and the students for the two lessons2a (Hero) and 4b (cultural differences). She mainly followed her students' reading and writing through activities that were focused only on their linguistic skills. In other words, the observational data indicates that the teacher does not demonstrate any teaching of cultural content. Although TE4 is aware of IC, it seems that she does not believe that it has a role in her classes, which is the reason why applying it was missing in her teaching. Hence, her teaching pedagogy lacks IC as a core component to reinforce intercultural awareness, competence and sensitivity among students.

TE4: "Here in English language classes we teach a language skill, when it comes to culture and intercultural competence, we are speaking about dealing with others".

4.5.3 Group T

Although T1 had limited knowledge of the concept of IC, she was able to practice some teaching strategies that can be argued to have the capacity to enhance cultural awareness for her students. For instance, she motivated her students to learn about other cultures via role paly activities, which is considered to be an effective teaching strategy as reported in the study of (Zhang & Zhou, 2019)

T1: are you aware of your culture do you have the enough knowledge about the culture of Saudi Arabia? Imagine that you are the tour guide for foreigners coming to Saudi what you will do?

Consistent with the teacher's role in mediating between different cultures, the educator encourages her students to deepen their understanding about other cultures.

T1: Ok if you were in China and you are wearing the hijab which is weird or strange in China well you be shocked, and you never visit China again or you will understand that is new to them or different and you will understand it is not a negative reaction?

Student: Yes, I think I will understand that this is new to them

T1: so, this is what is the meaning of accepting the differences among countries or cultures.

As can be seen in the above extract of the lesson, the teacher questions her students' cultural orientations, since she presumes that all students are aware of the Saudi culture. However, the educator masterfully tweaks the lesson by placing the students in a multicultural setting where they interact with individuals from different cultures. This methodology has the potential to incline learners to develop an alternative worldview about their culture and other cultures as well.

T2 was able to introduce some superficial discussions with her students about different cultural practices around the world. She was limiting herself to the passage in the book, and although her students brought up some stereotypes of strange cultural practices, T2 did not unpack or explain the negativity of such an attitude, as can be seen in extract from the classroom observation below. This may be due to the fact that she was not knowledgeable of IC and that she also lacks IC training or cultural exposure:

> T2: so, we have 3 stories about cultural differences but before? Can you tell if you know any custom in your country or in any other country?
>
> Students: yes, the Chinese eat snakes and spiders and strange things?
> Teacher: that is strange what else?

This negative teaching practice is also evident from her IC result because people at Minimization stage tend to ignore differences and therefore, they overcome stereotypes(Bennett, 2011)

T3 emphasizes tolerance and humanity as among the key Islamic values. On this note, she reveals that despite religious differences, Saladin was willing to help his enemies, which is consistent with Islamic virtues.

> T3: so, what do you think of Salah al din after you read this story? He helps his enemy what do think of this act?
> Student: he is kind and a true hero
> T3: what makes him do this and do take him as a model to us?
> Student: salah al din was not after winning the war he was spreading Islam
> T3: yes excellent so he dealt with King Richard as a Muslim person with tolerance and justice he treated his enemy as human and he put all heartrate away he put all differences of religious, race and dealt with humanity and this is what true Muslim stands for,

At this point, T3 is associating Muslims as good people consistent with her values and beliefs and this is the tendency of people who are at Defence stage of DMIS where they see their culture as a role model for other cultures (Hammer et al., 2003). However, such comments

are inconsistent with the teacher's initial beliefs about expanding cultural awareness as observed during her teaching in both lesson Hero and Cultural differences.

4.6 Agreement on the importance of IC in motivating the leaners of the language.

4.6.1 Group TT

IC in ELT requires that teachers include individual students' cultural context. This technique ensures that the educator employs a diversity of styles that solicit interests and purpose of diversity and equality among students (UNESCO, 2006). From another angle, the teacher creates an intermediary place where the learner is able to experience and appreciate cultural differences without the feeling that one's culture is abandoned or unappreciated. This ability to mediate between cultures is at the core of IC, and, accordingly, TT1, TT2 and TT3 all demonstrate this capability.

TT1 thinks that IC and the English language are intertwined. The teacher accepts that this foreign language will be less understood when it is not linked to cultural knowledge. However, its importance in enabling students to learn about cultural topics should not be underestimated by teachers. Additionally, as a global language, most people across the world are using English to foster and shape their world perspectives. TT1 was confused about the role of intercultural competence in the teaching of the English language. She believed that both are related somehow because English to her is a foreign language she responded:

> "I think culture or as you said intercultural competence is related to the English language because for us it is a foreign language, not our mother language so there must be a factor of culture in English language classes. For the place of IC in my classes, I am not sure about it but I always incorporate cultural topics in classes always because as I said it is a foreign language.

By associating the English language with IC or cultural knowledge, the educator plays a critical role in setting up the learning space for individuals who are culturally different. According to the teacher, the ability to interact with people from different cultures, particularly for Saudi students, is contingent on these students' ability to communicate in English. Although TT1 may appear to be confused about whether to consider the English language as a foreign or a global language, the cultural aspect of English is recognised, and she appears to believe in IC as being able to promote interactions among students within multicultural settings. Thus, the recognition of this supportive factor inclines the educator to encourage students to learn the English language to improve their chances as well as opportunities in the academic arena. TT1's description of the English language also echoes the above sentiments. TT1 was aware of the global factor of English language that considers English as a lingua Franca she stated: "I think it is a global language because it became the second language for almost everyone around the world, so it became global".

But at some point, during the interview, she was hesitated she stated:

> "According to the place of Intercultural competence in my classes I am not sure about it but I always incorporate cultural topics in classes always because as I said it is a foreign language.

TT1 indecision might have resulted from her unfamiliarity with the term (Intercultural competence) or probably it is difficult to know the difference as she is not an academic in the field of IC or lingua franca. TT1 appears to believe in the importance of IC and also, she was practicing it at the same time teaching it, but she was not familiar with its terminology.

Later during the interview, I asked about the importance of IC in English classrooms and specifically for her learners. She was able to differentiate between cultural knowledge and IC as a skill that can be learned and taught.

TT1 responded: <u>"Yes, intercultural competence is highly urgent for every human and in schools, we should focus on it especially for learners learning about foreign language and will communicate using this language to others from different countries so they should have the knowledge and ability to master interactions in the future</u>".

Similar to TT1, TT2 also believes that IC has an important place in her classes, and she has namely given a high percentage of cultural capacity in her English classes. She also, considers IC as a teaching tool and as a great motivation for her learners. TT2 also believes that English is a language that is used globally, and it is relevant to any culture, as it is a language used by people from around the world and English as Lingua Franca is potentially a representative of limitless cultures. In other words, the teacher believes that language permeates understanding of different cultures in ELT. The English language is not seen as a separate element of culture, and according to her view as well as teaching practices, IC underpins her capacity to teach the English language. This analogy is reflected in the following excerpt from the interview.

<u>TT2: Yes I believe IC has a place in my teaching, I can say the culture has a 70% dominance on my English language classes first of all because it is really an interesting topic form my students it is like a great motive for them, for example, many of my students are interested in Japanese culture so they also in constant search for all aspects of this culture and English will be improved</u>

Notably, the prioritization of language and the belief that IC is a critical tool in ELT classrooms demonstrates the educator's use of IC as a motivational tool as she mentioned above. Since nearly a third of the educationalist's teaching technique is reliant on linguistic skills only like reading, speaking, and writing the English language, IC as a sociolinguistic skill becomes instrumental in dictating the learning process because she believed it provoked her students' sense of research. TT2 uses her skills and competencies in understanding different cultures to encourage positive learning of the English language within a

monocultural setting. This was notable during the classroom discussion with her students as follows:

> TT2: any other ideas? Think about something we do, and it is not acceptable, or others would feel that this is weird.
> Students: here some people greet each other by approaching each other's nose
> TT2: great it might be not acceptable in other cultures, but it is norm here good any other ideas
> Student: The Hijab
> TT2: yeah, it might be not welcomed in other cultures also Bakhoor we see it as a fancy smell and a way to show respect for guest but other might find it wired and not acceptable.

In the same vein, TT3 vehemently challenges the status of the English language by advocating for some balance in cultures. Despite the fact that English is spoken by the majority of the world's population, TT3 articulates that the Anglophone culture should not dominate other minority cultures, like the Saudi or Arabian cultures. For example, TT3 indicates that through her experiences in the training program, she noticed that people had limited knowledge of the Saudi culture and were only predisposed to their own culture. Such narrow-mindedness is deleterious to cultural diversity, and it warrants the need to incorporate different cultures in English classrooms. Although these views might seem inconsistent with the promotion of the English language learning process, the educator advances knowledge about the importance of IC within monocultural settings. TT3 stated during the interview:

> TT3:in America we have been asked as a Saudi teacher to present the Saudi culture for every class we go to and surprisingly most of the American student did know anything about us they even say that we have the ego not to have the welling to explore other or different cultures outside American they were very closed to themselves and only know their own culture.

From the above extract, it appears that the teacher felt culturally discriminated against from her experiences calling for more intercultural sensitivity, especially for her native customs. This narrative is applicable in other settings where English is not considered as the lingua

franca (Wang et al., 2021). The recognition and acknowledgement of different cultures, in this regard, will potentially allow teachers to adopt an open-mindedness towards different cultures in order to motivate students to learn about languages from diverse cultures.

> TT3: IC is very importance because if the students are accepting other culture, they will enjoy learning the language and they will be more professional in mastering it. IC will reduce the misunderstanding and it will increase the knowledge of my students opening up new doors to them.

4.6.2 Group TE

Although, TE1 was not acquainted with the terminology of intercultural competence, she was able to explain the function of IC and to consider it deeply. TE1 believed that including all cultures from around the world is a must and she criticised the syllabus being focused on the American culture only because this does not enhance the global awareness of other cultures and can lead to a reduction of the English language proficiency. English has dominated the culture classroom, and the teacher highlights the importance of including other cultures within this setting. Although she sees English as a global language, TE1 believes that to foster IC, it is imperative to include other cultures, such as African, Chinese, and Arabian cultures in the English classroom.

> TE1: "I wish that we could include all cultures from around the world. Now in the English language textbooks they mainly focus on the American cultures it is rarely they present information about chinses culture, African culture or Indian culture. We suppose to introduce unlimited cultures to our students without any biases or underestimating the importance of any other cultures we should show to our students that everything is accepted not because they are poor or third world cultures they are not included in your text books . I tried to teach my students about racism and discrimination because I believe it is my role to rise my student's awareness about these deep concepts in life, I have to relate our lessons to our lives".

TE2 highlighted in her interview that IC represent a vital role in people's lives. TE2 believed that people nowadays are living in a small village, a globalized community. Also, TE2 considered IC useful for people both in their personal and academic lives. TE2 personally revealed that the English language is global and thinks that the inclusion of other culture like

the Saudi culture in the curriculum and in the English classroom is unnecessarily. Since

students practice the Saudi culture on a daily basis, all the time should strictly be accorded to

foreign cultures only.

Although TE3 is at the Polarization stage with a Defensive orientation she is knowledgeable

when it comes to IC since the teacher does consider the skills and mindset needed to engage

with people from multiple cultures.

> TE3: We usually talk about ICC on a personal level with other teacher, but we never brought it up as a skill or competence to be enhance and to be taught to our students. For my learners I always bring up the topic of their cultural background and mine as will to break the ice or to get to know each other it is always a topic that attracts them.

According to this teacher, IC refers to the way people become acquainted with cultures that

are different from their own. The teacher emphasizes that despite the strangeness or

differences in cultural patterns, it is imperative to respect all cultures in order to understand,

interact, and communicate in a diverse cultural setting. Intercultural competence, similarly,

requires certain skills and attributes that can enable a person to interact effectively with an

individual from a different culture.

> TE3: The cultural aspects will help students to love the language and it is considered to be a great motive for the learners to express their cultural background in a positive way especially if the learners are being outside their country, they will develop a better language skill.

To this end, TE3 associates respect and willingness to understand cultural differences as the

main skillsets and attributes necessary to facilitate intercultural competence. Concerning the

English language, TE3 believes that this culture should not exclude other cultural patterns

within the classroom setting. Even though English is used as a global language, other

cultures, such as the Saudi culture, should be given similar opportunities for non-Saudi

English speakers to explore.

According to her interview data, TE4 believes that she has a vital role in enhancing IC in her classes and to her students, and this was evident during observing her classes. For TE4 English is a global language that has a critical role to play in enabling students to navigate the global environment. From this teacher's perspective, globalization further necessitates the need to expose students to this language, enabling them to understand global events and engage in rational deliberation concerning global issues.

> TE4:as a teacher I must enforce and enhance the power of culture in each and every student. A Learner must have her own definition of culture and her awareness of the cultural existence around her. In my teaching I always relate it to our local culture because they live in it and at the same time they should build up a knowledge of other exterior cultures outside their environment   in case of any future need or if they will have a chance of exposure to different or new culture they could avoid shock or gaps of misunderstanding. IC is a way to explore other people ways of thinking and how to deal it so we could understand each other and avoid problems.

TE4 was also willing to incorporate IC in the study plans acknowledging that every student has the right to be exposed to such culturally diverse concepts. TE4, however, warns that students are autonomous in such a way that they have the power to dictate and describe the cultures surrounding them.

> TE4: I discuss with my students about events happened around the world which enhance their vocabularies and their ability to speak about global issues but at the same time I always enforce the Saudi Islamic identity in them. For example I teach them that your power lies within your real identity ass Muslim female when they are exposed to new different cultures they must have the awareness pf knowing what to take and what to avoid and what will benefit you and what will harm you so they should build up a confidence of how to choose or follow what they see from different cultures even if these cultures are presented in movies or T.V.

Additionally, the teacher uses the 2a (hero) lesson to instill desirable attributes that might enable students to interact with people from different cultures. The teacher emphasizes that

emotions are undesirable. Instead, intelligence and sense are critical in making wise decisions or judgments.

> TE4: good do you think that a hero should be sensible?
> Students: no
> TE4: why not?
> Student: because sensible not strong and hero should be strong
> TE4: you mean that emotions will not help you make wise judgments or decisions what about prophet Mohammed peace be upon him can I describe him as a sensible man?
> Students: yes
> TE4: we can describe a hero a as a brave man ,confident ,honest man ,a strong and intelligent man , so sensible person can be a hero, right?
> Student; yes

4.6.3 Group T

T1 seems to be aware of her role in enhancing the IC in her students and she expressed her responsibility for introducing the American and British cultures to them, although this indicates an exclusion of other global cultures, and a limited knowledge of the IC concept.

> T1: Because I am specialised in English language teaching, I tried to include cultures from America and British cultures.

T2 believes that the English language is has become a global language that is vital for use in technology, and in order to be used in places like hospitals and airports.

> T2: For me English is a basic language in our life because it is the global language wherever you go you will need to use the English language in airports in hospitals for technology in Saudi we use English a lot specially with foreigners and for the students I think it I the second language

T3 believes that IC is the key to the ability to engage students with the world around them and to allow them to understand culture and to be able to communicate with others from different cultures.

> T3: Absolutely, IC it is important for our students to understand the external world, they have to be prepared they will leave school and they will leave their countries and might go abroad even inside Saudi Arabia with other people from different cultures it is very important to develop our abilities

This kind of perception was unexpected from a person with a defence orientation towards cultural difference which contradicted her IC assessment via the IDI tool. This further supports the argument that IC assessment is a complex phenomenon, as mentioned in the literature earlier (Borghtti, 2017). On this note, the teacher remarks that students will inevitably be forced to study in a multicultural setting. Accordingly, T3 believes that IC is central to language learning because it is a potential tool which can enable teachers to change their students' perspectives about different cultures across the world.

4.7 Teacher perceptions of Intercultural Competence assessment (IDI)

4.7.1 Group TT

This section aims to provide insights into the TT teachers' views about the possibility and validity of assessing IC and also their opinions of the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) itself, as respondents. TT1 thinks that IC assessment is not possible due to the fact that human experiences are dynamic, ever-changing, ongoing and unique. She stated:

> "We cannot evaluate intercultural competence, but we can only observe it so we cannot test the IC because people will always be exposing to new things about different cultures.

This statement shows that TT1 sees IC as content or as material, not as a skill that can be used even in new contexts, whereas researchers in the field of IC consider it to include many components, such as knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour (e.g., Barrett, 2012). Notably, this perception is incongruent with the definition of IC, which concerns the capacity to recognize cultural differences and use underlying competencies to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. TT1 appeared to find the IDI ambiguous, and she could not understand some of the questions in the inventory, although she confirmed the significance of the questionnaire and the values of it content.

> TT1: "The items in the IDI questionnaire were not clear to me there is ambiguity in some questions, but I felt that other questions were more valuable and have deep

concepts, thoughts and perception of cultural difference not like other questionnaires that I have come across it touches lively matters that every human experience"

TT2 believes that IC can be assessed by observing people's reactions and behaviour towards other peoples' differences. She stated that "Maybe by IC can be assessed by observation or their reactions of any changes for example." Hence, TT2 appears to believe that a person's ability to interact with individuals from diverse cultures is dependent on the extent to which they are able to change their attitudes or behaviours towards others. TT2 also had positive feedback about the IDI: "I think it was well organised, detailed and understandable." This response indicates that the interviewee is aware of the intentions of the current study with regards to importance of IC in ELT.

Like TT1 and TT2, TT3 assumes that assessing IC can be achieved only by observation. She thinks that this is because IC cannot be measured precisely. TT3 believes that IC can be evaluated through observing behaviours and manners. Thus, according to the educator, the behaviours and manners represent the attitudes, beliefs, and practices about IC.

> TT3: I cannot assess exactly their intercultural competence, but I think I can notice their behavior also from their actions. I. can see if he or she is opened to other cultures or not or if he or she is accepting the others from observing them. I see some teachers treating their students differently according to their nationalities.

TT1, TT2 and TT3 all shared the same overestimated assessment of their IC. All of them believed that they are interculturally competent but at the same time they admit that they were not able to recognise the term of it and define it precisely. All of them contended that the only valid method to assess IC is through observation in practice.

4.7.2 Group TE

TE1 believes that IC can be assessed by only observing behavior, but when I asked her about the IDI assessment tool, she showed great interest and appeared to be supportive of this type of IDI assessment. TE1 also reflected on some ambiguity about the IDI questionnaire and stated that she sees herself as a competent intercultural person.

> TE1: Yes, I think so, maybe by observing the person for example if I attended a class, I could see how she act with her students or what subjects were discussed and how she deals with her students' differences. the questionnaire opened to me new concepts and deepen my thoughts about culture, but I fine some difficulties in understanding some facts. I see myself confident and I think I have competent level when we speak about respecting and accepting all different culture".

TE2 notes that IC assessment is possible via observation only, although she explained that she faced some difficulties while dealing with the IDI assessment.

> TE2: There were some questions that was confusing to me I have answered some questions, but I was not fully aware of its meaning to be honest with you. I think something like IC could be assessed only by lively manners or methods not by surveys Yes, by looking at. People's attitudes and actions like for example some people I have seen refused to deal with people of dark skin just. Because of their colors and I can say that they are raciest, and they never have IC".

TE3 considers that IC is possible to be assessed via observation stating that she gained a lot of information from the IDI assessment, and she positively experienced the survey.

> TE3: "It is possible to evaluate and to observe through their talks and while they express their opinion about differences among cultures or their opinion towards any strange culture".

TE3 did not have any cultural training before or in-service although she stated that she gained some cultural training while teaching her students about culture and focusing on their own culture first and then others.

> TE3: "Yes, we need to include the Saudi culture we have a wonderful heritage we need to enhance it so other non-Saudi English speakers could explore it and enjoy it".

TE4 considers that IC assessment is possible only via observation and for the IDI assessment she expressed having some difficulties in understanding some concepts in the questionnaire.

> TE4: "we can evaluate IC Maybe by observation but not by examination you might notice people IC from their way of behaving and dealing with others from their attitudes towards situations they face. The IDI was my first experience to deal with such assessment I have had some difficulties in understand some questions, but I think it was deep and needs more time and effort to read about".

4.7.3 Group T

T1 believes that it is possible to assess IC through observation and surveys and she confirmed that the IDI assessment was to some extent not clear, although she was impressed by the concepts that included in the IDI topics. During the interview, the teacher pinpoints the importance of surveys in assessing people's different attitudes. Such assessments, according to this teacher, offer new insights about people's worldviews. Some of the interview data indicate that the teacher values IC as a concept and assessment tool and she stated:

> T1: It was interesting, and topics were new to me although it was difficult to understand some of the questionnaire sentences and I think the concepts and the ideas in the questionnaire are very important and interesting I have never come across such topics but there are some questions that I could not understand and I'm not sure if I am giving the answers that I meant.

T2 appears to believe that IC can be evaluated by observing people's behaviour. Given the teacher's lack of understanding about IC as a concept, T2 initially offers no suggestions about the importance of IC assessment. However, questions on how a person's IC level can be assessed, resulted in a positive response where the teacher revealed that a person's behaviour towards different cultural orientations indicate cultural skills. Also, when the respondent was asked about the questionnaire of the IDI she replied:

> T2: there are some statements that I am not sure about its meaning. It was a little bit confusing but I tried to answer all the question as possible as I can understand

T3 thinks that IC cannot be assessed, and that IC can be only observed through people's interactions and behaviours. For the IDI assessment questionnaire, she implied that some of the questions were not clear to her, and this might have affected T3's IDI results.

> T3: Some questions were not very clear to me but the rest are okay .

This entire group of teachers expressed some of the difficulties they faced in understanding some statements in the IDI and this might be due to their limited knowledge of the IC in theory, given their education level and in practice from their limited cultural exposure.

4.8 Teachers' Perceptions of their Intercultural Competence Training

4.8.1 Group TT

The TT group's views on the development of IC and the way teacher training is delivered locally in Saudi Arabia and internationally via the Khebrat program is reviewed in this section. TT1 believes that IC should be self-taught because this concept comprises and individual's life and global skills. In this case, TT1 believes that IC emerges naturally from a person's behaviours and attitudes towards different cultures. At this point, the teacher feels that training is not essential in improving IC-related skills and competencies. In another regular in-service training program attended by TT1, she became accustomed to different cultures, mainly British and African cultural background of her trainer, which ultimately bolstered her intercultural sensitivity. Nonetheless, the belief that people are always exposed to new cultures showcases TT1's positive attitudes towards the training of IC.

> TT1: "I don't think that teacher regular training of teaching methods prepared me to teach IC, all training courses available are textbook based they don't target life skills or global skills like IC so I think we cannot professionally teach IC, I guess it is going to

be self-taught. I think because English teacher trainers focus on linguistic skills, and they ignore life skills like IC. Once I have attended a course not related to my teaching job and there were two presenters one from the UK and the other from Africa at the beginning of the course, they introduce some interesting facts about their cultural background, and I felt really engaged and attached and I still remember this course. That is why it is really important to relate the English classes to the cultural content."

TT2 described her experience during the training program in a foreign environment as authentic. Specifically, interacting with people and students from different cultural backgrounds in the U.S. was found to be fulfilling to TT2. The training program was, therefore, culturally refreshing, enabling her to become accustomed to and to appreciate other people's cultures. Such responses illustrate the value that TT2 places on the training of IC among teachers. The exposure through workshops, according to this teacher, promotes positive interactions within multicultural settings as stated:

> TT2: I think Khebrat programme was basically for cultural training because we have lived in a foreign environment we have interacted with other teachers and students from different cultural background it was an authentic experience.

TT3 believes that intercultural training programs are essential in enabling teachers to discover and experience cultures that are different from their own. According to TT3, such programs shape people's beliefs and perceptions about other cultures. TT3 states that the Khebrat program enabled her to interact with people from other cultures, and this is something she believes that she would not have been able to undertake prior to the program. TT3 acknowledges the importance of training on the imparting of intercultural awareness, skills, and competencies. However, for the in-service training program which was provided from the Ministry of Education, that she had locally in Saudi Arabia, did not offer any

intercultural training. TT3, on this occasion, questions the relevance of locally arranged

training programs on IC.

> TT3: all of the training we had and we still have until today from the ministry of education is mainly theoretical and academic and basically focus into the teaching methods of the four skills reading writing speaking and listening. I think policymakers in the department of education and some supervisor got a very old-fashioned mentality about the language. The training courses we have in the ministry of education in Saudi do not align with the 2030 vision to prepare us to be a global and competent teacher so we could help the students. Only Khebrat program that I can say helped me identify the importance, but I was not trained to teach it.

All the three teachers, TT1, TT2, and TT3, appear to believe in the in the necessity of IC

training, all of them commented on the positive significant impact of Khebrat program on their

IC development. All of them agreed on the lack of IC training locally in Saudi Arabia and their

need for more training on how to develop their own IC and on how to teach it in class. The

next section demonstrates the monocultural signs of teachers' IC level that appeared from data

extracted from classroom observation and interviews.

4.8.2 Group TE

Data from interview and classroom observation indicate that TE1 is implementing

intercultural teaching during her classes, and she was paying attention to this matter.

Although she stated that she was not trained to teach it before or in-service.

> TE1: "No, I did not have any cultural training and I think it is better to implement cultural training as a subject for both teachers and for students. the supervisors always encourage us to include an emotional and religious objective in every lesson, so I believe it is also important to include an intercultural objective in our lessons".

TE2 believes that training is only important in enhancing or honing teaching skills. Through

training, teachers acquire linguistic skills, and their ability to teach is further improved.

However, she believes that society and the Saudi community are critical in shaping

intercultural sensitivity.

> TE2: "No, all the training I had was focusing on abstract linguistic skills and our ability to teach and finish the curriculum on the time scheduled for. I think this was influenced by the society our Saudi community before having not highlighted the learning of English as an important skill for the   students. I still hear some of my students and their parents suspect the importance of English language and they still feel it is a threat on their Islamic identity. Which is against what Quran and Islam recommended) O men! Behold, We have created you all out of a male and a female, [15] and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another.) some parents teach their kids that English is not good to learn and it is the language of non-believers or (non-Muslims) and we should avoid that language and those people who speak it . unfortunately, they seem not aware of the real Islamic morals which encourage us to be friendly with others even if they are not from our country or from not our Islamic religion".

Although TE3 never had any intercultural training before, she states that intercultural training

is essential in order to facilitate communication in the classroom and to enhance the overall

teaching process. TE3: I never attended any intercultural training or workshop during in

service or before. TE3 acknowledges that training can enable teachers to understand their

students better from a cultural perspective.

> TE3: We usually talk about IC on a personal level with other teacher, but we never brought it up as a skill or competence to be enhance and to be taught to our students although it was urgent to do

TE4 confirmed that training to teach IC is crucial although she had not had any intercultural

training before or in-service as a teacher.

> TE4: "No, teacher training I had before mainly focused on teaching methods and basic English language skills enforcing of speaking grammar reading and writing. They focus on how to prepare the teacher to teach only what includes in the curriculum".

4.8.3 Group T

The training that T1 has undertaken lacks intercultural competence programs and according to the teacher, her previous teacher training programs comprise the study of linguistic skills only.

> T1: Not at all, the teacher training we receive do not put these kinds of kills as priority they focus on the linguistic ability only, I think the supervisors, or the policy makers focus on acquiring the language

On IC training, T2 says that such programs offer minimal improvements in teaching practices. She asserts that:

> T2: I'm not sure our training was about the ways of teaching English as a language grammar and spelling."

T3 believes that intercultural training is essential in improving the teaching of cultural awareness. For example, T3 critiques the content of teacher training programs and stated:

> T3: the training I had was on the basic skills of English language only. I think the teacher training is separating culture from the English language although it is essential and in the curriculum.

It is impressive that all these teachers were practicing cultural teaching to some extent without any training and above all, that they believe that it is vital for them to get more education to teach IC on a professional level.

4.9 Techers' Monocultural Indicators (Ethnocentric Orientations) Vs. Intercultural indicators (Ethnorelative Orientations) of qualitative data

4.9.1 Group TT

For TT1, mild instances of Defense/Denigration orientations are evident from the observational data of the teacher with her students in lesson 4b (cultural differences).

Denigration is explained by Bennett as "the existing cultural worldview is protected by negatively evaluating persons with different cultural behaviors or values" (2011, p.3). Specifically, when TT1 agreed with one student's judgment that the greeting of one of the African cultures is disgusting. Keeping in mind that this is a multicultural classroom comprising an African student, the teacher is delineating this greeting practice and attaching aspects of inferiority. In defending her own culture, TT1, at this moment, is harshly criticizing this cultural practice. The excerpt below from the observational data illustrates this form of ethnocentric orientation.

> Students: there is an African tribe they have a very weird greeting custom who spit on each other as greeting way when they meet.
>
> Teacher: can you tell us what's the name of this country?
>
> Students: I think it is in Zimbabwe.
>
> Teacher: you mean it is a small society in that culture do they think this is bad behavior?
>
> Students: yeah, it is disgusting.
>
> Teacher: Yeah, yeah thanks for sharing this information

From this narrative, it is evident that the teacher depicts a state of defence. The educator fails to acknowledge and respect this cultural practice by Africans. She does not dissuade the student or refrain from disrespectful remarks terming the cultural norm as "disgusting." Although the educator is culturally aware of the differences in greeting customs, her teaching behaviour diminishes the quality of this culture. Moreover, to illustrate cultural dominance, the teacher refers to the region as a small country. There was one indication of monocultural orientation appeared from the data shows polarization of judgmental reaction toward other culture specifically positive judgment. When I asked TT2 about her friends from the different cultural background she replied:

> TT2: Yes, I am still connected with my foreign friends from the travels so I can say that I enjoyed the friendship with the American people they are friendly, and they are opened to anyone.

Here there is evidence of idealization of American culture which is a direct indication of Reversal orientation in the polarization stage, and which represents a monocultural viewpoint.

Although TT3 demonstrates familiarity with different cultures and cultural patterns, including values, principles, and beliefs, the observational data showed monocultural indications. TT3 centers the hero lesson discussion on Islamic heroes and did not point to the fact that heroes can be from any religion, not specifically Muslims only:

> TT3: good, our prophet is our model and our hero, So I think we know many things about him about his characteristics and his way of life and by that, we know everything about him. But what about others, Islamic figures? Do we have any Islamic figures to be heroes?

Even though prophet Mohammed and Salah Al din are heroes in this context, the teacher associates these figures' characters with universalism. In this way, students should learn that these traits are acceptable across all cultures.

The section below focuses on intercultural indicators were arose during the TT group of teachers' classroom observation and interview data.

Data from the interview and classroom observations showed that the IC stages of TT1 lies between acceptance and adaptation. Acceptance of differences in culture is common among individuals who are willing to learn about other people's cultures (Bayles, 2009). TT1, in this respect, possesses the affective quality of curiosity. This is in evidence since TT1 is interested in knowing and learning about different cultures across the world. Moreover, the

teacher maintains contact with people from other cultures, and she admits that she is intrigued

to learn new ideas and make comparisons between different cultures.

TT1: I am a social person in the first place and I have a lot of friends from all over the world I have made many friend in New Zeeland and we still in contact until this moment even if they are practicing different religion I always have the curiosity to know more and learn new things.

These are attributes that are congruent with an individual at the acceptance stage. From a

learner's perspective, the lessons reveal that the teacher is not only willing to accept these

cultural differences but also to take steps to improve students' cultural awareness.

Throughout the (cultural difference) lesson 4b, TT1 seems to attempt to articulate the existing

differences between multiple cultures, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Western cultures.

Moreover, the teacher goes the extra mile by drawing comparisons with the Saudi culture, in

order to enable students to deepen their level of understanding.

TT1: so, girls today we have come across many cultures from everywhere around the world and I also learned new things from your things I have not heard about it before. If we heard or read about new things or information about other cultures what we should do?

Student: we should respect it.

TT1: great respect it and we should embrace these differences and enjoy it because it is valuable for you to expand your knowledge and your relationships and you will understand why and how things are happening in these ways you will build up a logic of your understanding do you agree?

Also, the teacher uses experiential learning opportunities to enhance cultural awareness

among students. In this regard, TT1 draws from personal experience, for instance, during a

trip to New Zealand, to enable the students to understand the importance of knowing cultural

variations across the world.

TT1: Yeah if you misunderstand anything in new culture you might put yourself in a bad situation or embarrassing situation like for example what happened to me when I was in New Zealand in the park a little girl came next

> to me and she was so cute I was talking to her and then I hugged her and then their parents came and took her and they looked really angry so I felt so uncomfortable it is not acceptable in western countries to talk or to touch their children un like our Saudi culture.

Finally, the extensive use of voice recordings and videos act as simulations that place learners in different cultural contexts. These teaching practices reveal that TT1 is perhaps attempting to change students' behaviors and their worldview constructs by exposing them to diverse cultures.

During the observation of TT1 started lesson 2a (Hero) by showing her students a short movie to explain the new meaning of a hero. TT1 introduced to the students a new meaning of becoming a hero such as the ability to overcome obstacles and not being discouraged by failure. This allows students to experience appropriate feelings and behaviors in the video derived from a foreign culture which was an indication of adaptation.

Throughout observing lesson 2a (Hero), I noticed several intercultural indicators of Acceptance and Adaptation. TT1 explained to her students at the beginning of the lesson that they would talk about two heroes. TT1 presented both leaders in the story as heroes although they were presented in the story as enemies.

> TT1: today we will read together a story about two heroes one from our religion and the other from a different religion.

When students read the story TT1 started a deep discussion about the ancient war between Muslims and Christians, where she highlighted the values of humanity above any other considerations like religions and this also shows an indication of Ethnorelative orientation of people in the stage of adaptation.

> TT1: so, we as Muslims have cultures and also, we have heroes in our culture that means also other cultures of Christians or any other religions or cultures have heroes and signs, what should we do about them we should respect them and respect their

orientations and heroes. I believe this respect will lead to peace and this is the most beautiful thing that will happen to us as human".

TT2 is the most sensitive to cultural differences of the three teachers in the TT group, demonstrating sophistication in her perception of different cultures. Accordingly, TT2's intercultural sensitivity puts her at the Ethnorelative stage, including the acceptance stage and, in some cases, the adaptation stage. In the acceptance stage, a person's culture is experienced in the context of different cultures. Such people also do not perceive cultural differences to be threatening. Instead, a person in this stage accepts that their culture is a part of a complex system of interrelated worldviews (Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2014). Similarly, TT2 takes steps to inculcate other worldviews to her thoughts and to illustrate that she respects other people's cultures. Interactively, the teacher engages the students in analyzing the different communication styles and nonverbal cues that can be found in different cultures. Unlike other teachers, TT2 does not rely on reading the passage as a means of integrating knowledge about communication and arising cultural misunderstandings. Instead, she allows the students to conceptualize, analyze, and internalize these different ways of communication.

> TT2: excellent. Any other name!! You are missing something is the hero only male it could be a female, let's describe the hero regardless of the names, so how can you describe them?
>
> Student: protective.
>
> TT2: yes, protecting others what else, what did you say about prince Mohammad Bin Salman
>
> Students: kind person, helpful, honest.
>
> TT2: is the hero should be a famous person?
>
> Students: No TT2: the hero could be an ordinary person, let's talk about our hero Salah Aladdin I want from you to read the first and second paragraph how was Salah Aladdin look like take a minute read and give me a description ... is he old person is he a Muslim and so on .

From another perspective, TT2 creates an accommodative environment that is consistent with learning practices under the adaptation stage. According to Bennett, to support learners in the adaptation stage, it is critical to create opportunities for peer interaction and practice of behavior in unknown cultures. Furthermore, facilitators at this stage allow learners to analyze and characterize cultural differences by undertaking research (Bennett, 2017). Similarly, TT2 reveals that her students are fascinated by different cultures. To nurture this interest, the teacher encourages her students to undertake research about Japanese and English cultures and identify connections with the Saudi culture. In this way, the teacher ensures that both the students' and her worldviews are broadened. This education plan also enables the class to reconstruct their worldviews while recognizing the underlying cultural differences.

TT3 demonstrates progression through the three stages of Ethnorelative orientation. In accepting other cultures, this teacher recognizes the different cultures of students in her class and she attempts to include them through different communication styles and teaching practices. For instance, TT3 reveals that her class is composed of students from different countries. The teacher strives to accept and include these students in the classroom, I observed that during both lesson Hero and Cultural difference that she was always encouraging her students to participate. Similarly, the teacher focuses on eliminating cases of cultural misunderstandings in the classroom by encouraging students to increase their knowledge about different cultures. The girl who learned the Indian culture, including the Indian language, is an ideal example of students' who follow up on TT3's advice. Therefore, TT3 is well adept with multicultural education as evidenced by the teacher's ability to accommodate and

teach students from different cultures other than Saudi culture. Regarding adaptation,

the teacher showcases the capacity to expound her individual worldviews and develop

new worldviews congruent with different cultures. The teacher attempts to shift the

student's cultural frame from being Saudi-oriented towards a more accommodating

model that accepts other worldviews.

> TT3: From all over the world from every part of the earth stories are there to
> learn and to know the humanity and everyone on this planet is a neighbor. So,
> if we have seen it all in this beautiful world, we are going to enjoy it.

 The teacher enables the students to understand the different cultural patterns in countries,

such as India, Belgium, and Japan. Specifically, the teacher introduces students to

different cultural patterns using international tales, stories, and animated series for

children to show the girls how people live in different parts of the world.

In addition, TT3 completes the adaptation phase and moves into the integration phase by

facilitating students in internalizing the learned cultural differences. This potentially

enables them to think from different worldviews. For example, the teacher engages

students in a deliberative process, challenging them to think about customs and

nonverbal cues that exist in different countries. Consequently, the class learns about

the cultural aspects of Yemen and Ukraine, which are quite different from the Saudi

culture.

4.9.2 Group TE

There are intercultural and monocultural indicators apparent in the data from the teachers'

observations and interviews. Each of these teachers show both monocultural and intercultural

characteristics at the same time. Besides superiority, denigration is another substage under

the defense phase that can help to describe this TE1's monocultural orientation. Denigration

allows individuals to safeguard their own culture by negatively portraying other people's

cultures (Bennett,2011). This also inclines people to associate negative or undesirable

attributes to worldviews that are conflicting with their personal ideologies (Bennett, 2017).

Concerning TE1, this tendency was evident in her explanation of the lesson 4b (cultural

differences), the story of Saladin and King Richard. According to the teacher, King Richard

can never possess the valuable principles, generosity, and humanity embodied by Saladin. In

other words, since King Richard was not a Muslim, he would never demonstrate the kindness

of Saladin considering the hostility that was prevalent between the two. This teaching sends

the wrong message to the students, concerning intercultural sensitivity. More specifically, it

inclines students to be protective of their culture by disavowing other people's worldviews.

As students come out of this lesson, they will learn that only Muslims have the desirable

characteristics of kindness, tolerance, and justice attributed to true heroes. To this end, TE1

had one practice of IC teaching which indicates an individual at the defense stage.

> TE1: they were enemies they fight each other but, although salah Adin choose to help him when he found out he is in need for help do you think it is a good thing to do ?
>
> Student: yes
>
> TE1: do you think this is easy or that any other person can do the same?
>
> Student: no, I don't think so
>
> TE1: what do we learn from this act?
>
> Students: kindness
>
> TE1: see always people in this situation of war they hate each other but imagine salah Aldin did not hate king Richard instead he helped him and what we can learn from this is the true hero is the one who shows mercy and be kind when people are sick or weak and this what makes him a true hero . But what is the thing that made him really do this girl?
>
> Students: true Islam
>
> TE1 exactly applying the teachings of Islam in which we all should follow we should respect all people in our country even if they non-Muslims we should show mercy on all mankind no matter where they are from. So, again what do we learn from this story that salah al din was a good Muslim was a brave and merciful. it is normal to treat you friend with respect but it is unusual to treat your enemies with kindness and this is what we should really look at in this story so we should not let our feelings control our actions

TE2 displays tendencies congruent with an individual at the acceptance and adaptation

phases and, as such, can be said to lack ethnocentric orientations. The teacher is receptive and

acknowledges the existence of other cultures. Further to this, TE2 does not hold a rigid

perspective about other cultures and religions. She appears to be open minded and is a risk

taker, especially when teaching sensitive topics that are deemed unacceptable within her

culture.

> TE2: "it is highly important because we as Saudi we are not alone in this world; we
> are sharing this world with other people from different countries."

This statement is an indication that the teacher is receptive to cultures from different

countries across the world. To adapt to cultural differences, the teacher wants to tackle one of

the most debated cultural aspects. The teacher expects to include lessons about

homosexuality in her classes as dictated by the need to accept different cultural beliefs and

practices that are inconsistent with the Saudi culture.

> TE2: I was thinking about the concept of sexual orientations specifically
> homosexuals and how I. am going to accept it as a person and how I am going
> to discuss it with my learners as a difference of some cultures and specially
> this is basically against most of religions including Islam. In intercultural
> competence we have. To accept the others so this homosexuality is other are
> we going to accept it and how we are going to deal with such difference.

From another perspective, the teacher encourages students to treat all humankind with

kindness regardless of their region. She defies predispositions about teachings that advocate

for unequal treatment, thereby illustrating her prowess in adapting to different cultural

beliefs. In the end, this evidence reveals that the educator is willing to coexist with

individuals from different cultures even when her principles, values, and beliefs are under threat.

> TE2: "treat all people as human, not as Muslim or Christian and black or white okay we are all the same."

Also, to minimize cultural differences, the teacher believes that teaching in Saudi Arabia should focus on cultures within reach, such as Japanese and Indian cultures. She states that Mexican, Swedish, and Norwegian cultures are irrelevant for the Saudi students since they do not interact with these cultures.

> TE2: We should not include the Saudi culture in English classroom because they live it daily. We should learn about cultures and customs of others only like in Japan the families are really attached to each other in Japan the grandfathers and the parents with their sons they still live together in the same house , not like us now in the Saudi culture we started to lose this family morals we have been lost in this modernized world , so when should see the good examples in other cultures like Japan and try to make them as an example of a positive role model I think now in Saudi the people are now become more distant from their families they want to be independent and to be disconnected from their parents unfortunately I hope we could go back to the way we used to be in the past

However, people at the minimization phase are quick to correct and detest other people's practices or behaviours that are inconsistent with their cultural practices. Thus, people experiencing this phase, like TE2, are not receptive to behaviours or cultural tendencies that are incongruent with their cultural expectations.

TE3 showcases instances of Denial of cultural differences in her classroom sessions. Consistent with an individual at this stage, the teacher attempts to isolate students from other cultural contexts psychologically. This Denial occurs when the teacher portrays and terms Christians as the enemies in the hero lesson TE3 stated:

> "The enhancement of Islamic morals that appeared in the story and how the Hero Salah Al din helped an enemy who are different in their religion and although he became a big help for the Christian leader".

In contrast, the teacher emphasizes that unlike his enemy, Salah Al din from the Islamic culture is the true hero in the story. TE3 further associates desirable traits, such as kindness and goodness, to this hero in a way that separates the students from different cultural orientations. In other words, the teacher knowingly portrays individuals from other cultures as villains. TE3 does not value and respect the cultural differences that are inconsistent with her own. Her lack of interest in Christianity cements her status as a person in the denial phase. Ultimately, the educator represents a person accustomed to a monocultural setting unable to function or communicate within a multicultural context.

TE4 exhibits tendencies consistent with an individual at the defence stage. This attitude was evident in the interview where the teacher dwells on the issue of enforcing the Saudi Islamic Arabic Identity. TE4 confirmed that she would not focus on other cultures unless they presented it in the curriculum. The teacher's defence against cultural differences means that she may present any cultural differences as a threat to her students, and she tells them that they should be aware of what to accept and what not to tolerate. From this observation, the teacher is clearly in the ethnocentric phases. Related to this, the teacher indirectly criticizes other cultures, as the example below demonstrates:

> TE4: I always enforce the Saudi Islamic identity in them. For example, I teach them that your power lies within your real identity as Muslim woman when they are exposed to new different cultures, they must have the awareness of knowing what to take and what to avoid and what will benefit you and what will harm you so they should build up a confidence of how to choose or follow what they see from different cultures"

With regards to intercultural indicators, during lesson 4b (cultural differences), TE1 attempts to help the students to understand the meaning of cultural differences, and she goes on to

draw positive implications of accepting different cultures. TE1 encourages students to be happy with their culture and those of others. The educator draws religious examples indicating that the world would not be enjoyable if God had created a unanimous culture across the world. By posing such questions, TE1 enables the students to think critically about other people's cultures and to learn to be receptive. In this way, the teacher ensures that students accept, adapt, and learn to live with others irrespective of their cultures. The following excerpt illustrates this unique technique employed by the teacher.

> TE1: "now let's imagine that people are the same, and everyone is similar, what do you think the world would be like?"
> TE1: "of course, it is going to be very boring that's why Allah made us different so we could enjoy our differences. Even if we are from the same place, we will still exhibit differences like now we are all in the class from Saudi Arabia, but we still have our differences."

TE1 acknowledges that people are different depending on their cultural orientations. By acknowledging this fact, the teacher manages to create a cultural construct among students which has the potential to enable them to identify with people from different regions.

> TE1: The person should respect any culture, the culture that is different form his culture or he feels that he disagrees with it. It is not his right to feel that your culture is the model and the best of all. A person should respect any culture as long as it is not against the standards of ethics and general morals.

Additionally, TE1 facilitates the transition from monocultural environments to multicultural settings by emphasizing that students should strive to coexist with others despite individual differences in customs as well as traditional beliefs. In this way, the teacher assists the students to assess their identity with respect to cultural variations.

TE2 displays tendencies which are congruent with an individual at the acceptance and adaptation phases. The teacher notes that Saudi Arabian people are different from people in other parts of the world. By doing so, the educator can impart new perspectives among

students with regards to cultural differences. Also, in the observational data, TE2 emphasizes that people live differently and according to their own cultural orientations, and it is the responsibility of Saudi individuals to understand as well as respect these customs, even when they are inconsistent with the Saudi culture.

> TE2: good we are the same we should be a human and treat all people as human not as Muslim or Christian and black or white okay we are all the same. Now tell me what do you think of equality and treating everybody the same? If you face someone raciest what will you do how you will act?

TE2 displays tendencies congruent with an individual at the acceptance and adaptation phases.

> TE2: "it is highly important because we as Saudi we are not alone in this world; we are sharing this world with other people from different countries."

This statement is an indication that the teacher is receptive to cultures from different countries across the world. This observation from the class indicates that the teacher is aware and sensitive to other cultures. The teacher demonstrates cognitive and emotional sensitivity to cultures across the globe. In another instance, as revealed from the responses during the interview, the teacher showcases the need to adapt to cultural differences.

> TE2: We should teach our students that people from other countries are different in their orientations, mindsets, how they look, how they feel and how they act. so if they were familiarized with these differences they will accept these differences and they will respect it , the IC will be useful l for their linguistic abilities and their personal and life skills how the students will develop their selves by acquiring the tolerance with other and the interacting with others no matter what the other come from.

Related to this, the teacher wants to tackle a highly controversial topic in Saudi culture. She expects to include lessons about homosexuality in her classes, as dictated by the need to accept different cultural beliefs and practices that are inconsistent with the Saudi culture. From another perspective, the teacher encourages students to treat all humankind with

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kindness regardless of their religion. She defies predispositions about teachings that advocate

for unequal treatment, thereby illustrating her prowess in adapting different cultural beliefs.

> TE2: "treat all people as human, not as Muslim or Christian and black or white okay we are all the same."

The above observational data is evidence that the teacher wants the students to integrate their

cultural awareness into their individual behaviours. TE2 implores students to identify or

empathize with individuals from different cultures. Thus, the teacher, not only encourages

students to expand their understanding of cultural differences, but also instils a sense of

togetherness amongst students regardless of differences in cultural backgrounds. To this end,

the educator is an example of an individual surpassing the three Ethnorelative stages:

acceptance, adaptation and integration.

TE3's teaching process is indicative of an individual who is willing to experience or test

individual beliefs within the lenses of other cultures. The evidence that she is at this

acceptance stage can be seen in the observational data during the hero class, which reveals

that the teacher begins the lesson by emphasizing the importance of respecting other people's

cultures.

> TE3: Ok what do you think of this custom in Belgium?
> Students: I don't like it
> TE3: maybe that is not acceptable for you or strange but remember it is their normal thing to do their way of greeting each other and we have to respect it. Ok Now girls what have you learn from this lesson today or tell me your thoughts about it. In group work write a sentence of things or you like, or you did not like about the lesson today or write about something you have learnt.
> Student: we have known that other countries have different cultures from us and sometimes they are strange for us.
> TE3: yeah like in Belgium will you be angry if they greet you by their way?
> Students: no, it okay.

In the interview data, this teacher further asserts that she is interested in different cultural patterns, including foods and patterns. TE3 goes on to encourage this curiosity among the students in the classroom lesson. As a result, the teacher uses different examples in foods and clothing in countries like Syria and other Arab nations to showcase the cultural differences that exist among people from different backgrounds. Additionally, the teacher reminds and insists during the hero class lesson that students must learn about other people's cultures.

> TE3: "what we should do before you meet someone from a different culture?
> Students: "read about their culture and search about them.
> TE3: "that's great, this also will enrich you with knowledge and ability to   communicate with them in a very good way."

The above evidence from the classroom observation indicates that TE3 wants students to expand their understanding of different cultures. Initially, the teacher attempts to enable students to understand that cultural differences are persistent across various regions in the world. Towards the end of the lesson, the key takeaways concern the desire to learn about customs and practices that are different from those accepted in Saudi. From a learner's perspective, the students are able to develop a new perspective about cultural awareness and sensitivity. Before interacting with people in a multicultural setting, such learners will be able to interpret their identity within the context of a different culture. This technique employed by the teacher, therefore, showcases an individual sensitive and willing to empathize with people in all global environments.

TE4 integrates cultural differences in several ways. Firstly, during the interviews, TE4 is adamant that like many other cultures, Saudi and Islamic cultures should be accepted across the world, especially in English-speaking or Western countries. This notion challenges other cultures to step out of their preconceived perceptions regarding Saudi as well as Islamic culture and attempt to incorporate different worldviews about this region's traditions.

> TE4:I think I as a human I will be affected by circumstances, but I think I follow the Islamic teachings that recommends equality and diversity no one is superior than other we are different, but we are equal.

Similarly, during the lesson in the classroom, TE4 strives to ensure that the students are accustomed to different communication styles and practices that are inconsistent with Saudi culture perhaps indicating the educator's concern about culture integration.

> TE4: that's right cultural differences, now let's see question number 1: think about gestures or customs that existed in your country do you think they are the same everywhere around the world? customs in Saudi are they the same in America?
> Students: No, I think it's different?
> TE4: Why they are different?
> Student: because they are different people
> TE4: yes, and they have different ideas, personalities, religion.

Integrating cultural differences, in this case, is evident from the teacher's dwelling on different forms of greeting. TE4 goes beyond the text to help the students conceptualize these cultural differences. The observational evidence reveals that the teacher helps the students to understand the differences in cultural practices. For example, the teacher tells the students that in Wisconsin, people greet each other by shaking hands while in Belgium, people kiss on the cheek three times when they meet.

> TE4: Thank you so much for this good reading. So, he is form Wisconsin and they have custom their if he meets someone for the first time, he shakes hands only okay so what happened when he visited Belgium?
> Student: he was surprised
> TE4: he found out that in Belgium they greet each other by kiss on the cheek not once but three times moving from one check to another so according to the question 3: what is the common way to greet people in Belgium?

This example provided during the class ensures that the student expand their worldviews about cultures across the world. Moreover, it draws insight and inclines learners to deepen their understanding about differences in traditions or customs. Therefore, these are

Ethnorelative teaching practices where the teacher attempts to promote cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

4.9.3 Group T

Some integrated monocultural and intercultural indicators emerged from the analysis of the teacher's qualitative data from the classroom observations and interviews. T1 exhibits tendencies that are congruent with ethnocentrism and, particularly the defence stage. The defence stage under the DMIS framework entails a state where a person's culture faces threat from other or different cultures. According to Bennett (2017), individuals at this stage associate their culture with superiority. In other words, these individuals perceive the cultural differences as a threat that jeopardizes their beliefs, values, and ideologies (Bennett, 2017). Likewise, T1 attests that she only takes from other cultures what she can derive benefit from. Other cultural factors that are not useful are discarded by this teacher. T1's world constructs are categorized into two: one that represents her own culture and the other, representing all other cultures. T1, in this regard, demonstrates similar traits by avoiding religious confrontations, particularly concerning the Jewish and the Muslim religions. She does not want other cultural beliefs to infiltrate her Muslim values and practices.

> T1: One of my students was from Palestine and because her home country is occupied by Israel I did not comment on her participation when she said I will shoot my enemy I did not want to go into a conflict of religious orientations or racism against or with Jews and Muslims. I did not want to be biased towards my own orientation, I want to enhance the idea of peace among religions I want to focus on the concept of humanity because in the class I have many students from different countries.

The teacher during the lessons also encourages her students to protect their own culture and not to integrate their traditions with new technologies in the modern world. Therefore, at the

defence stage, people become protective of their culture, and they tend to disregard different worldviews.

Based on the interview, T2, however, symbolizes undesirable minimization stage characteristics. The teacher acknowledges that the term intercultural competence is a relatively new term for her. Also, from what is observed in her teaching practices, it appears that T2 lacks the capacity to look into other people's cultures that are different from her own. During lessons 2a (Hero) and 4b (cultural differences), the teacher did not discuss the topics deeply with her students. T2 only asked the students to read the text and guided them to find the meaning of any new vocabulary. This indicates that she may lack the skillset needed to teach IC and therefore shows her to have a low IC level.

> T2: I think it is better that I only follow what is in the syllabus, but sometimes I just mention a fact or story about big event happened in any part of the world which related to our topic

To further describe this teacher's minimization of cultural differences, transcendent universalism, a subset within this phase is worth mentioning. Transcendent universalism is where an individual accepts certain economic, religious, and philosophical concepts from their own culture and applies these aspects to all differing cultures (Bennett, 2014). Such people take their ideologies to be universal and applicable across multiple cultures and T2 conforms to this group. Even though she accepts all cultures, she appears to believe that her religious teachings, morals ad logic must prevail across different cultures. She transmits this ideology to the students, attesting that she will walk away from ideologies or worldviews that contradict these beliefs. In this regard, the teacher becomes a true advocate of transcendent universalism and this is considered to be monocultural indicators of T2's IC assessment. For example, T2 stated in the interview:

> T2: For me culture is very important, each one of us should increase his or her knowledge of other cultures so he/she could interact and communicate with others language alone will not help you communicate. even in our life and our culture is really an interesting topic but we should be very careful of what to introduce to the students only culture that is reliable with our Islamic and Arabic culture.

T3 shows characteristics of a person in the defence stage, as she was very defensive of the Islamic culture. The teacher begins by reminding the students about past victories of Saladin to showcase the hero's Islamic principles during lesson 2a (Hero). As a person at the defence stage, T3 is drawing a boundary to illustrate the differences between the Muslim culture and other cultures. To further illustrate this stage, T3 is also depicting Islamic culture as superior in comparison to other, different cultures. For instance, she argues that Muslims are tolerant and just in contrast to the Christian leader King Richard in the story. Further to this, T3 reveals that people from this culture set aside their racial and religious differences and are willing to come to the rescue of others. She does not apply the same sentiments to other cultures. Such remarks are arguably an indication that this teacher believes that the Muslims way of life, including their values and beliefs, are somewhat superior compared to that of other cultures. T3 seems to hold Islamic beliefs in very high regard, and she is willing to dissociate from people or cultures that conflict with these ideologies. In the interview, the teacher revealed that she believes and teaches her students to walk away from cultures and doctrines that contradict the Islamic way of life. For example, she stated:

> T3:I think we should include the Saudi culture, but we should focus more on developing our selves towards globalism but at the same time keeping our traditions and culture we must be selective, and we must keep our roots our pride and our religion. Like what happened in my class when you were observing one of the students hated our tradition of marriage practice, I could not stand against what the parents and what the society approves these are very sensitive. I avoid the discussion to avoid problems.

Such a belief is attributable to a person at the denial stage who self-isolates either physically or emotionally from other cultures. T3 stated that she is tends to avoid any potentially sensitive religious topics in the classroom, especially when students voice concerns or express ideas that contradict traditional cultural practices, such as marriage. Therefore, even though the teacher is showing some considerable markers towards becoming interculturally competent, she still has a long way to go. T3 included only American, Australian, and British cultures to be related to the teaching of English language. During the interview, when I asked her about the reason behind this choice she replied:

> T3: Because their lifestyle is international, and I prefer to introduce developed ones and they are mix cultural and they are more developed than us, but I am very selective and I avoid sensitive topic especially religious topics to be on the safe side anything might affects their Islamic believes I try to avoid it".

The above quote indicates a Polarization orientation, which is where people seem to have a Reversal mindset. That is, they see another culture as superior to their own. This means that people at a reverse stage tend to see other cultures as better than their own and this might be considered as discrimination and exclusionary. Bennett described it as the "tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one's own, exemplified by "going native" among long-term sojourners or the "false ally" among some dominant-culture seekers of minority approval' (2011, p.3).

With regards to the intercultural indicators which appear in the data extracted from the classroom observation and interviews, T1 showed a character of an individual with some form of Ethnorelative orientation. To acknowledge the cultural differences in the classroom, the teacher greets the students using the Arabic language first and then English. In this way, all students are able to respond without experiencing a language barrier. Specifically, in the lesson 4b (cultural difference), the teacher begins by elaborating on this topic to enable

students to conceptualize and accept different cultural practices. The teacher also begins the class by introducing English words, thereby setting the tone for the ESL class.

> T1: Hello everyone, how is you girls today we are going to have a reading lesson about Hero. On the board   Can you read the following words and tell me if you someone comes to your mind when you read it (intelligent – honest – brave)

In the observational data, the teacher goes on to compare different cultural aspects and traditions, such as foods, clothes, and greetings, in different cultures, including Indian, Japanese, and Saudi cultures. For example, she says:

> T1: so, girls these are some examples of differences between cultures in the way they greet each other do you know more examples of differences in cultures or body language from other parts of the world?

In this interactive process, the students highlight the most notable cultural differences in a way that can potentially expand their intercultural sensitivity. Finally, the teacher uses video footage to bring a clear picture of these cultural patterns to the classroom. However, the teacher cautions students not to forget their roots, lest they lose their cultural identity. In general, this teacher demonstrates some capacity to integrate cultural differences within the classroom and, in this process, T1 plays a mediating role by assisting students to highlight and acknowledge cultural differences.

T2's response to intercultural competence indicates that she accepts all cultures, religions, and nationalities. Before starting the teaching of the heroes' class, the teacher allows students to associate heroes with characters and individuals from different societies rather than strictly limiting the discussion to Islamic heroes.

> T2: can you give me an example of a hero in your life and also tell me why   you think he is a hero?
> Student: Bill Gates because he invented a smartphone on a laptop.
> T2: excellent do you have another example?
> Student: yes, my hero is my father
> T2: your father why?

> Student: Because he always supports me where there is new people he takes my hand and knows me a and he encourage me to be more talking to people about a lot of things.

This indicates that the teacher accepts all individuals and is willing to tie desirable traits to these people, regardless of their culture. Additionally, T2 introduces students to different scenarios of cultural misunderstandings. She emphasizes that considering the cultural differences from one country to another, it is imperative that people learn to avoid misunderstandings. She concludes the lesson by saying that:

T2: Girls this is what we call misunderstanding because there are cultural differences between country to another.

T3's teaching practices during the lesson 4b (cultural differences) might bolster her intercultural orientation, particularly within the stages of acceptance and adaptation. T3 perceives herself as a culturally receptive individual acknowledging the differences in cultures irrespective of their incompatibilities with the Saudi Arabian culture. However, the teacher reiterates that others often discriminate against Saudi people because of their cultural orientation. Nonetheless, such prejudice does not deter the teacher from accepting, respecting and identifying with people from different cultures. These notions are revealed in the following interview data:

> T3: an open and accepting peoples' cultures Because I have met people before who do not like to accept the culture of the other, so through what I have read, seen, and through whom I have socialized with, I consider myself a tolerant human being receptive to all cultures."

From another angle, this response from the interview illustrates that people might see themselves as competent intercultural individuals. In such cases, such people may overestimate the weight of their cultural perspectives or intercultural sensitivity.

4.10 Factors Affecting Levels of Intercultural Competence

4.10.1 Group TT

Training and cultural exposure are central in the teacher's development of their level of IC.

Data shows that TT1 IC level was affected by two main factors, first the foreign cultural

exposure during her childhood and second, the training she received from Khebrat teachers'

program in New Zealand.

> TT1: "when I came back from New Zealand after finishing our teacher training in Khebrat program I started to talk about my experience to some teachers in the school and they were really interested they always keep asking about it until today they wanted to know more about the New Zealand culture and how they teach"

There was one indication of monocultural orientation in the data which shows polarization of

judgmental reaction toward other cultures, specifically positive judgment. When I

asked TT2 about her friends from different cultural backgrounds, she replied:

> TT2: Yes, I am still connected with my foreign friends from the travels so I can say that I enjoyed the friendship with the American people they are friendly, and they are opened to anyone.

Here, there is evidence of positive judgment of American culture, which is a direct indication

of Reversal orientation in the polarization stage and which represents a monocultural

reaction.

For TT2, the time spent in different or foreign cultures had the most effect on her level of IC.

It is evident that she was also influenced by her American friends. Further to this, her

education level appears to have contributed to her intercultural awareness. "I completed my

master's degree in linguistics in 2016" TT2 has an advanced level of intercultural

competence based on the qualitative data, despite the fact the quantitative data showed a low

level of Intercultural competence.

TT3 was mainly influenced by her experience in the time she spent abroad with the Khebrat program.

> TT3: During Khebrat programme in America we have been asked as a Saudi teacher to present the Saudi culture for every class we go to and surprisingly most of the American student did know anything about us they even say that we have the ego not to have the welling to explore other or different cultures outside American they were very closed to themselves and only know their own culture. So, I believe we as Saudi are really interested in exploring and learning other people's cultures. for my Saudi students now, they are becoming more interested in learning several languages not only English but also Spanish Korean Turkish and so on and I am so proud of Saudis.

The data from the interviews and classroom observations suggest that the main factor that has affected these three teachers is the Intercultural training of the Khebrat program. As it shows advanced levels of IC and Ethnorelative orientations towards cultural differences. Interviews and classroom observation data suggest that two of them (TT2 and TT3) are considered to be in acceptance stage of the DMIS and that this is due to the training of Khebrat program. But surprisingly, all of the TT group had scored lower IC levels among the ten teachers who were assessed. This can be a direct indication that assessing IC throughout surveys and questionnaires do not necessarily show the true picture of an individual's IC level. What is also interesting is that qualitative data of TT1 indicated both monocultural and intercultural mindset in some occasions during the observations and the interview which was not in line with her IDI assessment.

The following section presents the data from the Exposed Teachers group, who have had some experience of other cultures but had not had any official IC training (unlike the TT group).

4.10.2 Group TE

TE1's teaching experience of 28 years might be the main factor that affects her intercultural competence. She had never been exposed to any intercultural training but still has a sufficient practice of teaching IC, as in evidence while observing her classes. The teacher, throughout her teaching years, has interacted with students from multiple cultures, a factor which may indeed have bolstered personal intercultural awareness. From the observational data, the educator's behavioural patterns were also consistent with an individual ready to empathize with students from different cultural backgrounds. The teacher incorporates inclusivity in the classroom lessons, emphasizing the need to respect every culture. Additionally, it was also noticeable during the lesson that the teacher was positive towards cultural differences, and she attempts to empathize with different characters in the story, even though their beliefs and practices may be considered incongruent with those acceptable in the Saudi culture. Hence, the teacher's experiences may have played a critical role in shaping her level of IC, since she was able to understand the cultural differences and demonstrate through her behaviour and communication styles the desire to acknowledge and respect different traditions.

Although TE3's teaching experience is long, sixteen years, and she has had cultural exposure through travelling, her IC assessment showed a monocultural orientation between Denial and Defence. It might be due to the lack of intercultural training and her education level since her last bachelor's degree completed before 22 years ago, along with her unfamiliarity with IC concepts and its constituents which resulted in this monocultural orientations.

TE2 also has relatively lengthy teaching experience of the English Language for more than 16 years, which potentially positively affects the IC level. Although the teacher lacks IC training, her travelling experiences may have further improved her level of IC. The interview

responses from the teacher suggests that she has much acquaintance with different cultural aspects, such as food, language, and traditional beliefs. However, this teacher does not believe that it is necessary to include students' own culture in teaching practices, which demonstrates a cultural Defense and Reversal IC stage. Reversal is defined as the "tendency to see another culture as superior while maligning one's own, exemplified by "going native" among long-term sojourners or the "false ally" among some dominant-culture seekers of minority approval" (Bennett, 2011, p3)

> TE2: We should not include the Saudi culture in English classroom because they live it daily. We should learn about cultures and customs of others only like in Japan the families are really attached to each other in Japan the grandfathers and the parents with their sons they still live together in the same house , not like us now in the Saudi culture we started to lose this family morals we have been lost in this modernised world , so when should see the good examples in other cultures like Japan and try to make them as an example of a positive role model I think now in Saudi the people are now become more distant from their families they want to be independent and to be disconnected from their parents unfortunately I hope we could go back to the way we used to be in the past

It is, therefore, questionable whether the educator is culturally competent. Ideally, her ability in communicating and interacting with people from different cultures should be dependent on the capacity to use skills and cultural competence(Rosario et al., 2016). In contrast, the teacher fails to demonstrate such skills in communication or teaching practice, thus, illustrating a low level of IC. This contradiction is evidence that IC in an ongoing dynamic and developmental capacity that does not necessarily have an end point.

TE3's level of education compared to other teachers, was the lowest. Further to this, some other behaviour that was noticeable via the classroom observation and interview suggests that, despite giving full consent to participate, she was cautious and unreceptive to the research. For instance, some of her responses suggested a fear of showing and sharing her

real opinion and she appeared to have a suspicious attitude toward some of the questions during the interview. In other words, the teacher offered limited information that would indicate her level of IC. According to the observational data, her level of IC is arguably very low, particularly during her communication style in the classroom lesson. The educator unknowingly associates valuable attributes to Muslims while depicting other religions to be inferior.

> TE3: The enhancement of Islamic morals that appeared in the story should be highlighted and how the Hero Salah Al din helped an enemy who are different in their religion and although he became a big help.

Moreover, it was noticeable that the teacher believes that Islam is a true and higher religion compared to Christianity. Given that such intercultural views were likely to be evident to the students, it is presumable that they would be unable to identify and associate with other cultures and teachers' views potentially influence students in that they are less likely to be able to identify and to wish to associate with other culture. This can be argued to be a failure by the teacher, and this could impact negatively on the students' IC level and, as such, their capacity to interact in an intercultural environment.

For TE4, the lack of training on IC limits the heights that this teacher might reach in becoming interculturally sensitive. Further, this level of training might as well ensure that the teacher adapts different teaching strategies to ensure that ethnocentric orientations are mitigated. The teacher draws intercultural relevance from her 16 years' experience in teaching the English language and from her experiences via traveling in the U.S. The teacher's experiences in a foreign country appear to have provided much exposure to multiple cultures. Most importantly, she was able to learn, interact and communicate with people from different cultures. At this point, the educator demonstrates an in-depth understanding of different cultures. Unsurprisingly, during both the interview and the observations, the teacher

appeared to be aware of the impact that her worldviews may have on her students'

perspectives of IC. Although traveling and teaching experience may have been critical in

improving IC among the four teachers, the evidence highlights limitations in IC as a result of

lack of training. These teachers believed that their experiences were influential to their levels

of IC. However, it is notable that they did not appear to understand that inadequate training

impeded their communication styles and capacity to improve intercultural sensitivity among

students. Also, they were adamant that inclusion of other cultures in the English Language

classrooms was unnecessary. This could arguably hamper their students' ability to interact

within multicultural settings in the future. In contrast, with adequate training, these teachers

may understand how to incorporate other cultures in their teaching practices to enhance IC.

4.10.3 Group T

Although T1 had obtained a higher education and a great deal of experience in teaching a

foreign language (nine years' experience in ESL classrooms), her orientation as assessed by

the DMIS is within a monocultural mind-set. In addition, T1's limited intercultural teaching

that was observed during her in class, may be due to her lack of IC knowledge and training,

as well as her lack of exposure to different cultures, as she has never been out of her country.

She was also resistant on many occasions to open classroom discussion of religion or other

orientations. T2 also had a good amount of experience in teaching English (8 years). She also

keeps track of cultural events that occur across the globe in order to improve her level of IC.

T3 had also been teaching English for eight years. The teacher enhanced her level of IC by

reading different books about cultures and different traditions or customs. In general, these

teachers lack training in IC and rely predominantly in the experiences gained from teaching

ESL. Unsurprisingly, all three teachers were unfamiliar with intercultural competence and

assessment of this concept within classrooms. Further to this, they were unaware of the

impact of IC on their teaching practices and the impact that the concept may have on the

capacity of their students to interact within multicultural settings. To this end, available

evidence from classroom observations and interviews illustrates the importance of training in

improving intercultural competence levels.

The following chapter discusses the Exploratory Study of Saudi Male Teachers' IC levels

assessed via the IDI tool – An Exploratory Study

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter critically analyses the findings of the study regarding Saudi English language

teachers' understanding of intercultural competence (IC) and its role in teaching English as a

second language (ESL). The discussion is organized around several key themes emerging

from the data, including teachers' beliefs and practices, their level of exposure to intercultural

competence, perceptions of their role in promoting IC among educators and students, views

on the assessment of IC, and factors influencing their understanding of IC. In the context of

intercultural competence (IC) literature, it is hoped that the main findings of this study can

offer valuable insights into the complexities and challenges faced by Saudi English language

teachers in understanding, promoting, and assessing IC in their teaching practices.

5.2 Beliefs and Practices of Saudi English Language Teachers

The study revealed varied beliefs and practices among Saudi English language teachers

regarding the role of intercultural competence in ESL teaching. Teachers in the TT group

demonstrated a positive attitude towards IC, emphasizing its importance in motivating learners and fostering positive interactions. Despite lacking formal training in IC, these teachers incorporated IC principles into their teaching practices, such as promoting tolerance, respect, and understanding of cultural differences. In contrast, teachers in the TE and T groups showed limited understanding and practice of IC, attributing it to their lack of exposure to different cultures and inadequate training. Teachers' perceptions of IC and its integration into language teaching practices are shaped by their pedagogical beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and professional experiences (Fantini, 2009). Understanding teachers' conceptualizations of IC is essential for designing effective teacher education programs and curriculum materials.

The study's exploration of teachers' diverse perceptions of IC and their pedagogical implications aligns with Fantini's (2009) call for a nuanced understanding of teachers' beliefs and practices in promoting intercultural learning.

Additionally, the study's identification of specific pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to foster IC, such as storytelling and cultural discussions, underscores the importance of incorporating experiential and reflective activities into language teaching, as advocated by Fantini (2009). The study highlights teachers' varying perceptions of IC, ranging from viewing it as a skillset to a set of values and attitudes, influencing their teaching methodologies (Etri, 2022).

Teachers' practices of IC, such as storytelling, discussions on cultural backgrounds, and raising awareness of cultural issues, align with the principles of communicative language teaching and intercultural pedagogy (Qadeer, 2019).

The following table demonstrates numeric data of themes that emerged from the teachers explaining their IC understanding. I have used the In vivo software to organize and categories

the themes that emerged and extract the number of occurrences of every participant as in

(Table28)

Table 28: Themes emerged from the interviews and classroom observation and number of occurrences that explain how teachers conceptualize IC

Themes	TT1	TT2	TT3	TE1	TE2	TE3	TE4	T1	T2	T3
1.The role of IC in ELT										
1.1Agreement on the importance of IC in motivating the leaners of the language	3	4	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
2.Teachers' perception of IC										
2.1 IC as a tool that could be used in teaching	3	1	1	2	4	3	2	0	0	0
2.2 IC as a set of manners or attributes	2	1	1	3	2	2	4	1	0	0
2.3 IC as a life skill could be practiced	1	1	1	2	3	4	2	1	1	1
2.4 IC a set of values	1	1	1	1	4	6	3	0	0	1
2.5 IC as an attitudes and strategies	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
3.Teachers' practices of IC										
3.1 story telling method	1	3	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	1
3.2. discussion of teachers 'cultural background	0	0	1	1	3	2	3	2	0	0
3.3 discussion of learners 'cultural background	1	4	1	1	1	4	1	0	0	0
3.4 raising learners' awareness of sensitive cultural issues e.g. : racism , discrimination and diversity	1	4	1	3	2	3	1	0	0	0
4. The assessment of IC										
4.1 Agreement on the possibility of measuring IC by observing	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
4.2 Agreement on the urgency of IC teachers' training	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
4.3 Agreements on the lack of teacher's intercultural education	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
4.4 agreement on the ambiguity of the IDI assessment tool	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
5.The Monocultural indicators (Ethnocentric orientations)										
5.1 Denial orientation	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	4	3	2
5.2 Defence orientation	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	5

5.2.1 Reversal orientation	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	2	2	2
5.2.2 Acceptance of cultural practices that agrees with Islamic believes only	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
5.2.3 Superiority of their own cultures upon others	1	0		1	1	1	2	3	2	2
5.3 Minimization orientation.	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6.The Intercultural Indicators (Ethnorelative orientations)										
6.1 Acceptance orientation	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
6.2 Adaptation orientation	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
6.3 Integration orientation	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5.3 Level of Exposure to Intercultural Competence

The Khebrat intercultural training program emerged as a critical factor influencing the level of IC among teachers in the TT group. This program positively impacted teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards foreign cultures, leading to the development of an intercultural mindset. However, the findings also indicate discrepancies between the IDI assessment and qualitative data, suggesting limitations in the assessment tool's applicability and the dynamic nature of human intercultural competence. Teachers who have undergone intercultural training or have extensive travel experiences tend to exhibit higher levels of IC, demonstrating the importance of experiential learning in developing intercultural awareness (Garrett-Rucks, 2012).

Despite limitations in exposure to different cultures, some teachers show adaptability and empathy towards cultural differences, highlighting the dynamic nature of IC development (Alzamil, 2019). Experiential learning through travel and cross-cultural encounters is widely regarded as a powerful catalyst for intercultural development (Byram, 1997). Immersion in different cultural contexts exposes individuals to diverse perspectives, norms, and values, and can potentially foster empathy and cultural sensitivity.

The identification of intercultural training and travel experiences as influential factors in teachers' intercultural competence found in this study resonates with Byram's (1997) emphasis on the transformative potential of experiential learning.

Furthermore, the recognition of teachers' adaptability and empathy towards cultural differences despite limited exposure reflects Byram's (1997) assertion that intercultural competence is not solely dependent on direct experiences but also on individuals' willingness to engage with cultural diversity.

5.4 Perceptions of Teachers' Role in Promoting Intercultural Competence

Teachers perceived their role as crucial in promoting IC among both educators and students. Despite facing challenges such as cultural stereotypes and discrimination, teachers in the TT group initiated authentic cultural communication in the classroom setting, fostering meaningful interactions and discussions. Similarly, teachers in the TE group recognized the importance of IC as a skill in global communication, influenced by their diverse travel experiences. However, teachers in the T group demonstrated a stronger emphasis on preserving Saudi culture and Islamic values, leading to a monocultural approach in ESL teaching. The study underscores the teachers' belief in the intrinsic connection between English language teaching and culture, emphasizing the importance of IC in motivating learners and fostering positive interactions (Zughoul et al., 2018). Teachers recognize IC as a motivational tool, particularly in the context of a monocultural setting like Saudi Arabia, where exposure to diverse cultures may be limited (Cushner & Chang, 2015). In the field of ELT, scholars have long recognized the intertwined nature of language and culture (Kramsch, 1993). This perspective emphasizes that language learning cannot be separated from cultural understanding, as language embodies cultural meanings and values. Kramsch (1993) argues

that language teachers should aim to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence, which involves not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to understand and navigate cultural differences effectively. The study's findings regarding the teachers' perception of the intrinsic connection between language and culture resonate with Kramsch's (1993) argument, highlighting the importance of integrating intercultural components into language teaching to enhance learners' communicative competence.

All teachers of the three groups believed that English language teaching and culture are related because English is considered a foreign language for the community, so culture for them is a must aspect for English language classes. All the teachers promote a positive learning environment and demonstrate the importance of IC as a motivational tool in learning the English language. Specifically, the findings illustrate the emphasis that this teacher places on learning English. She associates language with interaction in multicultural settings. When these students progress to complex and different cultural settings, the knowledge may be pivotal to interpreting multiple contexts. Most importantly, since such knowledge is imparted at a young age for students, the competencies and skills can be used in higher learning(Zughoul et al., 2018). For Saudi students learning within the monocultural setting of Saudi Arabia, the deployment of IC in teaching practice, particularly in ELT classrooms, has the potential to foster positive interactions and learning.

For the TT group teachers confirmed that they play a critical role in promoting their students' intercultural competence by spending more time getting to know their students' cultural background, so it was clear that they were applying IC as a tool. It was evident from observing their teaching styles that the Khebrat training program has influence their understanding of the IC role in the teaching of English.

For the TE group, the teachers were also practising and teaching IC but they were not aware of its term but they believed that IC and the English language are intertwined. All of these teachers in the TE group believed that they have a main role in enhancing student's awareness about the IC but they were not quite applying it in their teaching from what is observed during their classes.

For the T group it was different all teachers were confused about their role in enhancing IC for themselves and for their students, although they believed in the importance of IC for them as English teachers. All of the T group teachers were looking at IC from a monocultural view and this is could be resulted of their limited exposure to different cultures.

5.5 the IDI level of the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers

The study found that Saudi English language teachers, despite being assessed as having a monocultural mindset by the IDI tool, exhibited varying degrees of intercultural competence in qualitative assessments. While some teachers showed acceptance of cultural differences, others were at stages of denial, polarization, or minimization. Interestingly, half of the teachers showed contradictory results between quantitative and qualitative assessments, indicating limitations in solely relying on quantitative tools for measuring intercultural competence. The findings suggest that exposure to different cultures and intercultural training may not always correlate with higher intercultural competence, as some teachers demonstrated advanced levels despite limited experiences. Overall, the study highlights the complexity of assessing and developing intercultural competence among educators and the need for comprehensive approaches that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods.

In analyzing the stages of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as characterized by the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers, it becomes apparent that the data presents a complex picture. While the IDI assessment tool primarily classified teachers within monocultural orientation stages, the qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations often provided contradictory findings.

Based on the IDI assessment results:

1. Denial Stage: Four teachers (TT3, TE3, T1, T3) were classified at the denial stage. This stage is characterized by a lack of recognition or acknowledgement of cultural differences.

2. Polarization Stage: Three teachers (TT1, TE1, TE4) were placed at the polarization stage, where individuals perceive their own culture as superior to others.

3. Minimization Stage: Two teachers (TT2, TE2, T2) were identified at the minimization stage, where individuals downplay cultural differences and view all cultures through the lens of their own.

Figure 16: Comparison of Teachers' IC level from IDI, interview and class observation
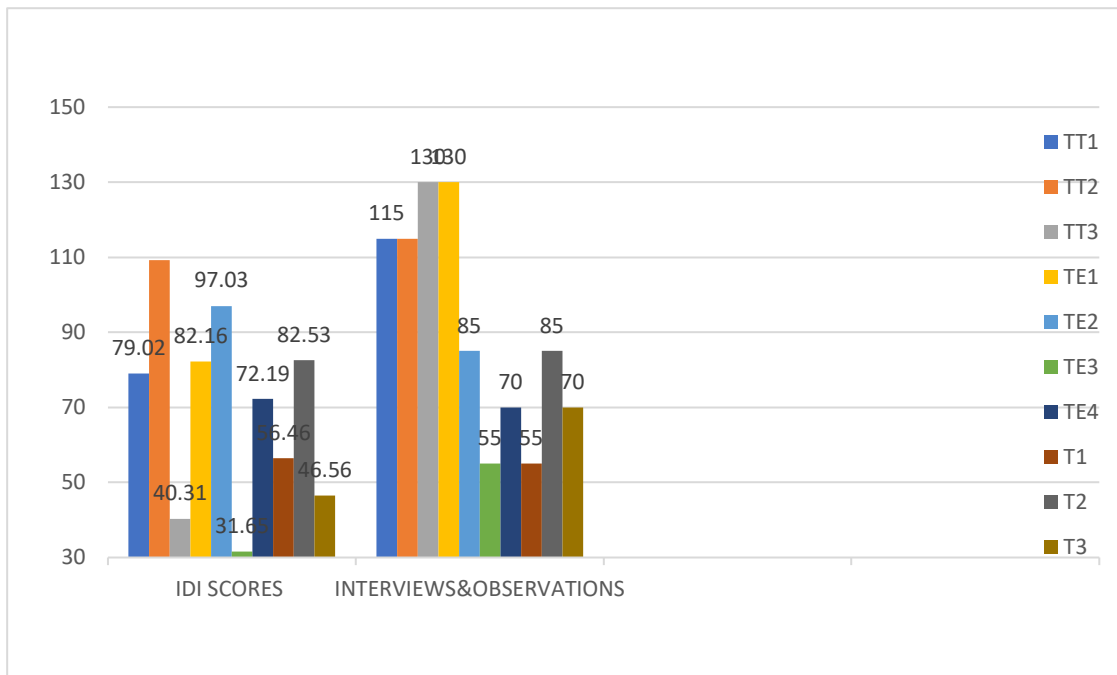
In contrast to these quantitative findings, qualitative data from interviews and observations revealed a more nuanced understanding of teachers' intercultural orientations:

1. Adaptation Stage: Three teachers (TT3, TE1, T2) were perceived to exhibit an adaptation orientation, demonstrating a more sophisticated understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

2. Acceptance Stage: Two teachers (TT2, TT1) were found to be at the acceptance stage, indicating a genuine acceptance and curiosity towards cultural diversity.

3. Minimization Stage: One teacher (TE2) was identified at the minimization stage, consistent with the IDI assessment.

4. Polarization Stage: Four teachers (TE3, TE4, T1, T3) were observed to exhibit polarization, aligning with the IDI assessment.

Table 29: Comparison of Teachers' IC level from IDI, interview and class observation

Participant's code	IDI result on DMIS	Interview and observation result on DMIS

Group TT		
TT1	Polarization stage scored 79.02	Acceptance
TT2	Minimization scored 109.22	Acceptance
TT3	Denial scored 40.31	Acceptance
Group TE		
TE1	Polarization scored 82.16	Acceptance
TE2	Minimization scored 97.03	Minimization
TE3	Denial scored 31.65	Denial
TE4	Polarization scored 72.19	Acceptance
Group T		
T1	Denial scored 56.46	Denial
T2	Minimization scored 82.53	Minimization
T3	Denial scored 46.56	Polarization (Defence)
The number of participants who showed similar results in both quantitative and qualitative methods = 4 out of 10 The number of participants who showed different results in both quantitative and qualitative methods = 6 out of 10		

The discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative data underscores the dynamic nature of intercultural competence and the limitations of relying solely on quantitative tools for assessment. Human beings are complex, and their intercultural competencies may vary depending on context, experiences, and personal growth. This discrepancy also resonates with existing literature, as it highlights the challenges of accurately measuring intercultural competence and the need for a holistic approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods (Garrett-Rucks, 2012). Studies have shown that individuals may demonstrate intercultural competence in certain situations while struggling in others, emphasizing the importance of considering context and individual differences (Garrett-Rucks, 2012).

In conclusion, the contradictory findings in the assessment of intercultural competence among Saudi English language teachers underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of cultural competence, acknowledging its dynamic and context-dependent nature. By incorporating mixed methods approaches and considering the complex interplay of factors

influencing intercultural competence, educators and researchers can better support the development of effective intercultural teaching practices.

I believe that the conflicting results between the IDI assessment and qualitative methods such as interviews and observations underscore the dynamic nature of intercultural competence. This inconsistency aligns with Garrett-Rucks' (2012) findings, which suggest that individuals may demonstrate varying levels of intercultural competence depending on contextual factors. Human nature is multifaceted, and individuals may exhibit intercultural competence in certain situations while struggling in others. This highlights the importance of considering the complexity of human behavior and the contextual nuances that influence intercultural interactions. By acknowledging the dynamic nature of intercultural competence, educators and researchers can adopt more nuanced approaches to assessment and intervention, facilitating more effective intercultural communication and understanding.

5.6 Views on the Assessment of Intercultural Competence

Teachers expressed mixed views on the assessment of IC, with most emphasizing the importance of observation in evaluating IC levels. While some teachers found the IDI assessment tool valuable, others encountered difficulties in understanding certain concepts, highlighting the need for clearer assessment methods tailored to their cultural context.

Assessing intercultural competence presents numerous challenges due to its multifaceted nature and context dependency (Deardorff, 2011). Traditional assessment methods often fail to capture the complex interactions between language, culture, and identity. The study's exploration of teachers' perspectives on IC assessment highlights the need for contextually relevant and authentic assessment tools that align with the goals of intercultural language education (Deardorff, 2011). Moreover, the study's emphasis on observational methods for assessing IC resonates with Deardorff's (2011) recommendation for performance-based

assessments that allow learners to demonstrate their intercultural skills in authentic contexts. Teachers' perspectives on IC assessment reflect challenges in understanding and applying existing assessment tools, indicating a need for clarity and alignment between assessment methods and teachers' conceptualizations of IC (Massri, 2020). Observational methods emerge as a preferred approach for assessing IC, highlighting the importance of practical demonstrations of intercultural skills and behaviours (Suhayati, 2018).

For the first group (TT), TT1 thinks that IC assessment is not possible due to human dynamic, ever-changing, ongoing and unique experiences. For the IDI, TT1 faced ambiguity and could not understand some of the questions in the inventory. Although, TT1 confirmed the significance of the questionnaire and the values of it content. TT2 believes that IC could be assessed by observing people's reactions and behavior towards other people differences. Hence, the educator realizes that a person's ability to interact with individuals from diverse cultures is dependent on how they change their attitudes or behaviors towards others. Ideally, this is an illustration of practical assessment of IC among teachers. She also had positive feedback about the IDI. Similar to TT1 and TT2, TT3 assumes that assessing IC can be achieved only by observation. She thinks that because IC cannot be measured precisely. TT3 believes that IC can be evaluated through observing behaviors and manners. Thus, according to the educator, the behaviors and manners represent the attitudes, beliefs, and practices about IC.TT1, TT2 and TT3.

 For group TE, TE1 believed that IC can be assessed by only observing behavior, but when I asked her about the IDI assessment tool, she showed great interest and appeared to be supporting this type of IDI assessment .TE1 also reflected some ambiguity on the IDI questionnaire and affirmed that she sees herself as a competent intercultural person. TE2 stated that IC assessment is possible via observation only, although she explained that she faced some difficulties while dealing with the IDI assessment. TE3 considers that IC is

possible to be assessed through observation stating that she gained a lot of information from the IDI assessment, and she positively experienced the survey. TE4 considers that IC assessment is possible only via observation and for the IDI assessment she expressed having some difficulties in understanding some concepts in the questionnaire.

All of the T group teachers agreed on the probability of assessing IC, T1 believed that it is possible to assess IC through observation and surveys and she confirmed that the IDI assessment was to some extent not clear although she was impressed by the concepts that included in the IDI topics. During the interview, the teacher notes the importance of surveys in assessing people's different attitudes. Such assessments, according to this teacher, offer new insights about people's worldviews. T2 believed that IC can be evaluated by observing people's behaviour. Given the teacher's lack of understanding about IC as a concept, T2 initially offers no suggestions about the importance of IC assessment. However, questions on assessing a person's IC level resulted in a positive response where the teacher revealed that a person's behaviour towards different cultural orientations indicate cultural skills. Also, T3 thinks that IC cannot be assessed, and the IC could be only observed through people's interactions and behaviours. For the IDI assessment questionnaire, she implied that some of the questions were not clear to her and this might affect T3 IDI results.

Al of the teachers from the three different groups expressed difficulties that they faced in understanding some statements of the IDI, which might be due to their limited knowledge of the IC in theory form their education level and in practice from their limited cultural exposure. all shared the same overestimated assessment of their IC. All of them believed that they are interculturally competent but at the same time they admit that they were not able to recognize the term of it and define it precisely. All of them contended that the only valid method to assess IC is through observation in practice.

All the teachers participated in this study have the desire to learn and incorporate IC in their teaching but they were not equipped with the right skills. Also, all the teachers were not familiarized with IC as a terminology but they were believing in its importance and they were to some extent practice it.

5.7 Factors Affecting Understanding of Intercultural Competence

Factors such as cultural exposure, training programs, and level of education emerged as significant influences on teachers' understanding of IC. Teachers with higher levels of exposure to diverse cultures, such as those in the TT group, demonstrated a more advanced understanding of IC compared to their counterparts. Additionally, formal training programs like Khebrat played a pivotal role in shaping teachers' beliefs and practices related to IC. Teachers who have undergone intercultural training or have extensive travel experiences tend to exhibit higher levels of IC, demonstrating the importance of experiential learning in developing intercultural awareness (Garrett-Rucks, 2012).

Despite limitations in exposure to different cultures, some teachers show adaptability and empathy towards cultural differences, highlighting the dynamic nature of IC development (Alzamil, 2019).

Apparently, the Khebrat intercultural training program has helped to increase the IC level of a number of the teachers in the TT group. The data presented in interviews and observations showed that they were in the developmental stage of Adaptation and Acceptance where they have an intercultural mindset according to the DMIS. In contrast, the data taken from the IDI assessment showed that two of them are at the stage of Polarization and Denial where they have a monocultural mindset. All three teachers TT1, TT2, and TT3 hold positive beliefs and

practices of IC. They all affirmed that they are open-minded people accepting all and believed that humanity is above everything.

The Khebrat program can be argued to be critical in improving IC levels among the TT group. The training program impacted positively on beliefs and attitudes towards foreign cultures. Through this training, these educators appear to have developed a sense of belief that although they originated from different parts of the state, intercultural awareness is essential to be able to identify with people in their new teaching environments (Lenkaitis et al., 2020). The program improved teaching practices by enabling teachers to design classroom atmospheres that are suitable to the learners' interests. In the lessons, these teachers consider the intercultural limitations that students face in ELT classes (Alsaeed et al., 2020). The educators engage in reading and telling stories that bolster intercultural awareness. At this point, learners can develop a positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. Such positive learning experiences can be reciprocated in social interactions where students are able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

TT1, TT2 and TT3 all believed in the urgent role of IC in ELT although they were not familiar with its terminology. All of them articulated that IC is mainly a skillset and mindset which cannot work separately from the use of a foreign language. All these three teachers implemented and used IC main categories of values, attitudes, and skills such as Tolerance, Respect, understanding differences, avoiding misunderstanding, Adaptation, Equality, Diversity, Managing cultural differences, Acceptance, Equality, and Inclusion.

All three teachers shared approximately the same length time and experience in teaching English in Saudi Arabia. They also shared the same view of their IC teaching preparedness, with all of them willing to teach and implement IC, but they believed that they were not

trained to teach it during in-service (nor beforehand). The factors that mostly affected the level of IC of these three teachers is clearly their cultural exposure. Apparently, time spent during the Khebrat program influenced their knowledge and attitudes towards their IC. Also, TT1 and TT2's level of education might have affected the IDI score where they showed a higher level than TT3. The former holds a bachelor's, degree whereas TT1 and TT2 hold a master's degree.

5.7.1 Impact of Training and Travel Experience on IC:

Experiential learning through travel and cross-cultural encounters is widely regarded as a powerful catalyst for intercultural development (Byram, 1997). Immersion in different cultural contexts exposes individuals to diverse perspectives, norms, and values, fostering empathy and cultural sensitivity. The study's identification of intercultural training and travel experiences as influential factors in teachers' intercultural competence resonates with Byram's (1997) emphasis on the transformative potential of experiential learning. Furthermore, the study's recognition of teachers' adaptability and empathy towards cultural differences despite limited exposure reflects Byram's (1997) assertion that intercultural competence is not solely dependent on direct experiences but also on individuals' willingness to engage with cultural diversity.

5.8 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of the study on intercultural competence (IC) among Saudi English language teachers can be contextualized within existing literature on IC development and assessment. Here's how the findings relate to key themes in the IC literature:

5.8.1 Developmental Nature of Intercultural Competence:

The study's identification of discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative data underscores the dynamic and developmental nature of intercultural competence. Existing literature emphasizes that IC is not a fixed trait but rather a process that evolves over time through exposure to diverse cultures, reflective practice, and meaningful intercultural interactions. Scholars like Bennett (2008) and Deardorff (2006) advocate for a developmental approach to IC, highlighting the importance of ongoing learning and adaptation.

5.8.2 Complexity of IC Assessment:

The study's use of mixed methods highlights the complexity of assessing intercultural competence. While quantitative tools like the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) provide valuable insights, they may not capture the full range of individuals' intercultural capabilities. Qualitative methods such as interviews and observations offer a more nuanced understanding of teachers' intercultural orientations and behaviours. This aligns with calls in the literature for the use of multiple assessment methods to comprehensively evaluate IC (Fantini, 2009; Paige et al., 2009).

5.8.3 Influence of Context and Experience:

The study's findings regarding the varied backgrounds and experiences of the teachers underscore the influence of context on IC development. Existing literature suggests that factors such as cultural exposure, language proficiency, travel experiences, and intercultural training can impact individuals' intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; Cushner & Mahon, 2002). However, the study's results suggest that these factors may not always predict individuals' actual intercultural behaviours and attitudes.

5.8.4 Implications for Teacher Education:

The study's implications for teacher education align with recommendations in the literature for incorporating intercultural competence training into teacher preparation programs. Educators need opportunities to develop not only their linguistic skills but also their

intercultural awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills ((Kramsch, 2013; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). The study highlights the importance of experiential learning, reflective practice, and cross-cultural interactions in fostering intercultural competence among language teachers.

5.8.5 Future Research Directions:

The study's findings point to the need for further research to explore the factors that contribute to the development of intercultural competence among language teachers. Longitudinal studies tracking teachers' intercultural development over time and across different contexts could provide valuable insights into the complex nature of IC and its impact on teaching and learning outcomes. Additionally, research is needed to identify effective strategies for integrating intercultural competence training into teacher education programs and promoting more inclusive and culturally responsive language teaching practices.

In summary, the study's findings contribute to our understanding of intercultural competence among language teachers and highlight the need for a holistic and contextually sensitive approach to IC development and assessment. By situating the findings within the existing IC literature, we can identify key themes, challenges, and opportunities for promoting intercultural competence in language education contexts.

5.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into Saudi English language teachers' understanding of intercultural competence and its implications for ESL teaching. While some teachers demonstrate a positive attitude towards IC and incorporate it into their teaching practices, others exhibit limited understanding and practice. Addressing these gaps through targeted training programs and culturally relevant assessment tools can enhance teachers'

capacity to promote IC among educators and students, ultimately fostering more inclusive

and effective ESL learning environments.

Chapter Six: An Exploratory Study of IC of Saudi Male Teachers

6.1 Introduction

In Saudi Arabia's education system, gender segregation is a fundamental aspect that shapes

teaching and learning environments. While previous research has mainly focused on female

educators due to these policies, this study aims to explore the intercultural competence (IC) levels of male Saudi Arabian teachers. Despite the challenges posed by gender segregation, data was collected from 184 male teachers using the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI). This exploratory investigation seeks to uncover potential differences in IC levels between male and female educators and contribute to a deeper understanding of IC development within the Saudi educational context. Grounded in the hypothesis of gender-based variations in exposure to other cultures, this study aims to provide valuable insights into IC development among male teachers, thus informing future research and educational practices in Saudi Arabia.

6.2 The aim of the study

This exploratory investigation aimed to assess potential similarities or differences in IC levels between male and female Saudi teachers, as indicated by IDI scores. While recognizing the limitations of only collecting IDI data, it was hypothesized that gender differences may exist in IC levels due to distinct societal roles and potential differences in exposure to other cultures among Saudi men and women.

In Saudi Arabia, gender segregation is a deeply ingrained aspect of societal norms and cultural practices. This segregation extends to various aspects of life, including education, workplace, and social interactions. In the context of education, Saudi schools and universities typically have separate facilities for male and female students, with strict regulations to prevent mingling between genders.

Gender segregation in Saudi Arabia is largely influenced by cultural, religious, and legal factors. Islamic principles, which form the basis of Saudi Arabia's legal system and societal norms, emphasize modesty and the separation of unrelated men and women. In the realm of education, gender segregation is enforced from primary school through university level.

Schools are divided into male and female sections, with separate classrooms, entrances, and facilities. This separation extends to faculty and staff, with male and female teachers typically teaching in their respective gender-segregated environments.

The enforcement of gender segregation in education has significant implications for the experiences and opportunities available to male and female teachers.

Furthermore, the gender-segregated nature of education in Saudi Arabia can contribute to differences in exposure to other cultures between male and female teachers. Male and female teachers may have distinct societal roles and responsibilities, which can influence their opportunities for travel, engagement with diverse communities, and access to resources for intercultural learning.

Given these contextual factors, it is credible to hypothesize that gender differences may exist in intercultural competence (IC) levels among Saudi teachers. Male and female teachers may have varying degrees of exposure to other cultures and opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, which could influence their IC development. However, it is important to approach this hypothesis with caution and recognize the need for further empirical research to explore the complexities of gender dynamics and IC in the Saudi educational context.

6.3 The objectives:

1. Evaluate the IC of male Saudi English language teachers using the IDI tool, considering their cultural exposure through travel experiences and participation in the Khebrat training program.
2. Compare the IC results between male and female teachers to identify any significant differences and contributing factors.

6.4 Research Questions

1. What factors influence the IC level of male Saudi English language teachers?

2. Which stage of IC best characterizes the majority of tested male Saudi English language teachers?

This exploratory study serves as a preliminary investigation into the IC levels of male Saudi teachers, with the understanding that future research should incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews and classroom observations for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

6.5 Research Instrument

The IDI assessment tool that was undertaken by the female participants in the main study was also implemented in this exploratory study (Appendix 1). The IDI provided numerical data which generated group profile results of IC levels as explained earlier in chapter 3 see (quantitative method section). Further to this, eight demographic questions were included with the IDI, as follows:

1. What is your level of education?
2. What is the country of citizenship?
3. What is the current position in your educational institution?
4. What is your gender?
5. How long you have been teaching English?
6. Have you travelled abroad?
7. What are the reasons of travelling?
8. Have you joined Khebrat training program and finished successfully?

6.6 Sampling

The sampling criteria used for this exploratory study was the non-probability sampling method as it depended on availability, and on a particular set of characteristics such as profession, nationality, and gender. The sample targeted was Saudi Arabian English language male teachers in Riyadh. I contacted the male English language department there, and one of the supervisors cooperated and sent out the IDI assessment to the male teachers using WhatsApp. Responses from 184 participants were gathered.

6.7 Research Participants Groups

The study focused on male teachers in Saudi Arabia. One hundred eighty-four teachers participated in the study, all making and with varying education levels. However, all of them had at least a post-secondary graduate level of education (67%), with some having master's and Ph.D. levels of education at 24% and 7%, respectively. Further, 98% of the teachers were Saudi Arabians, with only 2% being from Kuwait. To match the analysis pattern undertaken in the main study, the 184 male teachers were grouped based on three criteria. The first group comprised teachers who did the Khebrat program, which included only 7% of the male teachers in this study. The second group was for teachers who had travelled abroad for whatever reason in the past, a group which was composed of 40% of the male teachers who participated. The third group comprised those who had never travelled abroad and consisted of 52% of all the teachers in the study. The grouping allowed for a preliminary analysis of the intercultural competence of the male teachers, allowing the researcher to compare the results with those of the corresponding groups in the female teachers' study.

6.8 Findings and Analysis

The first research question of this exploratory study concerns the factors that may affect the male teacher's IC level. Demographic information gathered from the responses of 184 male teachers shown in (Figure 16) indicates that the level of education plays a significant role. It is evident that the level of education could affect the level of IC as 67% of them completed their higher education (see Figure 16) unlike what was found in the sample of 10 female teachers, where 4 out of 10 had completed their higher education and all of these male teachers scored advanced level of the IC assessment.

Figure 16: Education Level of Male Teachers Group
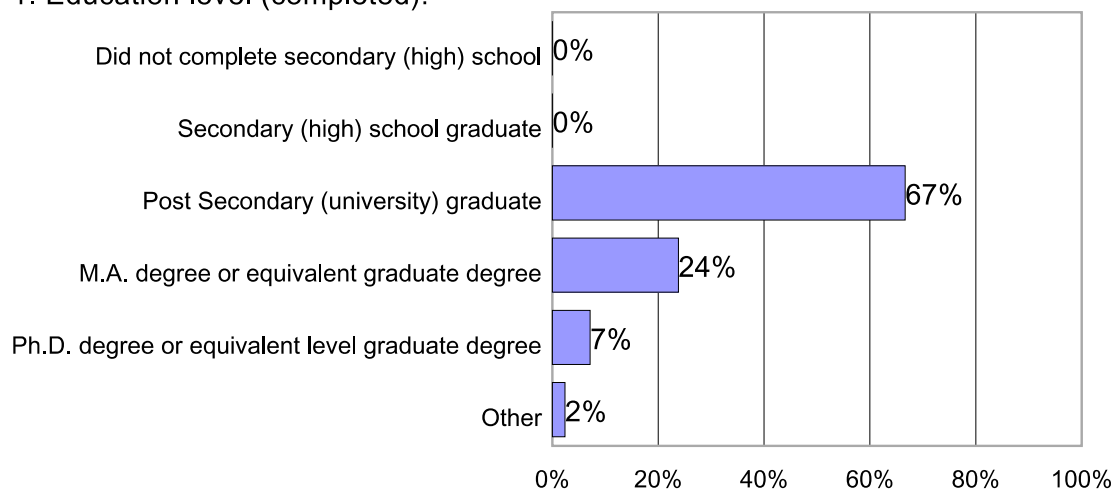
1. Education level (completed):

2. Country of citizenship (passport country). Indicate the country that you consider your primary country of citizenship.
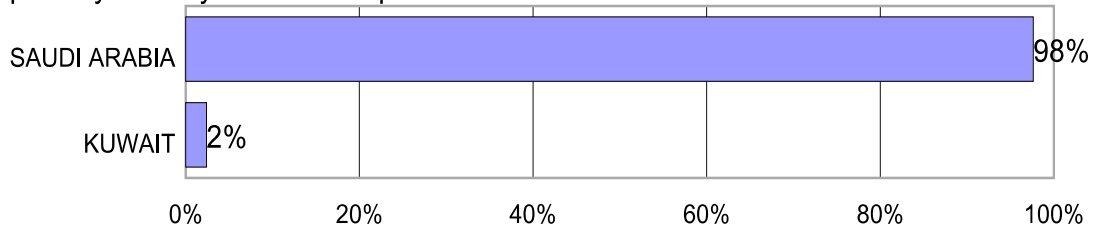

Figure 17 above shows that all responses are Saudi Arabian and belong to a monocultural conservative community which may also affect their IC level.

Figure 18: Current position of male group respondents

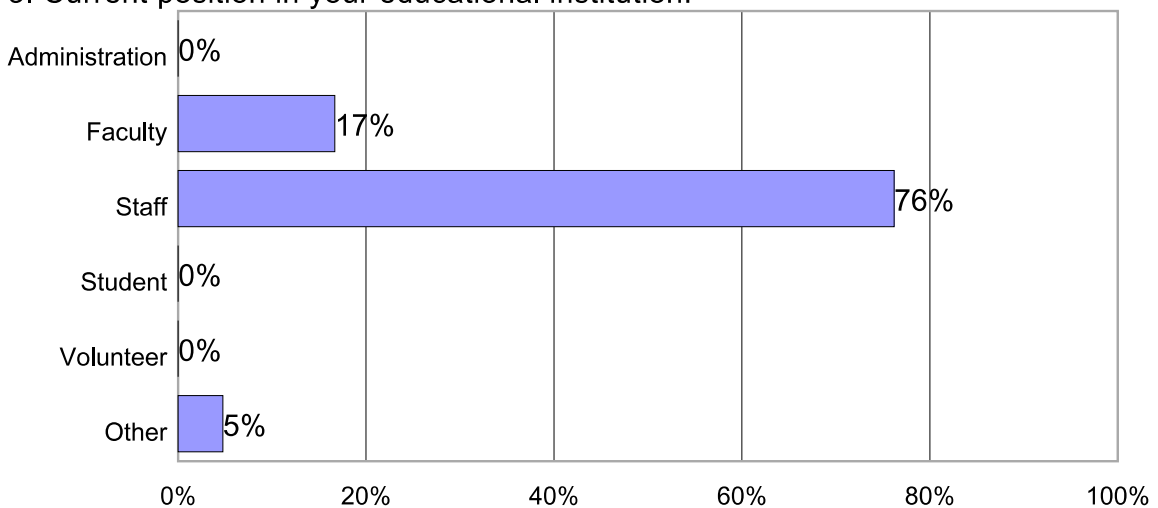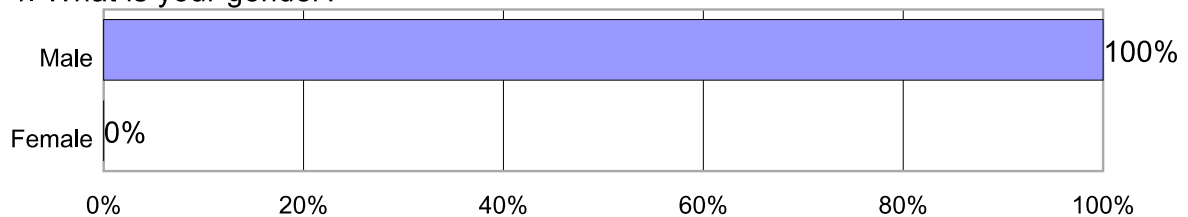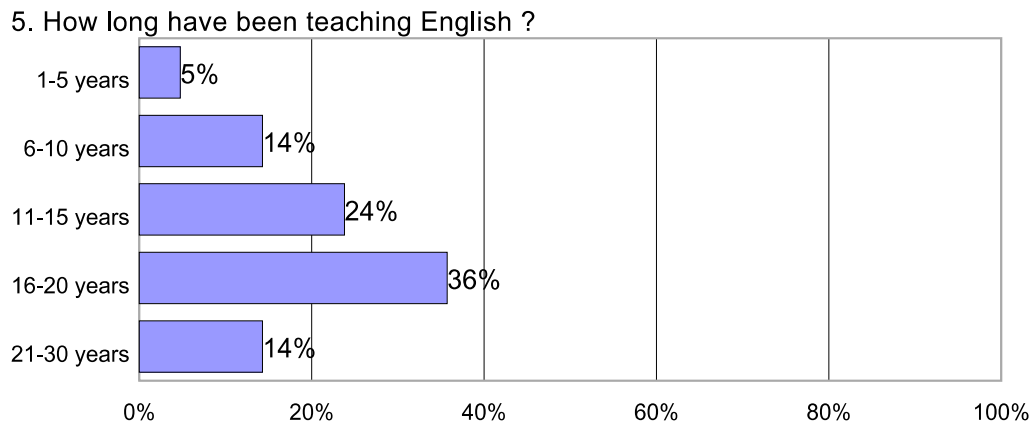3. Current position in your educational institution:

Figure 19: Male grape gender percentage of responses

4. What is your gender?

From (Figure 18&19 and) shown above all of the responses collected were from male and faculty and staff members of the Saudi educational system

Figure 20: Male responds to the years of experience

5. How long have been teaching English ?

Years	Percentage
1-5 years	5%
6-10 years	14%
11-15 years	24%
16-20 years	36%
21-30 years	14%

The years of experience among the male sample (Figure 20) were to some extent similar to the

female sample in the main study. Female teachers' experience lasted between 10 to 20 years,

and the majority of male teachers had a similar length of teaching experience.

Figure 21: Male Group travel exposure rates

6. Have you travelled outside Saudi Arabia before?

Response	Percentage
Yes	40%
No	52%
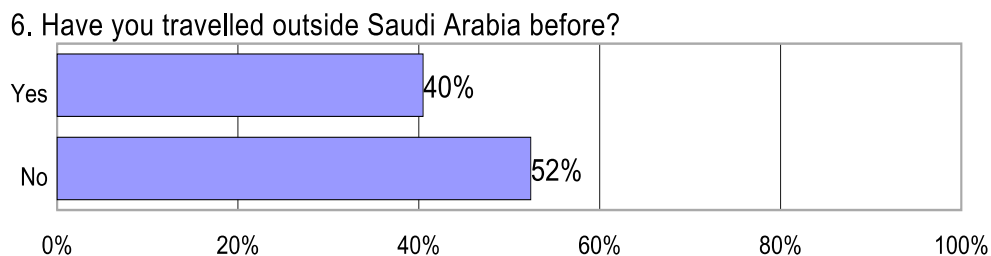
Giving the findings from the main study travelling abroad might be a main key to the

development of IC and from what we see in (Figure 21), it is evident that more than half of the

male sample did not have the exposure of different culture that can be benefit from travelling.

Figure 22: Male Group travel exposure type

7. What was the reason for travelling?
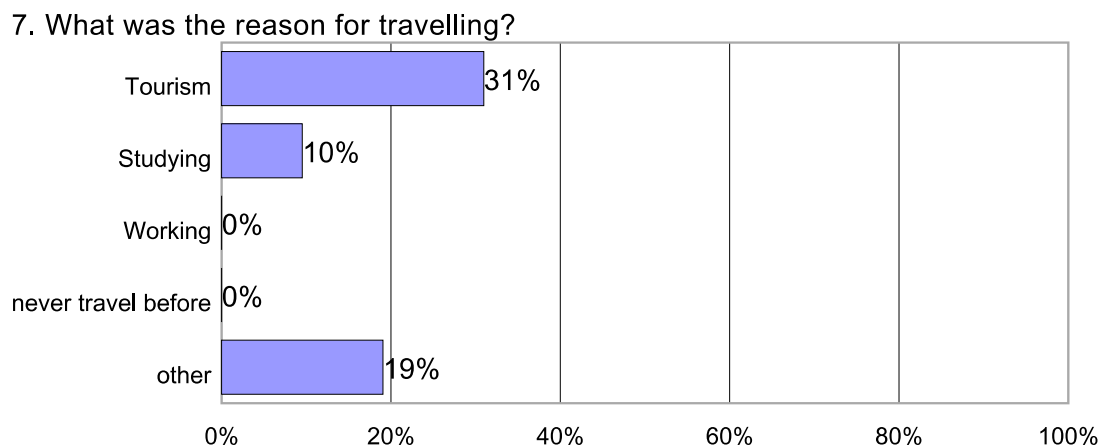
31% percentage of respondents have travelled for tourism and only 10% have travelled for study purposes indicating that studying and training can affect the level of IC as seen in (figure22), similar, to what we found with the female sample in the main study that teachers with cultural exposer and training scored higher levels of IC than the one who did not.

Figure 23: Male Group Khebrat Training joining percentage

8. Have you joined Khebrat training program and finished it successfully?
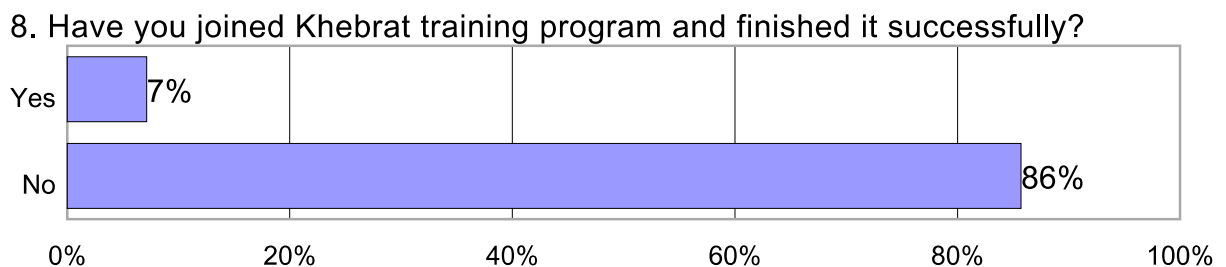
Data shown above (figure 23) indicate that only 7 % of male teachers have joined the Khebrat program, and the other 86% did not attend any cultural program. So, this is another main factor that could cause a low level of IC recorded among male teachers. Which was like what has been found with the female sample in the main study. Teachers who had joined the Khebrat program showed higher levels of IC than the others who did not.

Figure 24: Male Group Intercultural Training percentage

9. Have you had any direct or indirect intercultural training during your teaching service or before?
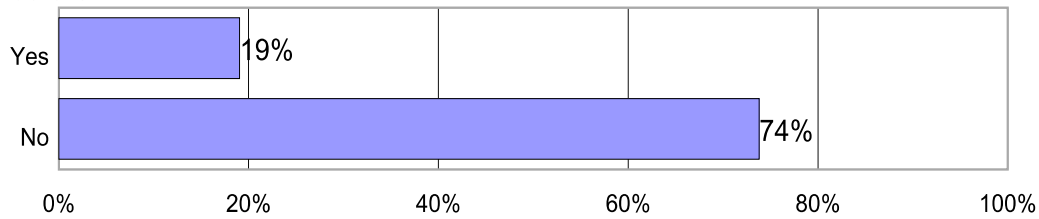
As we can see in (figure 24) and as expected majority of male teachers did not have any intercultural training. 74% said no while only 19% said yes.

Figure 25:The IC level of the majority of tested male English language teachers in Saudi
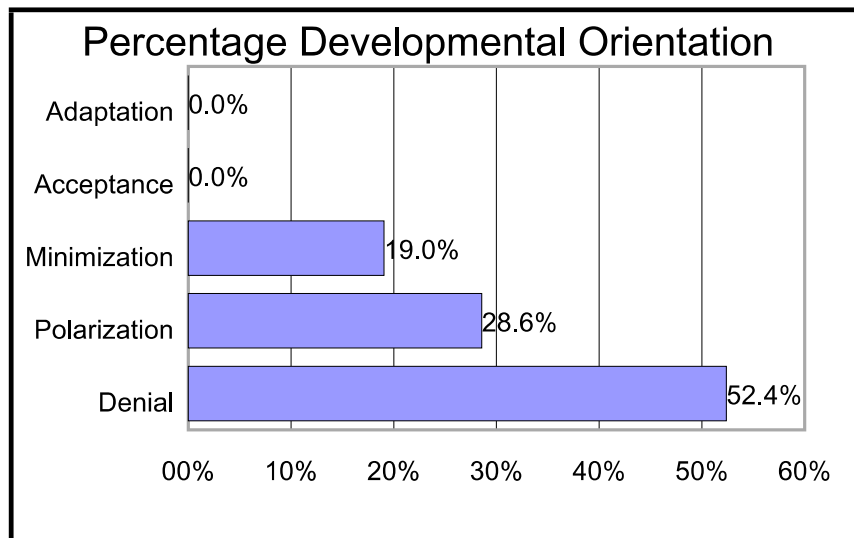
The second research question of this exploratory study targeted the IC level of the majority of tested male English language teachers in Saudi. As we can see in (Figure 25) above of the male teachers' IC levels indicates that the majority of male teachers are in a monocultural mindset. The IDI showed that they are showing an Ethnocentric view of cultural differences. Out of 184 responses from male teachers, 19 % representing 34 male teachers were at the Minimization level. Where 28 % represent 51 male teachers at the Polarization level and the majority of 52% of 95 male teachers were at the Denial level. People at these stages can

struggle with their limited skills to deal with complex cultural differences. Also, their tendency to be overall judgmental toward cultural differences is to be defensive of their cultural background. It is evident from the data of IDI assessment that the male sample showed slightly lower levels of IC compared to the female group in the main study. This raises a critical question where gender would show us distinctive results when it comes to assessing IC.

6.8.1 Teachers Trained in Khebrat (TT Group)

Based on the male teachers' explorative study findings, only 7% of the 184 teachers were trained in Khebrat. This is a very low proportion compared to the 30% proportion in the female teachers' study. However, in both cases, the low level of training in the Khebrat system leads to significantly low levels of intercultural competence (IC) and IDI. Both samples presented significantly low levels of concern for other cultures both in their interview and the IDI.

The Khebrat program is focused on exposing teachers to different perspectives and allowing them enough space and information to relate to different kinds of students, situations and needs. This means that going through the program successfully leaves a teacher at an advantage, especially when dealing with learners from different backgrounds and experiences (D. K. Deardorff, 2015). With the large number of teachers having not undergone the program, the levels of intercultural competence were low for the majority. However, those in the TT group demonstrated IDI levels of at least *Minimization* and *Acceptance*. These results are directly related to the data obtained from the female teachers' research see (figure 11).

6.8.2 Teachers Who Have Travelled and are Exposed to other Cultures (TE Group)

This group comprises teachers who have had an opportunity to travel outside Saudi Arabia. Besides the direct training of teachers through the Khebrat program, travelling and getting

exposed to different cultural perspectives in a foreign land can potentially help to create the perception that there are other people with different ideas opinions, cultures and beliefs. Being a foreigner at one time helps one to understand what other people feel in his or her environment. Travelling removes the teachers from their comfort zone and exposes them, vulnerably to a new environment.

Based on the study on male teachers, 40% of them have travelled outside the country for one reason or the other. The main reasons for this travelling included tourism and education. This presents a very good foundation for teachers who understand their learners through the lens of being exposed to different cultures through their travels. Consequently, their IDI scores were significantly higher than those of teachers who did not have an opportunity to travel outside their country. The conclusion based on this is that the exposure that travelling enables provides teachers with an increased ability to conceptualize and understand issues from varying perspectives, respecting the opinions of others and recognizing the sociocultural differences that could lead to one form of behavior or another. The IC and IDI scores for the male teachers who have travelled (T group) therefore compare with the same scores for the female teachers who had travelled.

6.8.3 Teachers who have Not Travelled (T Group)

In this explorative study, the male teachers who have not travelled represented a majority of 52% of the sample size. Based on the details from the data, these teachers have operated within the same Muslim culture all their lives. Having been born, raised, schooled and worked in the same environment all their lives, they are likely to have a narrowed perspective of culture and hence low intercultural competence (Bhawuk, 2017). This is directly evidenced by the teachers' IDI scores and their IC indicators. For almost all of the male teachers in the exploratory study, their understanding of learners from a different culture is altered by their

cultural perspectives. They tend to see everything through the lenses of their culture and environment and even though there is evidence of technological exposure and some awareness of cultural differences, most are inclined to dwell within their own experience. The results from this group are consistent and compared with those from the not-travelled teachers' group in the female study.

Table 30: Comparison of all research participants' IDI level

IDI LEVEL	Male Teachers total number	Male teacher percentage	Female total Teacher no	Female Teacher percentage
Adaptation	0	0%	0	0%
Acceptance	0	0%	0	0%
Minimization	34	19%	3	30%
Polarization	51	28%	3	30%
Denial	95	52%	4	40%
Total number of participants	184	100%	10	100%

6.9 Conclusion and Recommendations

Intercultural competence is critical in education, exposure to different cultures and direct or indirect intercultural training is an essential element in proper learning for children in schools (Oka & Taji, 2022). Teachers, both male and female have a role in ensuring that their teaching environments are well-integrated and that their methods are responsive to the needs of the intercultural groups. Having been trained in intercultural competence helps educators and teachers understand their roles in the teaching environment and directly relate their experiences and training to the classroom. Travelling, for both male and female teachers, seems to present tangible and very elaborate exposure to different cultures, helping the teachers to not only understand their learners but also to work with them well. The results of this explorative study on male teachers are very similar to those of the main study that entailed intercultural

competence and intercultural development inventory among female teachers. Despite the differences in sample size and environment of study, the consistency in these two studies to some extent validates the conclusions herein. Assessing the IC of male English language teachers using only the IDI tool will not for sure present enough data. Investigating such a complex and sensitive concept of IC requires qualitative methods to understand and reflect on realistic data. However, the IDI results of the majority of this sample were similar to some extent to the data revealed from the female sample. Most of the responses show long periods of experience in teaching English similar to the female group. But what was distinctive is that a great number of male teachers did not attend any intercultural training or did not join the Khebrat program also, half of the male teachers never travelled abroad. A future study should investigate the IC of male English language teachers in depth using different methods of assessment, using qualitative data collection tools as well as gathering quantitative IC data.

The following chapter discusses the overall findings of the study presented in the thesis, in relation to the research questions, and links them to findings in the literature.

Chapter seven: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to examine the IC level of English language teachers in Saudi Arabia, comparing three groups of teachers: a group who had IC training (via the Khebrat program), one who had had prior exposure to other cultures via travelling, and a third group, with neither formal nor informal exposure to other cultures. The aim was to examine the teachers' IC level and its impact on their beliefs and practices in the monocultural setting of Saudi Arabia. Research into IC suggests that foreign language educators ideally should possess important intercultural skills, in addition to verbal competence and linguistic ability. The study has attempted to shed light on the impact of IC on teaching practices of English as a second language to students based in Saudi Arabia classrooms. To achieve the aims of the study, qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted, using interviews, classroom observations and the IDI assessment tool to gather and analyse the views and practices of the participants. This thesis consists of six chapters and this final chapter provides a summary of the main conclusions, the study's contribution and implications drawn from the findings. It also includes recommendations for future research, and finally raises several limitations. Firstly, below I summaries the overall findings to answer the research questions.

7.2 Summary of the Research Findings:

The study examined the understanding and application of intercultural competence (IC) among Saudi English language teachers, with a focus on their beliefs, practices, and alignment with the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The findings revealed diverse perspectives and practices among teachers, with varying levels of intercultural awareness and competence.

All teachers acknowledged the importance of culture in English language teaching, recognizing it as essential due to English being a foreign language in the community. They emphasized the role of IC in creating a positive learning environment and motivating students to engage with the language.

Teachers who had undergone the Khebrat training program demonstrated a deeper understanding and application of IC in their teaching practices. They actively engaged with students' cultural backgrounds and utilized IC as a tool to enhance their teaching effectiveness. While teachers in the traditional training (TT) and teaching experience (TE) groups also recognized the importance of IC, their understanding and application varied. Some demonstrated awareness of IC's significance but struggled to incorporate it into their teaching, while others lacked a clear understanding of IC concepts. The majority of the teachers, regardless of training or experience, were classified as having a monocultural mindset according to the DMIS scale. Only a few teachers demonstrated ethnorelative orientations, indicating higher levels of intercultural competence. Interestingly, there were discrepancies between the results of the IDI assessment and qualitative data obtained through interviews and classroom observations. Some teachers categorized as monocultural by the IDI showed evidence of ethnorelative orientations in their practices, highlighting limitations in the assessment tool's applicability to the Saudi context.

7.3 Answers to the Research Questions:

7.3.1 How do Saudi teachers understand the role of intercultural competence in the teaching of the English language, including teachers' beliefs and practices?

Saudi teachers recognize the importance of intercultural competence in English language teaching, viewing culture as integral to language learning. While some demonstrate a deep

understanding and effective application of IC, others struggle to incorporate it into their

teaching practices.

7.3.2 Which stage of the DMIS scale best characterizes the majority of tested Saudi English language teachers?

The majority of tested Saudi English language teachers were classified as having a

monocultural mindset according to the DMIS scale. Only a few teachers exhibited

ethnorelative orientations, indicating higher levels of intercultural competence.

7.3.3 What factors affect Saudi English language teachers' level of exposure to intercultural competence?

Factors such as participation in intercultural training programs, cultural background, level of

education, and experiences such as travelling influenced teachers' levels of exposure to

intercultural competence. Teachers who underwent the Khebrat training program showed

improved IC levels and positive beliefs and practices related to IC.

7.3.4 How do Saudi teachers perceive their role in promoting intercultural competence among educators and students?

Teachers perceived their role as critical in promoting intercultural competence among both

educators and students. Factors such as training, cultural background, level of experience,

and exposure to diverse cultural environments influenced their attitudes and practices in

promoting IC.

7.3.5 What are the views of Saudi English language teachers on the assessment of intercultural competence?

Teachers expressed varied views on the assessment of intercultural competence, with many

highlighting the importance of observation as a method for assessing IC. However, there

were challenges in understanding and applying assessment tools like the IDI, indicating the

need for clearer and culturally sensitive assessment methods.

7.3.6 What are the views of Saudi English language teachers on the assessment of intercultural competence?

Saudi English language teachers expressed diverse views on the assessment of intercultural competence (IC). Teachers from all three groups generally agreed on the importance of observation as a method for assessing IC, highlighting the complexity of the concept and the challenges of measuring it precisely. For example, teachers in group TT emphasized the dynamic and ever-changing nature of human experiences, making IC assessment difficult. TT1 faced ambiguity with the IDI assessment tool, while TT2 and TT3 believed that IC could only be evaluated through observation of behaviors and manners.

Similarly, teachers in group TE and group T also favored observation as the primary method for IC assessment. They acknowledged the importance of the IDI assessment tool but expressed difficulties in understanding some concepts, possibly due to limited knowledge of IC theory and practical exposure. Despite these challenges, all teachers expressed a desire to learn and incorporate IC into their teaching, highlighting the importance of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively promote intercultural competence in the classroom.

In sum, Saudi English language teachers recognize the significance of IC assessment but face challenges in understanding and applying assessment tools. Observation emerges as a preferred method for assessing IC, reflecting the teachers' belief in its practicality and relevance in real-world contexts. However, there is a need for further training and support to enhance teachers' understanding and implementation of IC assessment strategies.

7.4 Verification of the Hypothesis:

The hypothesis that intercultural training would improve teachers' teaching methodologies and lead to higher levels of intercultural competence was partially supported. While some teachers who underwent training demonstrated improved understanding and application of IC, many still exhibited monocultural mindsets. The hypothesis that exposure to different

cultures through travel would enhance intercultural competence was also partially supported, as some teachers with travel experiences demonstrated ethnorelative orientations, while others did not.

7.5 Useful Implications for Saudi Teacher Training Programs:

The study suggests several implications for Saudi teacher training programs:

Incorporate Intercultural Competence Training: Teacher training programs should include modules on intercultural competence to equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively incorporate IC into their teaching practices.

Provide Practical Guidance: Training programs should offer practical guidance on how to integrate IC into English language classrooms, including strategies for promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity among students.

Address Cultural Specificity: Recognize the unique cultural context of Saudi Arabia and tailor training materials and approaches to align with the cultural norms and values of the region.

Enhance Assessment Tools: Develop or adapt assessment tools for measuring intercultural competence that are culturally sensitive and applicable to the Saudi context, ensuring alignment with teachers' beliefs and practices.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of promoting intercultural competence among Saudi English language teachers and suggests strategies for enhancing teacher training programs to achieve this goal.

7.6 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the intercultural competence (IC) levels of Saudi English language teachers, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and delimitations. Firstly, this study may not provide a comprehensive assessment of IC within the Saudi educational context. Despite efforts to collect data from male teachers and explore gender differences, the scope of this study is limited by factors such as the gender-segregated nature of Saudi schools. Additionally, the practical challenges of incorporating IC into English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia are recognized. There is a lack of theoretical models and practical guidance tailored to the Saudi cultural context, implementing IC education a daunting task for teachers. As such, teacher training centres within the Ministry of Education are recommended to introduce training courses to equip educators with the necessary skills to integrate IC into their teaching practices.

Furthermore, while the participants in this study expressed a desire to incorporate IC into their teaching, they felt inadequately prepared to do so. This underscores the need for further research and development of IC frameworks and materials that are culturally relevant to Saudi Arabia. The study also suggests the need for re-evaluation of IC within monocultural conservative communities like Saudi Arabia. Developing models and theories of IC that align with the cultural context of Saudi Arabia can facilitate a better understanding and implementation of IC education. Moreover, this study proposes the introduction of a Saudi cultural indicator for the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to address gaps in existing theoretical frameworks. However, further research is needed to validate and refine this proposed indicator.

In conclusion, while this study offers valuable insights, there is a clear need for further research to explore suitable theoretical frameworks, develop culturally relevant IC materials, and assess IC development longitudinally among both students and teachers. This includes longitudinal studies that track the progress of IC development over time for both students and educators.

7.7 Future Directions in Intercultural Competence Research in Saudi Arabia and Beyond

As our understanding of intercultural competence (IC) continues to evolve, there are numerous avenues for future research both within Saudi Arabia and on an international scale. This chapter explores potential directions for advancing IC research in the context of Saudi Arabia and beyond.

1. Longitudinal Studies: Future research could focus on longitudinal studies to track the development of IC among students and educators over an extended period. By examining IC growth trajectories, researchers can gain deeper insights into the factors influencing IC development and its long-term impact on individuals' intercultural interactions and perceptions.

2. Comparative Studies: Comparative research that contrasts IC levels and practices between Saudi Arabia and other cultural contexts can provide valuable insights. By examining similarities and differences in IC across diverse cultural settings, researchers can identify cultural-specific factors influencing IC development and explore effective strategies for fostering IC in various contexts.

3. Cultural-Specific Models and Frameworks: Given the unique cultural context of Saudi Arabia, there is a need for the development of culturally specific models and frameworks of IC. Future research could focus on creating theoretical frameworks and assessment tools that

are tailored to the Saudi cultural context, facilitating more effective IC education and training initiatives.

4. Teacher Training and Professional Development: Further research is needed to explore effective strategies for integrating IC education into teacher training and professional development programs. By equipping educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote IC in the classroom, researchers can contribute to the cultivation of culturally competent teaching practices in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

5. Technology and IC Education: With the increasing use of technology in education, future research could explore the role of digital tools and online platforms in promoting IC development. By harnessing technology, researchers can create innovative and accessible resources for enhancing IC skills among students and educators.

6. Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Collaboration between scholars from diverse disciplines, including education, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, can enrich our understanding of IC from multiple perspectives. Future research could explore interdisciplinary approaches to IC research, drawing on insights from various fields to advance theoretical understanding and practical applications.

7. Community Engagement and Stakeholder Involvement: Engaging with local communities and stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of IC initiatives. Future research could focus on participatory approaches that involve community members in the co-design and implementation of IC programs, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness within the Saudi cultural context.

8. Policy Implications: Finally, future research could explore the policy implications of promoting IC education in Saudi Arabia and other countries. By advocating for the integration of IC into educational policies and curriculum frameworks, researchers can

contribute to the creation of inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that prepare students for success in an interconnected world.

In conclusion, the future of IC research in Saudi Arabia and beyond holds promise for advancing our understanding of cultural competence and fostering meaningful intercultural interactions in an increasingly globalized world. By exploring these future directions, researchers can contribute to the development of innovative approaches to IC education and training that empower individuals to thrive in diverse cultural contexts.

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Appendix

Appendix A the Interview Questions

Presentation of interviewee:

1. Name, age and nationality. Education: Where? When? What? Her work experience: how many years?

2. Have you travelled outside Saudi? If not, why?

3. Have you had any intercultural training before?

4. How can you define the term "intercultural competence"? or "Global mindset."

5. Do you think Culture or intercultural competence has a place in your teaching?

If, yes How and what culture?

If, no, why?

6. What cultures should be included in the teaching of the English language?
   In other words, do you think that only English-speaking countries cultures (Anglophone cultures) should be included and introduce in the teaching of English Language?

If, Yes, why?
If, no what cultures should be included?

7. How do you perceive the usage of English language learning? Choose one or more than one, and you can add more:

   a) Foreign language
   b) Second language
   c) Lingua franca (global language)
   d) Additional language.
   e) Add other

8. Do you have a friend from different cultural background, or do you have any relations with people from different countries?

9. Do you think that only Saudi culture should be presented in the English language classrooms, in your teaching, and the English language textbooks?
   If, yes why
   If, no why

10. Do you think IC is important in English classrooms and for your learners and why?

11. Do you think any teacher training you had before prepared you to teach Intercultural Competence?

      Yes. How? No. Why didn't it?

12. Do you usually discuss intercultural teaching with your learners and with colleagues where you work now?

If yes, what do they think?

If no, why they are not interested?

13. Do you think Can we evaluate or examine other peoples' intercultural competence?

If yes, How

If no, why

Here: there will be an open dissection with the teacher about the observed lesson and the IDI questionnaire

14. What is the thing that you wanted to discuss with your students, and you did not?

15. What are the lesson objectives?

16. How do you perceive your IC?

17. What do you think of the IDI questionnaire?

	Disagree	Disagree somewhat more than agree	Disagree some and agree some	Agree somewhat more than disagree	Agree
			Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)questionnaire		
1	It is appropriate that people do not care what happens outside their country				
2	I feel rootless because I do not think I have a cultural identification				
3	I have observed many instances of misunderstanding due to cultural differences is gesturing or eye contact				
4	When I am with people from different cultures, I act differently than when I am with people from my own culture				
5	I have seen many situations where cultural differences in the way people express their emotions led to misunderstanding				
6	People of other cultures are more interested in improving themselves than we are.				
7	People are the same; we have the same needs, interests, and goals in life.				
8	Technology is creating a single worldwide culture.				
9	I can look at the world through the eyes of a person from other culture.				
10	I do not feel I have a culture.				
11	When I come in contact with people from different culture, I find I can change my behaviour to adopt to theirs.				
12	I use different cultural criteria for interpreting and evaluating situations.				
13	While I see myself as a member of my own culture, when I am in one or more other cultures, I find myself thinking like a member of that group.				
14	I evaluate situations in my own culture based on my experiences and knowledge of other cultures.				
15	It is appropriate that members of our strong culture have more opportunities.				
16	Human behaviour worldwide should be governed by natural and universal ideas of right and wrong.				
17	There would be fewer problems in the world if culturally different groups kept to themselves.				
18	People from other cultures are lazier than people from other cultures.				
19	I can change my behaviour to adopt to other cultures.				
20	I do not feel I am a member of any culture or combination of culture.				
21	Many times, I have noticed differences in how direct or indirect people are in conversation.				
22	If only other cultures were more like ours, the world would be a better place.				
23	I am often aware of cultural differences in how decisions are made				
24	People from our culture are less polite compared with people from other cultures.				
25	I do not identify with any culture, but with what I have inside				
26	My cultural identity is not clear to me because it is not grounded in the values and patterns of any particular cultural group				
27	Too much attention id directed toward other cultures.				
28	People from other cultures are more sophisticated than people from our culture.				

29	Other cultures related to technology better than our culture does.
30	Despite some cultural differences, it is more important to recognize that people are all a like in their humanity.
31	If only our culture was more like other cultures, the world would be a better place.
32	I often act as a cultural bridge between people from different cultures.
33	People from other cultures are less tolerant compared with people from other cultures.
34	People from other cultures are not as interested as we are in improving themselves.
35	Too much cultural diversity is bound to lead to divisive conflict.
36	People are fundamentally the same despite apparent on cultures.
37	Family values are stronger in other cultures than in our culture.
38	It is appropriate that people do not socialize very much with individuals from different cultures.
39	People in our culture work harder than people in most other cultures.
40	Our cultures way of life should be a model for the rest of the world.
41	Cultural differences are less important than the fact that people have the same needs, interests, and goals in life.
42	Family values are stronger in our culture than in other cultures.
43	People should avoid individuals from other cultures who behave differently.
44	People from our culture are not as open-minded as people from other cultures.
45	Our common humanity deserves more attention than cultural differences.
46	Because there are universal values, cross-cultural conflicts can be resolved.
47	I have frequently observed cultural differences in how problems are defined and solved.
48	It is best to form relationships with people of your own culture
49	Universal moral principles provide an effective guide for behaviour in other cultures.
50	I frequently change my behaviours to deal with cultural differences in gesturing or eye contact.

Research project information sheet

The Assessment of Intercultural competence of Saudi Arabian English Language Teachers

Dear Teachers,

I am Asma Alqahtani are currently carrying out a research project to this study is aiming to explore how Intercultural competence is perceived in Saudi Arabia. By viewing the Saudi English language teachers believes, attitudes, and practices in English language classrooms.

I am writing to ask if you are able to take part in the study and keep in mind that you have the absolute right to refuse or to withdraw at any time without any further explanation or excuses.

The study is going to take place in High schools of Riyadh for English language teachers only, and it is authorised by university of York and sponsored by the Ministry of Education. In this stage which is the first I am going to deliver the IDI questionnaire then attend and observe two of chosen lessons and later conduct an interview using audio recordings. It might take no more than 30 minutes. Participating in this study by sharing your thoughts in the interview will benefit me in answering the research questions and the results of this research might be of valuable to teachers to help their students learn better in order to improve their English skills. The outcome of this research might contribute to the improvement of teaching intercultural competence thorough out English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia schools. Hopefully, the current research will be useful for the development of English language teaching and learning techniques, as well as will encourage teachers to adopt new and effective teaching methods and materials.

Anonymity

The data that you provide (recordings of the interview) will be stored by code number. Any information that identifies you will be stored separately from the data.

Storing and using your data

Data will be stored on a password protected computer. The interview recordings will be kept for the whole project time and only interview transcripts may be used for future analysis and shared for research or training purposes, but participants will not be identified individually. If you do not want your data to be included in any information shared as a result of this research, please do not sign this consent form. Also, you will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of your interview.

Information about confidentiality

The data that we collect (audio recordings) of the interviews and classroom observations only <u>transcripts</u> may be used in *anonymous* format in different ways. Please indicate on the consent form attached with a ☑ if you are happy for this anonymised data to be used in the ways listed.

We hope that you will agree to take part in this research. If you have any questions about the project/study that you would like to ask before giving consent or after the data collection, please feel free to contact Asma Alqahtani by email <u>aaa657@york.ac.uk</u> or by telephone on 07729260671or the Chair of Ethics Committee via email education-research-administrator@york.ac.uk

If you are happy to participate, please complete the consent form attached

Please keep this information sheet for your own records.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Yours sincerely

Asma Alqahtani

UNIVERSITY of York

Consent Form

Please initial each box if you are happy to take part in this research.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information given to me about the above-named research project and I understand that this will involve me taking part as described above.

☐

I understand that the purpose of the research is to explore how English language teachers in Saudi Arabia conceptualized and practiced intercultural competence in their teaching

☐

I understand that recordings and transcripts will be used by the researcher only and will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet or on a password protected computer and only Asma Alqahtani and Dr Leah Roberts will have access to any identifiable data. I understand that my identity will be protected by use of a code/pseudonym

☐

in publications that are mainly read by university academics

☐

in presentations that are mainly attended by university academics

☐

in publications that are mainly read by the public

☐

in presentations that are mainly attended by the public freely available online

☐

I understand that data will be kept for the whole project time after which it will be destroyed.

☐

I understand that data could be used for future analysis or other purposes [e.g. other research and teaching purposes]

☐

I understand that I can withdraw my data at any point during data collection and before 1ˢᵗ June 2018.

☐

I understand that I will be given the opportunity to comment on a written record of my responses.

☐

I understand that my interview, classroom observations transcripts questionnaire responses only will not be identifiable and the data may be used

2a reading

A. Discuss.
- Which words would you use to describe a true hero?

brave	confident	honest
intelligent	sensible	strong

B. Read the introduction and the extract from a short story. What does the writer do in this story?

a. express his opinion
b. describe the main character in detail
c. describe events and the characters' feelings

SALAH AL-DIN A TRUE HERO

A KNIGHT

helmet — armour — sword — shield

Sometime in the 12th century, there lived an incredibly brave and sensible man named Salah al-Din. It was a time of war between men of different religions. Salah al-Din led the Muslim soldiers against their enemies and managed to defeat them at the Battle of Hattin in 1187 and freed Jerusalem. Crowds of Muslims gathered to cheer their victory. The war continued for many years, still Salah al-Din remains in history as a supporter of the Muslim culture, as a great leader and as an honest man whose careful plans and many skills won the respect even of his most famous enemy, King Richard I of England.

For two years Salah al-Din and King Richard fought against each other, the former protecting and the latter trying to win Jerusalem.

One day, word got around that King Richard was wounded. His men gathered round the tent in which their King lay hidden. It was unknown whether the King was in pain, or was suffering from an injury; his men sat on the ground, looking extremely upset.

While they were trying to find out more about the King's health, something unexpected happened. 'Some soldiers are approaching!' shouted a knight. Silence fell. As the strangers were galloping towards them, the King's men were nodding to each other. Five Muslim men greeted them.

The knights raised their swords and lifted their shields in the air.

'What is the meaning of this?' said one of them.

'We are here for the King,' one of them announced. 'Salah al-Din sent us.'

'We come in peace,' said one of them. 'I am Salah al-Din's doctor. Salah al-Din knows your King is ill and sent me here to help him.'

The knight removed his helmet. He then noticed that the men were carrying fruit for the King as well as ice to help with his fever.

It was then that all of them realised that what they heard about Salah al-Din's goodness was true.

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Appendix F Illustration 2 of the textbook lesson 4b (Cultural Differences)

4b Cultural differences

1. READING

A. Discuss.

- Think of gestures or customs that exist in your country. Do you think they are the same everywhere around the world?

B. Guess the answers to the questions below. Then read and check your answers.

1. How do Saudis perfume their houses and clothes?
   a. They burn something.
   b. They light candles.

2. What's a common way for people in Belgium to greet each other?
   a. They kiss three times on the cheek.
   b. They shake hands.

3. What does pulling the skin down under your eye mean in Japan?
   a. Something is boring.
   b. Something is interesting.

They do it differently!

We know what feels normal and right to do in our culture. But other cultures have customs and gestures that are different and they may seem strange to us. So, it's easy to misunderstand someone from a culture that is different from our own. Here are a few examples:

While I was in Saudi Arabia on a business trip, I was invited to a Saudi friend's house for lunch. It was the first time I had been to a Saudi house and I was impressed by the spectacular decoration. At lunch time, my friend, Ibrahim, showed me into the dining room, where I met his four sons. The boys were talking cheerfully about their day when a man came in the room, silently carrying a beautiful cup with something burning in it. I was curious about it. I was about to ask Ibrahim to tell me more about it when a wonderful smell interrupted my thoughts. Ibrahim explained that it is a custom in Saudi Arabia to burn bakhoor, a kind of scented wood, to create a pleasant atmosphere. It is also polite to use bakhoor when you have guests.

John, Boston

I'm from Wisconsin, and when we meet someone for the first time, we usually shake hands. Well, I had a big surprise in Belgium. When I was introduced to my friend's brother, something occurred, which made me feel uncomfortable. I said 'hi' to him, extending my hand, and he came up to me and kissed me on the cheek, not once, but three times, going from one cheek to the other! Of course, I went red and they started laughing at me. In Belgium, it's common to greet someone by kissing three times.

Jack, Madison

Last year, I was invited to Japan by my friend Daiki. On the second day of my visit, Daiki asked me if I wanted to go to his house for dinner and of course I said 'yes'. It was really enjoyable, but halfway through the night, I got something in my eye. So, I tried to remove it with my finger. Daiki's brother saw me and he got really upset. I couldn't understand why though. I asked Daiki why his brother was angry with me and he told me that in Japan when you pull the skin down under your eye, it shows that you find something boring. Later in the evening, I apologised to Daiki's brother and tried to clear up the misunderstanding, but I'm not sure he believed me.

Peter, Miami

C. Read again and answer the questions.

1. Why did they use bakhoor in Ibrahim's house?
2. How did John first react when he saw bakhoor burning?
3. Why did Jack extend his hand?
4. How did Jack feel when the man kissed him?
5. Why did Peter pull the skin down under his eye?
6. What did Peter do after the misunderstanding?

D. Look at the highlighted words/phrases in the texts and choose the correct meaning a or b.

1. silently
   a. without moving
   b. without speaking

2. was about to
   a. was ready to
   b. was afraid to

3. occurred
   a. was said
   b. happened

4. remove
   a. take out
   b. cover

5. clear up
   a. explain
   b. find out

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