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INVESTIGATING INTERCULTURALITY OF SAUDI STUDENTS IN THE US
ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

by

Ruqayyah Nasser Moafa

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

The University of Memphis

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, the soul of my father, my husband, and my beautiful children Lana, Latene, Linda, and Ahmed. Without them, this dissertation would have never been written. I am grateful to have them in my life.

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Abstract

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Thrush, Ph. D.

This study applied Mixed Methods research (MM) to understand the possibility of developing the intercultural competence of Saudi students through language classes in Saudi Arabia, since there is an indication of a gap between language classes in Saudi Arabia and the globalized world. This study was conducted to investigate the intercultural competence development of Saudi students enrolled in American universities and compare it to the way they developed their interculturality during their language classes in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this dissertation sought to determine the necessary strategies to enrich intercultural competence through English language classes in Saudi Arabia. Using MM, this study consists of two parts; first, a data from 107 Saudi students were collected and analyzed, and then data were collected and analyzed from six interviewees to provide further explanation. Findings from this study indicated that the experience of studying in American universities helped in developing Saudi students' intercultural competence, whereas language classes in Saudi Arabia did not contribute to the same thing. It informed that English language classes in Saudi Arabia were missing some elements despite their necessity to help students grow into interculturally competent and globally responsible citizens. The study proved that the challenges that faced Saudi students during their studies in the United States helped them to develop their intercultural skills. This study began to bridge a gap between language classrooms in Saudi Arabia and the new globalized world as it recommended that intercultural competence should be a fundamental part of the curriculum to promote English language classes in Saudi Arabia. The compiled research also suggested that the

way American schools promoted students' intercultural competence should be studied to achieve the same in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the study proposed devoting future research to focus on how to develop the interculturality of Saudi students in order to prepare them for the 21st-century. Results of the study contributed to a new line of work, such as examining the relationship between teachers' level of interculturality and the ability to develop their students' intercultural competence as language teachers who are considered to be the experts with whom students approach for knowledge.

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Chapter one: Introduction

The way people communicate is affected by the sociocultural norms and limitations of the target culture and plays a prominent role in their communicative development. Knowing that communicating with speakers of other languages requires linguistic and pragmatic competence is essential. Therefore, educators need to improve socio-pragmatic competence, “the ability to accurately interpret and appropriately express social meaning in interaction” in order to avoid cross-cultural failures (Holmes & Riddiford, 2011, p. 377). Specifically, the problems that second language learners face in their intercultural communication are derived from fundamental differences between cultures. Besides, these problems are mainly due to the weakness of pragmatic competence, which is defined by Thomas (1983) as “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (p. 92). Thus, the failure in developing the socio-pragmatic competence would lead to a problem in selecting the appropriate style, which can result in intercultural as well as cross-cultural misunderstanding.

Many researchers (e.g., Cohen, 2007; Kasper, 1997) have argued that every individual has to have appropriate knowledge of cultural and social values as well as the ability to modify the speaking strategies in cross-cultural communication to avoid sociolinguistic failure. Therefore, interlocutors need to have an awareness of such differences to overcome any cultural misunderstanding. Consequently, language teachers always have to understand that:

Each culture has its own rules of proper behavior, which affect verbal and nonverbal communication. Whether one looks the other person in the eye-or not; whether one says what one means overtly or talks around the issue; how close the people stand to each

other when they are talking--all of these and many more are rules of politeness which differ from culture to culture. (Ting-Toomey, n.d.)

Therefore, competency in linguistics knowledge by itself is not enough for fruitful communication unless it is accompanied with “Cultural competence” (Beamer, 1992; Alptekin, 1993). Rivera, Johnson & Ward (2010) pointed out that cultural competency is “an open, accepting, and welcoming attitude toward other group cultures, defined broadly as other racial, ethnic, gender, and affinity groups’ normative, communicative, and behavior values” (p. 2). Importantly, pragmatic and linguistic knowledge are main factors of communicative efficiency, which many researchers (Thomas, 1983; Byram and Grundy, 2003; Baker, 2011; Ishihara and Cohen, 2010; Taguchi & Roever, 2017) asserted were required for producing socially appropriate utterances as well as successful communication.

Raising people’s awareness of the effects of sociocultural and sociolinguistic constraints is essential to achieving successful communication. Unfortunately, the way the English language is taught in Saudi Arabia and many other countries mainly focuses on making students users of the language instead of helping them conform to the norms of the language speakers. Saudi Arabian English teachers’ primary consideration is formal correctness and native-like proficiency rather than functional and communicative effectiveness, which means they are not aware of the challenges their students may face in a new environment that go beyond second language acquisition whenever they find themselves in a new environment. Shore (n.d.) insisted, “many of these newcomers are likely to have difficulties adjusting to their new environment.”

Statement of the problem

Although it is crucial to expand an understanding of interlanguage and intercultural pragmatics of any target language and culture, language teachers usually focus on linguistic

knowledge and pay less attention to sociolinguistic factors. Therefore, to overcome the old view of standard English forms and emphasize the global varieties of English, educators need to establish connections with socio-pragmatic competence, especially so satisfaction, appropriateness, effectiveness, and adaptability are central elements of sociocultural success. As linguists know, second language learners need to start focusing on more dynamic than simple linguistic knowledge to help them successfully communicate across cultures, attain specific goals, and make their functional goals smoother and more effective. Smith (1987) claimed that discourse across cultures is more effective in cross-cultural communication than just grammar, lexis, and phonology.

Moreover, Saudi society used to be monocultural and monolingual with few exceptions in the past; however, this situation has been changing recently. Therefore, a significant number of Saudi cultural problems and social misunderstandings are related to sociolinguistic factors, particularly, appropriateness of style and politeness across-cultures. This problem needs language teachers to immediately develop and empower the sociolinguistic and the cultural parts of the language.

Significance of the Study

The current trends in Saudi Arabian culture (Vision 2030) suggest that teachers address intercultural communication as it moves toward globalization. Particularly that international staff and tourists will be welcomed in Saudi Arabia in general, and specifically in the new cities such as Qiddiya and Neom. Nowadays, Saudi Arabia relies heavily on sending students abroad as a tool to acquire the language and foster intercultural competence as well as to pursue their higher education at the same time. According to Open Doors (2017), Saudi Arabia is among the top five leading countries that sent their students to the United States of America. As it is shown in the

table below (see Table 1), Saudi Arabia ranked the fourth with 52,611 students in the academic year of 2016-17.

Table 1

Top 5 Places of Origin of International Students in the United States (Open Doors, 2017)

Rank	Place of Origin	Number of Students 2016-17
1	China	350,755
2	India	186,267
3	South Korea	58,663
4	Saud Arabia	52,611
5	Canada	27,065

Therefore, there is a need for research that takes into account the different features that might help in developing Saudi people’s intercultural competence in their home country, especially that there is a lack of research addressing this issue regardless of its importance. In 2012, Deardorff and Jones suggested that intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important as one of the goals of global citizenship and internationalization.

Purpose of the study

This study aimed to investigate and examine the real and perceived development of Saudi students enrolled in American universities. This investigation should result in a new approach that will lead to a reduction of incidents of ethnocentric attitudes towards people from different countries, increase self-awareness concerning cultural assumptions, and a greater intercultural as well as cross-cultural understanding and tolerance. This dissertation sought to be a foundational study that equips language teachers in Saudi Arabia specifically, and the world in general, with the necessary techniques and strategies to enrich their students’ intercultural competence. Additionally, it provided them with the skills needed to avoid problematic issues when

expressing their opinion in English with a sufficient understanding of international settings. This study aimed at opening windows for more research on new approaches to teaching and learning language and cultures. It also laid the groundwork for further research on the development of students' intercultural competence through English language classes.

Theoretical Framework

This study and its research questions were built on shreds of evidence in the literature review that various concepts related to intercultural competence have been in existence for decades to promote values related to global citizenship. However, there is a gap in the literature as to how intercultural competence can be developed in language classes in Saudi Arabia. The framework of this study, therefore, adapted Deardorff's (2006) Model of intercultural competence to use as a framework for understanding the meaning of intercultural competence in second language teaching in Saudi Arabia. Deardorff's model of intercultural competence is comprised of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal and external outcomes (this model is discussed in depth in chapter two).

Deardorff's model is appropriate for this study because it serves as an investigating lens for exploring intercultural competence development in Saudi students in American universities, which leads to understanding the components that helped them to develop. Nevertheless, this framework did not bring the role of language in intercultural competence development, citing that language alone does not ensure one's competence in culture. However, the language classroom is going to be the focus of the current study and the crucial element that would lead to intercultural competence development in Saudi Arabian society, particularly that through the language, people can understand the worldviews.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The following limitations and delimitations were considered during the process and procedures of this study:

1. The participants were from Saudi cultural orientation, and thus, the results of the study reflect a Saudi perspective since the target audience of this study are English language administrators in Saudi Arabia.
2. The study solely reflects the opinion of those who participated, and the results need to be viewed with this in mind. They were Saudi students studying in the American academic environments, although the majority of them had traveled abroad to the different parts of the world in their lives prior to their studies in American universities.
3. This study was influenced by Deardorff's Model of International Competence, which introduced its own bias into the study, such as being a US-centric model of intercultural competence and outlined only the essential aspects of the framework.
4. In the qualitative part of the study, the researcher was positioned as an outsider and insider researcher at the same time. She was an outsider since none of the interviewees has had a similar experience to her during their studies in Saudi Arabia; however, she was an insider because this study was influenced by her interest and motivation to investigate the intercultural competence of a population to whom she belongs.
5. The data gathered from the participants were self-reported and collected through an online survey and semi-structured interviews, and there were no observations or language tests included.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic and presents

the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter two provides a literature review of culture, language, and culture, the role of culture in language teaching overtimes, language teaching and intercultural competence in the globalized world, characteristics of intercultural competence, difficulties in teaching intercultural competence, intercultural competence and identity transformation, and gaps in the literature. Chapter two also presents the research questions that are mainly guiding this study. Chapter three is used to explain the methodology that is used in this study and presents in detail the research instruments, participants, data collection, data analysis, and human participants and ethics precautions. Chapters four and five are used to present, analyze, and discuss the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the online survey and gathered from the semi-structured interviews. Finally, chapter six summarizes the research findings and provides research implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This section is to present literature that defined culture, language and culture, the influence of culture on language teaching overtimes, language teaching and intercultural competence in the globalized world, characteristics of intercultural competence, difficulties of developing intercultural competence in language teaching, and the last part is focusing on intercultural competence and identity transformation. This chapter also discusses gaps in the literature and concludes with the research questions that guided this study.

Defining Culture

Culture is defined as “a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life, from folktales to carved whales” (Seelye, 1993, p. 22). Thus, culture is a complex topic that consists of several expectations that help people to explain the world in which they are living. The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) prefaces the definition of culture that is mostly used for the Intercultural Studies Projects as the following:

The shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group. (<http://carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>, retrieved Jan 18, 2018)

In 1998, Bennett defined culture as “the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people,” and connected it more to “psychological features that define a group of people - their everyday thinking and behavior -... than to the institutions they have created” (p. 3). Singer (1987) illustrated that people receive and understand new information through their own filtered perception, coming from their cultural background and education.

Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989) identified four “modes” that they termed “acculturation attitudes,” describing the different stages that people go through whenever they experience different cultures. (1) Marginalization, where people lose cultural and psychological contact with both their own and new cultures. (2) Assimilation, where people absorb and get so deeply involved in the new culture that they lose their own culture. (3) Segregation or separation, where people cannot build any positive relationship with the new culture and prefer to maintain only its ethnic identity and traditions. (4) Acculturation, where people maintain their own culture and traditions and, at the same time, build a positive relationship with the dominant groups to be an effective part of the new culture. Through these stages, people find difficulties in understanding other cultures unless they connect them to their cultural background and transmitted pattern of meanings.

Geertz (1975) emphasized the “transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols” that results in the different ways people “communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89). Geertz acknowledged that “transmitted pattern of meanings” vary even within the same culture group, especially because not all members have the exact experience. According to Garrett-Rucks (2016), “it is difficult to transmit to students the cultural aspects that influence the identity of members of the target culture” (p. 33). As Garrett-Rucks illustrated, foreign language educators recognized the multitude of individual differences within the cultural group, and they consider that cultural codes and frames of reference change continuously. Therefore, scholars started to see the deep connection between language and culture.

Language and Culture

According to Bennett, Bennett & Allen (2003), “culture is an important topic in the

language teaching profession” (p. 242). As they later stated there is a “typical fit between language proficiency levels and developmental levels of intercultural sensitivity” (p. 255). They speculated that there is a linkage between second language proficiency and cultural sensitivity. Brown (1994) also emphasized the indissoluble relation of language and culture in his explanation that “a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 165). Therefore, cultural instructions are very complicated and have received considerable attention in the last decades from foreign and second language educators as conceptions of language and culture continue to evolve.

The cultural issues have been situated through different variety of pedagogical instruction, starting from the audio-lingual method to the communicative language teaching approach and communicative competence leading to the current literacy-based, intercultural positions in the field. Therefore, it is essential to clarify that in this literature review, intercultural competence, a “term used to describe an individual’s relationship with culture,” is labeled in many different terms, such as intercultural sensitivity, cross-cultural effectiveness, intercultural effectiveness, and cross-cultural adjustment as the role of culture in language teaching changed over times (Mahon, 2003, p. 20).

The role of culture in language teaching overtimes

Language teaching has been modified over the past century as it is influenced by culture and cultural issues resulting in more communicative approaches that focus on culture as an essential element. Starting from the *audio-lingual* method, which was modeled in the late 1960s to focus on culture in the sociologists’ and anthropologists’ ideas of practices on daily bases. Then, it was widespread with affirmation on elements of target cultures, such as drilling useful

phrases and memorizing certain dialogues leading to more of emphasize on values and beliefs of the target culture to help students to develop their proficiency in order to communicate effectively using the target language (Brooks, 1968; Lado, 1957). This method extended as it attempted to make language teaching accessible to larger groups of learners and stressed syntactical progression. However, it was criticized due to the failure of learners to transfer the acquired skills to real communication outside the classroom.

Shifting the focus into communicative competence.

In 1974, the notion of *communicative competence* was introduced as Hymes started to focus on communication, speech communities, and how meaning is made within different social groups. He defined communicative competence as “the ability to participate in society as not only a speaker but also a communicating member” (Hymes, 1974, p.75). In 1980, Canale and Swain built on Hymes’ idea of communicative competence, adding more focus on cross-cultural communication. They maintained Hymes’ communicative competence into *sociolinguistic* (the ability to produce sociolinguistically appropriate utterances) and *discourse competence* (the ability to produce coherent and cohesive utterances). Additionally, they added *strategic competence* (the ability to solve communication problems as they arise) and adapted Chomsky’s (1965) *linguistic competence*, which is the knowledge that allows people to construct and understand grammatical sentences, into grammatical competence.

Soon afterward, Van Ek (1986) added *social* and *sociocultural competences* to Canale and Swain’s communicative competence model resulting in “a framework for comprehensive foreign language learning objectives” (Van Ek, 1986, p. 33). According to Van Ek, social competence involves behavioral and motivational elements, whereas the sociocultural competence involves the awareness of how language choice is affected by culture. He

emphasized that “every language is situated in a sociocultural context and implies the use of a particular reference frame which is partly different from that of the foreign language learner; sociocultural competence presupposes a certain degree of familiarity with that context” (p. 35).

Van Ek’s model is summarized as in the following:

1. *Linguistic competence*: the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances, which are formed following the rules of the language.
2. *Sociolinguistic competence*: the awareness of ways in which some conditions such as setting, and relationship determine the choice of language forms.
3. *Discourse competence*: the ability to use appropriate strategy in the construction and interpretation of texts.
4. *Strategic competence*: when communication is difficult, people have to find ways of ‘getting their meanings across’ or of ‘finding out what somebody means; these are communication strategies, such as rephrasing, asking for clarification.
5. *Sociocultural competence*: socially and culturally, languages are differently framed. Being in one specific cultural or social situation or trying to master it outside the context requires a specific reference frame, and
6. *Social competence*: involves both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitudes, self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to handle social situations.

However, Van Ek’s focus on the learner’s own social and personal development made his framework objectives unparalleled. To avoid that problem, Byram (1988) built on the notion of communicative competence focusing on social practices that carry values of social groups and communities with reference to the *cultural context in cross-cultural communication*, mainly that the awareness of the cultural issues that arise as people learn new languages and involve in new

cultures were studied heavily during that period.

Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness.

To help learners be aware of the cultural issues as they gain the language and to explain the different stages that people go through as they learn the new language and adapt to the new culture, Bennett (1986) designed a model, which he named later the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (will be explained more in-depth later). Soon after that, Damen (1987) emphasized the importance of *cross-cultural awareness* and defined it as “involving uncovering and understanding one’s own culturally conditioned behavior and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognizing the givens of the native culture” (p. 141). Concerning *cross-cultural adaptation*, Kim (1988) highlighted the dynamicity of the cross-cultural model as individuals “suspend or modify some of the old cultural ways, and learn and accommodate some of the new cultural ways” (p. 377). In 1991, Byram emphasized the importance of the current pedagogical approaches of *intercultural instruction* as he focused on “the question of change from monocultural to intercultural competence” as he was concerned about developing communication skills during interaction with foreign language speakers (p.24). Two years later, Bennett (1993) illustrated that as people gain the knowledge and language of the target culture, they “experience some aspect of reality differently from what is given by one’s own culture” (p. 53).

The experiences and knowledge that people gain as they involve in new cultures result in new identities. Kramsch (1993) recognized that learners’ identities are developed in a positive way when learners treat their native cultures and target cultures as a monolith or “a third culture” as she referred. Byram (1997) described the process of cultural transition to the third culture

through *critical cultural awareness* which he defined as “an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries” (p. 63). Therefore, critical cultural awareness should strengthen students’ ability to deal with the values and beliefs differences when communicating with people from very different cultures, which in turn should enhance their preparedness to become intercultural individuals. In addition, it is imperative to develop foreign language teachers’ cultural awareness, especially that “foreign language education is, by definition, intercultural,” Sercu (2005) insisted, “bringing a foreign language to the classroom means connecting learners to a world that is culturally different from their own” (p. 1).

Intercultural Competence in Language Teaching.

Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) introduced the essential goal of emphasizing *intercultural competence in language teaching* which is “to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity” (p. 5). According to Byram (1997) learners with intercultural competence “produces effects on a society which challenge its unquestioned and unconscious beliefs, behaviors and meanings, and whose own beliefs, behaviors and meanings are in turn challenged and expected to change” (p. 1). Therefore, language learners perceive the world with a culturally determined view as they show their attitudes toward new cultures, which result in consciousness, “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (Byram, 1997, p. 50).

Scholars continued to focus on the idea of how interculturality changes learners to be more understanding-people. Thus, in 2001, Omaggio-Hadley suggested that language teachers

should guide their students to *understand* their *cultural frame* and then *explore* the *target culture* with direct guidance through authentic materials. In addition, Allen (2004) proposed a framework that enhanced *cross-cultural understanding* and *integrated teaching language and culture* at the same time. She stated that students need to observe different cultures, and that would eventually improve students' willingness to gather information and think critically before throwing any judgment on other cultures. Deardroff (2006) also illustrated that exploring foreign or second language culture starts with *observation and noticing*. They then demonstrate knowledge and skills of the intercultural competence by acting with, as Byram (1997) mentioned, "social group and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country and individual interaction" (p. 51).

In 2008, Pegrum and others criticized nativelike notions and described it as an unrealistic goal. They asserted that language teaching should prepare students for *global citizenship and cultural awareness*. Recent studies (Jenkins 2014; Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015; Garrett-Rucks, 2017) indicated that the global features of English, as well as its cross-cultural role, are shifting the focus of second language teaching toward communication skills rather than native-like proficiency. Nussbaum (1998) argued that language teachers need to provide students with the skills and attitudes that are needed to be global citizens able to deal with those who are different from themselves. She illustrated that teachers need to work hard to help students overcome any "difficulty understanding people different from themselves," and not to be the kind of students "whose imaginations rarely venture beyond their local setting" (p. 14). Moreover, Fantini (2015; Fantini & Garrett-Rucks, 2016) illustrated that *intercultural communicative competence* should aim at producing students with "complex of abilities" that are required for communicating appropriately and effectively with people who are from different cultures and linguistic

backgrounds.

Language teaching and intercultural competence in the globalized world

Obviously, the world has been changing, and the big movement of globalization has been taking its position. As a result of that, more cross-cultural communication among different cultural and linguistic groups has been established; therefore, more interculturally competent teachers are needed to teach our students and help them to gain the interculturality along with the linguistic knowledge. The Education Sector of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed guidelines on intercultural education as it responds to the challenges of the globalized world. *Intercultural competence* is viewed as a mean of addressing human rights within the cross-cultural world, and “culture is at the core of individual and social identity and is a major component in the reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion” (UNESCO, 2006).

López-Rocha (2016) underscored that “globalization and migratory movements have highlighted the need to integrate interculturality in the language curriculum” (p. 107). Byram (2006) emphasized the demographical changes that have been happening to the world and argued that globalization should expand to “take a wider perspective, involving engagement with people of other forms of life or cultures” (p. 127). As a result, intercultural competence has gained recognition recently in language education as it is contemplated to be the essential element and “the crucial link” between communication and culture in intercultural communication (Lusting & Koester, 1996, p. 27).

Garrett-Rucks (2016) stated that “intercultural competence is a key goal of internationalization because it indicates awareness and understanding of situations and people from diverse cultures, attitudes that move beyond ethnocentric thinking.” In addition, Garrett-

Rucks pointed out that there is a “need for foreign language educators to include a sociocultural component into the communication practices of the classroom,” which might foster language learners’ communicative competence to “become cross-culturally sensitive global citizens.” Particularly, it has become imperative to understand that “culture is the marginalized sister of language” (Hennebry, 2014, p. 135). Thus, language educators need to focus on any activities that might lead their students to have the competency of cultures’ knowledge. Therefore, the best way to facilitate communication strategies, as mentioned above, is through exposure with great attention to extra-linguistic cues.

The ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015), evidenced that foreign language educators in the United States of America considered cultural understanding as a paramount skill in foreign language classes. Therefore, it has been generalized and incorporated into most of the preparation of world language teachers that language teaching should prepare students to develop intercultural competence and linguistic through focusing on communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Intercultural communication skills are essential not only to prepare today's learners to compete in the inexorably multicultural nature of industrialized societies but also to equip learners to end up as reflective global citizens (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Therefore, language educators need to shift the focus on any aspect that might help in building a community outreach that enriches their students with the needed knowledge. Arauz (2012) stated in his web-based discussion, “in order for students to be prepared for 21st century needs, educators must show students how to use their everyday skills so they can proudly stand up and say I am innovative, culturally resilient, adaptive, collaborative, and cross-culturally aware.” In addition, to successfully gain global citizenship, English teachers should develop their students’

communicative competence, including grammatical and sociolinguistic competences (Hymes, 1972).

Thus, developing students' intercultural competence, which is "the ability to communicate and interact across linguistic and cultural borders," as Byram (1997) described, "appropriately and efficiently," can be achieved by surrounding them with teachers in an environment of understanding and awareness as well as respect and equality. As a result, every individual gets the chance to illustrate his identity and opinion freely with high awareness of the different aspects of the intercultural community as well as sociocultural differences of English users from different cultural backgrounds. The students, in turn, should be led to acceptance of diversity of cultural background as well as the vast differences of human personalities and characters within the same culture, and that is the essential element of understanding the necessary skills in intercultural communication as it is critical to understand the diversity and learn the necessary skills as well.

McConachy and Liddicoat (2016) mentioned that each language has a range of intercultural options to be used for achieving particular pragmatic acts, and these options are interpreted with broadly shared cultural expectations. Therefore, any interlocutor (individual) must accompany his/her acts with cultural awareness and critical judgments to their interactions to make sure of the appropriateness of the linguistic actions and social behavior to the social relationships in such cultures (Coupland & Jworski, 2004; McConachy, 2013).

Language teachers assume the role of facilitators as they guide the process of learning the language in order to involve learners in the role of explorers to discover, analyze, and evaluate the transmit detailed information about the culture (Byram et. Al., 2002). Thus, it is important to emphasize cultural awareness and intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the global

culture and global communication-skills that are needed for World English (Seidlhofer, 2011; Baker, 2011).

Characteristics of Intercultural Competence

Kim (2009) defined intercultural competence as “the overall capacity of an individual to enact behaviors, and activities that foster cooperative relationships with culturally dissimilar others” (p. 54). Furthermore, Bennett argued that intercultural competence is becoming “the term of choice to refer to the combination of concepts, attitudes, and skills necessary for effective cross-cultural interaction” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p.163).

The literature indicated (e.g., Kural & Bayyurt, 2017; Schauer, 2016) that intercultural competence and its related skills are interpreted as the abilities to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in multicultural settings with the involvement of self-reflection, social knowledge, and skills toward cultural differences where language serves as a mean of interaction and communication. Moreover, Havril (2015; Stiftung, 2003; Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Schauer, 2016) applied the same specific components of Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence through which every intercultural interlocutor goes in order to gain the intercultural competence. As stated by Byram’s, intercultural competence is a combination of five factors (1) *attitudes* involve curiosity openness and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and about one’s own, (2) *knowledge* of social groups and their products and practices as well as knowing the general processes of societal and individual interaction, (3) *skills of interpreting and relating* including the ability of deep understanding, relating, and connecting with ability to interpret an event from another culture and relate it to one’s own, (4) *skills of discovery* including ability to acquire new knowledge of culture and operate them to real-time communication, and (5) *critical cultural awareness* and ability to evaluate critically

based on explicit criteria. He summarized the factors as the following:

The ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in interpreting, relating, and discovering, i.e., of overcoming cultural difference and enjoying intercultural contact. (Byram, 1997, p. 70)

It is imperative to mention that Byram distinguished intercultural competence from intercultural communicative competence as intercultural competence is under the umbrella of intercultural communicative competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and intercultural competence.

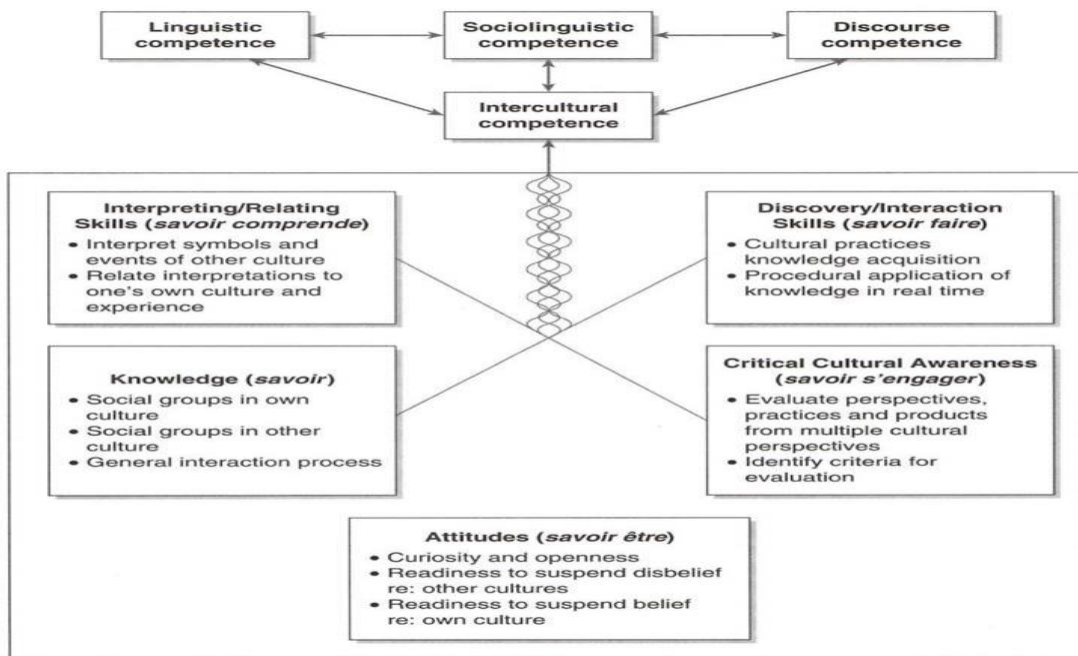


Figure 1: Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997, p.73)

Adding to Byram's intercultural competence, Lázár, Huber-Kriegler, Lussier, Matei, and Peck (2007) emphasized the importance of developing the skills of observation, interpretation, and discovery with focusing on attitude, which lead to respect and empathy, tolerance of

ambiguity/willingness to suspend judgment, heightened interest, curiosity, and openness regarding persons of other cultures (p. 9-10).

Deardorff (2004) also developed a model of intercultural competence through investigating the definition and components of intercultural competence with the help of twenty-three intercultural experts in addition to a questionnaire for higher education administrators. Subsequently, Deardorff (2006) identified a new perspective related to intercultural competence as the “ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” resulting in the first grounded research-based framework, or model, of intercultural competence (p. 194). Her framework is comprised of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal and external outcomes.

Attitudes: Based on Deardorff’s study, some crucial attitudes became visible, respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery. Openness and curiosity suggest a readiness to risk and to proceed beyond one’s comfort zone. In exhibiting respect to others, it is important to reveal that others are valued.

Knowledge: Intercultural scholars came to an agreement on knowledge that is needed for intercultural competence: (1) cultural self-awareness (the ways one’s culture has influenced one’s identity and worldview), (2) culture-specific knowledge, (3) in-depth cultural knowledge including understanding other world views, and (4) sociolinguistic awareness. Importantly, understanding the world from others’ perspectives.

Skills: Observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating skills that address the acquisition and processing of knowledge.

Internal Outcomes: They are aspects that occur within the individual as a result of the acquired attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for intercultural competence and comprise

flexibility, adaptability, ethnorelative perspective, and empathy. In this stage, interlocutors can see from others' perspectives and respond to them in a way that they wish to be treated.

External Outcomes: The internal outcomes as well as the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are exhibited through the action and communication of the person, which become the apparent consequences of intercultural competence experienced by others. Resulting in the definition of intercultural competence, “the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations.” Hence, the *effectiveness* can be determined by the interlocutor, whereas the *appropriateness* can only be determined by the other person.

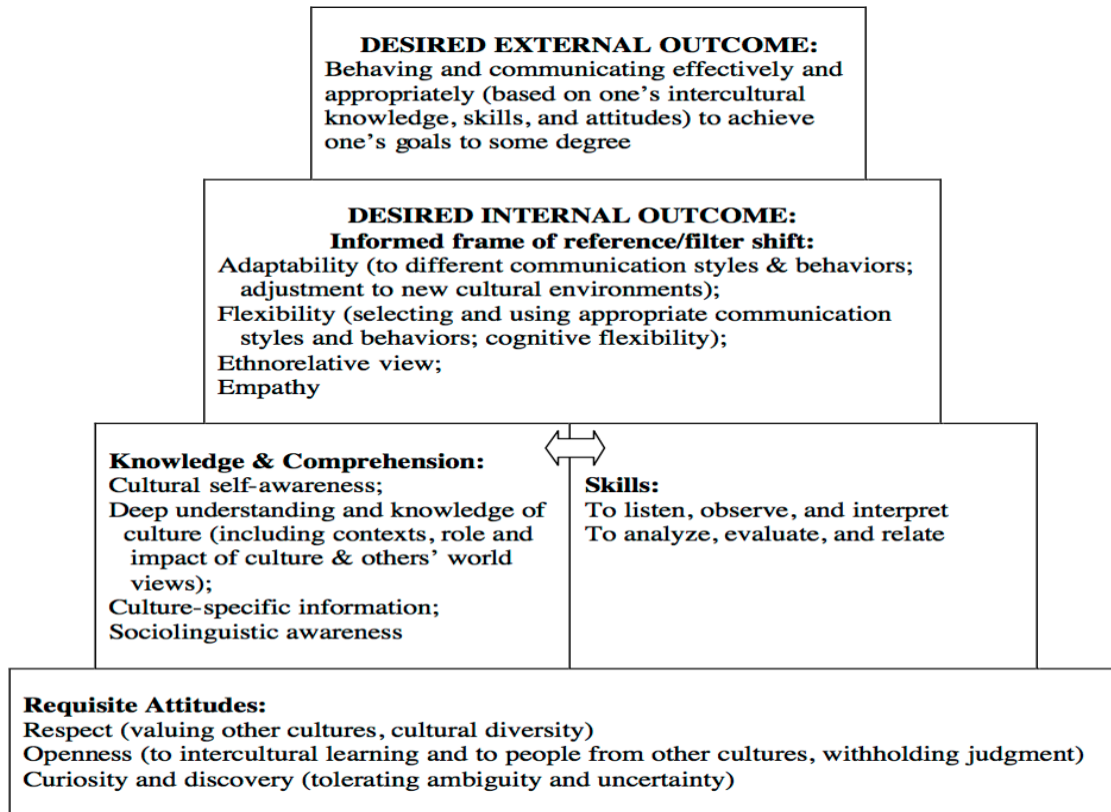


Figure 2: Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006. 2009)

Deardorff (2006) agreed with the earlier researchers in the field of intercultural competence (Fantini's, 1995; Ting-Toomey and Kurogi's, 1998; Byram's, 1997) in defining

intercultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, based on specific attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills, and reflection.” Her process model of intercultural competence was organized at two levels; (1) individual level, which requires an attitude of respect, value for other cultures, openness and curiosity to discover and then to develop deep cultural knowledge and sociolinguistics awareness, and (2) interaction level, which involves internal and external desired outcomes. The internal desired outcomes refer to adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, and empathy, whereas in the external desired outcomes, individual demonstrates effective and appropriate communication and behavior in any situation that involves intercultural communication (Kural & Bayyurt, 2017).

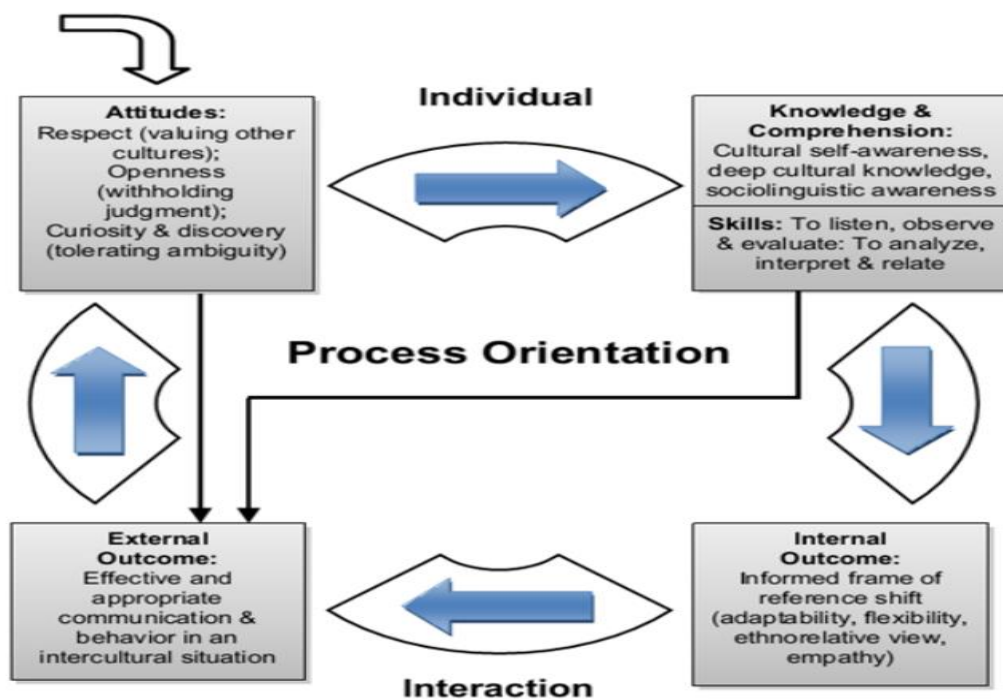


Figure 3: Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff’s, 2006, p. 241-266)

This model illustrated that intercultural competence is a lifelong process that needs to be addressed explicitly. There is no one point where an interlocutor becomes interculturally

competent as it is not a naturally occurring phenomenon. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the developmental process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes. According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence must intentionally be addressed, and that can only happen through programs, orientations, experiences, and courses.

Adding to that, Fantini (2015) (as cited in Fantini & Garrett-Rucks, 2016) defined intercultural communicative competence as the needed abilities to interact appropriately and effectively with people who are from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Fantini identified the components of intercultural communicative competence on (1) various characteristics or attributes, (2) three domains or areas, (3) four dimensions, (4) proficiency in the host tongue, and (5) a developmental process as it is shown in the figure below.

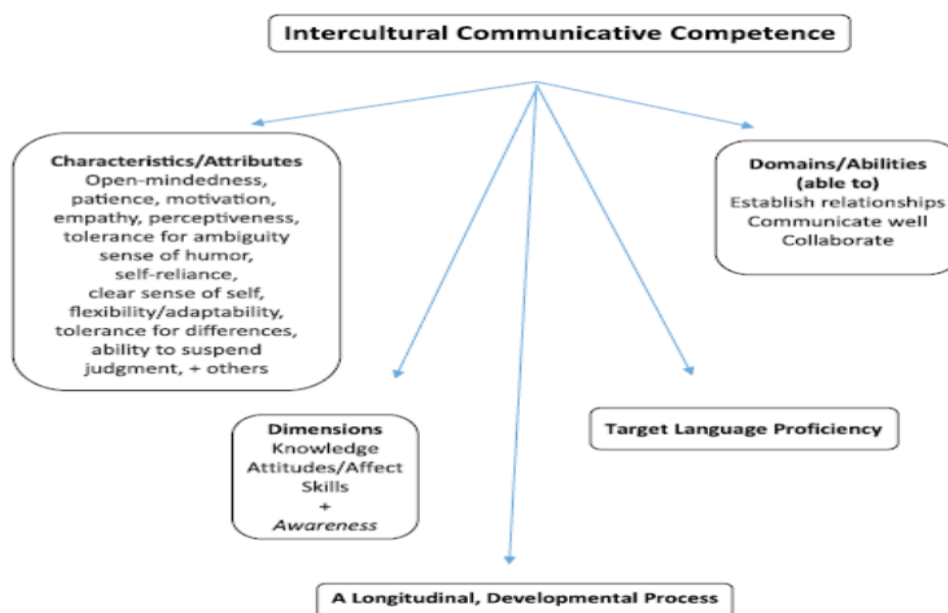


Figure 4: Components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Fantini & Garrett-Rucks, 2016, p. 6)

Difficulties in teaching Intercultural Competence

Even though language teachers' role as "guides and partners in the process of culture

learning and discovery with their student rather than culture experts upon whom their students exclusively rely for cultural knowledge,” they still encounter number of difficulties upon implementing intercultural competence in their classes (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003, p. 220). Bennett et al. (2003) listed some of them such as (1) which culture to teach, (2) how to incorporate the target culture in the class, (3) which materials or models to follow, and (4) lack of experience of the target culture.

Additionally, studies (e.g., Mahon, 2003; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2002) indicated that teachers are not prepared to teach the intercultural curriculum. Language teachers find that teaching culture is one of the problematic missions as it is ambiguous to define which culture should be the role model. Moreover, teachers face difficulties in assigning materials and activities in the classroom as Paige et al. (2003) highlighted “a lack of concrete example of how to teach for intercultural competence” as that lead teachers to stress and mistakenly “believe that they need to be cultural experts” (p. 220).

However, to raise cultural awareness in any foreign language classroom, teachers need to pay attention to is Robin-Stuart and Nocon’s (1996) category of the different theoretical perspectives which are (1) culture as an outcome of language instruction; (2) culture as knowledge or skills that may be objectified; and (3) culture as a meaning-making process. Therefore, language teachers can successfully turn their language classes into an intercultural environment by raising awareness and cultural understanding of their students resulting in more intercultural identities.

Steele (2000) called for more research in his quote when he indicated that:

The service of language instruction in the production of transcultural empathy deserves much more research evidence than is now available. It is especially important that such

research establishes the connection between the learning of a little bit of one language and the generalized cultural broadening and ethnorelativism now included in the rationale for foreign language study (p. 76).

Unfortunately, there is still a need for the same type of research nowadays in language classrooms which proves that moving from teaching grammar to teaching interculturality is a hard step in language classrooms as language teachers still find difficulties to increase students' intercultural competence (Bickley, Rossiter & Abbott, 2014).

Intercultural competence and identity transformation

Martin and Nakayama (2008) defined identity as “the concept of who we are,” and it serves as a bridge that connects culture and communities (p. 3). Usually, identities develop over a long period of time but in spurts, resulting in multiple identities that are influenced by societies and depend on ones' cultural background (Martin, n.d.). Fortunately, in our globalized world, a significant number of language learners can develop their identities to be a more intercultural identity that feels equally at home in several cultures.

That being said, a person who has adapted some cultural differences when she/he enters daily life within different cultures, allows him/her to have a great understanding of others' social communication processes, rather than abiding by norms of the original culture, can be described as an individual with intercultural identity (Hebrok, 2011). Persons with intercultural identities have the ability, as Bennett et al. (2003) noted, “to recognize oneself operating in cultural context,” as well as to identify and appreciate “cultural differences” (p. 246). Therefore, the interculturally competent person can “recognize,” “identify” and “appreciate” cultural differences and “adopt” to “appropriate behavior in one or more different cultures” (p. 237). According to Byram (1997) people with intercultural identity have the ability to interact “with

people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness, and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering, i.e., of overcoming and enjoying intercultural contact” (p. 70-72).

Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) described intercultural competent language users to be “able to interact effectively across cultures,” and as they involve in cross-cultural communication, they enjoy “working on complex tasks that demanded extensive intercultural interaction.... engaging in other intercultural activities such as eating different ethnic foods” (p. 414). Straffon (2003) mentioned, “the utilization of that cultural knowledge to successfully engage in effective interaction” (p. 5). Therefore, people with intercultural identity have three components that play important roles and are associated very closely with one another: (1) the affective component such as intercultural sensitivity, (2) cognitive component such as a knowledge of the target culture and (3) behavioral component such as adroit utilization of the target culture knowledge (Hammer & Bennett, 2004, p. 6).

In cross-cultural interactions, individuals from different cultural backgrounds view the world based on their assumptions, norms, and values (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Bennett, 1993; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998; Schwartz, 2006; Hofstede, 2005). However, as time passes, individuals acquire, as Ting-Toomey (2009) mentioned, (1) a value knowledge schema of the situational norms governing the situation, and (2) the conflict style schemas pertaining to appropriate or inappropriate conflict style patterns that support positive as opposed to adverse outcomes to behave appropriately within an intercultural interaction and to negotiate conflicts in such interactions (Ting-Toomey, 2009, p. 102).

Willing to adapt with tolerance, acceptance, and great focus on avoiding the restriction of ethnocentric biases can result in having a unique identity that bridges the gap between cultures

and races (Kim, 2001). This bridge can be achieved by having more intercultural sensitivity which is a crucial first step toward developing intercultural competence (Bennett's, 1993). Thus, the identity that has great characteristics of cultural sensitivity has a multidirectional relation with intercultural competence; thus, the more culturally aware (engaging, respectful, confident, enjoying) a person is, the more intercultural competent he/she is (Bennett, 2004). Therefore, using cultural learning skills such as acting cultural mediators and seeing the world through others' eyes would lead the language learner to global citizenship and, in turn, to become a successful English global language competent user.

Damen (1987) illustrated the potential impact of intercultural competence on language learners as it leads them to a better understanding of one's own culture as well as for others. Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe (2007; Sercu, 2004) highlighted the core role of intercultural competence as it mediates between cultures helping learners to interact appropriately with a great understanding of cultural adjustment. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) stated that "to be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures" (p. 416).

Intercultural competence speaker, as Kramersch (1998) described, is a 'competent language user' who has "the adaptability to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use" along with "the ability to speak and write according to the rules of the academy and the social etiquette" (p. 27). Therefore, people who focus on intercultural competence models as a means during their language learning do not acquire linguistic and cultural knowledge only, but they also acquire some appropriate attitudinal characteristics, e.g., open-minded. In addition, they gain the

necessary skills to communicate appropriately with others in an intercultural setting regardless of differences in cultural background. Thus, unless a language learner is knowledgeable and has the motivation and the skills to communicate effectively in the target culture, he/she is not interculturally competent.

Bennett (1986) proposed the six stages that language learner goes through during the process of cultural competency in his Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. He grouped them into two general categories: (1) ethnocentric, where the person is “using one’s own set of standards and customs to judge all people, often unconsciously” and consist of denial, defense and minimization, and (2) ethnorelative, where one is “comfortable with many standers and customs and...having an ability to adapt behavior and judgments to a variety of interpersonal settings” (p. 26).

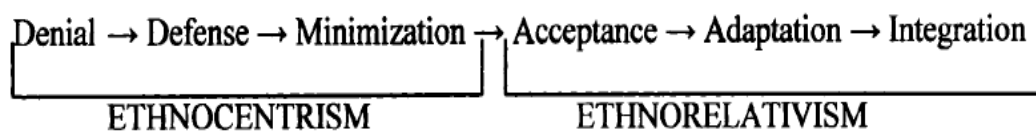


Figure 5: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Hammer & Bennett, 2004, p. 89)

“Each stage was indicative of a particular worldview structure, and that certain kinds of cognitive processing, attitudes, and behaviors would typically be associated with each such configuration of worldview” (Hammer & Bennett, 2004, p. 12). This means the interlocutors develop their worldview as they transit from stage to another, establishing effective and positive intercultural communication and identities.

In the ethnocentric category, individuals start with the Denial stage, where they miss the cultural cues as they are not able to recognize cultural relevance and patterns. They then move

into the Defense stage, where individuals start looking at the differences through the polarized lens of us versus them. In that stage, people are critical of their own culture, and they are very judgmental. After that, the stage where people tend to minimize cultural differences ‘Minimization,’ although they are differentiating the two cultures through the lens of their and our own culture. However, when individuals reach the Ethnorelative category, they show curiosity and Acceptance of cultural differences. They then exhibit Adaptation and shift perspectives to cultural differences, and that results in changing their worldview. The final stage of the second category is Integration, where learners’ worldview is a combination of more than one culture. In that stage, the learner gains ‘constructive marginality’ through which he/she is able to move in and out of cultures as an integral and important part of his/her identity. (Deardorff, 2006; Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). In other words, learners acquire higher levels of interculturality as they experience other cultures (Straffon, 2001).

Intercultural identity is not easy to achieve without fundamental preparations for intercultural competence frameworks in order to apply them to the learning process. Exposure to global varieties of English is an essential element in shifting the focus to the concept of self and the attitudes to other cultures with great emphasis on intercultural competence. Moreover, individuals need to gain more intercultural competence in addition to self-awareness and identity transformation to be responsible global citizens. Language learners, therefore, would need to investigate similarities and differences between their own cultural identities and connect with those of the others. They need to understand that “peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding” (Einstein, n.d.).

Gaps in the Literature

The review of the literature presented justification regarding the importance of

intercultural competence in second language education. Notwithstanding, few studies have focused on carrying out those theoretical bits of knowledge into classrooms. More studies and research that investigate the ability of second language classes to provide language learners with the necessary technique to develop their intercultural competence, therefore, are needed. This gap inspires researchers with a great number of research questions that would need to be studied. For example, how can English language classes serve in developing students' intercultural competence?

Additionally, the literature indicated that the role of culture in language classrooms had considerably changed as it moved from being limited to understanding cultures in the audio-lingual methods to the notions of intercultural competence; however, scholars did not study the topic of developing intercultural competence in language classrooms in students' home countries. They all focused on the idea of developing interculturality once students hit different cultures, which leads to many questions such as would students be able to move to Byram's (1997) cultural awareness if they were provided with the infrastructure in their language classes? Do they need an environment that provides them with opportunities to participate in exploring cultures through discussions during language classes in their home countries?

Another gap that should shed light on is that all the different models of intercultural competence are introduced with an ultimately Western perspective by scholars mostly from America, Canada, and Europe. Subsequently, the way Eastern and Arab perspectives would perceive intercultural competence still needs further investigation. Additionally, no one has tried to tie up the Eastern and Western perspectives on intercultural competence in the language classroom.

Finally, there is no single study, to the best of my knowledge, that build an argument that

English language classes can be sufficient for developing intercultural competence, citing that language alone does not ensure one's competence in culture. Instead, all the available studies have linked the progress and the development of intercultural competence with the studying abroad experience. Consequently, there are insufficient studies that concentrate on second language classrooms and their position and function in developing intercultural competence. However, the language classroom is going to be the focus of the current study and the crucial element that would lead to intercultural competence development in Saudi Arabian society, particularly that through the language, people can understanding the worldviews.

Nevertheless, this study is different from previous studies for several reasons. First, it contributes to the lack of research on the Saudi people's intercultural competence. Second, this study contributes to the ways in which the Saudi people can develop their intercultural competence and challenge the stereotypes of the different cultures. Third, it contributes to the field's understanding of the importance of developing intercultural competence as an essential element in language learning and cultural awareness. Fourth, the findings of this study are unique in the literature, especially for investigators who investigate curriculum orientations, which impact the development of intercultural competence in language classrooms. Fifth, some recent studies (Alhuthaifi, 2019) tried to shed light on the importance of intercultural competence in any language class in Saudi Arabia as she emphasized the importance of developing knowledge about cultures, appreciating differences of being and behaving and developing positive attitudes toward others. However, her study was very theoretical and focused only on exploring the conceptions and practices of international mindedness of four English as a foreign language faculty members in higher education programs in a Saudi university. Therefore, her study did not focus on Saudi Students. Lastly, Hagar (2016) conducted the only study that focused on the

development of the intercultural competence of Saudi students. Unfortunately, his study used a case study approach with qualitative and focused data collection of only two participants; therefore, the results cannot be extrapolated or generalized to a larger population.

The differences of other studies from this study indicate a gap in the development of intercultural competency literature concerning the Saudi people. However, this study bridges that gap, advances the understanding in the line of inquiry, and contributes to the development of pedagogical approaches to foster interculturality in language teaching. This is particularly true of the complexity of the culture-language relationship and can be achieved through the investigation of the intercultural competence of Saudi students in the academic environment of the US. The findings of this study may, therefore, help English language instructors, curriculum designers, and English language institutional administrations offer a more effective curriculum while considering the ways various forms of linguistic discourses create cultural differences and how the development of English language classes contribute to the development of intercultural identities.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following questions were used to guide the data collection:

1. How do Saudi students say that their experience of studying in American universities help in developing their intercultural competence? How did the challenges that they had during their experiences, if any, help students develop their intercultural skills?
2. What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in, language class in Saudi Arabia that will develop intercultural competence in the students?

3. Do students' perceptions of their experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on participants' demographic information?
4. What are the cultural challenges that Saudi students say that they face during their experience in the US academic environment? How did these challenges help students develop their intercultural skills?
5. Should English language classes in Saudi Arabia focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum?

Chapter Three: Methodology

This study employed an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods design that focused on combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, which created greater validity. This approach ensured that there are symmetry and a continuous smooth flow of the collected data (Creswell, 2013). Importantly, collecting data using mixed methods addressed the research questions from many perspectives, which helped validate data. Creswell (2013) illustrated that qualitative methods assess description and meaning, and quantitative studies underline measurement and relations. Thus, in this mixed methods research, all the available approaches that serve the study were used to obtain a more precise understanding of answers to the listed research questions. Additionally, it included statistical results in numerical representation as well as subjective results that presented the voice of participants (Creswell, 2013). Straus and Cobin (1998) provided more detail concerning that:

Qualitative and quantitative forms of research both have roles to play in theorizing. The issue is not whether to use one form or another but rather how these might work together to foster the development of theory. Although most researchers tend to use qualitative and quantitative methods in supplementary or complementary forms, what we are advocating is a true interplay between the two. The qualitative should direct the quantitative and the quantitative feedback into the qualitative in a circular, but at the same time evolving, process with each method contributing to the theory in ways that only each can (p. 34).

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3. Do students' perceptions of their experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on participants' demographic information?
4. What are the cultural challenges that Saudi students say that they face during their experience in the US academic environment? How did these challenges help students develop their intercultural skills?
5. Should English language classes in Saudi Arabia focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum?

The first question aimed at investigating the segments and components that helped Saudi students develop their intercultural competence and skills while they were studying in American universities. That question was explored quantitatively. The second research question is to present the missing elements that are needed to be included in language classes in Saudi Arabia and was explored through both quantitative and qualitative examination. The third research question intended to explore whether students' backgrounds affected their intercultural competence development and was looked at quantitatively. The fourth and fifth research questions were approached qualitatively. They aimed to investigate the cultural challenges that face Saudi students during their experiences at American universities and how these challenges helped Saudi students develop their interculturality and whether or not to include them in language classes in Saudi Arabia.

Research Instruments

The nature of this study requires a nonexperimental, two-phase, explanatory sequential, mixed methods design in order to provide comprehensive, insightful, and in-depth data. Mixed methods also help researchers avoid bias and limit problems of insufficient data, which often plague one-source studies (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Therefore, this research study involved questionnaires that were designed to address the research questions quantitatively as a first phase, and then in the second phase, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to answer the research questions qualitatively. The additions of the semi-structured interviews allow for going beyond metrics to provide a deeper understanding of the practices and perceptions of participants (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009; Seifert, Goodman, King & Baxter Magolda, 2010). More details about each tool and how they were used for this study are provided in the following sections.

Questionnaire.

Brown (2001) defined questionnaires to be “any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers” (p. 6). According to Wray, Trott, and Bloomer (1998), questionnaires are very efficient tools to investigate the process of teaching and learning second languages as well as the attitudes toward those languages, especially in large-scale studies where questionnaires save time, effort, and cost.

In order to collect data for this study, an online questionnaire was developed to answer the research questions quantitatively (see Appendix A). According to Wright (2005), online survey services have enhanced the spread of questionnaires to access participants who are difficult to contact through other means. Google Forms was used for this purpose because it is

advanced enough to make designing and administrating the questionnaire quick and easy. The questionnaire was reviewed by members of the Internal Review Board (IRB) at the University of Memphis to make sure that this study is eligible. They then obtained IRB approval to conduct the study (see Appendix E & F).

The questionnaire was distributed through SACM, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other popular social media outlets to reach as many Saudi students in the United States of America as possible. The questionnaire was open for two weeks, and then the researcher stopped accepting more responses due to the beginning of data analysis. The participants were also provided with a consent form at the beginning of the survey (see Appendix C).

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part contained demographic questions that provide the study with the participants' background information. It consisted of eleven multiple-choice questions and one short-answer question. This part of the questionnaire introduced variables such as the region of origin, academic level, length of residence, and intercultural experience that guarantee that the sample does not include false identities. Therefore, trust and confidentiality problems are not exacerbated (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003).

The second and third parts of the questionnaire were based on Deardroff's framework of intercultural competence, which is comprised of attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal and external outcomes (see Table 2). (1) *Attitudes*: several crucial attitudes became visible, respect: valuing other cultures and cultural diversity, openness to intercultural learning and people from other cultures withholding judgment, curiosity, and discovery, tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty. (2) *Knowledge*: (a) cultural self-awareness (the ways one's culture has influenced one's identity and worldview), (b) culture-specific knowledge, (c) deep cultural knowledge

including understanding other world views, and (d) sociolinguistic awareness. (3) *Skills*: Observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating skills that address the acquisition and processing of knowledge. (4) *Internal Outcomes*: In this stage, interlocutors can see from others' perspectives and respond to them in a way that they wish to be treated. It includes (a) adaptability to different communication styles and behaviors: adjust to a new cultural environment, (b) flexibility selecting and using appropriate communication styles and behaviors; cognitive flexibility, (c) ethnorelative view, and (d) empathy. (5) *External Outcomes*: The internal outcomes as well as the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are exhibited through the action and communication of the person, which become the apparent consequences of intercultural competence experienced by others. Resulting in the definition of intercultural competence, "the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations." Hence, the *effectiveness* can be determined by the interlocutor, whereas the *appropriateness* can only be determined by the other person.

The second part consisted of thirteen questions regarding the integration of cultural information and intercultural competence in English language classes in Saudi Arabia. The third part consisted of sixteen questions regarding the development of the intercultural competence of the Saudi students who were studying at American universities at the time the data were collected.

Table 2
Questionnaire Division

Deardorff	SA Classes	US Experiences
Attitudes	2a. I learned about the similarities and differences of other cultures in	9b. I have tried food from different cultures at an American university.

Table 2 Continued

	my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.	11b. Exploring the different parts of my American university has helped me to become interculturally competent.
	9a. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to attend events to increase my own cultural awareness.	12b. Exploring the art and culture of other countries was a good way to develop my intercultural experience.
	11a. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to try food from different cultures.	
Knowledge	1a. I was able to build my intercultural skills in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.	3b. I have read books that describe and explain patterns of cultural differences and similarities.
	4a. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia presented clear information about cultural differences.	4b. I have additional intercultural experience because of my classes at the American university.
	8a. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to present some cross-cultural performances during class time.	13b. I have learned about different cultures through media, talk shows, and movies during my studies at the American university.
Skills	5a. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia helped me to think	2b. I have worked with groups on presenting different cultures to

Table 2 Continued

	before judging people from different cultures.	the class at the American university.
	7a. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia played English movies during class time.	7b. I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes.
	12a. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to explore the art and culture of other countries.	
Internal Outcomes	6a. In my English language classes in Saudi Arabia, I learned that everybody's culture shapes and influences his/her interactions with other people.	5b. My professors at the American university were good role models of intercultural competence.
	10a. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competence.	6b. The faculty members at the American university were good mentors for my cultural problems.
		15b. I am comfortable sending emails to my professors at the American university to ask about anything I encounter.
External Outcomes	3a. I learned how to interact and communicate with people from	8b. I know how to disagree with my classmates at the American university.

Table 2 Continued

different cultures in my English classes in Saudi Arabia.	10b. Interaction with people from different countries at the
13a. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia have made me an interculturally competent person.	American university was a good way of developing my intercultural competence.
	14b. I can respond appropriately to my classmates' comments at the American university.
	16b. I can describe myself as an interculturally competent person now.

The second and third parts of the questionnaire had the same format. They both employed the Likert scale in which the respondents were presented with several statements. Respondents were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with each statement: they can choose either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. An even number of response options was used to make respondents choose either a positive or a negative response rather than a neutral one (e.g., neither agree nor disagree). Therefore, the undecided category was omitted, and a four-point scale was used.

Likert Scale.

Researchers have a concern about the effects of midpoints on a Likert scale's reliability and validity measurement. Some researchers argued that midpoints might increase the reliability of the test. However, other researchers argued that respondents might tend to choose the midpoint options because they do not want to endeavor any cognitive effort to share their real

opinion. That kind of tendency usually found, and more frequent among respondents are less motivated to participate. Therefore, the omission of the midpoint has adapted in this study to avoid this kind of issue.

Another point to be discussed here is that participants need to choose one answer either with a low level of certainty (agree/disagree) or with a high level of certainty (strongly agree/strongly disagree). Therefore, in this study, there is an attempt to differentiate the participants' choices based on their agreement as well as their certainty.

Interviews.

According to Merriam (2002), deciding the correct data collection method to use depends on which collection method is most likely to reveal the most useful information regarding the listed research questions. Therefore, if the experience of a particular group or population is the focus of the study, then the interviews with those who underwent that experience “would yield the most relevant information” (p. 12). Particularly that interviews allow the researchers to familiarize themselves with the problem or concept to be studied and to generate hypotheses to be tested. They also help the researcher to gain an understanding of any underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. Sakui and Gaies (1999) explained that interviews help in allowing the participants to reveal beliefs that “are not addressed in the questionnaire and to describe the reasons, sources, behavioral outcomes, and other dimensions of their beliefs” (p. 486).

Semi-structured interviews, which endeavored to produce vibrant and interesting data, were conducted to answer the research questions qualitatively. The interviews focused on two parts. The first part consisted of two general questions about participants' backgrounds and experiences. The second part consisted of ten questions about topics directly related to the intercultural competence that led to an understanding of the participants' points of view, their

sociocultural identity, and their experiences (see Appendix B & D). The questions addressed important social issues relating to intercultural communication. Subsequently, this type of interview enabled the participant to provide more in-depth and precious information.

Research Participants

To improve the validity of the collected data through the questionnaire, two different groups participated in this study: a pilot group and a study group. The pilot group was selected carefully according to research objectives. In addition, there were six people participated voluntarily in the follow-up semi-structured interviews.

Pilot Group.

Pilot testing is the process of distributing the questionnaire to a group of respondents who had a comparable amount of time and experience in the US as the target group for whom the study initially was designed. Gass and Mackey (2000) illustrated that pilot testing “can help avoid costly and time-consuming problems during the data collection procedure,” as well as “the loss of valuable, potentially useful, and often irreplaceable data” (p.57). Therefore, this study was piloted prior to distributing the questionnaire to the study group to identify any possible problems before starting the study. Piloting the questionnaire was helpful to ensure that all questions were clear, and the questionnaire displayed correctly to respondents. The pilot group was Fifteen Saudi students who were living in the United States of America for more than a year. They were eight males and seven females students at American universities.

Study Participants.

The study group involved 107 Saudi male and female students who were studying in several universities in the United States of America. This random sampling group consisted of Saudi students in the US who responded to a survey request on social media. Looking at their

demographic variables (see Table 3), they found to be 43% females and 57% males. 35.5% of the participants were in Ph.D. programs, 31.8% of them were in master's degree programs, 31.7% were in undergraduate programs. 41.1% of the participants were between twenty-five and thirty years old. 33.6% of the participants were between thirty-one and thirty-six years old. 14% of the participants were between eighteen and twenty-four years old, and only 11.2% of the participants were thirty-seven and above.

Table 3
Questionnaire's Participants' Demographic Information

Demographic information	Frequency	
Gender	Male	57%
	Female	43%
Age group	18-24	14%
	25-30	41.1%
	31-36	33.6%
	37 and above	11.2%
Educational level	Undergraduate	31.7%
	Master	31.8%
	Ph.D.	35.5%
Interaction with international people	More than 8 hours a week	23.4%
	4 - 7 hours a week	30.8%
	1 - 3 hours a week	40.2%
	Less than an hour	1.9%
	Never	3.7%

25.2% of the participants were from the central region of Saudi Arabia, 22.4% were from the east region, 22.4% were from the west region, 5.6% were from the north region and 23.4% were from the south region of Saudi Arabia.

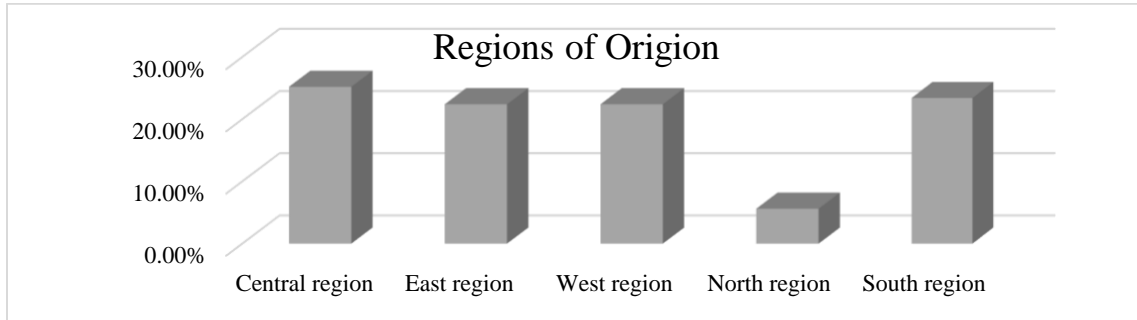


Figure 6: Participants' regions of origin

Moreover, 50% of the participants had been living in the US for about 4-7 years, and 31% of them had been living there for about 1-3 years. Interestingly, 8% of them had been living there for less than a year and 8-10 years. However, there were only 3% of the participants who had been living there for more than ten years (see Figure 6).

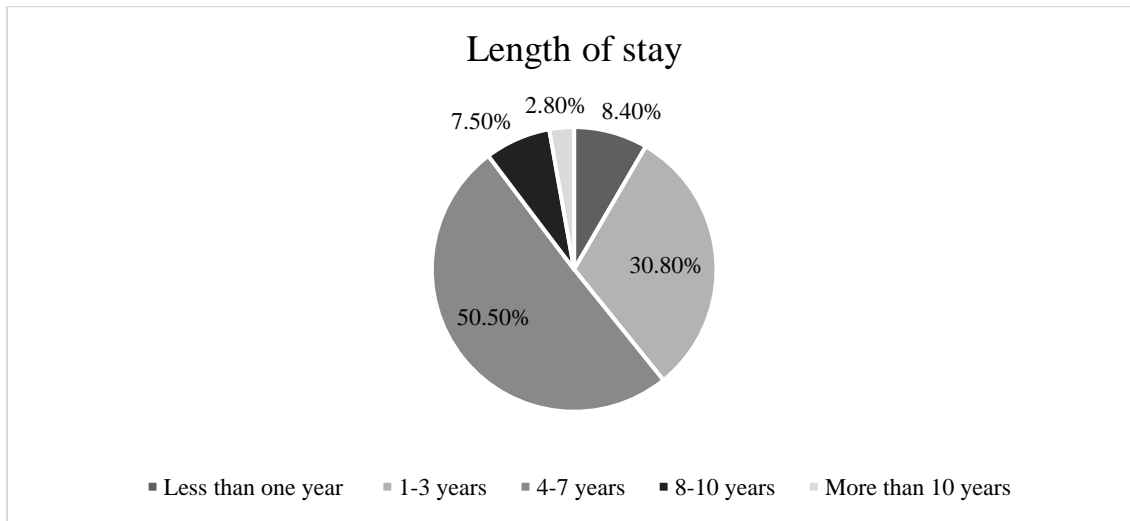


Figure 7: Percentage of participants' length of stay in the US

Additionally, interaction with Americans was an important point that was taken into consideration. It can be seen that 40.2% of the participants had been interaction with American for about 1-3 hours every week, 30.8% of whom had about 4-7 hours a week of interaction with

American, 23,4% had more than 8 hours every week, 3.7% had never interacted regularly with American, and only 1.9% had been interacting with American for about one hour a week in a regular bases.

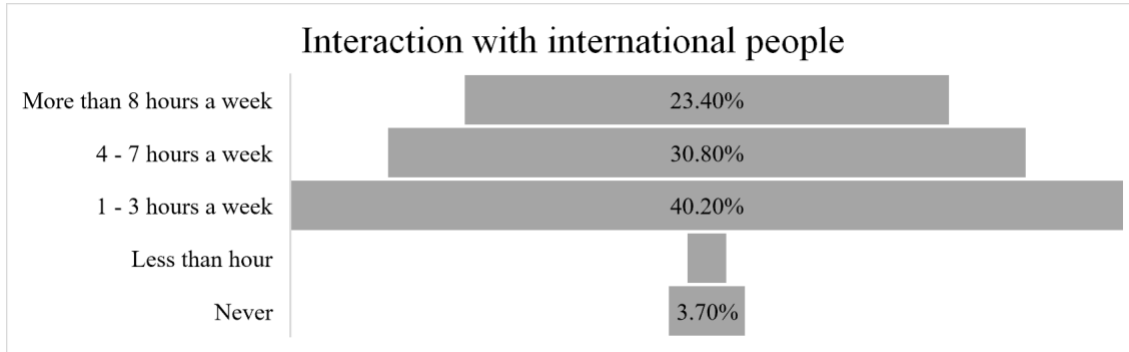


Figure 8: Rate of interacting with American in a weekly bases

Exploring the reason behind participants tendency to learn about English language and American culture, the data illustrated that 39% of them decided to understand the American culture because of their interest in digging deeper into the English language itself, 29% tend to learn it to be able to understand people who are using that language and be able to communicate with them, 17% chose to understand the norms of the English communities and cultures, and 15% thought that learning the English language and culture would be the best way to understand the values of the American cultures.

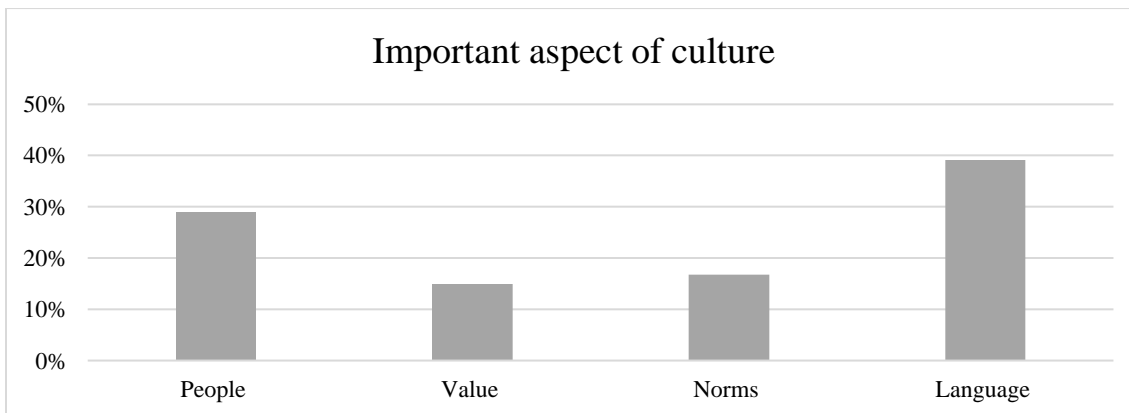


Figure 9: The aspect of culture based on their importance to participants

The next criterion that looked at was the cultural knowledge and education that the participants had before coming to the US. While 66.4% of the participants found to be educated culturally before coming to the states, 33.6% of them had no prior knowledge of the cultural differences to their arrival to the United States of America.

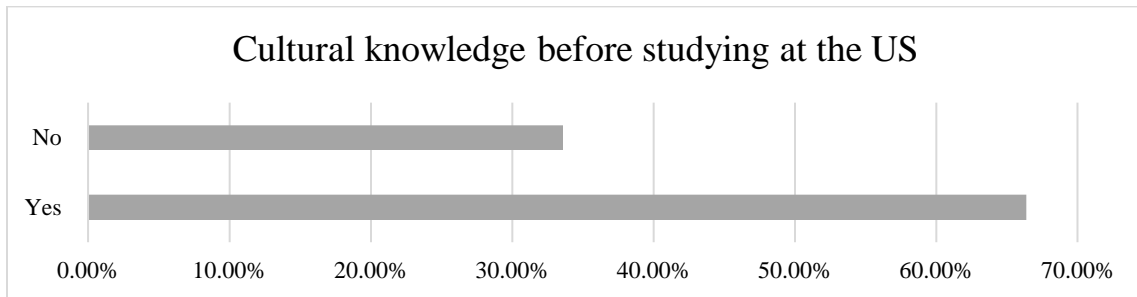


Figure 10: Cultural Education

The other overseas experience of participants was also a point to take into consideration while collecting the data. Interestingly, it was found that 71% of the participants had traveled abroad other than to the US, whereas 29% of them had no other overseas experience prior to their stay in the US.

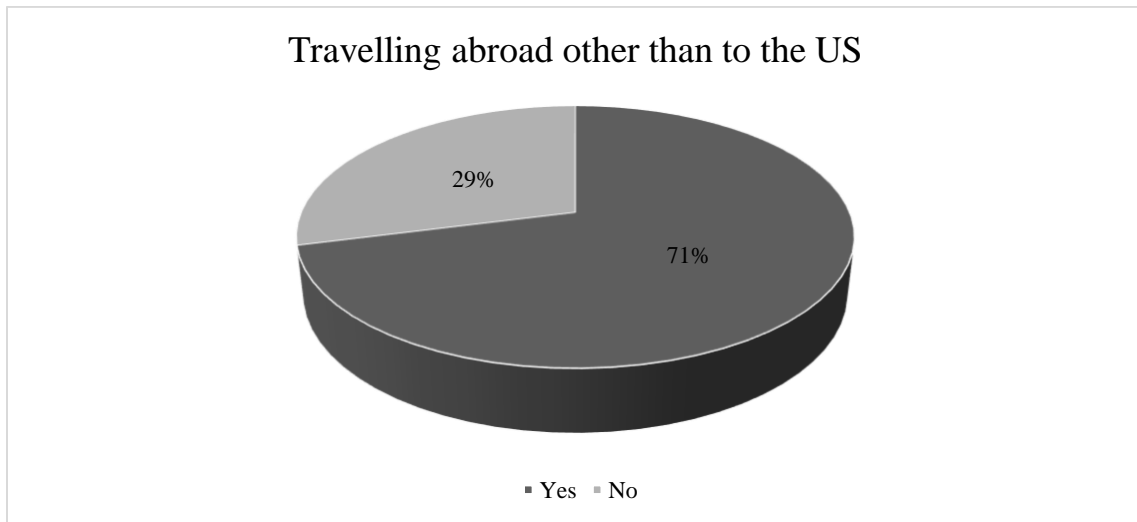


Figure 11: Other overseas experience

Interviews' Participants.

A question was included at the end of the questionnaires asking the participants to provide their contact information if they were interested in a more in-depth follow-up interview. After receiving the questionnaires' responses, three participants from each group were selected: two males and one female from the pilot group and one male and two females from the study participants. Studies showed that data saturation and the redundancy of themes usually happens after six studies (Glaser and Strauss, 2009).

Demographic information about the six participants for the semi-instructed interviews was summarized in the following table (see Table 4). They were six Saudi students in American universities, three males and three females. The participants have been living in the USA for more than five years. To some degree, they all have interacted with international people as well as American people during their living in the USA. Three of the participants were Ph.D. students, one possessed a Ph.D. degree recently, one possessed a master's degree, and one was working on his bachelor's degree. All names have been changed to pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Table 4
Semi-structured interviews' Participant Demographic Information

Participants	Age	Total Length of stay	Region of SA	The current level of Education
Abdul	38	Eight years	South region	Master
Sara	30	Six years	West region	Ph.D.
Maya	45	13 years	East region	Ph.D.
Adam	38	Six years	West region	Ph.D.
Nadya	37	Seven years	West region	Ph.D.

Table 4 Continued

Sami	25	Seven years	North region	Bachelor
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Data Collection

There are some characteristics of any mixed-method study as indicated by Creswell (2013). Here are some of these characteristics; (1) a closed-ended quantitative data, (2) an open-ended qualitative data, and (3) a plan to bring the two data together when one form is not sufficient enough to fully understand the problem. As it has mentioned earlier, this study adopted an Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method design. Thus, the data were collected in two phases. First, the questionnaire was distributed through SACM, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other popular social media outlets to reach as many Saudi students in the United States of America as possible. Then, semi-structured interviews were conducted as people illustrated their interests in the follow-up interviews.

Each interview lasted for about fifteen minutes to one hour. The participants were given clear and understandable information regarding the study. The interview questions were open-ended, which encouraged participants to talk lengthily, as the researcher was an active listener and a speaking modifier. The interviews were audio-recorded at the coffee shop that was the preference of the three participants. The other three participants were from different cities that were inaccessible to the researcher; thus, an online communication service called Skype was used to conduct asynchronous interviews, and that helped with “the cost and time efficiency advantage in terms of reduced costs for travel and data transcription” (Creswell, 2013, p. 159).

On the other hand, there were some ethical and methodological concerns with the collected data through Skype as “participants’ privacy protection, new power differentials, ownership of the data, authenticity, and trust in the data collected” (Creswell, 2013, p. 161). However, ethical considerations for both face-to-face and online techniques requested both

verbal and written consent of the participants who were interviewed as the participants were provided with the consent form and asked to continue if they agreed to participate in the study at the beginning of the interviews.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on the Explanatory Sequential Mixed Method data analysis. The quantitative data were collected and analyzed as a first phase, and then the qualitative data was collected and analyzed to provide further explanation and more details (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative analysis.

For the quantitative analysis, the SPSS software was used to generate percentages, frequencies, tables, and figures, and to calculate means and standard deviation. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out to group questionnaire items based on similar underlying factors that influenced Saudi students' responses to the Likert scale items on the questionnaire calling for information related to their intercultural competence development during their studies at American Universities. After that, a descriptive analysis of the items that fostered the intercultural competence development of the Saudi students was presented to report the level of participants' agreement with the items provided in the questionnaire. In addition, a Related-Samples Friedman's Two-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks was used to determine whether scores on the three factors differed. The role of demographic variables on Saudi students' intercultural competence development was examined using A Kruskal-Wallis H test. Creswell and Plano Clark (2010) argued that results from a data collection instrument should to be reliable (scores should be consistent), and valid (scores should be meaningful). Cronbach's alpha was

calculated for the entire questionnaire testing internal consistency, or the relatedness of the multiple questions in a group as a reliability measure, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Qualitative analysis.

The theoretical framework and the research questions were reviewed at the beginning of the qualitative analysis, and based on that, a list of coding concepts was created to pull the analysis close to the research questions, starting the analysis with the key ideas related to the study. The codes were *attitudes toward own cultures, international experience before the USA, other cultures awareness, intercultural competence knowledge, the importance of intercultural competence, difficulties upon communicating with internationals, intercultural activities, experiencing American universities, and the absence of intercultural competence.*

Each of the six semi-structured interviews was audio-recorded and then manually transcribed using Microsoft Word. In addition, notes about each interviewee that gave background information were scribbled immediately following each interview, adding them to the transcripts in a different color of the font. Then, the data from each interview was analyzed separately. Moreover, to conduct a systematic coding for the data, the Word highlights features were used to color-code similar codes and categories. Therefore, within each interviewee's transcript file, the different points were highlighted in different colors according to the different codes that granted as the first step of the data analysis. After that, notes about each point were written using Word comments feature in each file of the interviewees to be used to exemplify each concept. Thus, the different points were identifiable for reference at the data discussion phase.

Next, a connecting strategy was used to identify the relationships among data for a better understanding, mainly that research questions cannot be answered through disconnected and

discrete elements that were collected from data collection. Via careful listening to the interview recordings and reading the transcripts several times, some other tentative themes and categories were denoted directly onto transcripts using the Word comments feature.

The data from the interviews were transferred into a table where they were categorized, allowing different themes to emerge. The categorization process was divided into three parts. First, the data were organized and sorted by themes in an organizational category. These themes were presented as subject headings of data to organize categories that signal *attitudes toward own cultures, international experience before the USA, other culture awareness, intercultural competence knowledge, the importance of intercultural competence, difficulties upon communicating with internationals, intercultural activities, experiencing American universities, and absence of intercultural competence*. Second, the participants' concepts and beliefs were listed in a substantive category.

In the beginning, the keywords and phrases that relate to the different themes were identified. Then, the participants' statements from the interview transcripts were cut and pasted into the eight broad categories that were labeled as core coding concepts. That is, the original transcript data, which contained the coding notes and analysis, were placed along with the transcribes in their respective categories. Consequently, the data was gradually reduced, and significant points were identified. Third, in a theoretical category, data was placed in categories by looking across all the six interviews to identifying overarching themes related to the research questions.

After conducting this long process of themes formation, revision, and refining those themes in terms of labeling appropriateness and inclusiveness of all the coded data were

conducted. This refining process also included dismissing some themes that were not satisfactorily maintained by data or did not correspond with the research aims and questions.

Human Participants and Ethics Precautions

The researcher is protecting the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the data collected. Every effort was made to keep all research records that identify the participants private to the extent allowed by law. Therefore, the information of all the participants who took part in this study was combined, so the participants would never be personally identified. This study is anonymous, which means that no one knows that the information the participants gave came from them.

For the questionnaire that was distributed through Google Forms, settings were changed to anonymize responses; therefore, IP address and GPS coordinates of respondents were not collect, and that maintains the confidentiality of the data. Moreover, the written notes and paper copies that were collected during the interviews were stored in a locked file cabinet with keys in possession of the researcher alone. The interview audio files were assigned a password that is known solely to the researcher. The files were transcribed, backed up, and stored on a personal flash drive. The personal information was not used in the content of the research study, and pen names were used instead.

The collected data will be retained for three years, after which all of the files will be destroyed, a process that is recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010). However, there are some circumstances in which the participants' information may be shown to people who need to be sure that the research has been done correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Memphis.

Chapter Four: Quantitative Results

This chapter presents and describes the results of the quantitative data analysis. The results of the analysis are arranged into two main sections. Results of quantitative analysis based on the survey administration are presented first, followed by a summary of the findings. Analysis of this data sources provided insight in addressing the research questions:

1. How do Saudi students say that their experience of studying in American universities help in developing their intercultural competence? How did the challenges that they had during their experiences, if any, help students develop their intercultural skills?
2. What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in, language class in Saudi Arabia that will develop intercultural competence in the students?
3. Do students' perceptions of their experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on participants' demographic information?

The quantitative data were analyzed to determine the way Saudi students' intercultural competence develop during their time in the US academic environment. Besides, the purpose of this analysis was to report the quantitative results related to the elements that are missing from and should be included in any language class in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in the students. A factor analysis was carried out using SPSS to determine what underlying factors influence participant responses to the Likert scale items on the survey calling for information on their intercultural learning experiences in Saudi Arabia and the US. However, before reporting the results related to the research questions, the steps to check the validity of the survey elements were presented.

Factor Analysis

Preliminary Interpretation.

After receiving the survey data, an excel file was created. After that, the data was uploaded to SPSS statistical software to conduct an analysis of the items, checking descriptive statistics for each item, including mean and standard deviation for administrations (see Table 5) for the purposes of ensuring that all items evidenced sufficient variance. Items analysis revealed that all items had sufficient variance, so they were all retained at this step.

Table 5
SPSS output for Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
1A	3.02	.91
2A	3.04	.93
3A	3.07	.93
4A	3.12	.84
5A	3.13	.89
6A	2.99	.92
7A	3.21	1.03
8A	3.28	.94
9A	3.34	.91
10A	3.01	.92
11A	3.22	.86
12A	3.20	.86
13A	3.27	.84
1B	1.80	.96

Table 5 Continued

2B	1.79	1.01
3B	1.96	.99
4B	1.65	.94
5B	1.91	.91
6B	2.10	.93
7B	1.69	.95
8B	1.83	.93
9B	1.77	.97
10B	1.60	.91
11B	1.79	.90
12B	1.80	.90
13B	1.88	.93
14B	1.87	.87
15B	1.74	.97
16B	1.79	.88

* Note: All items scored on a 4-point scale. N = 107.

The above table gave the means and standard deviations for each of the questionnaire items. (Note: Items labeled A deal with experiences in Saudi Arabia; items labeled B deal with experiences in the United States). Visual inspection of items means suggested a divide between student experiences of intercultural learning in Saudi Arabia and the United States, with scores suggesting that one was higher than three where one indicated that the respondents strongly agreed with the giving statement whereas three revealed that the respondents did not agree to the

statements. To better understand the data, the statements that were used in the questionnaire were listed in Appendix F.

The data were then examined to determine whether they were suitable for factor analysis. An examination of the correlation matrix showed that each variable was correlated at .3 with at least one more variable, meaning that all items were interconnected, and none needed to be removed. The correlation r has to be .30 or greater as anything lower would suggest a weak relationship between variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Furthermore, none of the variables correlated above .90 which suggests that while there were relationships among variables, they did not overlap to the extent of multicollinearity (which would suggest that some items did not add unique information to the data).

In addition, the Bartlett's test of sphericity was at the significant level of .000 (see Table 6), meaning that the data are a good match for factor analysis and have patterned relationships. Finally, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy was examined and determined that the data is suitable for the EFA with cut-off above .50, which was .905 (see Table 6).

Table 6
SPSS output for KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.905
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2524.785
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

On the other hand, the diagonal element of the Anti-Correlation matrix was examined, and unfortunately, A6 has the 'a' superscript with cut-off above .50 with two other variables; thus, it was removed, so it would not cause diffused correlation patterns as indicated by diagonal

value in the Anti-Correlation matrix (see Table 7). Therefore, the data was suitable for EFA as the KMO was .91, and the individual diagonal elements were $>.90$.

Table 7
Truncated SPSS output for the Anti-image correlation portion obtained from the Anti-image Matrices.

		6A
Anti-image Covariance	1A	.024
	2A	-.027
	3A	.026
	4A	-.101
	5A	-.116
	6A	.256
	7A	-.035
	8A	-.058
	9A	1.686E-5
	10A	-.040
	11A	.018
	12A	-.008
	13A	-3.132E-5

Factor Extraction and Rotation.

The factor analysis was set to extract any factor with an eigenvalue over 1. This yielded four underlying factors. However, only two factors were needed to explain over 60% of the variance, the accepted level of variance for factor analysis. Factor three explained almost about

5%, but four explained less than 4% of the cumulative variance. 5% is the benchmark for inclusion as a variable (see Table 8).

Table 8

Truncated SPSS output for the total variance explained for extracted factors.

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.7	36.92	36.92	10.7	36.92	36.92
2	6.86	23.64	60.56	6.86	23.64	60.56
3	1.36	4.68	65.24	1.36	4.68	65.24
4	1.15	3.97	69.20	1.15	3.97	69.20

The rotated component matrix was examined to determine whether the fourth factor was adding substantially to the model. All items that loaded onto the fourth factors loaded with similar strengths to other factors. Thus, there was an argument for not considering factor four as an essential factor.

Then, the rotated eigenvalues and scree plot were used to determine the number of significant factors (see Figure 12). There was a clear inflection point in the scree plot after the third factor, which indicated that subsequent factors added little to the total variance.

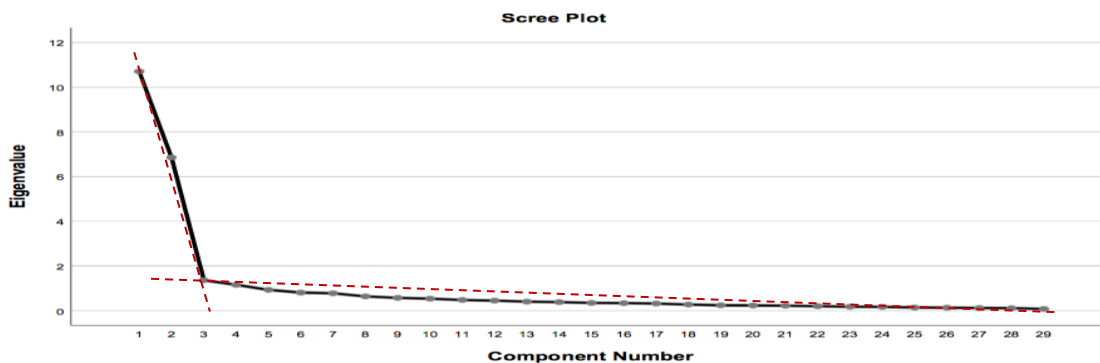


Figure 12: SPSS output for scree plot indicating that the data have three factors.

Based on the analysis of the initial factor analysis, it was decided to rerun the factor analysis specifying that only three factors were extracted and using a .40 value as the cut-off for factor loadings (see Table 9).

Table 9
Truncated SPSS output for the total variance explained for extracted factors

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10.6	37.92	37.92	10.6	37.92	37.92
2	6.49	23.16	61.49	6.49	23.16	61.49
3	1.32	4.73	65.81	1.32	4.73	65.81

After the multiple forced factor analyses were carried out, the rotated component matrix displayed the loading of survey items onto the three factors (see Table 10). This was nearly a clean solution, with most items loading onto only one factor.

Table 10
SPSS output for 3 factors extracted Factor Matrix after Varimax rotation

	1	2	3
B10	.877		
B14	.862		
B16	.861		
B12	.844		
B4	.839		
B11	.836		
B15	.836		
B7	.784		

Table 10 Continued

B2	.763		
B13	.725		
B9	.720		
B5	.706		
B8	.704		
B1	.697		
B6	.654		
B3	.635		
A12		.854	
A8		.841	
A13		.834	
A9		.796	
A7		.772	
A10		.749	
A11		.746	
A2		.416	.783
A4			.745
A3			.735
A5		.404	.688
A1			.670

In sum, the data has three factors: (a) developing intercultural competence in American universities (factor 1), (b) intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi

Arabia (factor 2), (c) language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia (factor 3).

The first factor labeled “developing intercultural competence in American universities” included items related to the ways Saudi students’ intercultural competencies were developed during their studies at American universities. The second factor, intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, included items related to the experiences and activities that Saudi students were encouraged to try during their language classes in Saudi Arabia. The third factor, which is language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, presented the way cultures were presented and treated during language classes in Saudi Arabia. A2 and A5 are complex variables as they load onto both factor 2 and factor 3. The following table (see Table 11) presented the questionnaire items and how they were grouped based on the rotated component matrix.

Table 11
The three factors with items from questionnaire that loaded most strongly to them.

Factors	Loaded Items
Developing intercultural competence in American universities (Factor 1)	1. Interaction with people from different countries at the American university was a good way of developing my intercultural competence. 2. I can respond appropriately to my classmates' comments at the American university. 3. I can describe myself as an interculturally competent person now. 4. Exploring the art and culture of other countries was a good way to develop my intercultural experience. 5. I have additional intercultural experience because of my classes at the American university.

Table 11 Continued

	<p>6. Exploring the different parts of my American university has helped me to become interculturally competent.</p> <p>7. I am comfortable sending emails to my professors at the American university to ask about anything I encounter.</p> <p>8. I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes.</p> <p>9. I have worked with groups on presenting different cultures to the class at the American university.</p> <p>10. I have learned about different cultures through media, talk shows, and movies during my studies at the American university.</p> <p>11. I have tried food from different cultures at the American university.</p> <p>12. My professors at the American university were good role models of intercultural competence.</p> <p>13. I know how to disagree with my classmates at the American university.</p> <p>14. I have worked on projects that present clear information on cultural differences in my US. classes.</p> <p>15. The faculty members at the American university were good mentors for my cultural problems.</p> <p>16. I have read books that describe and explain patterns of cultural differences and similarities.</p>
<p>Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia (Factor 2)</p>	<p>1. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to exploring the art and culture of other countries.</p> <p>2. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to present some cross-cultural performances during the class time.</p> <p>3. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia have made me an interculturally competent person.</p> <p>4. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to attend events to increase my own cultural awareness.</p> <p>5. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia played English movies during the class time.</p>

Table 11 Continued

	6. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competence.
	7. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to try food from different cultures.
Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia (Factor 3)	<p>1. I learned about the similarities and differences of other cultures in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>2. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia presented clear information about cultural differences.</p> <p>3. I learned how to interact and communicate with people from different cultures in my English classes in Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>4. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia helped me to think before judging people from different cultures.</p> <p>5. I was able to build my intercultural skills in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.</p>

Items Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha.

One way to test internal consistency or the relatedness of multiple questions in a group was to measure Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, SPSS was used to conduct a Cronbach alpha analysis for the entire survey as a reliability measure. Cronbach's alpha was .890, with 29 items for the internal consistency for the survey questions in general. That revealed that there was a high internal consistency, which showed that the questionnaire was reliable with $\alpha = .89$.

Then, SPSS was used to conduct a Cronbach's alpha analysis to test the consistency of the items within the three factors that were extracted earlier in the paper through the stage of factor analysis. (1) developing intercultural competence in American universities, (2) intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, (3) language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia.

Factor one consisted of sixteen items that were highly consistent with each other. In this case, $\alpha = .95$, which showed that the factor was reliable. Additionally, the means and standard deviations showed us that the items were tapping into the same concept with fairly similar scores. Moreover, the Inter-Item Correlations table, which displayed how each item correlated to all of the other items, showed us that all items were measuring the same concept and correlating well together. They were all above $r = 0.3$.

The second factor consisted of seven items that were reliable with each other with $\alpha = .94$. The mean and standard deviations clarify that the items were absolutely tapping into the same concept as well. The Inter-Item Correlations table also proved that all items were measuring the same concept and well correlating with $r > 0.3$.

The third factor consisted of five items that were consistent with each other with $\alpha = .88$ that showed that the items within this factor were reliable. Moreover, the means and standard deviations illustrated that the items were utterly tapping into the same concept with very similar scores. Additionally, the Inter-Item Correlations table explained that all items were measuring the same concept and correlating well together, where they were all above $r = 0.3$.

Descriptive Analysis of the three factors in relation to participants' responses

The purpose of this analysis was to show the levels of participants' agreements with the three factors and present the most influential factor that helped in developing Saudi students' intercultural competence. The three factors were (1) Developing intercultural competence in American universities, (2) Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and (3) Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia. The table below illustrated the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence according to the three factors as well as the means and the standard deviations (see Table 12).

Table 12
Frequency of the three factors

Factors	Strongly Agree%	Agree%	Disagree%	Strongly Disagree%	Mean	SD
1. Developing intercultural competence in American universities	47.49	31.66	13.20	7.65	1.81	0.94
2. Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia	5.74	15.89	29.24	49.13	3.19	0.91
3. Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia	6.35	17.76	37.76	38.13	3.1	0.91

As presented in the table, the means and the standard deviations of the three factors indicated that there was no significant difference in the scores of factor 2 with a mean of 3.19 ($SD = 0.91$) and factor 3 with a mean of 3.1 ($SD = 0.91$); however, there was a significant difference in the scores of factor 1 with a mean of 1.81 ($SD = 0.94$) and the scores of factors 2 and 3. That proved that factor 1 influenced the students' intercultural competence the most, especially that most of the participants agreed that it had helped them to develop their intercultural competence to a terrific extent. On the other hand, Factor 2 and Factor 3 were missing most of the elements that were looked at to be helping in improving students' intercultural competence.

The table above also indicated that the participants were mostly able to illustrate their opinion with a high level of certainty (strongly agree/strongly disagree). 47.49% of participants chose to strongly agree with the fact that studying in an American university has an impact on

developing their intercultural competence. 31.66% of them agreed to the same fact, which meant 79.15% of the participants were subject to benefit from their experience of studying in the US. On the other hand, 49.13% of the participants disagreed with high certainty to the fact that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia had provided them with the needed experience that they needed to be intercultural competent people. 29.24% disagreed with a low level of certainty to the same fact, which made it 78% of disagreement. In addition, 38.13% of the participants strongly disagreed with factor three, which referenced English language classes in Saudi Arabia to be a source of language and culture that provided students with the needed elements to understand other cultures. 37,79% of participants disagreed with the same factor, which meant that 75.89% of participants illustrated that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia were not suitable environments to learn about English cultures. Each of the factors' elements is discussed more in-depth in the following.

Developing intercultural competence in American universities.

As mentioned earlier, a significant number of participants benefited from their experience of studying in American universities. To give a greater understanding, the items within this factor were analyzed. The table below illustrated the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence in relation to their experience of studying in American universities (see Table 13).

Table 13
Percentage to response to the elements of the factor Developing intercultural competence in American universities

Items	Strongly Agree%	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%	Mean	SD
1. Interaction with people from different countries at the	62.62	21.49	9.35	6.54	1.60	0.90

Table 13 Continued

American university was a good way of developing my intercultural competence.							
2. I can respond appropriately to my classmates' comments at the American university.	40.19	37.38	17.76	4.67	1.87	0.87	
3. I can describe myself as an interculturally competent person now.	46.73	32.71	15.89	4.67	1.79	0.88	
4. Exploring the art and culture of other countries was a good way to develop my intercultural experience.	46.73	30.84	17.76	4.67	1.80	0.89	
5. I have additional intercultural experience because of my classes at the American university.	59.81	22.43	10.28	7.48	1.65	0.94	
6. Exploring the different parts of my American university has helped me to become interculturally competent.	44.86	40.19	6.54	8.41	1.79	0.90	
7. I am comfortable sending emails to my professors at	54.21	26.17	11.21	8.41	1.74	0.96	

Table 13 Continued
 the American university to
 ask about anything I
 encounter.

8. I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes.	56.08	27.1	8.41	8.41	1.69	0.95
9. I have worked with groups on presenting different cultures to the class at the American university.	53.27	25.23	11.22	10.28	1.79	1.01
10. I have learned about different cultures through media, talk shows, and movies during my studies at the American university.	40.18	41.12	9.35	9.35	1.88	0.93
11. I have tried food from different cultures at the American university.	52.34	27.1	12.15	8.41	1.77	0.97
12. My professors at the American university were good role models of intercultural competence.	39.25	37.38	16.82	6.54	1.91	0.91

Table 13 Continued

13. I know how to disagree with my classmates at the American university.	45.79	31.78	15.89	6.54	1.83	0.93
14. I have worked on projects that present clear information on cultural differences in my US. classes.	47.66	33.64	9.35	9.35	1.80	0.96
15. The faculty members at the American university were good mentors for my cultural problems.	29.91	38.32	23.36	8.41	2.10	0.93
16. I have read books that describe and explain patterns of cultural differences and similarities.	40.19	33.64	15.89	10.28	1.96	0.99

The table illustrated the percentage of the agreement to the 16 elements that were listed in the questionnaire, and that proved that the participants had developed their intercultural competence in American universities. It can be seen that 47.49% of the participants agreed to the statements which support the fact that studying in the US had developed their intercultural competence with high certainty. About 31.66% of them agreed to the statement with low certainty, which illustrated that 79.15% agreed that their experience in the US had absolutely developed their intercultural competence. On the other hand, the percentage of total disagreement with the same fact was only about 20.85%.

By looking more in-depth, it can be seen that interaction with international people and exploring the different parts of American universities had developed the participants' intercultural skills the most with about 84.11% of total agreement and a mean of 1.60 ($SD = 0.90$). (I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes) was the second-highest segment that participants agreed to be of benefit to the development of their interculturality with an agreement of 83.18% and a mean of 1.69 ($SD = 0.995$). The third segment that developed the students' skills was the fact that they had additional intercultural experience because of their classes at the American university with an agreement percentage of 82.24% and a mean of 1.65 ($SD = 0.94$). On the other hand, the segment that indicated that the faculty member in American universities were good mentors who helped them to develop their skills interculturally was the least useful items with 68.23% of the participants' agreement although it was a high level of agreement with mean of 2.10 ($SD = 0.93$). Overall, it was apparent the total agreement of the participants was high in comparison to their disagreement with the 16 elements of the first factor, developing intercultural competence in American universities, which made it an important factor in developing their overall intercultural skills.

Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

The table below illustrated the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence in relation to their intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia (see Table 14).

Table 14

Percentage to response to the elements of the factor Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia

Items	Strongly Agree%	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree%	Mean	SD
1. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia played English movies during the class time.	10.28	13.08	22.43	54.21	3.21	1.03
2. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to present some cross-cultural performances during the class time.	5.61	16.82	21.50	56.07	3.28	0.94
3. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to attend events to increase my own cultural awareness.	5.61	13.08	23.36	57.94	3.34	0.91
4. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competence.	7.48	19.63	37.38	35.51	3.01	0.93

Table 14 Continued

5. My English language						
teachers in Saudi Arabia						
encouraged me to try	3.74	16.83	32.71	46.73	3.23	0.86
food from different						
cultures.						
6. My English teachers in						
Saudi Arabia						
encouraged me to	3.74	17.76	33.64	44.86	3.20	0.86
exploring the art and						
culture of other						
countries.						
7. My English language						
classes in Saudi Arabia						
have made me an	3.74	14.02	33.64	48.60	3.27	0.84
interculturally						
competent person.						

This table showed the results of the survey in which Saudi students in the US were asked about their intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia. Clearly, there were seven statements in the questionnaire that had relation to that factor. It was evident in the table above that the majority (about 49.13%) of the participants disagreed with the given statements with high certainty, and nearly 29.24% disagreed with low certainty. That indicated that 78.37% of the participants disagreed with factor two, which suggested that Saudi students in

the US had experienced interculturality in their language classes in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, only 21.63% of the participants agreed with that factor in general.

By looking more in-depth into the table, it can be seen that about 57.9% of the participants thought with high certainty that their teachers never encouraged them to attend events that might increase their intercultural awareness, and 23.4% agreed with low certainty to the same statement which gave a total of 81.3% with a mean of 3.34 ($SD = 0.91$) ensured that they were not encouraged to attend any kind of events that increase their interculturality. Besides, 82.24% of the participants disagreed with a mean of 3.27 and ($SD = 0.84$) to the statement (my English language classes in Saudi Arabia have made me an interculturally competent person). Interestingly, 10.3% of the participants agreed with the given statements, and that was the highest percentage of their agreement to the statement illustrating that their language teachers had played movies during their English language classes to help them to experience the culture visually. However, comparing that to the other side, we realized that 54.2% of the total participants strongly disagreed with that statement with a mean of 3.21. Additionally, the statement, my English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competent people, had a good debate. About 35.5% of the participants strongly disagreed, 37% disagreed, 20% agreed and 7.5% strongly agreed to that statement.

Thus, since many participants disagreed with the seven statements, it was clear that intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not have their needed roles in developing students' intercultural competence.

Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia.

The table below illustrated the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence in relation to their language and culture in their English language classes in Saudi Arabia (see Table 15).

Table 15

Percentage to response to the elements of the factor Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia

Items	Strongly agree%	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree%	Mean	SD
1. I was able to build my intercultural skills in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.	6.54	20.56	37.38	35.51	3.02	0.91
2. I learned about the similarities and differences of other cultures in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.	7.48	18.69	36.45	37.38	3.04	0.93
3. I learned how to interact and communicate with people from different cultures in my English classes in Saudi Arabia.	8.41	14.02	39.25	38.318	3.07	0.93
4. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia presented clear information about cultural differences.	3.74	18.69	39.25	38.32	3.12	0.84

Table 15 Continued

5. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia helped me to think before judging people from different cultures.	5.61	16.82	36.45	41.12	3.13	0.89
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This table showed the results of the survey in which Saudi students in American universities were asked about the fact that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia had provided them with the needed information regarding the English language and culture. The survey included five statements in relation to language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

From the data, it was clear that the majority of the participants (75.89%) disagreed with the given statements with both high and low certainty. 41% of the participants thought with high certainty and 36.4% with low certainty that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not help them to improve their judgment skills toward people from different cultures and countries, indicating a total of 77.6% with a mean of 3.13 and $SD = 0.89$ of disagreement with that statement. In addition, 77.6% of the participants considered their English language classes to be not helpful in presented reliable information about cultural differences nor interaction and communication with people from different cultures with both high and low certainty. Moreover, about 27% of the total participants believed that their English classes had built their intercultural skills and helped them to learn about the differences and similarities of other cultures, whereas 73% of them considered their English language classes in Saudi Arabia not to be helpful with that at all with means of 3.02 and 3.04.

Overall, it was clear that 75.89% of Saudi sojourners in American universities had found their English language classes in Saudi Arabia not to be helpful with building their cultural

knowledge nor intercultural education with a mean of 3.08 and an SD 3.00 as illustrated in Table 12.

Comparison of student experiences of intercultural competence

A Related-Samples Friedman’s Two-Way Analysis of Variance by Ranks was used to determine whether scores on the three factors differed. The results showed that the distribution of scores among the three factors was significantly different, $\chi^2(2) = 111.245$, $p < .0005$. Pairwise comparisons were performed with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Statistical significance was accepted at the $p < .0167$ level. That indicated that there was a significant difference between the three factors. Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia was the lowest factor that helped in developing the intercultural competence in the participants ($p < .0001$), Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia was also a low factor but still was higher than Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia ($p < .0001$), although there was no significant difference between the two factors. However, Developing intercultural competence in American universities approached as it was rated higher than the other two factors, meaning that it differed significantly to the other two with the Bonferroni adjusted p-value ($p = .038$). The median scores for each of the three factors are displayed in the table below (see Table 16).

Table 16
The median scores for each of the three factors

Factors	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Median	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000

Role of Demographic variables on learners' perceptions

Following the factor analysis, statistical tests were conducted to determine whether any demographic variables impacted learner perceptions of culture learning and intercultural competence development. Analysis of the participant scores for the three factors identified in the factor analysis (Developing intercultural competence in American universities, Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, and Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia) was carried out. Examination of box-plots indicated that for each demographic variable, there were several univariate and multivariate outliers. Visual examination of normal Q-Q plots indicated that the data were severely skewed. The Wilks-Shapiro test showed multiple non-normal distributions for each demographic variable. The data were transformed using the square root procedure, the logarithmic procedure, and the inverse procedure. Examination of Q-Q plots of transformed data indicated that there were many univariate and multivariate outliers, and the data were severely skewed. Transformations of the data failed to achieve a normal distribution. MANOVA was relatively resilient to violations of normal distribution if there were 30 or more observations per cell. However, because several of the groupings for demographic variables in these data resulted in cell sizes of less than 30, non-normal data distributions raised the risk of Type I errors (finding a significant difference where none exists).

Based on this, it was determined that these data were a poor fit for parametric MANOVA. Instead, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H was used. Kruskal-Wallis H was performed based on the median instead of the mean, so it was not influenced by outliers in small cells. It also did not rely on a normal distribution. Median scores for each demographic variable are presented below.

Regions of origin.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants from the five different regions of Saudi Arabia (North, East, West, South, and Central) reported different levels of intercultural competence development (see Table 17).

Table 17

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' regions of origin

Regions of origin	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia
North region	7	2.63	2.57	3.00
East region	24	1.53	3.21	3.16
West region	24	1.56	3.43	3.00
South region	25	1.50	3.71	3.17
Central region	27	1.56	3.43	2.83
Total	107	1.56	3.43	3.00

Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the five region groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the intercultural learning factors; Language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 4.54$, $p = .36$, Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 4.14$, $p = .39$, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(4) = 6.18$, $p = .19$.

Gender.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants from different genders (male and female) reported different levels of intercultural competence (see Table 18).

Table 18
Median scores for the three factors based on participants' genders

Gender	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Female	46	1.5625	3.4286	3.1667
Male	61	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000
Total	107	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000

Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the two gender groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the three factors; Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(1) = 1.32, p = .25$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(1) = .46, p = .51$; and Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(1) = .18, p = .67$.

Age.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants from the different age groups (18-24, 25-30, 31-36, and 37 and above) reported different levels of intercultural competence (see Table 19).

Table 19

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' age groups

Age	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
18-24	15	1.56	3.43	3.17
25-30	44	1.50	3.64	3.17
31-36	36	1.94	3.21	3.00
≥ 37	12	1.47	3.50	3.00
Total	107	1.56	3.43	3.00

Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the four age groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(3) = .27$, $p = .97$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(3) = 1.71$, $p = .63$; and Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(1) = 4.74$, $p = .19$).

Level of Education.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants enrolled in different levels of academic programs (bachelor, master, or doctorate) reported different levels of intercultural competence development (see Table 20).

Table 20

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' educational level

Education level	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Undergrad	35	1.69	3.00	3.00
Master	34	1.41	3.71	3.33
Doctorate	38	1.59	3.43	3.00
Total	107	1.56	3.43	3.00

Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the three education level groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for Developing intercultural competence in American universities ($\chi^2(2) = 3.59$, $p = .17$). Median scores for Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia ($\chi^2(2) = 4.74$, $p = .09$) approached but did not reach significance.

However, there was a significant difference among the groups in their rating of items in the Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia factor ($\chi^2(2) = 10.54$, $p = .005$). Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values are presented. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in median Experiencing culture ratings between the Bachelor (3.00) and Master (3.71) ($p = .01$). The difference between doctorate (3.42) and Master approached but did not reach significance ($p = .08$). This suggested that doctorate and master's students did not have enough intercultural experience in their English classes in Saudi Arabia.

Length of stay in the US.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants who had spent different amounts of time in the United States (less than one year, 1-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-10 years, and more than ten years) reported different levels of intercultural competence development (see Table 21).

Table 21

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' length of stay in the US

Length of stay in the US	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
< one year	9	2.00	3.00	3.00
1-3 years	33	1.75	3.29	3.00
4-7 years	54	1.38	3.57	3.17
8-10 years	8	1.34	3.50	3.25
> 10 years	3	2.38	4.00	4.00
Total	107	1.56	3.43	3.00

Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the five-length of stay in the United States conditions, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia ($\chi^2(4) = 6.26, p = .18$). Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia ($\chi^2(4) = 2.66, p = .62$) approached, but did not reach significance.

However, there was a significant difference among the groups in their rating of items in the Developing intercultural competence in American universities factor ($\chi^2(4) = 16.16, p = .003$). Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values were presented. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in median Developing intercultural competence in American universities ratings between the participants who had been in America 4-7 years (1.37) and participants who had been in America less than a year (2.00) ($p = .04$). The difference between participants who had been in America 8-10 years (1.34) and participants who had been in America less than a year approached, but did not reach, significance ($p = .06$). This suggested that participants who were at American universities for 4-7 years or 8-10 years had developed their intercultural competence as a result of being there more than any of the other groups. The overall model of developing intercultural competence in American universities indicated significant effects; however, no other pairwise comparisons were significant.

Interacting with Americans.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether the length of interaction with American (never, less than an hour, 1-3 hours a week, 4-7 hours a week, and more than 8 hours) reported different levels of intercultural competence development (see Table 22).

Table 22

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' lengths of interaction with American

Length of Interaction	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Never	4	1.6250	3.7143	3.5833
< 1 hour	2	1.9063	3.7857	3.4167
1-3 hours	43	1.5625	3.7143	3.0000

Table 22 Continued

4-7 hours	33	1.5000	3.4286	3.0000
> 8 hours	25	1.3750	3.4286	3.5000
Total	107	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000

Distributions of intercultural competence development scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for each of the four lengths of interaction with American groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the intercultural learning variables (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 3.26$, $p = .52$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 1.34$, $p = .85$; Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(4) = 1.99$, $p = .74$).

Cultural education.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether cultural education (yes or no) reported different levels of intercultural competence development (see Table 23).

Table 23

Median scores for the three factors based on participants' cultural education

Cultural education	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Yes	71	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000
No	36	1.5313	3.7143	3.1667
Total	107	1.5625	3.4286	3.0000

Distributions of intercultural competence development scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for participants wither they had cultural education or not, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the intercultural competence development factors; Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(1) = .215$, $p = .64$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(1) = 1.86$, $p = .17$; Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(1) = .02$, $p = .90$.

Important aspects of culture.

To determine which aspect of culture (people, norms, language, or values) reported different levels of intercultural competence development, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used (see Table 24).

Table 24
Median scores for the aspect of culture based on their importance to participants

Aspect of culture	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Others- language	1	2.63	3.00	3.00
People	31	1.56	3.57	3.17
Norms	18	1.56	3.36	3.00
Language	41	1.63	3.57	3.00
Values	16	1.38	3.57	3.17
Total	197	1.56	3.43	3.00

Distributions of intercultural competence development scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for the different aspect of culture, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the intercultural learning factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 1.70, p = .79$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(3) = 1.90, p = .75$; Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(3) = .381, p = .43$).

Importance of intercultural competence to participants.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether the importance of intercultural competence to the participants (agree, or disagree) affected different levels of intercultural learning (see Table 25). Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for the importance of intercultural competence to the participants, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different among the groups for any of the intercultural competence development factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(4) = 1.70, p = .79$; Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia $\chi^2(3) = 1.90, p = .75$; Developing intercultural competence in American universities $\chi^2(3) = .381, p = .43$).

Table 25

Median scores for the importance of intercultural competence to the participants

IC	Number	Developing intercultural competence in American universities	Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia	Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia
Agree	101	1.56	3.43	3.17
Disagree	6	1.84	3.00	3.00
Total	107	1.56	3.43	3.00

Other overseas experience.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether participants who had spent time in other countries overseas reported different levels of intercultural competence development. Distributions of intercultural learning scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were similar for participants who had and had not spent time in other overseas countries, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were not significantly different between the groups for Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia ($\chi^2(2) = .02$, $p = .88$) nor for Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia ($\chi^2(2) = .81$, $p = .37$) approached. For learning about Developing intercultural competence in American universities, the difference approached but did not reach significance ($\chi^2(1) = 3.53$, $p = .06$).

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The primary purpose of the first phase of this study was to explore the segments and elements that helped in developing Saudi students' intercultural competence and whether their backgrounds and demographic variables had any effect on their interculturality. Thus, this section laid out to summarize the results of the quantitative data in relation to the following

research questions: How do Saudi students say that their experience of studying in American universities help in developing their intercultural competence? How did the challenges that they had during their experiences, if any, help students develop their intercultural skills? What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in, language class in Saudi Arabia that will develop intercultural competence in the students? Do students' perceptions of their experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on participants' demographic information?

How do Saudi students say that their experience of studying in American universities help in developing their intercultural competence? How did the challenges that they had during their experiences, if any, help students develop their intercultural skills?

To address the first research question, “How do Saudi students say that their experience of studying in American universities help in developing their intercultural competence?” a descriptive analysis was applied to explain the frequency of each of the segments of experiences that Saudi students found to be helpful in developing their intercultural competence during their time in the US academic environment. Analysis of the sixteen segments that were listed in the questionnaire revealed that the participants agreed that they were able to develop their intercultural competence in American universities with a mean of 1.81 ($SD = 0.94$), which makes it an important element in developing their overall intercultural skills with an overall agreement.

The following stacked column chart (see Figure 13) illustrated the percentage of agreement with certainty to the 16 elements that were listed in the questionnaire, and that proved that the participants had developed their intercultural competence in American universities.

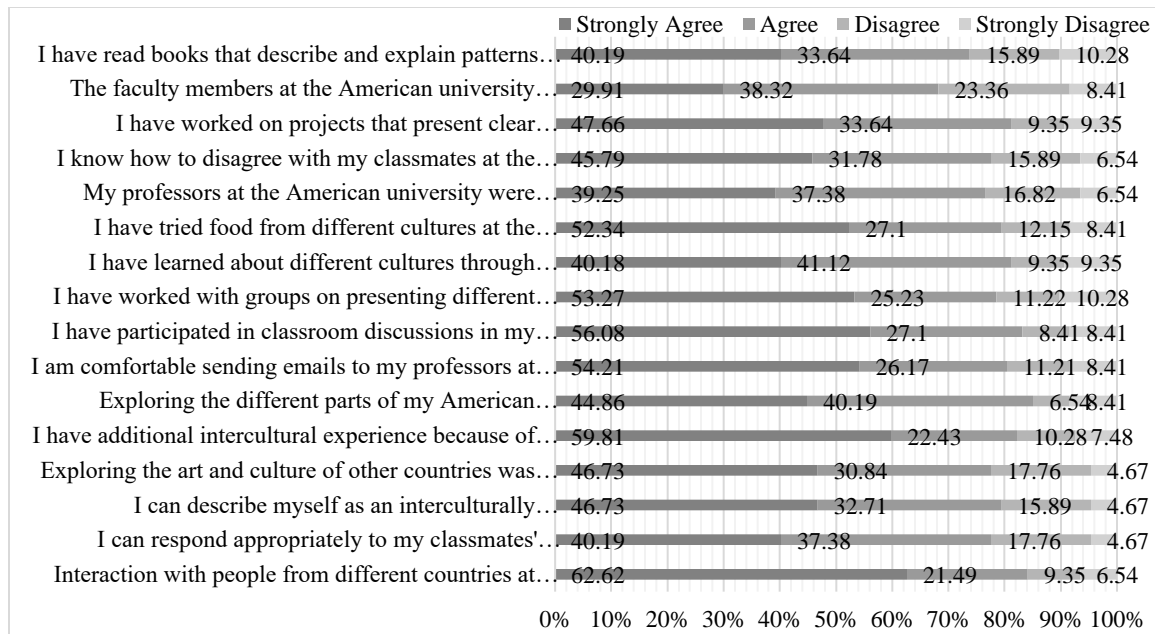


Figure 13: Response to the elements of the factor Developing intercultural competence in American universities

It can be seen that almost 50% of the participants agreed to the given statements that were supporting the fact that studying in the US had developed their intercultural competence with high certainty. About 30% of them agreed to the statement with low certainty, which illustrated that about 80% agreed that their experience in the US had absolutely developed their intercultural competence.

Based on the analysis of the collected data, interaction with international people was one of the elements that influence Saudi students and helped them to develop their intercultural competence, and that can be connected to Garrett-Rucks (2016) where she explained that “it indicates awareness and understanding of situations and people from diverse cultures.” She insisted that this kind of interaction would “move beyond ethnocentric thinking.” Therefore, it was apparent that interaction with international helped them to move out of their ethnocentric culture and became more open to others.

Moreover, classes' environments and classrooms' discussions in American universities were sources of additional intercultural experiences that fostered participants' intercultural experience that, in turn, became obvious in the way Saudi students have become able to communicate effectively with their American professors and colleagues. That can be connected to Robin-Stuart and Nocon's (1996), where they urged that class discussion should be a meaning-making process to result in students' understanding of how to interact in different situations with different groups of people. In connection to that, it was proved that group works and group discussions helped participants to understand cultural differences and gave them insight into intercultural communities. They were also able to comprehend the right way to participate in any kind of discussion and to be able to handle any kind of disagreement without having to deal with conflicts.

Arauz (2012) stated that "in order for students to be prepared for 21st century needs, educators must show students how to use their everyday skills so they can proudly stand up and say I am innovative, culturally resilient, adaptive, collaborative, and cross-culturally aware." That was one of the components that made the experience of studying in the US an exceptional experience for the participants where they found their professors to be role models of intercultural competent people who influenced them interculturally.

Another element that was found to be helpful for students' intercultural skills development was the involvement in other cultures. The participants proved that trying food from different cultures helped them to have a sight into these cultures. Byram et. Al. (2002) indicated that learners should be involved in the role of explorers to discover and evaluate other cultures to be able to understand these cultures. That also was proven in the way Saudi students realized that exploring the art and cultures of other communities helped them to become

interculturally aware, which can be connected to Bennett (2004), where he linked people's cultural awareness with the level of their intercultural competence. Thus, these experiences were all connected to the way the participants view themselves, and that resulted in the fact that 80% of them were able to describe themselves as interculturally competent people.

In compression to Deardorff's framework, we can find that the participants meet all the elements that were introduced to be needed to develop themselves as intercultural competent people. They had had the attitudes toward intercultural development, gained the knowledge, developed their skills, and also met the internal and external outcomes. Therefore, Saudi students in American universities were found to benefit from their involvement in different cultures. The study proved that they were able to explore different cultures, try different food, present their own cultures as they wish to be seen, analyze different situations, involve in different types of arguments and discussions, and achieve their academic and personal goals.

The Students found themselves in a situation where they either involve in different cultures and educate themselves to be more intercultural competent people or be rejected from the culture around them. They decided not to hesitate to explore and observe the new culture on their own, and that reflected obviously on their identities and way of communication. However, they blamed their previous education in Saudi Arabia, where they did not get the chance to learn about and understand different cultures although it was suggested that language teachers are "guides and partners in the process of culture learning and discovery with their student" (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003, p. 220).

What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in, language class in Saudi Arabia that will develop intercultural competence in the students?

To come up with this finding, a descriptive analysis was applied to explain the frequency of each item that was listed in the questionnaire regarding this point as well as the mean and standard deviation. These elements were divided into two groups, (1) Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia, and (2) Language and culture in English language classes in Saudi Arabia. Analysis of the two groups revealed that some of the essential elements that needed to be in any English language classes in Saudi Arabia were missing. It was proved as the participant (77.13%) disagreed with the fact that they benefited from their language classes in Saudi Arabia in developing their interculturality, with a mean of 3.15, and a standard deviation of 0.91 for the two groups.

Intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

The figure below illustrates the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence in relation to their intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 14).

This bar graph showed the results of the survey in which Saudi students in the US were asked about their intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia. Clearly, there were seven statements in the questionnaire that had relation to that factor. From the bar chart, it was clear that the majority (49.13%) of the participants disagreed with the given statements with high certainty, and nearly 29.24% disagreed with low certainty. On the other hand, about only 21% of the participants agreed with the given statements with both high and low certainty.

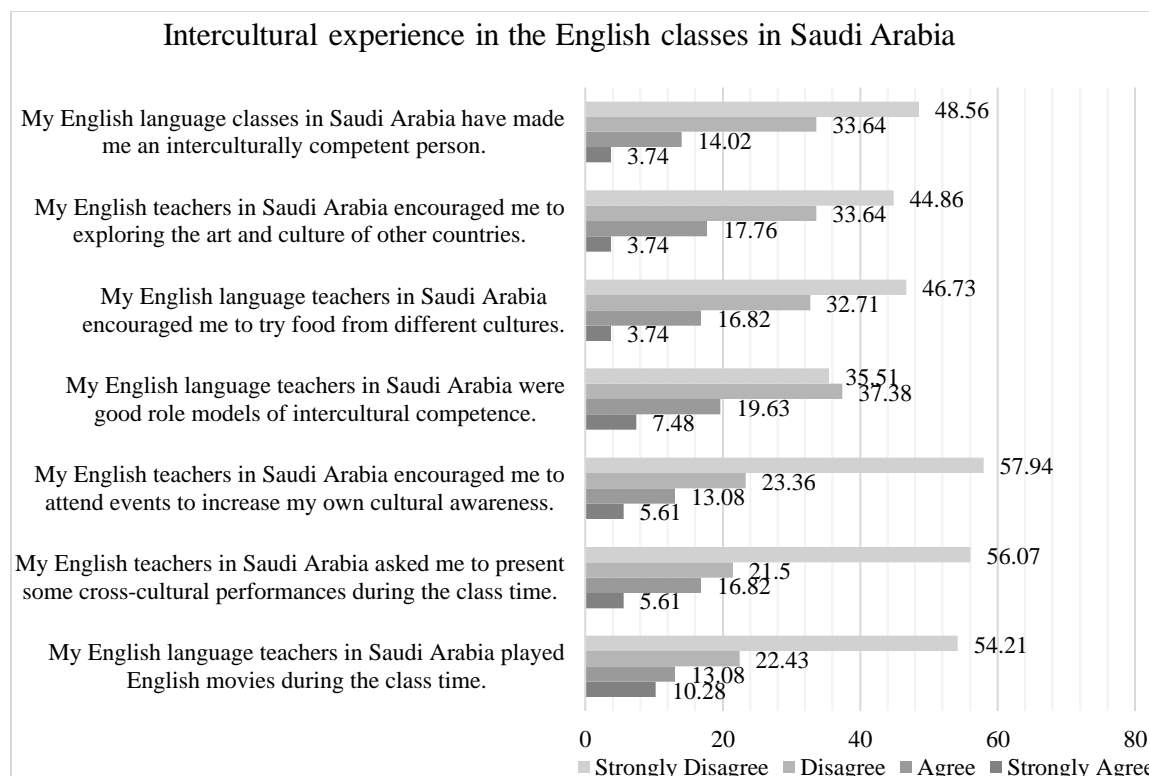


Figure 14: Frequency of intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia

By looking more in-depth into the chart, it can be seen that 58% of the participants thought that their teachers never encouraged them to attend events that might increase their intercultural awareness. In addition, it was apparent that only low percentage of the participants agreed with the given statements, and the highest percentage of their agreement (10.3%) was to the statement that illustrated their language teachers had played movies during their English language classes to help them to experience the culture visually. However, if we compare that to the whole picture, we would realize that about 58% of the total participants strongly disagreed with that statement. Interestingly, the statement, my English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competent people, had a good debate. About 35.5% of the participants strongly disagreed, 37% disagreed, 20% agreed, and 7.5% strongly agreed to that statement.

Therefore, since many participants disagreed with the seven statements, it was clear that intercultural experience in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not have their needed roles in developing students' intercultural competence.

Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia.

The figure below illustrated the degree of certainty of participants' opinions regarding the development of their intercultural competence in relation to their language and culture in their English language classes in Saudi Arabia (see Figure 15).

The graph showed the results of the survey in which Saudi students in American universities were asked about the fact that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia had provided them with the needed information regarding the English language and culture. The survey included five statements in relation to language and culture in the English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

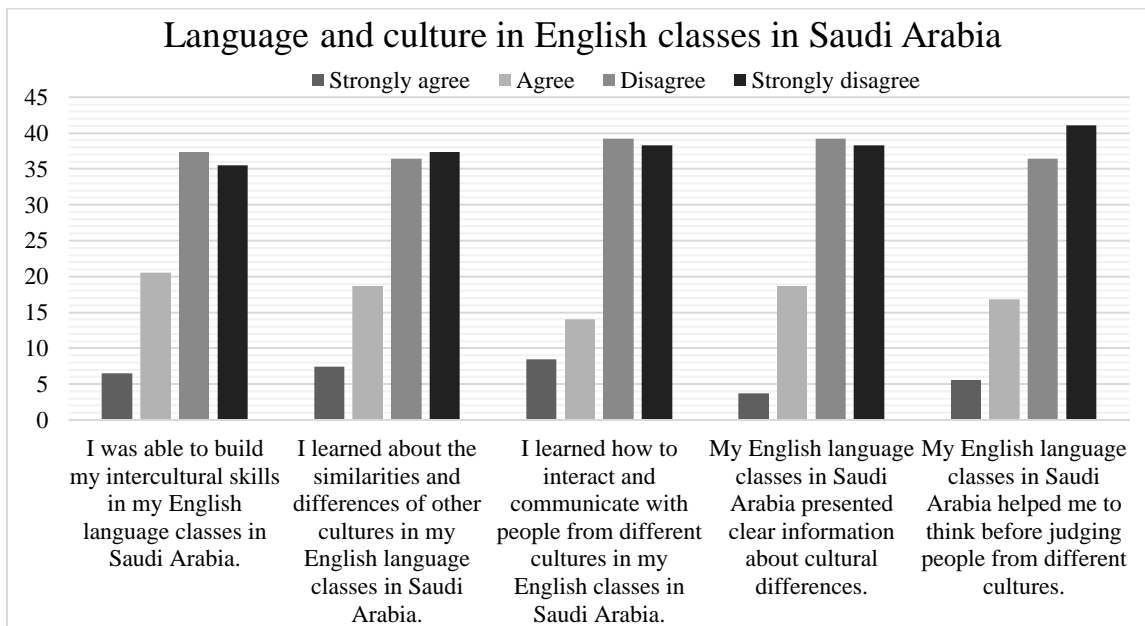


Figure 15: Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia

From the chart, it was clear that the majority of the participants disagreed with the given statements with both high and low certainty. 41% of the participants thought with high certainty

that their English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not help them to improve their judgment skills toward people from different cultures and countries. In addition, 77.6% of the participants considered their English language classes to be not helpful in presented trustworthy information about cultural differences nor interaction and communication with people from different cultures with both high and low certainty. Moreover, about 27% of the total participants believed that their English classes had built their intercultural skills and helped them to learn about the differences and similarities of other cultures, whereas 73% of them considered their English language classes in Saudi Arabia not to be helpful with that at all.

Overall, it is clear that 75.89% of Saudi sojourners in American universities had found their English language classes in Saudi Arabia not to be helpful with building their cultural knowledge nor intercultural education.

Thus, the data illustrated that the English language teachers in Saudi Arabia did not encourage their students to attend any cultural activities nor to explore similarities and differences of the different cultures to help them increase their cultural awareness. Furthermore, the English language classes did not encourage students' attitudes toward deeply thinking before judging people from different cultures, which can be connected to what Deardorff explained as the attitude toward other cultures. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) stated that "engaging in other intercultural activities such as eating different ethnic foods" would result in the ability to interact efficaciously across cultures (p. 414).

In addition, it was confirmed that the English language classes were low on visual activates that might bring sight into different cultures, on presenting cross-cultural performances that might help with sociolinguistics awareness, and on building intercultural skills that are needed to have a deep understanding of different cultures as well as their own cultures; that can

be connected to Deardorff's idea of cultural knowledge and skills. To help students to develop their cultural awareness, they need to be as Damen (1987) mentioned, "involving uncovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behavior and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures, but also recognizing the givens of the native culture" (p. 141). Besides, students need to gain the knowledge and language in their classes in addition to "experience some aspect of reality differently from what is given by one's own culture" (Bennett, 1993, p. 53).

Moreover, the participants proved that they were not able to understand that everyone's culture shapes and influences their interactions with other people. Allen (2004) proved that English language classes need to go alongside enhancing cross-cultural understanding. She introduced the necessity of observing different cultures in order to improve students' critical thinking and information gathering about other cultures to avoid biased judgment.

To serve their best purposes, the English language classes should help students to interact and communicate with people from different cultures effectively. Byram et al. (2002) illustrated that language classes should "develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity" (p. 5). Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) state that "to be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures" (p. 416). However, the participants in this study proved that they did not develop their behaviors toward people from other cultures nor become interculturally competent as a result of their English language classes in Saudi Arabia that evidenced that they were missing the needed elements to be able to develop their

intercultural competence. Thomas (1983) argued that socio-pragmatic failure “stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior” that can be considered as English language teachers job to educate students to what beyond linguistics competences (p. 99).

Do students’ perceptions of their experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on participants’ demographic information?

Based on the fact that the data were a poor fit for parametric MANOVA, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H was used to perform based on the median instead of the mean; therefore, the result is not influenced by outliers in small cells and does not rely on a normal distribution. Thus, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine if there are any different levels of intercultural learning in relation to participants’ demographic variables.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test reported that distributions of intercultural learning and development scores for each of the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) were *similar* for regions of origin, gender, age, interacting with Americans, cultural education, important aspect of culture, and importance of intercultural competence to participants.

On the other hand, for the level of education and length of stay in the US, there were significant *differences* among the groups in their rating of items in the three factors. It can be interpreted as the following. For the education level, the post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in the median of the intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia ratings between the Bachelor and Master ($p = .01$). The difference between doctorate and Master approached but did not reach significance ($p = .08$).

That can explain that there might be some changes in the educational system in Saudi Arabia, which in turn influence the way the English language is taught in there. It can also explain that students that were working on their Bachelor degree at the time the data were collected were still fresh and had good experience in their high schools with their English classes, whereas the Master and doctorate students had less effective experience with their English classes in Saudi Arabia during their high school and undergraduate studies. They might have found themselves in a situation where they needed to have more intercultural skills that they had never experienced in their home country Saudi Arabia which effected their evaluation of their English language classes.

For the length of stay, the post hoc revealed statistically significant differences in the median of Saudi students' development of intercultural competence in American universities ratings between the participants who had been in America 4-7 and 8 - 10 years and participants who had been in America less than a year. That can be explained that the participants who had been in the US less than a year had not had the same amount of experiences that 4-7 and 8 - 10 years participants had. It can also be because of the difference in the number of participants. There were only nine people that had been living in the US for less than a year, whereas there were 54 of the participants who had been living in the US 4 -7 years.

In summary, Saudi students intercultural competence development was found to be significantly similar for the three factors (Language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, Intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and Developing intercultural competence in American universities) in relation with regions of origin, gender, age, interacting with Americans, cultural education, important aspect of culture, and importance of intercultural competence to participants; however, it was found to be significantly different for

level of education in relation to intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia and length of stay in relation to developing intercultural competence in American universities.

Chapter Five: Qualitative Results

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative data analysis of six semi-structured individual interviews. The presentation of the findings has three main sections. The first section offers a brief introduction to the participants' backgrounds and experiences across cultures. The second section provides the themes that arose from the data analysis of the interviews. Notably, it provides evidence of how the interviewees believed that intercultural competence is an important skill and relevant to the development of English language classes. Precious quotes gathered from interviews supported these themes and findings. The final section presents a summary of the findings from the data analysis. The data collected and provided in this chapter attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What are the cultural challenges that Saudi students say that they face during their experience in the U.S. academic environment? How did these challenges help students develop their intercultural skills?
2. What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in language classes in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in students?
3. Should English language classes in Saudi Arabia focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum?

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the intercultural experience of Saudi students in the USA in light of their intercultural competence development. The data obtained from the participants' semi-structured interviews revealed how each participant experienced cultural challenges, how he or she coped with them, and how the experience of studying in the USA offered insights into intercultural preparedness and influenced their intercultural competence.

Additionally, it provided some suggestions for activities that could help in reducing intercultural incompetence in students during their English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

Participants overview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Saudi students (three males and three females) who were studying at American universities. The students had been living in the USA for more than five years at the time of the interviews. To some degree, they all had interacted with international people as well as American citizens during their time in the USA. Three of the participants were Ph.D. students, one possessed a Ph.D. degree, one possessed a Master's degree, and one was working on his Bachelor's degree. All names have been changed to pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Participants' cross culture experience.

During the interviews, the first section asked each participant to talk about his/her experiences across cultures and how he/she viewed his/her primary cultures prior to leaving Saudi Arabia. Then they were asked to describe their new culture, the American culture. These questions served not only as orientation questions but also to illustrate, to some degree, the factors that influenced the interviewees' acquisition of intercultural competence.

Abdul. is a thirty-eight-year-old Saudi male student who has been living in the U.S. for more than eight years. Originally from the south region of Saudi Arabia, Abdul came to the U.S. to pursue his Bachelor's and Master's degrees. He found the lifestyle in the U.S. completely different and meet his expectations more than it was in his own country; thus, he decided to find a job in the U.S. and spend the rest of his life in America. Abdul has always enjoyed being around international people, and his connection with them makes him feel accepted. Although he

experienced culture shock at the beginning, he was able to overcome it quickly because of the exceptional connection he has with internationals.

Sara. is a thirty-year-old Saudi female student who has been living in the U.S. for around six years. She is from the western region of Saudi Arabia and came to the U.S. to finish her Master's and Ph.D. degrees. Sara is planning on going back to her country as soon as she finishes her Ph.D. She describes her home country as having a bright future. "It was a more closed culture. It was segregated cultures. But, now it's more open after the changes that have been done since Mohamed ben Salman created the 2030 vision. A lot of things have been changed," Sara said. She views the American culture as being more diverse compared to her native culture, where she had no contact with internationals.

Maya. is a Saudi female who has spent more than thirteen years in the U.S. She came to the U.S. as a child with her father, as a teenager with her husband, and now as an adult to pursue her Ph.D. degree. She received all of her higher education degrees – Bachelor, Master's, and now Ph.D.– in the U.S. In addition, she grew up in an international community in Aramco, Saudi Arabia, where she enjoyed being around internationals. She has been curious about other cultures since early childhood, and that helped her respect international cultures. Maya truly admires her own culture and thinks it is a polite, well-organized, and well-mannered culture. She also thinks that American culture is a unique culture that has helped her appreciate her own culture.

Adam. is a thirty-eight-year-old Saudi male from "a very multicultural society . . . very rich in diversity of people from different cultures," as he described. Since he was fourteen years old, Adam was able to build an outstanding intercultural communication awareness that helped him understand international people and their cultures. Upon noticing the variety of people's lifestyles, he started his self-learning journey when he came across the English proverbs,

“Manners maketh men.” He then decided “to think about manners and how people build the manners that they believe in.” He also “tried to reach a better understanding [of] those people . . . [to] have less conflict.” Adam is eager to learn about other cultures, and fortunately, he found America to be a very diverse and massive society that he described as a “very multicultural society. A melting pot.”

Nadya. is a thirty-seven-year-old Saudi female student who has been living in the U.S. for about seven years. She described the Saudi culture as being “strict and conservative, and there are so many rules. But now it’s more, more open, and one big thing that happened is women started driving, and this is changing everything right now.” Her experience with international people prior to leaving her own country was limited, as she mentioned, “it was okay. I mean, I didn’t have any issues working with international people.” Although her experience with international individuals was limited, she was so excited to travel to the U.S. that she did not face any culture shock during her stay. She explained that she read books and novels and watched movies, which helped her visualize the American culture and understand it. Now that she just graduated from her Ph.D. program and is ready to return to her country, she feels that she belongs in the United States more than her own country even though she is from a big city in the western part of Saudi Arabia.

Sami. is a twenty-five-year-old Saudi male who has lived in the U.S. for about seven years. He is from the north region of Saudi Arabia and came to the United States to finish his Bachelor’s degree in public health with a concentration on OSH. He thinks Saudi Arabia is a country dissimilar to anywhere else in the world. He was unsure about his feelings toward his home country and America. Sami described both cultures as being unique, each with its own way of living. He explained that religions helped in building both cultures and in controlling their

citizens. Speaking about his interactions with internationals, he explained that he does not like to be around people and mostly communicates with others using the Internet. He seemed to be a socially anxious individual.

Emergent Themes

The themes that emerged from the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews included: Intercultural competence knowledge and importance; cross-cultures communication difficulties upon communicating with internationals; Absence of intercultural competence; Experiencing American universities; Coping with intercultural challenges.; and Intercultural competence and English language classes development.

Intercultural competence knowledge and importance.

To measure participants' intercultural competence knowledge in relation to their personal backgrounds, they were asked to define the term *intercultural competence*. They were also asked to express their opinions regarding the necessity of it in today's society. Some interviewees provided a competent understanding of the term, while others showed they were not sure about what that exactly meant despite the fact that they have been in the U.S. for more than five years and have had positive relations and zero misunderstandings with people from other cultures.

Intercultural competence in participants' views. Interestingly, the participants were able to give useful definitions of intercultural competence as they all agreed to some extent that it implies positive relations with levels of understanding, flexibility, respect, and integration.

Adam offers his explanation of intercultural competence, describing this term as follows:

The proper understanding of people's values, norms, cultures, beliefs, whatever they have, and you cope with it. It doesn't matter if you agree with what they are doing or

disagree, or [if] you have different values. But the point is that you should, or you always need to have a very mutual understanding with other people.

He continued by explaining intercultural competence to be the ability to avoid misunderstanding with other people and “being able to reach zero misunderstandings.” Nadia also clarified intercultural competence to be understanding and respecting differences that come into sight in other cultures. She stated that intercultural competence could be distinguished as “being able to interact with people from a different culture and also respect the differences that they have.” She adds:

I mean, not everybody’s going to have the same experiences you had in your country, so it is about trying to respect their special occasions like holidays and the rules of their country and the way to deal with other people.

Nadia believed that people need to understand and have an awareness that there are cultural differences in societies. In addition, Sara defined it to be “able to communicate with people from different backgrounds, from different cultures, effectively, and to be flexible to understand other cultures.” The three interviewees agreed that understanding other cultures is the main element of intercultural competence.

Maya, however, interpreted intercultural competence as an integration where a learner’s worldview is a combination of more than one culture. She defined this to be “the way cultures integrate together in a positive way.” She looked at intercultural competence in a broader way, where people have the ability to adopt behaviors from both cultures.

Unfortunately, Sami and Abdul find difficulty in defining intercultural competence due to their lack of exposure to the term. Abdul bluntly admitted, “I do not know it.” Sami defined it as cultures and their norms. He said, “intercultural competence can be defined as what people do

according to their norms and what is acceptable in their community.” When provided with a definition of intercultural competence, Sami and Abdul readily accepted the meaning. Abdul said, “exactly this is what I experience in my life. I agree! It is the ability to interact with people and to communicate with people effectively without having any problems or without being misunderstood, like in a very effective way where people can understand you, and they can get you right.” Sami, likewise, insisted that “being able to communicate effectively doesn’t mean people should know the fashionable terms that stand for. I just need to understand other people, and they understand me.”

Intercultural competence importance in participants’ views. To the interview question, “Do you feel that intercultural competence is a necessary skill in today's society?” all participants agreed that understanding and coping with cultural differences is an essential skill that people need to have in a globalized world. They emphasized the necessity of intercultural competence in different ways. For example, Adam stated, “since we are in a globalization era, I think this is a very crucial point of fact that we need to understand that we need to have a better awareness.” Abdul added, “now that I know intercultural competence, I think it is very important because if you have intercultural competence, you’ll know the right way [to] communicate with different people that you meet every day.” Maya noted that people nowadays are more culturally mixed, especially with the “affordability of travel which helps in bringing people together.” She claimed that “wherever you go in the world, you’ll see people from all over the world, that is, not just people from that country only anymore . . . It is important that people get to know other people's culture and how to interact with them and to grow, to respect them.” She believed that people “don’t have to believe in what they [people from other cultures] believe . . . [they just need to] accept them as they are and respect them.”

Moreover, participants promoted the importance of interculturality, especially with the increase in online communication. Sara described intercultural competence as the following:

It is very important because the world is more open now, and you can meet people from different cultures, not just face to face, but sometimes online. So you need to understand other cultures to know how to communicate with people from different cultures.

In addition, Adam said,

It is not like, you know, going to work and, for example, doing your job or whatever things that you believe in. But it's like you will definitely contact with several people.

You know, we have these new technologies that we every day can connect with.

Nadia also asserted that importance in relation to the online communication “because not only do we deal with people face to face right now, although we've traveled a lot, but we also talk with people from different cultures online. Thus, it's a necessary skill for this society.”

Cross-culture communication difficulties.

The interviewees were asked to reflect on any cross-cultural communication difficulties that they experienced or witnessed. That question helped participants recognize the cultural problems they experienced and appreciate the cultural awareness they gained as a result of their experiences. These problems were mainly due to language selection or lack of cultural awareness.

Language selection. Some participants acknowledge that *language* is the first obstacle they had. Abdul said, “I was not sure which phrase to use so people would not be offended or misunderstand me.” Nadia mentioned language to be her most serious difficulty whenever she communicates with people from other cultures because she struggles to know what she should say so people would not misunderstand her. She insisted that she did not have any difficulty

communicating with Americans: “but, yeah, in the U.S., thankfully, I did not. I did not face any difficulties.” She explained that watching movies helped her to understand the American culture and language selection appropriately.

Lack of cultural awareness. Participants claimed that lack of cultural awareness is the second difficulty that hinders their communication with people from different cultures. Sara reported, “in some places, people don’t understand other cultures. They are not aware of other cultures, and I feel like they don’t understand me. So, it’s hard to communicate with those people.” Maya mentioned the same point but from a different perspective. She said, “people tend to mix religion with culture.” In her view, this mixing results in avoiding interaction with people from different cultures. She referenced the way people shake hands and how some people thought she was from a rude culture when she refused to shake hands with men even though it was not a cultural issue. Speaking about cultural problems, she stated that some people had no limits when communicating with her; thus, she avoided talking with them. Maya said:

Normally, I would not like to go into side talk because I don't know what their limits are because, in some cultures, it's okay, like to say bad words. It's okay, you know, to talk about certain things, and that's not acceptable for me.

She also mentioned that she had a fear of rejection due to cultural differences, which resulted in her isolating herself. “I would only interact with my professors . . . It was the fear of not knowing what to do.”

However, these cultural difficulties helped some of the participants improve their cultural awareness and devise strategies to manage these difficulties. Sara, for example, said, “sometimes it's difficult, but I would say it helped me in a way that I should show them my culture and present it clearly, so I help them understand my culture.” Maya decided to set her own

boundaries that people could clearly see and respect. Whenever people cross her boundaries, she would take herself out of that situation. She explained, “I am not going to put myself in that situation again. So it’s just we learned as we move on.” In addition, Adam gave a great example of his way of dealing with cross-cultural difficulties. He explained:

I have an approach, which I call it *inductive and deductive*. That means I have to understand people's values, people's norms, people's way of communicating. I have this kind of vision. I would like to start knowing them before they know me, and then I tried to reach a better understanding, and then we have very good communication. So that's number one. Number two is like; I would like to express myself the way I am. And from that point, I feel like I want to be very open with them and have a very mutual understanding in any kind of argument or talking or discussion. So sometimes, we have misunderstandings, but I usually compromise their mistakes because they might not understand where I am from. So this is kind of things like compromising helps to reach a mutual understanding and also less communication gap.

Absence of intercultural competence.

Absence of intercultural competence was a term that emerged as a theme after participants were asked to think and reflect on a situation where someone did not show intercultural competence. Participants thought about situations where people were treated with biased or discriminatory behavior to answer that question. They Sara described a *discrimination* situation she personally experienced:

Sometimes they judge me based on how I look, based on my hijab. I remember when I first came to the United States, I went to the ladies’ restroom, and a lady came in with her kids, and she looked at me like a weird look. And she went to the bathroom, and she

asked her son to go to the other bathroom even though he didn't want to go. He didn't want to use the bathroom! But she screamed at him and asked him to go to the bathroom and lock the door. And she was looking at me really, really weird like as if she was scared of me. That was really weird for me.

In the same vein, Adam gave an example of cultural discrimination that he personally experienced. He was involved in discussions with people from different cultures when one person started talking about the complexities that arise in relation to politics. That person was biased against and offensive to Adam just because he is from Saudi Arabia. Adam decided to avoid being in discussion with that person anymore.

Sara also explained how people tend to treat her with *bias* just because of her look. “sometimes they look at me as they assume that I don’t speak English just because I look different. So they tried to scream. They assume that if they scream at me, I would understand.” Maya had an experience where people were avoiding her because of her hijab. She explained the way people were staring at her as “it was like I am coming from Mars.” She sadly recalled her feeling at the time. “I didn't feel comfortable, you know. I didn't feel wanted.” Abdul described that he experienced bias as he was communicating with a person who assumed he did not have the appropriate behavior because he was from another country. He said, “he wanted to make it always his way. He thought I don’t understand how to deal with different things. That was very difficult. I mean, difficult because he tried to force me to follow his way, although I was doing it right in my own way.”

Nadia described a situation where she witnessed a South American person who thought he had been treated with discriminatory behavior. That person was new to the U.S. and had only a basic level of English. He was not able to express himself using the English language. He went

to the director, but the director did not understand that person. The director calmly told him, “I don't understand. Is there any way to explain that more clear to me?” The student got really angry and switched to his native language and started shouting until they had to take him away.

Moreover, Maya gave a similar example where she witnessed people from Saudi Arabia who had that kind of stereotype. She said, “I know people who refuse to mingle with Americans... [because they think] all Americans get drunk.” They are biased and think their culture is the only right one. She explained, “I know a lot of people who just decide that they don't need to know other cultures. They don't need to interact with them.”

Experiencing American universities.

The question “How has the experience of studying in the American University changed your perspectives?” was asked to see if the interviewees’ experiences of studying in the U.S. has developed their level of intercultural competence. Four of the six interviewees showed a high level of intercultural competence as they reached an adaptation or integration level; however, the other two interviewees showed that they were at the acceptance level of the intercultural sensitivity model (Hammer & Bennett, 2004, p. 89).

Sara’s flexible approach enabled her to understand people from other cultures. She explained that she learned to communicate effectively and comprehend people’s needs. She stated, “it's very important to have acceptance, tolerance, understanding of other cultures and respect them at the same time.” Adam also conveyed that the experience of studying in the U.S. changed him. He stated, “it's not just a culture, but it's more of personalities and different values of people.” He revealed, “it changes my way of building myself. It's not like this is one culture, or this is one society, but within the same society, you will see a diversity of people's values, people's way of living, people's personal preferences.” In addition, Adam was eager to talk about

religions and the way people should be free to choose any religion they think is suitable for them.

He added:

So, for example, let's take a talk about religion. Do you know that here in the U.S. religion is very, very open? Some people believe that we are free to do whatever we want. We are free to believe in whatever religion that we think is suitable for us. So, I think this is one of the important things to build intercultural communication, to help understand people and help them understand you at the same time.

Additionally, Abdul explained that he was able to get more involved in American culture. He described his experience to be “helpful and made me a completely different person. I can describe myself to be more of a bi-cultural person where I can switch to anyone I want whenever I am communicating with different people.” He added that he could not become the person he is now unless he studied in America. He stated, “studying in America under the supervision of American professors with international colleagues was an amazing experience that built a different personality within me. I was able to build friendship and explore the authentic American life that I loved so much.”

On the other hand, Maya and Nadia related their experience directly to their schools and the way their personalities changed without mentioning anything in relation to their cultural point of view. Maya realized that she changed and became a hard worker and a goal-oriented person. She expressed that she learned to challenge herself, persevere, and be precise. She stated, “I know how to draw up a plan and stick to it. I know how to be flexible in my plan. So sticking with a plan, a plan that is flexible that you can bend a little bit depending on your progress and your accomplishments.”

Nadia decided to talk about cultural differences in gender mixing and class discussions. She stated, “we didn't have like a gender mixing, so that's one thing that was different.” She explained that she changed because of that experience and became more comfortable in classes with males and females. She also indicated that classes in Saudi Arabia are missing the different kinds of class discussions:

The way in Saudi, most of the time, the teachers just come in and give you a lesson, and you just sit there and listen. Not many discussions. If you have a question, you can ask, but you don't have like group discussions, and you don't sit with a group and work with them.

Sami decided to look at the experience from a different perspective. He has social anxiety, so he tends to avoid any cultural or social gathering. He is always isolating himself only with his online gaming friends. He described his experience as “worthless and just a way of developing a second language.” He believed that “American people like to talk too much in their classes. They want to discuss everything in groups, but that is not good. I am used to the way classes were held in my country, and I wish classes here were the same.” However, upon asking him about his online communications, he described them as smooth and easy-going people. He said, “we don't have that much of problems as we exactly know what we are talking about.”

Coping with intercultural challenges.

To the interview question, “What activities did you engage in that have promoted your intercultural learning?” the participants mostly agreed that watching TV shows and movies as well as reading books and articles helped them improve their intercultural competence. They also cited discussions about cultural differences as a proper technique that enriched their intercultural competence as they were able to hear and understand differences.

Reading different books was an effective method that helped participants understand their own cultures and their target cultures at the same time. Adam shared that his experience made him think and read more about other cultures. He explained that he was in a class in Australia, where the professor started a discussion about how students should interact with other people. Adam admitted he felt “ashamed” because of his insufficient “knowledge about different cultures.” He stated, “I felt like I am very behind this kind of competence, and I needed to develop a better understanding to reach the world as big as it is.” He then explained, “the professor asked everybody in the class to write a paper about their intercultural communication profile.” Thus, Adam decided that day to think about himself first and to read as much as possible to understand other cultures and have “zero misunderstandings” at the same time. Reading, therefore, became his way of finding and understanding himself as he expressed, “I wanted people to see me.”

Similarly, Nadia explained that reading novels helped her to learn about and understand the American culture:

I read novels for pleasure, and there's a lot, sometimes it's just you're living in the culture when you try to visualize everything...sometimes they described the place, you know, and the city, and you see what's going on and how they interact in the dialogues.

Watching TV shows, TED Talks, and YouTube helped Sara to understand elements of other cultures. She explained, “they discuss a lot of cultural and societal issues.” Abdul agreed that watching videos helped him to see how native people of the American culture communicate, what certain expressions they use, and how they use body language. Nadia agreed with this viewpoint:

I love movies. I've watched a lot...it's just seeing real people interacting, you know,

it's just your window to seeing how they talk to each other and interact. And so, yeah, I think they have a big impact on your language, your language profession, your language proficiency, and your insight into the culture.

Moreover, all interviewees agreed that discussions with people from different cultures helped them develop their intercultural skills. Sara thought that sharing knowledge about other cultures and discussing them with other people was a good start for her to realize how cultures are different and how there are a variety of cultures within the same one. Abdul also believed that “hanging out with different people, talking a lot, and practicing more are what needed to promote intercultural skills although they would be difficult at the beginning.” In addition, Maya stated that discussions and “getting to know a lot of people” have been a good way for her to understand people more and to know about the different cultures, which in turn helped her to become a more intercultural competent person. She believed that such communications were helpful not only for her but also in a way for the people from different cultures to “understand our religion and our culture. This is what people are not differentiating.” Nadia agreed that involvement in any discussion and conversations are helpful. She said:

I volunteered once in a homeless shelter and sat down with them and talked to them.

They have issues with different cultures, so it was a good experience to try to explain where you came from and what your culture is for people to understand.

This experience helped her understand her own culture when she explained it to other people. Sami, despite his social anxiety, agreed that whenever he is involved in a discussion where he has the chance to ask about different things that he did not know, he tried to find good background knowledge of different cultures.

Intercultural competence and experiencing culture vs. teaching culture.

All interviewees reported they believed intercultural competence is a necessary skill that needs to be a big part of any language class. They all agreed that navigating cultural differences should be taught and included in the English language curriculum. Abdul believed “language teachers should teach students the easy way to communicate with people from different cultures and how to deal with them at the same time. So, it is language and culture.” Sara also insisted, “you’re going to meet people from different cultures. You are going to meet people who are different from you, so you need to understand them and communicate with them effectively.” According to Sara, people would not learn to deal with other people upon trying to understand their language unless they learn cultural issues along the way with the language. Adam stated:

We live in a globalization era, and it’s impossible that you stay in the same bubble all the time. We actually need to go out and see people and how they build their relationships with others. I think this is really important that students get better knowledge in their English language classes about intercultural communication and cultural competence to have a very open mind about other people.

Adam explained that English language classes should prepare students to be able to communicate effectively in the globalization era, mainly since people are corresponding in open cyberspace nowadays. He insisted that language teachers should encourage students to know “how we can express ourselves and who we are... So this is one step that students should take before they go out and see other people, they should understand themselves too.”

The participants also stated some examples of productive activities for language classes. Sara suggested providing students with articles and movies that portray and present other cultures and then asking them to discuss them in groups and to provide reflections on what they

watched or read. Adam also listed good ideas to be used in any language class to help students develop their interculturality. He mentioned that students need to engage in communication with people from different cultures and to be encouraged to watch videos and read books that might help them to see how other cultures were formed. He used Chinese culture as an example as in the following:

For example, they might want to know about some other cultures like Chinese culture. So I think it's a very good point to show them some real videos about how Chinese people dress or eat or at least their way of greetings.

Adam also felt that students need to learn how to start communications, especially in the business world. “When people reach other people, for example, to do business, they fail because they didn't have that kind of knowledge. They feel that they are way behind intercultural competence.” Adam recommended conducting workshops where students are encouraged to discuss the different issues of cultural difficulties and problems. He also suggested asking students to build a profile for a culture that interests them and then presents it to the rest of the class. “This is a really good experience, and [students] have to live it to see how those people communicate, how they live, what their values or norms or [just simply explore] different backgrounds.”

Maya wondered, “why not start giving them ideas, [and] teaching them how to respect other cultures and understand them?” She illustrated, “honestly, I did not learn real respect for other cultures until I came to the U.S.” She suggested building English language classes in a way that is similar to preparatory orientations that are held by the ministry of education to prepare students for their scholarships. She stated, “[they] were teaching them what's okay, what's not okay, what to do, what not to do. You know what to stay away from, what is expected from

them.” She added, “the nice thing was that someone who had experienced before could ask questions [and] share their experiences.” Other ideas that could be used are introduced by Maya:

You could make a virtual trip using virtual reality where they actually travel abroad and interact with the international world. And this can be controlled and made up scenarios where they will be faced with somebody . . . if you can build it in a virtual reality environment where they can actually wear that helmet and live it and see it and talk it out. I think that it kind of gives them a better preparation.

Nadia also shared a situation, which she saw some people going through:

I met some Saudi people who came to the U.S., and they were like it was just something totally new. They really didn't know how to deal with the situation, and it was really hard for them. They like got into, you know, kind of a high- think people should like take preparatory courses before they level school that they thought that they could go on at the beginning of, you know, a few weeks into the program, they just couldn't deal with it because they felt it's really above their level. You know, they couldn't interact with people. They don't speak English well. So I think people should take preparatory courses before they come here. Just simple courses . . . to understand the basics, you know, coming to the U.S., and how to deal with people. Just simple things.

After asking Nadia the interview question, “Can you see a way to involve what helped you to develop your intercultural competence in language classes in SA?” she answered, “I wish, for example, when I came here I had a class on the Hispanic culture, and they showed us a movie that gave me insight into the Mexican culture.” She insisted, “I think it's a really good idea to have a class dedicated to culture.” Another idea suggested by Nadia is to design a web page for students to have sessions in their classes where they can interact with people from other cultures

under the supervision of their language teachers. She also introduced an idea of designing an educational website that requires school IDs from students to be able to interact with students from other cultures, which would help in improving cultural knowledge for both parties. Nadia was begging to deliver her voice to anybody interested in developing language classes. “I think that they should have these classes in Saudi. A class dedicated to English cultures.” She felt that language and culture “should go hand in hand. I think they [language teachers] should talk about real-life issues.”

Summary and Discussion of Findings

As mentioned earlier, the primary purpose of this chapter is to investigate in-depth the cultural challenges that Saudi students face during their studies in the U.S., how they coped with those challenges and the possible activities that might help in empowering intercultural incompetence in students during their English language classes in Saudi Arabia. Thus, this section summarizes the qualitative findings from the interviews in relation to the research questions: What are the cultural challenges that Saudi students say that they face during their experiences in the U.S. academic environment? What elements do Saudi students say are missing from, and should be included in, language classes in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in students? Should English language classes in Saudi Arabia focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum?

What are the cultural challenges that Saudi students say that they face during their experience in the U.S. academic environment? How did these challenges help students develop their intercultural skills?

To address this issue, participants' intercultural views were looked at in-depth first. Then cross-cultural communication difficulties were discussed as well as the experiences that they had during their stay in the U.S. academic environment.

The interview data proved that participants were at least in the ethnorelativism stage of the development model of intercultural sensitivity, which characterizes that one's culture or ethnic group is not superior to others; instead, it is one of many different cultures (Hammer & Bennett, 2004). They demonstrated different levels of intercultural sensitivity, acceptance, adaptation, and integration, as they were asked to define intercultural competence. They all were able to show curiosity and *acceptance* of cultural differences. For example, one participant reported, "it doesn't matter if you agree with what they are doing or disagree ... [you] need to have a mutual understanding with other people." Another stated, "Being able to interact with people from a different culture and also respect the differences that they have," and a third one mentioned, "not everybody's going to have the same experiences you had in your country ... it is about trying to respect [their differences]."

Some of the participants also exhibited *adaptation* and shifted perspectives to cultural differences as well as changed their worldview. They illustrated the "proper understanding of people's values, norms, cultures, beliefs, whatever they have, and you cope with it," and the need to be "able to communicate with people from different backgrounds, from different cultures, effectively, and to be flexible to understand other cultures."

One participant endorsed *integration*, where learners' worldview is a combination of more than one culture. She displayed a higher level of intercultural competence, 'constructive marginality,' when she encouraged that "cultures integrate together" with an emphasis on "in a positive way."

The participants did not only show a great understanding of cultural differences, but they also emphasized the importance of intercultural competence in the new globalized world. One stated, "since we are in a globalization era, I think this is a very crucial point of fact that we need to understand that we need to have a better awareness." Another participant offered, "it is very important because if you have intercultural competence, you'll know the right way . . . [to] communicate with different people that you meet every day." Another one stated, "the world is more open now, and you can meet people from different cultures." Huebner (1962) supports their opinion in his argument, as in the following:

If a man does not learn to converse with those who surround him and impinge upon him, then he must find other ways of dealing with them; either ignoring them or turning them into objects of use or control. Ignoring, controlling or using others leads eventually to rebellion, resistance and conflict, and a realignment of the power field which supports the using, controlling or ignoring (p. 82).

Huebner insisted on the importance of finding ways to communicate effectively with other people; otherwise, the communication would be a ring where people debate to prove that they are dominant.

Furthermore, the participants believe the world nowadays is a single community where people need to be open and show acceptance of all cultures. A participant claimed that "wherever

you go in the world, you'll see people from all over the world that is not just people from that country only anymore," which can be connected to Deardorff (2016):

The central capability for the 21st century, as we continually search for ways to get along together as human beings sharing this one planet, is the need to transcend boundaries, to bridge and transform our differences, to be in relationships with one another, to join in the oneness of our humanity while accepting our differences... These needs will continue to drive us as we seek to overcome differences that may divide us. In the end, Intercultural Competence is about our relationships with each other and ultimately, our very survival as humankind, as we work together to address the global challenges that confront us in this century (Deardorff, 2016, p. 26).

Accordingly, although the participants tried to reach a mutual level of respect when interacting with people from different cultures, they still faced some difficulties communicating with people from different cultures regardless of their high levels of intercultural sensitivity. The challenges, which were reported by interviewees, were mostly due to the intercultural incompetence of one party or another. It proved that the absence of intercultural competence might result in communication problems and misunderstandings. One participant stated, "in some places, people don't understand other cultures. They are not aware of other cultures, and I feel like they don't understand me. So it's hard to communicate with those people." Another one reported that she started to avoid talking with people from different cultures because they tend to show unacceptable behavior. She said, "normally I would not like to go into side talk because I don't know what their limits are ... and that's [behavior] not acceptable for me." Both participants illustrated that they could not "interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural

situations, based on specific attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills, and reflection” because of behaviors that were produced by other people (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247).

The participants also believed a lack of intercultural competence results in bias and discriminatory behaviors that challenge communication. One participant stated, “sometimes they [people from different cultures] judge me based on how I look, based on my hijab.” Another participant perceived that people were trying to avoid talking to her. “It was like I am coming from Mars ... I didn't feel comfortable, you know, I didn't feel wanted.” One participant added, “[it is] difficult because he -- a man from other culture -- tried to force me to follow his way although I was doing it right in my own way.” Bhawuk and Brisline (1992) explained precisely that situation as they stated, “people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures” (p. 416). If these elements are missing in any kind of communication, then the communication will never be successful. The participants explained that the communication in which they involved, other interlocutors were missing the intercultural skills that were needed to result in fruitful communications.

Additionally, some people lacked “the adaptability to select... forms of accuracy and... forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use” (Kramsch, 1998). One of the participants explained that a South American person thought that people were treating him with discriminatory behavior when he was trying to talk to a director, but the director did not understand that person due to a lack of his language proficiency. However, the student started screaming. That example showed that the person lacks the appropriate attitudinal characteristics (e.g., open-mindedness).

However, these challenges helped participants develop their cultural awareness and acquire higher levels of intercultural competence. One participant reported, “I have to understand people's values, people's norms, people's way of communicating ... start knowing them before they know me, and then I tried to reach a better understanding, and then we have very good communication.” He decided to wait before forming an impression on people until he gives himself a whole chance to understand them thoroughly before engaging in any discussion. This participant indicated that he tries to “understand and accept individuals from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values, and behaviors,” which helps him “to see that such interaction is an enriching experience” (Byram et al., 2002, p. 6). Another participant explained that these challenges were a chance for her to “show them [people from other cultures] my culture and present it clearly, so I help them understand my culture.” She indicated this opportunity provided her with “an ability to adapt behavior and judgments to a variety of interpersonal settings” (Hammer & Bennett, 2004, p. 26). In addition, the challenges which participants faced in the U.S. academic environment helped them to set their boundaries upon communicating with people of other cultures until they gain “the utilization of that cultural knowledge to successfully engage in effective interaction” (Straffon, 2003, p. 5).

What elements do Saudi students say should be included in language classes in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in students?

Solórzano, Datnow, Park, and Watford (2013) stated, “hearing student voices is essential to understanding their pathways to and through postsecondary education” (p. 5). With that in mind, interviews were conducted to investigate the ways Saudi students’ intercultural competencies were promoted. The participants were asked to suggest some activities that they found to be helpful in developing their intercultural competence as they were a sample of the

target group that this study was designed to meet their needs. After exploring the different activities, which benefitted the interviewees, the idea of using them in language classes emerged.

“The language classroom is a privileged site for intercultural exploration because it affords the time and the space for sustained and reflective encounters with ‘otherness’” (Corbett, n. d., p. 15). It is crucial to teach and encourage students to see other cultures through others’ eyes, although it is hard to prepare them for every scenario and each kind of intercultural communication they might face. Therefore, language teachers need to consider every possibility, so their students do not complain, “why was I not warned? Why was I not better educated? Why did my teachers not tell me about these problems and indicate my behavior as a member of an interdependent human race?” whenever they stare into the face of global society (Muller, 1982, p. 6). Thus, language teachers’ job mainly is to motivate students to explore other cultures and to offer remediation whenever it is needed by encouraging their students to engage in different activities that would promote their skills. These activities include but are not limited to intercultural discussion groups with online partners, intercultural workshops and forums, intercultural communication profiles, and integrated intercultural classes.

Intercultural groups with online partners. It was the first idea that emerged from the data analysis. Ware and Kramersch (2005) defined this kind of activity as a “technology-mediated language and culture exchange in which language learners write to one another ... [that] involves the use of both synchronous [real-time] and asynchronous [delayed-time] writing, as well as teleconferencing functions that allow for the exchange of visual and aural communication” (p. 203). This was highly supported by the participants as it was introduced by more than one. “We live in that kind of open cyberspace, so that is something I would really recommend for students and teachers,” one participant stated. Another participant recommended someone “design a web

page that is like a chat room but for people [students]. Internationals people can have sessions in class and interact with others.” In this way, students might benefit from sharing their ideas and exploring others through online discussions where they can quickly get in touch with people from different cultures through discussion boards, forums, and threads. Additionally, Garrett-Rucks (2017) suggested that “online classroom discussions provided learners the opportunity to self-reflect and mediate their thoughts on the diverse perspectives found in the target culture and their own culture as learners’ expanded their own worldviews toward alternate cultural practices” (p. 11).

Intercultural workshop and forum. It was the second suggested activity. Cushner (2018) saw the need for bringing people together with the acceptance of differences and having the abilities to modify their behaviors and attitudes based on the interlocutors’ background as in the following:

It becomes clearer every day that the world faces a broad array of global challenges that will only be solved if people from a wide range of backgrounds, speaking many different languages and holding many diverse beliefs and practices develop the skills, ability and willingness to sit with those different from themselves to solve problems. (p. 5)

To reach that outcome, language teachers and educators need to conduct workshops that may help learners develop their students’ intercultural competence. One participant recommended: “do some workshops, presentations... this is a really good experience, and they [students] have to live it.” These workshops can show students the ultimate need to practice more “international reading” and aim at “addressing this topic... international studies or a related topic” (Deardorff, 2011, p. 69). Therefore, workshops would encourage and challenge students to discuss different issues of cultural difficulties and problems as they would be surrounded by some experts or

simply people with different experiences than theirs. Describing the way they work, Cushner (2018) stated, “it comes about after recognizing where one is on the developmental continuum, and then while providing both support and challenge, engaging students in systematic, oftentimes repetitious and well-planned exposure to intercultural interactions that nudge one to increasingly complex levels.”

Intercultural communication profiles. It is also a good idea introduced by participants. One stated, “ask your students to build a profile for each culture they are interested in.” Another participant advocated that teachers “challenge [their] students to introduce other cultures as they build their communication profile. Let them explore cultures and present them to the rest of the class in that such profile.” In addition, Holló (2016) advised, “we teach culture, and interculturality is part of it. But it is more important to experience it than to define it or learn about it in a theoretical manner.” Thus, according to the participants and Holló, the experience where students get the chance to share their knowledge and information is more beneficial for them than the theoretical presentations. That can also explain the role that teachers have as “guides and partners in the process of culture learning and discovery with their student rather than culture experts upon whom their students exclusively rely for cultural knowledge,” as students here are encouraged to explore and collect information about other cultures independently (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003, p. 220). They then would share the knowledge they gained with other people, which creates a student-centered classroom with an excellent opportunity for developing that knowledge.

Intercultural integrated classes. It is the idea that was widely proposed by most of the participants. They suggested that language classes should be an integration of watching movies or TV shows and reading articles and books that give insight into different cultures and then

discussing and reflecting on that experience. Such integration leads students to distinguish the differences between personal and cultural worldviews and to consider all angles of any issue before making decisions as they would realize that not all conflicts or misunderstandings are based on cultural differences. One participant stated:

Teachers should ask students to read something in English in relation to any culture they pick and then watch a movie or a show related to that culture. They then can come to their class and share with other students what they learned. It is a good chance for them to read, listen, and also speak, all would lead to developing the language and interculturality at the same time.

Another form of integration is a virtual reality where students can find themselves in different environments with a totally different culture trying to survive and live within it; moreover, they are asked to discuss their experience and the way they deal with the situation with the rest of the class. Thus, students find themselves exploring different cultures as they live in them, which results in developing their interculturality through experience rather than learning about it in a theoretical manner.

Should English language classes in Saudi Arabia focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum?

The main aim of any language class should be to develop skills of cross-cultural communication and negotiation as they would eventually increase students' awareness of ethnic disparities and their impact on any decision-making process. As a result, students would be aware of the importance of sociocultural factors and their high impact on beliefs and behaviors. Martin and Nakayama (2014) highlighted crucial skills that are needed to help language students improve and develop their intercultural competences, which are "practicing self-reflexivity,

learning about others, listening to the voices of others, and developing a sense of social justice” (p. 21). Learning these skills results in developing “students' view of the self as language learners and user, their affiliations to the languages they speak, their conceptions of their language competence, their beliefs about language and language learning, and also the emotions tied to these aspects” (Barkhuizen, 2017). Particularly, the American Council on Education (2012) believed that intercultural competence is a necessary skill to be developed. They also proposed that their fundamental duty is “to prepare students for productive and responsible citizenship.” As it is stated in the following:

In the early 21st century, this means preparing students to live and work in a society that increasingly operates across international borders. Graduates must possess intercultural skills and competencies to be successful in this globalized world, and higher education institutions must commit to helping students achieve these outcomes. (2012)

Participants also supported the idea of focusing on intercultural competence as a crucial part of language curricula. One participant wondered, “why not start giving them ideas [and] teaching them how to respect other cultures and understand them?” Another participant added, “I think people should take preparatory courses before they come here [study abroad] ... how to deal with people.” She also emphasized, “I think it's a really good idea to have a [language] class dedicated to culture.” Along with that, Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) emphasized the 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching as it aims “to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity” (p. 5). Garrett-Rucks (2017) also underscored the same idea: “by infusing an intercultural reflective dimension into our instruction, we can help prepare language learners to become responsible

global citizens” (p. 13). Indeed, intercultural competence is “vital to successful interactions among diverse groups of people locally, nationally, and internationally,” which make it a necessary part of the language class and curricula (ACTFL, 2014, para. 2).

Therefore, curriculum design should not only “involve the integration of knowledge from many of the areas in the field of Applied Linguistics, such as language acquisition research, teaching methodology, assessment, language description and materials production;” instead, it should include steps that help in creating necessary changes that prepare students for potentially needed skills to communicate effectively to the world (Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. xv-xvi). Thus, English language teachers in Saudi Arabia are encouraged to develop students’ intercultural competence as “it has been argued that culture is the marginalized sister of language” (Hennebry, 2014, p. 135). Additionally, Moeller and Nugent (2014) insisted that “applied linguistics, and especially language researchers and teachers, have come to regard language as a cultural act” (p. 5). Moreover, Bennett and Bennett (2004) explained, “the intercultural skill set includes the ability to analyze interaction, predict misunderstanding, and fashion adaptive behavior,” which is the primary goal of language classes in the globalized world (p. 149). Language classes “can take learners beyond a focus on their own society, into experience of otherness, or other cultural beliefs, values and behaviors” (Byram, 2008, p. 29). In addition, language learners will be able to think critically, communicate effectively, and relate globally.

One participant summarized, “you’re going to meet people from different cultures. You are going to meet people who are different from you, so you need to understand them and communicate with them effectively.” That can only occur upon using language classes to develop “skills for communication with individuals from other societies, to promote

understanding and positive attitude towards other societies and cultures, and to create an awareness of language as a personal and societal phenomenon” (Byram, 2008, p. 105).

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

The main purpose of this study was to determine what was missing in English language classes in Saudi Arabia that is needed to help students grow interculturally competent and globally responsible citizens. Also, it investigated the way Saudi students were able to develop their intercultural competence during their studies in American universities. The challenges that faced them were also discussed as well as how to promote English language classes in Saudi Arabia to develop students' interculturality. The research was carried out by implementing an online survey and semi-structured interviews to determine how to promote English language classes in Saudi Arabia to develop students' interculturality.

Hence, this chapter is to summarize the findings of this study. It also extends to cover the limitations of the study and presents the implications for educational practices that were mainly drawn from the findings of the questionnaire and interviews. It finally offers recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire and interviews, five main findings were revealed that may add to the literature on intercultural competence development in language classrooms, as well as to the body of literature that would help educators better understand the elements that would develop students' experiences and shape their intercultural competence development. The five main findings from this study were, first, the experience of studying in American universities helped in developing Saudi students' intercultural competence. Second, there are some elements that Saudi students in American universities think are missing from, and should be included in, any language class in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in students. Third, Saudi students'

experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on their demographic information. Fourth, there are some cultural challenges that Saudi students face during their experience in the US academic environment; however, these challenges help students to develop their intercultural skills. Fifth, English language classes in Saudi Arabia should focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum.

The experience of studying in American universities helped in developing Saudi students' intercultural competence. Saudi students in American universities benefited from their involvement in different cultures. The study proved that they were able to explore different cultures, try different food, present their own cultures in an authentic way, analyze different situations, engage in different types of arguments and discussions, and achieve their academic and personal goals. They had positive attitudes toward intercultural development, gained the knowledge, developed their skills, and also met the internal and external outcomes, which proved that they met all the elements that were introduced by Deardorff's framework to be intercultural competent people.

Interaction with foreign people influenced and helped Saudi students to develop their intercultural competence as it raised their awareness and understanding of situations and people from diverse cultures. This kind of interaction helped them to move out of their ethnocentric prejudice and become more open to others. Moreover, classes' environments and classrooms' discussions fostered their intercultural experience, which reflected on the way they have developed their ability to communicate effectively with their American professors and colleagues. Besides, group work and group discussions helped in understanding cultural differences and gave them insight into intercultural communities, and the ability to handle any disagreement without having to deal with conflicts. In fact, the experience of studying in

American universities fostered Saudi students' cultural learning and discovery, which, in turn, developed their overall intercultural competence.

There are some elements that Saudi students in American universities think are missing from, and should be included in, any language class in Saudi Arabia that would develop intercultural competence in students. The data proved that the English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not encourage their students to attend any cultural activities nor to explore similarities and differences between cultures. They did not encourage students to think deeply before judging people from different cultures. They did not help students to understand that cultures shape and influence people's interactions with others. In fact, it was confirmed that English language classes were low on activities that might bring insight into different cultures and on presenting cross-cultural performances that might help with sociolinguistic awareness. Also, English language classes did not help students build their intercultural skills that are needed to have a deep understanding of different cultures as well as their own culture.

Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) stated that “to be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures” (p. 416). However, the participants in this study proved that they did not develop their behaviors toward people from other cultures nor did they become interculturally competent as a result of their English language classes in Saudi Arabia. To serve their purpose, English language classes should help students to interact and communicate with people from different cultures effectively. They should help students to engage with other people using their multiple identities to avoid the stereotyping and biased judgment that usually comes from perceiving others through a single identity. English language classes should encourage students to observe and gather information

about different cultures to improve their critical thinking. Thus, language teachers' job is to motivate students to explore other cultures and to offer remediation whenever it is needed by encouraging their students to engage in different activities that would promote their skills. These activities include, but are not limited to, intercultural discussion groups with online partners, workshops and forums, communication profiles, and integrated intercultural classes.

Saudi students' experiences of intercultural competence development differ based on their demographic information. Saudi students intercultural competence development was found to be significantly similar for the three factors (language and culture in English classes in Saudi Arabia, intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia, and developing intercultural competence in American universities) in relation to regions of origin, gender, age, interacting with Americans, cultural education, important aspect of culture, and importance of intercultural competence to participants; however, it was found to be significantly different for level of education in relation to intercultural experience in the English classes in Saudi Arabia and length of stay in relation to developing intercultural competence in American universities.

There are some cultural challenges that Saudi students face during their experience in the US academic environment; however, these challenges help students to develop their intercultural skills. Saudi students did not only show a great understanding of cultural differences, but they also emphasized the importance of intercultural competence in the new globalized world. They found ways to communicate effectively with other people. They believe the world nowadays is a single community where people need to be open and show acceptance of all cultures. However, despite the fact that they tried to reach a mutual level of respect when interacting with people from different cultures, they still faced some difficulties communicating with people from different cultures regardless of their high levels of intercultural sensitivity.

These challenges were mostly due to the intercultural incompetence, especially biased, or discriminatory behavior of one party or another, which resulted in the disappearance of adequate and appropriate interaction and more communication problems and misunderstandings.

However, these challenges were enriching experiences that helped in developing students' cultural awareness and acquiring higher levels of intercultural competence. They were able to understand that people from other cultures have other distinctive perspectives, values, and behaviors. They also treated these challenges as opportunities to adapt to different behaviors and present their differences. Therefore, the challenges that participants faced in the US academic environment helped them to set their boundaries upon communicating with people of other cultures until they gain "the utilization of that cultural knowledge to successfully engage in effective interaction" (Straffon, 2003, p. 5).

English language classes in Saudi Arabia should focus on intercultural competence as a fundamental part of the curriculum. Developing skills of cross-cultural communication and negotiation as they increase students' awareness of ethnic disparities and their impact on decision-making processes should be considered. They would help students to develop an awareness of the importance of sociocultural factors and their high impact on beliefs and behaviors. Another point to be deliberated is focusing on skills that help language students improve and develop their intercultural competences, especially listening to the voices of others and developing a sense of social equality. Eventually, that results in developing students' views of themselves, the languages they speak, and their language competence. Language classes' fundamental duty should be to prepare students be productive and responsible global citizens who are interculturally prepared to live in a society with no specific nationality or language.

Intercultural competence should be a crucial part of any language curricula. Particularly, the intercultural dimension in language teaching aims at developing language learners to be able to engage with complexity and varied identities, which result in avoiding stereotyping and biased judgment. It also can help in preparing them to grow as , rhetorically engaged and creditworthy global citizens, who can foretell any communication problems, analyze them, and adjust their behaviors to avoid the problems before they occur.

Limitations of the Study

This analysis has concentrated on ways Saudi students in the US. academic environments had developed their intercultural competence and how to promote Saudi students' intercultural competence in English language classes in Saudi Arabia. However, it should be born in mind that the study has some limitations: First, the study was limited to Saudi students in the United States of America and the findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to other populations. The sample of this study included 107 participants with under 4 cases per item, indicating that this is a little low because it is needed to be 5 cases per item. However, the Kaiser-Meyer_Olkin (KMO) is > 0.9 , which is excellent. This means we can have confidence in the analysis. The individual item KMO scores (shown in the anti-image correlation matrix) are also all high, indicating that the sample was enough for each item.

Second, the study solely reflects the opinion of those who participated and the results need to be viewed with this in mind. They were Saudi students studying in the American academic environments, although that the majority of them had traveled abroad to the different parts of the world in their lives prior to their studies in American universities and presented a variety of backgrounds including: regions of origin, gender, age, level of educations, length of

stay in the US, interacting with international people, cultural education and other overseas experiencing.

Third, this study was influenced by Deardorff's Model of International Competence, which introduced its own bias into the study, such as being a US centric model of intercultural competence and outlined only the essential aspects of the framework.

Forth, in the qualitative part of the study, the researcher was positioned as an outsider and insider researcher at the same time. She was an outsider since none of the interviewees has had similar experiences to her during their studies in Saudi Arabia; however, she was an insider because this study was influenced by her interest and motivation to investigate the intercultural competence of a population to whom she belongs.

Fifth, the data gathered from the participants were self-reported and were collected through the online survey and semi-structured interviews, and there were no observations or language tests included. The results might be revealed differently if the data collection methods were combined with other methods.

Implication for Practice

This study sheds light on what is happening in English language classes, in general, and in Saudi Arabia in specific. Educators and language teachers can be informed through this study about the great need for intercultural competence and sensitivity, and the affective way to meet that need is through language classes. Specifically, intercultural competence gives people the tools to become involved in the world without the problems of miscommunication. This study, in addition, proved that intercultural competence is still not getting sufficient attention in language classes. Therefore, teachers' obligation is to hold students' hands, share their knowledge and experiences, and guide students in the right direction.

The findings proved that there is a disconnect between language classrooms in Saudi Arabia and the new globalized world, and this disconnect can be remedied through the integration of intercultural competence as a factor for language learning. Therefore, this study recommends curricula and textbook designers to shift their focus from only teaching grammar and language skills to focusing on building a whole culture inside language classrooms. It also recommends exploiting English language classes to focus on developing cultural competence and provide students with the necessary techniques and strategies that enrich their intercultural competence, and that can be achieved through discussion, presentations and cultures profiles. Another way is explaining at least ten top things that students need to understand about each culture to prevent intercultural problems. Consequently, language classes will result in an expansion of the students' cognitive stage to avoid stereotyping and biased judgment, which enables them to deal in a more sophisticated and neutral manner with people of different cultures and overcome cultural barriers at the same time.

Educators should consider English language classrooms and curricula as tools that help in improving intercultural competence. Integrating intercultural competence with English language classes asserts that cultural awareness and cultural acceptance are found, which results in more appreciation of cultural differences. Particularly, English language classes can be the only source of different cultures that help students to build their cultural differences awareness. Therefore, cultural education and intercultural skills should “no longer be an add-on at the end of the language lesson but has to be reconceptualized within the framework of intercultural communicative sensitivity and integrated into the organizing principle of the curriculum” (Steele, 2000, p. 193). Educators should manage cultural events that bring international people to join Saudi students and celebrate diversity through different activities such as cultural affairs and

community service. Eventually, students will be able to deal with people from different cultures and nationalities without having difficulties, especially now that modern trends in Saudi culture (Vision 2030) are heading towards globalization.

Essentially, some people from Saudi society have faced difficulties in dealing with people from different cultures whether inside their home country (Saudi Arabia) or during their traveling abroad for education or any other reason, there is a necessity to intervene to solve this problem. Expressly, some Saudi people are not ready to deal with foreigners and people from different cultures due to their lack of experience. Thus, a large number of cultural problems and social misunderstanding need immediate action from language teachers to reduce the severity of cultural collisions. Language classes should, therefore, focus more on raising people awareness linguistically and culturally to be able to deal with international staff and tourists who will be welcomed mainly in the new cities such as Qiddiya and Neom. Therefore, the incidents of problematic attitudes towards people from different countries should be discussed and deeply studied during language classes in order to increase students self-awareness regarding cultural assumptions.

Based on the fact that English language teachers are regarded to be the experts to whom students always approach for knowledge and wisdom, this study suggests dedicating more attention to educators to raise their awareness of these skills. In particular, focusing on more research that demonstrates how intercultural competence is best acquired and taught through English language classrooms. In addition, there is a need for training on how to shift language classes to focus more on intercultural approaches, which focus on teaching cultural differences as well as accepting and tolerating these differences. English language teachers should pay their attention to every events that might improve themselves to be prepared for the globalization era,

such as discussion, forums and workshops. Optimistically, the implications discussed above would help in improving English language classes to their best potential to prepare students for the globalized world.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is a need for an investigation of the relation between teachers' level of intercultural competence and the ability to develop their students' intercultural competence. Besides, Saudi students in American universities indicated that their intercultural competence was developed and established in their American schools more than in their language classes in Saudi Arabia. Thus, to improve curriculum, the way American schools promoted students' intercultural competence should be studied to learn how that can be achieved in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, research on the most effective ways that would help teachers teach cultures effectively is recommended. Future studies should investigate how Saudi students perceive intercultural competence as a factor necessary for 21st-century readiness.

Additionally, data from interviews and surveys proved that English language classes in Saudi Arabia did not improve students' intercultural skills, as they treated cultural knowledge as optional or add-on skills. Therefore, there is a burning need to know when teachers should shift the focus to developing students' intercultural competence in a more inclusive and integrated way. Moreover, there is a need to find ways to teach intercultural competence in English language classrooms formally. Using student voices to understand the way they perceive cultural knowledge may help in developing curricula to promote cultural understanding and intercultural competence in language classrooms.

Importantly, few gaps in literature needed to be filled through research and more studies. For example, if language classes are to prepare students for the 21st-century and to develop their

critical thinking skills, further research should be conducted to investigate the relationship between intercultural competence level and critical thinking skills.

Statement of Accomplishment

The findings of this study can help English language teachers and program administrators in Saudi Arabia and beyond to better support students in developing intercultural skills, including strategies to predict and analyze communication problems and to adjust their own behaviors as communicators in intercultural contexts. These skills are crucial to student growth as rhetorically engaged and responsible global citizens.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Questionnaire

Investigating Interculturality of Saudi Students in the US Academic Environment

This survey is conducted as a part of my research as a Ph.D. candidate in the Applied Linguistics Program at The University of Memphis. It is designed to get information about the different strategies that were used to foster the development of your intercultural competence during your English language studies in Saudi Arabia and in your experience in the US academic environment. The findings of this survey are expected to raise the English language teachers' awareness of the strategies that are needed to be included in any language class that will eventually effectively enhance Saudi people's intercultural competence.

I am only interested in your personal opinion and want you to give your answers sincerely because only this will guarantee the success of the research. This survey will take between three and seven minutes to be completed, and your participation is strictly voluntary.

Thank you very much for your participation, your time, and your willingness to help complete this project. All the collected data is confidential and is only used for this project.

If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Ruqayyah Moafa, at rnmoafa@gmail.com.

Sincerely yours,

Ruqayyah Moafa

rnmoafa@gmail.com

* Required

For your information:

- a. Intercultural communication is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. Basically, inter- is a prefix that means between, and cultural is derived from the word culture, so intercultural communication is the communication between cultures.
- b. Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate and interact in appropriate ways with people from different cultures.

Demographic Questions and Information:

Please give your first answers as only this will guarantee the success of the research.

1. Where are you from? Which part of Saudi Arabia? *

- Central region
- East region
- West region
- North region
- South region
- Other:

2. What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female

3. How old are you? *

- 18-24

- 25-30
- 31-36
- 37 and above

4. In which educational level are you now? *

- Undergraduate
- Master
- Doctorate
- Other:

5. How long have you been in the US? *

- Less than one year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-10 years
- More than 10 years

6. Have you ever traveled abroad other than to the US? *

- Yes
- No

If yes, to where did you travel?

7. How many hours do you interact with people from different cultures in a week? *

- More than 8 hours a week
- 4 - 7 hours a week
- 1 - 3 hours a week
- Never

- Other:

8. Have you ever read or learned about other cultures before studying in the US? *

- Yes
- No

10. What is the most important thing for you to learn about the English language culture? *

- People
- Values
- Norms
- Language
- Other:

11. Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate and interact with people from different cultures. *

- Agree
- Disagree

12. What does intercultural competence mean to you? *

Statements related to my English classes when I was studying in Saudi Arabia.

Below are a series of statements about the learning opportunities that were used to accomplish your intercultural goals during your English language classes in Saudi Arabia.

Please indicate your choice based on your agreement to the statements by checking the ones that apply to you!

(1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree).

1. I was able to build my intercultural skills in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

2. I learned about the similarities and differences of other cultures in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

3. I learned how to interact and communicate with people from different cultures in my English classes in Saudi Arabia. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

4. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia presented clear information about cultural differences. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

5. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia helped me to think before judging people from different cultures. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

6. In my English language classes in Saudi Arabia, I learned that everybody's culture shapes and influences his/her interactions with other people. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

7. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia played English movies during the class time. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

8. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to present some cross-cultural performances during the class time. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

9. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to attend events to increase my own cultural awareness. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

10. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competence.

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

11. My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to try food from different cultures. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

12. My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to exploring the art and culture of other countries.

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

13. My English language classes in Saudi Arabia have made me an interculturally competent person. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

Statements related to my intercultural competence development during my studies at the American universities.

Below are a series of statements related to the strategies that have helped you develop your intercultural competence and accomplish your intercultural goals.

Please indicate your choice based on your agreement to the statements by checking the ones that apply to you!

(1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree).

1. I have worked on projects that present clear information on cultural differences in my US classes. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

2. I have worked with groups on presenting different cultures to the class at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

3. I have read books that describe and explain patterns of cultural differences and similarities. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

4. I have additional intercultural experience because of my classes at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

5. My professors at the American university were good role models of intercultural competence. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

6. The faculty members at the American university were good mentors for my cultural problems. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

7. I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

8. I know how to disagree with my classmates at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

9. I have tried food from different cultures at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

10. Interaction with people from different countries at the American university was a good way of developing my intercultural competence. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

11. Exploring the different parts of my American university has helped me to become interculturally competent. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

12. Exploring the art and culture of other countries was a good way to develop my intercultural experience. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

13. I have learned about different cultures through media, talk shows, and movies during my studies at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

14. I can respond appropriately to my classmates' comments at the American university. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

15. I am comfortable sending emails to my professors at the American university to ask about anything I encounter. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

16. I can describe myself as an interculturally competent person now. *

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

Do you think online communication and social media tools (e.g., What's App, FB, Twitter, etc.) have a great impact on developing your intercultural competence? Please explain.

Do you have anything to add?

If you would like to participate in the follow-up interview, please provide me with your contact information.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. I greatly appreciate it. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Ruqayyah Moafa

Phone: +18183700571

rnmoafa@gmail.com

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Form

You were selected as a research participant because you have been identified as someone who has years of experience in studying in a country culturally different from Saudi Arabia, has the unique opportunity of spending some of your time in intercultural environment and because you are a Saudi student who is studying in an American University.

My research study focuses on intercultural competence. I am interested in understanding the role of the language classes in helping to develop intercultural competence skills. This study will shed light on the intercultural development strategies required to support Saudi Sojourners in English-Speaking Countries in their intercultural experience. Also, this study will highlight the Saudi Sojourners' needs in relation to studying in a culturally different environment.

This research and your active participation will allow English language instructors, curriculum designers, and administration to develop English classes with great focus on intercultural development that will target these needs.

Information collected throughout this interview will be handled with the greatest confidentiality. Your personal information will not be used in the content of the research study, and pen names will be used instead. I am hereby asking you for your permission, I will record this interview. Also, I will transcribe this information, and I will provide you with a copy so you may further verify the accuracy of the information, or make appropriate adjustment if you would like. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Please remember that there is no right or wrong answers. You may take your time in thinking and in talking.

Before we get started here is a form which I would like you to sign.

<hand in the form>

Appendix C: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Investigating Interculturality of Saudi Sojourners in the Academic Environment in the U.S.A.

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about Investigating Interculturality of Saudi Sojourners in the Academic Environment in the U.S.A.. You were selected as a research participant because you have been identified as someone who has years of experience in studying in a country culturally different from Saudi Arabia, has the unique opportunity of spending some of your time in intercultural environment and because you are a Saudi student who is studying in an American University. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 12 people to do so.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

The person in charge of this study is Ruqayyah Moafa of University of Memphis Department of English. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Emily Thrush. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

By doing this study, we hope to learn the role of the language classes in helping to develop intercultural competence skills. This study will shed light on the intercultural development strategies required to support Saudi Sojourners in English-Speaking Countries in their intercultural experience. Also, this study will highlight the Saudi Sojourners' needs in relation to studying in a culturally different environment.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The questionnaire will be distribute through Google Forms, and designed to get the data and the information about some strategies that foster the development of your intercultural competence during your language learning. This is not a test so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and you don't even have to write your name in it. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please

give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the research. This survey will take you about 10 minutes to be completed.

The interviews will be conducted and tape recorded at the café shop that you prefer if you are living around the city of Memphis; however, if you are outside Memphis, we can do the interview through skype. Either we go with the onsite or the skype interview, the interview will be tape recorded. We also will need to meet one time during the study for about one hour.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

This research and your active participation will allow English language instructors, curriculum designers, and administration to develop English classes with great focus on intercultural development that will target these needs.

Information collected throughout this interview will be handled with the greatest confidentiality. Your personal information will not be used in the content of the research study, and pen names will be used instead. I am hereby asking you for your permission, I will tape record this interview. Also, I will transcribe this information, and I will provide you with a copy so you may further verify the accuracy of the information, or make appropriate adjustment if you would like.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Although you might not derive any direct benefit from it, your participation will reflect the experience of studying abroad in the context of English speaking countries and the relevant cultural issues that may arise while studying there. This participation will help educational practitioners develop programs that will help foster the intercultural competence of language learners and improve the quality of foreign language education. This research and your active participation will allow English language instructors, curriculum designers, and administration to develop English classes with great focus on intercultural development that will target these needs.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study, your choice will have no effect on your academic status or grade in the class.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

We will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

For the questionnaire that is going to be distributed through Google Forms, I will change settings to Anonymize Responses so IP addresses will not be collected. The Google Forms default is to collect IP address and GPS coordinates of respondents. By setting the survey to Anonymized Responses, we will not be collecting this identifiable information, and that will maintain the confidentiality of the data.

This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give came from you.

For the interview participants, we will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. The personal information will not be used in the content of the research study, and pen names will be used instead.

We will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. We may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Memphis.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

The individuals conducting the study may need to withdraw you from the study. This may occur if you are not able to follow the directions they give you, if they find that your being in the study is more risk than benefit to you, or if the agency funding the study decides to stop the study early for a variety of scientific reasons.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Ruqayyah Moafa at rnmoafa@memphis.edu. You can also contact the adviser and the co-investigator, Emily Thrush at ethrush@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

What happens to my privacy if I am interviewed?

The participants' real names will be replaced by pseudonyms that are only known to the researcher. The written notes and paper copies that are collected during the interviews will be

stored in a locked file cabinet with keys in the possession of the researcher alone. The interview audio files will be assigned a password that is known solely to the researcher. The files will be transcribed, backed up, and stored on a personal flash drive. The data that is collected will be retained for three years, after which all of the files will be destroyed, a process that is recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010).

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of [authorized] person obtaining informed consent

Date

Appendix D: The Interview Questions

Part 1:

This part of the interview focuses on your background prior to leaving your own country, Saudi Arabia.

1. How would you describe your home culture?
2. How can you describe your experience with international people at the time before you left your home country for the first time?

Part 2:

My research study revolves around intercultural competence. I am interested in assessing the importance of preparing students for the intercultural experience during their English language classroom. I am also interested in knowing the type of strategies that foster your experience and developed your intercultural competence resulting in the intercultural identity that you have right now.

1. How would you describe the culture outside of Saudi Arabia?
2. What do you understand by the term Intercultural Competence?
3. Do you feel that intercultural competence is a necessary skill in today's society? Why or why not?
4. What kind of difficulties did you have when communicating with the international colleagues and professors? Do these difficulties promote or hinder the development of your intercultural competence? How?
5. Do you see a need to involve some type of intercultural development activities during the English language classes to deal with these intercultural conflicts? Do you feel that there

is a need to incorporate intercultural competence into English language classroom instruction? Why or why not?

6. What activities have you engaged in that have promoted your intercultural learning?
7. What resources do you think would help managing/resolving intercultural conflicts, facilitating the development of students' intercultural competence that you think that should be used in any language classes?
8. Have these resources been helpful to you? How? What additional resources do you feel you need?
9. How did the experience of studying in an American university change your perspective?
10. Can you think of a situation where someone did not show intercultural competence?
What happened?

Appendix E: Institutional Review Board Approval



Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

May 4, 2018

PI Name: Ruqayyah Moafa
Co-Investigators:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Emily Thrush
Submission Type: Initial
Title: Investigating Interculturality of Saudi Sojourners in the Academic Environment in the U.S.A.
IRB ID : #PRO-FY2018-609

Expedited Approval: May 4, 2018
Expiration: May 4, 2019

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. This IRB approval has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.
2. When the project is finished or terminated, a completion form must be submitted.
3. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval.

Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.

Appendix F: Institutional Review Board Renewal



Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

PI: Ruqayyah Moafa
Co-Investigator:
Advisor and/or Co-PI: Emily Thrush
Department: English, Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation.
Study Title: Investigating Interculturality of Saudi Sojourners in the Academic Environment in the U.S.A.
IRB ID: PRO-FY2018-609
Submission Type: Renewal

Date: Mar 1, 2019 12:15 PM CST

Dear Ruqayyah Moafa,

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Office for Human Subjects Protections announced that the revisions to the Common Rule went into effect January 19, 2019. Under the new regulations protocols in the expedited category no longer require continuing review. As investigators you are responsible for complying with the following:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required.
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation.
3. When necessary submit incidents/adverse events to the board for review
4. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at citiprograms.org every 2 years

For any additional question or concerns please contact us at irb@memphis.edu or 901.678.2705

Thank you,

James Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis

Appendix G: The statement that were used in the questionnaire

<p>A1 I was able to build my intercultural skills in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.</p>	<p>B1 I have worked on projects that present clear information on cultural differences in my US. classes.</p>
<p>A2 I learned about the similarities and differences of other cultures in my English language classes in Saudi Arabia.</p>	<p>B2 I have worked with groups on presenting different cultures to the class at the American university.</p>
<p>A3 I learned how to interact and communicate with people from different cultures in my English classes in Saudi Arabia.</p>	<p>B3 I have read books that describe and explain patterns of cultural differences and similarities.</p>
<p>A4 My English language classes in Saudi Arabia presented clear information about cultural differences.</p>	<p>B4 I have additional intercultural experience because of my classes at the American university.</p>
<p>A5 My English language classes in Saudi Arabia helped me to think before judging people from different cultures.</p>	<p>B5 My professors at the American university were good role models of intercultural competence.</p>

<p>A6 In my English language classes in Saudi Arabia, I learned that everybody's culture shapes and influences his/her interactions with other people.</p>	<p>B6 The faculty members at the American university were good mentors for my cultural problems.</p>
<p>A7 My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia played English movies during the class time.</p>	<p>B7 I have participated in classroom discussions in my U.S. classes.</p>
<p>A8 My English teachers in Saudi Arabia asked me to present some cross-cultural performances during the class time.</p>	<p>B8 I know how to disagree with my classmates at the American university.</p>
<p>A9 My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to attend events to increase my own cultural awareness.</p>	<p>B9 I have tried food from different cultures at the American university.</p>
<p>A10 My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia were good role models of intercultural competence.</p>	<p>B10 Interaction with people from different countries at the American university was a good way of developing my intercultural competence.</p>

<p>A11 My English language teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to try food from different cultures.</p>	<p>B11 Exploring the different parts of my American university has helped me to become interculturally competent.</p>
<p>A12 My English teachers in Saudi Arabia encouraged me to exploring the art and culture of other countries.</p>	<p>B12 Exploring the art and culture of other countries was a good way to develop my intercultural experience.</p>
<p>A13 My English language classes in Saudi Arabia have made me an interculturally competent person.</p>	<p>B13 I have learned about different cultures through media, talk shows, and movies during my studies at the American university.</p>
	<p>B14 I can respond appropriately to my classmates' comments at the American university.</p>
	<p>B15 I am comfortable sending emails to my professors at the American university to ask about anything I encounter.</p>
	<p>B16 I can describe myself as an interculturally competent person now.</p>