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**Investigating EFL Teachers at the Faculties of Education
Perceptions towards Integrating Intercultural Communicative
Competence in Classrooms**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for an MA Degree in
Applied Linguistics

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, family and friends for their love and encouragement.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, I am thankful to Allah for giving me the strength to finish this work.

I am forever deeply grateful to my outstanding supervisor, Dr. Massoud Ghouma. This endeavour would not have been possible without his guidance, crucial feedback, encouragement, and patience.

I am also thankful to all my professors at the Libyan Academy who taught me and helped me during my academic journey.

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Words cannot express my gratitude to my family and friends, who stood behind me every step of the way.

Finally, I am indebted to all my colleagues and friends who helped me pave the way to conduct my study.

Abstract

This study investigates Libyan EFL university teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards culture and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in their classrooms. It also aimed to identify how teachers define, understand and integrate ICC in their classrooms. A sample of 42 language skills subject teachers from Tripoli University's faculties of education participated in the study. A mixed-methods approach using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews was employed. The findings revealed that teachers hold positive attitudes towards integrating culture and ICC, recognising the importance of integrating culture, cultural elements, and cultural differences for successful communication. However, although teachers' grasp of the concept may be weaker than desired, they possess a general understanding and awareness of ICC. For ICC integration, teachers emphasised students' engagement, using authentic materials, comparing learners' cultures with other cultures, and real-life situations as essential for developing students' ICC. Teachers also identified challenges in integrating ICC, including students' age, limited access to technology, outdated materials, and potential confusion or misunderstanding among students regarding cultural or religious events. Nevertheless, the study emphasises the need for ongoing professional development and support to enable teachers to effectively integrate ICC, overcome challenges, and promote intercultural understanding among students.

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List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence

L2: Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Culture and cultural differences significantly affect how we think and communicate with others. Bodley (1994) defined culture as "what people think, make and do"(p.22). Later, this was developed by Frank (2013) to be the 3P models: perspectives, practices, and products. In this research, we are interested in perspectives (what members of a particular culture think, believe, feel, and value) that considerably differ from one culture to another. Therefore, we need Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) to deal with cultural differences and communicate successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. This has put language teachers in a position of responsibility to teach a broader goal than language items. However, many studies were conducted on the significance of ICC in EFL classrooms (Al Mawoda, 2011; Alkhashnam, 2012; Liu, 2019). Moreover, Alptekin (2002) suggested that teachers' education and practice should include intercultural aspects. This study investigates how EFL teachers in Libyan universities understand, define, and integrate ICC in their classrooms.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although English language teaching programs emphasise developing communicative competence and ICC, Libyan EFL teachers still focus on linguistic items and neglect real communicative encounters (Jha, 2014). In addition, little attention was paid to the role of cultural differences in misinterpretation and miscommunication in the learners' future encounters (Abukhattala, 2015;

Ramadan, 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to examine teachers' perceptions on integrating ICC in Libyan EFL university classrooms.

1.3. Aims of the Study

This study aims to:

- 1- Investigate university teachers' perception toward ICC and its role in the classroom.
- 2- Investigate how teachers themselves integrate culture and cultural concepts.

1.4. Research Questions

The current study aims to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- How do Libyan EFL teachers in universities perceive and define ICC?
- 2-How do they approach the integration of ICC in their classrooms?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Since teaching cultures and cultural differences become an essential part of EFL classrooms, teachers should be conversant with ICC and highly trained to transmit cultural awareness and develop students' ICC in their classrooms. Even though little attention was given to the real communicative issues and the role of ICC in creating successful encounters in Libyan EFL classrooms. Therefore, I shed light on teachers' perceptions of ICC in this study. My interest and personal experience as an EFL teacher initiated this topic. Hence, this study creates a basis for developing teachers' methods for incorporating ICC in their classrooms.

1.6. Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed research design to investigate how Libyan EFL university teachers understand, define, and integrate ICC in Libyan university classrooms. Therefore, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were employed. The sample consisted of 42 university teachers

who teach language skills subjects at Tripoli University answered the questionnaire. In addition, six of them at Tripoli University, Faculty of Education/Janzour, responded to a semi-structured interview. Through semi-structured interviews, more detailed and in-depth responses were collected using open-ended questions. The qualitative data triangulated the survey results, thus increasing the credibility, reliability, and validity of the data collection tools and findings. Furthermore, the study utilised two sampling techniques, namely purposive and snowball. This sample was chosen explicitly because their courses often incorporate cultural aspects, highlighting the need to develop students' ICC in English classrooms.

Two data analysis techniques were used: Microsoft Office Excel and thematic analysis technique.

1.7. Organization of the Study

The present study is divided into five chapters:

1. Chapter one contains a short description of the study's background, a statement of the problem, the aims of the study, research questions, significance, research methodology, an explanation of the study's organisation and a summary.

2. Chapter two includes a literature review that introduces critical concepts employed throughout the literature, the importance of intercultural education and intercultural encounters within global communities. The chapter also explores the relationship between language and culture and comprehensively analyses teachers' cognition and associated traits. The chapter examines the encompassing theories of ICC, Byram's perspective on intercultural competence, the development of foreign language teaching objectives, and the instruction of intercultural competency in EFL classrooms. Finally, the chapter concludes by introducing relevant previous studies that inform the research in this domain and a summary.

3. Chapter three explains the methodology and describes the research design, including the context

of the study, the participants, sampling methods, the data collection process, ethical considerations and a summary.

4. Chapter four contains detailed information about data analysis, including the analysis of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. To conclude the chapter, a brief summary of the main findings was presented.

5. Chapter five discusses the study's findings, implications, recommendations, and limitations and draws an exploratory conclusion.

1.8. Summary

The first section of this chapter offered a concise overview of culture definitions and presented the concept ICC and the fundamental purpose of the present study. This introduction was necessary to furnish the reader with the requisite background information to contextualise the content that follows throughout the dissertation. Subsequently, the research problem, aims, research questions, and the significance of this study were delineated clearly and directly. Finally, a description of the methodological approach and the organisation of the study were provided.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

This chapter introduces the key concepts used in the literature, followed by the importance of intercultural education for language learners, particularly in intercultural encounters in their global communities. Language and culture and the relationship between them are also covered, followed by a thorough examination of teachers' cognition and its traits, accomplished by examining various research. Finally, regarding teaching and learning ICC, theories of ICC, Byram's perception of intercultural competence, the development of foreign language teaching goals, and teaching intercultural competency in EFL classrooms were discussed. At last, relevant previous studies were introduced.

2.1. Key Concepts

Teachers' perception reflects their students' learning, teaching, and experience as they reflect on their thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, principles, culture, and attitudes (Stebbins, 1975, p. 109). Moreover, it is the teachers' understanding of their role in the teaching and learning process, which includes their reflection on meeting students' needs (Marble et al., 2000, p.3).

Culture was defined from different perspectives by many scholars; Byram (1997), Weedon (2004), and McCracken (1990) described it as a broad concept that consists of visible and invisible components and elements of human lives. Invisible components include values, beliefs, customs, and manners, while visible components include art, poetry, literature, music, food, and architecture. Similarly, Bodley (1994) defined culture as "What people think, make and do"(p.22). Later, this definition was developed by Frank (2014) to be the 3P models: perspectives, practices,

and products (p.3). Perspectives represent what people value, believe, and think, while practices represent how people deal with each other and interact. These two elements represent the invisible component in any culture. On the other hand, products represent the visible part we first see in any culture, such as customs, food, and literature. In this study, we are interested in perspectives of what people think, value, and believe, which considerably differ from culture to culture. (Frank ,2014)

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC): The concept of competence has developed and varied in functions. This competence combines two competences, namely Intercultural Competence (IC) and communicative competence. Intercultural competence, as Dearsdorff (2004) described, is the ability to achieve effective communication despite cultural differences based on one's knowledge of one's culture, skills, and attitude (p.194). On the other hand, communicative competence includes the four sub-competences: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. The first two represent the linguistic system itself, and the other two represent functional aspects of communication (Canale, 1983, p.16). So, both main competences successfully give us ICC, a complex construct involving more than knowledge of linguistic items to communicate in internationalised contexts (Dreadorff, 2004). According to Byram (1997), ICC is the individual's ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries.

2.2. Necessity for an Intercultural Education

Due to the progressive nature of our contemporary world, characterised by ongoing advancements and developments, communication has been notably facilitated and enhanced. Consequently, enhancing intercultural understanding within classrooms is of paramount importance. Therefore, teachers must integrate ICC into their classrooms (Serus et al., 2005). Additionally, terms such as intercultural education, intercultural learning, intercultural understanding, and interculturalism are

new and should be integrated within the educational system and research field (Serus, 2005). Klafki (1997) stressed the need to include themes such as environmental problems, war, ethical differences, and communication media to explore learners' critical thinking and argumentative skills (p.47). Furthermore, Delores (1996) summarised the necessity for intercultural education under four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, living together and learning to be (p.37). To achieve these four pillars of education, learners must learn to be interculturally competent. This competency is seen as a fundamental skill by the 21st Century Commission (Scientific, 2006). However, in a country such as Libya, with a homogenous cultural background, intercultural education should be concerned with students' education towards internationalism and multiculturalism. Ramadan (2021) believes there should be a balance between linguistic competence and social and intercultural competence in Libyan curriculums. He emphasises the need for intercultural education to prepare learners for future intercultural encounters (pp.537-538). Similarly, another study conducted in Sebha, Libya, revealed that missing the intercultural components while learning the target language can hinder mastering the foreign language. (Ahmed, 2015b, pp 159-160).

2.3.Intercultural Encounters

Our societies are becoming more international, and as a result, we find ourselves having “Intercultural Encounters” through business, travelling, games or the accessibility of reaching people in general, even though how we deal with these encounters differs from person to person. The term “Intercultural Encounters” refers to when you become aware that you are interacting with a member of a different culture whose background is distinct from yours (Harris, 2016, p.23). Similarly, Porto et al. (2018) defined intercultural encounters as those experiences we have with people from different cultures. He added that these experiences could be with someone from a different cultural background country or with someone from your own country but from another

region and culture (p.4).

However, regardless of the growing intercultural encounters at various levels, phenomena like racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudices, and various forms of extremism appear to be even more familiar. These factors are essential for learners and teachers to be aware of. These terms have different meanings. For example, racism can be any form of inequality based on various characteristics related to ethnic backgrounds and cultural differences. On the other hand, xenophobia is the fear or dislike of strangers or others from different cultures. It is also commonly seen as an anti-immigrant prejudice (Yakushko, 2018, p.12).

Ethnocentrism is usually related to an ethnic or cultural group's arrogance, when some believe in the superiority of their own culture, and often includes contempt, hatred, and hostility towards those from other cultures (Bizumic, 2018). In addition, stereotyping and prejudice are prevalent terms among societies and somehow are related to each other. Prejudice is the negative attitudes toward a member or group of people based on categorised misinformation about a social group, which is sculpted by stereotypes. Meanwhile, stereotyping is the over-generalisation of a conception towards a particular group or members, and it could be either negative or positive. (O'Keefe, 2020). Concerning these terms in academic progress and schools, Wolfe and Spencer (1996) researched stereotyping and prejudice in classrooms. The researchers attested that minority group members would likely face unique classroom challenges. These challenges can be addressed by actively respecting and valuing cultural diversity. Therefore, "Complementary tools should be developed to encourage students to exercise independent critical faculties including to reflect critically on their responses and attitude to experiences of other cultures." (Bodo & Milano, 2008, p.43). The need for intercultural education arose with all these challenges, and the teachers are in a favourable position to draw more attention to cultural differences and develop ICC. Moreover, Romanowski (2017) believes that ICC serves as a valuable tool in combating social exclusion and various forms

of intolerance, such as racism, sexism, ageism, and others. Hence, teachers need to nurture and develop it. (p.177)

2.4.Culture and Language

2.4.1. Culture

Culture is a relative term referring to a country, region, or nation. It is also the characteristics that distinguish a group of people inhabiting a particular place from others.

Many scholars defined the term. Bodley (1994) defined culture as "What people think, make and do"(p.22). On the other hand, Lee (2009) interestingly categorised culture as the capital C and small c. For him, the big "C" domain represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society. It is, by nature, easily seen and readily apparent to anyone and memorised by learners. It has been utilised heavily by many L2/FL/ELT language practitioners to teach a target culture. The small "c", on the other hand, refers to the invisible and more profound sense of a target culture, that is, the mainstream socio-cultural values, norms and beliefs, considering such socio-cultural variables as age, gender and social status (p.78). Since we are interested in perception or small c, which refers to people's beliefs and values, we can claim that communication is ruled by language, which is an inseparable element in any culture. Undeniably, language influences how we behave, think, and communicate in a cultural context. Therefore, drawing the relationship between them is necessary.

2.4.2. The Relationship Between Culture and Language

To draw the relationship between culture and language, let us go back in time to indicate how language was defined. Sapir (1921) described it as "a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires using voluntarily produced symbols." (p.8). The definition was later criticised for the terms 'idea', 'emotion', and 'desire' for not covering

everything communicated by language. In 1942, Bloch and Trager described it as a 'system' used for social interaction using arbitrary vocal symbols. This definition's value consists of pointing out the social functions of language, which are considered a significant element of intercultural communication. However, Bloch and Trager's definition was also criticised for restricting language to speech. The function of language for interaction and communication was also assigned by Hall (1969) that language is used for habitual interaction (p.158).

All previous definitions view language as a system of arbitrary symbols designed for communication, highlighting the connection between meaning and language. Sociolinguistics and interculturalism focused on the active use of language in communication, and a new connection emerged from this concept. Consequently, they claim it is inseparable. Brown et al. (1989) claim that words are meaningless if separated from their social context. Likewise, Lessard-Clouston (1992) maintains that texts in all forms (written, spoken, read, or listened to) cannot be understood without referring to their sociocultural dimensions. For example, when a person talks about topics such as boyfriend/ girlfriend, cultural differences may affect communication more than the word because of the sensibility of these topics in conservative cultures (Raddawi, 2016, p.124).

This issue has a significant impact on the professional responsibility of teaching, especially in Muslim countries classrooms. Raddawi (2016) explains that raising such topics may make students uncomfortable, consequently affecting their English language learning. On the other hand, Sercu et al. (2005) claim that language and culture can be separated in certain respects. According to them, inconsistency with language and culture pedagogy builds on the first language bias while dealing with language as a foreign language competence. Moreover, it is the first language speaker who counts as the only acceptable model for language learning. On the other hand, many scholars agree with Agar (1994), who believes that "culture is within language and language is loaded with

culture” (p.28). This agreement emphasises that language is expressed by designing cultural reality.

2.5. Teachers’ Cognition

It is crucial to distinguish between the two terms, perception and cognition. Sydhagen (2017) distinguishes cognition from perception, which is more general than perception. He maintains that the purpose of perception is to convey correct information about our immediate surroundings. At the same time, cognition involves forming beliefs, making decisions and solving problems based on already existing information. It encompasses a broader range of mental processes that include perception but go beyond it (pp.3-6). Therefore, this research examines the areas in which teachers’ perceptions relate to culture. Teachers’ perception intends to focus on cognitive processes and structures inspired by cognitive elements of thinking, including beliefs, knowledge, principles, theories, thoughts, reflections and teachers’ attitudes (Borg, 2003, p.81). The relationship between all these elements and the teachers’ perception of language teaching was classified by Borg (1997) in his diagram. The diagram represents the comprehensive nature of teachers’ cognition, including all aspects of their professional work. This diagram serves as a graphical representation of teaching and highlights the significant role of teacher cognition in their professional lives. It shows that teachers’ cognition influences classroom practices and, in turn, impacts teacher learning. Teacher learning encompasses formal schooling and professional education, reflecting teachers’ ongoing development and growth in their professional journey.

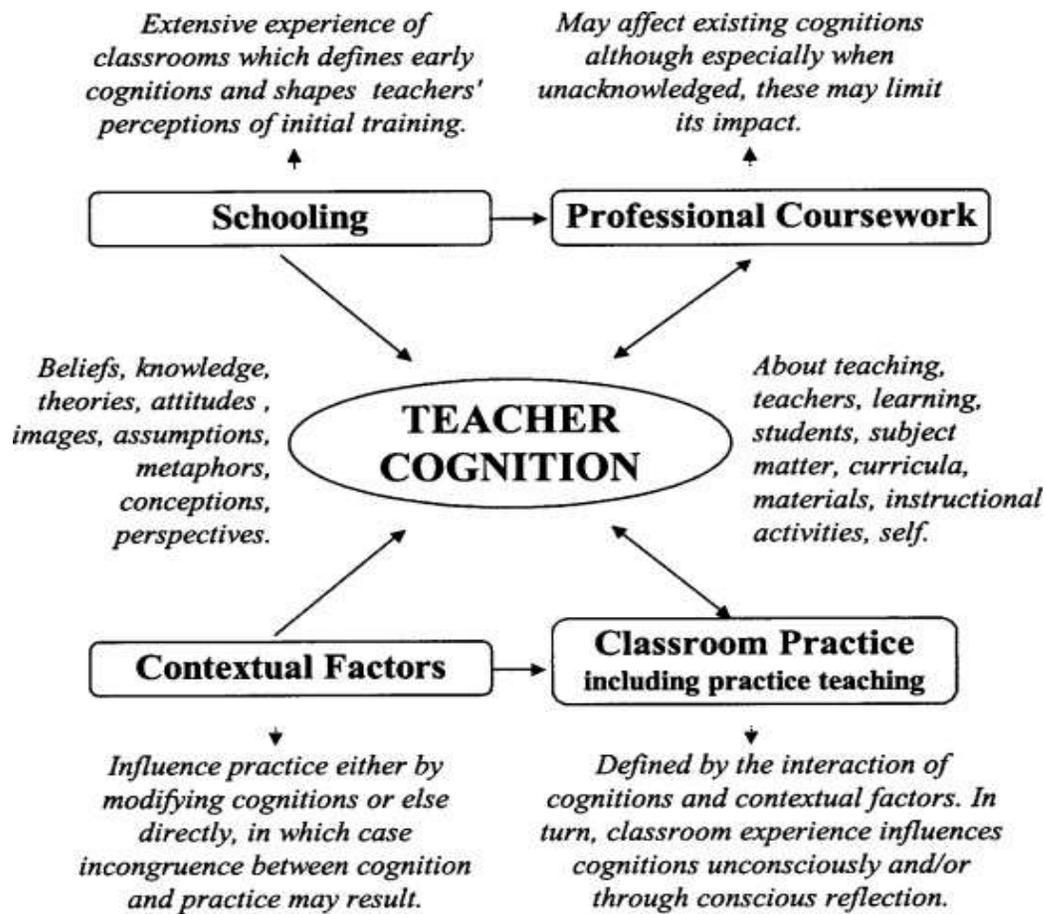


Figure 2.1: Teacher cognition, schooling, professional education, and classroom practice

(Borg 1997 as cited in Borg, 2003, p.81)

This diagram was drawn as an answer to questions related to the influence of teachers' cognition on their professional lives. Borg (2003) summarised the main issues in teacher cognition as follows:

- What do teachers have cognitions about?
- How do these cognitions develop?
- How do these cognitions interact with the teacher's learning?
- How do these cognitions interact with classroom practice?

To answer these questions in his diagram, he indicated that teachers' cognition is related to all other aspects. It describes the relationship between teachers' learning and practices. The diagram emphasises that these aspects and concepts cannot be separated from teacher cognition (p.81). Similarly, Kettle and Sellars (1996) agree that contextual factors, including cognitions and practices, are essential in defining how teachers can implement instruction on their perception. Crandall (2000) believes that teachers' cognition, which mainly consists of their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge, is the role of reflection, while teachers' narratives and case studies are the role of practical experience.

Teachers' cognition has an essential role in integrating ICC. Gordon et al. (2016) summarise the changes and challenges of integrating intercultural competence and critical pedagogy. They claim that students are not passive recipients of the knowledge transferred to them by teachers but are seen as a primary source of knowledge. In addition, teachers' reflections on the teaching and learning process are set by their values and beliefs. They also emphasise that students should know how to find the connection between their experiences and practices and what they learn to discuss their ideas in an environment that promotes critical thinking (57-58). Furthermore, teachers' experience, whether positive or negative, has an essential role in what they promote or avoid in their classes. For example, many teachers intended to integrate cultural components into their teaching because they had a positive experience with L2 culture while learning it (Borg, 2003, p.83).

Therefore, Gong et al. (2022) studied seven preservice teachers in a master of education program to examine their cognition towards teaching ICC. He found that teachers' objectives in teaching intercultural communicative competence were likely to be more attitude-oriented than knowledge- or skill-oriented. (p.8)

2.6. Theories of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The need for and use of intercultural communication originated in ancient times, but it was not until the late 20th century that its procedures, methods, and techniques were investigated. Efforts and research to understand intercultural communication started in the U.S. Ruth Benedict 1947 started studying culture and interpersonal communication in her book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. The book was used to aid in communication between Americans and Japanese prisoners. However, academically speaking, it was Edward T. Hall who first emerged an academic discipline in the field of intercultural communication in his book *The Silent Language* in 1959. Hall's contribution was considered a valuable and enormously comprehensive analysis of the interrelationship between culture and communication. Since then, much progress has been made in this area.

The anthropologist Collier (1989) identified three critical issues to be considered when studying ICC: how culture and communication are conceptualised, how a researcher creates validity and consistency between assumptions and the goals and theoretical perspectives made by the researcher. Collier also introduced the cross-cultural attitude approach, a cognitive approach to ICC. This was also seen in Wiseman et al. (1989) model of cross-cultural attitude, which consists of three components: cognitive deals with stereotypes, affective deals with ethnocentrism, and conative deals with social distance. (p.361).

In addition, several theoretical approaches were conducted to ICC. Kim's (1986) personal network approach focused on three elements of ICC: Moderation process, mindfulness outcome and communication effectiveness. She claims that one's personal network affects one's overall communication competence, assuming that one with a diverse personal network would likely be more competent in intercultural communicative encounters than others. Kim believes ICC is an

internal capacity within each person (p.172). She recognises adaptability as the ability of a person's internal psychological system to change its properties and configurations to suit environmental requirements. Kim identifies three ICC dimensions: the cognitive (determining meaning), the affective (emotions associated with readiness to accommodate various cultural practices), and the operational (behavioural adaptability and resourcefulness in an intercultural encounter) (Kim, 1991, p. 268). Wiseman et al. (1989) conceive ICC as a multidimensional entity and offer another study method. They point to awareness of the home society and attitudes towards other cultures as crucial components of ICC. This understanding of cultural competence is not distinct from Kim's (1991).

2.7. Byram's Perception of Intercultural Competence

Byram and Zarate (1997) believe that creating a relationship between two cultures means acting interculturally. Byram expanded the traditional view about social, sociolinguistic, discourse, linguistic, sociocultural, and strategic competence to include ICC. Byram (2002) agrees with Kim (1991) that ICC dimensions, affective, cognitive, and behavioural are all kinds of intercultural activities. Additionally, Byram created an ICC model that introduces what he calls *Savoir*. The model consists of overlapping elements: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness or political education. (Figure 2.2) below shows Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence, which introduced and comprised two closely related competences: communicative competence and intercultural competence. (Byram 2009, p. 323, as cited in Beaven & Livatino, 2012, p.6)

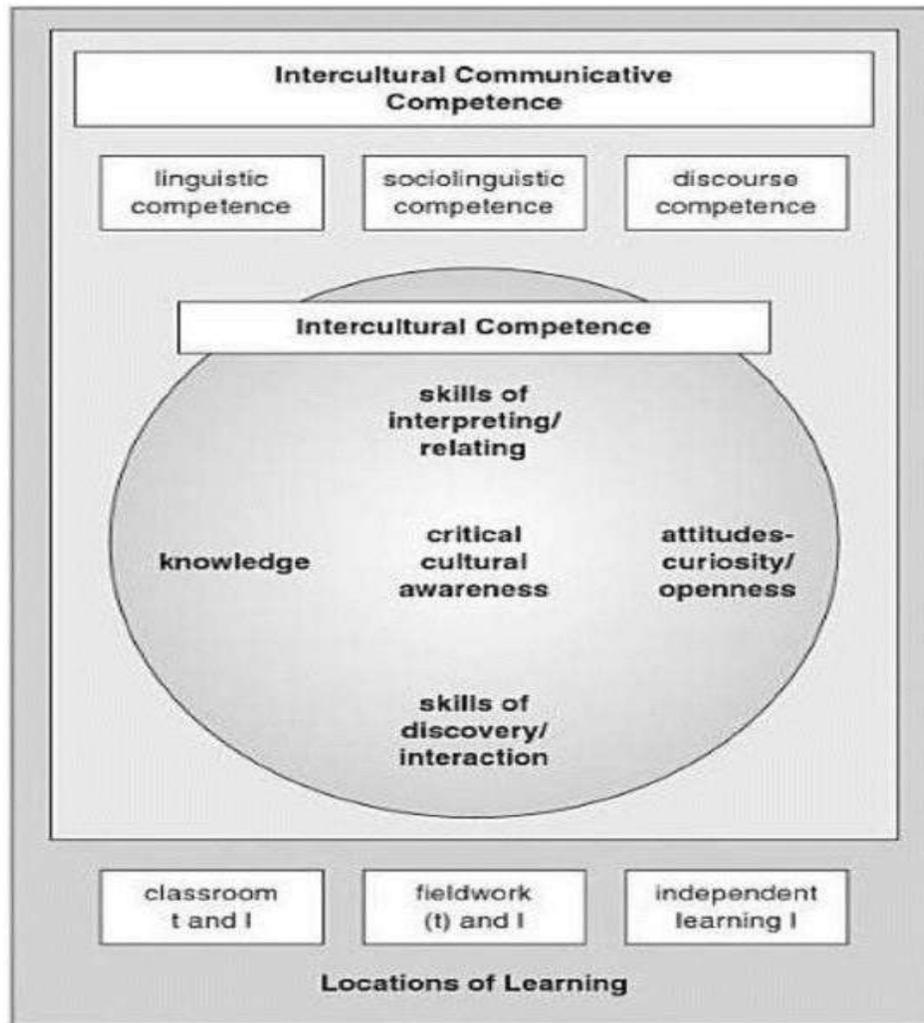


Figure 2.2. Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

According to him, the intercultural communicative competence components are linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence. On the other hand, intercultural competence consists of five values: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting, and skills of discovery, all connected to critical cultural awareness at the centre. Moreover, Byram considered the learning locations in his model, where integrating ICC can be exploited in the classroom, fieldwork, and independent learning. He clarified the teacher and learner's roles and relationships in each area. For example, there would be close interaction between teacher and student. In fieldwork learning, there is a brief or extended stay in the country where the target

language is spoken, and the teacher's role would disappear. Finally, independent learning is a component of the learner's psychological growth. Moreover, Byram stresses that the development of the intercultural dimensions of learners has to involve recognising the two main aims of intercultural competence and linguistic competence. According to him, this knowledge will prepare students for intercultural encounters and let them accept others' perspectives, values, and behaviours. (Byram, 2002, p. 5)

2.8. The Development of Foreign Language Teaching Goals

Teaching and learning a foreign language has changed in the last three decades; more attention has been given to culture and cultural elements when setting teaching goals. Research in this area has to be undertaken to reinforce the existence and importance of culture in language learning. (Chambers, 2001, p.48). Byram (2004) argues that in EFL teaching, huge attention was given to language skills, and little or no attention was given to values. Educators should not see culture as a fifth skill attached to the other four language skills, but it should always be in the background from the first day of any teaching situation (p.13). Similarly, Kramsch (1993) agrees that culture should not be seen or added as a fifth skill to the four language skills but should exist as the background of any language teaching scenario (p.70). When we think of all competences in the language learning process and how competences evolved to include ICC, we realise that ICC covers all other competences' significant components. The following diagram (Figure. 2.3) illustrates how developing teaching goals starts with linguistic competence, which deals with the learner's language knowledge and becomes more practical with communicative competence. The goal was to see how learners use what they acquired in their first competence. However, the triggers of globalisation needed more than those two competences, and two other competences were added to the literature: intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. It is essential to distinguish between the two competences. IC focuses on how individuals build strategies to

interact with people from different perceptions of communicative behaviour with effectiveness and appropriateness. (Bennett 1998, p.7). Meanwhile, ICC is the effective interaction between people across cultural boundaries in cultures that differ from each other (Byram, 1997, p.3). Therefore, ICC is seen as a holistic competence that calls for a holistic approach containing all elements learners need in their language learning. Teachers' ultimate goal now is to develop students' ICC.

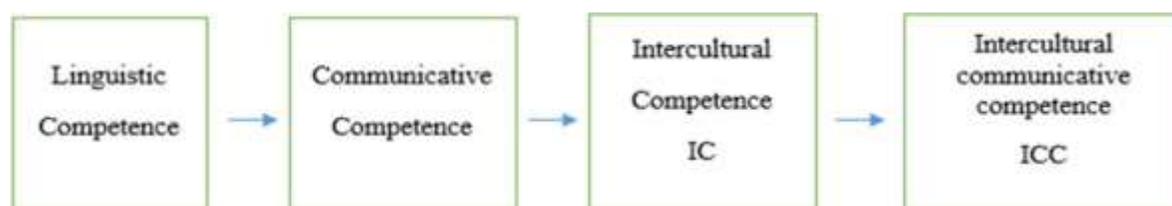


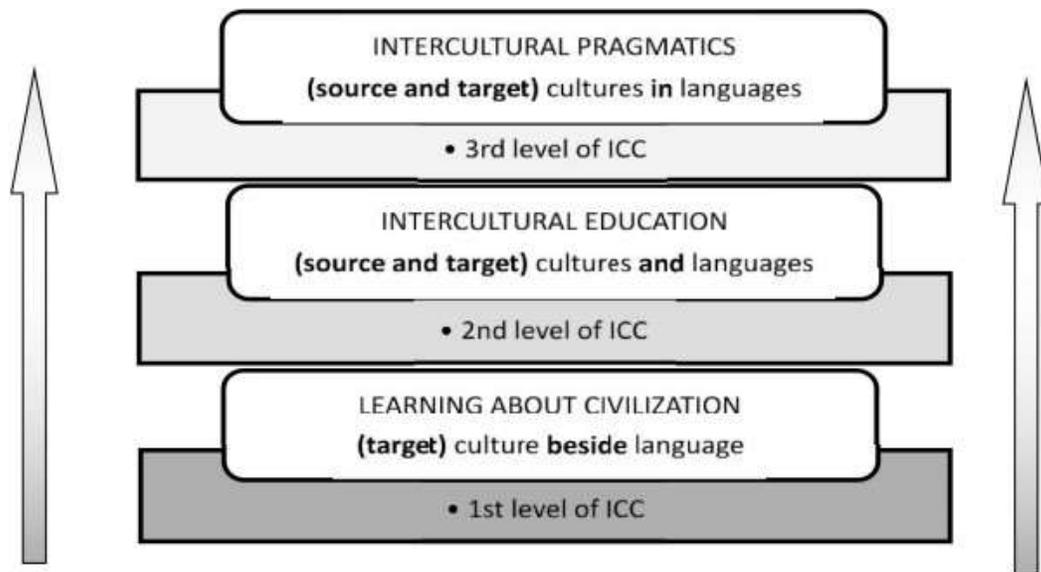
Figure 2.3. Goals Development in Foreign Language Teaching

2.9. Teaching Intercultural Competency in EFL Classrooms

Becoming acquainted with the society of a language is essential to learning a foreign language. Nowadays, people can engage with members of other cultures without physical travel. This change is primarily attributed to various factors, including the influence of popular music, widespread media accessibility, increased tourism, and the multicultural nature of many societies. Consequently, teachers find themselves in a position where they should answer the big question, “How can we make our students acquire a developed ICC within our classes?”. Excellent linguistic competence is insufficient for learners to create successful real-life encounters. Therefore, Kaikkonen(2001) explains that the first step to make learners acquire ICC is to assist them escape from their L1 and what he calls *cultural shell*. He claims this is because of their culture's crucial role in shaping their thinking, speaking, and the world. He also argues that many concepts, including prejudice and stereotyping, are developed at a very young age, even before formal

education begins. According to his explanation, learners are accustomed to perceiving themselves in their immediate culture as the primary reference point, resulting in a limited understanding of other cultures (p.63). However, many would get out of their cultural shell when they begin to learn a foreign language at school and interact with people from diverse backgrounds who exhibit different behaviours and come from various cultures. Kaikkonen suggests that to increase learners' awareness of their culture, language, and other cultures, teachers must set goals to widen learners' views of culture by implementing information about different cultures and their languages (p.58).

Similarly, according to Mikolič (n.d.), the initiation of intercultural education occurs within the school setting. She suggests three distinct approaches or levels to intercultural communicative competence (ICC), as illustrated (Figure 2.4) below.



Approaches towards Intercultural Communicative Competence

Figure 2.4: Approaches towards Intercultural Communicative Competence

In her diagram, learning about civilisation comes at the first level through learning about the traditions and customs of a particular culture. Inconsistent with Lessard-Clouston (1992), Brown et al. (1989), Mikolič (n.d) claims that culture and language are taught separately at this level, and ICC is limited to the visible parts of culture. Later in the second level, ICC develops through intercultural education by connecting culture and language by reflecting and comparing the learners' culture with other cultures. Finally, at the last and highest level, learners can negotiate the cultural differences expressed in language. The third approach aims to increase knowledge of cultural variations and the grammatical components of the source and target languages. It is focused on intercultural pragmatics, which deals with how language is used in social interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds.

From the preceding, we can deduce that ICC's development of information, skills, and attitudes is linked to the learners' psychological development. Therefore, specific teaching and learning goals and suitable tasks must be set up to develop the necessary learning skills and make the learners aware of the diversity in language and culture.

2.10. Review of Relevant Previous Studies.

Traditionally, language teaching has emphasised linguistic competence as the central focus of the curriculum. However, in today's interconnected world of globalisation, equipping learners solely with linguistic skills may not be sufficient. Considering people's diverse cultural interactions, adequate and appropriate communication is crucial in language learning. Consequently, scholars have grown interest in ICC and the role of culture in language classrooms. For how culture is seen and defined among EFL teachers, Morganna and Anshori (2018) conducted a study focused on the exploration of how Indonesian EFL teachers conceptualise culture within the context of EFL

classrooms, particularly about the promotion of interculturality and multiculturalism as essential aspects of 21st-century EFL pedagogy. They aimed to examine how culture is understood and integrated into Indonesia's EFL teaching and learning process. The data for the study were collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. Participated teachers defined culture as the way of life of individuals, including their beliefs, knowledge, values, norms, verbal and non-verbal behaviour, and conventions. Furthermore, they presented culture in communication as discourse and formed the framework for language use. They also considered language as a social semiotic that creates, conveys, and interprets meanings within the cultural context of the speakers. In the context of EFL learning, some teachers emphasised the importance of interculturality in EFL learning. In contrast, others prioritised linguistic competence and argued that students should base their English language skills on native speakers' proficiency.

Regarding how ICC is seen and understood by EFL teachers, Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017) studied teachers' understanding of ICC, their views on integrating ICC into English language teaching, and their perceptions of its impact on learners. Data were collected from Thai EFL teachers at a private university in Thailand via questionnaires and interviews. Their study revealed that EFL teachers had a general, rather than a strong, understanding of ICC. The teachers believed ICC could be integrated into their teaching by incorporating more cultural content for learners. However, according to theoretical explanation of ICC, this approach alone is not sufficient or effective in helping learners acquire ICC. Additionally, the participants recognised the importance of ICC in English language teaching but felt that it does not significantly improve learners' English communication skills.

Similarly, another study conducted by Yang (2023) investigated primary school teachers' understanding of the importance of integrating ICC into English language instruction for grades three

and four in China. In this study, semi-structured interviews using a qualitative approach were utilised. The findings revealed that although teachers' understandings may not precisely match with experts' definitions, the teachers demonstrated an awareness of critical elements of ICC. The study also emphasised educational standards that advocate for promoting learners' ICC to the same level as comprehensive language application competence. They assert that including ICC in EFL teaching is necessary and reasonable, considering the inseparable nature of culture and language. However, the teachers confirmed that in their culture teaching, they focused on teaching the surface culture, such as buildings, dances, music, food, behaviours, gestures, etc. In addition, teachers relied on non-authentic pictures, videos, realia, and authentic materials from textbooks to teach ICC. Their emphasis on using visual and tangible resources suggested a focus on providing concrete examples of culture to enhance students' understanding. This indicated that limited attention was given to other components of ICC, such as openness, which age-related cognitive and affective factors may influence. The teachers also acknowledge that the goals associated with ICC development may not be entirely suitable for primary school children in grades three to four. They recognised that these young learners' cognitive and affective development may pose challenges in fully comprehending and applying ICC concepts.

Another study by Banjongjit and Boonmoh (2018) aimed to explore EFL teachers' perceptions regarding promoting ICC in EFL classes and the strategies they employ for this purpose. The researchers utilised a semi-structured interview to collect the qualitative data. The findings indicated that most teachers perceived ICC as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with individuals from different cultures and be aware of cultural diversity. In addition, the study revealed that teachers primarily focused on desired external outcomes, skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards cultural differences when addressing ICC. The predominant strategies employed by teachers to enhance ICC included sharing personal stories, engaging students in reading and discussions, and

utilising role-play. According to the teachers, role-play is considered the most effective method for promoting ICC. Moreover, the teachers also identified challenges they encountered when promoting ICC, many of which were attributed to the homogeneous background and experiences of the students. Additionally, curriculum design, time constraints, availability of materials, and teacher-related factors were identified as obstacles to promoting ICC.

Regarding experience and its impact on teachers' perception, Estaji and Rahimi (2018) studied how EFL teachers' level of instruction, education, and experience impact their views on ICC. They explored the relationship between teachers' perceptions of ICC and their teaching practices regarding culture. The research adopted a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The findings revealed that teachers recognise the importance of considering multiple aspects of different cultures when teaching languages. They also emphasised that ICC involves not only being aware of the social and cultural norms of the language(s) being learned but also understanding their cultural context. The teachers also believed that this competence could be acquired through various means, including natural exposure to other languages and cultures and utilising resources such as books, periodicals, and English movies. Most importantly, their study results indicated no significant differences in the participants' perceptions of ICC based on their experience, education, and instruction.

Similarly, the perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers towards ICC in this regard were also explored by Banafsheh et al. (2013). They sought to determine whether the teachers' experience influenced their understanding of ICC. The results uncovered a range of similarities and differences in the participants' conceptualizations of ICC and its relevance to English language teaching. Generally, the results indicated that Iranian EFL teachers are intensely aware of the importance of integrating cultural dimensions in foreign language education. They also recognise the significance of

incorporating ICC into language instruction to enhance learners' intercultural competence. Furthermore, the participants in this study generally held similar views on the English prevalent in today's world and the type of English that should be taught in language classrooms. They also agreed on a standard set of activities to enhance cultural understanding, specific aspects of culture to focus on in teaching, and techniques to incorporate cultural dimensions in the Iranian EFL context. In contrast with Estaji and Rahimi (2018), this study results indicated that Iranian EFL teachers, especially those with less experience, perceived culture teaching as disseminating substantial knowledge about the target cultures rather than viewing it as a mission to raise students' cultural awareness (p.75).

Furthermore, Yıldız's (2016) study found that Turkish EFL teachers at the tertiary level primarily had cross-cultural experiences limited to tourism. In addition, their perceptions of ICC and culture-teaching activities varied based on the teachers' undergraduate degree and teaching experience. The researcher employed a questionnaire and observations to find that teachers with ELT graduation degrees had a more positive attitude towards ICC than those with non-ELT graduation degrees. Furthermore, teachers with two to five years of experience showed a more positive perception of ICC. They reported using culture-teaching activities more frequently than teachers with six to ten and 11 to 20 years of experience. However, despite the positive perception of ICC, teachers indicated that their teaching time focused more on the linguistic aspect of language teaching rather than culture teaching.

A recent study by Nafisah et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review to thoroughly investigate the viewpoints and approaches of EFL educators when it comes to incorporating ICC into language instruction. Through a systematic analysis of a wide range of studies conducted in various global contexts, this review drew valuable insights. It deepened our understanding of how educators

worldwide perceive and practice ICC in local and international educational settings from 2016 to 2023. However, despite the teachers' positive perception, a noticeable gap exists between teachers' theoretical understanding of ICC and its practical implementation in the classroom. Furthermore, limited time within the curriculum, inflexible teaching frameworks, and uncertainties surrounding effective application strategies posed obstacles for teachers to integrate ICC.

Nationally, Almadni (2023) conducted a study to examine the attitudes and perspectives of Libyan EFL teachers at the English language departments of two colleges within Misurata University regarding incorporating cultural education into the teaching process. The study aimed to identify the potential challenges that teachers anticipate when teaching cultural information. It also sought to determine whether teachers consider teaching culture alongside the target language and whether knowledge of cultural references and related aspects contributes to cultural awareness. Data collection involved the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that most EFL teachers had a positive attitude towards teaching culture. Additionally, the results from the interviews highlighted specific challenges based on the teachers' perspectives that may arise. These challenges were limited resources, cultural differences, time constraints, student resistance, language proficiency, and teachers' lack of training.

However, the absence impact of ICC inside the classroom was clearly seen in Ramadan's (2021) study. The researcher investigated how the native culture of Libyan students affected their verbal and nonverbal communication. The study examined real-life situations that highlight the challenges faced by Libyan students while studying in the UK. The participants in the study were Libyan students who were pursuing higher education in the UK. The findings revealed that the challenges faced by Libyan students are not primarily linguistic. Instead, they rely on the lack of emphasis on intercultural competence within the foreign language curriculum in Libyan educational institutions.

The absence of cultural and social knowledge among Libyan students results in breaches of cultural norms, leading to socio-pragmatic failures and miscommunications. Therefore, the researcher suggested that enhancing learners' understanding of other cultures can be achieved by language instruction, which should be accompanied by cultural education. He claimed that this will enable learners to deepen their knowledge of other cultures, including aspects such as lifestyle, values, attitudes, and beliefs held by its people. In addition, Ramadan asserted that incorporating cultural education within language instruction not only aids students in their language learning process but also plays a crucial role in preparing them to adapt to a new culture and reducing the cultural shock experienced by many Libyan students upon arriving in the UK. This study also emphasised the connection between culture and language for effective intercultural interactions and understanding.

Regarding ICC's impact on students, Mede and Gunes (2019) conducted a study to investigate students' perspectives before and after incorporating ICC into an elementary-level English course. They also aimed to explore the reflections of the teacher who taught this course regarding using ICC in English instruction. The study's findings revealed significant changes in the learners' perceptions following the integration of ICC. The incorporation of ICC increased their awareness of different cultures, their own culture, and the role of culture in language learning. The teacher confirmed that the learners showed a genuine interest and openness in learning about different cultures. Similarly, Tran and Seepho (2016) aimed to incorporate intercultural content into an English communicative language course to investigate the attitudes of EFL learners towards intercultural communicative language teaching (ICLT) and their development of ICC in the Vietnamese context. Their findings indicated that EFL learners' attitudes towards intercultural communicative language learning had a positive shift. In addition, their ICC, encompassing both linguistic competences and intercultural competence, developed in similar patterns. They also suggested that fostering the implementation of ICLT requires a shift in teaching approaches, motivation of learners, development of appropriate

learning materials, and learner-centred instructional design. By embracing these principles, educators can effectively integrate intercultural content into language classes and support learners in developing their intercultural communicative competence.

In summary, Studies in various contexts indicated both similarities and differences in teachers' varying levels of understanding, conceptualizations of ICC, and its integration into language instruction. However, there is a lack of research regarding Libya EFL teachers' understanding and integration of ICC in their classrooms.

2.11. Summary

To summarize, ICC is recognised as a crucial element in language learning and teaching, as it equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively. Beyond linguistic proficiency, ICC encompasses the ability to engage in meaningful intercultural exchange and demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity. Consequently, ICC is increasingly seen as a vital learning outcome in contemporary language education, preparing students for successful interaction in an increasingly globalised world. Studies have shown that language teachers' cognition, beliefs, and pedagogical decision-making play a significant role in integrating and developing ICC in the classroom, underscoring the need to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and sensibilities regarding intercultural communication. The comprehensive review in this chapter provided valuable insights into EFL teachers' perceptions and instructional approaches to ICC, reflecting the researcher's sustained academic interest and engagement with the interconnected fields of language, culture, and pedagogy.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Research Design

3.0. Introduction

This chapter covers the research methodology applied in this study. It explains the research design, data collection and analysis instruments, and procedures. It also provides information about the participants and the sampling methods adopted. Finally, this chapter describes how ethical issues are considered.

3.1. Research Design

This study is exploratory in nature. The main aim is to explore how Libyan EFL university teachers understand, define, and integrate ICC in Libyan university classrooms. Therefore, a mixed-method design was utilized. Creswell (2014, p. 23) believes that a mixed research design is an “approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone.”

In this research, the quantitative data provided support with numbers to the research, while the qualitative data provided in-depth. Morse (2016) believes that qualitative research using quantitative measures would enrich the findings in mixed methods.

3.2. Sampling Methods

According to Kumar (2011), sampling is the procedure of selecting a few (a sample) from a larger group (the sampling population). A sample is a subgroup of the population you are interested in.

In naturalistic research, participants are selected in purpose according to the study questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.880). Therefore, purposive sampling was used, as this research aims to explore rather than generalise (Dawson, 2007, p.54).

The purposive sampling was employed to choose teachers for the questionnaire and the interview. According to this technique, which belongs to non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected according to their knowledge, relationships, and expertise regarding the research subject (Kumar, 2011). Therefore, the researchers selected participants who teach English language skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All these courses deal with cultural aspects which require knowledge of integrating and developing ICC.

3.3. Participants of the Study

42 university EFL teachers who teach language skills courses at the faculties of education at Tripoli University participated in this study. They were asked to participate in the study by filling out the questionnaire, and they were assured that their data would be used solely for research purposes.

Six EFL teachers of Tripoli University at the Faculty of Education/Janzour were selected for a semi-structured interview. This sample was specifically chosen because their courses often incorporate cultural aspects, highlighting the need to develop students' ICC in English classrooms. Moreover, the participants' experience provided valuable information and insights for the research.

3.4. Data collection instruments

In this study, two instruments were used to investigate the research questions. A questionnaire was conducted to obtain the quantitative data, and a semi-structured interview was employed to get the qualitative data.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was chosen as a means of extracting quantitative data. Kumar (2011) defines a questionnaire as “a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents.” (p.145). In this research, the questionnaire was found suitable because it provides the researcher with descriptive data on participants’ attitudes, beliefs, practices, and relationships

(Cohen et al., 2007; Oppenheim, 1992; Selitz et al., 1976). It also helped in reaching many busy university EFL teachers to know their perceptions and attitudes towards ICC. O’Leary (2014) emphasises that questionnaires have the advantages of reaching many respondents, representing an even larger population, allowing for comparisons, generating standardised, quantifiable, empirical data, qualitative data through open-ended questions, and being confidential and anonymous.

One major disadvantage is that the data’s level of in-depth details or interpretive capacity is constrained (Cohen et al., 2007). To account for this disadvantage, a semi-structured interview was used.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed to help the participants better understand the items and thus provides appropriate answers. It started with a short introduction about the research topic and kept the data confidential. It also contained two background questions. Moreover, no technical and challenging words were used to avoid misunderstanding and false interpretations. The questionnaire consisted of 46 statements and four optional open-ended questions related to interviews (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994, p.40).

Likert scale comprising strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, and disagree was used among the 44 questions. The ‘neutral’ option was added to avoid leading the participant to choose either a positive or a negative attitude when they might not have either attitude or knowledge. The 44 questions were categorised into themes as follows:

- (1) Culture knowledge (items 1-9)
- (2) Knowledge of intercultural communicative competence(items 1-10)
- (3) Beliefs about introducing culture in EFL classrooms (1-16)
- (4) Knowledge of appropriate teaching practices (1-12)

3.4.2. Semi-structured Interview

According to Kothari (2004), “an interview involves the presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses” (p.97). Interviews can be conducted in person, over the phone, or using other comparable audiovisual or face-to-face communication techniques (Kumar, 2011). Furthermore, types of interviews vary in their ability to explore research subjects' opinions, behaviour, experiences, phenomena, etc.

A semi-structured interview was selected in this study because of its flexibility, uniqueness, careful adaptation of the problem, and participants' ability to express their particular experiences (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). Cohen et al. (2007b) define it as “semi-structured qualitative interviews for individuals and groups gather data on the more intangible aspects of the school's culture, e.g. values, assumptions, beliefs, wishes, problems.” (p.97). Moreover, semi-structured interviews are used for reconstructing previous experiences, projecting into the future, validating, updating, and expanding data (Cohen et al., 2007b). This type of interview enabled the researcher to collect data about teachers' knowledge of ICC and experiences. It also provided details and more in-depth information about the study.

However, the researcher needed to be aware of its disadvantages, too. First, data collection and analysis can be time-consuming. Second, interviews require a certain level of skill that the researcher has to have to extract valuable data; and last, they tend to be subjective due to the researcher's bias in forming and interpreting the questions (Kumar, 2011). Therefore, integrating the semi-structured interview with the questionnaire enriched the study. Moreover, it is believed

that triangulation increases the validity and credibility of the work (Dawson, 2007; Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with each participant. Nine main questions were asked, and further questions were asked to gain an in-depth view of their attitudes towards culture teaching and ICC. The interview questions were explained and sometimes rephrased, thus leaving little room for misunderstandings. Moreover, the researcher recorded the interviews to help her refer back to the records and listen to them many times.

3.4.3. Piloting the Instruments

For more valid and reliable data, a pilot study was conducted to check the appropriateness of the intended tools. It is essential to pilot instruments to refine them and ensure that they are exhaustive for data collection. (Cohen et al., 2007b). Hence, the piloting of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview was to test the time and feasibility of the instruments and find out whether there were any ambiguities with the instructions or the questions. Four teachers volunteered for the piloting. They provided feedback on the clarity of the instructions, the length of the questionnaire and some terms used in the questions. The researcher took their comments and feedback into consideration and made some changes.

3.4.4. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Several procedures were used to increase and measure the reliability and validity of the research instruments to ensure the research efficiency.

3.4.4.1. Validity

Validity is the property that measures the precision, accuracy, relevance and quality of the instruments (Sarantakos, 2013). According to Kumar (2011), validity refers to the appropriateness of each stage in achieving research goals. Although achieving complete validity is not possible, it

was essential for the researcher to account for research validity. Several procedures were taken to ensure the research increased face and content validity.

Face validity refers to the fact that the questions and items of the instruments must address and measure every aspect of the problem being evaluated in the research. On the other hand, content validity refers to the degree to which a statement or set of questions accurately represents the topic it is intended to measure. (Kumar, 2011, p.180). Thus, both instruments were reviewed by the supervisor. Then, they were sent to five staff members in the Libyan Academy for feedback about whether the questionnaire and interview items were suitable for the research objectives (face validity) and to what extent the instrument items were in line with the research title and questions (content validity).

One of them replied via email, and four met face-to-face. This enabled the researcher to explain her research questions and clarify some items and choices. Their comments were summarised as follows:

Four pointed out that the questionnaire was lengthy, leading the researcher to remove some items later. In addition, three of them mentioned that background information such as age and gender might be unnecessary, and thus, they were removed too. One suggested that the open-ended questions should be removed since an interview was used; however, they were left optional in case the participants wanted to express themselves in words. Another reviewer considered that belief items should be before the practices in the questionnaire; the order of the items was changed according to the suggestion. Only one suggestion, which was about replacing the word “teachers” with “I”, was not accepted since the word “teacher” is more general and reflects their beliefs about teaching practices in general.

3.2.4.2. Reliability

According to Kumar (2011), “If a research tool is consistent and stable, hence predictable and accurate, it is said to be reliable.” (p.181). In other words, reliability refers to the degree to which a measure produces consistent results when applied to various situations, populations, or instrument versions (Kothari, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007b). Therefore, reliability is a crucial aspect of assessment and is considered a factor that contributes to validity rather than being in opposition to it. In social science, having an entirely reliable research tool is impossible, but some factors affecting reliability must be considered (Kumar, 2011, p.182). This study employed a mixed research design involving using different instruments for data collection, namely a questionnaire and an interview. This approach, known as data triangulation, involves examining the same situation using multiple methods. Triangulation enhances the reliability and validity of research methods (Bryman, 2001). Furthermore, to increase the reliability of the questionnaire, it was sent to some teachers before collecting the data and after making the adjustments for further feedback.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

According to Flick et al. (2004), a researcher should consider some ethical issues because of the close interaction between the researcher and participants in qualitative research. First, the study's objectives were clearly explained before distributing the questionnaire. In the present study, the researcher clarified any ambiguities the participants might face in the questions. She made sure that all terms and vocabularies were clear by piloting the questionnaire for clarity. Interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed place, such as their workplace, lecture room or department office. Either orally or in writing, all participants were informed about the aims of the research and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Furthermore, the researcher obtained permission to record the interviews and informed them that the recordings and their

identities would be kept confidential and anonymous. Besides, they were informed that their data would be used for this research only.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study was collected through two instruments: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The procedures in this research were in two phases. The first phase was collecting data through an online questionnaire using Google Forms. Hard copies were left in departments for those teachers who teach these skills courses and wish to participate, but they need internet access, as it was only possible to approach some target teachers face-to-face due to their busy schedules. The researcher administered the questionnaire within three weeks.

Meanwhile, qualitative data was collected in the second phase, six teachers were interviewed face-to-face by conducting semi-structured interviews. Nine open-ended questions were asked to each teacher, and sub-questions were generated during the interviews. The teachers were interviewed at Tripoli University Faculty of Education/Janzour. The interviews ranged from 13 to 25 minutes. It is worth mentioning that after asking participants' permission to record the interviews, all interviews were recorded to make the data analysis process more straightforward. Furthermore, written notes were written whenever the researcher needed to.

3.7. Data Analysis

After the data collection process was finished, the data from both instruments were analysed. The starting point was filling in the data obtained from the questionnaire in Excel. The researcher believes that Microsoft Office Excel was the appropriate software to manage the data received. This software was selected due to its feasibility and the researcher's lack of training in data management, which often increases the risk of data collection and recording errors (Elliott et al., 2006).

Excel was used to produce descriptive statistics for the closed-ended questions. Open-ended

question data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques. The data from the analysis and themes were used later to support interview results and provide a more in-depth understanding and strength to the findings.

On the other hand, interview results were tackled using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis in this type of research is considered a popular and trustworthy analytical method initially used to find a group of themes that reflect the core of verbal data and discover recurring patterns (Sarantakos, 2013). Themes were generated after coding the data as “themes emerge in TA as a product of a fine inductive analytic procedure it employs and is not pre-constructed” (Sarantakos, 2013, pp.379-380).

3.8. Summary

To summarise, a mixed-method approach was used to investigate Libyan EFL university teachers' understanding, conceptualisation, and integration of ICC within classrooms. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative tools were used to extract data. A questionnaire was first given to 42 participants to collect quantitative data, whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted with six of them. Then, the quantitative data was analysed using Microsoft Excel, while the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. In the end, ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure the integrity of the research.

Chapter four

Results

4.0. Introduction

The present chapter analyses data from the teachers' questionnaires and interviews.

4.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire results were presented according to themes upon which this instrument has been developed, namely: (1) knowledge of culture, (2) knowledge of ICC, (3) beliefs about introducing culture in EFL classrooms and (4) knowledge of the appropriate teaching practices.

4.1.1. Participants Background

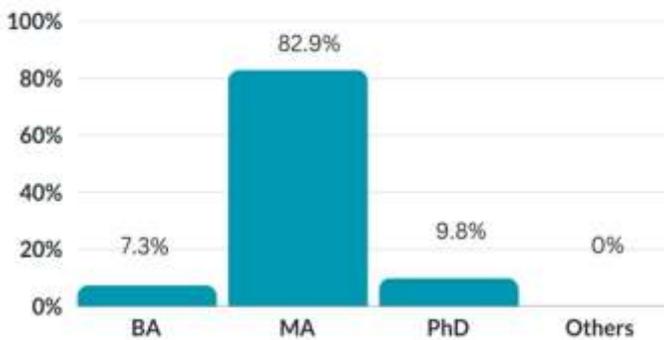


Chart (4.1) Participants background information (Qualifications)

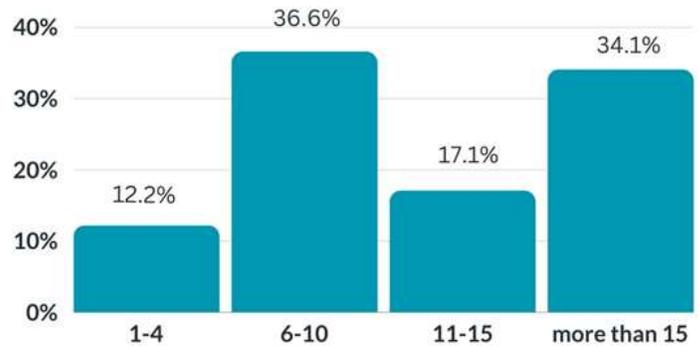


Chart (4.2) Participants background information (Experience)

Chart (4.1) above shows that most questionnaire respondents have an MA degree, which qualifies them for the position by 82.9%. Moreover, chart (4.2) shows that 34.1% of respondents have more than 15 years of experience in teaching, and 36.6% have 6-10 years of experience.

4.1.2. Knowledge of Culture

Since culture is the main component of ICC, this section represents the first theme and explores the participants' knowledge of culture and its definition. Eight items within the questionnaire targeted this aspect. The results of each of the eight items are represented below.

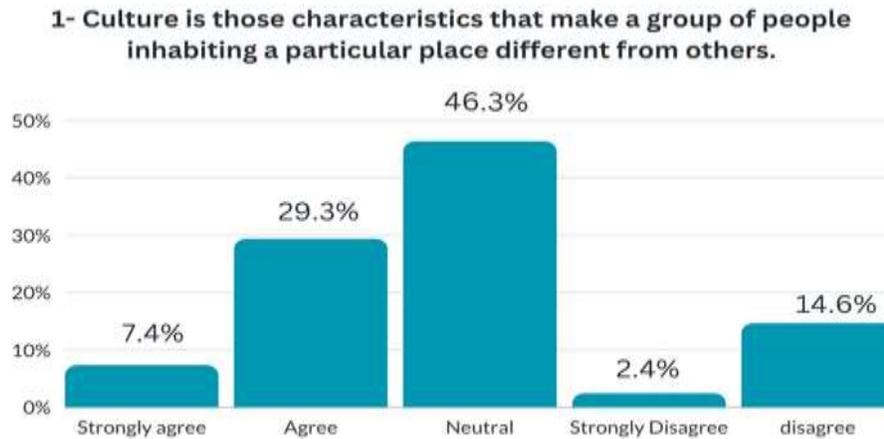


Chart (4.3) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Chart (4.3) shows that 29.3% of respondents agreed and 7.4% strongly agreed that culture is the characteristic that makes people different. Only 17% disagreed, and 46.3% were neutral.

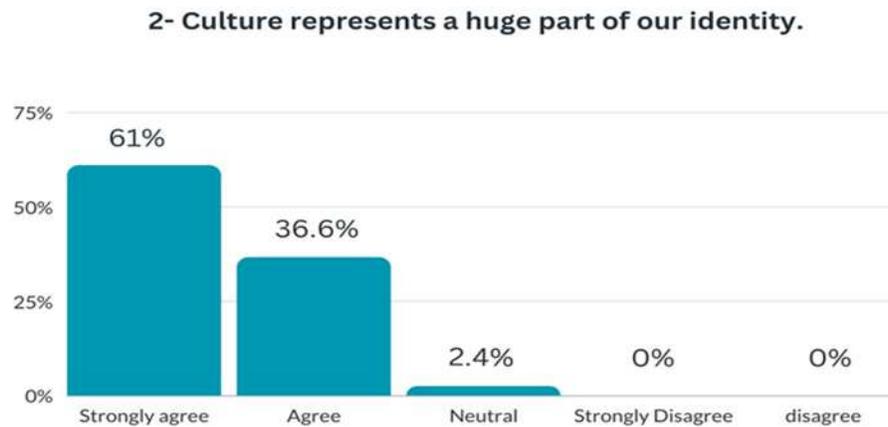


Chart (4.4) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Based on chart (4.4), most participants (97.6%) agreed that culture represents our identity. However, only 2.4% of them were neutral, and none of them disagreed with that.

3- Culture is the behaviours, values, norms and beliefs of a group of people.

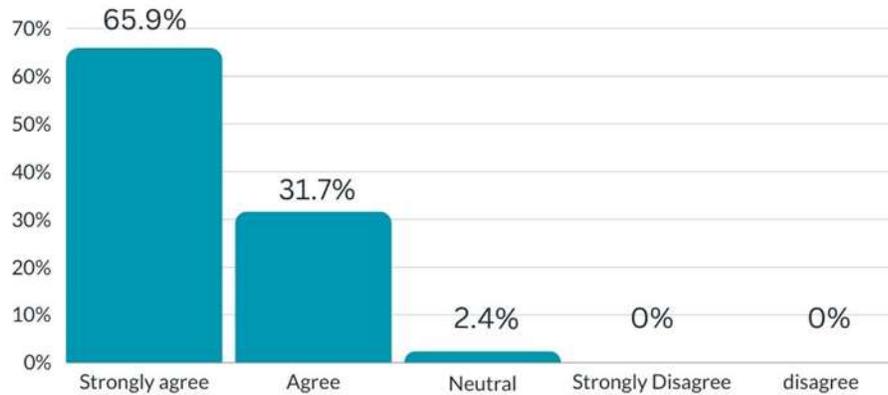


Chart (4.5) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Similarly, chart (4 .5) shows the exact percentage,97.6%, of the participants who agreed that culture can also include our behaviours, values, norms, and beliefs. Again, 2.4% were neutral, and no one of the participants disagreed.

4- Culture refers to the creative component of a group of people such as art, customs, literature, and music.

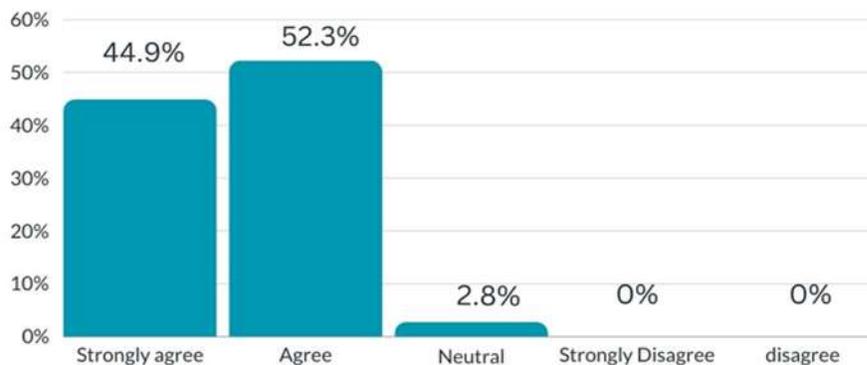


Chart (4.6) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

On the chart (4.6), 97.2% of teachers believe that creative components such as art, customs, literature, and music represent culture. However, while none of them disagreed, 2.8% were neutral.

5- Culture is what makes a nation different from others.

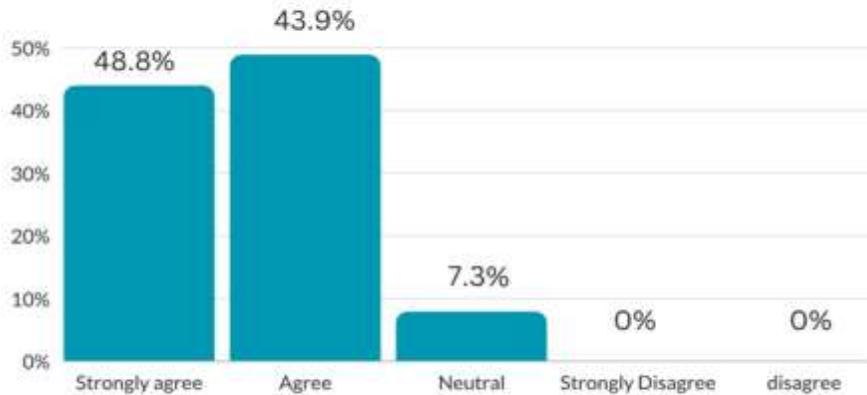


Chart (4.7) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Chart (4.7) reveals that none of the teachers disagreed that culture is what makes a nation different from another. While most agreed to a different extent, 92.7%, the remaining 7.3% were neutral.

6- Culture is the values that different groups share.

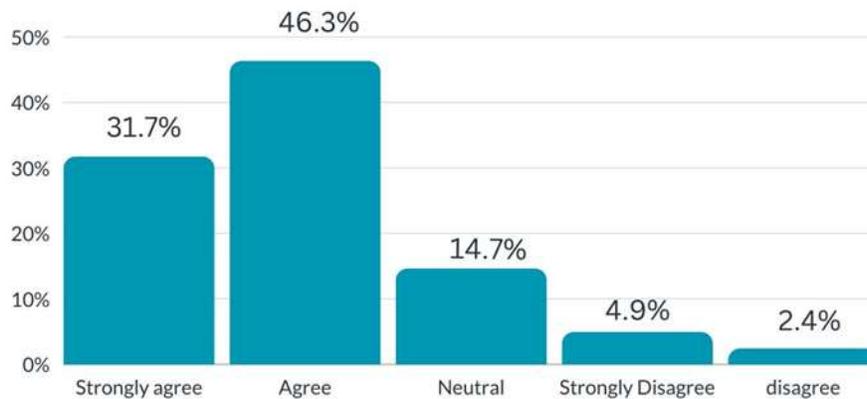


Chart (4.8) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Chart (4.8) illustrates that more than half of the participants, 78%, agreed that the values different people share represent culture. However, 4.9% strongly disagreed, 2.4% disagreed, and 14.7% were neutral.

7- Culture is all the above.

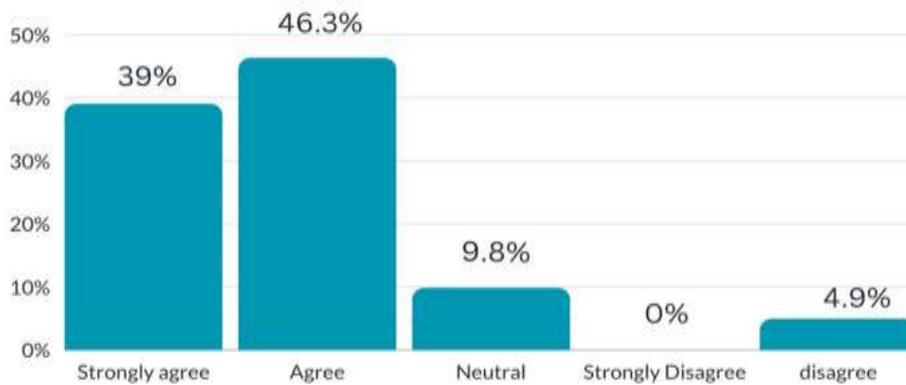


Chart (4.9) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Chart (4.9) indicates that the majority, 85.3%, confirmed that culture is all mentioned definitions. However, 4.9% stated the opposite, and 19.8% were neutral.

8- I do not know.

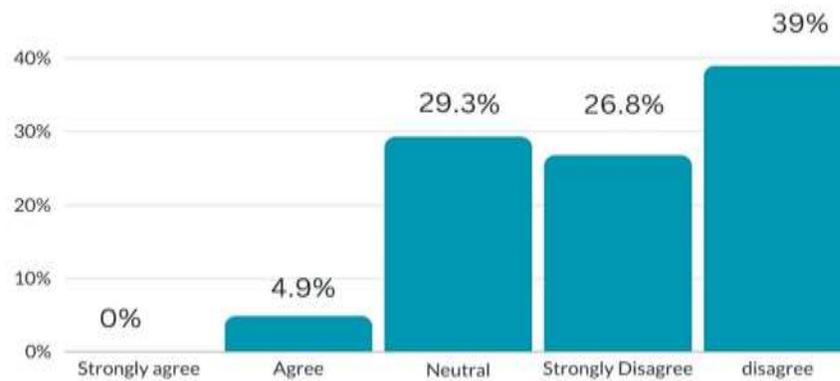


Chart (4.10) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

Chart (4.10) shows that 65.8% of teachers denied that they do not know what culture is. While 29.3% were neutral, only 4.9% agreed, and none strongly agreed.

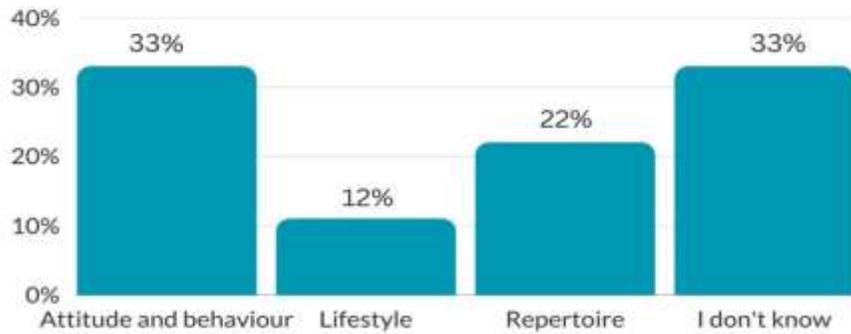


Chart (4.11) If you have another definition, please write it down here.

The chart (4.11) depicts the responses of nine participants out of 42 to the open-ended question. Notably, 33% of the participants defined culture as a combination of behaviour and attitude, 12% described it as a lifestyle, and 22% defined competence as a repertoire. On the contrary, 33% were unsure or did not know how to define it.

4.1.3. Knowledge of ICC

The second theme investigated teachers' knowledge of ICC by investigating their preferences through the following ten items and definitions of competence.

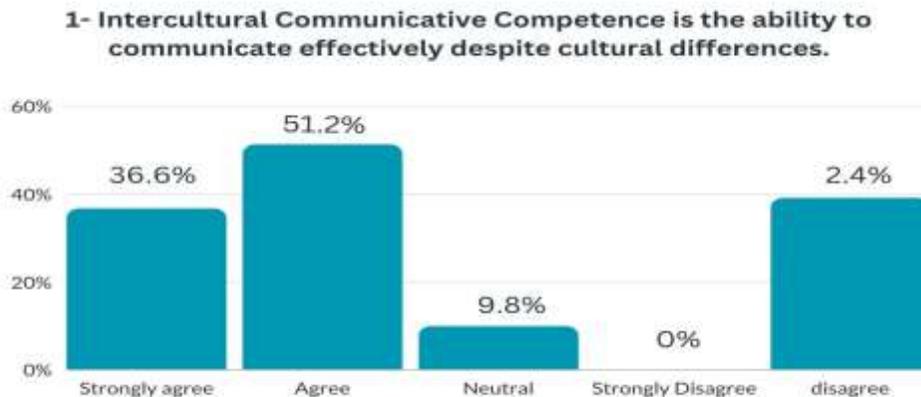


Chart (4.12) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Chart (4.12) illustrates that 87.8% of participants agreed, 9.8% were indifferent, and 2.4% disagreed.

2- Intercultural Communicative Competence refers to communicating with other cultures with no prejudice or stereotyping.

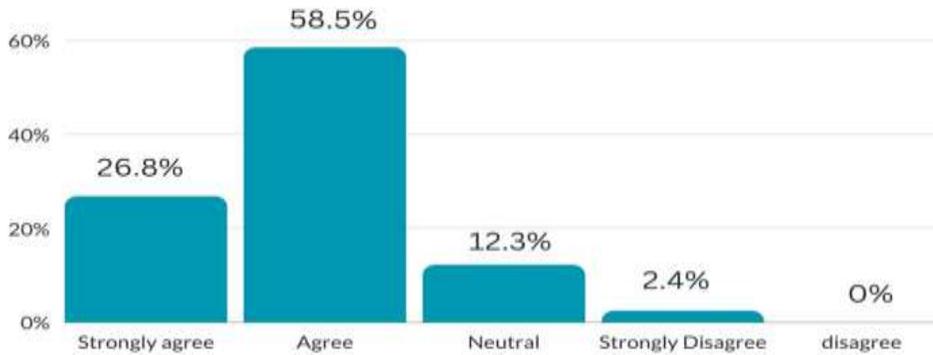


Chart (4.13) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Based on chart (4.13), more than half of the respondents 85.3% agreed that ICC means making no prejudice or stereotyping of others. Meanwhile, 12.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 2.4% strongly disagreed.

3- Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to speak fluently.

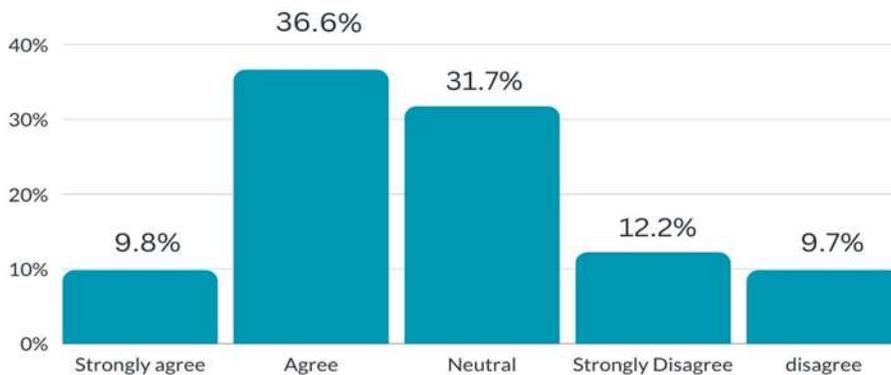


Chart (4.14) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Chart (4.14) illustrates that teachers have different views on this definition. 46.4% agreed to a different extent. However, 22% disagreed, and 31.6% were unsure if ICC is connected with fluency.

4- Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to understand local culture and other cultures despite similarities and differences.

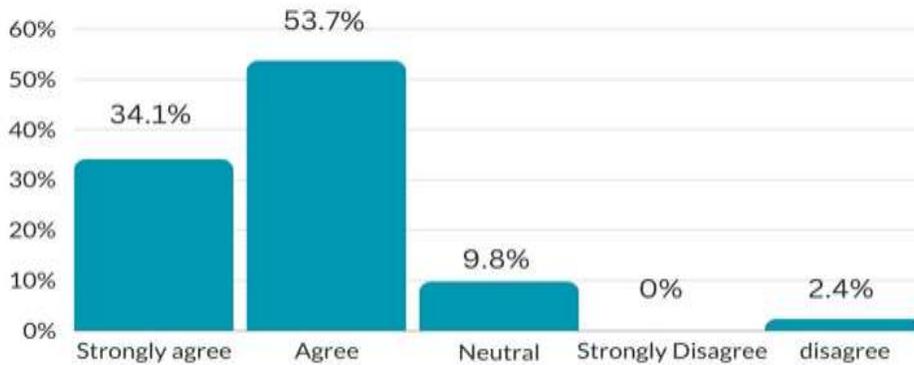


Chart (4.15) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Chart (4.15) shows that most participants, 87.8%, agreed that ICC is the ability to understand local and other cultures despite differences and similarities. Only 2.4% disagreed, and 9.8% were neutral.

5- Intercultural Communicative Competence refers to communication failure between two people.

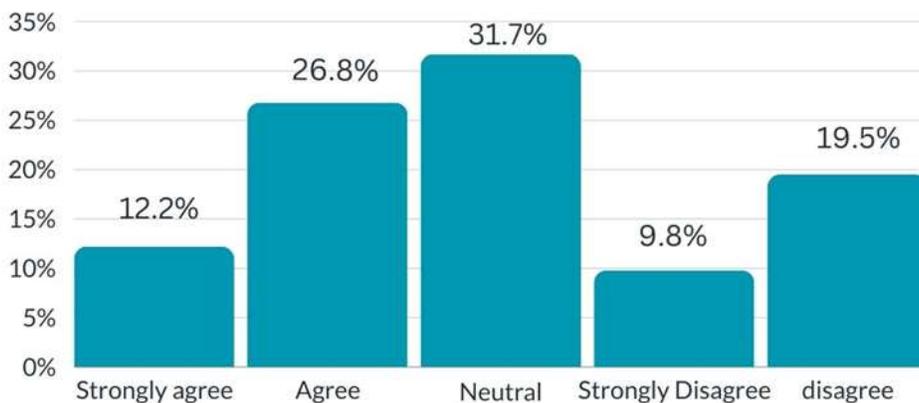


Chart (4.16) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Chart (4.16) reveals that more than a quarter of the participants, 31.7%, were neutral about whether ICC refers to communication failure between two people. While 39% agreed, about 30% disagreed.

6- Intercultural Communicative Competence is to be familiar with different cultures.

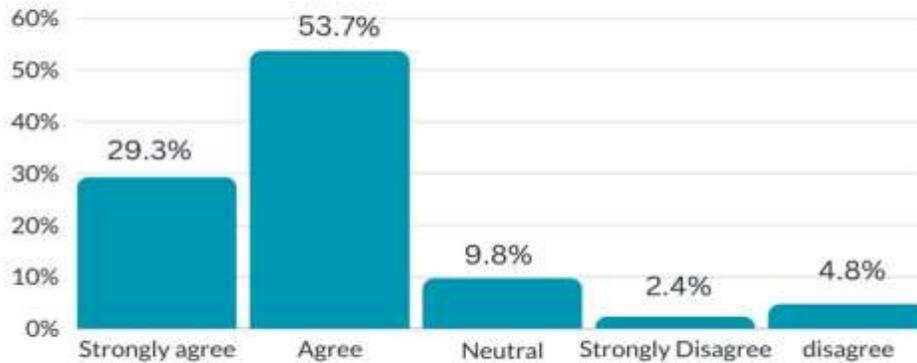


Chart (4.17) to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

The chart (4.17) shows that 83% of teachers agreed that ICC refers to being familiar with different cultures, 9.8% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 7.2% disagreed.

7- Intercultural Communicative Competence is all the above.

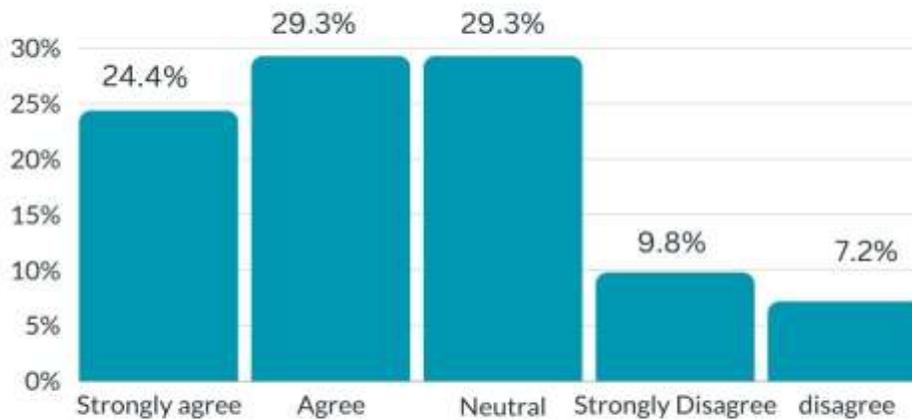


Chart (4.18) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

Chart (4.18) shows that teachers agreed by 29.3% that ICC is all the above were the same as those who were neutral. On the other hand, whereas 24.4% of teachers strongly agreed, only 9.8% strongly disagreed.

8. Intercultural Communicative Competence is none of the above mentioned.

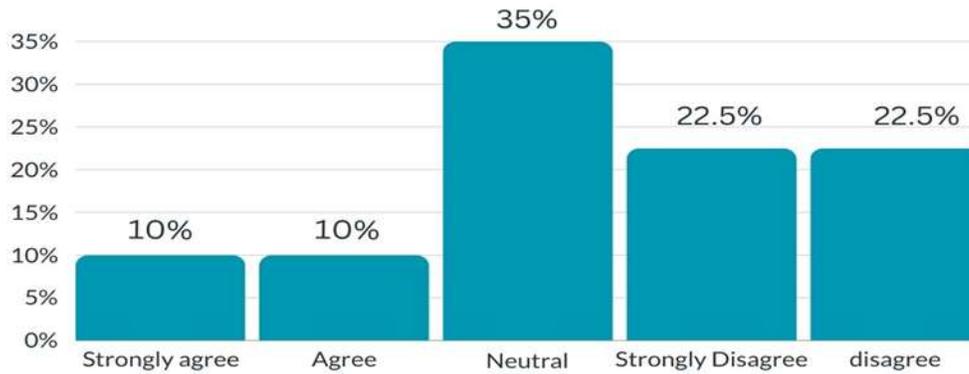


Chart (4.19) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural Communicative Competence?

Chart (4.19) shows that 45% of participants disagreed that ICC is none of the above, while 35% were neutral. Only 20% agreed with that.

9-I do not know.

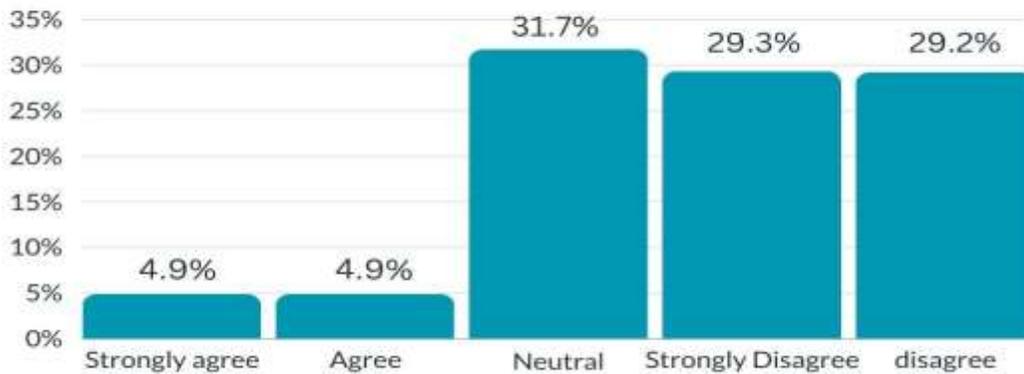


Chart (4.20) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural Communicative Competence?

Based on chart (4.20), the majority, 58.5%, disagreed that they do not know what ICC is. However, a few participants agreed that 9.8% and 31.7% were neutral.

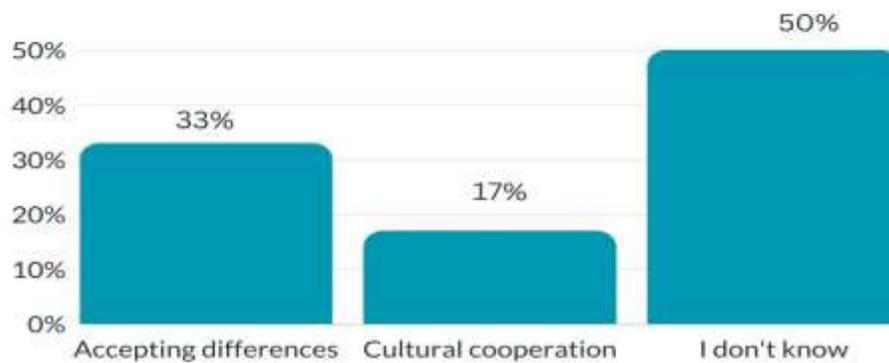


Chart (4.21) If you have another definition, please write it down.

Only six participants out of 42 provided their definitions of ICC. Chart (4.21) illustrates that among those participants, 33% described ICC as how individuals accept and handle cultural differences, while 17% defined it as the cooperation between two or more cultures. However, 50% of the participants were unsure or did not know how to define it.

4.1.4. Beliefs of Introducing Culture in EFL Classrooms

Sixteen items were included in the questionnaire to measure the third theme, teachers' beliefs about introducing in EFL classrooms.

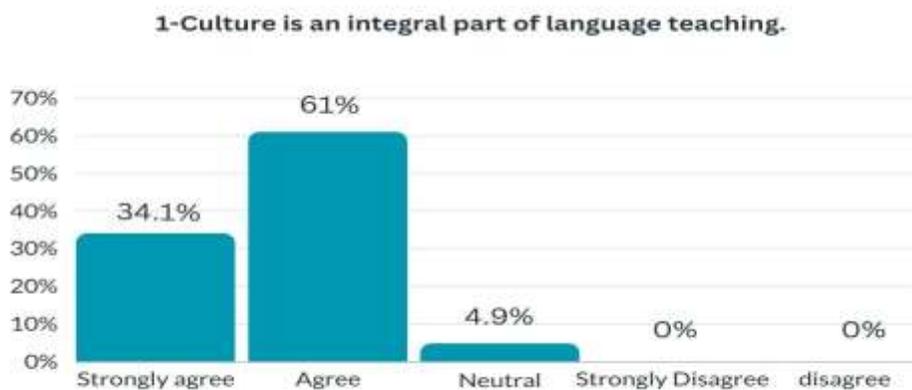


Chart (4.22) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

As shown in chart (4.22), 95.1% of participants confirmed that culture is integral to language teaching. However, 4.9% were neutral, and none of the participants disagreed with that.

2-Intercultural education helps students to overcome prejudice and stereotyping.

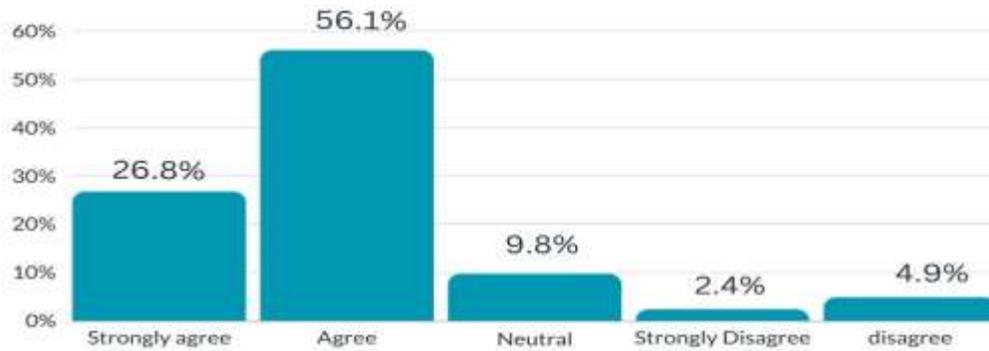


Chart (4.23) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The chart (4.23) shows that 82.9% of the participants agreed that intercultural education helps students overcome prejudice and stereotyping. While 9.8% were neutral, only 7.3% disagreed.

3-Language teachers should provide a realistic image about other culture(s) including negative sides of its society.

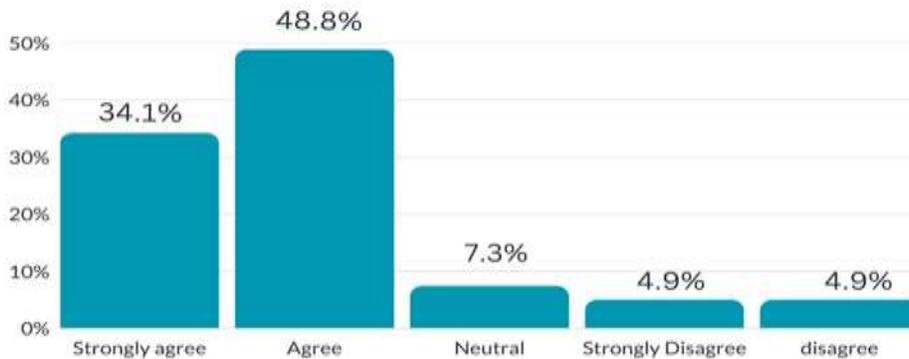


Chart (4.24) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Chart (4.24) illustrates that 82.9% of the teachers agreed that they should provide a realistic image, including both sides of other culture(s). However, 9.8% disagreed, and 7.3% were neutral.

4-Foreign language speakers' values, beliefs, history, geography, and political system need to be introduced in EFL classroom.

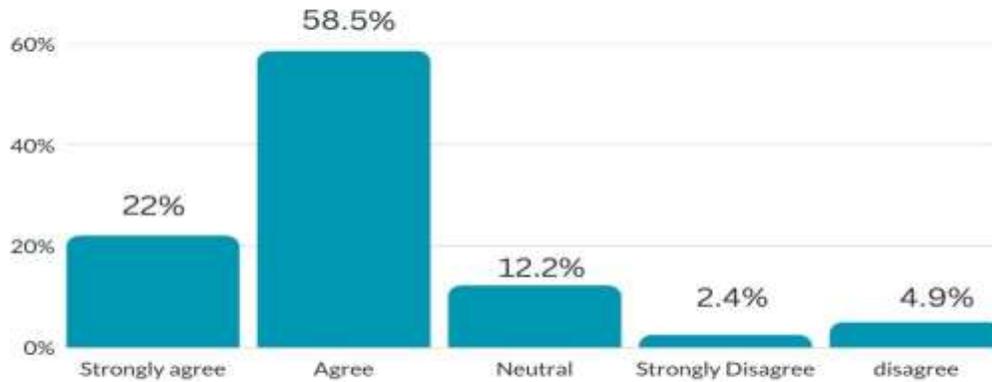


Chart (4.25) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

According to chart (4.25), about 80.5% of teachers agreed that it is essential to introduce foreign language speakers' values, beliefs, history, geography, and political systems inside the classroom. They were followed by only 7.3% of the teachers who disagreed. However, 12.2% were neutral.

5-Foreign language speakers' cultural components such as music, drama, art, food, and customs need to be introduced in EFL classroom.

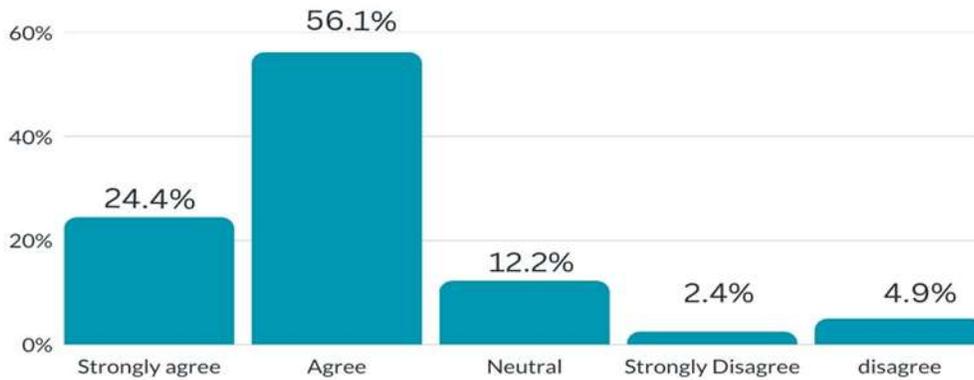


Chart (4.26) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Similarly, chart (4.26) shows that more than half of teachers, 56.1%, agreed and 24.4% strongly agreed that cultural components should be introduced in EFL classrooms. In contrast, a minimal number of participants, 7.3%, disagreed with that, and 12.2% were neutral.

6-Different ethnic and social groups needs to be introduced in EFL classroom.

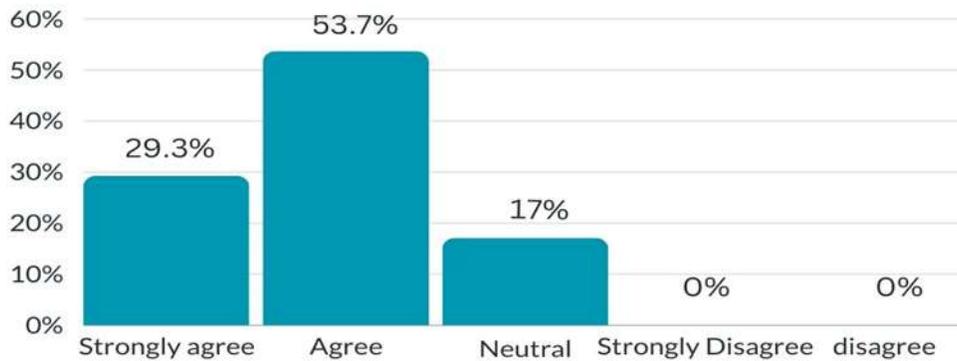


Chart (4.27) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

As shown in chart (4.27), 83% of teachers confirmed the need to introduce different ethnic and social groups inside EFL classrooms. However, about 17% were unsure, while none of them disagreed.

7-Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school.

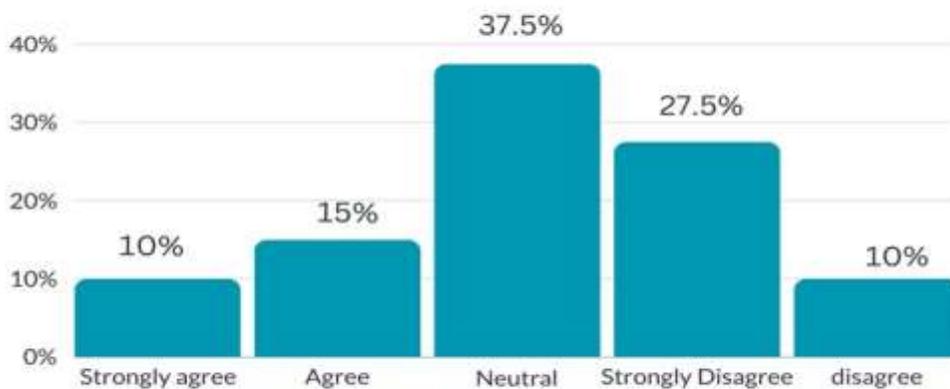


Chart (4.28) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

On the chart (4.28), 37.5% of teachers were unsure whether intercultural skills could not beacquired at school. However, other participants agreed by 25% and disagreed by 37.5%.

8- All students should acquire intercultural competence even if they are not going to travel.

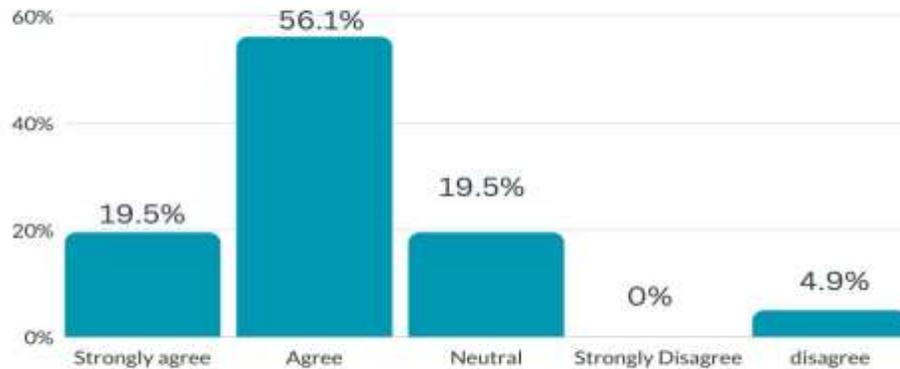


Chart (4.29) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Chart (4.29) confirms that most teachers agreed that all students should acquire ICC even if they are not travelling by 75.6%. While only 4.9% disagreed, 19.5% were neutral. However, none of them strongly disagreed.

9- Teaching culture means developing students' attitude positively toward other people and cultures.

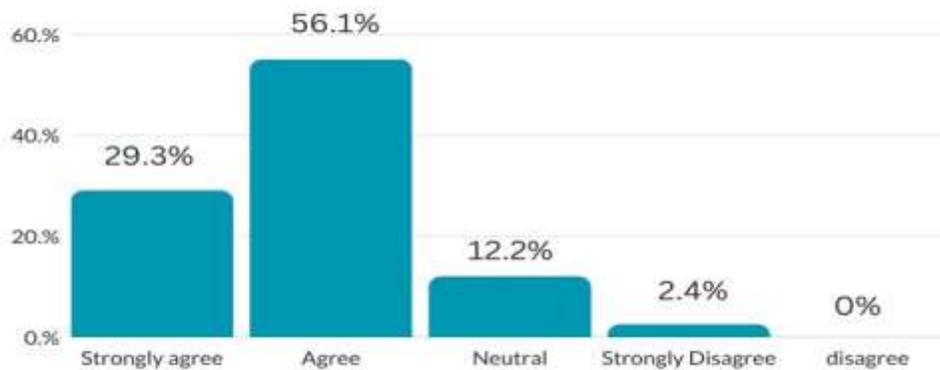


Chart (4.30) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Similarly, chart (4.30) shows that 85.4% of teachers believe that teaching cultures can develop students' attitudes towards other people and cultures. A few strongly disagreed, 2.4%, and 12.2% were unsure.

10- Teaching culture means comparing the national and foreign cultures.

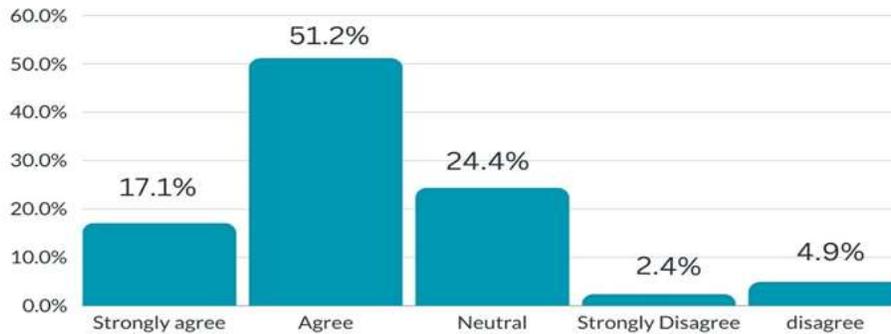


Chart (4.31) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Similar to the two previous points, chart (4.31) illustrates that the majority, 68.3%, think that teaching culture means comparing the national culture and other cultures. However, 24.4% were neutral and 7.3% disagreed.

11- Teaching culture means encouraging reflection on cultural differences.

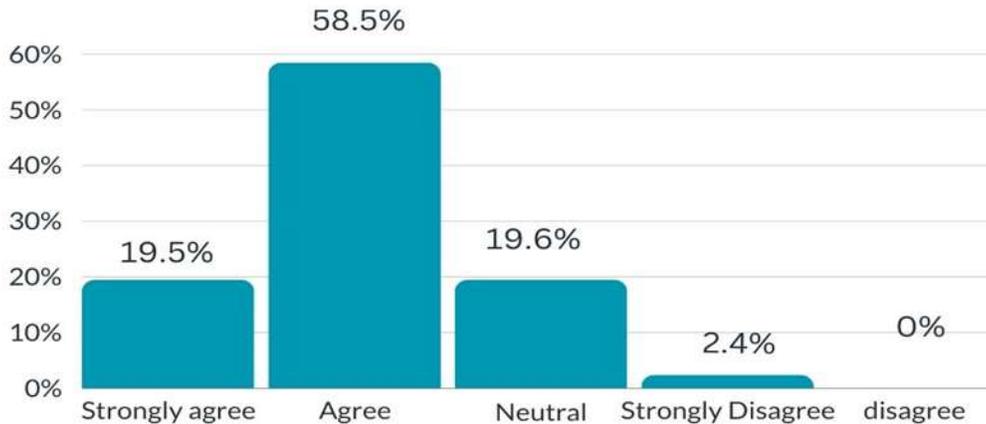


Chart (4.32) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

As shown in the chart (4.32), 78% of participants believed that teaching culture also means encouraging reflection on culture. 19.6% were neutral. However, 2.4% strongly disagreed, and yet none of the participants disagreed with that.

12- Teaching culture means emphasising students' culture superiority.

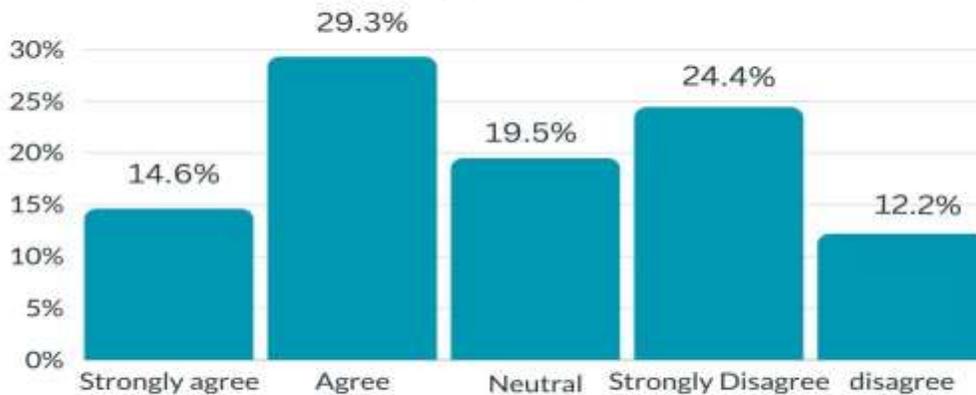


Chart (4.33) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

According to chart (4.33), nearly half of the teachers 43.9% agreed that teaching culture means emphasising students' cultural superiority. Followed by 36.6% of the teachers who disagreed, and 19.5% were neutral.

13- Teaching culture means celebrating others' religious and national occasions and holidays such as Halloween and New Year Eve.

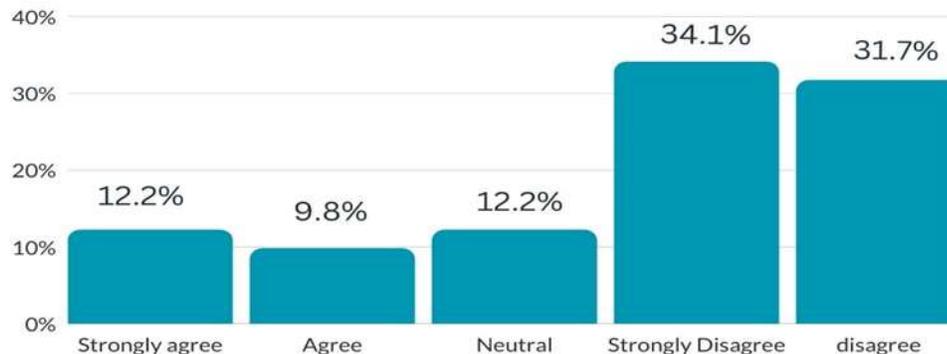


Chart (4.34) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Chart (4.34) indicates that more than half of the participants, 65.8%, disagreed that teaching culture means celebrating others' occasions and holidays. However, 22% of them stated the opposite. However, 12.2% were neutral.

14- Teaching culture means developing students' ability to account for cultural encounters.

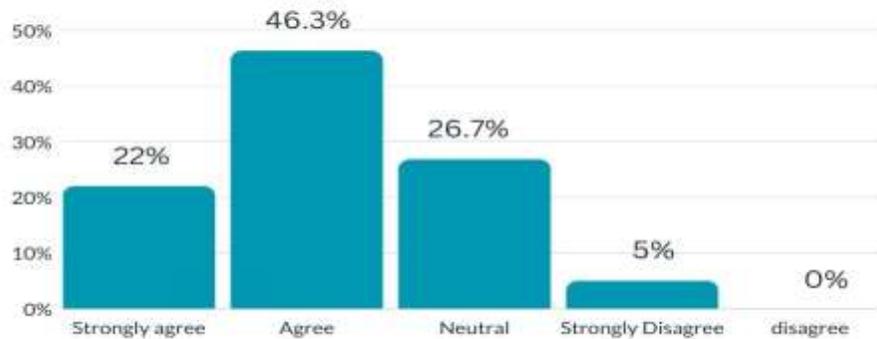


Chart (4.35) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

In contrast, chart (4.35) shows that only 5% of participants strongly disagreed that teaching culture means developing students' ability to account for cultural encounters. However, 68.3% agreed with that, while 26.7% were neutral.

15- Teaching culture means all the above-mentioned points.

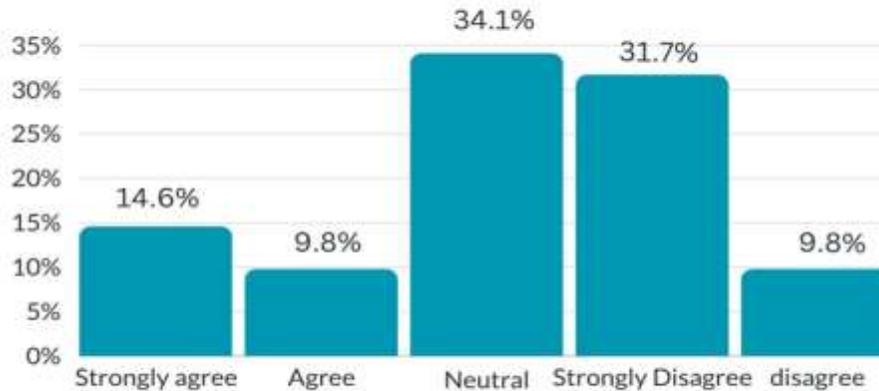


Chart (4.36) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The chart (4.36) illustrates that only 24.4% agreed that teaching culture means all the mentioned points, while 41.5% disagreed. Nevertheless, 34.1% were neutral.

16- None of the above-mentioned points is relevant to teaching culture. Please mention below.

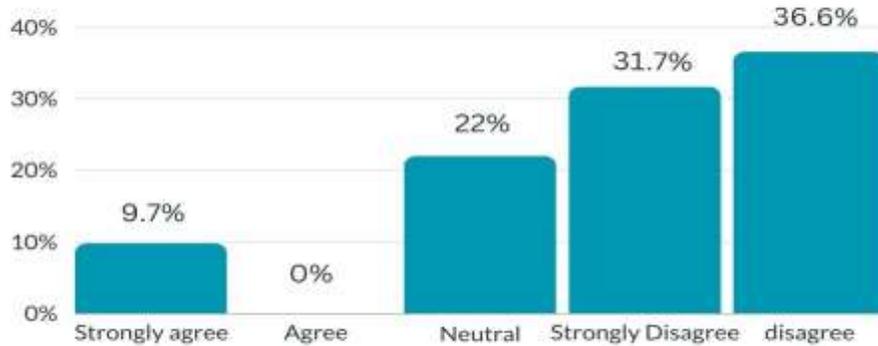


Chart (4.37) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

As shown in the chart (4.37), a significant number of participants, 68.3%, disagreed that none of the mentioned points is relevant to culture teaching. However, while 22% of teachers were undecided, 9.7% strongly agreed, yet none of the participants agreed with that.

17- None of the above-mentioned points is relevant to teaching culture. Please mention below.

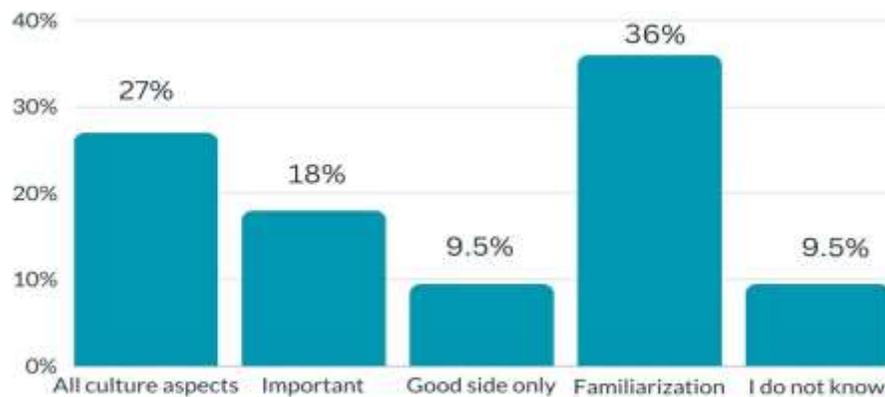
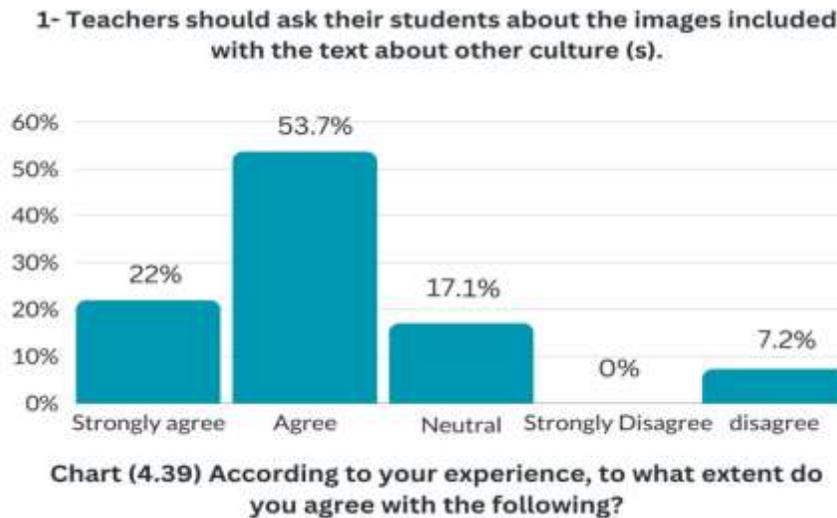


Chart (4.38) Teaching culture is.....

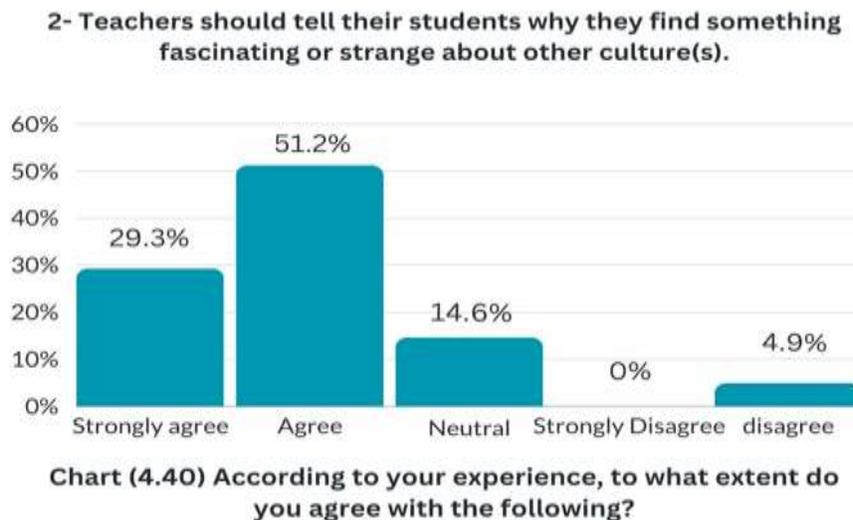
Chart (4.38) shows eleven responses to the open-ended question out of 42. 27% of teachers believe that teaching culture means covering all aspects of culture, while 18% think it is essential to teach culture. Meanwhile, 9% of the teachers believed that teaching culture involves teaching the positive aspects of other cultures. Furthermore, 36% of the teachers believe that teaching culture is about familiarising learners with different cultures, and only 9% do not know.

4.1.5. Knowledge of Appropriate Teaching Practices

The last section of the questionnaire included eleven items to collect data about the fourth theme, which concerns teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching practices.



The chart (4.39) shows that 75.7% of teachers agreed that students should be asked about the images of other cultures included in the text. 17.1% were neutral. However, only 7.2% disagreed, and none of them strongly disagreed.



According to chart (4.40), the majority, 80.5%, see that teachers should tell their students why they find something fascinating about other cultures. However, where only 4.9% of teachers disagreed, 14.6% were undecided.

3-Teachers should ask their students if they find something interesting about the other culture(s).

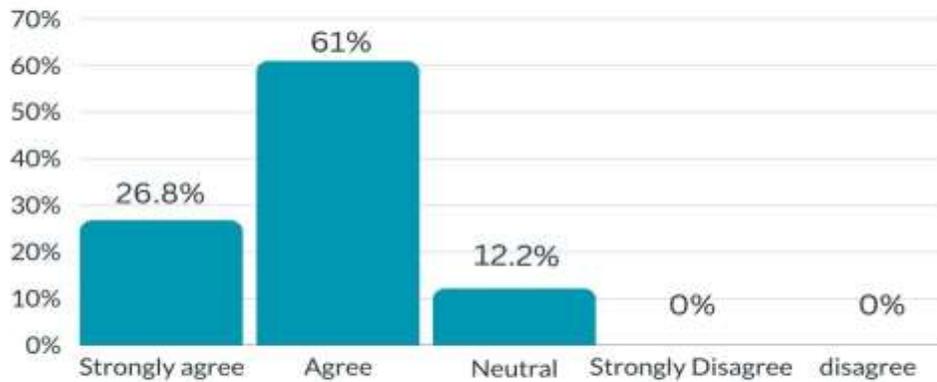


Chart (4.41) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Similarly, chart (4.41) shows that 87.8% of teachers think that teachers should also ask and know what their students find interesting about other cultures. However, 12.2% were indifferent, and none of them disagreed with that.

4-Teachers should share their experience and stories with their students about the other culture(s).

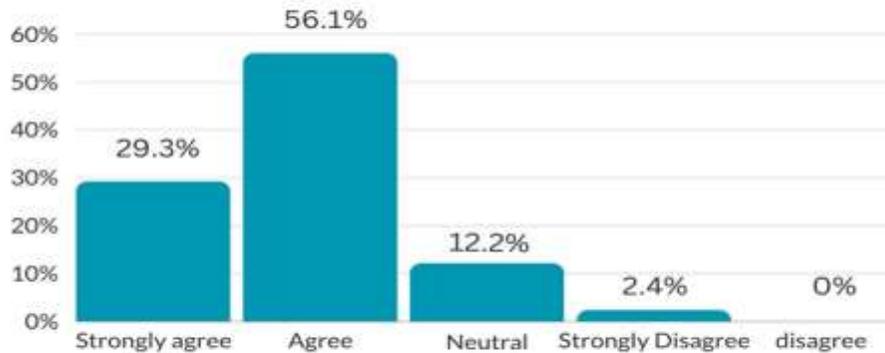


Chart (4.42) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The chart (4.42) indicates that the majority, 85.4%, confirmed that teachers should share their experiences and stories about other cultures with their students. Only 2.4% stated the opposite. However, 12.2% were undecided.

5- Teachers should ask their students about their own experience and listen to their stories about other culture(s).

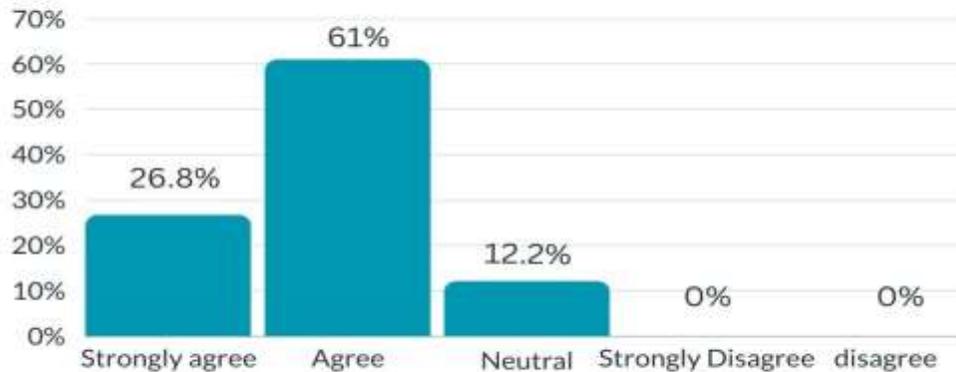


Chart (4.43) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

As shown in the chart (4.43), 87.8% of participants think teachers should ask and listen to their students' experiences and stories about other cultures. However, 12.2% were neutral, and none of the participants disagreed with that.

6- Teachers should ask their students to tell them about what they know about any cultural aspects of other culture(s).

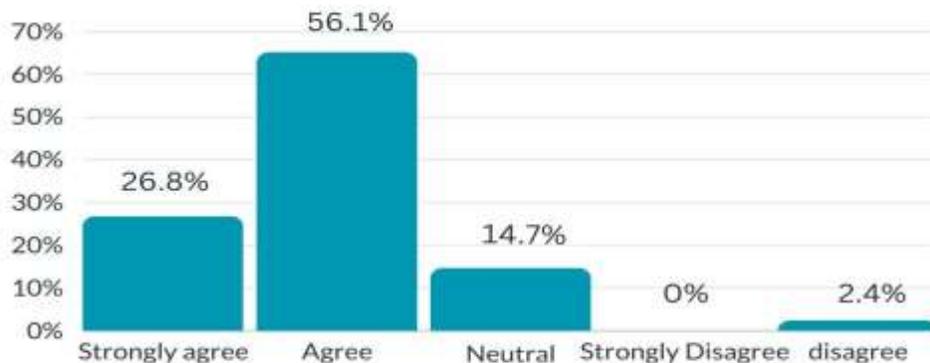


Chart (4.44) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

In chart (4.44), 82.9% agree that teachers should ask their students to share their knowledge of any cultural aspects of other cultures. However, 2.4% disagreed, none strongly disagreed, while 14.6% were neutral.

7-Teachers should ask their students to talk about their own culture.

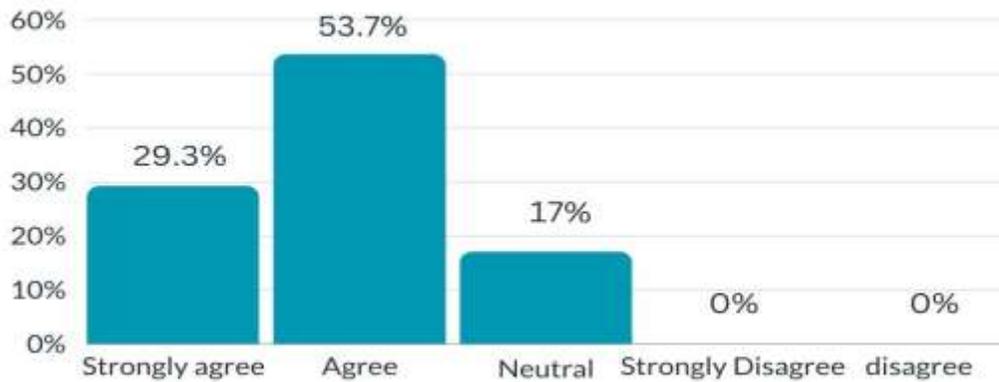


Chart (4.45) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Based on the chart (4.45), 83% agreed they should also ask their students about their culture. On the other hand, 17% were undecided, and none of the teachers disagreed.

8- Teachers should ask their students to compare an aspect of their own culture with other culture(s).

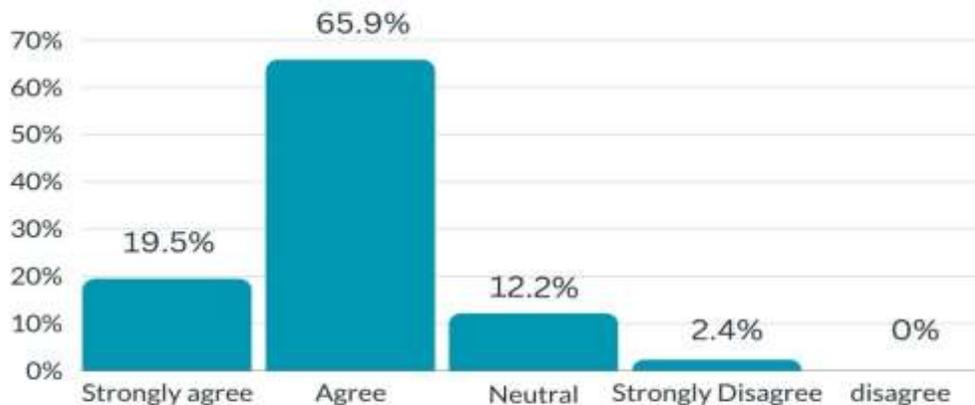


Chart (4.46) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The chart (4.46) illustrates that 85.4% of the participants agreed that teachers should ask students to compare their cultures with others. However, only 2.4% strongly disagreed, and 12.2% were neutral.

9- Teachers should talk with their students about stereotyping, racism, prejudices, and forms of extremism.

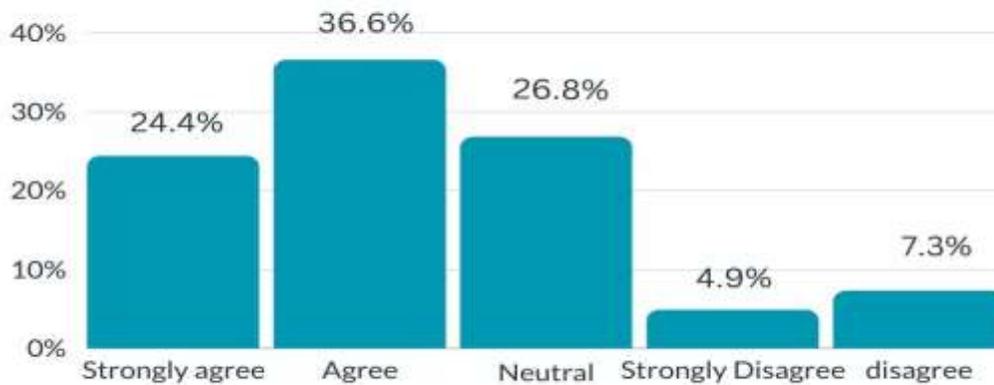


Chart (4.47) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

Based on the chart (4.47), more than half of the respondents 61% agreed with the need to talk with students about topics such as racism, stereotyping, etc. Whereas 26.8% were undecided, 12.2% disagreed with that.

10-Teachers should use all the above mentioned activities.

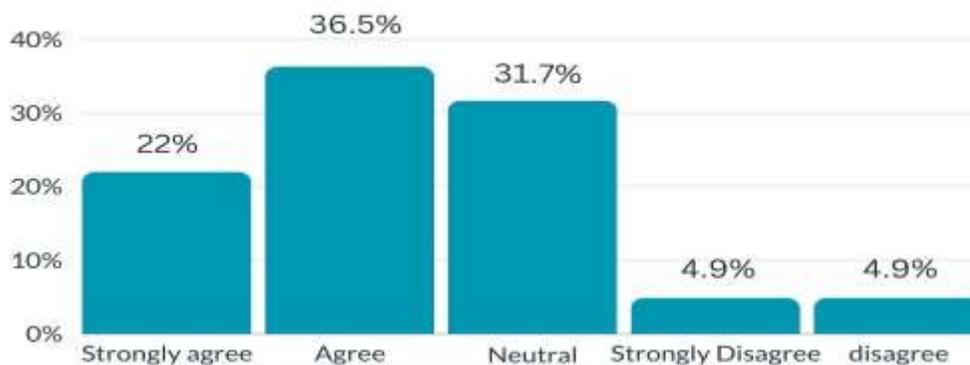


Chart (4.48) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

According to the chart (4.48), more than half of the teachers, 58.5%, agreed that all the activities mentioned above should be used, followed by 31.7% who were neutral and 9.8% who disagreed.

11- Teachers should use other activities. Please mention below.

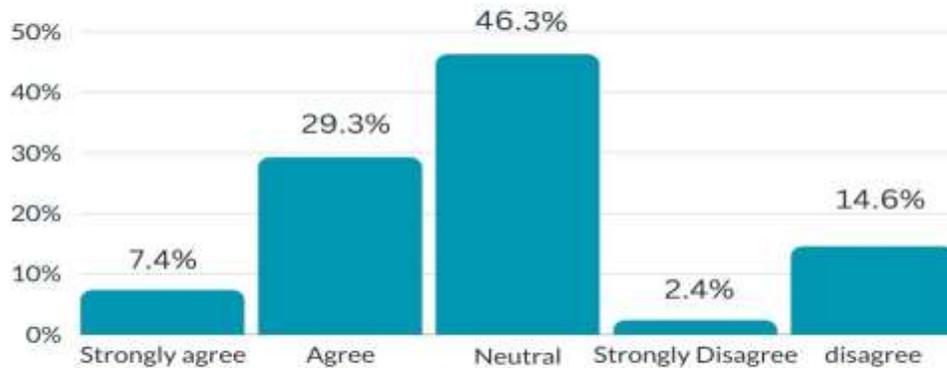


Chart (4.49) According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

The chart (4.49) shows that responses varied. 29.3% of teachers agreed, compared to 14.6% who disagreed. It also shows that 7.4% strongly agreed, compared to 2.4% strongly disagreed. However, the majority, 46.3%, were neutral.

12- Teachers should use other activities. Please mention below.

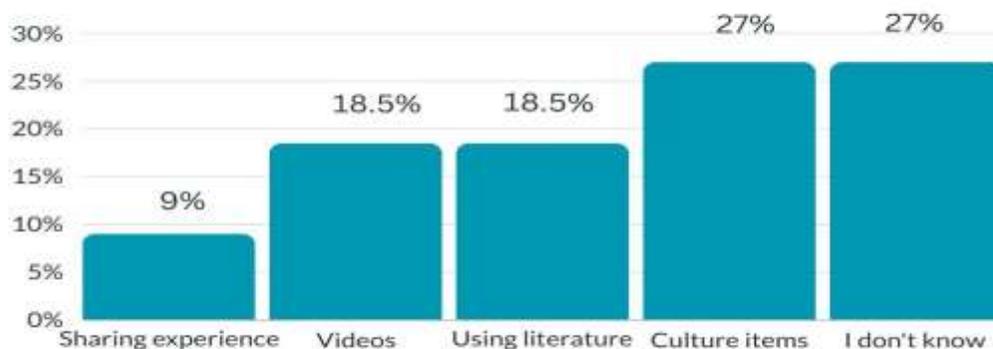


Chart (4.50) Other classroom activities may have not been mentioned.

The chart (4.50) shows other activities provided by 11 teachers out of 42 participants. 9% of teachers think sharing experiences is beneficial for introducing culture. Furthermore, 37% of the teachers believe that culture can be effectively introduced through videos and literature. While 27% of the teachers believe that cultural items such as music and food could be used to introduce culture, 27% did not provide any other activities.

4.2. Analysis of Teachers' Interviews

The first question of the interview was about how many years the teachers had been teaching the English language. The analysis showed that teachers' years of teaching ranged from six to ten years.

The same themes used in the questionnaire analysis were used to guide the analysis of the interview data. These themes are (1) knowledge of culture, (2) knowledge of ICC, (3) beliefs about introducing culture in the EFL classroom, and (4) knowledge of the appropriate teaching practices.

4.2.1. Knowledge of Culture

Regarding the first theme and to urge the participants to express their definitions, the researcher explicitly informed the interviewees that she was not interested in textbooks or dictionary definitions of culture. Instead, she sought their definitions and perspectives of ICC and its role in EFL teaching. Four of the six participants extensively reflected on the topic and offered detailed explanations of culture. Teacher C described culture as *"Culture is what we are used to do mentally and physically, how we think, how we react to things, our attitude, the way we dress, the way we eat, and our beliefs. All of that is about culture."* Moreover, teacher E provided more examples in defining culture, such as those creative components like traditions and celebrations, when she stated that,

It is actually related to everything: the way of thinking and of living, traditions, and celebrations. So, it actually defines who you are. So your culture defines who you are whether you are like from the main culture, Islamic culture, and everything. Or from other cultures. So, it is who you are in terms of your traditions and your background. Everything related to you. This is what makes you like the person who you are, as I mentioned.

Meanwhile, the remaining two teachers presented more concise definitions similar to teacher B's:

“Culture is the background, the effective community, and the inherited ideas of generations.”

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the significance of culture in English as EFL teachers, specifically exploring their perspectives on the connection between culture and language teaching. The findings revealed that, out of the six interviewees, four expressed a general acknowledgment of the importance of culture in language teaching and its impact on students' learning. Teacher B stated that.

It is important for me to tell the students and show them that this is another culture, and this is another life, another environment in a different culture. Furthermore, to show them that you are not only learning the language, you are exposed to a new culture.

Interestingly, in the same context, teacher D emphasised the idea that culture and language learning and teaching cannot be separated *“So, when we talk about culture in our learning or teaching, I think culture plus learning equals one. We cannot differentiate. We can't divide them. OK, each one is complementary to the other.* Furthermore, teachers were asked which cultural elements are necessary in their classrooms. Teacher B emphasised the significance of formal and informal situations as crucial to cultural differences *“Formal and informal situations because sometimes it does not work the way it works in the Arab world. For example, what is in our culture is not in another culture.”*

On the other hand, teacher C considered familiarising students with others' lifestyles to be an essential element.

We have to teach them the way they live there. I mean the way they think, the way they are, the way they eat, the way they dress, they need to know that even the relationships there. I mean, it is not just a relationship between the teacher and the student. They need to know how they are, how do they live in general in every way it's possible.

Likewise, teacher D believes that behaviour plays a vital role in cultural differences and considers it a highly significant aspect *“I think something cultural must be found and must be accepted inside the classroom is the behaviour of how people behave, whether positively or negatively.”*

Teacher D also highlighted the significance of various cultural elements, such as traditions and celebrations, and considered them essential.

A lot of things, even celebrations. For example they should be able to know what Christmas means. Even they don't mix it between Christmas and New Year's Eve. So such things need to be like introduced to students, even food. So like the famous food that this culture of this place is famous for. So I said celebrations, traditions, and sometimes even costumes. So all these things should be introduced to students.

Teacher F emphasised the importance of cultural differences, particularly those related to religion. She stated that understanding and addressing these differences is crucial in interacting with others *“I can get everything from our religion. So, I follow what our Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) said. Anything can confuse my students or pay their attention I talk about it.”*

When the teachers were asked how they acquire and maintain their cultural knowledge, they all agreed that it constantly evolves. They utilise technology and the internet to stay up to date. For example, teacher C mentioned the following *“Either by watching you tubers, like broadcasts, movies, or documentaries.”* Furthermore, teacher D emphasised the importance of staying updated with cultural knowledge and ensuring students are informed. As he stated,

Knowledge, in general, is something that is updating, so the students must follow and know more about culture, not only their own culture but also foreign culture for a certain country or another side of the world. The students must be repeatedly educated to push them to know more about life, culture, customs and traditions.

Interestingly, teacher C provided insights on why teachers should continuously stay updated.

We live here in Libya. We have like limited things that we can just keep ourselves updated about their culture. And what's going on nowadays is a bit dangerous for our students, to be honest! And the world is a bit open there, so it is not just about the language. As I said before, we need to let them know what is right and what is wrong. Not all the cultures they follow are appropriate for our students, so we have to keep updated to follow and teach them.

4.2.2. Knowledge of ICC

according to literature, only two, C and E, out of the six teachers could define ICC correctly.

Teacher C defined it as:

The ability to know the culture, the ability to know how to deal with it, how to behave in certain cultures—they have backgrounds in that. Then how can they behave in these cultures in certain situations or something like that?

The researcher needed to rephrase the question to account for the perceptions of the other four interviewees. Teacher D responded with the following statement:

The effectiveness of communication, I think, is very fundamental, I think. To communicate with other people means that we can say I can know more about them, and I have a spirit to communicate with other people to get something new from them, and this would be very positive here to know more about their culture.

Furthermore, after rephrasing the question and asking how they would describe the ability to communicate effectively with other people from different cultures, teacher F provided a straightforward definition of ICC, stating: *“It is to have a lot of information about other peoples’ cultures and ways of living, to be more educated about other people.”*

All six teachers regarded ICC as a highly significant competence in their roles as language teachers.

When teacher B asked about what ICC means to her as an EFL teacher, she replied

It is important for me to tell the students and show them that this is another culture, another life, another environment in a different country. And to show them that you're not only learning the language, you are exposed to a new culture.

Similarly, teacher C described its role in her classroom as follows: *“As a teacher, I am trying not to teach them just vocabulary and how they speak and stuff like this; I am just trying to integrate our culture with their culture.”*

During the interviews, teachers explained how they integrate ICC into their teaching. Three teachers, B, E, and F, believe that incorporating authentic materials and real-life situations effectively fosters the development of learners' ICC. Teacher E stated the following:

I encourage them, for example, by bringing things from other cultures and putting them in certain situations so that they can be aware of these things and how to act in them. I try to enlarge, develop, and improve their background on that.

On the other hand, teacher C believes that comparing learners' own culture with other cultures, particularly in terms of attitudes, can enhance their ICC *“I keep telling them that if you are living abroad you have to react differently. Sometimes, you need to use your body language, your facial expressions, and all that tells something in their culture.”*

Teacher D believes it is the teacher's responsibility to develop learners' ICC by utilising technology and encouraging learners to open up to others *“It is the role of the teacher. We all know that the world is becoming a global village. Using technology, it is a very small village, and you can get to other people.”*

4.2.3. Beliefs of Introducing Culture in EFL Classrooms

All six interviewed teachers agreed that introducing culture in language classes is important. They only differed on how they saw its importance. Teacher B linked the significance of incorporating culture to its impact on communication, saying, *“It is very important, as I told you. It is not a matter of speaking the language that you are using. If you were dealing with a person from a different background, it is a different perspective, too.”*

Furthermore, teacher D sees that the learning and teaching of a language cannot be separated from its cultural context when he said:

When we talk about culture in our learning or teaching, I think culture plus learning equals one. We cannot differentiate them; we can't divide them. OK, each one is complementary to the other. Culture means a lot, and learning means a lot.

Moreover, teachers expressed various ways in which introducing culture in the classroom is beneficial. Teacher F stated that, *“gaining knowledge about other cultures expands one's overall knowledge base,”* while teacher B linked this cultural knowledge with language usage when she

stated,

I would make the idea of learning this language to its idealistic points. I guess because if you speak the language and do not know how to properly, let us say, properly use it. It is not a matter of grammar and so, but you might be misunderstood, yeah, so it is very important.

Teachers D, C, and E emphasised that introducing culture in the classroom can foster intercultural competence. They further highlighted that students can better understand themselves and their cultural identity by knowing and comparing their culture with others. As teacher D stated,

Benefits, for example, to widen the students' thinking and to push them to know more about the world and how the world has progressed. So, we can push them to have a comparison here and to push them to know more. And another benefit is self-cultural effects if you can say that students must be educated, must know about culture, how to take this and how to avoid this. For example know about their behaviour, know about their style. I think it would be very encouraging to use something cultural here and integrate one another to have something good for the students, and this will be very positive to learn EFL.

Nevertheless, despite the significance of introducing culture in the classroom, certain topics may pose sensitivity and challenges for teachers due to cultural differences. As a result, some teachers, like teachers A and F, acknowledged that they might skip or avoid parts of the curriculum that could be inconvenient. Teacher A expressed his perspective by stating,

I try to escape that part OK. I try to skip that part. Some students understand why I did that, while others do not, but I cannot explain it to them. We just moved to another part. In some cases, like dating or boyfriend, or something like that in general, I may explain to them, but in what we call it in general, I am not going into the depth, just OK into the words that I think it is something not a shaming something not OK make them embarrassing.

On the other hand, other teachers, such as C, D, and E, believe that addressing these sensitive topics is essential to familiarise students with cultural differences. Teacher E emphasised the importance of discussing these issues in the classroom by stating,

You need to mention from the start that, OK, these are not for us, but we need to have an idea about them. As I said, we should know a thing about everything. Even though it maybe it is actually not maybe unacceptable for us. Still, they need to know about it.

In contrast, teacher B argues that the appropriateness of addressing such topics should be considered in light of the student's maturity and language abilities.

It depends on the age of the students. For example, you will not face such paragraphs or reading passages unless they are intermediate and so on, and usually they are teenagers or adults. So they already know. It would be not easy if you are teaching kids to explain things, but when it comes to teenagers and adults, I frankly say that we know it does not work as in our community. Sometimes, we discuss this matter. For example, as you said, dating. I talked about this in one of the courses I had where we talked about that.

4.2.4. Knowledge of ICC Teaching Practices

All interviewees, except for teachers F and D, agreed to share their opinions and experiences with their students. Teacher F mentioned that she only shares her opinion and experience with colleagues, while teacher D believes that sharing such personal insights depends on the classroom environment. As he stated, *“It depends here, OK, the environment inside the classroom.”*

In contrast, teacher B believes it is possible and appropriate to discuss personal experience from both perspectives of being a teacher and a student. She sees the importance of open communication and sharing personal experiences as a means of fostering understanding and growth, which can benefit from discussing their experiences and learning from each other's perspectives, saying *“We can talk about our experience, like being open as a teacher and student.”*

Teacher C emphasised the significance of incorporating both positive and negative aspects of cultures when recounting personal experiences to students when she said that *“I told them like we were discussing something about racism. One time, they were like, they don't know what racism is like. We have sort of racism here in Libya, but when you go abroad, racism is totally different.”*

In a similar context, teacher E believes sharing and incorporating experiences in her classes would familiarise learners with future cultural encounters when she said,

So the culture involves everything. So yes, you can share these experiences. For example, if there were awkward moments, that is a situation that happened because you did not know something about the culture, so you could also mention that.

Based on their statements, all the interviewed teachers confirmed their integration of ICC in their classes during the interview. However, they held differing opinions regarding the methods to achieve this integration. For instance, teacher B contended that authentic materials could accomplish implicit integration *“Implicitly... as we mentioned before. Having the material, authentic material within the curriculum, would, of course. It shouldn't be like a separate thing.”*

On the other hand, interviewees A and E believe the opposite. For example, teacher E said:

Well. I am a fan of implicitly like teaching students implicitly without like trying to be so clear about them. But for culture, I think sometimes some things need to be like. Explicit. So you need to teach them some elements explicitly, other things. You can do them from the way you act.

However, teachers C, D, and F hold a different perspective, asserting that the integration of ICC can be accomplished through implicit and explicit means. This viewpoint is exemplified by teacher D, who expressed, *“I think both are complementary here. It depends on the teachers and depends on the situation they have. I mean teacher, so both are important for me.”*

Teachers usually face different challenges every day; therefore, teachers were asked about the kinds of challenges they face when integrating ICC. While teacher C perceives no challenges when integrating ICC into her classes, other teachers highlighted various challenges. Teacher B specifically mentioned that the age of the students, itself, poses a challenge, *“Age because I taught adults, and it has never been an obstacle because they know like they are grownups, and we even can discuss it.”*. Teacher D acknowledged that he faces challenges in terms of both a lack of technology and outdated materials. He expressed this by stating that,

Types of technology are not provided, found, or available enough for the teacher. That would be challenging, so how can the teacher be updated? How can he develop his students? The syllabus, OK, sometimes is another challenge. So, we need to update

the syllabus to meet students' needs.

Furthermore, teacher E concurred with teacher D regarding the above mentioned challenges, namely the lack of technology and outdated materials. Additionally, she emphasised that another challenge can arise from the confusion or misunderstanding that some individuals may have regarding cultural or religious events.

It may be difficult for them to understand some concepts. They mix between Christmas and New Year's Eve. So when you talk about New Year's Eve, maybe they say, oh, it is haram, well we do not celebrate it but it is not Christmas. They say it's haram because it's Christmas, Christmasn is something different.

4.3. Summary of the Findings

Overall, the findings indicated that the majority of EFL teachers have positive beliefs about the importance of introducing culture in their classrooms, with a focus on developing ICC , promoting balanced cultural representation, and encouraging cultural reflection and comparison. In conclusion, the findings provided valuable insights into EFL teachers' knowledge and perception of culture and ICC, which are critical components of intercultural language teaching. The next chapter will discuss these findings and link them with previous studies.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

4.4. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings described in chapter 4. It correlates the findings with the research questions, aims, and previous studies. It also highlights the limitations, emphasises some implications, and provides recommendations for further research.

4.5. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the attitudes of EFL university teachers towards ICC and its role in their classrooms. The study also sought to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the integration of ICC in their teaching practices. Whereas Chapter 4 presented the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, this chapter discusses the results and relates them to the previous studies in the literature and the research questions. The research questions to be answered are:

1. How do Libyan EFL teachers in universities perceive and define ICC?
2. How do they approach the integration of ICC in their classrooms?

The results are discussed in four categories:

- (1) Teachers' perception of culture.
- (2) Teachers' perception of intercultural understanding.
- (3) Teachers' perception of ICC.
- (4) Teachers' practice of integrating ICC.

5.1.1. Teachers' Perception of Culture

The results revealed that 97.2% of teachers concentrated on defining culture as creative components such as art, customs, literature, and music (see Chart 4.6). This image represents Lee's definition (2009) of the big "C" of culture, which represents the observed and remembered facts such as arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals, and customs of a target society. However, the findings also indicated that teachers broadly understood culture. 97.6 % (see Chart 4.5) believe that culture also includes various aspects of human behaviour, including shared values, daily life, standards of living, and beliefs. Here, teachers' views represented Lee's (2009) small "c" of culture, which refers to the invisible and more profound sense of culture such as people's thinking, beliefs, norms, living conditions, everyday living, and interpersonal relationships. This is also similar to Porto's (2010) description in his approach to the cultural iceberg, where the Big "C" and Small "c" cultures are like the top and bottom of an iceberg. The top is the visible culture, and the bottom is the invisible culture. Furthermore, this finding aligns with Morganna and Anshori (2018) study results.

Moreover, the findings of the semi-structured interview provided in-depth information about teachers' understanding of the essential cultural elements in the classroom and how they acquire and maintain cultural knowledge. Interviewed teachers provided different perspectives regarding which cultural element they considered most important. One of the participants highlighted the importance of addressing formal and informal situations to understand cultural differences. Another participant emphasised the need to familiarise students with the daily lifestyles, thinking, relationships, and general aspects of the culture being taught. This result aligned with previous studies in the literature (Ramadan, 2021; Almadni, 2023).

It also confirms previous studies' results regarding the type of English teachers think is relevant nowadays and the type that should be taught in language classrooms (Banafsheh et al., 2013; Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018).

According to the findings, teachers agreed that cultural knowledge is constantly evolving. They confirmed utilising technology, the internet, YouTube, movies, and documentaries as sources to stay updated. This confirmed previous studies' results regarding the importance of including natural exposure to other languages and cultures and utilising different resources to stay updated (Estaji & Rahimi, 2018; Yang, 2023). Furthermore, they also emphasised the need to stay updated on cultural knowledge to guide students appropriately, considering the potential dangers of inappropriate cultural influences. This suggests that teachers are responsible for navigating cultural differences and providing students with accurate and relevant cultural information. This outcome correlated with the previous studies in the literature (Ramadan,2021; Banafsheh et al.,2013; Almadni,2023; Estaji & Rahimi, 2018) that there is a need for intercultural education, and teachers are in a favourable position to pay more attention to cultural differences and develop ICC.

To summarise, the findings indicated that the interviewed EFL teachers recognise the significance of culture in language teaching. They understand culture as a multi-faceted concept encompassing various aspects of life. They were also aware of the importance of exposing students to different cultures, addressing cultural elements in the classroom, and staying updated on cultural knowledge to provide effective language teaching.

5.1.2. Teachers' Perception of Intercultural Understanding

The results of the current study showed that most teachers know how important it is to introduce culture in language classrooms. This was clearly presented in the findings that teachers believe that culture is an integral part of the teaching process by 95.1% (see Chart 4.22). This result confirmed previous studies' results regarding the importance of incorporating culture and cultural elements in teaching (Ramadan,2021; Almadni,2023; Estaji & Rahimi, 2018; Banafsheh et

al.,2013). The findings also revealed that teachers believe that culture is inseparable from the language they teach and that learning cannot occur without cultural influences. This was clearly stated during the interview when one of the teachers emphasised that language and culture relationships cannot be separated “*We cannot divide them.*” This belief is consistent with the argument made by many scholars that language and culture are inseparable ((Byram, 1994; Kramersch, 1993; Brown et al., 1989). It also confirms the results of previous studies (Ramadan,2021; Yang, 2023). For teachers, culture and learning are complementary to each other. This suggests that culture provides a rich context for learning while learning enables individuals to understand better and engage withtheir own culture and the cultures of others. The results also showed that teachers expressed high confidence and asserted that they possessed extensive knowledge and a strong foundation in understanding culture (see Charts 4.9 and 4.10). This perspective aligns with Nafisah et al. (2023) review of how educators worldwide perceive culture and ICC in local and international educational settings. Moreover, the findings also revealed that teachers believed understanding culture would foster empathy and openness among their students, enabling them to connect it with their culture (see Chart 4.30). Consequently, this connection will encourage students to validate and explain their culture to others. This finding aligned with Mede’s and Gunes’s (2019) and Estaji’s and Rahimi’s (2018) conclusions. Furthermore, the findings showed that teachers believe that intercultural education is beneficial in helping students overcome prejudice and stereotyping (see Chart 4.23). This suggests that they recognise the positive impact of intercultural education in promoting understanding and empathy and reducing students’ prejudice and stereotyping. This agrees with Sue’s (2011) conclusion that engaging students in active and reflective learning activities that promote critical thinking and cultural understanding and challenge stereotyping is essential.

The interview findings shed further light on teachers' perception regarding integrating culture in language classes. While there was a unanimous agreement among the teachers on the significance of introducing culture in language instruction, there were notable differences in their viewpoints

on several aspects.

One area of divergence among the teachers was how they addressed sensitive cultural topics in their classrooms. Some teachers acknowledged that specific cultural topics might pose sensitivity and challenges for teachers due to cultural differences. They mentioned that they might skip or avoid parts of the curriculum that could be inconvenient or uncomfortable for students. Such findings correlated with Raddawi's (2016) study, which states that teachers prioritise avoiding potentially embarrassing or shaming topics. On the other hand, other teachers believe that addressing sensitive topics is essential for familiarising students with cultural differences. They argue that although some topics may be unacceptable or unfamiliar to students, they should still be discussed to broaden their understanding of different cultures. Furthermore, one of the teachers explained that the appropriateness of addressing sensitive topics should be considered based on students' maturity and language abilities. They also mentioned that discussing specific topics may be more suitable for teenagers or adult learners, as they better understand societal norms and concepts. This perception aligns with the previous study of Yang (2023).

On the other hand, there was a consensus among the teachers in their understanding of how culture influences communication. The interviewed teachers believe that simply speaking the language is insufficient when interacting with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. In addition, teachers believe that when individuals from different cultures interact, they bring their unique cultural backgrounds that shape their communication styles, gestures, expressions, and even the meanings they attach to words. This belief emphasised Ramadan's (2021) previous study on the impact of different cultures on communication among people from different cultural backgrounds. However, this result contrasts with Cheewasukthaworn's and Suwanarak's (2017) results that acquiring an excellent cultural background does not significantly improve learners' English communication skills.

5.1.3. Teachers' Perception of ICC

The present study's findings revealed that most of the questionnaire respondents, 87.8%, believe that ICC involves the ability to communicate effectively despite cultural differences (see Chart 4.12). The findings also revealed that teachers widely recognise ICC as the ability to understand local and other cultures despite their differences and similarities. It also showed an awareness of the importance of developing knowledge and understanding of different cultures, including one's own. Such cognition was found in earlier research (Nafisah et al., 2023; Banjongjit & Boonmoh,2018).

The survey results highlighted the substantial agreement among teachers about the definition of ICC. However, the interview results provided more depth on teachers' understanding and perspectives of this definition. One notable finding is that only two of the six teachers could provide clear, correct definitions of ICC. This suggested, for the researcher, that there might be variations in how teachers conceptualised ICC and the extent to which they were familiar with the term. Hence, the researcher rephrased the question to capture the view of the other four interviewees. However, when defining the term, the teacher's responses showed the importance of including cultural elements for effective communication and openness to learning from others. This result was in accordance with the results of two previous studies (Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak,2017; Yang,2023) that EFL teachers had a general, rather than a strong, understanding of ICC.

The findings also revealed that teachers recognise the significance of ICC in their roles as language teachers. They also acknowledged the importance of exposing students to different cultures and environments, going beyond language instruction to promote cultural understanding. This is in agreement with previous studies about the crucial role of ICC as an integral part of language education (Ramadan, 2021; Yang, Y.,2023; Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018; Banafsheh et al., 2013; Nafisah et al.,2023).

5.1.4. Teachers' Practice of Teaching ICC

The questionnaire findings indicated a high consensus among teachers regarding incorporating culture and ICC into teaching practices. Furthermore, they emphasised the need for students' engagement, sharing personal experiences, and exploring diverse cultural perspectives. This finding aligns with previous studies conducted by Banafsheh et al. (2013) and Estaji and Rahimi (2018). In addition, the interview findings highlighted the varying perceptions among teachers regarding sharing personal experiences. Most interviewed teachers agreed on the importance of sharing their insights and experiences with students, except one teacher decided to share those experiences with colleagues only. Those interviewed teachers agreed that it was possible and appropriate to discuss personal experiences from the perspectives of both teachers and students. They also emphasised the importance of open communication and sharing personal experiences to foster understanding and growth. This aligns with Banjongjit's and Boonmoh's (2018) previous explanation about the strategies for promoting ICC in EFL classrooms. Moreover, the participants in both the questionnaire and interview emphasised the significance of incorporating both positive and negative aspects of cultures when recounting personal experiences to students (see Chart 4.24). Another diverse viewpoint was about the methods of integrating ICC and the challenges faced in this process. This diversity reflects the complex nature of integrating ICC and the need for teachers to adapt their approaches to meet their classrooms' specific needs and contexts. These findings agree that contextual factors with teachers' cognitions and practices play an essential role in defining how teachers can implement instruction in agreement with their cognitions, as explained in many previous studies (Estaji & Rahimi, 2018; Banafsheh et al., 2013; Nafisah et al., 2023; Yıldız, 2016)

A perception on how ICC can be integrated was that three teachers in the interviews emphasised the need to use authentic materials, technology, and real-life situations, including both positive and negative aspects of cultures, to foster the development of learners' ICC. This approach aligns with

Ramadan's (2012) conclusion that providing learners with meaningful cultural contexts and opportunities for interaction can enhance their intercultural competence. Additionally, other teachers provided a more comprehensive understanding by emphasising comparing learners' cultures with other cultures, specifically attitudes. This emphasis on developing awareness of cultural differences and encouraging learners to adapt their behaviour and communication styles aligns with the results from previous studies (Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018; Tran & Seepho, 2016; Su, 2011).

While three of the interviewed teachers expressed their belief that both implicit and explicit methods could be employed to integrate ICC into their classroom instruction, another teacher held a contrasting opinion regarding the integration of ICC. This teacher advocated for implicit integration by incorporating authentic materials into the curriculum, suggesting that ICC should not be treated as a separate entity but integrated naturally into the teaching process. Similarly, the same viewpoint was found in Estaji's and Rahimi's (2018) results. However, according to the theoretical explanation of ICC, this approach alone is not sufficient or effective in helping learners acquire ICC, as confirmed in Cheewasukthaworn's and Suwanarak's (2017) study. Conversely, the teachers who believed in both methods explained that certain cultural elements should be explicitly taught to students. At the same time, other aspects could be addressed implicitly through the teacher's actions and behaviour. These different perceptions on the integration of ICC within EFL classrooms underscore the critical role of teachers' cognition and instructional practices in facilitating the integration of ICC, as previously underscored in various studies (Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017; Yang, 2023; Estaji & Rahimi, 2018; Banafsheh et al., 2013; Nafisah et al., 2023).

The present study also examined teachers' difficulties when incorporating ICC into their instructional practices. The findings suggest that factors such as students' age, limited access to technology, and using outdated teaching materials can present challenges in effectively teaching

ICC. Furthermore, the potential confusion or misinterpretation that some students may experience about cultural or religious events with other cultures can further complicate the integration of ICC. These findings substantiate the previous research mentioned in the literature in this particular domain (Almadni,2023; Banjongjit & Boonmoh,2018; Yang, 2023; Nafisah et al.,2023).

5.2. Implications

According to this current research, teachers demonstrated a strong knowledge and recognition of the importance of incorporating cultural elements in language instruction. Furthermore, they have displayed a commendable level of understanding and awareness regarding ICC. This knowledge is reflected in their instructional practices, including their approach to teaching cultural subjects, their handling of sensitive topics, and their efforts to bridge cultural gaps within the classroom. Nevertheless, a greater emphasis should be placed on acquainting teachers and students with the concept of ICC, ensuring a comprehensive understanding and application of its principles in educational settings.

In addition, it is crucial to underscore the importance of developing and implementing updated curriculum and instructional materials to facilitate the effective integration of ICC in language education. As educational landscapes constantly evolve, keeping pace with the changing dynamics of our globalised society becomes imperative. This entails consider again existing curricula to reflect the most current and relevant cultural contexts and perspectives. This can give students a comprehensive understanding of the diverse cultural realities they may encounter in their personal and professional lives.

5.3. Recommendations

The findings of the study call for the following recommendations to be considered:

- All level teachers should be trained to integrate ICC in their classrooms and deal with sensitive cultural topics.
- Students should be taught to become effective communicators and proficient language

users in intercultural contexts rather than focusing solely on their perceived shortcomings as non-native speakers.

- Language education should shift its traditional focus from factual information to exploring values and ways of thinking. Promoting meaningful discussions surrounding cultural values and perspectives.
- Teachers must bond students with their culture first and show respect for traditional, religious, and cultural differences.

5.4. Limitations

As with most studies, there were some limitations in this study. Firstly, because of the time limitations of interviews and the space limitations of questionnaires, it is difficult to account for every detail within teachers' knowledge about ICC and practices. Glens and Pesken (1992) argue that in interpretive research, subjectivity is present but is still accepted as a unique, practical, and personal quality of research. Secondly, the data claimed by the participants about teachers' integration of ICC inside their classrooms were not confirmed in actual teaching through observation due to the researcher's time limitation. Therefore, further research should use different tools to confirm the findings of this study. The final limitation was that the sample size consisted of 42 teachers. This number did not accurately represent all EFL teachers in the faculties of education in Tripoli. Thus the results cannot be generalized.

5.5. Further Researches

In light of the results and findings in the current study, the following are suggested research topics that can be tackled forward as an alternative advanced study:

- An alternative study should look into EFL university students' perceptions towards ICC, as only teachers' perceptions were explored in this study.
- An alternative study should examine the perceptions of primary and secondary teachers,

as this competence should be acquired early.

5.6. Conclusion

This study explored university teachers' perceptions of ICC and how they integrate it into their EFL classrooms. It has been noticed that teachers are aware of the importance of culture and ICC in language teaching and learning. Moreover, they consider culture a multi-faceted concept that includes various aspects of life, including traditions, customs, values, daily life, and beliefs. However, although teachers possess a general understanding of ICC, their grasp of the concept may not be as strong as desired.

Furthermore, teachers acknowledged the significance of exposing students to different cultures and addressing cultural elements in the classroom. They emphasised the need to stay updated on cultural knowledge using technology, online and media sources. Additionally, the findings revealed that teachers believe that culture and language are inseparable and that learning cannot occur without cultural influences. They also recognise that culture provides a rich context for learning and enables individuals to understand better and engage with their own culture and the cultures of others. Teachers also believed that understanding culture would help learners overcome any possible cultural differences they encounter.

Moreover, teachers emphasised the importance of understanding cultural differences in communication to avoid misunderstandings. The findings also revealed teachers' rich perception regarding how they address sensitive cultural topics and the benefits of cultural knowledge. They also acknowledged the challenges they face in their integration of ICC, such as the age of the students, lack of technology, outdated materials, and potential confusion or misunderstanding among students regarding cultural or religious events. These challenges highlight the importance of addressing the diverse needs of students and creating inclusive learning environments that promote intercultural understanding. These diverse viewpoints also reflect the different considerations and approaches that teachers may employ when incorporating culture into language

education.

Teachers also emphasised the need for students' engagement, use of authentic materials, and real-life situations to foster the development of learners' ICC. Moreover, there are varying perceptions on how ICC can be integrated. Some teachers focused on comparing learners' culture with other cultures while others emphasised providing meaningful cultural contexts and opportunities for interaction. Sharing personal opinions and experiences is also seen as valuable activity in promoting understanding and growth by some teachers. They emphasised the importance of open communication and incorporating both positive and negative aspects of cultures when sharing personal experiences, particularly in discussions about particular topics like racism, stereotyping and religious differences. This highlights the complexity of integrating ICC and the need for teachers to adapt their approaches to meet their classrooms' specific needs and contexts.

In conclusion, the study confirmed the significance of teachers' perceptions and practices in integrating ICC. It highlighted the need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to effectively incorporate ICC into their classrooms, navigate challenges, and promote intercultural understanding among students.

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Appendix A

Investigating EFL Teachers at the Faculties of Education Perceptions towards Integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Classrooms

Dear Participants,

I am a student at the Libyan Academy in the applied linguistics department.

I want to thank you for agreeing to share your generous experience with me in this research “Investigating EFL Teachers at the Faculties of Education Perceptions towards Integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Classrooms”.

Ticking this questionnaire will require only 5-10 minutes. Your personal information will remain anonymous, and the collected data will be only used for academic purposes.

I. Personal information.

1. What is your highest degree? BA () MA () PhD () Other:
(Specify).....

2-English language teaching experience 1-5 years () 6-10 () 11-15 () More than 15 ()

II. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of culture?

1- Culture is those characteristics that make a group of people inhabiting a particular place different from others.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
2- Culture represents a huge part of our identity.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
3- Culture is the behaviours, values, norms and beliefs of a group of people.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
4- Culture refers to the creative component of a group of people such as art, customs, literature, and music.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
5- Culture is what makes a nation different from others.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
6- Culture is the values that different groups share.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
7- Culture is all the above.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
8- I do not know.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

9. If you have another definition, please write it down here.

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III- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following definitions of Intercultural communicative Competence?

1- Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to communicate effectively despite cultural differences.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
2- Intercultural Communicative Competence refers to communicating with other cultures with no prejudice or stereotyping.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
3- Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to speak fluently.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
4- Intercultural Communicative Competence is the ability to understand local culture and other cultures despite similarities and differences.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
5- Intercultural Communicative Competence refers to communication failure between two people.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
6- Intercultural Communicative Competence is to be familiar with different cultures.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
7- Intercultural Communicative Competence is all the above.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
8. Intercultural Communicative Competence is none of the above mentioned.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
9-I do not know.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

10. If you have another definition, please write it down here.

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III- According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with the following?

1-Culture is an integral part of language teaching.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
2-Intercultural education helps students to overcome prejudice and stereotyping.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
3-Language teachers should provide a realistic image about other culture(s) including negative sides of its society.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
4-Foreign language speakers' values, beliefs, history, geography, and political system need to be introduced in EFL classroom.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
5-Foreign language speakers' cultural components such as music, drama, art, food, and customs need to be introduced in EFL classroom.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
6- Different ethnic and social groups need to be introduced in EFL classroom.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
7-Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
8- All students should acquire intercultural competence even if they are not going to travel.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
9- Teaching culture means developing students' attitude positively toward other people and cultures.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
10- Teaching culture means comparing the national and foreign cultures.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
11- Teaching culture means encouraging reflection on cultural differences.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
12- Teaching culture means emphasising students' culture superiority.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
13- Teaching culture means celebrating others' religious and national occasions and holidays such as Halloween and New Year Eve.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
14- Teaching culture means developing students' ability to account for cultural encounters.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
15- Teaching culture means all the above-mentioned points.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

16- None of the above-mentioned points is relevant to teaching culture. Please mention below.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
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Teaching culture is

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IV- According to your experience, to what extent do you agree with these classroom activities to introduce culture?

1- Teachers should ask their students about the images included with the text about other culture (s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
2- Teachers should tell their students why they find something fascinating or strange about other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
3-Teachers should ask their students if they find something interesting about the other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
4-Teachers should share their experience and stories with their students about the other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
5- Teachers should ask their students about their own experience and listen to their stories about other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
6-Teachers should ask their students to tell them about what they know about any cultural aspects of other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
7-Teachers should ask their students to talk about their own culture.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
8- Teachers should ask their students to compare an aspect of their own culture with other culture(s).	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
9- Teachers should talk with their students about stereotyping, racism, prejudices, and forms of extremism.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
10-Teachers should use all the above mentioned activities.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
11- Teachers should use other activities. Please mention below.	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree

12. Other classroom activities may have not been mentioned.

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Thank you for your responses to this survey

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Investigating EFL Teachers at the Faculties of Education Perceptions towards Integrating Intercultural Communicative Competence in Classrooms.

1. Background Questions

Name:

Place of teaching:

Years of teaching:

1. How would you define 'culture'?
2. How do you see culture in EFL teaching?
3. What cultural elements do you think are important to consider when teaching a language?
4. What does "Intercultural Communicative Competence" mean?
5. What does ICC mean to you as an EFL teacher?
6. How do you incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into your teaching?
7. What challenges do you face when you integrate intercultural communicative competence?
8. What do you think are the benefits of teaching culture in EFL classrooms?
9. **Finally**, Are there anything or comments you would like to add?
-Is there a possibility to contact you in future?

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

Appendix C

Interview Transcript

Transcript Interview E

University: Tripoli University, Faculty of Education/Janzour

Date: 5/07/2023

Language: English

Recording

Q1- How would you define culture?

Well, it is actually related to everything: the way of thinking, the way of living, traditions, and celebrations. So, it's actually what defines who you are. Your culture defines who you are, whether you're from the main culture, Islamic culture, and everything. Or from other cultures. So it is who you are in terms of your traditions and your background. Everything related to you is what makes you the person you are, as I mentioned.

Q2- How do you see culture in EFL teaching?

Well, I think that it plays like it has a rule because when students sometimes learn about something, they need to learn about their culture as well. For example, their celebrations. So that when someone mentions something in front of them, they can be aware of these things and interact because, as I said, it defines who you are, so the culture also defines the language. So that's why they need to be aware of a lot of things related to the culture.

Q3- what cultural elements do you think are important to consider when teaching language?

A lot of things even like celebrations. So for example they should be able to know what Christmas means. Even they don't mix it with New Year's Eve. So, such things need to be like introduced to students, even food. So like the famous food that this culture of this place is famous for. So, I said celebrations, traditions, sometimes even the costumes. All these things should be introduced to students and should be aware of them so that even the words sometimes they don't have equivalents in their language. So they should be like in forms of the words that are famous in these cultures that they are known for like certain things for certain celebrations. So again. If they travel or like if someone mentions these things, if they watch something, if they listen to broadcast. For example, series, watch movies, they understand that. They can be aware of them. So, they don't like to have culture shock or something like that.

- And how do you obtain and stay up to date with cultural knowledge relevant to your students' background?

E: relevant to my students' background? **I:** Yeah. **E:** would you clarify that more please? **I:** Yeah, I mean here how... **E:** you are not talking about English, their background here. **I:** Yes, that is relevant. How do you connect the cultural knowledge that they should know with your background and you make the connection. **E:** We try, you can like start by asking them what do you do, for example in certain occasions, and then after that we can talk about other occasions. So kind of like comparing and contrasting between them so the things they already have, things they already know, things that they already share with the things that they may not know. So, in kind of would you do?, do you think?, did you know that? for example, in that culture, they do this, and this or they have these celebrations, they have these traditions, they have this kind of food, et cetera,

Q4- What does “intercultural competence” mean to you?

E: What does it mean to me? **I:** intercultural competence. As a teacher? An EFL teacher? **E:** Okay, Let me think about it. It is something that we should be aware of, to be honest, because we're from different cultures, so as I said, cultures are important. So yes, we should try and like always connect between cultures and so on and they should be aware of these things in case of that if they have put in in a situation or something. They can deal with it.

Q5: And how would you define it? Intercultural competence? In your own words, how would you define it?

E: Well, well, well, well. Definition. **I:** Yeah, for the intercultural competence. If the students should have this competence. So, how would you define it? What kind of abilities? **E:** The ability to know the culture. The ability to know how to deal with the culture. OK, how to like behave in certain cultures, they have like backgrounds on that. Then how can they behave in these cultures in certain situations or something like that.

- And how do you think the Intercultural competence can be developed in language learning?

For example, by encouraging them to like, by bringing things from other cultures, by encouraging them, by putting them in certain situations, so that they can be aware of these things and how to act in them and try to enlarge, develop, and improve their background on that.

-And in your opinion why it's important in language education in general?

Because as I said. Culture defines who you are, so it's important to connect cultures. The language to the culture. And this is important for students also, as I said, to be aware of certain elements, certain

things, certain points in these cultures, so that even when they hear them, when they deal with them, when they were put in certain situations.. They can know what to say, for example, how to behave, even sometimes the way you like shaking hands, sometimes it may be inappropriate in certain cultures. So they should be aware of these things, as I said.

Q6- How do you incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into your teaching?

By bringing original things. For example, other cultures. Sometimes, they can watch videos and then comment on them. Something like that. Original things, as I said.

- If you have any experience in other countries with other cultures, would you share that experience?

Yes, of course, I used to live in another country, another place. So yes, as I said, we need to bring the culture to them. So, the culture involves everything. So yes, you can share these experiences. For example, if there was like awkward moments that's a situation that happened cause you didn't know something about the culture, so you could also mention that.

- You can take this as an example?

Exactly, and it would be more interesting, by the way, for students. Especially like stories, personal stories, they can be interesting, you can grab their attention and they may even make them curious to want to know more about these cultures, even other cultures, by the way.

- Do you think that intercultural communicative competence should be taught explicitly or implicitly?

Well. I'm a fan of implicitly like teaching students implicitly without like trying to be so clear about them. But for culture, I think sometimes somethings need to be like explicit. So, you need to teach them some elements explicitly, Other things, you can do them from the way you act. For example, the word sorry we're not famous, we don't use sorry, yeah, okay in our language I think. But in other cultures they say sorry all the time, especially like in the English culture, they say sorry all the time. So in this case for example, When you say sorry, sorry, sorry, you will notice that they started using sorry, sorry, sorry, which is a word that we don't really use in a culture. So, yeah, somethings can be taught explicitly, but others from the way you even act with them, you can try and bring the culture as if you're bringing the culture as a model.

- Do you focus on cultural elements when you teach? Do you set them as a goal before you give your lessons?

As a goal, no, But yeah, I try to like integrate them because I said they are important sometimes even you will face them like in the material itself, so you can try and bring more things extra, for example, material to try and clarify it more for them to try to make it more fun for them. Even sometimes by the way presentations when you ask, some students choose like give presentations, some talk about other cultures and the famous things in other cultures and when someone presents such topics or such a topic, students will feel really interested. So because they feel interested, you can bring them extra things, even if like something little bit a little just point is only covered in the lesson. So you can try and bring extra sheets, extra activities. Extra things for that.

Q6- What challenges do you face when you integrate intercultural communicative competence?

Sometimes it may be difficult for them to understand like some concept. Sometimes specially like because as I said, they mix between Christmas and New Year's Eve. So when you talk about New Year's Eve so maybe they say, oh it's haram , well we don't celebrate it, but it's not Christmas. They say, oh, it's haram because it's Christmas, Christmas something different. So that would be difficult because you would have to explain something like that. Sometimes students grew up knowing that it is actually this is not that! So, I try to convince them that this is not correct. It would be difficult and you would need like to persuade them and everything so that they know that this is ok this is the reality. This is an example as I said so their background may affect this also sometimes you need materials. You need like data shows, so visuals to show things if they related to food and if they are related to hmm .. If you want to show them a video. So these things maybe also may complicate introducing the culture because something need them to watch certain things or listen to certain things.

Q7: What do you think are the benefits of teaching culture in EFL classroom?

Well, I think we have mentioned this. Yes, as I said, it defines who you are. The you way of living, The way of thinking okay, even sometimes your attitude, because it affects you. It has an effect on you. The way of thinking even your thinking because sometimes they limit the things you can do and the things you cannot do. Your food, your traditions, your celebrations, the costumes and everything.

- And how do you navigate potential challenges or sensitive topics when you introduce culture inside your classrooms? For example, if you have dating topics?

E: Exactly. Dating topic haram for us, but it's OK for them. **OK, I:** How do you navigate this kind of topic? **E:** Well, you would mention that, okay. Sometimes you need to come across certain topics that are sensitive, as I said, but you need to mention from the start that OK, these are not for us, but we need to like have an idea about them. As I said, we should know a thing about everything. Even though it maybe it is actually not maybe unacceptable for us. Still, they need to know about it. You got to try and like skip those things for example, take in everything, they won't want to talk about, and it happened. Even when you for example give them a task. Or like ask them that they're going to have a dictation. they will say OK we don't want this word OK for example pork, beer. So yeah. Oh, and they start like giving looks looking at each other!. So yeah. So they feel that it is strange, and they're trying to make fun of it. So these things can be kind of like sensitive.

- And do you skip it, or do you explain it?

I explained them because of course they will need to know them. However, then, for example, for the dictation or like later, I do not bring them to be honest because I feel that some things may be more sensitive, especially like pork, because, as I said, it is difficult because they have background. They grew up like that. So, you give them something like that is unacceptable to them. They will reject it. I still need to explain it, talk about it, and discuss it. It is haram and everything, but they should know about it.

- And what resources do you use to teach intercultural concepts inside your classes?

Well, of course, there are online things, like books, sometimes anything beneficial from a book, or sometimes, as I said, things need videos to clarify them, to clarify their ideas. So, things on YouTube, for example, educational channels or authentic things. As I said, original things, so you can bring them as an example, especially traditional food and customs. Halloween is not famous for us, for example.

- So, how would you describe Halloween?

By for example, bringing some pictures, authentic things, OK

Q8-And finally, the last question, are there anything or comments you would like to add to this Interview?

E: No. **I:** Something that we haven't mentioned and you would like to have for this topic. **E:** Well, nothing is coming in my mind. but if you need like to make extra questions. I am available. **I:** Thank you very much.