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Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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INVESTIGATING ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Dissertation Abstract

Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

This mixed-method study examines the perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) by English teachers in the Preparatory Year (PY) program at King Saudi University. Studies that aim to investigate teachers' perception of ICC and its implementation in a foreign language classroom are relatively scarce. Additionally, the majority of the studies that generally targeted the concept of ICC in a foreign-language learning context were studies that either relied on online blogs, discussion forums, and chat rooms to allow students to communicate cross-culturally, or examined ICC development during sojourns or study abroad periods in the target country. Relatively fewer studies have addressed the concept of ICC in a classroom context.

The researcher employed a mixed-method study conducted in two phases to investigate the importance of the 10 ICC objectives adapted from the work of Byram (1997) and Fantini and Tirmizi (2006). The quantitative data were collected during the first phase of the research through a survey aiming to identify patterns and trends of teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives and their relevance to the curriculum content and classroom activities. The qualitative data were collected during the second phase of the research using focus group discussions and class observations.

The main implication of this study for the field of language teaching and learning is that there is a gap between English teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives and their

current practices in the classroom. The fact that ICC objectives are not an explicit part of the current curriculum limits their systematic integration. Additionally, the current study findings call for the introduction of learning strategies that can accelerate the students' standard academic language learning, one of the ICC objectives that was found to be rather important for the English PY program. The findings also reiterate the need to incorporate other English variations in teacher training sessions. On the other hand, familiarizing students with other English variations will enable them to communicate more effectively and appropriately with the locally expanding Indian and Philippine communities, which would make English learning more relevant for them and more attuned to local demand in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Hazem Osman Candidate	12/3/2015 Date

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Sedique Popal Chairperson	12/3/2015
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CHAPTER I: RESEARCH PROBLEM

Across the globe, many immigrants, businesspeople, and students are involved in face-to-face intercultural contacts. The technological advancement of online social networking is making it even easier to contact people virtually from all parts of the world. This interconnectedness requires the ability to convey messages beyond cultural and linguistic boundaries effectively and appropriately. As national economies are becoming more interconnected, U.S. corporations' involvement in doing business abroad is increasing. To adapt to these global economic changes, these corporations are increasingly relying on employees with an advanced understanding of the world's languages, cultures, and politics. In this regard, the U.S. Committee for Economic Development issued a report in 2006 entitled *Education for Global Leadership*; in its conclusion, the report draws attention to the importance of language and cultural skills by stating that "to keep America safe in our rapidly changing world, knowledge of foreign language and cultures should no longer be esoteric skills solely for experts" (U.S. Committee for Economic Development, 2006, p. 29).

Across the Atlantic, the importance of learning English as a foreign language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been realized as a medium for advancing the country's military power as well as technical training in all fields (Cordesman, 2003). Every year, the Saudi military sends many officers to the United States to receive military training; and many Saudi students travel abroad to the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Western countries to continue their education. This trend to pursue education abroad was initiated by the Saudi government in 2005 with the Saudi

Scholarship Program, which aimed to enhance the quality of education for younger generations. As stated in Article No. 50 of the Saudi Policy of Education, the objective of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is to enable students to acquire the knowledge and scientific expertise needed to better represent Muslims and serve humanity (Al Hajailan, 2003). These goals highlight the importance for the KSA that students maintain their cultural identity while acquiring access to foreign language education.

Some approaches to foreign language education have emphasized the need to develop intercultural skills to enable students to communicate effectively across cultures. Byram (1997) developed a major framework that ensures the systematic inclusion in language education of cultural objectives, or what he calls intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The proposed objectives of ICC are listed under the four domains of knowledge, skills, attitude, and critical awareness. Byram's model is considered to be a refinement of van Ek's (1986) sociocultural competence (see Matsuo, 2012) that extends beyond learners' dependence on "native speaker" standards and adopts the concept of "intercultural speaker" as a more achievable goal for students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A recent critique of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach is that it relies heavily on presenting instructional materials that tend to be mainly focused on exclusive contexts (Liaw, 2006). Kramsch (2005, p. 549) described CLT as emulating an authentic "white middle class native speaker," excluding other language variations with which students need to be familiar. Additionally, current English textbooks fail to include examples of non-native competent language users, or to discuss how their cultural

background affects communication in the target language. This lack of references to the students' local culture and the strong emphasis on the native speaker's competence make it more difficult for English learners to set a more attainable goal for themselves than achieving a native speaker's proficiency.

Walker and Noda (2000) maintain that even though discussions of the relationship between culture and language are commonly found in the literature, they have not produced significant practical consequences. However, it should be noted that the standards for foreign language learning defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) offer a systematic approach to the presentation of culture in foreign language learning. The National Standards for Foreign Language Education, also known as the 5 C's, directly address culture learning in a foreign language context in different goal areas: communications, culture, connections, comparisons, and communities (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). These five C's bear much resemblance to the knowledge and skill domains in Byram's (1997) ICC framework, which is the overarching perspective informing this research.

Given the increasing role of English as a worldwide *lingua franca*, researchers like Crystal (2003) and Graddol (2006) have argued that it is rather important to integrate intercultural awareness and skills in a variety of contexts where English is learned and taught. Integrating ICC objectives and activities to supplement the current English curriculum can provide students with the attitude, knowledge and skills that are needed to become intercultural speakers. Becoming an intercultural speaker involves being able to reconcile and mediate between different perspectives in any specific interaction (Byram & Fleming, 1998). Moreover, functioning as an educated and skillful intercultural

communicator is a more realistic and achievable goal for students learning a foreign language than acquiring native-like competence. Thus, ICC can be a step in direction of the personal and social development of the learner, because it helps students develop cultural awareness and the ability to interpret the target culture as well as their own. The question is, how can ICC go beyond traditional presentations of culture and relate to curriculum goals?

Byram (2008) describes an intercultural speaker as someone who is able to take an "external" perspective on oneself while interacting with others. Intercultural speakers are able to analyze and adapt values and beliefs, performing the role of "mediators" (p. 68) between themselves and the others. As mediators, they have an understanding of the relationship between their own language, their culture, and the cultures and language varieties of different groups in their society. They also have an understanding of the foreign cultures in relation to which they act as mediators. Therefore, an intercultural speaker brings into the communicative interaction two sets of values, beliefs, and behaviors. ICC focuses on knowledge of both the inherited and the acquired culture and on the development of the skills and attitudes that enhance one's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately when interacting with people who are linguistically and culturally different (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

Although many studies have investigated learners' and teachers' perceptions of various aspects of language teaching and learning (Bell, 2005; Levine, 2003; Schulz, 2001), relatively few studies have examined teachers' perception of ICC and its implementation in a foreign language classroom. Results of the survey of cultural studies in the English classroom conducted by Young, Sachdev, and Seedhouse (2009) indicated

a lack of examination of the beliefs and practices of experienced language teachers. In another study that involved teachers of English in the United States, France, and Sweden, Sercu (2005) found a discrepancy between English teachers' beliefs and practices, as their responses showed their inability or unwillingness to translate their positive perception of ICC into practice. Some of the reasons cited were lack of curricular support, lack of suitable textbook material, and lack of ICC testing. Therefore, there is an increasing need to conduct further studies that explore ICC from the teachers' perspective and analyze its relevance to teachers' beliefs about teaching a foreign language, the curriculum, and classroom activities.

Researchers in the field of language learning have contended that a critical, mediating approach to cultures in language learning may be successful in motivating both learners and teachers. Adapting teaching to the students' needs makes culture learning more interesting by bridging students' inherited and acquired cultures and by being more relevant to the students' actual use of the target language. Kramsch (1998) suggests looking into the strategies teachers and students use to "appropriate" culture teaching by tailoring it to the students' needs and to cocreate culture through practices in the classroom (p. 81). Lazaraton (2003) contends that a discourse analysis of data obtained from the classroom would help teachers and learners gain more insights into the complex relationships between the inherited and the target languages and cultures of the students. Lazaraton also recommends that ESL teachers should not teach only Anglo-American culture, given that the United States is a multicultural society and that some students might not stay in the United States after they finish their studies.

These findings from previous studies provide opportunities for future research on ICC, as recommended by Byram and Feng (2004) and Young et al. (2009). It is also possible that the lack of culture-based teacher training results in a lack of ICC awareness by teachers.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

English as a foreign language plays a vital role in the economy of the KSA. The KSA relies heavily on a large number of foreign companies that critically contribute to the country's economic development. This reliance on foreign companies goes back to 1933, when the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) was founded. ARAMCO had the greatest impact on Saudi Arabian economy and on the framing of EFL instruction. The use of English as a foreign language is also linked to the development of the kingdom's military power with the help of American military advisors, trainers, and technicians who have been working within the KSA since as early as 1948 (Cordesman 2003). This early foreign involvement in their national economy has affected the Saudis' negative attitude toward learning a foreign language. The Scholarship Preparation School (SPS) was established in 1936 in Makkah and was open to Saudis traveling to study abroad. The creation of the SPS, which first introduced the teaching of English, is considered to mark the onset of modern high-school education in the KSA (Maboob & Elyas, 2014).

The instruction methods used in Saudi public schools and even in tertiary institutions still reflect early Saudi education practices, which are influenced by the methods of instruction used in medieval Islam. The teacher or lecturer, the conveyer of knowledge, possesses an ideological and spiritual power (Elyas & Picard, 2010) that

commands the respect of the students. Elyas (2008a) explains that students are asked to memorize four or five prewritten essays or topics in the textbook for the final exam. Therefore, students are judged on how well they have memorized the vocabulary and the structure of the essay rather than on how well they use language to create independent meaning.

One of the attempts to enhance the quality of education in the KSA was the establishment in 2008 of the Preparatory Year (PY) program, whose main goal is to prepare students for college education by enhancing their English proficiency. In many Saudi universities, such as King Saud University (KSU), students are required to enroll in the Preparatory Year (PY) program for a whole academic year. In this program, they study general English and English for Special Purposes (ESP) along with other subjects that develop the basic knowledge and skills required to continue their university education. In the PY English course description there is a clear emphasis on enabling students to acquire language proficiency through communicative tasks and exposure to authentic texts at the elementary and pre-intermediate levels. Language functions such as interacting in simple social exchanges and making requests are presented at the beginner level. At the pre-intermediate-plus level, the focus is expanded to include a range of common communicative strategies that promote language fluency and control.

Some PY students opt to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) during the PY to qualify for a scholarship to study abroad at the government's or their family's expense. Other students study English in the PY program as a required subject before pursuing a bachelor's degree in one of the two major tracks of Science and Humanities.

The instructional materials used in PY are well-known commercial textbooks for adult learners: *New Headway Plus* (2013), a special edition adapted for the Middle East, and *Q Skills for Success* (2012). Both textbooks incorporate many of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) that Savignon (2005) recommends. For instance, they place a lesser focus on accuracy in order to develop fluency. They also expose students to diverse situations and tasks that involve using the English language for a variety of purposes.

Even though *New Headway Plus*, the textbook used at KSU, is a special edition created for the Saudi context, it seems to lack proper adaptation except for a superficial modification of images and names to reflect the more conservative views held in the local culture. The textbooks also tend not to focus on local public figures, heroes, and traditions related to the topics of the units. This shortcoming shows the uncritical adoption of Western curricula by Gulf countries (Elyas & Picard, 2010). This little emphasis on the students' cultural background and the insistence on native speakers' perspectives could impair the students' learning process and prevent them from setting a more realistic goal than the emulation of native speakers.

A unique aspect of integrating ICC in language learning curricula is that such an approach takes into account the students' knowledge of their own culture. As such, it helps them become more aware of their cultural identity and to negotiate their participation in intercultural interactions more effectively. This focus on native culture is consistent with the Saudi curriculum development objectives of turning students into well-informed representatives of their culture.

In addition, integrating intercultural dimensions can further develop students' language proficiency. According to Sullivan (2011), many successful Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) test takers indicated that interpersonal communicative practice in class as well as the use of "culturally rich sources for input" (p. 254) had helped them achieve high levels of proficiency. Furthermore, researchers in applied linguistics have proved the existence of a relationship between grammar knowledge and the ability to express one's identity. Larsen-Freeman (2002) also maintains that in addition to encoding semantic meaning, grammar can be used flexibly to signal (or obscure) one's attitude, identity, and social position. Hence, ICC can help students develop their linguistic competence, sound more intelligible, support their opinions, and negotiate meaning in a conversation.

The integration of ICC requires surveying experienced EFL teachers to explore how intercultural activities can be embedded in current English curricula. The data obtained will also help envision how the current learning objectives can be supplemented with intercultural objectives to achieve the required English proficiency outcome. Exploring the types of intercultural activities teachers use in their classrooms will measure how teachers' current practices agree or disagree with their beliefs about ICC.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this mixed-method sequential explanatory study is to investigate teachers' perception of the implementation of ICC at a college-level English language program in Saudi Arabia. The study also aims to explore the inclusion of ICC in the existing English curriculum and in teachers' current practices. The study replicates Young and Sachdev's (2011) research on the beliefs and practices of experienced teachers in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France in relation to the

application of Byram's (1997) ICC framework to English language programs. However, this study is different in a number of aspects. First, teachers participating in this study teach English to learners who speak Arabic as their first language. Second, English learners in this study have significantly different cultural backgrounds from English learners in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. These differences could increase the knowledge gap learners experience between their own culture and the target culture, which may call for more attention to intercultural development.

The ICC domains investigated in this study are adapted to suit the level of English taught in the PY program as well as the learning context in the KSA more in general. The ICC objectives of attitude, knowledge, and skills selected as the focus of this study can be easily implemented in elementary and early intermediate levels in the PY program, which are the levels at which the majority of students in the PY at KSU are placed. For example, connecting an event or a document related to the students' culture to an event or a document related to the target culture is a common activity used in the early stages of language instruction. Additionally, instruction about significant events and national figures in both cultures can be integrated in language curricula already at the elementary level. By contrast, certain objectives that encourage critical thinking, such as being critical of one's own culture or analyzing and evaluating conversations, require a higher level of language competence than the level attained by most students in the PY program. Not only do these objectives require a higher proficiency, but also they conflict with Saudi educational policies that prohibit the critical discussion of religious and political topics. Further, some learning objectives can be ethically difficult to assess when it

comes to judging the students' interest in events related to the target culture or their readiness to engage in conversations with native speakers (Byram, 1997).

Results of Young and Sachdev's (2011) research show that most teachers agree on the difficulty to create an appropriate environment to discuss topics such as religion and politics, which they perceive as problematic. These topics are particularly problematic in the Saudi learning environment, along with the objective of developing critical cultural awareness, which requires students to evaluate critically their own culture as well as the target culture. Therefore, objectives related to domains of attitude and critical cultural awareness are adapted in this study to suit the Saudi culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive ICC objectives to be important in the language classroom?
2. Which curricular objectives do teachers find relevant to the objectives of ICC?
3. How do teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives inform their current teaching practices in the classroom?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws its theoretical framework from different theories relevant to second language acquisition. In particular, it relies on the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) of second language acquisition and on the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) approach.

Sociocultural Theory of Second Language Acquisition

It is important to consider the role different learning contexts play in shaping learning experiences. Sociocultural theory (SCT) views human learning as a dynamic activity that takes place in a physical and social context, and it analyzes how the social context relates to the culture of the learner and affects learning (Rogoff, 2003). Learning occurs as a result of interaction and is socially mediated or regulated (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Based on these principles, SCT supports intercultural learning. The development of classroom tasks that contribute to the attitude, knowledge and skills of students about their own culture as well as the target culture makes the experience of language learning situated in the social context.

Some SCT concepts that are particularly relevant to this study are instructional conversations, scaffolding, and Vygotsky's notion of zone of proximal development (ZPD). Classroom activities can be conversational when they are coherent, involve turn taking, focus on new information, and are unpredictable in the sense that they go beyond the teacher's planned activities for this lesson. What makes the classroom conversations instructional is when the teachers shape them toward a curricular goal (Donato, 2000). Donato asserts that instructional conversations provide a rich context in which a more complex language can be generated. This context provided enables students to experience how language is used outside of the classroom. Instructional conversations also capture a wider range of the communicative and cognitive functions of speaking, and so they are shaped by the teacher's and the students' cultural orientations. Hence, considering how both the target culture and the students' culture affect the communicative activities taking

place in the classroom is extremely important in creating an environment that is conducive to a successful language learning experience.

Scaffolding in SCT means creating assisted learning conditions for less competent learners. In this sense, scaffolding is similar to what teachers do when they help struggling students learn a particular concept. However, scaffolding differs from simple "help" in the sense that it aims at developing skills that will enable students to deal with future tasks on their own, or as Hammond and Gibbons (2005, p. 12) put it, "to know how to think, not simply what to think." Bruner (1985) contends that scaffolding is provided by an expert—an adult or a more competent peer—who serves as "a vicarious form of consciousness and control," which means that the adult or peer acts like an additional external brain that helps the individual in need of assistance understand and take control of the learning situation.

ZPD is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). At the teachers' level, this study attempts to identify the gap between teachers' actual development and their ZPD. Teachers' discussions about topics such as ICC and their teaching practices can provide opportunities for them to reach their ZPD with regards to the applicability of ICC objectives in the classroom. The focus groups conducted for this study exemplify how such interaction can result in generating collective knowledge that contributes to the potential development of participating teachers in different ICC domains, especially attitude, knowledge, and skills.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

This study mainly relies on the ICC domains outlined by Byram (1997). Table 1 shows the five domains that according to Byram (1997) should be implemented in the foreign language classroom: knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, attitude, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

The first factor, knowledge, refers to the understanding of the manifestations, the practices, and the perspectives of one's own and the interlocutor's culture as they emerge in the course of social interaction. The second factor, skills of interpreting and relating, deals with the ability to interpret events or documents from another culture and to explain it and relate it to events and documents from one's own culture. The third factor, attitude, includes certain characteristics such as curiosity, openness, and readiness to suspend disbeliefs about other cultures and beliefs about one's native culture. The fourth factor, skills of discovery and interaction, refers to the ability to acquire knowledge and to embrace the cultural practices of both the target culture and one's native culture. The fifth and final factor, critical cultural awareness/political education, relates to the critical evaluation of the perspectives, the practices, and the products of both the native and the target culture (Byram, 1997).

Table 1

Byram Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

	Skills interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction, individual and societal (*savoirs*)	political education and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** relativizing self and valuing other (*savoir être*)
	Skills discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

Note. From *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, by M. Byram, 1997, p. 34. Copyright 1997 by Multilingual Matters.

A related model is Fantini's (2010) ICC framework for sojourners, which is comprised of five major components. The first component includes a variety of characteristics that are usually developed in adult life, such as flexibility, humor, patience, and tolerance. The second component encompasses three areas: the ability to maintain relationship, to communicate with minimal distortion, and to collaborate in order to accomplish something of mutual interest. The third component consists of the four dimensions of knowledge, positive attitude/affect, skills, and awareness. The fourth component deals with language proficiency in the host language. The fifth and last component includes four developmental levels: educational traveler, sojourner, professional, and intercultural/multicultural specialist. These levels describe the nature of the experience the student has of the target culture. They are also dependent on the student's motivation regarding the host culture.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Certain domains associated with ICC objectives were difficult to investigate in the foreign language classroom in the PY at KSU. A first limitation is the sensitivity of the

intercultural objectives of attitude and critical cultural awareness in the KSA. The goals of suspending disbelief about other cultures and the beliefs about one's own culture and of critically evaluating one's own cultural practices were problematic to address in the Saudi learning context, in which discussions about politics and religion, if allowed, cannot take a critical perspective. To address this limitation, this study selectively included attitude and critical cultural awareness objectives that did not conflict with the educational policies adopted by the KSU.

Additionally, Byram's (1997) ICC framework was developed for Western models of education, and therefore its applicability to a Middle Eastern context is limited. In this respect, Byram (1997) maintained his appreciation of Arab Gulf states' special language objectives that contemplate the learning of English as long as it does not undermine the learner's Arab/Islamic identity. He explained that any Arab Gulf country "may then formulate its own aims and purposes within the framework" (p. 23).

Several objectives were removed from this study to adapt the ICC framework to the educational policies in Saudi Arabia. As critical discussion of religious or political topics is not allowed in the classroom, the related objectives were not considered in this study; for instance, knowledge of the past and present relationship between Saudi Arabia and English-speaking countries was not included because of its politically charged content. Also, the attitude objective of suspending assumptions about others' cultural values as well as one's own was modified to focus only on the first part. These objectives conflict with Saudi educational policies and are insensitive to the local culture, and Byram himself recommended adapting the ICC framework to the specificity of the local context.

The researcher is also aware of the limitation of self-assessment tools such as the ICC survey used to assess teachers' perception of ICC. To obviate this issue, the researcher utilized three data collection methods and triangulate the data obtained. By comparing data obtained from multiple methods, common ICC objectives were identified and recommended for inclusion in the current curricula to supplement the use of textbooks.

Another limitation is the students' level of language proficiency. During the time of the study, students' level of proficiency ranged from beginner to intermediate. Therefore, identifying the ICC objectives that are necessary to help students communicate effectively was challenging for some teachers. In order to bypass this limitation, the researcher drew participating teachers' attention to the end goal of the course—preparing students to communicate effectively and appropriately with native speakers when studying abroad.

One final limitation of the study is the researcher's role in the PY program. The researcher was not a teacher in the PY program, which was the object of the study, at the time the research was conducted; rather, he represented one of three companies that hire English teachers for the KSU. This role did not entail any supervisory or evaluative capabilities, though it involved acting as a liaison between teachers and the university management. In order to capture the teachers' actual experience in the classroom, the researcher conducted classroom observations to identify practices or incidents that were relevant to ICC. The researcher also facilitated focus group sessions to ensure that the teachers' experience in the classroom was fully shared with him. Further, the researcher

recorded and transcribed the discussions relevant to ICC objectives and their inclusion in classroom activities as well as the discussions taking place in the focus groups.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research aims at identifying objectives of ICC that can be integrated into English language programs in the KSA. Focus group discussions, classroom observations, and survey results will be used to support recommendations of ICC activities that could supplement the current English curriculum. The study's recommendations can serve as predictors of the students' future progress in achieving higher levels of proficiency.

Moreover, the identification of the gap between teachers' practices in the classroom and their perception of the importance of ICC may suggest the need to train teachers in this approach. Suggestions for teacher development workshops will be provided to remedy any shortcomings in pre-service and in-service teacher training at the university.

The lack of motivation to learn a foreign language is a key issue in the context of EFL in Saudi Arabia, mainly due to the lack of exposure to English and the limited opportunities for interaction with native English speakers outside the classroom. ICC activities that prepare students to participate effectively and appropriately in host communities can raise students' motivation when they realize how learning English can prepare them to travel abroad and continue their education.

Additionally, the objectives of ICC address not only the target culture, but also the students' own culture (Byram, 1997). Learning about one's own culture is consistent with the goal stated in the curriculum policy of the Saudi Department of Education of

preparing students to represent their culture abroad and to be agents of change by clarifying misperceptions about their culture and religion.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Communicative Competence (CC): This term is used in language learning literature to refer to the various abilities that a language learner needs to possess or learn in order to communicate successfully with native speakers of the target language. Canale and Swain (1980) indicate that CC includes strategic competence, grammatical competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Canale (1983) added a fourth category, discourse competence, and included under strategic competence the use of strategies that "enhance the effectiveness of communication" (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2002, p. 11).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): This term is used to describe a language teaching approach based on the concept of communicative competence. This approach shifts the focus of language learning from an emphasis on form, as in traditional methods of language teaching, to an emphasis on the negotiation of meaning and language. Terms sometimes used to describe CLT are process oriented, task based, and inductive or discovery oriented (Savignon, 2005).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): This term is used to describe the learning of English in a country or context in which that language is not commonly used for education, business, government, etc. (Brown, 2007). Students who study English during their PY program at a Saudi university can be considered EFL students.

English as a Second Language (ESL): This term refers to the learning of English in a context in which that language is used daily for business or other activities.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): This term shares with Intercultural Competence (IC) a reference to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately; however, it refers additionally to language learning–related abilities that are required to achieve successful and appropriate communication with people who speak a different language. Byram (1997) believes that the omission of communication in IC emphasizes skills, knowledge, and attitudes other than those associated with the linguistic aspects of intercultural communication. Adding knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are mainly linguistic broadens the scope of the ICC framework to be integrated in the foreign language classroom.

Intercultural Competence (IC): This term refers to a speaker's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. The definition of IC that reached consensus among scholars and practitioners is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Deardorff 2004, p. 194).

Instructional Conversation: The second word, conversation, describes classroom activities that are coherent, involve turn taking, focus on new information, and are unpredictable in the sense that they go beyond the teacher's planned activities for this lesson. The first word, instructional, describes conversational activities as defined above that teachers shape toward a curricular goal (Donato, 2000).

Scaffolding: This term indicates the assistance given to language learners by peers or teachers to help them complete the tasks assigned to them in a language learning activity. It is defined as the "social interaction [in which] a knowledgeable participant can create, by means of speech, supportive conditions in which the novice can participate in,

and extend, current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence" (Brooks & Donato 1994, p. 40).

Sociocultural Theory (SCT): This term denotes a pedagogical approach that gives ample consideration to the social environment in which learning occurs and analyzes how it affects the learning process. The main goal of SCT research is "to understand the relationship between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, historical, and institutional settings on the other" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.3).

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): This term refers to the possibility to help learners go beyond their current learning outcome and reach their potential development level through interactive activities. Although originally designed to deal with the developmental potential of children, the concept has been extended by Ohta (2001), who defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a teacher or peer" (p. 9).

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this mixed-method sequential explanatory study is to investigate teachers' perception of the implementation of ICC at a college-level English language program in Saudi Arabia. The study is adapting objectives from Byram's (1997) ICC framework and Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) to investigate how teachers perceive their importance and their implementation in an English-learning context in the KSA.

In this chapter, the literature review introduces the role of culture in language learning and presents previous research on this topic. The next section discusses Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and second language acquisition, and it is followed by an analysis of the challenges and prospects of teaching English in KSA and some background information on attempts to reform EFL teaching in the KSA. The section on communicative approach reviews the most commonly used English teaching approaches in the KSA, followed by a discussion on the need to reexamine the native speaker's competence as a model in language learning. Then, the ICC framework is introduced, with particular reference to the influential work of Fantini (2012) and Byram (1997). ICC assessment, and ICC studies in foreign language are presented to identify relevant findings and potentials for future research.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Definitions of culture are numerous and varying, and therefore difficult to narrow down. Shirvaev and Levey (2004) contended that culture is a group of symbolic systems including knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, language, art, and customs, as well as the habits and skills learned by members of a given society. Lustig and Koester (2010) defined culture as a "learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms,

and social practices, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people"(p.25). According to this definition, each culture is defined by particular patterns, shared among its group members that distinguish it from other cultures. Lustig and Koester (2010) contended that shared beliefs, values, norms, and social practices become cultural patterns when they remain stable over time.

Definitions of the role of culture in applied linguistics are also varied. Holliday (1999) proposed to differentiate between two paradigms of culture in applied linguistics. The first paradigm, "large culture," introduces essential features and standards of an ethnic national or international group. The second paradigm, "small culture", identifies the culture of small social and minority groupings and activities. While the former is known to be normative and dominant, the latter avoids this containing and subordinating relationship. Holliday contends that large culture is vulnerable to a culturist reduction of "foreign" students, teachers and their educational contexts. On the other hand, small culture contributes to the change of the traditional view of culture as "onion skin" (Holliday, 1999, p.241), reducing the stereotyping of minority groups and raising awareness of the multicultural aspect of modern societies (Holliday, 1999).

These definitions can help explain the role culture plays in language learning and language proficiency. The National Standards for Foreign Language Education, also known as the 5 C's, directly address culture learning in a foreign language context in different goal areas (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). The first C, *communications*, includes engaging in conversations in order to obtain information, express feelings, and understand and interpret written and spoken language. The second C, *culture*, refers to the knowledge of the relationship between the products and practices

of the target culture on one hand and the perspectives of the speakers of the target language on the other. The third C, *connections*, points to the recognition of the distinctiveness of the target foreign language and culture. The fourth C, *comparisons*, involves the students' ability to demonstrate their understanding of the target culture by comparing the foreign culture and their own. The fifth and last C, *communities*, enforces the use of language beyond school settings to pursue a personal interest and enrich students' language experience and to become life-long learners. These five C's bear much resemblance to the knowledge and skill domains in Byram's (1997) ICC framework, which is the overarching perspective informing this research.

STUDIES ON CULTURE IN A LANGUAGE-LEARNING CONTEXT

A number of researchers in the field of applied linguistics have analyzed the role of culture in English language teaching and learning, and empirical evidence shows that often culture is not approached in the classroom in a principled, active, and engaged manner. For instance, Young, Sachdev and Seedhouse (2009) have surveyed empirical literature broadly relating to this topic, collecting data for the period January 1993-March 2007 from the *ISI Web of Knowledge*, an academic citation indexing and search service. The survey included all studies focusing on the teaching of English and found a total of only 16 reports of empirical studies. None of them directly addressed the question of whether culture is taught in English language programs. Nevertheless, some of the studies indicated that culture was incidentally approached in the English language classroom. This finding is interesting considering the importance placed in the literature on the connection between the acquisition of a second language and the broader skills that are necessary to engage with a foreign culture.

Examples of this lack of awareness of the cultural domains that are at play in the language classroom can also be found in a six-month ethnographic study that Duff and Uchida (1997) conducted in Japan on four inexperienced EFL teachers, two Japanese and two Americans. The researchers explored how teachers' sociocultural identities and practices were negotiated and transformed over time and which domains affected those changes. The findings of the study indicate that teachers' perceptions of their sociocultural identities are deeply rooted in their personal histories and in their past educational, professional, and (cross-) cultural experiences. This study also shows an interesting contradiction between what the teachers believed about their cultural practices and identities and what actually took place in class. For instance, although one of the Japanese English teachers, Kimiko, frequently incorporated cross-cultural themes in her lessons, her students indicated at the end of the year that only one American teacher, Danny, had dealt with culture in his classes. Findings also reveal that none of the teachers thought that they were teaching culture explicitly.

Rajabieslami (2014) conducted a study on the effort English teachers make to help students become familiar with a global culture without offending their own identities and values. The data were collected through classroom observation and in-person interviews with a teacher having 17 years of experience in TESOL, who is known for his creative ideas to enhance his students' higher-order thinking. One of the activities this teacher used was an inanimate puppet he called "JohnAli," which speaks a low-level English, carries a local accent, and uses bad grammar and imperfectly translated idioms. In class, JohnAli engages in various situations that involve cultural similarities and differences, and it asks students to make the right decisions for him. The teacher believes

this activity stimulates critical reflection because students do not have to worry about clarifying their thoughts, as the focus is not on them.

Another practice designed by this teacher is called "exploratory task." After explaining the concept of identity and identity formation to the students, the exploratory task prompts them to think of how they have defined, defended, and deconstructed themselves in order to affirm their identities in their own social groups. The intent of this task is to help students find out more about their cultural selves and write a critical account of their identity formation. Even though these tasks focus on the students' own culture, they also contribute to their understanding of the target culture. As Kumaravadivelu (2008) explains, "in understanding other cultures, we understand our own better; in understanding our own, we understand other cultures better…when we do that, and do that right, we are not culturally melting. We are hybridizing. We are, in fact culturally growing" (p.165).

The works of Byram and others (e.g., Alptekin 2002; Byram 1997; Corbett 2003) open a new approach to the presentation of culture in the language classroom. They suggest that becoming an "intercultural speaker" can be a more productive and attainable goal for most learners of English worldwide. This model enables the learner to relate to both the familiar and the unfamiliar sociocultural and sociolinguistic aspects of the target culture, and it may well be a way to advance a more systematic approach to culture presentation in language learning. The intercultural model, however, remains empirically untested to date in the context of English language teaching (Young, 2007).

Taken together, these theoretical tools promote understanding between people as the result of a principled and enquiring approach to culture and cultural differences. What

is still needed is to investigate how these tools might be successfully applied to the reality of English language learning in diverse sociocultural contexts.

SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In recent years it has become clearer that functioning appropriately as a language learner requires more than cognition and memory (Brown, 2007). Therefore, Sociocultural Theory (SCT) plays a crucial role in influencing teaching practices, the classroom environment, and learners' progress. Much SCT research is based on the intellectual work of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whose theory of learning and development considers human learning as a dynamic activity that takes place in a physical and social context and goes beyond an information-processing activity carried out independently by the learner (Vygotsky, 1978). SCT is also concerned with the sociocultural development of mental functions and processes, and it emphasizes the strong connection between social and cultural domains in a given context and the learning process.

Lantolf and Thorne (2007) summarize five tenets that describe SCT. The first tenet is that SCT is concerned with the sociocultural development of human cultures and mental functions and processes over time. The second tenet indicates that human mental functioning is mediated (or "regulated") especially by language and symbolic systems. The third tenet describes human interaction as a site for the regulation or scaffolding of people's behaviors, reasoning, and thus learning. The fourth tenet considers knowledge to be acquired as a result of a social interaction followed by the individual's internalization as a more transformational concept than the concept of apprenticeship (e.g., Rogoff 1995). The fifth and last tenet emphasizes that learning is constructed through social

interaction and involves various semiotic tools and artifacts produced by communities over time (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). These tenets clearly apply to the interactions that take place in the classroom between teacher and students and among peers.

A further central tenet in the sociocultural approach, introduced in the previous chapter, is the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which in a language learning context indicates “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). At the teachers’ level, SCT can be used to identify the gap between the teachers’ current development and their ZPD.

In this regard, Bailey (2006) questions whether teachers are aware of the areas of their teaching that require development. She also questions whether they should be instructed by their supervisors about these areas of development and helped to understand their ZPD. One example of how ZPD can be utilized to develop teaching abilities is by having discussions with teachers about ICC as a relatively new approach to foreign language learning. These discussions are valuable opportunities for teachers to accumulate collective knowledge and to improve their capacity to handle situations in which the target culture and the students’ culture are in conflict or to help students take different perspectives and become intercultural speakers.

Empirically, SCT has been effectively implemented in the foreign language classroom. Donato’s (2000) report on studies in various instructional contexts (primary, secondary, and tertiary) shows a clear relationship between the instructional conversations taking place in the classroom and the culture of the participants. Donato

asserts that instructional conversations capture a range of communicative and cognitive functions that go beyond what current models define as input, output, and interaction, and are shaped by the teacher's and the students' cultural orientations. Hence, instructional conversations create an environment conducive to a successful language learning experience.

Scaffolding is another term used in SCT. In language learning, scaffolding means the creation of learning conditions in which a teacher or a more capable peer helps a less capable learner reach his or her ZPD. What distinguishes scaffolding from simply what teachers usually do to help struggling students is that it enables students to deal with future tasks in the future. Hammond and Gibbon (2005) describes this aspect of scaffolding as, "to know how to think, not simply what to think" (p.12) Bruner (1985) describes this expert or the more capable peer who scaffolds the learning of a less capable learner as an additional external brain that provides the consciousness and control of the learning situation for this less capable learner. Thus, scaffolding in a learning environment is similar to when an individual performs when she or he engages in metacognition (Holton & Clarke, 2006).

The concept of scaffolding, therefore, clearly applies to a language classroom context in which the development of intercultural skills occurs not only as a result of the interaction between teacher and student, but also as a consequence of the interactions among students with different levels of competence. Donato (2000) emphasized that linguistic tasks should not compel students to act in any specific way, because students invest their own goals, cultural backgrounds, and beliefs (i.e., their agency) into the completion of those tasks. Donato's conclusion provides yet more supporting evidence of

the importance of involving students' cultural backgrounds into foreign language learning.

Another concept relevant to sociocultural is instructional conversations. Classroom activities are described as conversational if they are coherent, involve turn taking, focus on new information, and are unpredictable in the sense that they go beyond the teacher's planned activities for this lesson. What makes classroom conversations instructional is when the teachers shape them toward a curricular goal (Donato, 2000). Donato asserts that instructional conversations are opportunities for students to socialize beyond the activities found in the textbook. These opportunities to socialize students into language learning provide a rich context in which a more complex language can be generated. Instructional conversations also capture a wider range of the communicative and cognitive functions of speaking, and so they are shaped by the teacher's and the students' cultural orientations (Donato, 2000).

TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE KSA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

English as a foreign language plays an important role in the economy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), whose economic development relies heavily on a large number of foreign companies. The need to access Western education and to communicate with employees working for foreign companies such as ARAMCO (the Arabian American Oil Company, founded in 1933) has moderated a long-held negative attitude toward learning a language associated with foreign invaders. The Scholarship Preparation School (SPS), established in 1936 in Makkah and open to Saudis traveling to study abroad, first introduced the teaching of English in schools. The manual for teaching ESL released by the Ministry of Education of the KSA in 2002 clearly emphasizes the

importance of enabling the student to communicate in an effective way in both written and spoken forms in English-speaking countries (Al Hajailan, 2003). However, a World Bank's (2002) study has stressed that pedagogy in most Arab schools and universities is still dependent on rote learning rather than critical thinking, problem solving skills, and learning how to learn skills. Indeed, implementing the stated objective to develop students' abilities to communicate appropriately and effectively in English encounters several challenges, described in the following section.

Reform Challenges

Al-Brashi maintains that some sectors in the KSA harbor anti-English sentiments. He reported on a Wahabi sheikh who issued a *fatwa* warning young people not to speak or study English (as cited in Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Wahhabism is a religious movement whose description varies from being "ultraconservative" form of Islam by some writers to "extremist pseudo-Sunni" movement by others. By contrast, some scholars in the Muslim world contend that the teaching of English and other foreign languages is in line with Islamic teaching (Azuri, 2006). No evidence thus far supports the claim that introducing English has affected the religious or cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia.

Although using original material in the target language makes learning meaningful by applying it to an "authentic context" (Gagne et. al., 2004, p. 172), it is in many ways incompatible with Saudi teaching practices. In the KSA, authentic material presented in English textbooks has to be filtered to remove content that would be inappropriate for a Saudi audience, such as pictures of women dressed in tight or revealing clothes, representations of social practices not tolerated in the Saudi culture

such as meetings in bars or dating, and references to pork-derived meat products, which are strictly forbidden in Islam. Elyas and Picard (2010) indicated that the cultural aspects of the communicative approach are of particular concern to Muslim leaders and even some English teachers, who consider the content of the "authentic" English texts harmful to their Muslim identity. According to Elyas and Picard (2010), education reforms in the majority of the Gulf countries resulted in an uncritical adoption of Western, and mainly American, curricula and teaching practices. Thus, the need to adapt these curricula goes beyond including appropriate images and omitting certain social activities and extends to finding ways for students to express themselves and present their worldview to others.

Studies on EFL in KSA

Studies on learning English in a Saudi context have yielded results that support the need for a more intercultural understanding in order to facilitate students' communication in English. Elyas (2008) conducted a study on the perception of EFL curricula by Muslim student teachers (i.e., students who perform teaching activities under the supervision of a faculty member) and found that these education students often perceived the content of the English textbooks they were required to teach as conflicting with their culture and Islamic identity. However, these student teachers still felt that the teaching of the English language could not and should not be separated from the teaching of English culture.

Giroir (2014) followed two Saudi students enrolled in ESL classes in the southern United States to explore their experiences as they continued their college-level and post-graduate studies. The researcher used class observations and individual interviews. Study results indicate that both participants faced difficulties in gaining fuller access to

community resources. Giroir asserted a need for deconstructing expert–novice interactions in the classroom by including narrative activities that develop the students' skills to mediate social practices, interpret conflicts, and define their identities.

In the KSA, many students of English at the college level struggle to achieve the expected level of proficiency by the end of the PY year. Some researchers explored Saudi students' strategies for success and reasons for failure in achieving their learning goals. Elyas (2014) looked into the language learning narratives of 23 English major students in their first year of study in a Saudi university. Students were requested to answer in writing some questions about what influenced language learning in their lives, what influenced their learning in the university and other educational environments, and their feelings about their current level of proficiency. Elyas's results indicate that nine students ascribed their language learning success stories to their exposure to English media (TV, newspapers, magazines, and short stories). It is interesting to note that only one of these nine students maintained that to improve his proficiency level he needed to be exposed to what he classified as "good" books and "good" English programs (Elyas 2014, p. 30). As for the "failure stories found in the narratives" (p. 33), respondents cited as reasons behind their lack of success their failure to do things "correctly" and their feelings of inadequacy in comparison to the "perfect" native speaker. Overall, interactions online and through other media and personal interactions with English native speakers appeared to be highly valued by the students in their narratives.

In terms of the teachers' perception of what affects the teaching of English in the KSA, Shah, Hussain, and Naseef (2013) conducted a study among teachers coming from different English-speaking countries and working in the English Language Institute (ELI)

of a Saudi university, which provides intensive English language instruction, also known as PY, to Foundation Year students. The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews indicated that three factors in particular have a negative impact on classroom teaching: social, cultural, and religious sensitivities; learners' negative attitude towards English; and institutional policies and procedures. Participants in the study stated that it is necessary for EFL teachers to understand the teaching/learning context of the KSA, because it certainly affects their efficacy in the classrooms. Among the problematic policies and procedures, participants mentioned the irrelevance of the textbook materials. One teacher, for example, expressed frustration that the examples in the book were hard to relate to the students' life: "I try to relate, like if Michael Jackson is there with Mohammad Abdu, Maradona with Yasir Qahtani… I try to make them relevant to the students" (Shah et al., 2013, p. 117).

Some researchers examined how different varieties of English are integrated in the Saudi classroom. Al-Asmari and Khan (2014) contended that the academic environment in the KSA is oblivious to varieties of English such as Philippine English and Indian English, which are spoken by a significant number of workers in the Saudi labor market. Therefore, English learners in the KSA need to be ready to communicate with speakers of a different variety of English than the one they use (Jenkins, 2006). Furthermore, a more balanced approach would help learners to be more sensitive to the varieties of English that are used in different parts of the world (McKay, 2002).

Standard English is not only a means of communication but also a symbolic representation of a community, expressive of its identity, conventions, and values (Widdowson, 1994). Therefore, considering the sociocultural background of the KSA,

Al-Asmari & Khan (2014) argue that it is not be viable to use for classroom instruction the variety of English spoken in the inner circle of countries for which English is a native language, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. This would disregard the importance of English variations (Cook, 2007). More varieties of English need to be presented in the classroom to develop the ability of Saudi learners to communicate effectively in an international context. English teachers should also focus on motivational and intercultural skills and help students learn how to translate in English a wide range of expressions from their native language (Arabic in this case; see Jenkins, 2006).

An intercultural approach based on the development of the attitude, knowledge and skills of ICC can enable students to communicate with native speakers effectively and appropriately. Enabling students to become good representatives of their culture and values and to serve humanity are also indicated in the Saudi Policy of Education as the expected outcome of learning English (Saudi Policy of Education, Article 50, cited in Hajailan, 2003). Brown (2007) acknowledged the importance of taking into account the students' experience when selecting a proper teaching approach. This adaptation to the local context can increase students' engagement during English lessons and eventually increase their motivation.

The findings of the studies summarized above indicate that many of the challenges Saudi students face in learning English can be attributed to the lack of proper adaptation of textbooks to the local culture and to the failure to prepare students to communicate effectively in the real world. Studies also pointed out the need to integrate English varieties such as Indian and Philippine English into current textbooks to help

students communicate with the expanding Indian and Philippine communities in the KSA. More studies are needed to explore how English can be adapted to the Saudi local context and how to develop skills that can enable students to become better language learners.

The next section presents the communicative approach to language teaching and identifies its key features as well as its shortcomings, which paved the way for the rising of the intercultural communicative competence approach.

THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The Communicative Approach is one of the most commonly used approaches in foreign language education. It is based on the concept of communicative competence (CC), which was first developed by Hymes (1972). Until the 1970s, language curricula placed a strong emphasis on grammar and included meaning as "subordinated" to other content (Wilkins 1979a, p. 83); however, a disadvantage of this approach is the difficulty of applying grammatical knowledge to actual communicative acts. The development of CC gave to the notion of using language to communicate a meaningful message a more important place on the landscape of foreign language education.

Hymes's (1972) CC approach was in response to Chomsky's (1965) emphasis on grammatical competence alone to understand first language acquisition. Chomsky (1965) coined the term "competence" as opposed to "performance"; he defined competence as "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of this language" and performance as "the actual use of language in concrete situation" (pp. 3-4). Hymes's reaction to Chomsky's definition of "competence" initiated a debate on language and the study of languages. In his argument, Hymes (1972) drew a parallel between the "perfection" linked to the notion of

competence and the "imperfection" of performance. He emphasized that a theory of language should include not only grammaticality, but also acceptability. The notion of acceptability reintroduced the social dimension that Chomsky had ignored; thus, Hymes's definition of competence incorporates not only knowledge of the language, but also the ability to use it.

If the goal of the communicative approach is to assist students in understanding and operating with the meaning expressed by language in a particular context, cultural instruction must be considered as vital element. In the 1980s, the emerging awareness of the relationship between language, sociocultural aspects, and communicative competence became more structured. Methodologists such as Canale and Swain (1980) created frameworks to divide CC into different categories. Canale and Swain (1980) contended that the individual who possesses CC should demonstrate three subcompetences: grammatical competence (morphology, syntax), sociolinguistic competence (sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse), and strategic competence (verbal and nonverbal strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication). Canale (1983) added to this classification the subcategory of discourse competence, which refers to the ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text (as distinct from the sociolinguistic subcompetence).

In Europe, Van Ek (1986) developed another model of CC consisting of six subcompetences: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, strategic competence, and social competence. The last category, in particular, involves what Van Ek described as "the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and ability

to handle social situations" (p. 65). Van Ek's model bears similarity with Byram's (1997) model of ICC; however, Van Ek did not provide a detailed description of how social competence can be implemented in the language classroom.

REEXAMINING THE NATIVE SPEAKER'S COMPETENCE

Hymes (1972) conceptualized communicative competence as being based on the way native speakers interact with each other. In his criticism of the communicative approach to language learning, Swan (1985b) argued that a shortcoming of this framework was the lack of attention to the individual's knowledge, skills, and experience as a speaker of his or her mother tongue. This is especially evident with respect to strategies for foreign language teaching that rely on the learner's familiarity with a particular topic, speaker, or writer. For example, in the KSA, most of the famous figures included in English textbooks are not relevant to the students' background knowledge, except for the Arabic names given to interlocutors in the dialogues. Using public figures, athletes, and places that are familiar to students in the KSA stimulates their ability to predict English content that is familiar to them.

Research findings show that the strategies of prediction mastered by learners in their first language are transferable to the learning of a second or foreign language. Lee's (2007) study results on the consequences of topic familiarity for Korean EFL students revealed that students who were given culturally familiar topics demonstrated far better recall than those who were at a similar level and worked with less familiar topics. These results support the importance of integrating topics relevant to the students' background knowledge in English textbooks to enhance their retention of the language.

Because users of a foreign language have a different level of knowledge of the target language compared to native speakers, they should not be always compared to the latter. This approach problematically subsumes the potential for growth of learners of a foreign language under a sphere of competence defined by the native speakers of that language. Cook (2007) described this limited conceptualization of successful foreign language users as "those who can pass as members of the monolingual native speakers community rather than having a membership of their own" (p. 206). Therefore, there is a need to integrate in English textbooks content that relies on the knowledge of foreign speakers, rather than native speakers, as a source of information (Cook, 1999). Another limitation of the communicative approach, already mentioned above, is that it does not place sufficient emphasis on language variations. This claim further supports the notion that a learning approach centered on the foreign language learner may be a better alternative to models relying on a definition of proficiency tailored on the native speaker.

According to Byram (1997), the purpose of language teaching should not be to encourage learners to model themselves on native speakers. The native speaker proficiency is often used as a standard against which many language teachers assess their students' competence. This goal, however, is rather difficult to achieve, and it can elicit a constant sense of failure in students (Byram, 2008).

Davis (2003) argued that even though native speaker proficiency can be used as a model and an inspiration, it is useless as a measure; he contended that what is needed is the description of "adequate partial competences" (p. 197). Byram (2008) similarly explained that even if the native speaker proficiency is an acceptable model to measure linguistic competence, it should not be used for (inter)cultural competence. The next

section sheds some light on how ICC can provide language learners with more adequate goals than the acquisition of native proficiency.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The importance of intercultural communication has been driven by the need of businesses, government agencies, and educational institutes to find people who can succeed in intercultural assignments (Lustig & Koester, 2010). Intercultural communication can be traced back to around 50 years ago, when U.S. Peace Corps trainers met to compare notes about their practices in communicating with different cultures (cf. Wright et al., 1999). Several phrases have been used interchangeably to describe this concept: "cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural sensitivity, multicultural competence, transcultural competence, global competence…" (Deardorff 2004, p. 32). Deardorff (2011) observed that the term "intercultural competence" seems to be used to refer to anyone who interacts with people from different backgrounds, regardless of location.

In an attempt to reach a consensus on what defines intercultural competence, Deardorff (2004) conducted a questionnaire and used a Delphi technique, a systematic interactive method that involves experts answering questions in two or more rounds, to bring a panel of nationally and internationally recognized intercultural experts to reach a consensus over the definition of intercultural competence. The definition agreed upon by experts is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situation based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2004, p. 194). All experts also emphasized the importance of the process in acquiring IC. Fantini's (2012) definition of ICC is "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively

and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006, p. 12). In Fantini's terms, "effective" refers to one's view of his or her performance in a foreign language (i.e., to an "etic" or outsider view of the host culture), whereas "appropriate" refers to how this performance is perceived by one's hosts (i.e., to an "emic" or insider view).

Some researchers in foreign language education have listed a number of components that enable a language student to have an interculturally effective behavior. These components are divided into five categories: message skills, interaction management, behavioral flexibility, identity management, and relationship cultivation (Chen, 1989, 2005, 2009; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Martin & Hammer, 1989; Spitzberg, 1997; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Wiseman, 2003). Whereas message skills and interaction management require knowledge of the speaker's and the interlocutor's culture, the other categories of behavior flexibility, identity management, and relationship cultivation are more influenced by personal characteristics and social skills.

Fantini (2012) also included the following components as part of ICC: (a) personal characteristics (e.g., tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility, open-mindedness); (b) motivation and options; (c) language proficiency; (d) intercultural areas (e.g., maintaining a relationship, communicating with the least distraction, and collaborating to accomplish a goal); and (e) intercultural abilities (knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness). According to Fantini (2012), some of the characteristics mentioned in his definition, such as flexibility, humor, patience, openness, interest, and others, are hard to evaluate through the traditional assessment techniques in language learning.

Furthermore, Kumaravadivelu (2003) described what he terms "pedagogy of possibility" (p. 542) as a step forward toward a deeper consideration for the individual and group identity of the learner. Whereas communicative competence tends to focus on native speaker's standards, which limits language learners' opportunities to "speak their word" (Freire, 1993, p. 88), the intercultural approach to language teaching found in ICC is concerned with understanding differences in interactional norms between sociocultural groups.

The purpose of understanding these differences between the native and the target culture is to "reconcile or mediate between different modes present in any specific interaction" (Byram & Fleming, 1998, p. 12). Therefore, the integration of both language uses and sociocultural norms in foreign language curricula can have a lasting impact on students' development (Shively, 2010) and improve their experience in the classroom.

Another reason to integrate intercultural domains in a language program is that they help students reach two goals at the same time: acquiring linguistic competence that is essential for communication and developing intercultural awareness (Byram, 2002). Katra A. Byram (2012) contended that the practicing of linguistic forms should be associated with cultural information that aims to develop students' sensitivity to meaning in a given context. She proposed the concept of "perspective" (p. 528) as a quality to be implemented after introducing a language form (i.e., vocabulary item, grammatical structure) and practicing its use. The concept of perspective provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and analytical skills by analyzing linguistic and textual features and relating them to register and narrative strategies used to various express meaning in context.

Katra Byram (2012) maintained that the perspective approach can be applied to nearly any type of text, photos, paintings, advertisements, short autobiographies, artwork, film clips, etc. and therefore can be easily integrated throughout the curriculum. More importantly, asking students to confront and analyze a variety of perspectives can facilitate their engagement with other worldviews and combat the kind of stereotyping that many instructors fear cultural instruction may encourage (Byram & Kramsch, 2008).

One can find many similarities between Katra Byram's (2012) perspective approach and Byram's (1997) ICC objectives related to acquiring knowledge of different perspectives, analyzing sources of misunderstandings, and relating one's interpretation of the target culture to one's own culture. ICC objectives encourage students to investigate different kinds of interactional patterns, not only in the target culture, but also in their own culture.

For example, Corbett (2003) listed a few examples of activities that can help students develop their ability to interpret "conversational implicatures," which are utterances that require some inference to make sense of what is being said. Examples of such utterances are an indirect request to close a window such as "It's cold in here, isn't it?", or an understated criticism like "Well, it certainly is different" in response to a question regarding what someone thinks of someone else's dress. Corbett (2003) focuses on the form and function of these utterances. Students can be led to analyze these utterances in terms of the kind of situations in which they might be used and the nature of the speech event (i.e., whether it is a formal event such as a religious service or a relatively unstructured event such as a casual conversation).

Other examples of conversation strategies that students need to learn at early levels of their language instruction are formulaic openings and closings in some speech events. Corbett (2003) uses the examples of "Can I help you?" as a usual starting question in a transaction or a cue like "Well…" in a storytelling conversation. Even though these examples might be found in current English textbooks, intercultural activities take the practice of these expressions one step further by eliciting from learners equivalent utterances in their own culture.

The following section details Byram's (1997) ICC framework and the related objectives for language learning.

Byram's ICC Framework

As already noted, Byram's (1997) ICC framework posits that becoming an intercultural speaker is a more valid and attainable goal than achieving native speaker proficiency. An intercultural speaker is someone who is knowledgeable about different interpretations of the same phenomenon. An intercultural speaker is also someone who has the skills needed to use his or her interpretation of a phenomenon to mediate between different perspectives and find shared meanings. Thus, in the language-learning context, intercultural speakers can function as mediators between perceptions of their native culture and perceptions of the target culture.

Byram's (1997) ICC model is based on earlier models of intercultural competence and effectiveness in learner-centered, communicative language teaching (e.g. van Ek, 1986; van Ek & Trim, 1991, 1996). Byram breaks down the ICC framework into four clusters, or *savoirs*: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness. These *savoirs* also form part of the classification of ICC adopted by the Common European

Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). In CEFR, these objectives are termed "savoir" (declarative knowledge), "savoir faire" (skills and know-how), "savoir être" (existential competence), and "savoir apprendre" (ability to learn) (see Table 1 in Chapter I).

The description provided below of the objectives identified by each of these domains adopts language-learning terms such as "target language" and "native speakers" instead of the generic terms "interlocutor's culture" and "otherness" used by Byram.

Knowledge. This factor refers to knowledge about the students' own culture as well as the target culture. Objectives listed under this factor indicate that intercultural speakers are expected to have knowledge of past and present relationships between their own country and the target language country; to know how to make contact with native speakers and institutions that facilitate intercultural exchanges, such as embassies and consulates; to understand the sources of misunderstandings between speakers of their own language and native speakers of the target culture; and to be aware of events, myths, cultural products, and their significance for their own culture as well as the target culture. Also, intercultural speakers are expected to have knowledge of what Byram (1997, p. 59) described as "geographical space," which refers to the ability to distinguish between regional identities, regional dialects, and landmarks that are meaningful to native speakers; and they are expected to have knowledge of the "processes of institutions and socialization" (p. 60), which include education, religious systems, and other institutions that shape the native speakers' national identity. Other objectives listed under this factor include knowledge of what Byram termed "national distinctions," which is needed to distinguish among social classes, ethnicities, professions, religions, etc.; knowledge of

the institutions that have an impact on daily life in both their country and the target country, such as institutions of health, recreation, finance, and information; and finally, knowledge of the processes of social interaction in both their country and the target country, such as formal versus informal language, nonverbal interactions, and taboos.

Skills of interpreting and relating. The objectives Byram (1997) listed under this factor refer to the ability to interpret an event or a document from another culture and relate it to events and documents from one's own culture. In particular, the intercultural speaker should be able to: identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document; identify and explain behaviors and expressions that cause misunderstandings; and mediate between conflicting interpretations of a phenomenon by explaining sources of misunderstanding and finding common ground.

Skills of discovery and interaction. These skills refer to the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and its practices. Objectives listed under this factor include the intercultural speaker's ability to: elicit information necessary to understand the value of particular documents or events for native speakers and apply such understanding to other situations; identify significant references within and across cultures; identify similar and different processes of interaction, verbal and nonverbal, and their appropriate use in certain circumstances; use a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with native speakers of the target language; identify present and past relationships between their country and the target country; identify and use institutions that facilitate contact with native speakers of the target language; and finally use their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to mediate between speakers of their language and of the target language.

Attitude. This factor deals with developing openness, curiosity, and readiness to hold one's disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own. The four objectives are: willingness to seek opportunities to engage with native speakers of the target language in a relationship of equality, interest to learn about different perspectives and interpretations in one's culture as well as the target culture, readiness to experience different stages of adaptation to another culture, and ability to engage in conversations that adhere to the conventions and expectations of the target language speakers.

Critical cultural awareness/political education. This last factor of ICC involves the ability to evaluate in a critical manner and using clearly stated criteria the perspectives, practices, and products of one's own and other cultures and countries. Three objectives are listed under this factor, indicating that intercultural speakers are able to: use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in documents and events relevant to their culture and the target culture; analyze and evaluate documents and events that refer to explicit viewpoints and criteria; and interact and mediate in intercultural conversations with a degree of acceptance.

Many researchers in foreign language education have worked on defining cultural goals that can help structure the presentation of culture in language curricula. Lange (2003) recommends the adoption of a recursive thematic curriculum design for both language and culture. This would enable learners to grasp aspects of language and culture on a particular theme and would also allow the development of cultural sensitivity and language proficiency to occur more or less naturally. Such occurrences permit conceptualization and extrapolation from experience to results. Another reason for adopting a recursive design for curriculum is that it avoids many complications of

cultural development by allowing opportunities to review earlier cultural learning and to add to what is already known.

Byram (2008) indicated that the precise definition of what an intercultural speaker should become able to do as a curriculum goal depends on the circumstances and on the specific learning opportunities and needs. He also maintained that objectives related to the domains of skills, knowledge, and attitude need to complement objectives of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence (Byram, 1997). He adds that this can be implemented by incorporating what he defines as "edges and corners of curriculum" (p. 81) combining all the components of ICC (knowledge, skills, and attitude) and linguistic competence objectives that are important to reach during the language course.

Byram's (1997) framework of ICC is developed for Western models of education. Consequently, choosing this model poses some limitations in terms of its applicability to a Middle-Eastern context. Corbett (2003), for example, maintained that a language activity revolving around the role of women in British and American culture could lead to indirect criticism of the treatment of women in the students' country. He also observed that intercultural approaches to language education are "less likely" to be used in countries where self-critical components of the curriculum are discouraged. In contrast, Corbett cited the example of Eastern European countries that have no history of liberal government, such as Bulgaria, in which intercultural education caught on and became a popular approach to education.

Assessing ICC

Many self-assessment surveys have been developed to evaluate students' intercultural sensitivity, such as Bennett and Wiseman's (2003) Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI), Fantini's (2013) Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC), and Chen and Starosta's (1996) Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES). These assessment tools can be used over the course of the curriculum. Fantini (2006) provided a review of assessment tools that can be used to assess the development of intercultural competence over a period of time.

Deardorff (2006) designed a framework that focuses on internal and external outcomes of ICC, based on the development of the specific attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are inherent in intercultural competence. The internal outcome includes shifts in the learner's frame of reference, such as adaptability, flexibility, empathy, and ethnorelativism. The external outcome is defined as the adoption of effective and appropriate communicative behaviors in intercultural situations.

However, these outcomes only become observable when the learners interact with native speakers; consequently, it is difficult to develop assessment criteria to evaluate the attainment of these objectives. It must also be noted that students tend to overlook what is not assessed, and teachers tend to teach what will be tested (McNamara, 2000). Tests that assess ICC via quizzes will probably lead to teaching that promotes the acquisition of cultural knowledge only, neglecting other domains of ICC (Sercu, 2010). Thus, skills and attitude domains of ICC should be included in the assessment process to reinforce their existence in the curriculum.

As these observations show, some ICC domains are challenging to integrate in the curriculum because of their problematic assessment. Byram (1997) opined that contextualizing factors such as autonomy (e.g., skills of discovery) and social responsibility (e.g., attitude) can be complicated to evaluate, not only technically but also ethically. In this respect, Byram questioned the right of an institution and its members to make judgments about a student's degree of social responsibility.

The assessment of ICC can vary according to the learning objectives and the learning context. Assessment tools like essays, midterms and finals, projects, and portfolios, as well as program-specific questionnaires, self-assessments, and interviews are the tools most commonly used for assessing ICC outcomes in college-level foreign language programs in the United States (Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe 2007). These tools can be used to collect both direct evidence (e.g., learning contract, e-portfolio, and critical reflection) and indirect evidence (e.g., surveys, inventories). It is important to use a combination of direct and indirect measures to ensure that the results are obtained from subjective, personalized tools as well as from objective, generic tools.

There is a need to devise different levels of ICC against which a student's performance can be measured. It is difficult to see how levels like basic competence, intermediate competence, and full competence, suggested by researchers like Sercu (2010), could help the assessor evaluate the observations or answers of the students. Nevertheless, these criteria can be a step forward toward a better definition of assessment criteria and their future integration into the language curriculum.

Studies on ICC

Most studies that have aimed to investigate the ICC framework in a language-learning context fall under two categories. The first category includes studies conducted online using platforms such as blogs, discussion forums, and chat rooms to allow students to communicate cross-culturally. Some of these studies investigate the development of ICC as students communicate with native speakers of the target language online (Elola and Oskoz, 2008; Fedderholt, 2001; Liaw, 2006; Muller-Hartmann, 2005; Schuetze, 2008; Thorne, 2003; Ware, 2005). Other studies utilize online tools to examine ICC development during sojourns or study abroad programs to measure the students' intercultural development during the period spent in the target country (Jackson, 2009; Womack, 2009). The second group of studies addresses the concept of ICC in a classroom context (Elorza, 2008; Sercu, 2006; Young & Sachdev, 2011).

Jackson (2009) conducted a mixed-method study to examine how a five-week study abroad program in England enhanced ICC for 14 advanced students of English from Hong Kong. Prior to the study, they attended a 14-week-long preparation course. The course consisted of seminars in intercultural communication and readings of ethnographic research and English literature related to theater and other cultural sites in England they were intended to visit. During the five-week sojourn in England, students lived with a host family, took literary and cultural courses, and pursued individual interests in their free time. Students were required to write a 30-page dissertation during the trip, based on the ethnographic data they collected, and a final reflection after the end of their sojourn.

The data collected through the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) developed by Hammer and Bennett (2002) and Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) revealed that students might have an advanced level of proficiency in the host language and yet possess an ethnocentric mindset. This discovery confirms the need for study abroad programs to include elements that promote (inter)cultural awareness and critical reflection at all stages (pre-sojourn, sojourn, post-sojourn) in order to stimulate higher levels of metacognitive awareness and ethnorelativism.

Some researchers have investigated foreign language teachers' perception of ICC and its implementation in the language classroom. Sercu (2005) conducted a study that surveyed teachers of English, German, and French and investigated to what extent the teachers' beliefs, levels of instruction, and teaching practices could be promoting ICC as opposed to mere communicative competence. Sercu found that the majority of foreign language teachers who participated in the study had "not yet adopted student-centered strategies for teaching intercultural competence" (p. 103). The reasons indicated were the lack of preparation and of appropriate teaching materials. One final significant finding in this study was that the surveyed teachers supported the aim to adopt the intercultural approach in foreign language education. They were "willing to become teachers of intercultural communication competence" (p. 97) but did not have sufficient time, resources, or training.

Young and Sachdev's (2011) also examined English teachers' beliefs and practices of implementation of Byram's (1997) ICC objectives. A total of 36 native and non-native teachers of English in three different countries, France, England, and the United States, participated in the study, which used teacher diaries, focus groups, and

questionnaires to collect data. The results of the study revealed that the ICC model was not an explicit part of the curriculum in the schools where the teachers worked or in any of the schools operated by their employing organization. Both U.S. and British teachers agreed that there is a need for a "safe, generally calm and unthreatening atmosphere" (p. 89) to implement some objectives that touch on political or religious topics. Most teachers agreed that such an atmosphere was difficult to create, particularly with regard to Byram's (1997) objectives of political education and critical cultural awareness. Furthermore, all three groups saw a connection between ICC and the attributes of a successful language learner and language teacher. Most teachers considered the intercultural speaker model to be most useful in positioning learners between their own culturally derived perceptions and those of another cultural group. The study results support findings of earlier studies that investigated teacher's beliefs and practices regarding ICC (e.g., Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby, 2003; Sercu, 2005).

The general perception one can derive from these studies is that teaching of and about culture seems to be neglected, or even actively avoided (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Lazaratton, 2003; Young et. al., 2009). The lack of curricular support, suitable textbook materials, and ICC testing raises concerns about the integration of intercultural competence into language curricula. These findings suggest an agenda for future research, as recommended by Byram and Feng (2004), Paige et al. (2003), and Young et al. (2009). It is also possible that the lack of teacher training contributes to the limited diffusion of the ICC framework.

SUMMARY

Since the 1980s, a number of teachers and educational scholars have been indicating the need for an intercultural approach to second language teaching that would go beyond language learning and bridge the information gap produced by the current communicative method (Corbett, 2003). The literature review presented in this chapter has focused on theoretical concepts and empirical findings in the following four related areas: the role of culture in language learning, the teaching of English in the KSA, the communicative approach, and the intercultural communicative competence.

Young et al.'s (2009) study findings indicated that none of the empirical research on language learning conducted from 1993 to 2007 directly questioned whether culture was taught in English language programs. Duff and Uchida (1997) found contradictions between what English teachers believed about their cultural practices and identities and what actually took place in the classroom based on their students' perceptions. These findings support Kumaravadivelu's (2008) argument that understanding other cultures also involves a better understanding of ourselves.

In the KSA, learning English is valued for its importance as the lingua franca of the modern world. However, the curricular reform movement in the Gulf countries, including the KSA, seemed to be adopting Western curricula with little or insufficient adaptation to the learners' needs (Mazawi, 2003). On the other hand, a counterforce has been pushing against this uncritical adoption of English textbooks for fear of losing the "Islamic identity" (Elyas, 2008).

Elyas's (2014) study of the narratives of success and failure of Saudi English learners indicated that many Saudi learners attributed their success to their exposure to

English media, whereas other learners attributed their feeling of failure to their inadequacy in comparison to the perfect native speaker. This finding calls for a reexamination of the strong emphasis on native speaker competence as an ultimate goal for English learners. Additionally, Hussein and Naseef's (2013) research on English teachers' perceptions in a Saudi college-level learning context showed that teachers considered the students' negative attitude toward English as an impairment in their learning process. Findings of these studies indicate that many of the challenges Saudi students face in learning English are attributable to the lack of proper adaptation of English textbooks to the local culture and the lack of preparation to communicating effectively in the real world. In this sense, the intercultural approach addresses a pressing need in the Saudi context and it can be considered as a middle ground between the Saudi curriculum reform movement and the concerns about students' cultural identity caused by an uncritical adoption of Western curricula.

Results of previous ICC studies provide evidence that a moderate level of coherence exists between individual rates of linguistic and cultural awareness progress. Other findings indicate that intercultural sensitivity and language proficiency are not developed at the same pace (Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, results of a survey of English teachers by Young and Sachdev (2011) revealed that ICC is not an explicit part of the curriculum and that aspects of ICC that encourage critical discussion of religion and politics would be rather difficult to implement in the classroom. These findings provide opportunities for future research to investigate to what extent the lack of culture-based teacher training can be attributed to the lack of ICC awareness among teachers.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter restates the objectives of the research, illustrates the approaches and instruments used to select and collect the data, introduces the location where the research will be conducted and the demographics of participating teachers, and elaborates on the quantitative and qualitative methods that will be used to analyze the data.

RESTATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to investigate English teachers' perception of the relevance of Byram's (1997) ICC framework and objectives. In recent years, the communicative approach has mainly addressed linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences as curricular objectives. This study broadens this focus by exploring the importance of the ICC domains of attitude, knowledge, and skills and the related objectives identified by Byram for the teaching of English as a foreign language.

The research took place in the male and female campuses of the Preparatory Year (PY) program at the King Saudi University (KSU) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The researcher utilized a survey to collect quantitative data, followed by focus groups, and classroom observations to collect qualitative data. These three instruments were used in two different phases, as described in the research design section below.

The study intended to address the following questions:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive ICC objectives to be important in the language classroom?
2. Which curricular objectives do teachers find relevant to the objectives of ICC?
3. How do teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives inform their current practices in the classroom?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research method used in this study was what Creswell (2009) defined as a mixed-method sequential explanatory strategy, a popular form of mixed-method design. This strategy involved two phases. The first phase was designed to collect and analyze quantitative data through a survey. The second phase followed the first one and utilized focus group discussions and class observations to collect and analyze qualitative data. The use of both quantitative and qualitative sources was meant to circumvent the weaknesses that could be found in either method when used alone. Additionally, choosing a sequential explanatory design helped the researcher explain and interpret the quantitative results by collecting follow-up qualitative data through the focus group discussions and classroom observations. This sequence is also useful in examining in more detail any unexpected results obtained from the survey (Morse, 1991).

The use of a survey was intended to provide a numeric description of the trends, attitudes, and opinions of the study participants (Creswell, 2009). The results obtained from the sample was meant to make inferences about the teachers' perceptions and opinions about the implementation of ICC in the Preparatory Year (PY) program. In terms of the survey design, the researcher selected 10 ICC objectives adapted from surveys of Byram (1997), and Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) on ICC objectives that are relevant to language teaching and learning. The researcher also contacted Dr. Tony Young and Dr. Alvino Fantini and received feedback from them on how to improve the survey items. Accordingly, the first draft of the survey was revised to reflect and ensure clarity and relevance of survey items to ICC.

The purpose of obtaining qualitative data through focus groups and classroom observations was to understand how participating teachers interpret their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Whereas questionnaires are appropriate for collecting qualitative data and explaining why participants hold a certain opinion, focus groups are better for exploring how opinions are constructed (Kitzinger, 1995). The decision to use focus groups rather than individual interviews with the teachers was intended to obtain data in a socially constructed way as a result of the interaction of the group (Merriam, 2009). The topics discussed were the participants' perceptions of implementing ICC in the language classroom, curriculum, and their classroom practices, along with the results obtained from the survey conducted in the first phase. Focus groups also allowed the researcher to economize on the time spent on this part of the research and maximize the exploration of different perspectives (Kitzinger, 1995).

Three classroom observations on the male campus helped the researcher obtain firsthand classroom experience and observe any incidents relevant to the implementation of ICC objectives in the classroom. When researchers collect data on the field, their observations are often interwoven with informal interviews. Therefore, the use of classroom observations allowed the researcher to relate to the teachers' experiences discussed in the focus groups and to better understand the context (Merriam, 2009).

RESEARCH SETTING

The study took place on the male and female campuses of the Preparatory Year (PY) program at the King Saudi University (KSU) in the KSA. Students who join the university enroll in a foundation year program (the PY) that prepares them to pursue their education in one of two tracks: science and humanities. Students' level of English

proficiency is assessed upon enrollment through an online placement test. Students' levels range from beginner to upper-intermediate. Students who request to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and achieve a high score are moved to a higher-level class. Many students also apply for scholarships in the United Kingdom, the United States, or Australia to obtain undergraduate degrees in these countries; other students pursue in these countries their post-graduate education.

The textbooks that are currently used in the PY program at the KSU are *New Headway Plus* and *Q: Skills for Success*, both of them published by Oxford University Press and available for levels from beginner to upper-intermediate. *Headway Plus* consists of 14 units and *Q: Skills for Success* consists of 10 units. In each term, students study English for 18 weeks, for an average of 10 hours per week. The average number of students in each class is 20.

The teaching faculty of the PY consists mainly of native speakers of English from Australia, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Some of the teachers who work in this program are non-native speakers of English but are citizens of English-speaking countries who demonstrated their language proficiency during the job interview. Some teachers have a degree in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Other teachers have teaching certificates such as the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) or Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Approximately 30% of the teachers have a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language (TESL/TEFL) or a related field.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants to this research were male and female teachers who have taught in the PY program at the KSU for at least two years. Thirty seven participants (7 female teachers and 30 male teachers) participated in this research. In order to find the most up-to-date list of teachers participating in the program, the researcher contacted the Human Resource Department at the KSU as well as the school's administrators to seek further information about the teachers' status. Teachers who were on leave without pay or on extended sick leave were excluded from the teachers' population. A purposeful sampling was utilized to select teachers with the required teaching experience of at least two years in teaching English in the PY program at KSU. The reason for limiting participation to teachers with two or more years of experience was to make sure that the results obtained were based on the experience that was most relevant to the KSU English learning context. The following three sections include more detailed information about participants of this research.

Survey Participants

The ICC survey conducted in this study was developed by the researcher and was piloted with several teachers who currently hold managerial and administrative positions, such as lead teachers and coordinators. After receiving feedback regarding the clarity of the items and of the instructions in the survey, the researcher revised the content and sent the revised version to two scholars in the field of intercultural competence and language learning, Tony Young and Alvino Fantini, who provided feedback regarding the validity of the survey items and their relevance to ICC as a concept. Their feedback was incorporated in the final version of the survey used in this research.

The researcher contacted a total of 60 male and female English teachers in the PY program, inviting them to complete the survey. Thirty four teachers accepted the invitation, 28 of which 25 male participants and 3 female participants completed the survey. This gender gap in responding to survey was expected due to the busy schedule of female participants that included more teaching hours than male participants' schedule did. Male participants received the survey notification on June 4, 2015. Female participants received the notification on June 29, 2015.

Focus Group Participants

Two focus group discussions, one for male participants and one for female participants, were conducted at two different locations. The first focus group discussion was conducted on June 8, 2015, in the conference room of the PY program on the male campus. Five English teachers from the PY program attended this discussion. The second focus group was conducted on August 3, 2015, in the head office of the teachers recruiting company. Four female teachers participated in this second focus group discussion. Each meeting lasted for approximately 60 minutes. The following section provides information about of participants' native country, educational background, work experience, and the reason why they chose to be English teachers:

Betty was born in Liverpool, England. She lived in Greece and KSA as well as UK. Her university degree majored is in English literature. She has been teaching EFL for approximately 20 years. Before teaching at KSU, she taught in a private language school in Corfu, Greece. As a UK qualified teacher, she also taught literacy at a beacon status college in Alton, Hampshire in the UK. The reason she chose to pursue an English teaching career is that she felt she had something to offer and had many ideas for

classroom activities. She also worked for a publishing house in Athens, Greece, which produces the whole gamut of EFL books, Express Publishing.

Laura was born In Taif in Saudi Arabia. She is from Saudi Arabia and lived in Riyadh most of her life. She has a bachelor of arts and her major is in English literature. She also obtained her English teaching certificate, known as Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), to pursue an English teaching career. She has 15 years of teaching experience. Before she joined KSU faculty, she worked at Alsarah Islamic Schools for 3 years. She also worked at Dar Al Uloom Schools as an English teacher then, and then she was promoted as a supervisor there. At the university level, she worked at Princess Nora University (PNU) for one year. She has been working at KSU for 4 year. Laura mentioned that in general she loves teaching and enjoys teaching English in particular.

Mary was born in Iran and lived there until the age of 13. She also lived for a short time in India, her husband's native country, and then in Saudi Arabia for the last 13 years. She has a bachelor of arts with a major in English literature, Language and Translation. She has 16 years of teaching experience of teaching English, of which five years is at KSU. Before that, she had worked at PNU and at private centers for English to adults. She described learning languages as her passion. She feels happy when she teaches English and observes how students learn and gradually improve. She also mentioned that financially it pays well to be an English teacher.

Renee was born and raised in Riyadh, and she sometimes traveled to Lebanon. She worked in Riyadh at different educational institutions ranging from American international schools to the preparatory year programs at PNY and finally at KSU. She

has a bachelor degree in education with a focus on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). She also has a postgraduate diploma in translation in translation a master's degree in applied linguistics and TESOL. She has been an English teacher for almost 10 years. Renee explains that she has loved English for all her life and has been interested in all the aspects of the language (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.). She also mentioned that since she always likes to socialize and meet different people all the time, English fulfills this need as she I teaches learners with different mentalities and personalities. Finally, she believes working as an English instructor is not worth it unless you have a genuine interest in both the language and the students.

Larry was born in Somalia and grew up in London, England. He has over eight years of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) experience, four of which at KSU and four more years in London. He was a community worker running his own center for disadvantaged young people as well as young people that were not disadvantaged at all. He also worked for the local authority in London. He mentioned that when he was a junior manager at a local community college, he volunteered to substitute for an absent English teacher and was observed then by a senior teacher. As a result, he was offered an English training opportunity and taught as a full time faculty member.

Andy was born in Somalia and lived in Kenya and then in the United Kingdom His university major is law. He has six years of teaching experience; all of it is at KSU. He believes that teaching is a noble profession, and he finds language acquisition interesting. Another motive to teach English at KSA is that the salary he receives is tax-free.

Malik was born in Mauritius and lived in Canada for most of his life. He has a bachelor of science in biotechnology. Prior to his five years of teaching experience at KSU, he taught English for 1 as a private tutor. The reason why he decided to change his career and become an English teacher is that he enjoys teaching and that teaching English as a profession offers more work opportunities.

Mat was born in Ireland, and lived in the UK for five years, USA for one year, India for three years, Cambodia for four years, Saudi Arabia for three years, Korea for a year and China for half a year. He has a bachelor of chemical engineering and a master's in English Language Teaching (ELT). He also has about 7 years of English teaching experience, teaching at different universities such as a university in Cambodia, a university in China, a private school in Korea. He also volunteered to teach some individuals in India, and has previously taught in an English language institute in Ireland. He became an English teacher as way to finance his travels.

Oliver was born in London, England. He holds a bachelor of science with a focus on network computing. He has four years of EFL/ESL teaching experience, none of which was prior to his time at KSU. He wanted to teach English to travel the world and teaching English was initially a means for him to do so and to be paid at the same time. After his first year at KSU, he realized that teaching English has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience for him.

Table 9 summarizes background information about the nine male and the four female focus group participants. All the names used are pseudonyms.

Table 9

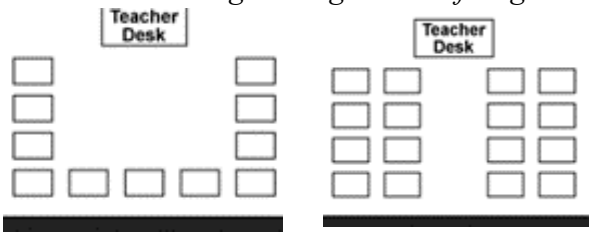
Demographic Characteristics of Male and Female Focus Group Participants

Name	Age	Ethnicity	Other languages	Number of years in the PY
Oliver	21–30	British-Somali	Somali and Arabic	4
Mat	31–40	Irish-Caucasian	Irish, French, and German	4
Malik	31–40	Mauritius	French, Creole, and Arabic	5
Andy	31–40	British-Black/African	Somali and a bit of Arabic	4
Larry	21–30	British-African	Somali	3
Renee	31–40	Lebanese-Palestinian	Arabic and French	3
Betty	41–50	British	French	3
Laura	31–40	Saudi	Arabic	4
Mary	31–40	Iranian	Farsi and Hindi	3

Classroom Observation Participants

To collect data from the classroom directly connected with activities and practices relevant to the ICC objectives, the researcher conducted three classroom observations for three different levels of English instruction in the PY program—A (elementary), B (pre-intermediate), and C (intermediate). The average number of students in each class ranges from 18 to 22 students. Students' age is between 18 and 23. The majority of students are Saudi citizens who live in or around Riyadh. They come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds: working class, middle class, and royal family members. The minority foreign students, usually two to three students in every class, come from neighboring countries such Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan. Students seating arrangements take two different forms: U-shape or rows and columns, depending on class size.

Figure 2
Classroom Seating Arrangements of English Classrooms in the PY Program



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SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

The data obtained for this study were collected from the following sources: survey of teachers' perception of ICC, focus groups, and three class observations on the male campus

The survey elicited participating teachers' responses regarding the inclusion in their current curriculum of the objectives of ICC indicated by Byram (1997) for foreign language learning. The survey also investigated whether the activities participants used in the classroom related to these objectives. The researcher selected the survey method to collect these data due to its effectiveness in collecting large-scale information.

The purpose of the focus groups was to collect qualitative data regarding any classroom incidents that relate to one of the ICC objectives. The two focus group sessions were audio recorded. Both sessions were facilitated by the researcher. The focus group procedures were adapted from Young and Sachdev (2011) and followed the guidelines suggested by Kitzinger (1995) and Hennink (2014). In the focus groups, the questions discussed were about how the objectives of ICC indicated by Byram (1997) were related to curriculum objectives and whether teachers used similar activities in their classroom.

The three classroom observations were coordinated with the chair of the English Department. During the observations, the researcher identified incidents occurring in the

classroom that related to objectives of ICC. The researcher made sure that the three classes were of various levels and were taught by different teachers. Due to university regulations, the researcher was not allowed to observe female teachers because male teachers are not allowed on the female campus.

The findings of the three data collection methods were analyzed to find similarities and differences using these research instruments.

PROCEDURES

Pre Data Collection Stage

Several steps were taken before the start of the actual research to prepare participants to the study. First, an e-mail was sent to the teachers selected to participate in the survey two days prior to sending the survey link. The email contained the link to the survey and indicated a clear deadline by which the survey was to be completed. The researcher sent another email two days prior to the deadline to remind participants to complete the survey.

The researcher coordinated the time and location of the three class observations with the chair of the English Department and contacted the selected teachers one day before the observation to get information about the class objectives and the students' level.

As for the focus group discussions, two groups were conducted for this research. Candidates invited to participate in the focus group were contacted two days prior to the focus group meeting. To enlist management support, the researcher informed the research participants' supervisors to explain the purpose of the research and the benefits to be gained from the teachers' participation.

As for the class observations, the researcher briefed the teachers who would be observed about the purpose of the observation. He also conferred briefly with the teachers to collect information about the students' level and their overall performance and to agree on the best way to limit the distraction caused by the researcher's presence in the classroom. The researcher also clearly communicated to the teachers that his observation was not intended to evaluate their performance in class, but only to collect information regarding the topic of his research.

Data Collection Stage

After sending an initial email to let teachers know they had been selected to participate in the survey, the researcher sent the survey to all participants via email before the end-of-year break. Participants had two weeks to complete the survey. The researcher also asked participants to specify the number of years they had worked for the KSU. The school management was asked to encourage teachers to complete the survey and to emphasize the benefits that could be gained from participating in the program and completing the survey. Each section of the survey was introduced by instructions to ensure the clarity of the process and the consistency of the responses.

Regarding the focus group discussions, participating male and female teachers convened on two specific dates. The main questions that were asked during the focus group session were adapted from Young and Sachdev's (2011) focus group activity:

1. To what extent are ICC objectives important in the English language classroom?
2. How relevant are these ICC objectives to the curriculum you currently teach?
3. Do you recall any classroom incidents that involve the use of these objectives?

The focus group procedures followed Kitzinger (1995) and Hennink (2014). The fact that all participants worked for the same teacher recruiting company ensured that they shared similar experiences and therefore provided more homogenous data (Kitzinger, 1995). Hennink (2014) indicated that the most common strategy to achieve homogeneity is to segment focus groups by gender and age group.

Each focus group session was audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher led the discussion by presenting ICC objectives, the focus group questions, and asking direct questions for clarification and follow-up questions for more detail. The researcher also made sure that all participants had equal opportunities to present their ideas. In order to make sure all points discussed in focus groups would be properly analyzed, the researcher audio recorded both focus group sessions, and transcribed these audio files for later analysis.

During the classroom observations, the researcher used an observation form to keep record of class incidents that are relevant to ICC objectives. The researcher adapted the elements of observation that Merriam (2009) indicated to be likely present in any setting: physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors, and the observer's behavior and thoughts. The researcher also made sure to be unobtrusive during class activities. Class observations were audio recorded to allow for a detailed data analysis at a later moment.

Post Data Collection Stage

The survey results were analyzed descriptively. Descriptive statistics of data include frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and measures of variation only for items that use a continuous rating scale, such as the Likert scale. Measuring

mean and standard deviation for items that use the Likert scale helped the researcher identify the average and variation of participants' responses in terms of their conceptualization and practices of ICC-related activities and their application of ICC objectives in their curriculum. Additionally, the researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to calculate the internal consistency of the survey items. The analysis of the results illustrated possible relationships among survey items and the teachers' perceptions of the need to devote more time to teaching culture in their classes.

To measure the survey's reliability, the internal consistency of the items was estimated by calculating coefficient alpha (or Cronbach's alpha), which allowed the researcher to identify how well different items on the survey complemented each other in their measurement of respondents' perceptions of intercultural objectives. Obtaining consistent information from items is the basis of a reliable survey (Fink, 2013). Based on the internal consistency results, the researcher calculated Cronbach's alpha reliability values for the three survey sections, which focused respectively on teachers' agreement or disagreement with the implementation of ICC in classroom activities, teachers' perception of how the curriculum incorporates or excludes ICC objectives, and the existence of ICC dimensions in teachers' practices and classroom activities.

As for the focus groups results, the researcher reviewed the audio files for detailed content analysis. The data obtained from the three classes were then compared and contrasted to identify emerging themes to be generalized across levels. The researcher captured segments of classroom interactions between students and teachers that were pertinent to the objectives of ICC. These examples of interactions were used to identify commonalities across data collection methods.

After the class observations, audio file recordings were reviewed at least three times to identify any incidents that related to ICC objectives; the researcher then transcribed class incidents in which ICC objectives were relevant and sought the help of an independent rater to implement a coding system to identify interculture-related episodes based on the ICC objectives developed by Byram (1997) and Fantini and Tirmizi (2006). Based on the coding system used to classify the content, the researcher along with the independent rater identified 21 IREs in the class observation transcripts, and two group discussion scripts. These themes include general group agreement or disagreement with regard to particular questions.

Transcripts

As mentioned above, in the post-intervention phase of this research, three audio-recorded class observations were used to obtain detailed classroom discourses to analyze. Each class observation lasted for 50 minutes. All the three class observations were transcribed; the transcripts of the class observations provided first-hand accounts of classrooms talk and interactions.

Identifying Interculture-Related Episodes

In order to explore potential interculture-related learning opportunities in the classroom, the researcher sought learning incidents pertaining to the ICC objectives that are the focus of this study. In this dissertation, intercultural learning incidents occured in a dialogue that involves constructing knowledge about the target language culture and students' own culture, and in which students used English to express themselves based on the knowledge gained about both cultures.

The interactive practice following the lesson lead-in in the three classes followed a predictable pattern adapted from Todhunter's (1999) study: (a) management (or setting up the exercise), (b) exercise (or completing the textbook exercise), and (c) extension (or unplanned questions and comments by students and teacher). First, the teacher checked the students' homework from the previous day and introduced the lesson of the day (management). Second, the teacher assigned a textbook activity for students to do in pairs or groups (exercise). Finally, students were engaged in an activity, such as a class discussion or role-playing, that enabled them to practice the language more freely and to integrate the target vocabulary or grammar structure just learned into a meaningful context.

One focus of the class observation is to identify any incidents during instructional conversations. Any class conversation can qualify as an instructional conversation if it involves an unpredictable conversation between the teacher and the students, which means that the activity goes beyond the activities planned by the teacher for this particular lesson. Instructional conversations are also described as coherent, and that the teacher shapes them toward the objectives of the lesson (Donato, 2000). The researcher will identify instructional conversation incidents using Donato's definition given above.

The structure of classroom interaction routines followed the Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Whereas the teacher usually starts the initiation and the feedback routines in any activity, students generate the response routines. Zhu (2012) describes four types of instructor's questions: display questions (questions to which the teacher already knows the answer), soliciting questions (request for information unknown to the teacher), clarification questions (request for more

information about something the student just said), and transmitting questions (questions that do not expect a student's response and are answered most of the time by the teacher). This model is used to analyze all the examples mentioned below.

Additionally, to better understand the interplay between intercultural encounters and language teaching, which helps answer the third research question, this study also adapts Zhu's (2012) definition of culture-related episodes (CRE) to analyze interculture-related episodes (IRE) in which both the target culture and the students' culture are involved in the learning incident. These IREs were analyzed based on how they were initiated (by the teacher, by the students, or based on textbook content), on whether these CREs fall within or outside an instructional conversation incident, and on their relevance to the 10 ICC objectives investigated in this research. The analysis of the IREs' relevance to instructional conversation is also useful to identify how these language socialization incidents can play a role in developing students' intercultural competence, especially in relation to the concepts of scaffolding and ZPD.

Data Coding Process

The system established for the coding process was based on the 10 ICC objectives identified by Byram (1997) and Fantini and Tirmizi (2006) that were relevant to language learning. The researcher worked closely with an independent rater to code the data obtained from class observations in order to establish interrater reliability. The independent rater who worked with the researcher was a native speaker of English and came from a similar academic background as the researcher.

Before coding, the researcher shared the ICC objectives of the study with the independent rater to familiarize him with the relevance of these objectives to language

teaching and learning. The researcher gave a copy of the class observations transcripts to the rater asking him to read them and code possible incidents according to their relevance to ICC objectives. The researcher and the rater agreed to meet a few days later to discuss the results of their coding.

During the one-hour meeting to discuss the coding results, both the researcher and the rater presented their coding of the incidents they found to be relevant to ICC objectives. Both the researcher and the coder had the time to explain the rationale used and to get clarifications on the other's coding. Finally, the researcher and the rater agreed on the IRE incidents to be presented and analyzed as research findings.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Background of the Researcher

The researcher has traveled to many countries since his childhood. He was born and raised in Kuwait, lived in Egypt in his twenties, immigrated in his thirties to the United States, where he spent ten years, and is now living in the KSA. He has been involved in teaching English as well as Arabic as foreign languages for the past 15 years in Egypt, in the United States, and now the KSA. In the United States, he gained experience in training foreign language teachers for almost ten years while working at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California.

The researcher has a certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from the International House at the International Language Institute in Cairo, Egypt. He also obtained a diploma in Teaching English to the military at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in San Antonio, Texas. Later, he obtained a master's degree in Teaching a Foreign Language (MATFL) from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in

Monterey, California, with emphasis on Arabic studies. His areas of interest include sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and language assessment. His current research interest resonates well with his multiculturalist background, which includes expertise in intercultural communication, sociocultural approach to language learning, and multicultural education and learning strategies.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher received an approval to conduct the research from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS). The approval letter was obtained after receiving the approval of the dissertation committee of the research proposal. The researcher also obtained an approval letter from KSU to conduct the research in the PY program at KSU. Additionally, the research participants were asked to sign a consent letter prior to the collection of data.

To ensure confidentiality, the researcher made sure all information obtained was secured through all the stages of the research. Only the researcher had access to this information. Additionally, the researcher respected the rights of those with whom he worked, and participants had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any explanation.

While conducting the study, the researcher avoided interrupting or disturbing participants during their work. The researcher provided the necessary information in an appropriate manner. Thus, the researcher honored all commitments of the research participants and the KSU.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter reports the results of the data analysis for the three research questions presented in this mixed-method study. The quantitative data were collected during the first phase of the research through a survey aiming to identify patterns and trends of teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives and their relevance to the content of the curriculum and classroom activities. The qualitative data were collected during the second phase of the research using two different methods. First, two focus group discussions with male and female teachers respectively allowed to seek more individualized perspectives regarding teachers' perceptions of ICC; second, a series of three classroom observations at different levels of English proficiency allowed to identify any classroom incidents that might require the integration of any of the ICC objectives investigated in this research. The three research questions the study addresses are:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive ICC objectives to be important in the language classroom?
2. Which curricular objectives do teachers find to be relevant to the objectives of ICC?
3. How do teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives inform their current practices in the classroom?

This chapter consists of five sections. The first section includes findings related to the first research question. Then, the second section deals with findings that address the second research question. After that, the third section covers findings that relevant to the third research question. After presenting findings, the fourth section summarizes quantitative research findings. Finally, a summary of qualitative research findings,

including focus group and class observations, is presented in the fifth section. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are presented below in the order of the research questions they address.

1. TO WHAT EXTENT DO TEACHERS PERCEIVE ICC OBJECTIVES TO BE IMPORTANT IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM?

Survey Findings

The first section of the survey investigated the extent to which respondents perceived the 10 ICC objectives as important to the PY program. These objectives were measured on a Likert scale that included the following options: 4 (definitely important), 3 (somewhat important), 2 (somewhat not important), and 1 (definitely not important). The researcher used a two-way categorizing convention to analyze the data: All "definitely important" and "somewhat important" answers were clustered into the "important" category, and all "definitely not important" and "somewhat not important" answers were categorized into the "not important" category.

On average, the majority of respondents (90%) indicated that they perceived ICC objectives to be important or somewhat important in the English program at PY. The three ICC objectives that most respondents indicated as important are: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (100%, n = 28), the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding to help speakers overcome conflicting perspectives (96%, n = 27), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating and interacting across cultures (96%, n = 27). In contrast, the three ICC objectives that more respondents perceived as not important were: the ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values (21%, n = 7), the ability to make evaluative

analysis of documents (19%, *n* = 5), and the development of students' readiness to adopt appropriate interaction behaviors (18%, *n* = 5). See Table 3 for details.

Table 3

The Most and Least Important ICC Objectives for the English PY Program

ICC objectives	Important	Not important
1. Knowledge about levels of formality	100%	0%
2. Ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding	96%	4%
3. Ability to suspend judgment	96%	4%
4. Readiness to adopt appropriate interaction behaviors	82%	18%
5. Ability to make evaluative analysis of documents or events	81%	19%
6. Ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values	79%	21%

Note. Rows are arranged by level of importance (from the most important to the least important ICC objective).

In addition, it can be noticed below (Table 3) that the standard deviation (SD) for the three objectives perceived as not important is considerably greater than the SD for the three ICC objectives respondents perceived as important. A larger SD value indicates larger differences in responses to items related to these objectives (Fowler, 2014). Hence, the lowest value of SD found for "knowledge about levels of formality in language" indicates consensus agreement among participants regarding its importance in the PY program. On the other hand, the highest value of SD found for "readiness to adopt appropriate interaction behaviors" indicates the least consensus among respondents regarding the importance of this ICC objective for the English PY program (see Table 4).

Table 4

Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of Most and Least Important ICC Objectives for the English PY Program

Objective	Mean	N	SD
1. Knowledge about levels of formality	3.67	27	0.48
2. Ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding	3.52	27	0.58
3. Ability to suspend judgment	3.52	27	0.58
4. Ability to make evaluative analysis of documents or events	3.30	27	0.73
5. Readiness to adopt appropriate interaction behaviors	3.22	27	0.85
6. Ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values.	2.93	27	0.73

Note. A low mean indicates an ICC objective perceived as more important; a low standard deviation value indicates a higher level of agreement among participants.

The internal consistency reliability calculated for the 10 items in this section that represent ICC objectives, using Cronbach's alpha, is .70. This value is considered to be within the acceptable range of reliability (Orcher, 2007). This sufficiently high value of internal consistency indicates that survey items align with each other in measuring the importance of ICC objectives for the English PY program. Additionally, a high level of alpha of .70 means that the scores obtained are less likely to be influenced by guessing or by random marks (Fowler, 2014).

Male Focus Group Findings

The guided discussion in the focus group started by asking participants to vote on 10 ICC objectives that participants perceived to be important for the English PY program. The discussion among male participants highlighted the importance of three ICC objectives. The first objective that received most votes is the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding. Participants considered this objective as an important facilitative factor to eliminate students' fear and bring down an important

language barrier when communicating with English speakers. Larry explained that this objective is important to "eliminate this misunderstanding … [and] eliminate the fear towards the people who speak the language". Larry emphasized the difficulties students encounter in understanding the rules and the teachers' role in helping them make sense of these rules. He said that "students don't understand why language is used this way, so they need to know the rules to understand ... clarifying their misunderstandings is like the first barrier is over."

The second ICC objective that male participants rated as important is the knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior. Some participants explained that for students who will be traveling abroad to continue their education, it is important to be able to distinguish between the language they use to do their assignments and the language used on TV shows. Mat related to his experience when he said, "I teach level C (upper-intermediate and advanced students) and they all watch *Breaking Bad*, so … they know the slang ... but they're not very good with formal language". Larry agreed with Mat and explained that "in this context here with teenager students, they're always fascinated, fixated on learning slang, so I always make a point to tell them that slang, yes, it does have a purpose, but your purpose really in this context is to learn formal language more."

The third objective that male participants saw as important is the ability to suspend judgment and to appreciate the complexities in interacting across cultures. Some participants related their own experience to explain why they considered this objective to be important. Andy explained that as a native English speaker and a Muslim he encountered such incidents, for example when he was asked why he was wearing a

traditional men's white robe on a subway in London. Reflecting on this experience, Andy said that this objective seemed important because when native and non-native speakers interact, they need to "be able to suspend that judgment … the assumption of who that person is and just be able to interact with each other."

Female Focus Group Findings

When the researcher asked female participants in the second focus group to vote for the most important ICC objectives for students learning English, three objectives received most votes. The first ICC objective was the knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Betty explained, "You don't need to be a rocket scientist to work this out … it is important as a teacher that we … keep a distance while maintaining a professional demeanor towards students." In terms of taboos, Betty explained that, for example, medical students associate the word "drug" with narcotics. She added, "I always tell students when we first open the medical book that when we use the word "drugs" in the context of the book, we mean conventional medications prescribed by doctors."

The second objective was the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures. Referring to the differences in appearance and body language Arab female students display when studying abroad, Mary observed that "many people already prejudge according to your appearance, your body language, so students definitely need to be aware of this, being judged by many people."

The third ICC objective was to develop students' readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are appropriate for non-native speakers or foreigners. Some participants felt that this particular objective would enable students to communicate

better with English speakers. Renee commented on the importance of this objective by saying, "We help students … to adopt their interaction behaviors … that would facilitate their communication … [and] their understanding, so communication will be much better" (see Table 5).

Table 5

Teachers' Perceptions of Important ICC Objectives for the English PY Program

Question: Which ICC objectives do you perceive as important for the English PY program?	
Male focus group participants	Female focus group participants
"Helping students identify sources of misunderstanding eliminates their fears towards people who speak the language"	"I think one thing that crosses all cultural boundaries in nonverbal behavior"
"It is important that students differentiate between informal and formal language"	"Students definitely need to be aware of this, of being judged by many people based on their appearance"
"They need to understand why we use this type of language or why we adopt this kind of behavior to get what we need"	"We are not actually changing anything, we are exposing them to something that is a bit more than high-school experience"
"When you're in Britain, you have to behave in a certain way, so that shows cultural awareness as well"	"It was decided they should be Exposed to it … If they didn't want to take it on board, that was a personal choice"

2. WHICH ICC OBJECTIVES DO TEACHERS FIND TO BE RELEVANT TO THE ENGLISH CURRICLUM IN THE PY PROGRAM?

Survey Findings

The second section of the survey addressed the relevance of ICC objectives to the content of the English textbooks used in the PY program. Relevance of ICC objectives to English textbooks' content was measured on a Likert scale that offered the following options: 4 (definitely relevant), 3 (somewhat relevant), 2 (somewhat not relevant), and 1 (definitely not relevant). As in the previous section, the researcher used a two-way

categorizing convention to analyze the data: All "definitely relevant" and "somewhat relevant" answers were clustered into the "relevant" category, and all "definitely not relevant" and "somewhat not relevant" answers were categorized into the "not relevant" category.

Generally, the average responses to the 10 items representing ICC objectives show that most respondents (76%) believed these ICC objectives to have some connection with the content of the current English textbooks. Three ICC objectives emerged as the most relevant: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (96%, n = 24), the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their connotations (84%, n = 21), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating across cultures (84%, n = 21). Conversely, the three ICC objectives respondents perceived as least relevant to the content of the English textbooks in the PY program are: knowledge about regional dialects (40%, n = 10), the ability to explain areas of misunderstanding (32%, n = 8), and the knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors (32%, n = 28). See Table 6 for details.

Table 6

The Most and Least Relevant ICC Objectives to the Content of Textbooks in the English PY Program

Note. Rows are arranged by most relevant ICC objectives.

ICC objectives	Relevant	Not relevant
1. Knowledge about levels of formality	96%	4%
2. Ability to identify significant references	84%	16%
3. Ability to suspend judgment	84%	16%
4. Knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors	68%	32%
5. Ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstandings	68%	32%
6. Knowledge of regional dialects	60%	40%

In terms of response variability, the lowest SD value was found for knowledge about levels of formality in language. This low value indicates a greater consensus among respondents in terms of the relevance of this objective to the content of English textbooks. On the contrary, the highest SD value found for knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors indicates the least agreement among respondents in terms of its relevance to the content of English textbooks in the PY program (see Table 7).

Table 7

Relevance of ICC Objectives

Objective	Mean	N	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Knowledge about levels of formality	3.37	24	0.58
2. Ability to suspend judgment	3.12	24	0.79
3. Readiness to adopt appropriate interaction behaviors	3.08	24	0.78
4. Knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors	2.83	24	1.09
5. Knowledge of regional dialects	2.75	24	0.85
6. Ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values	2.71	24	0.78

Note. ICC objectives with means closer to 4 are perceived as more relevant to textbook content.

The reliability calculated for the items in this section using Cronbach's alpha is .892. This sufficiently high value of internal consistency indicates that survey items in this section well complement each other in measuring the relevance of ICC to curricular objectives related to the textbook content. As indicated in section 1, this high level of .892 also means that the scores obtained are less likely to be influenced by guessing or random marks.

Male focus group Findings

Male participants rated three ICC objectives as the most relevant to the current curriculum and the textbooks used in the English PY program. The first highly rated ICC

objective is knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior. Mat mentioned that there are some examples of integration of ICC objectives in the book: Unit 4 of the *New Headway Intermediate* textbook features exercises that raise awareness of what is not acceptable in other cultures. He mentioned that "the reading article as a whole deals with understanding how different cultures deal with some areas of culture, and what to be aware of in some countries so as not to cause misunderstandings." However, Mat also observed that "this exercise doesn't deal with levels of formality in language, just with the practices of each culture … these practices can help students understand nonverbal communication across cultures."

The second highly rated objective is the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding to overcome conflicting perspectives. Andy mentioned one relevant example:

> There is one text we teach about Michael Schumacher (a German world-renown car racing champion) driving fast in a taxi … The taxi driver came to drive Schumacher's family to the hotel and take them back to the airport. One their way back … Schumacher said, Move over, let me drive … So he drove fast like he was driving his own car … He got just in time to catch his flight … So my concern now is, OK, they go to Germany and they think maybe I can do the same … and they can drive so fast on a fast lane … it's called autobahn.

Any's point here is that this reading activity presents to students a fast lane in which no one can drive slower than 120 km/h, a speed that is considered maximum speed in most highways in Riyadh.

The third and last objective that participants identified as highly relevant to textbook content is the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures. Andy observed:

> There was a passage we read the other day … it was about cosmopolitan live in London … One of the things it said is that … Londoners, or people who live in London, are not friendly … They thought London people are friendly because they are taught by teachers who come from London, so their assumption was, Wait a minute, we are taught by teachers in London but they are friendly, so I had to explain to them that being here we have to know you as people … I have to know you as my student … I have to look at you as my little brother … whereas in London no one cares, and they don't want to know.

On the other end of the continuum, two ICC objectives were indicated as the least developed in the current English textbooks: knowledge about regional dialects and varieties and how others perceive them, and knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Participants rated one ICC objective, the readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are appropriate for a non-native English speaker, differently. Malik commented, "This objective is hardly related to any of the content of any of the textbooks … I didn't come across this in any English textbook." On the contrary, Larry believed this is the focus of most books. However, he did not provide any particular example to support this statement.

When the researcher discussed with participants to what extent English textbooks addressed students' own cultural background, Mat pointed out that it is important to define what target language culture is the culture of Great Britain, United States, India, etc. He added, "There are plenty of articles about different parts of the world, and teachers can bring their own knowledge into the lesson … Most activities start off asking about students' own experiences." He mentioned that in the *Headway* book there are activities that prompt students to state "if a list of statements about their own culture are

true." Hence, he believes there is "a lot of knowledge and experience of the students that the books target."

Female focus group Findings

When asked to rate the ICC objectives according to their relevance to the current curriculum and English textbooks in the PY program, female participants rated three ICC objectives more highly than others. The first objective is knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior. Participants indicated that textbooks present both formal and informal language, and that even though there is enough material to help students distinguish between the two registers, their difference was sometimes implied and left for the teachers to explain. Laura observed, "There is enough content even if it is implied, not explicit." Renee added: "I do think there is enough material to use for this objective. It is hidden most of the time, though. Teachers should draw students' attention to this, I think."

The second objective participants rated highly is the ability to identify and explain sources of intercultural misunderstanding to overcome conflicting perspectives. As an example, Laura said: "In the textbook, one passage deals with a woman changing her last name into her husband's. I explained to them that once a woman gets married in the West, she carries her husband's surname". Renee added another example: "When there is a text about a president … I explain that in some countries they have a president, not a king, and both the king and the president have the highest rank in any country."

The third ICC objective that was rated highly is the readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are considered appropriate for a non-native English speaker. Renee mentioned the example of "presenting a situation in which two or more

individuals are at a pharmacy, a clothing store, or even a hospital. Then, after exposing the learners to the target expressions to be used, I ask them to create similar dialogues and practice role-playing". Laura agreed with Renee and she recalled a specific reading in the textbook about people sitting in the coffee shop, ordering hot and cold drinks, and asking about prices.

Participants gave a low rating to two objectives: knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos, and knowledge about regional dialects and varieties in English and how they are perceived by others. They said that there were no particular examples they could remember that related to these two objectives.

Another question the researcher asked participants if any of the ICC objectives mentioned to be relevant to English textbooks addressed students' own cultural background as well as the target culture, including knowledge about Saudi public figures, businesspersons, doctors, scientists, or entrepreneurs. Betty's answer was, "No, I would have to say not in *Q Skills*, unless it's not applicable to the medical book, but definitely not in *Q Skills*." Mary added, "Every now and then they put some pictures of the desert, I don't know…" Betty remembered one cultural reference that could be related to students' cultural background in *Q Skills for Success,* Level 4: "In *Q Skills* there is one that … is not a cultural reference, it's a religious one … It's Hajji Noor Edeen. He's a Chinese Muslim, and he has written most beautiful artwork, but that's the only reference I have ever come across." Table 8 includes some quotes pertaining to what both focus groups participants saw as the ICC objectives that are most relevant to textbooks.

Table 8

Most Relevant ICC Objectives to the Content of the Current English Textbooks

Question: Which ICC objectives do you perceive as important for the English PY program?	
Male focus group participants	Female focus group participants
"There is always a section in the book about formal and informal language"	"In level II they have a lot of knowledge, they have a lot of phrases, and they have many lessons related to levels of formality"
"The books expose students to different cultural sensitivities"	"There is formal and informal content, but it is hidden; most of the time teachers must draw students' attention to it"
"Knowledge of regional dialects is rarely seen in books. Sometimes there is some differences explained between American and British English"	"There should be more space dedicated to knowledge of regional dialects to expose students to varieties of accents and dialects all over the world"
"There might be an example of knowledge of nonverbal behavior, but I can't remember it"	"Only one reference in the books relates to students' own culture; some pictures of the desert every now and then"

3. HOW DO TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF ICC OBJECTIVES INFORM THEIR CURRENT PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM?

Survey Findings

The third section of the survey explored the frequency of culture-related activities and their relevance to ICC objective. Responses were measured on a Likert scale that included the following options: 4 (often), 3 (once in a while), 2 (rarely), and 1 (never). Generally, findings show that the two culture-related activities practiced more in the classroom are: briefly presenting facts about the culture of English-speaking countries when students come across them ("often" = 60%; "once in a while" = 28%, n = 22) and providing sufficient information about food and greetings ("often" = 52%; "once in a while" = 32%, n = 21). On the other hand, findings show that the two least practiced culture-related activities in the classroom are: asking students to find information about a particular practice ("rarely" = 37%; "never" = 33%, n = 17) and asking students to find

information about a cultural product ("rarely" = 40%; "never" = 4%, *n* = 11). See Table 9 for details.

Table 9

Most and Least Used Culture-Related Activities in the English PY Classrooms

Culture activities	4. Often	3. Once in a while	2. Rarely	1. Never
Briefly presenting facts students come across	60%	28%	8%	4%
Providing sufficient facts about food, greetings, etc.	52%	32%	16%	0%
Exposing students to materials to recognize diversity	32%	36%	24%	8%
Effective questioning of culturally relevant activities	24%	44%	32%	0%
Finding information about cultural products	20%	36%	40%	4%
Finding information about cultural perspectives	12%	44%	32%	12%
Finding information about cultural practices	4%	25%	38%	33%

Note. Rows are arranged by most frequently practiced activities.

As indicated in the previous two sections, the relatively low values of SD associated with "providing sufficient facts about foods, greetings, etc." and "briefly presenting facts about the culture of English-speaking countries" indicate a higher level of agreement among respondents regarding how frequently these objectives are addressed in classroom activities. To the contrary, the highest value of SD found for "effective questioning of culturally relevant activities" indicates a low level of agreement among respondents in terms of how often this objective is practiced in the classroom (see Table 10).

Table 10

Most and Least Frequent Class Activities Relevant to ICC Objectives

Objective	Mean	N	Standard Deviation (SD)
1. Briefly presenting facts students come across	3.64	24	0.83
2. Providing sufficient facts about food, greetings, etc.	3.37	24	0.77
3. Finding information about cultural perspectives	2.54	24	0.80
4. Finding information about cultural practices	2.00	24	0.89

Note. Means closer to 4 relate to activities perceived as more often practiced in the classroom.

The reliability calculated for the items in this section that represent classroom activities related to ICC objectives, using Cronbach's alpha, is .759. This moderately high value of internal consistency indicates that survey items in this section well complement each other and are less likely to receive responses that are guessed or randomly selected.

A last question in this third section of the survey elicited teachers' feeling about the need to devote more time to culture-related activities in the PY program. A total of 64% of the participants (16 out of 25) indicated that they agree "very much" or "to a certain extent" on this need; none of the respondents thought that there was no need at all for more culture-related activities (see Table 11).

Table 11

Participants' Feeling About Devoting More Time to Culture-Related Activities

Question	*n*	1. Yes, very much so	2. Yes, to a certain extent	3. No, not particularly	4. No, not at all
28. Devote more time to culture related activities?	25	8%	56%	36%	0%

Male focus group Findings

In the last activity in the focus group discussion, the researcher asked participants to share any incidents occurred in the classroom that were relevant to any of the ICC objectives and how they handled the situation. The researcher also asked participants

whether they used any activities of their own to address students' learning needs in this regard. Participants in the male focus group indicated that one of the issues students find more problematic pertains to the different levels of formality in language and behavior. Larry mentioned that his students always had problems using formal English in academic writing, and observed: "After seeing in their mock writing exam that a lot of them use informal language … I felt I had to help them prepare for the exam." Mat agreed with Larry and added: "I had the same issue, not just with their writing, but their speaking as well … They would use informal language when they should use formal language, I just explain differences, when it is expectable to use one and not the other…"

Another objective that related to classroom incidents is the knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Oliver recalled an incident in which a student was offended by something that Oliver had done without realizing it: "Something in their culture … made them see what happened as offensive and I was unaware of that as a teacher … and so maybe I offended one of them, and the others were like, 'He's a foreigner … he doesn't really know.'" Oliver shared another example of a classroom incident related to this ICC objective, regarding the interpretation of a certain hand gesture teachers perceive as offensive even though it is commonly used in the Saudi culture. Oliver commented on this:

> One time I was eliciting answers and a student was still working on that task made a certain gesture to me, and I didn't like it, something came off and so I asked him "what do you mean" and I found it to be rude but later on I found out it's polite…it's polite, but I didn't know it's polite…it means please give us more time…just wait.

Female focus group Findings

When the researcher asked female participants whether they could recall any incidents related to ICC objectives, and whether they had used any class activities to address these incidents, their responses focused on two ICC objectives. The first objective is knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Betty recalled an incident in which she had to change a class activity that required students to role-play a trip to London and to navigate the subway using a map. She realized that even though students actually liked the task, asking female students to act as independent in London is perceived as a taboo in their culture: "It is related to knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos because it is about women's independence, from the Saudi perspective … These girls would be sort of negotiating the London tube, and that is a taboo."

In addition, the same nonverbal hand gesture the Oliver reported earlier in the first focus group tended to offend some native English-speaking teachers. Betty recalled an incident in which she caught a student using hand gesture which means, "Wait a minute" or "Give us more time" in the Saudi Culture. Betty explained:

> The gesture you've just done … It is also used in Greece … It means "I've got you," so when a student actually did that to me … the look on my face was one of a shock and I just had to ask her, why are you doing that to me? So rude!

When students explained that it just means "Wait", she responded, "No, it doesn't actually. It means "Now I've got you". Mary commented on this incident saying:

> Because I am quite experienced in this field and I worked with people of international background, [I know] what can be offensive to English native speakers like Betty … I try to advise students that if they travel abroad, or if they have native speaking teachers, these are the do's and don'ts … I try to give them

> ideas, because … some of them come from backgrounds and families that never even traveled outside of Riyadh, or outside of Saudi Arabia.

The second objective the female participants focused on is the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interaction across cultures. The stories participants shared relate to students' interactions with each other according to the interplay between the dominant versus less powerful cultural backgrounds. Mary recalled several incidents in which some students with a very strong tribal background would refuse to work with students from a different, or purportedly less powerful, cultural background. She explained that "for group activities … and if we want them to change their teammate … it's a little problematic". When I asked Mary how she handled these incidents, she responded: "I said 'What? You are all sitting in one class' and I forced them, I used my authority."

Betty agreed with Mary and recalled a similar incident in her class when students were engaged in a debate activity and discussions got out of control. She observed: "I think you will always have clashes in the classroom, with these different family backgrounds … Some of them will be quite judgmental towards each other."

Table 12 below presents some quotes from the focus group discussions about classroom incidents connected with ICC objectives.

Table 12

Culture-Related Activities or Incidents That Occurred in the Classroom

Question: How do teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives inform their current teaching practices in the classroom?	
Male focus group participants	Female focus group participants
"I had to improve their writing to help them prepare for the exam, after seeing their mock exam and their use of informal language"	"I put students in a situation where they were working abroad and using the tube map … It is a taboo because it's women having independence, from the Saudi perspective"
"I had the same issue, not just with their writing but with their speaking as well, using informal language when the objective is to use formal language"	"In a medical class, I asked students to pair up and to role-play different situations"
"Sometimes students misunderstand me … I was unaware of it … Students actually liked explaining that misunderstanding to me"	"I had students, Egyptians, Yemenis, or from some other Arab countries ... They refuse to sit…I say, 'You are all siting in one class' and I force them, I use my authority"
"I was eliciting answers and a student was still working and made a gesture to me, so I asked him, 'What do you mean?' and I found it to be rude but later on I found out it's polite … It means please give us more time"	"The look on my face was one of shock and I just had to ask her, 'Why are you doing that to me? So rude' … [Students said] 'We just mean wait' … I said, 'No, it doesn't, actually it means 'now I've got you'"

Classroom Observation Findings

The following section reports on the most prominent examples of IREs observed in the three classroom observations. The 21 IREs found are categorized under the seven ICC objectives that are most relevant to them. These examples of IREs are ordered according to their frequency, from the most frequent IREs to the least frequent ones.

1. The ability to use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in events and documents and to apply these interpretations to other events and documents

The researcher identified six IREs as opportunities for enhancing the students' ability to understand assumptions of an event or a document of the target culture and to apply these interpretations to other documents or events by establishing links and relations among them. Examples of these assumptions can be found in allusions,

connotations and presuppositions of an event or a document of the target culture. The following seven examples include classroom practices that are relevant IREs to this ICC objective. The following seven examples are the most relevant IREs to this ICC objective.

Example 1 *(T: Sammy; Ali: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is activating the students' background knowledge about that day's lesson; Class B]

T: [Lifting the book to show students a picture] The picture on the page, what does it show?

Ss: A taxi.

T: How do you know it is a taxi?

Ali: From the back of the car.

T: You see the back of the car … OK! Well, how do you know it's a taxi?

Ali: [In Arabic] From its shape … [In English] It is round.

In this example, the teacher is activating the students' background knowledge about what characterizes taxis in England. In this example, which falls within the lead-in part of the lesson, the teacher is using two display questions; even though the textbook included the image of the taxi, the teacher initiated an interaction to elicit this information from students. Additionally, this technique demonstrated to less observant or less competent students how to question and identify the differences between taxis in English-speaking countries such as England and taxis in the students' home country or neighboring countries. This incident seemed to be unplanned in the lesson as the questions asked were not previously prepared by the teacher yet related to the lesson objectives. This incident also involved distributed turn-taking, and focused on new

information. These questions can be applied to other situations to identify and interpret other cultural products of an English-speaking country.

Example 2 *(T: Sammy; Ahmed: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is telling students about his friend's unfortunate experience in a hajj tour agency in Riyadh; Class B]

T: I had to go to a hajj company in El Hamrah ... I saw my friend there … He wanted to change [his package] from bus to plane … This is the only thing he went there for … the only thing you can change.

Ahmed: Or you can cancel it.

T: And he cancelled it … and he came out with nothing. Is this normal here?

Ss: [Some students say yes]

T: Poor guy … This is his first hajj … And all he wanted to do is to change it from bus to plane, and then he walks out with noting…

The short interaction in this example occurred between the teacher and a number of students who maybe had little experience of the teacher friend's predicament. It occurred as part of the lead-in activity, and it obviously was not part of textbook activities. Although not clearly related to the lesson objectives of identifying what defines a big city, the interaction was marginally associated with the lesson objective because hajj is a defining feature of Saudi Arabian culture. The teacher asked a soliciting question to invite students to help him understand the local culture. The students' response was consistent with what had happened to the teacher's friend; the students did not offer an alternative solution to deal with such predicament. This IRE is part of an instructional conversation incident in which the teacher was trying to understand the cultural values associated with booking a hajj trip through a local travel agency.

Example 3 (T: Ibraheem; Ali, Kamal, Motlaq: student participants)

[The teacher is reviewing the previous day's lesson, which focused on what attracts people to shops; Class C]

Ali: Indeed, but the thing you want to buy … If it's important or not, the price it costs.

T: Is this for everything you buy?

Motlaq: Not necessarily for everything you buy, some things like toothpaste, you don't have to think when you buy them; other things, like a new phone, a laptop … Those are things you have to spend a lot of time thinking before buying … You should find something that matches your interest.

T: So it depends maybe on the price?

Kamal: It depends on the price … the higher the price the more time I need to think.

In this example, though the teacher's questions were stated in a yes or no format, students' high-intermediate level enabled them to provide detailed answers and elaborate on their perspectives regarding how much time they spend and what they consider when they go shopping. The teacher asked questions that were not previously prepared for this lesson, but still related to the previous lesson objectives, to which two students took turns answering. Thus, they were part of an instructional conversation incident that consisted of solicitation questions. It is also possible that since these questions related to the students' own preferences, the students felt encouraged to explain in more detail rather than simply answering yes or no. Thus, the teacher's solicitation questions identified local cultural values about shopping as reflected in the students' individual preferences and encouraged students to express themselves.

Example 4 *(T: Ibraheem; Khaled: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is asking students how they would prepare their houses to sell them; Class C]

T: You would paint it. What color would you use? Color is important…

Ss: White.

T: White? Why?

Khaled: Most people like white.

T: Very interesting.

In this interaction, the teacher was leading into the lesson of the day. The two questions the teacher asked are examples of soliciting questions related to the topic of the lesson, but also extend beyond the activities included in the book. The teacher's response indicates he was unaware of this general preference for the color white, even though he had lived in Riyadh for more than two years. This IRE was part of a short instructional conversation incident that included solicitation questions to identify color preferences in the local culture.

Example 5 (T: Ibraheem; Salem: a student participant)

[The teacher is explaining the meaning of the idiom "a hot potato"; Class C]

T: OK! A hot potato, what does that mean? … An issue that many people are talking about, a controversial issue, is a hot potato … No one is speaking about it, but everyone is speaking about it.

Salem: I think it's a game … It is called hot potato.

T: I don't know… a TV show?

Salem: No, just people standing next to each other and they have to cut hot potato and when the whistle is going…

T: He's out.

Salem: Yeah.

T: OK!

In this example, the IRE incident occurred during the management stage of the lesson as the teacher was setting up a fill in the blank exercise. The teacher was trying to explain the meaning of the word idiom by presenting idioms commonly used in English. It is obvious the teacher here slightly departed from textbook content using an idiom that he believed would help students understand the term "idiom." The student's response towards the end indicated that at least some students were still struggling with the meaning of this term. The expression "a hot potato" has no relevant meaning in the Saudi culture but seems to be related to a game that is familiar to students. This IRE was part of an instructional conversation incident in which the example brought up by the teacher was interpreted differently from the teacher's intent to explain the meaning of the term "idiom."

2. The ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and understand their connections

The next five IREs examples observed in the three classes relate to the ability to identify references that are found in students' local culture or that are shared by the target culture and the students' local culture.

Example 6 *(T: Ibraheem; Ali: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is explaining to the students the meaning of the word "idiom"; Class C]

T: As an idiom, when you start a sentence with "in theory," you mean

like in theory in Saudi Arabia, for example, in theory… [the teacher is trying to think of an example].

S: There are no Christians.

T: Yeah, OK! Like, in theory, for example, if you are speeding you get a ticket … And if you speed again, they take your license away. But does that happen?

Ss: No ... Yes.

In this example, the teacher was trying to explain the idiom "in theory" mentioned while managing setting up the exercise. He tried to relate his explanation to a situation that is common in the local context. This IRE is an example of instructional conversation that occurred in the management stage. One student, Ibrahim, mentioned an example to confirm his understanding of the idiom. The example of the speeding ticket used by the teacher seemed more appropriate to use in the class. The type of question the teacher asked can be classified as a display question meant to help students relate the idiom to the local culture.

Example 7 *(T: Ibraheem; Ali: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is asking a student about sign language, which the student knows; Class C]

T: OK! I always had this question: Is it the same sign language?

Ali: … Like, Saudi Arabia and Arabic culture has their own sign language because it's not always about specific things … They can show like by hand, and every culture has their own ways like the difference between America's sign language and here.

T: It's not universal?

Ali: They try to make it universal … They are still trying because every place has its own culture…

This interaction between the teacher and a student was part of a discussion in which the teacher asked students how many languages they knew. Ali's answer about his

mastery of sign language prompted the teacher to ask him questions about this language. The discussion is relevant to some extent to the textbook content, but the questions were not included in the book. This IRE occurred during an instructional conversation incident in the exercise stage. The conversation was not part of the activities planned for this lesson, involved multiple students, and had a connection with the lesson objectives. This conversation enabled the student to take the position of the subject matter expert while the teacher took the position of the learner. The teacher asked soliciting questions, as he was curious to know about Arabic sign language. The student's answer shows a high level of awareness of the role culture plays in communication and of the differences between Arabic culture and American culture.

Example 8 *(T: Ibraheem; Saud: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is commenting on a student's finishing an exercise a bit too early; Class C]

T: You started too early, you jumped the gun. [Talking to the other students] You can start now.

[Ten minutes later, the teacher is explaining to the class what "jump the gun" means]

T: In English, if you tell someone "you jumped the gun"…

Saud: You started before.

T: You started, yeah! You see, here [pointing at the definition on the smart board] it says, it's figurative, it says "in racing they do this," isn't it? [The teacher pretends to hold a race starter gun]

Ss: Ah!

This example shows how the teacher explained an idiom by relating its meaning to a recent incident that involved one of the students. This IRE occurred during an

instructional conversation that was not previously planned by the teacher as part of the lesson, focused on providing new information regarding this idiom, and provided further explanation of the term "idiom," one of the target vocabulary items for this lesson. This instructional conversation occurred during an extension activity following a practice that involved a cultural reference, the racing starter gun. This cultural reference seemed to be familiar to many students, even though it is not common in their local culture. The students' familiarity of this scene from foreign movies could have helped them understand the relationship between the words in this idiom and its figurative meaning in the racing-starter-gun scene.

Example 9 *(T: Yaser; Salman: a student participant)*

[The teacher is asking students about their hobbies; Class A]

T: Next one.

Salman: I like reading.

T: You like reading … What do you like to read?

Salman: Agatha Christie.

T: You like reading stories … Do you really read it, or you just say that?

Salman: Yes, I read it…

In this example, the teacher was engaging students in a discussion that followed exercise completion. This activity was part of the book content, so it was not an instructional conversation. The teacher was surprised to hear how popular Agatha Christie novels were among Saudi students. His questioning students' genuine interest in reading novels by Agatha Christie showed teachers lack of awareness of a cross-cultural phenomenon such as Agatha Christie who is a worldwide famous writer. Salman's

answer ensured his interest in reading Agatha Christie's novels even though they did not originate from students local culture.

Example 10 (T: Yaser; Amir: a student participant; Megren, Hashem, Moathe, Bilal: student participants; Ss: the whole class)

[Teacher is asking about favorite hobbies; Class A]

T: You had another one, what was the other one?

Amir: I like collecting beads.

T: You like collecting beads, or prayer beads. OK! Give an example of things you can collect. [Talking to all students]

Megren: I like to collect money.

[Ss laughing]

T: Very good! Very old money or currency.

Hashem: Books.

T: Old books.

Moathe: Letters.

T: Letters and stamps.

Bilal: Mascot.

T: Mascots.

In this example, Amir's hobby of collecting prayer beads was relevant to the students' local culture during an extension activity that followed a book exercise. Like the previous example, this discussion activity is not an example of instructional conversation as it was planned as part of the lesson activities. During the minutes that preceded this activity, as he was monitoring the students' interactions with each other, the teacher noticed that Amir was unable to express his hobby to his classmate. Therefore, he

assisted him in finding an expression to use, and during the class discussion he corrected Amir's description of his hobby by adding the word "prayer" to the word "beads" that he had told Amir to use. The teacher also helped students share their knowledge of other contexts that involve the word "collecting"; some of these contexts included local hobbies such as collecting old books and letters, whereas others seemed international such as collecting coins and mascots.

3. The ability to identify and explain sources of intercultural misunderstanding to overcome conflicting perspectives

The following three IREs present examples of classroom incidents that involved actual intercultural misunderstandings caused by the different cultural expectations of students and teachers.

Example 11 (T: Ibraheem; Assem: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)

[The teacher is sharing examples of idioms to help students understand their meaning; Class C]

T: Yeah, but "beat around the bush" is not that specific. It's general. Do you have anything that's similar in Arabic?

Assem: [In Arabic] His face fell off.

T: What does that mean?

Assem: It means his face fell.

T: His face dropped. OK! We have it in English too. That means he's shocked!

Assem: He's been humiliated maybe.

T: Oh! You embarrassed him!

Ss: Yeah.

In this example, the teacher is departing from the textbook activity to engage students in an instructional conversation during an extension activity that was not planned, though it was still related to the lesson objective. The teacher used soliciting questions to seek an equivalent expression in Arabic to "beating around the bush." The interaction between the students and the teacher helped the teacher understand the different meanings of "his face fell off" in the English and the Arabic context: Even though the words used are similar, the Arabic idiom has a very different meaning from the English one.

Example 12 (T: Sammy; Abdilkader: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)

[The teacher is asking Majid to describe the area where he lives; Class B]

T: What's the area's name?

Abdilkader: Alghadeer district.

T: OK! Describe it … I have never been there. Describe to me the district.

Abdilkader: It's normal…

T: [Smiling] What's normal? What's a normal district?

Abdilkader: Houses and streets. [Abdilkader seems to be offended by the question]

T: Nothing personal…OK! I will leave it there. And then, what did you do when you got home?

Abdilkader: I slept…

This interaction is another example of instructional conversation occurring during an extension activity. The misunderstanding was caused by the student's use of "normal" in a way that makes more sense in Arabic than in English. Khalid's use of the word "normal" to respond to the teacher's question meant to convey the meaning of "typical"

or "ordinary" in English. The last question the teacher asked to clarify the meaning of "normal" seemed a little confusing to Khalid and made him feel like the teacher was trying to embarrass him. When he realized that, the teacher managed to change subject to avoid a further breakdown in communication with Khaled.

Example 13 (T: Sammy; Mahmoud: a student participant)

[The teacher is asking a student what he did the day before; Class B]

T: Where do you usually go for lunch?

Mahmoud: Me… Sometimes I don't eat

T: And the other times you're eating [laughing], where do you go?

Mahmoud: Ah… home.

T: You go home… You get back?

Mahmoud: No.

T: So sometimes you go and not come back [laughing]

Mahmoud: No! At the break? Just… pay…

In this example, which is a continuation of the instructional conversation during the extension activity in the previous example, Mahmoud's interpretation of the word "lunch" seemed to be associated with the local use of the equivalent Arabic word for "lunch," which indicates a meal people eat in the late afternoon in Saudi Arabia. The teacher, by contrast, interpreted the word according to English conventions, as indicating a meal that people eat from twelve to two in the afternoon. The further questioning and the surprise on the teacher's face made Mahmoud realize the misunderstanding, and he asked the teacher a clarification question, "At the break?" to signal to the teacher this misunderstanding. His final answer reflected the correct interpretation of the word "lunch" in English-speaking contexts.

4. Developing readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are considered appropriate for non-native speakers or foreigners

The following three IRE examples illustrate incidents related to the knowledge of appropriate ways of interacting in English-speaking contexts, which the teacher clarified to the students.

Example 14 (T: Sammy; Bassem, Faisal: student participants)

[The teacher is giving feedback to students on how to improve conversation; Class B]

T: OK, so if you want to improve it, how can you improve it?

Bassem: Asking the same question.

T: Asking the same question. OK! [Turning to another student to demonstrate that] OK, so what's your name?

Faisal: Faisal. What's your name? [Asking the teacher]

T: Sammy! OK? So what's the second question?

This dialogue took place in a management stage in which the teacher was giving directions on how to do an exercise. The activity was included in the book and the teacher planned it as part of the lesson, so it cannot be considered as an example of instructional conversation. After students had tried to analyze several conversation examples and to find ways to improve them according to the instructions received from the teacher. The teacher asked display questions to get students involved in the feedback and check their understanding. It is worth mentioning here that this activity was part of a practical exercise in the textbook that focused on the appropriate behavior expected from foreigners as well as native speakers when interacting in an English-speaking country such as England.

Example 15 (T: Yaser; Saad, Tariq: student participants; Ss: the whole class)

[The teacher is explaining the use of the word "pardon"; Class A]

T: "Pardon" has several meanings, guys. It is one way I can say "repeat it again". A very rude way or a polite way?

Ss: [Some students say it is rude, others say it is polite]

T: A very polite way. "Pardon" means "say it again" in a polite way. Another meaning for the world pardon… As anyone knows, it's actually originally a French word.

Saad: "What you see."

T: "What you see"? No.

S: "Excuse me."

Tariq: Very good. "Pardon me" you can use like "excuse me." Even in Arabic you have similar stuff, OK! You don't use it, but you have it … Another meaning is that you can pardon… If I'm a ruler … If this person killed someone I know … I can say "No, he must be punished" or I can pardon him.

Ss: Ah!

T: In Arabic what is called? Only first letter.

Tariq: Ein. [A letter in Arabic]

T: Ein, correct! You understand [talking to all students]?

Ss: Yeah.

In this example, the teacher used display questions along with his knowledge of the students' first language and culture to confirm their understanding of "pardon me" as a social expression presented in the book. This is not an incident of instructional conversation because it is directly related to the lesson objective. The teacher explained a

different context in which "pardon me" could be used and related this meaning to the students' background knowledge of the authority of a ruler to punish or pardon someone.

Example 16 (T: Yasir; Ali, Jamal, Saber: student participants)

[The teacher is explaining when to use the formula "Excuse me"; Class A]

T: OK! If I say excuse me, what's this? Tell me when I use this.

Ali: If I want things.

T: When you want something.

Jamal: Asking.

Saber: Can I take your time?

T: Good! I like this explanation. Can I take your time or have your attention. When I say excuse me that means I want your attention.

As this example shows, this teacher initiated an IRE during the management talk while setting up an exercise and utilizing the students' previous knowledge of the expression "excuse me." The teacher asked students a display question on when to use this expression, which was included in the textbook under "Social Expressions"; therefore, this IRE is not included in an instructional coversation because the discussion is directly related to the lesson objective. The teacher engaged other students to identify the meaning of this expression by using a display question suggested by more competent students and by providing further explanation to reinforce the meaning of the expression and its use in different contexts.

5. Raising students' interest about others' perspectives and interpretations of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena

In the following two examples of IREs, the teacher uses different approaches to create interest in knowing how English speakers interpret certain expressions unknown to students.

Example 17 (T: Ibraheem; Ali, Saud: student participants)

[The teacher is explaining the idioms "an arm and a leg" and "beat around the bush"; Class C]

T: An arm and a leg. If you say "it costs an arm and a leg"…

Saud: Very expensive.

T: Very expensive! I'm sure you have something similar to this, in Arabic. OK! One more: "Beat around the bush"…

Ali: [In Arabic] Being indirect.

T: You see, you don't translate it literally. "Beat around the bush" means to not be straight.

Saud: Some people say "ballpark figure," it means an estimate…

T: Yeah, but "beat around the bush" is not that specific. It's general. Do you have anything in Saudi or Arabic that's similar?

In this interaction, the idiom "an arm and a leg" was part of the previous instructional conversation that occurred during an extension activity. The idiom seemed to be easier for students to understand than "hot potato" (see Example 5). The teacher asked for a similar saying in Arabic but did not seem to be receiving a relevant response from the students. This can be due to the very limited time given to students to think about the question. Students were able to find the Arabic translation but not to suggest an equivalent idiom. It is worth noting here that some students seemed interested to know more about other idioms such as "ballpark figure."

Example 18 *(T: Sammy; Mohamed: a student participant)*

[The teacher is explaining when to show interest in what others say in an English conversation; Class B]

Mohamed: So Jamal showed some interest by asking him, "How long have you been a teacher?"…

T: Even if he's not interested … Sometimes you have to say this even if you are not interested … Let's leave it at that for now, and let's move on to the next one…

This discussion was related to a textbook practice, but the teacher's elaboration went beyond what was prescribed in the book to explain the obligation of English speakers to show interest in what someone says, even if not a genuine interest. This short conversation does not qualify as an instructional conversation for it did not involve distributed turn-taking. The teacher's refraining from providing further explanation as the students had no comments to make could be due to the students' limited level of proficiency. It is not clear whether the students were able to comprehend the teacher's statement about showing interest in a conversation even if not a genuine one.

6. The ability to suspend judgment and appreciate complexities across cultures

These two IRE examples of a discourse involve what Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman (2004) considered to be leading people to reduce others to less than they are. These two examples illustrate how teachers handled stereotyping others in one example and conversing in the other example about a reckless and unacceptable driving behavior among adults in Saudi Arabia, yet a commonly practiced one among Saudi male teenagers and young adults.

The following IREs illustrate what Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman (2004, p. xv) would consider instances of "otherization," that is, of "the way in which we over-

generalize, stereotype and reduce the people we communicate with to something different or less than they are." In these two examples, teachers handled cultural stereotypes about a different ethnicity and contrasting social norms about what constitutes an acceptable driving behavior.

Example 19 (T: Sammy; Ali, Fahd, Masood, Saamir: student participants)

[The teacher is practicing vocabulary for that day's lesson; Class B]

T: Describe a taxi here in Riyadh.

Fahd: White.

T: White… So it's white… What else?

Ali: It's not an expensive car.

T: They are not expensive cars…

Saamir: They small.

T: They are small…

Masood: Most of the drivers are Asians.

T: Most drivers are Asians [laughing]… [I am talking about] The cars, not the people!

In this example, the teacher used display questions to encourage students to come up with their own assumptions about what defines taxis in Riyadh. The teacher used improvised questions that were not part of the book activity but were still relevant to the topic of the lesson and helped students reflect on products of their own culture. This discussion is another example of an instructional conversation in which the teacher used questions to encourage the students to come up with their own assumptions about what defines taxis in Riyadh. The teacher's surprised laughter after hearing one student associating an ethnicity to a taxi description shows different cultural expectations about

what defines taxis, which brought the teacher to point out that he was asking about what characterizes the vehicle, not the people who drive it.

Example 20 (T: Yaser; Abdil Majeed: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)

[The teacher asked Abdil Majeed about what he likes doing; Class A]

Abdil Majeed: I love… I like drifting [Intentional car oversteering and reckless driving; the practice is common among Saudi young men, even though it is punishable by arrest]

T: OK! Grammatically that's perfect. I don't like it, though!

Abdil Majeed: No?

T: That's fine … Let's go on with this … Very good! Anyone else?

In this last example, the soliciting question the teacher asked resulted in Abdil Majeed's revealing his fondness for an unacceptable social behavior. The teacher briefly mentioned his dislike of such a hobby but then reverted the focus to the class and praised Abdil Majeed for his grammatically correct sentence. This discussion occurred during an extension activity that followed an exercise in the book, but it cannot be considered an instructional conversation because it was clearly planned as part of the lesson.

7. Knowledge of regional dialects and varieties of English and of how they are perceived by others

In this last example, the IRE relates to the use of dialects that are different from the one the students are most familiar with.

Example 21 *(T: Sammy; Fahd: a student participant; Ss: the whole class)*

[The teacher is helping students pronounce a word in a British accent; Class B]

T: What did you have for lunch?

Fahd: Rice and chicken.

T: OK.

Fahd: After [American English initial A sound] that I prayed.

T: Say “after” [British English initial A sound] not “after” [American English initial A sound] … You prayed and then you went to sleep. OK cool!

This conversation was part of an extension activity following the completion of an exercise in the book. The questions asked by the teacher seemed to be unplanned, which makes this an example of an instructional conversation. The teacher used soliciting questions to ask students what they had one the day before after school. The teacher’s correction of the students’ pronunciation emerged accidentally in this situation. The teacher attempted to teach students to pronounce the “a” in “after” as in “an” and not as in “alms.” The teacher made no further comments about the variation used by the student.

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In order to investigate the participants’ perceptions of the 10 ICC objectives, the researcher developed a 40-item Likert scale and calculated measures of variability and percentages related to ICC objectives that are perceived as important in the English PY program, relevant to English textbooks content, and that are frequently practiced in classroom activities.

In response to the first research question (i.e., to what extent ICC objectives are considered important to the English PY program), findings of the first section in the survey indicate that the majority (90%) of the respondents perceived the 10 ICC objectives to be important to the English PY program. In particular, respondents perceived three ICC objectives as more important than others: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (100%, $n = 28$), the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding to help speakers overcome conflicting perspectives (96%, *n*

= 27), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating and interacting across cultures (96%, *n* = 27).

In terms of the second research question (i.e., which ICC objectives are relevant to the curriculum of the English PY program), respondents indicated that three ICC objectives are related to the content of the English textbooks taught in the PY: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (96%, *n* = 24), the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their connotations (84%, *n* = 21), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating across cultures (84%, *n* =21).

The third research question looked into the extent to which teachers' perceptions of ICC inform classroom practices. Respondents indicated two culture-related activities as being practiced more frequently than others in the classroom: briefly presenting facts about the culture of English speaking countries when students come across them through the course of the program ("often" = 60%; "once in a while" = 28%) and providing sufficient facts about food and greetings ("often" = 52%; "once in a while" = 32%). Moreover, a total of 64% of the participants (16 out of 25 participants) indicated that they believe "very much" or "to a certain extent" that more culture-related activities are needed in the English PY program.

SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The researcher used the two methods of focus group discussion and classroom observations to collect qualitative data pertaining to the three questions of the research. The focus group discussions addressed all three research questions, whereas class

observations focused on the third research question regarding classroom practices and their relevance to the 10 ICC objectives.

The focus group sessions were divided by gender to adapt to the Saudi culture; in total, nine teachers participated to the focus group discussions: five male teachers and four female teachers.

The first research question looked into the teachers' perceptions of the 10 ICC objectives. The two groups shared the perception that the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures was a very important ICC objective for English students in the PY. On the other hand, different perceptions of the the two other important objectives was noticed. The male participants identified knowledge of formal language versus slang and identification of sources of misunderstanding to be vital ICC objectives for the English PY program, whereas the female focus group emphasized the ICC objectives of preparing students to adopt proper interaction behaviors and help them become familiar with nonverbal language. Both groups agreed that the ICC objectives they chose would help students, especially those who would study abroad, to overcome the fear of communicating across cultures and to be better prepared to face the challenges of communicating in English.

The second question investigated the relevance of the 10 ICC objectives to the content of the English textbooks and the curriculum. Both groups agreed that knowledge of levels of formality is the most relevant objective to the English textbooks in the PY program. Participants in the male group indicated that there are sufficient activities that deal with levels of formality in different cultures in general. One ICC objective that was perceived differently in the male focus group was the readiness to adopt interaction

behaviors with English speakers that are appropriate for a non-native English speaker. Oliver mentioned that this objective was very relevant to the textbooks used in the PY program. On the contrary, the same objective was described by Malik in the male focus group as “hardly related to any of the content of any of the textbooks” and that he did not come across it in any of the English textbooks used in the PY program.

Female group participants mentioned that even though there is enough material in the textbooks to raise students’ awareness of different registers in different contexts, these differences were sometimes implied and left for the teachers to explain. For instance, the book does not provide a comparison between different registers in English used in different contexts, but it has reading and speaking exercises that cover the area of good business manners in different world contexts like America, Britain, Greece, India, Japan,

It was interesting to find that both male and female groups indicated the same two ICC objectives as the least found in the current English textbooks: knowledge about regional dialects and varieties and how they are perceived by others, and knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. When the researcher asked participants in both groups to what extent English textbooks addressed students’ own cultural background, Mary in the female group indicated that there was barely any content that integrated students’ cultural background beyond the adaptation to the Saudi culture of the clothes and names used in the textbook. However, Mat in the male group mentioned that there were different articles from many parts of the world that were preceded by questions to elicit from students’ information about their own culture and experience. One example that came up as the only example relevant to the students’ religious orientation was the

mention in the textbook of Hajji Noor Edeen, a Chinese Muslim notable for his artistic skills.

The third questions dealt with incidents and activities in the classroom that are relevant to any of the 10 ICC objectives. Both groups recalled episodes of misunderstanding in their classes that were caused by a lack of knowledge of the nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Interestingly, two incidents involved the same hand gesture students use to indicate they want more time to finish an activity. The responses to the gesture, however, varied from the complete rejection by one participating teacher to the more open and accepting approach to students' culture by another teacher. Additionally, the male group recalled incidents in which students still lacked sufficient knowledge of how to use formal language effectively, whereas the female group shared classroom incidents in which the students showed a lack of ability to suspend judgment and reject cultural stereotypes, which sometimes affected classroom dynamics and group work productivity. The teachers who experienced such incidents adopted a strict approach toward students who were unwilling to cooperate with classmates of a different cultural background and explained to them that they were all expected to act as students who came to learn English and to work together to achieve that goal. Figures 1 and 2 at the end of this chapter summarize the findings from the male and the female focus group, respectively.

As for the class observations, the researcher observed three classes at different levels of English instruction: Class A, elementary; Class B, intermediate; and Class C, upper intermediate. The findings show that 21 incidents occurred in these classes that qualify as interculture-related episodes (IREs). These episodes were categorized under

seven different ICC objectives: the ability to use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in documents and events and the application of these interpretations to other documents and events (five episodes), the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and understand their connections (five episodes), the ability to identify and explain sources of intercultural misunderstanding to overcome conflicting perspectives (three episodes), developing readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are considered appropriate for non-native speakers or foreigners (three episodes), raising students' interest about others' perspectives and interpretations of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena (two episodes), the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate complexities across cultures (two episodes), and knowledge of regional dialects and varieties of English and of how they are perceived by others (one episode).

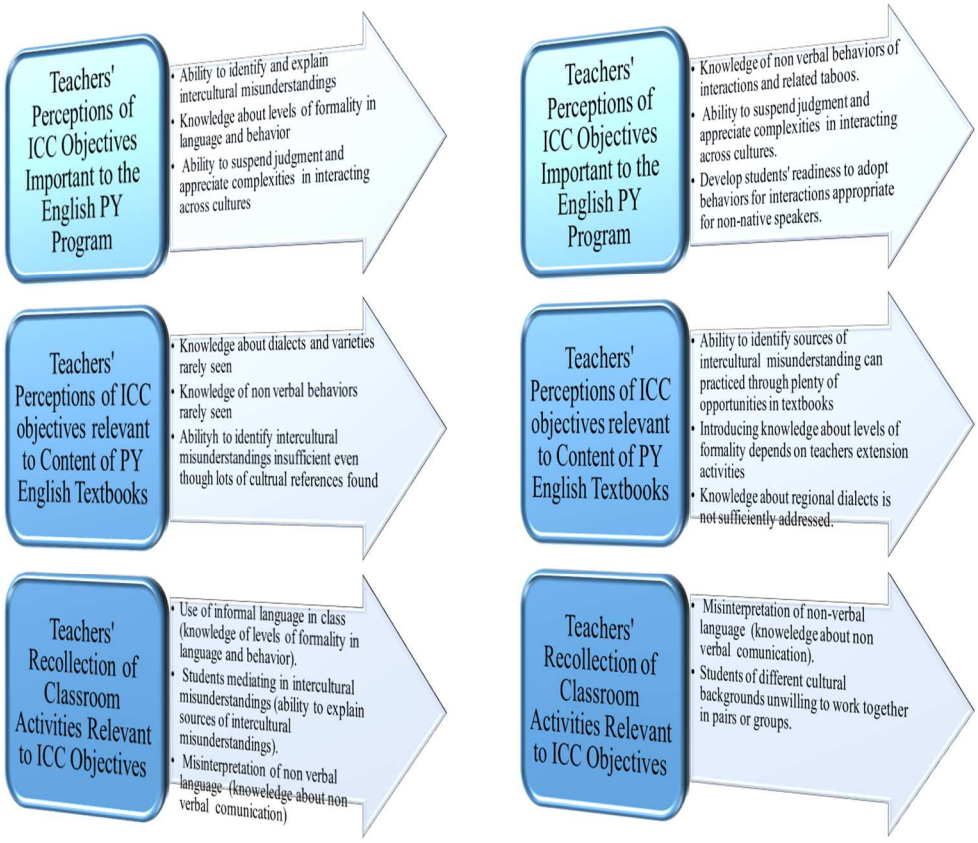
These IREs were found in all three observed classes. Most of the IREs (14) were included in an instructional conversation incidents and they were initiated by the teacher as part of a lead in activity (2 IREs), management stage (2 IREs), exercise stage (1 IRE), and extension activity stage (6 IREs). In all the episodes, the teachers asked questions to elicit information from students either about English-speaking countries or about their own culture. The teachers used only two types of questions during these episodes: display questions, used to elicit information from students regarding what they knew about a product (e.g., taxi) or a practice (e.g., the use of an idiom); and soliciting questions, stemming from the teacher's interest to know more about a practice in Saudi Arabia (e.g., cancellation of hajj) or the local culture (e.g., the choice of white as a color for houses).

Whereas teachers used open-ended questions with students with a lower level of English proficiency, they used closed-ended questions with more advanced students.

In these IREs, the teachers were able to help students to identify other ways to use English expressions in different contexts and to relate this use to their local culture. For instance, it was noticeable that four IREs (5, 6, 11 and 17) were relevant to English idioms presented in the upper intermediate class (level C) and the teacher elicited their equivalent in Arabic. These idioms touched on three different ICC objectives: identifying cultural reference, the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding, the ability to identify explicit and implicit values, and raising students' interest about others' perspectives. They also matched students' upper intermediate level in as they dealt with figurative language rather than concrete language. Therefore, they exemplified how culturally bound expressions such as idioms can achieve ICC objectives while still address the linguistic aspects of a lesson. These activities motivated students to ask questions about other similar expressions and their use in real life. In addition, teachers were able to enlist some students' background knowledge about a topic to inform less competent students. Finally, a couple IREs involved a teacher's strict adherence to a pronunciation convention and another teacher's willingness to suspend his judgment regarding a student's hobby that was commonly accepted in the local culture.

Figure 2

Findings of the Male and Female Focus Group Discussions



CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section includes a summary of the research findings. The second section presents a discussion of a comparative analysis of the qualitative and quantitative findings, and the results of the present study in comparison to prior research. The third section offers recommendations for future research. The fourth section provides implications for practice in the language-learning classroom. The fifth and last section introduces the conclusions drawn from the study.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

The researcher developed a 40-item Likert scale survey addressing the three above-mentioned question; a total of 28 male and female English teachers in the PY program responded to the survey. In response to the first question, probing the extent to which ICC objectives are important in the PY program, the majority of respondents (90%) declared to perceive ICC objectives as important or somewhat important in the English program at PY. Respondents chose three objectives as more important than the others: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (100%, $n = 28$), the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding to help speakers overcome conflicting perspectives (96%, $n = 27$), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating and interacting across cultures (96%, $n = 27$).

As for the second question, addressing the relevance of the ICC objectives to the current English textbooks in the PY program, respondents selected three ICC objectives

as the most important: knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (96%, *n* = 24), the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their connotations (84%, *n* = 21), and the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating across cultures (84%, *n* = 21). In response to the last question, investigating the frequency of culture-related activities in the classroom that relate to ICC objectives, the two culture-related activities that respondents indicated as the most frequently practiced were: briefly presenting facts about the culture of English-speaking countries when students come across them through the course of the program ("often" = 60%; "once in a while" = 28%) and providing sufficient facts about food and greetings ("often" = 52%; "once in a while" = 32%). Additionally, a total of 64% of the participants (16 out of 25) indicated that they believe "very much" or "to a certain extent" that more culture-related activities are needed in the English PY program.

Qualitative Findings

The researcher used focus group discussions and class observations to collect qualitative data pertaining to the three questions of the research. The first and the second focus groups consisted of five male participants and four female participants, respectively. The first research question looked into the teachers' perceptions of the 10 ICC objectives. Both groups agreed that the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures was a very important ICC objective for English students in the PY program. In response to the second research question concerning the relevance of the ICC objectives to the content of the current English textbooks and curriculum in PY, both groups agreed that knowledge of levels of formality is the most relevant objective that is addressed in the English textbooks used in

the PY program. In this regard, female group participants mentioned that even though there is enough material in the textbooks to help students distinguish between different registers, the difference between levels of formality was sometimes implied and left for the teachers to explain. Interestingly, both male and female groups also agreed that knowledge about regional dialects and varieties and knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos are the least found in the current English textbooks. As for the third research question, which dealt with classroom incidents and activities relevant to the 10 ICC objectives, the results again showed both groups recalled incidents of intercultural misunderstanding resulting from lack of knowledge of the nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos.

As for the class observations, the researcher observed three classes at different levels of English instruction: Class A, elementary; Class B, intermediate; and Class C, upper intermediate. The observation identified 21 classroom interculture-related episodes (IREs), categorized under seven different ICC objectives. The most frequently related objectives were the ability to use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in documents and events and to apply these interpretations to other documents and events (5 episodes), and the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and to understand their connections (5 episodes). In addition, four of the IREs (5, 6, 11, and 17) identified related to presenting English idioms to upper intermediate level students. These activities of presenting idioms addressed four different ICC objectives: the ability to identify reference within and across cultures, the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding, the ability to identify explicit and implicit values, and raising students' interest about others' perspectives, and also achieved the linguistic

objectives of that lesson. Some teachers were able to encourage more competent students to inform and motivate less competent students and engage them in the discussion.

DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion of the research findings: A comparison between the quantitative and qualitative data obtained in this study is followed by a discussion of relevant findings in previous studies on ICC that are comparable to the findings of this study.

Findings of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

The perception of the objectives of ICC among English teachers in the PY program was investigated in the light of Byram's (1997) language learning objectives. According to Byram, the ICC objectives that are the focus of this study can be divided into three main areas: attitude, knowledge, and skills. The following section presents quantitative and qualitative findings for each of these three areas.

Attitude

Both quantitative and qualitative findings identified three attitude-related ICC objectives. As for the quantitative findings, survey respondents chose the ability to suspend judgment and to appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures as one of the three most important ICC objectives as well as one that is strongly relevant to English textbook contents. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative ones, showing that participants of both focus groups also indicated that the ability to suspend judgment is an important ICC objective in the English PY program. In the case of Andy, one of the participants to the male focus group, the rationale behind choosing this objective was based on his first-hand experience of being asked why he was wearing a

traditional men's white robe on a subway in London. Reflecting on this experience, Andy said that developing the students' ability to suspend judgment can prove useful in such encounters. Explaining the value of developing the awareness and skills to handle prejudices when interacting across cultures, Mary added: "Many people already prejudge according to your appearance, your body language, so students definitely need to be aware of this, being judged by many people."

The second attitude-related ICC objective that emerged in both quantitative and qualitative findings is raising students' interest about others' perspectives and developing their ability to interpret familiar and unfamiliar phenomena. More than three-fourth of the survey respondents (93%, $n = 26$) indicated that this ICC objective is important in the English PY program, and two IREs were found in the classroom observations that highlighted the teachers' approaches to explaining the English speakers' interpretations of different situations. The first episode dealt with raising interest in the interpretation of the idioms "to cost an arm and a leg" and "to beat around the bush," and the second involved English speakers' readiness to show an interest in what is said, even if not a genuine one.

The last attitude-related ICC objective that came up in both quantitative and qualitative findings is developing students' readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are considered appropriate for non-native speakers. The quantitative findings of the survey show that more than three-fourth of respondents (82%, $n = 23$) perceived this ICC objective to be important in the English PY program. Participants to focus group discussion had contrastive views regarding the relevance of this objective to the content of the textbooks. The female focus group participants agreed that this objective is relevant to textbooks' content, while some male focus group

participants believed it is hardly found in textbooks. For example, Renee mentioned one of many activities in the textbook in which "two or more individuals are at a pharmacy, a clothing store, or even a hospital … to create similar dialogues and practice role-playing". The same objective, however, was described by Malik in the male focus group as "hardly related to any of the content of any of the textbooks" and that he did not come across it in any of the English textbooks used in the PY. The example mentioned by Renee seems to address only the first part of this objective, readiness to adopt interaction behavior with native speakers…" which can be found in any typical role play found in many English textbooks. Byram's (1997) emphasis in this objective though is that such behavior would be expected from a language user as opposed to a native speaker. This distinction might have been more recognized by Malik who could not find any examples in the textbooks that address this second part of the objective.

Additionally, the classroom observations identified two IREs in which the teachers demonstrated appropriate ways of interacting according to native speakers' conventions, which also addresses the first part of this objective. The first IRE involved explaining how to improve conversation according to an activity in the textbook. The second IRE included an explanation of how to use the word "pardon" appropriately, which was not provided in the book. Although participants found their classroom activities and the content of the English textbooks to be relevant to the objective of developing "readiness to adopt behaviors of interaction," the examples they mentioned showed a lack of understanding of how these behaviors are considered to be "appropriate for a non-native English speaker," the second part of the objective. The examples they provided—e.g., role-play activities in which students practice ordering drinks or asking

about food prices at a coffee shop—focus on practicing native-speaker standards of behavior as opposed to behaviors that native speakers expect non-native speakers or foreigners to demonstrate. This probably reflects the textbooks' heavy emphasis on native speakers' proficiency standards rather than on the interaction behaviors that non-natives or foreigners are most likely to display.

Knowledge

Three knowledge areas were identified in one or more of the three data collection methods used in this study. The first one is knowledge of levels of formality in language and behavior. Respondents to the survey selected this knowledge-related objective as the most important ICC objective for students in the English PY program as well as the most relevant to the English textbooks content. These quantitative findings converge with the qualitative findings obtained through male focus group discussion. When male focus group participants were asked why they thought this ICC objective to be important, some participants explained that it was because it facilitates the academic achievement of students who will be traveling abroad to further pursue their education. They also mentioned that the informal language and the slang heard on TV sitcoms and shows does not necessarily help students master the formal language. In this regard, Mat said about his students: "They all watch Breaking Bad, so … they know the slang ... but they're not very good with formal language." Larry also shared the reason he believes formal language is the most valuable objective students can learn in the English program. He

said: “I always make a point to tell them that slang, yes, it does have a purpose, but your purpose really in this context is to learn formal language more.”

Despite the agreement between survey and focus group findings about the ubiquitous presence of knowledge of levels of formality in the textbooks, female focus group participants did not select this objective as one of the most important objectives in the PY program. This divergence can be attributed to the fact that many female Saudi students are discouraged from pursuing academic achievements abroad compared to Saudi male students, unless the students’ husband, father, or brother can travel with her. Thus, the focus on academic language on female campus might be secondary to other objectives that serve more immediate educational needs. Additionally, some participants in the female focus group mentioned that knowledge of formal language seems to be more implicit and left for teachers to explain. Laura observed: “There is enough content even if it is implied, not explicit.” Additionally, Renee commented: “I do think there is enough material to use for this objective [knowledge of levels of formality and behavior]. It is hidden most of the time, though. Teachers should draw students’ attention to this, I think.”

Another knowledge-related ICC objective identified as important in the survey was knowledge about regional dialects and English variations and how they are perceived by others. The majority of survey respondents (86%, $n = 24$) perceived this ICC objective to be important in the English PY program. The focus groups discussions revealed that this objective is one of the least found in the English textbooks, and classroom observations revealed one IRE in which the teacher attempted to reinforce the British pronunciation over the American one. Thus, very little attention seems to be paid to

exposing students to different English variations. Some participants in the female focus group found it really hard to remember any activities that helped students become familiar with different English variations or how to familiarize students with these dialects in the classroom.

A third knowledge-related ICC objective that came up as important in the English PY program is knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. In terms of quantitative findings, most survey respondents (93%, $n = 26$) agreed that this ICC objective is important to the English PY program. The qualitative findings from the focus groups supported the quantitative findings, as some participants shared incidents of intercultural communication caused by a lack of understanding of students' nonverbal communication. It is worth mentioning here that the same nonverbal hand gesture (meaning "Wait a minute" or "Give us more time" in the Saudi culture) initially offended both Oliver in the male focus group and Betty in the female focus group. However, Oliver's response seemed to be more tolerant and accepting of this different interpretation than Betty's, who directed students not to use the gesture and described it as rude and inappropriate in the classroom. Additionally, both focus group discussions indicated that knowledge of nonverbal behavior was another ICC objective for which they could not remember any related activities in the textbooks.

In terms of culture-related activities, survey respondents indicated briefly introducing cultural facts whether incidentally or as a planned activity as the most frequently occurring activities in the classroom. Additionally, more than half of the respondents (64%, $n = 16$) indicated that more time needs to be dedicated to culture-related activities. Qualitative findings, however, identified incidents of intercultural

misunderstandings that required more than presenting factual information about the target culture. This contradiction between teachers' perception and practice may reflect their inability to implement ICC objectives due to time constraints or lack of training on how to integrate various culture-related activities in the classroom.

It is also worth noting that when focus group participants were asked to what extent students' first culture was integrated into the textbooks used in the PY program, results varied between female and male focus group participants. One the one hand, female focus group participants opined that there was not much found in textbooks that related to students first culture. Betty only found one cultural reference that related to students' cultural background, Hajji Noor Edeen in *Q Skills for Success,* Level 4. On the other hand, some male participants believed that questions that encouraged students to share their cultural and personal experience were found in lead in activities. Mat pointed out that many activities start off by asking students' to share their own experiences. It can be inferred that female teachers perceived that the integration of students' first culture can take a more active role in the textbook content than only in elicitation questions in lead in activities. These different expectations between female and male participants in terms of integrating students' first culture in textbooks could be the reason for this discrepancy between participants' responses in female and male focus group.

Skills

The survey findings show that respondents chose the ability to identify and explain intercultural misunderstandings to overcome conflicting perspectives (96%, n = 27) as one of the most important ICC skills for the English PY program. The male focus group shared this same perception. Larry, for example, explained that this objective is

important to "eliminate this misunderstanding … [and] eliminate the fear towards the people who speak the language." Larry emphasized that it is part of the teachers' role to help students make sense of language rules they come across: "Students don't understand why language is used this way, so they need to know the rules to understand ... clarifying their misunderstandings is like the first [language] barrier is over." The importance to develop this ability is confirmed by the occurrence of cultural misunderstandings during classroom interactions. Participants to both focus groups recalled incidents that occurred as a result of a misunderstanding of nonverbal language used in the classroom. Additionally, the classroom observations identified three IREs that involved intercultural misunderstandings between the teacher and students.

Another skill that survey respondents chose as relevant to the English textbooks content is the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and identify their connections (84%, $n = 21$). When the researcher further probed this objective in the focus group discussions, participants to both groups indicated that there is not much in the textbooks that relates to the students' cultural background. Betty could only remember one religious reference as she said, "It's about Hajji Noor Edeen. He's a Chinese Muslim, and he has written most beautiful artwork, but that's the only reference I have ever come across." Mary's experience with this aspect is no different than Betty's; she added, "Every now and then they put some pictures of the desert, I don't know…" What can be inferred from these different perspectives on the inclusion of cultural references is that most examples in the English textbooks used in the PY program are not related to the students' cultural background; however, a reference to the students' own

experience can be found toward the end of the activities and is left open to the students' input.

A third and last skill that came up as important in both quantitative and qualitative findings is the ability to use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in documents and events. Whereas more than three-fourth of survey respondents chose this skill as an important one for English students in the PY program (79%, n= 22), six IRE incidents emerged from the classroom observations include situations in which teachers used questioning techniques to demonstrate how these explicit and implicit values can be elicited from English native speakers to better understand the cultural values of different English-speaking countries. It is worth noting that no attempts to use these techniques were made by the students at any time, even though the techniques were demonstrated by different teachers on different occasions in the classroom.

Current Findings and Previous Studies

Some of the findings of this study support the findings of previous studies in the ways illustrated below.

First, both quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that overall teachers perceived nine out of the 10 ICC objectives examined in this study as important objectives for the English PY program. More than half of the respondents (68%, n = 16) to the survey indicated the need to dedicate more time to culture-related activities in the English PY program. These findings bear resemblance with those of Young and Sachdev's (2011) study, in which English teachers generally indicated that an intercultural approach may be successful and appropriate in the classroom. In their study of English teachers' beliefs and practices of implementation of Byram's (1997) ICC

objectives in three different countries (France, England, and the United States), Young and Sachdev reported that 93% of the respondents agreed, or strongly agreed, with the proposition that it is important to include ICC in an EFL course, compared to 90% of the responses in this study agreeing that ICC objectives are important for the English PY program. These findings are congruous with those of Sercu's (2005) study, which investigated to what extent Flemish teachers' professional self-concept relates to the envisaged profile of the intercultural foreign language teacher. Sercu reported that 61% of the participants to her study indicated the need to devote more time to "culture teaching" during their foreign language teaching classes but somehow "never get round to it," compared to 68% of participants favoring more culture-related activities in the current study.

Second, the quantitative findings of this study indicate a gap between teachers' awareness of the importance of ICC objectives and their actual classroom practices. Participating teachers used teacher-centered activities to present culture as facts either incidentally or as a planned activity more often than other activities that engaged students in exploring cultural products, practices, or perspectives. These results were compatible with the findings in the literature. For example, Sercu's (2005) study also identified this disparity between teachers' perceptions of ICC and their classroom practices. Flemish teachers defined culture primarily in terms of daily life, routines, history, geography, political conditions, and capital-C culture (p. 92). They reported most commonly practiced activities such as "I tell my pupils what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture" and "I tell my pupils why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture." Sercu's (2005) findings also revealed that even though

teachers supported intercultural objectives and promoted the acquisition of ICC, their teaching practice could not be characterized as intercultural.

In another study whose findings also correlate with the current study's findings, Sercu (2006) investigated how teachers' professional profiles meet particular specifications found in the literature regarding foreign language and intercultural competence. The teachers surveyed were from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. A significant finding was that the surveyed teachers supported the aim to adopt the intercultural approach in foreign language education but did not have sufficient time, resources, or training to implement this approach.

Third, the quantitative and qualitative findings in this study show that participating teachers chose the ability to identify and explain intercultural misunderstandings to overcome conflicting perspectives as one of the most important ICC skills for the English PY program. A total of 96% of respondents shared this perception, and the focus group participants associated this objective with the possibility to "eliminate this misunderstanding … eliminate the fear towards the people who speak the language." The classroom observations also identified IREs that could be opportunities to develop this skill of interactions. As Giroir (2014) noted as a result of her study of two Saudi students enrolled in ESL classes in the southern United States, there is a need to analyze and explain expert–novice interactions in the classroom. Holliday (1995) and Lazaraton (2003) also suggested that a critical, mediating approach to different cultures may be successful in motivating both learners and teachers. This form of mediation to identify and explain misunderstandings and less familiar aspects of a

foreign culture seemed to be successful in terms of encouraging learners' engagement (Rao, 2002).

Fourth, the quantitative and qualitative results of the current study showed consensus with regard to the participants' perception of the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures. Additionally, participants in the female focus group recalled incidents in which some students showed a negative reaction to students from less dominant subcultures, which affected classroom dynamics and productivity. The researcher's observation also identified one IRE that provided evidence of an interaction between a teacher and his students that can be utilized to develop a more tolerant attitude toward the unfamiliar. These results correlate with Sercu's (2005) study on Flemish teachers revealing that all participating teachers concurred in identifying the second most important objective in culture learning as "developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures." ICC scholars and administrators participating in Deardorff's (2006) study also emphasized the effect of attitudes on the learning that follows. The attitudes of openness and respect (valuing all cultures) are viewed as fundamental to intercultural competence.

Fifth, the qualitative findings from the focus groups in this study showed a scarce presence of ICC objectives such as knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Further findings revealed that the lack of the meaning of some nonverbal gestures in the Saudi local culture was the cause of intercultural misunderstandings between teachers and students. This confirms the results of Duff and Uchida's (1997) six-month ethnographic study that was conducted in Japan of four inexperienced EFL teachers, two Japanese and two Americans. The findings of the study reveal that creating

connections and bonds with students was critical to make up for the limited social network EFL teachers usually encounter when teaching abroad. For example, incorporating Japanese cultural and linguistic items and drawing on students' own sociocultural resources helped one American teacher, Carol, with the construction of herself as an empathetic teacher.

Sixth, the qualitative findings of this study show that focus group participants believed there is lack of integration of students' own culture in textbooks, which is only reflected in images of men's and women's clothing and names. These findings are consistent with the findings of Shah, Hussain, and Naseef's (2013) study of English teachers in a Saudi university providing English language instructions to PY students. Among the problematic policies and procedures, participants mentioned that the irrelevance of the textbook materials made it difficult for students to relate to them. One teacher, for example, expressed frustration with the examples in the book as he said, "I try to relate, like if Michael Jackson is there with Mohammad Abdu, Maradona with Yasir Qahtani … I try to make them relevant to the students" (Shah et al., 2013, p. 117).

Seventh, even though the survey responses indicated knowledge about levels of formality in language and behaviors as one of most important ICC objectives, focus group participants indicated that the difference between the different registers, formal and informal, was sometimes implied and left for the teachers to explain. Likewise, Young and Sachdev's (2011) examination of beliefs and practices of implementation of Byram's (1997) ICC objectives revealed that the ICC model was not an explicit part of the curriculum in the schools where the teachers worked or in any of the schools operated by their employing organization. Chamot (2008) suggests introducing learning strategies to

students to accelerate their academic language learning. Chamot also adds that learning strategies are especially important for students who seek to master both academic language and academic content at the same time. This approach to enhancing academic language learning is in line with the definition of scaffolding as opposed to what teachers usually do to help struggling students. This is an approach that in the beginning incorporates highly explicit instructions on how to apply strategies to learning tasks and then gradually fades, so that students can begin assume greater responsibility in selecting and applying their preferred learning strategies. Similar to scaffolding, this approach emphasizes how to acquire skills that help students know how to learn rather than only knowledge that tells them what they should learn (Hammond & Gibbon, 2005).

Eighth, the class observations found a total of 21 IREs in all three observed classes. Most of the IREs (14) were included in instructional conversation incidents the teachers initiated as part of a lead-in activity (2 IREs), management stage (2 IREs), exercise stage (1 IRE), and extension activity stage (6 IREs). In all the episodes, the teachers asked questions to elicit information from the students either about English-speaking countries or about their own culture. Thus, the majority of these instructional conversations occurred during the management and the extension activity stage. These findings are consistent with Sanford's (1996) and Todhunter's (1996) studies exploring instructional conversation in elementary and intermediate foreign language classes. Sanford (1996) conducted his study of first-semester college students of French, and he found that instructional conversations occurred only when the teacher stepped out of his or her authoritative position and talked to students as co-participants in the interaction. Similarly, the findings of Todhunter's study in a third-year high-school Spanish class

showed that management talk and extension activities were the sites of instructional conversations, and not the contextualized exercises of the book. Donato (2000) asserts that instructional conversations incorporate a wider range of the communicative and cognitive functions of speaking and are shaped by the teacher's and the students' cultural orientations. Thus, instructional conversations provide optimal opportunities to implement the ICC objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To examine English teachers' perceptions and practice of ICC objectives in the English PY program, the following recommendations need to be taken into consideration.

The first recommendation concerns the method for distributing the survey to collect the quantitative data. In this study, the researcher used Survey Monkey, an online application to create surveys and analyze results, to collect the participants' responses regarding their perceptions and practices of ICC objectives in the classroom. Initially, 60 teachers expressed their willingness to take the online survey, but only 28 of them responded, which is a response rate of 47%. Couper and Miller (2008) note that web surveys are at a disadvantage compared to other methods of data collection. The researcher considered online survey as the only viable option to collect data due to the difficulty of accessing the female campus to conduct the research. Thus, to eliminate any confounding variables that could arise from using two different survey methods, it was decided that all respondents would complete the survey online. The recommendation the researcher makes for future research is to consider other modes of delivery of the survey, such as hard copies that can be distributed and collected during a school event.

Second, to further examine teachers' perceptions of ICC objectives, a preliminary orientation session needs to be conducted with the participants to familiarize them with this new approach. Due to the participants' time constraints, which made meeting with them for more than one hour very difficult, the researcher sent an email to all participants that included articles about ICC and its application to language learning. Unfortunately, the majority of participants were unable to preview these articles prior to the focus group discussion. The researcher, therefore, had to spend a considerable amount of time at the beginning of each focus group meeting to introduce ICC objectives, which took away from the total time allotted for the focus group discussion. Conducting an orientation meeting before the actual focus group discussion can help participants better understand ICC objectives, which will positively affect their contribution to the focus group discussion.

The third recommendation for future research is to include the participants' perceptions of what they consider as the challenges of incorporating ICC objectives in the classroom. Questions such as which ICC objectives participants believe to be impractical to implement in the English classroom, and what difficulties they would encounter in adopting the intercultural speaker model as opposed to the native speaker model, should be included in both the survey and the focus group discussions. The data obtained from these questions could enrich the findings of the research and help find practical solutions to the challenges identified by the participants.

A fourth recommendation for future research is to investigate the availability of ICC training in the language school where the research takes place and to identify the types of ICC training events offered to English teachers to develop their intercultural

knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In the same respect, further research can look into the effectiveness of these ICC trainings in changing teachers' practices and see how these objectives help teachers and curricular developers present culture-related activities systematically and at a deeper level rather than only sporadically and superficially.

Finally, further research should include more classroom observations and focus on the student-to-student interactions that occur during small group activities. Due to time constraints and exam schedules, the researcher was unable to conduct more than three classroom observations, in which pair work and group work activities were conducted in Arabic. Thus, measuring how class interactions enable students to reach their zones of proximal development (ZPD) of ICC was limited to the interactions between the teacher and the students. Thus, these class observations partially cover how language socialization contributes to students' cognitive development in terms of ICC. ZPD in a language learning context indicates "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Thus, further research that looks into interactional routines that occur between students in pairs or small groups can provide more insight into the impact of language socialization on the classroom and how it contributes to the students' reaching their ZPD of ICC.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The researcher identified six essential pedagogical issues that relate to the application of ICC objectives in the English classroom. The first pedagogical issue that the study findings underscore is the gap between English teachers' perceptions of ICC

objectives and their current practices in the classroom. The nine ICC objectives that the participants described as important and relevant for the textbook content, or that need to be integrated into the current English curriculum, are categorized into three areas: attitude, knowledge, and skills. Sercu (2005) attributed this gap between teachers' practices and their beliefs about teaching to the lack of sufficient time, resources, or training. In addition, Young and Sachdev's (2011) study revealed that ICC is not an explicit part of the curriculum. Developing training workshops that raise teachers' awareness of ICC and its implementation in the classroom can help teachers identify ways to bridge this gap and work towards developing proper attitude, knowledge, and skills to address the shortcomings of culture presentation in the classroom.

Bailey (2006) questions whether teachers are aware of the areas of their teaching that require development. She also asks whether they should be instructed by their supervisors about these areas of development to help them understand their ZPD. Therefore, engaging teachers in professional development opportunities in which they share best practices can overhaul how culture is presented in the English classroom to find strategies and techniques that can narrow the gap found between teachers' perceptions and practices.

The second pedagogical issue that the study findings revealed is the lack of incorporation of students' own cultural background in the curriculum. The inclusion of local public figures such as businessmen, entrepreneurs, and sports icons can localize the content of the current English textbooks and make the students feel more related to the content. Kumaravadivelu (2008) states that understanding one's culture is conducive to understanding the other's culture and vice versa. Donato (2000) also emphasizes that

linguistic tasks should not coerce students to act in a prescribed way, because students invest their own goals, cultural backgrounds, and beliefs (i.e., their agency) into the completion of those tasks. Therefore, creating English material that is adapted to the students' sociocultural environment is essential to supplement the current curriculum.

The third pedagogical issue is the importance of ICC objectives that develop students' attitude to suspend judgment and be more tolerant of the others in the English classroom. Activities that help students self-reflect and regulate their behavior accordingly can be the way to achieve these ICC objectives. Rajabieslami (2014) describes the imaginary character of "JohnAli," an animated puppet created by an innovative teacher who used it in his English lessons to relate to the students' first culture. JohnAli speaks a low-level English, carries a local accent, and uses bad grammar and imperfectly translated idioms. Such activities develop the students' critical reflection skills because students do not have to worry about clarifying their thoughts, as the focus is not on them (Rajabieslami, 2014). Hence, interculture related activities integrated into English textbooks can help students develop intercultural skills, knowledge, and attitude to become intercultural speakers able to communicate effectively and appropriately in English.

Byram (2012) contended that the practicing of linguistic forms should be associated with cultural information that aims to develop students' sensitivity to meaning in a given context. She proposed the concept of "perspective" (p. 528) as a quality to be implemented after introducing a language form (i.e., vocabulary item, grammatical structure) and practicing its use. The concept of perspective provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking and analytical skills by analyzing linguistic and

textual features and relating them to register and narrative strategies used to variously express meaning in context. Byram (2012) maintained that the perspective approach can be applied to nearly any type of text, photos, paintings, advertisements, short autobiographies, artwork, film clips, etc., and therefore can be easily integrated throughout the curriculum. More importantly, asking students to confront and analyze a variety of perspectives can facilitate their engagement with other worldviews and combat the kind of stereotyping that many instructors fear cultural instruction may encourage (Byram & Kramsch, 2008).

The fourth pedagogical issue this study identified is the need to adopt a more explicit approach to developing students' formal and academic language skills as part of ICC objectives. The study findings show that even though there is sufficient textbook content that addresses the different levels of formality in language and behavior, they are often implicit and left for the teacher to explain. Chamot (2008) recommends introducing students to learning strategies to accelerate their standard academic language learning. This is an approach that incorporates in the beginning highly explicit instructions on how to apply strategies to learning tasks and then gradually fades, so that students can begin assume greater responsibility in selecting and applying their preferred learning strategies. Similar to scaffolding, discussing learning strategies to develop academic skills can empower students to acquire skills that help know how to learn and not only knowledge that they need to learn (Hammond & Gibbon, 2005). Chamot contends that planning, monitoring and identifying problems, and evaluating are metacognitive strategies to be addressed in the language classroom along with using the students' prior knowledge. She also presents the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), a

systematic cycle of preparation, presentation, practice, self-evaluation, and expansion that teachers can use to demonstrate learning strategies to students and help them use them effectively.

The fifth issue that the study's findings highlighted is the role of instructional conversations in creating opportunities for language socialization that can help students develop ICC, while still focus on lesson objectives. These instructional conversation opportunities can supplement the current curriculum with activities that develop students ICC knowledge, skills, and attitude if planned to be less focused on textbook activities, and yet be peripherally relevant to the overall objectives of the lesson.

Finally, the current study's findings confirmed a lack of emphasis on different English variations in the current curriculum. Participants in the focus groups lamented the insufficient practice of different English variations in current English textbooks, and an American English variation was overlooked by a teacher in a classroom observation. These findings call for the incorporation of different English variations in teacher training to help teachers develop the skills to address these variations in their classrooms. At the same time, familiarizing with other English variations will enable teachers to communicate more effectively with the expanding Indian and Philippines' communities in the KSA, which would make English learning more relevant to their local culture needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The research for this study was conducted in two phases. In phase one, the researcher created and piloted a survey on English teachers' perceptions of the

importance of 10 ICC objectives in the English PY program, their relevance to the content of books used in the program, and their relevance to their classroom practices.

The researcher identified nine ICC objectives that participants found to be valuable in both quantitative and qualitative methods findings. These ICC objectives are categorized into three main areas: attitude, knowledge, and skills. The first attitudinal ICC objective the survey respondents identified as important is the ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of interacting across cultures. The second attitude objective indicated by both quantitative and qualitative findings is raising students' interest about other perspectives and their ability to interpret familiar and unfamiliar phenomena. The last attitude-related ICC objective that emerged in both quantitative and qualitative findings is developing students' readiness to adopt interaction behaviors with English speakers that are considered appropriate for non-native speakers. Participants in focus group discussion had contrastive views regarding this third attitude and its relevance to the content of the textbooks.

On the one hand, female focus group participants agreed that this objective very much related to textbooks' content, while some male focus group participants believed it is hardly found in textbooks. These distinctive views can reflect a misinterpretation of this objective to be related to any typical role play found in many English textbooks. Byram's (1997) emphasis in this objective though is that such interaction behavior would be the one expected from a language user as opposed to a native speaker. This distinction might have been more recognized.

As for the objectives related to the knowledge area, three ICC objectives related to knowledge were found in data obtained from both quantitative and qualitative

methods: knowledge of levels of formality in language and behavior was found in both quantitative and qualitative findings, knowledge about regional dialects and English variations and how they are perceived by others, and knowledge of nonverbal interaction behaviors and related taboos. Despite the agreement between survey and focus group findings about the ubiquitous presence of knowledge of levels of formality in the textbooks, female focus group participants did not select this objective as one of the most important objectives in the PY program. This divergence can be attributed to the fact that many female Saudi students are discouraged from pursuing academic achievements abroad compared to Saudi male students, unless the students' husband, father, or brother can travel with her. Thus, the focus on academic language on female campus might be secondary to other objectives that serve more immediate educational needs

In terms of the objectives related to the skills area of ICC, both quantitative and qualitative findings supported the importance and relevance of three ICC skills: the ability to identify and explain intercultural misunderstandings to overcome conflicting perspectives, the ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and recognize their connections, and the ability to use questioning techniques to identify explicit and implicit values in documents and events.

Additionally, the classroom observations revealed that 14 of the 21 IREs related to the ICC objectives happened during an instructional conversation initiated by the teacher and were moments in which the teacher stepped out of the textbook exercise yet maintained connection with the lesson objectives. It is worth noting that four of the IREs (5, 6, 11, and 17) identified occurred during the presentation of English idioms to upper intermediate level students. Thus, presenting idioms demonstrated optimal opportunities

to addressed four different ICC objectives: the ability to identify reference within and across cultures, the ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding, the ability to identify explicit and implicit values, and raising students' interest about others' perspectives, while maintaining linguistic focus in the lesson. All these findings draw attention to the need to develop English teachers' practices that are consistent with their perception of the importance to implement ICC objectives in the classroom. The findings also suggest the need to exploit intercultural conversation incidents to develop students' ICC in terms of standard academic language learning, which is the key objective of the current English curriculum, by using strategies to empower students of their learning and not only providing students with the knowledge they need to master academic language and formal interaction behaviors.

To conclude, the findings of this study point out that culture-related activities in the English classroom in the PY program are still knowledge based and are centered around the introduction of cultural facts either incidentally or as a planned activity. To pursue a more balanced intercultural approach, the nine ICC objectives in the areas of attitude, knowledge, and skills identified by this study should be integrated in the current curriculum. These objectives were perceived by the study participants as vital in the English PY program in terms of learning both academic English and English content. They can help the students become intercultural speakers, which is a more realistic goal to achieve than emulating the level of proficiency of English native speakers.

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APPENDIX A

Classroom observation form

The researcher adapted the elements of observation that Merriam (2009) indicated to be likely present in any setting: the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversation, subtle factors and the observer's behavior and thoughts.

During the class observation, the researcher will make sure to be unobtrusive during class activities.

1- What is the topic of the lesson? What does the teacher expect to come up in terms of teacher to students and students to students' interactions?

2- How is the physical setting?

3- What is the class profile like in terms of students' age group, nationalities, interest in learning English, and travel experience?

4- Other comments from the teacher? (post the observation)

Class observation sheet

Time	Relevant Activities	Conversations	Behaviors and thoughts

APPENDIX B

Focus group questions

a. To what extent are ICC objectives important in English language classroom?
b. How relevant are these ICC objectives to the curriculum you currently teach? Please give examples…
c. Do you think there should be more space allocated for these objectives in the current curricula? Why?
d. Do you recall any classroom incidents that involve the use of these objectives?

APPENDIX C

Informed consent form and survey

Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural

Informed Consent Form

Purpose and Background
Hazem Osman, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is conducting a study on English Teachers Perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the Preparatory Year program at King Saud University (KSU) in Saudi Arabia. The researcher will explore English teachers' perception in the PY program in terms of how important they believe ICC facilitates students learning of culture, how relevant ICC objectives are to the content of the curriculum they are currently teaching, and how often they do activities with students that are intercultural/cross-cultural in nature.

I am being asked to participate in this study because I am an English teacher who has been teaching at the PY program at KSU for at least two years, and I am over 18 years old.

Procedures
If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:
1. The researcher will provide me with additional information about intercultural communicative competence upon my request to help me become familiar with it.
2. The researcher will collect my response to a survey that investigates my perception of ICC and its relevance to curriculum and classroom practices
3. I will complete a background survey.

Risks/Discomforts
1. It is possible that some of the questions asked in the survey provided may make me feel uncomfortable or upset, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not wish at any time.
2. Confidentiality: Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

Benefits
The direct benefit to me for participating in this research study will be the learning of what ICC objectives can contribute to systematic presentation of culture in the current English curriculum at PY program, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Costs/Financial Considerations
1. There will be no financial costs to be charged for my participation in this study.
2. I will not be reimbursed or paid for my participation in this study.

Questions
I have talked to Hazem Osman about this study, and have had my questions answered. If I have any further questions about the study, I may call him at 0566-11-9713 or email him at haosman510@hotmail.com.
If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk to the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voice mail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu. Or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Bldg., University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

*Consent
I have been given a copy of this signed consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status as an EFL teacher at the PY program. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Introduction

The survey you are about to take incorporates learning objectives adapted from Byram's (1997) framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) for foreign language instruction. ICC is defined as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills,

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and attitudes" (Deardorff 2004, p. 194). The survey also includes items from Fantini's (2010) Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC), Sercu's (2005) survey of foreign language teachers' perceptions of their role as mediators of langauge and culture, and Young and Sachdev's (2011) survey of EFL/ESOL teachers' opinions of ICC. Please answer survey questions in light of your perceptions and experience as an EFL teacher at the PY program

I. Your Perceptions of Culture and Language Teaching and Learning

The following questions seek your perceptions of how important the following culture-related objectives are for EFL classes in the PY program:

1. Knowledge about regional dialects and varieties and how they are perceived by others (e.g., regional dialects in the England, The US...).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

2. Knowledge about levels of formality in language and behavior (e.g., different situations that require being formal or informal in verbal or written communications).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

3. Knowledge of non-verbal behaviors of interactions, and related taboos (e.g., acceptable and unacceptable facial expressions and body language).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

4. The ability to identify and explain sources of misunderstanding to help speakers overcome conflicting perspectives (e.g., explaining how speaking in a loud voice is perceived in Saudi Arabia versus in English speaking countries).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

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5. The ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values of documents or events (e.g., a cellular phone bill, a Thanksgiving dinner...), and test applicability to other documents or events.

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

6. The ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their connections (e.g., soccer popularity in Saudi Arabia and in the US in contrast to American football or baseball popularity, etc.).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

7. The ability to make evaluative analysis of documents and/or events which refer to students' ideological perspectives and values (e.g., the ability to analyze and evaluate drinking alcohol from a Muslim's perspectives).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

8. The ability to suspend judgment and appreciate the complexities of communicating and interacting across cultures (e.g., suspending the notion that all Americans/British people have the same attitude towards Muslims/Arabs).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural

9. Raising students' interest about the other's perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena (e.g., how Americans/ British English speakers may interpret frequently coming 20 minutes late to a meeting, or rejecting a request while smiling).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

10. Develop students' readiness to adopt behaviors for interactions with English speakers that are considered appropriate for a non English speaker or a foreigner (e.g., how an English speaker expects foreigners to greet...).

- ◯ Definitely Important
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Somewhat Not Important
- ◯ Definitely Not Important

II. Relevance to Current Textbooks

From your experience as an EFL teacher in the PY program, how relevant are the following culture-related objectives to the content of the textbook/s you are currently teaching at PY?

11. Knowledge about regional dialects and varieties and how they are perceived by others.

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

12. Knowledge about levels of formality in English (e.g., situations that require being formal or informal in verbal and written communications).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural

13. Knowledge of non-verbal behaviors of interactions, and related taboos (e.g., acceptable and unacceptable facial expressions, body language).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

14. The ability to identify and explain areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction (e.g., explaining how speaking in a loud voice is perceived in Saudi Arabia versus in English speaking countries).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

15. The ability to elicit from English speakers concepts and values of documents or events (e.g., a cell phone bill, a Thanksgiving dinner...), and test their applicability to other documents and events.

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

16. The ability to identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their connotations (soccer popularity in Sandi Arabia and in the US versus American football or baseball popularity).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

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17. The ability to make evaluative analysis of documents and/or events which refer to students' ideological perspectives and values (e.g., being able to analyze and evaluate events that reflect Muslims identity such as drinking alcohol, etc.).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

18. The ability to suspend judgement and appreciate complexities of communicating and interacting across cultures (e.g., suspend the notion that all English speakers have the same attitude toward Arabs/Muslims, etc.).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

19. Raising students' interest about the other's perspectives on interpretations of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena (e.g., how Americans may interpret frequently coming 15 minutes late to a meeting or rejecting a request while smiling...).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

20. Develop students' readiness to adopt behaviors for interaction with English speakers that are considered appropriate for a non English speaker or a foreigner (e.g., how British people expect foreigners to greet them...).

- ◯ Definitely Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Relevant
- ◯ Somewhat Not Relevant
- ◯ Definitely Not Relevant

III. Your Teaching Practice

Please circle the choice that best describes how often you do the following activities with students in your English classroom in the PY program:

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21. I provide students with sufficient facts about foods, greetings, and customs of English speaking countries that are important for students to know.

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

22. I briefly present facts about the culture of English speaking countries when students come across them through the course of the progam

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

23. I ask students to find information about a product of the target country (e.g., a particular kind of food, drink, clothes...) and share their findings with their colleagues

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

24. I ask students to find information about a particular practice by English speakers (e.g., celebrating a particular festival) and share their findings with their colleagues

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

25. I ask students to find information about perspectives of English speakers on some topics in the society (e.g., respecting parents...) and share their findings with their colleagues

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

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26. I expose students to materials that allow them to recognize the diversity in English speaking countries (differences in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, cultural background...)

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

27. I involve students in activities that help them use effective and appropriate questions to ask English speakers on issues that are culturally relevant (e.g., being independent from parents...).

- ◯ Often
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Rarely
- ◯ Never

28. Do you have the feeling that you would like to devote more time to culture-related activities in your English classes at the PY program but somehow never get around to it?

- ◯ Yes, very much so
- ◯ Yes, to a certain extent
- ◯ No, not particularly
- ◯ No, not at all

IV. Your Background

Please complete all questions below about your background as best as you can:

29. My country of origin is

30. In addition to English, I also speak

31. Gender

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

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32. What is your current age in years?

- ◯ 21-30
- ◯ 31-40
- ◯ 41-50
- ◯ 51-60
- ◯ 61-70

33. What is your educational level?

- ◯ College/University (4 years)
- ◯ Masters
- ◯ EdD./PhD.
- ◯ Other

***34. What was your major in college/university?**

***35. How many years have you worked as an EFL/ESL teacher?**

36. Have you had any other experiences dealing with foreigners before your English teaching experiences?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

37. If you had prior experience in dealing with foreigners before working as an EFL/ESL teacher, have you developed any abilities that were useful to communicate with foreigners

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

38. If you have developed abilities to communicate effectively with foreigners, please list these abilities

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39. Which of these abilities do you use in your teaching?

40. Do you have any other information you wish to add?

APPENDIX D

IRB approval

To: Christy Lusareta, Hazem Osman (R), Mohammad Popal
Emails:
From: Christy Lusareta
Subject: Exemption Notification - IRB ID: 440
Date: 05/07/2015 10:00 AM PDT

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Protocol Exemption Notification

To: Hazem Osman
From: Terence Patterson, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #440
Date: 05/07/2015

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your project (IRB Protocol **#440**) with the title **Investigating English Teachers Perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** has been approved by the University of San Francisco IRBPHS as **Exempt** according to 45CFR46.101(b). Your application for exemption has been verified because your project involves minimal risk to subjects as reviewed by the IRB on 05/07/2015.

Please note that changes to your protocol may affect its exempt status. Please submit a modification application within ten working days, indicating any changes to your research. Please include the Protocol number assigned to your application in your correspondence.

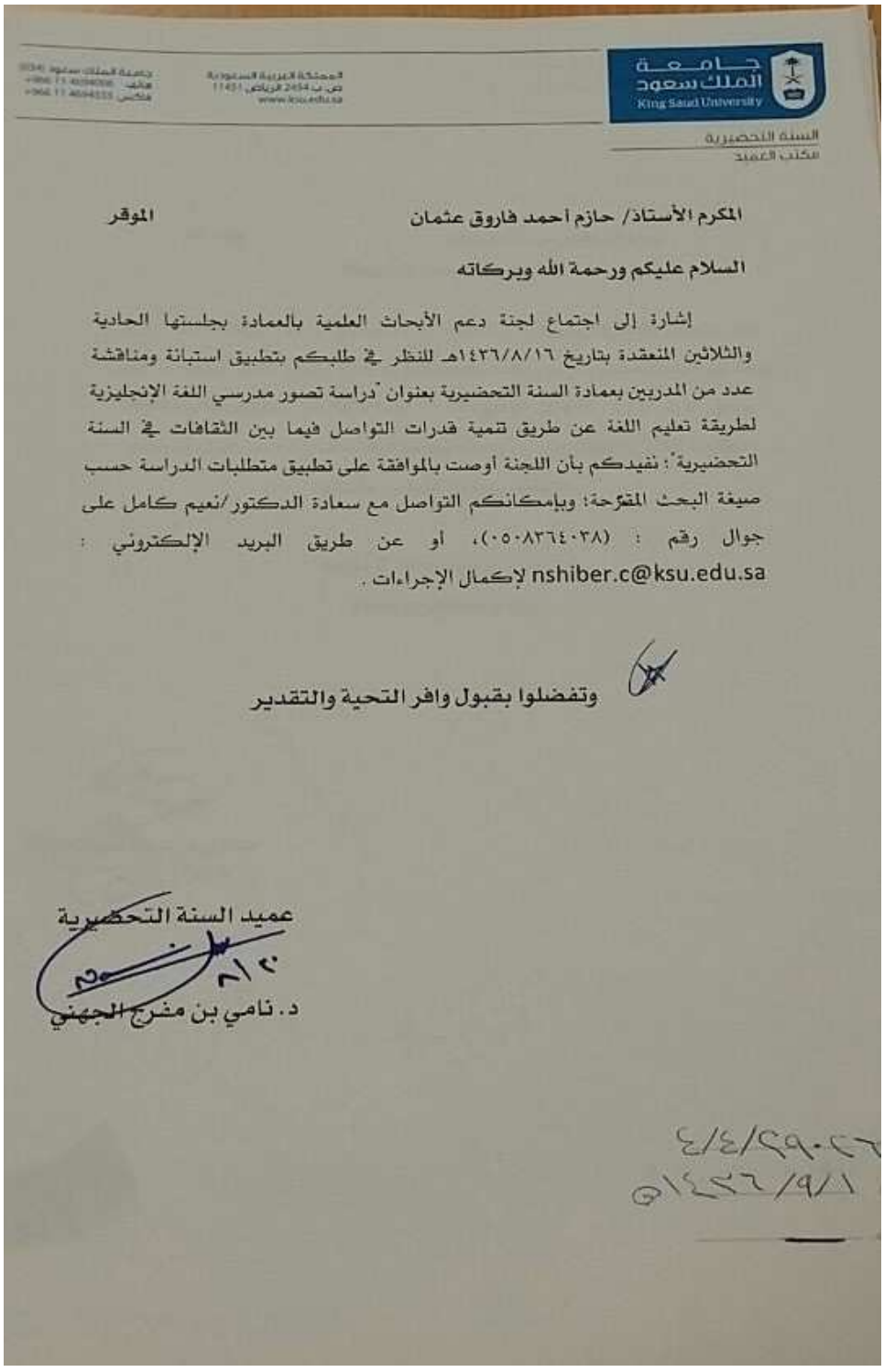
On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Professor & Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
University of San Francisco
irbphs@usfca.edu
https://www.axiommentor.com/pages/home.cfm

APPENDIX E

University and department approval



جامعة الملك سعود
King Saud University

السنة التحضيرية
مكتب العميد

المكرم الأستاذ/ حازم أحمد فاروق عثمان — الموقر

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

إشارة إلى اجتماع لجنة دعم الأبحاث العلمية بالعمادة بجلستها الحادية والثلاثين المنعقدة بتاريخ ١٤٣٦/٨/١٦هـ للنظر في طلبكم بتطبيق استبانة ومناقشة عدد من المدربين بعمادة السنة التحضيرية بعنوان "دراسة تصور مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لطريقة تعليم اللغة عن طريق تنمية قدرات التواصل فيما بين الثقافات في السنة التحضيرية": نفيدكم بأن اللجنة أوصت بالموافقة على تطبيق متطلبات الدراسة حسب صيغة البحث المقترحة؛ وبإمكانكم التواصل مع سعادة الدكتور/نعيم كامل على جوال رقم : (٠٥٠٨٣٦٤٠٣٨)، أو عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني : nshiber.c@ksu.edu.sa لإكمال الإجراءات .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر التحية والتقدير

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سعادة وكيل العمادة للشؤون الاكاديمية سلمه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبعد

إشارة إلى كتاب 4/4/290265 بتاريخ 23/7/1436 هـ ، نفيد سعادتكم بأنه لا مانع لدينا من إجراء إجراء مراقبة فصول مادة اللغة الإنجليزية بالسنة التحضيرية للباحث/ حازم أحمد فاروق عثمان بعد مراجعة البحث المطروح بعنوان "Investigating English Teachers' Perceptions of Intercultural Communicative Competence at the PY Program"

و نتمنى له التوفيق و النجاح و أن يحوز البحث على ثمرات قيمة في دراسته.

مع جزيل الشكر و التقدير ،

رئيس قسم مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية

د. حسام بن محمد العوض