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Students' and Teachers' Perceptions and Practices of Intercultural Communication Awareness in an ELT program at a Saudi Arabian University

by

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Abstract

The recognition of intercultural elements in English language teaching is evident in policies but is insufficiently addressed in classrooms (Baker, 2015b). The linguistic environment in Saudi Arabia is rapidly aligning with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). However, integrating diverse languages and cultural meanings poses challenges to established norms.

This thesis explores the views and practices related to Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) among students and instructors at Taibah University's English Language Centre (ELC) in Saudi Arabia. Using a qualitative methodology that includes interviews, classroom observations, and focus group discussions, the study provides a comprehensive examination of intercultural communication dynamics within the ELC. Participants include local English teachers, instructors from other Arabic-speaking countries, teachers from English-speaking nations, an English teacher from France, and four students. The choice of ELC as a focal point is influenced by Saudi Arabia's increasing openness following Vision 2030 and the cultural context of Madinah, which shapes participants' understanding of ICA. A qualitative interpretivist lens with thematic analysis is applied to interpret the data, capturing perceptions and practices, including the acknowledgment of cultural differences.

The findings offer valuable insights into the status of ICA in English language education at Taibah University. By gathering empirical data, the research highlights the perspectives of both educators and students, underscoring the urgent need for reforms in teaching strategies to align with contemporary ICA concepts. This research serves as a resource for policymakers and educators, emphasising the importance of incorporating culturally responsive teaching methods to enhance language education in an interconnected world.

Table of Contents

Table of Tables

Table of Figures

Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Abdullah Faisal Alzighaibi

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
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5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature: Date: 05/10/2024

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Definitions and Abbreviations

ICA .... Intercultural communication awareness.

ELC...................................... The English Language Centre at Taibah University.

CEFR .... The common European framework of reference for languages.

ICC .... Intercultural communication competence.

CA....................................... Cultural awareness.

ELT...................................... English language teaching.

ELF...................................... English as a lingua franca.

EFL...................................... English as a foreign language.

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Background and Motivation

The relationship between language teaching and learning and culture is a compelling area of inquiry with significant implications for educational practices and policies in multilingual and multicultural contexts. My interest in this topic stems from two main influences: my educational background and my participation in specialized language courses.

My academic journey began as an English language student in Saudi Arabia, later enriched by studies in Australia and the United Kingdom. This diverse education provided me with a comprehensive understanding of language acquisition and the cultural contexts influencing it. Upon completing my studies, I became an English language teacher at two Saudi universities, where I witnessed first-hand the complexities of teaching in a culturally diverse setting, greatly influenced by students' varied backgrounds.

A pivotal moment in my understanding of this relationship occurred during a Language and Intercultural Communication course in the iPhD Applied Linguistics program at the University of Southampton. I vividly recall facilitating a classroom exercise at Taibah University where students discussed what constitutes a "typical" Saudi wedding. This dialogue revealed the inherent diversity within cultural expressions, as students from different regions shared their experiences, highlighting the assumptions often accompanying cross-cultural interactions. The discussions emphasized that culture is dynamic and multifaceted, illustrating that no single narrative can fully represent a nation's social norms.

This realization is particularly relevant for language education in Saudi Arabia, which is experiencing significant linguistic transformation. As educational initiatives shift from traditional, grammar-focused paradigms towards models aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), incorporating cultural awareness into the English curriculum becomes increasingly important. This shift towards intercultural communication is not just an academic concern but a national priority recognized by educational authorities, including the Ministry of Education.

However, integrating diverse languages and their cultural significances poses challenges to existing cultural norms in Saudi society. The proposed study aims to assess students' and teachers' perceptions of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) at the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. Using contextual study methods, including interviews,

classroom dialogues, and focus groups, this research seeks to provide nuanced insights into the interplay between language learning and cultural understanding in this educational setting.

ICA emphasizes the importance of cultural context in communication and the evolving dynamics of relationships among languages and cultures. By applying ICA within the English classroom, educators are encouraged to present cultural content expansively, focusing on its fluidity rather than reinforcing static stereotypes.

The anticipated findings will enhance our understanding of ICA at Taibah University, particularly in light of the Ministry of Education's 2019 policy directives. These insights will benefit researchers exploring intercultural communication in similar contexts and provide valuable resources for curriculum developers globally. Moreover, the findings are expected to inform the management of the Testing, Curriculum, and e-learning facility at the ELC, guiding educational frameworks toward improved outcomes where ICA is central.

In conclusion, the interplay between language, culture, and education is complex yet essential. As educational institutions increasingly acknowledge the significance of intercultural competence in a globalized world, research like this is vital to creating environments that promote cultural understanding among learners and educators. Ultimately, the insights gained from this study may enrich the discourse on language education and foster a more nuanced appreciation of the diverse cultural landscapes that shape language learning experiences.

1.2   The Rationale of this research project

This research investigates the perceptions and practices of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) at the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. It is motivated by strategic priorities and theoretical applications of ICA.

From a strategic perspective, this study aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a roadmap aimed at diversifying the economy and enhancing public services, particularly education. Education is recognized as crucial to this vision, prompting universities like Taibah to internationalize their faculty by hiring foreign professors and instructors. This initiative fosters global connections across various sectors (Yusuf, 2017) and underscores the role of higher education in promoting belonging in diverse societies. Graduates must be socially responsible and possess intercultural knowledge for success in a globalized world (Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007). Thus, language learning is expected to play a vital role in the internationalization of educational institutions (Byram, 2012).

However, there are significant gaps between policymakers' goals and the realities of language classrooms. Previous research indicates that teaching practices often diverge from the Ministry of Education's intentions (Ahmed and Ahmed, 2015). This research addresses these gaps by examining ICA teaching and learning strategies at the ELC, where qualified English instructors from diverse cultural backgrounds are employed.

The significance of this research extends beyond theoretical exploration, offering practical implications for the ELC and the Ministry of Education, particularly concerning new employment standards aligned with Vision 2030. By investigating ICA perceptions and practices among teachers and students in English classrooms—where English serves as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2013)—the study aims to uncover how ICA is understood and enacted in practice.

The study will explore ICA's applicability in language teaching, acknowledging that the effectiveness of ICA initiatives depends on stakeholders' understanding and implementation. By examining how both teachers and students perceive and practice ICA, the research will illuminate the relationship between language use and cultural awareness in the classroom.

To achieve these objectives, various research methodologies will be employed, detailed in Chapter 3: Research Methodology. Participants will include students and teachers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, enriching the exploration of ICA. In total, four students will participate, alongside local English instructors, educators from other Arabic-speaking countries, teachers from English-speaking nations, and a French instructor, all contributing to a multifaceted understanding of ICA in an international educational setting.

The research will investigate participants' understanding of culture's broad and dynamic nature through experiences with the curriculum and interactions with different cultures while learning English. By focusing on the perceptions and practices of ICA among teachers and students, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of intercultural communication initiatives at the ELC and offer recommendations for enhancing language education in line with the strategic goals of Vision 2030. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform educational policies and practices, ensuring a cohesive integration of ICA within the language curriculum and a deeper understanding of cultural diversity in language learning environments.

1.3   Research Questions

This study initiates with an examination of the perceptions and behaviours regarding intercultural communication awareness. It subsequently delves into the impact of intercultural communication practices on teaching and learning experiences within an

English language educational environment, as well as how socio-cultural contexts influence participants' comprehension of intercultural communication awareness through the utilized curriculum. Lastly, the study evaluates how different categories of English teachers (Local, Arabic-speaking, international, and English-speaking) conceptualize and integrate intercultural awareness in their English language classrooms.

The research aims to address the following inquiries:

RQ1 - How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?

RQ2 - What relationships exist between instructional materials utilized in the research setting and participants' understanding of intercultural communication awareness?

RQ3 - What is the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of intercultural communication awareness?

1.4   Intercultural Dimension at the Macro Level

The integration of intercultural components in education is increasingly recognized as essential for equipping learners with the competencies necessary to thrive in a globalized world. This perspective aligns with the tenets put forth by international organizations, such as UNESCO, which emphasize the importance of fostering knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes that enhance international competence and intercultural functionality (UNESCO, 2006). Language learning, in this context, is heralded as a pivotal component of effective intercultural education, serving as a conduit for expressing cultural nuances, worldviews, and value systems (UNESCO, 2006).

At the national level, Saudi Arabia has responded to this global recognition by embedding intercultural dimensions into its higher education framework. The Ministry of Education has articulated a vision that centres on preparing university graduates with essential intercultural communication skills that are increasingly demanded in the labour market (Ministry of Education, 2019). This initiative reflects a broader commitment to developing a workforce that is not only academically proficient but also culturally aware and capable of engaging in meaningful dialogues across cultural boundaries.

In practical terms, the incorporation of intercultural dimensions can be seen within English language courses offered at public universities and language institutes that follow the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) guidelines (Al Houssawi, 2016). These frameworks

facilitate the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) while also addressing the intercultural aspects that contribute to effective communication in an increasingly interconnected world. However, while macro-level policies and curricula indicate a strong interest in integrating intercultural education, the actualisation of these components within the classroom can be influenced by a myriad of factors.

Variability in the manifestation of intercultural components can arise from the teaching materials used, the experiences and cultural backgrounds of both instructors and students, and differing educational contexts. For instance, the resources chosen for teaching may either support or hinder the development of intercultural competencies, depending on their content and how they are implemented. Additionally, teachers' prior experiences with intercultural interactions and their own cultural perspectives profoundly shape how they approach intercultural teaching in the classroom. Similarly, students' backgrounds and previous exposure to different cultures can significantly affect their engagement with intercultural content and their overall learning experience.

This complexity highlights the importance of examining the interplay between educational policy, classroom practices, and the diverse experiences of both teachers and students in fostering intercultural communication skills. In the context of the English language institute where this study is conducted, understanding how these factors converge will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of current pedagogical strategies in promoting intercultural competence. Ultimately, enhancing the intercultural dimension of language education in Saudi Arabia will not only contribute to individual graduates' skill sets but will also foster a more interconnected and culturally competent society, reflecting the aspirations of Vision 2030 and the goals of the Ministry of Education.

1.5   Overview of the context

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is indeed undergoing significant transformations as it embraces a new era where the English language plays a pivotal role in realizing the goals set forth in Vision 2030 (Elyas, 2018). This strategic plan is designed to enhance various dimensions of Saudi society, with education being a primary focus. As noted on the Vision 2030 website, one of the central educational objectives is to bridge the gap between higher education outcomes and job market requirements (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2023).

To facilitate this ambition, the Ministry of Education has articulated explicit missions for its state-funded universities, which aim to elevate the quality of educational outcomes and nurture the skills and capabilities of students (Ministry of Education, 2019). A critical component of these skills

is the capacity to compete in the global job market, which necessitates effective intercultural communication with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Article 50 of the Ministry of Education's educational policies emphasizes the importance of foreign language acquisition—specifically English—as integral to fostering interactions with people from other cultures and contributing positively to global dialogue, particularly in promoting the message of Islam and serving humanity (AlSeghayer, 2014).

The emphasis on communication aligns with the moral values ingrained in Saudi society, reflecting a historical commitment to intercultural dialogue and connection (Elyas, 2018). Research by Almujaiwel (2018) underscores the necessity of integrating more intercultural elements in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Saudi Arabia. His quantitative analysis highlights that a greater inclusion of intercultural content is essential for preparing students to effectively engage with English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) speakers from various ethnicities and cultures. Similarly, Al-Zahrani and Rajab (2017) argued that successful communication between nations is crucial for national prosperity, reinforcing the need for educational frameworks that prioritize intercultural understanding.

The city of Madinah, where this study is conducted, serves as a unique context for exploring these dynamics. As the second holiest city in Islam, Madinah has a rich history of cultural exchange, shaped by over 1,400 years of migration and interaction among diverse populations (Al-Ahmadi *et al.,* 2018). This historical backdrop likely enhances the intercultural communication awareness (ICA) of its inhabitants, as exposure to different cultures fosters a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.

In this environment, participants in the study are expected to have varying levels of ICA shaped by their unique experiences and interactions. This context is crucial for understanding how intercultural communication practices are interpreted and implemented within the educational setting at the English Language Centre (ELC) in Taibah University. By examining the participants' perceptions of ICA, the research aims to illuminate the factors influencing their intercultural communication abilities and the implications for their language learning experiences. As such, the study not only contributes to the understanding of ICA in the specific context of Madinah but also aligns with the broader objectives of Vision 2030, which seeks to cultivate a globally engaged and culturally competent workforce in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, and it is well-known, Saudi society is largely conservative and religious. Islam plays a central role in defining the culture and determining the norms, values, attitudes, and practices of society (AlMunajjed, 1997) A significant aspect influencing various aspects of public and social life in Saudi Arabia is the profound use of language. A division of genders also dominates and is

maintained physically, socially, and mentally, with women not being allowed to interact with unrelated men as dictated by Islamic teachings. This has had massive effect on the teachers, curriculum and the students' perception of other cultures. Despite textbooks being frequently utilized as the primary resource for English Language Teaching (ELT), educators can adopt a critical approach towards them. It is important for teachers, and possibly even students, to be able to assess and contrast the cultural material found in textbooks with their own cultural background (Baker, 2011). Furthermore, conducting further research on the representation of cultures in English textbooks and exploring educators' perspectives in Islamic regions can contribute towards enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the true significance of English in a globalized society.

As for the setting, Taibah University in Madinah was chosen for this study. The location of Taibah University inspired the idea of exploring ICA among both teachers and students to answer the previously mentioned research questions in a Saudi context that relates mainly to the multicultural setting of the city.

The university was established in 2003 and has 28 colleges, 14 campuses in 8 different cities, and has a preparatory year program for science colleges. At this university, where the majority of the students are Saudi, students must pass their English language courses by the end of their prep year to be assigned to their preferred colleges, as shown in Table 1.

University	Taibah University
Location	Madinah
Founded in	2003
Colleges	28 (16 in Madinah city)
Total number of students in the prep year	7500
Total number of teachers in the ELC	214
The Curriculum	Unlock Second Edition Cambridge University Press

Table 1 Educational information about the university in Madinah

The second research question investigates the perceptions and practices of ICA among participants and requires knowledge of the curriculum. The ELC had an agreement with the supplier that their curriculum committee would make necessary and vital tweaks to Unlock

Second Edition, second edition to make it more culture-friendly in cooperation with Oxford University Press to suit the learning outcomes.

1.6   The research's contribution

The empirical research landscape concerning the integration of intercultural dimensions within English language teaching (ELT) remains notably sparse. This research gap has prompted an investigation into the perceptions and pedagogical approaches adopted by educators in relation to intercultural awareness (ICA) within their instructional routines. Additionally, to enrich the understanding of this dimension, it is prudent to consider the perspectives of students as active participants in the learning process. The findings from this research endeavour aim to furnish policymakers, teacher development programs, and English language educators with empirical data that underscore the necessity for a critical re-evaluation of pedagogical methodologies and objectives in alignment with contemporary, fluid, and emergent conceptualizations of ICA.

Such re-evaluations are not merely academic exercises; they are imperative for realizing national educational strategies, such as the envisioned objectives outlined for 2030. In an increasingly interconnected world, where geographical boundaries grow less significant in the face of digital communication and global mobility, the need for effective intercultural communication competencies becomes ever more pressing. Therefore, it is vital that English language curriculum and instruction not only reflect this interconnectedness but actively foster it among learners.

Moreover, it is imperative to clarify that this research initiates an exploratory inquiry grounded in the framework of understanding "what is" before engaging with the normative question of "what ought to be." This methodological approach resonates with the perspective articulated by Byram and Feng (2004, p. 150), who contend that educators contemplating transformative interventions typically maintain a dual focus. They do not merely engage in the observational and analytical scrutiny of existing conditions ("what is")—they simultaneously envision aspirational outcomes associated with the ideal state of intercultural education ("what ought to be").

Within the context of this study, the initial phase entails a thorough and systematic analysis of the prevailing landscape concerning ICA, particularly in the English language centre context, at both micro (classroom) and macro (institutional) levels. This empirical assessment serves not merely as a descriptive endeavour but as an essential cornerstone conducive to formulating any subsequent interventions or enhancements. By meticulously documenting "what is there," in adherence to the interpretative lens proposed by Byram and Feng, this investigation lays the groundwork for a more informed and nuanced approach to shaping "what ought to be" within the domain of intercultural awareness in language education.

Ultimately, the insights gleaned from educators' perspectives and practices can catalyse significant "changes in teacher education," fostering a dynamic framework for future research advancements in the field (Lázár, 2011, p.116). This research seeks not only to elucidate current practices but also to inspire ongoing dialogues about pedagogical innovation and the essential role of intercultural literacy in modern ELT contexts.

English teachers universally recognize the critical importance of possessing a high level of intercultural sensitivity for both educators and students. They acknowledge that cultural learning plays a vital role in enhancing language acquisition as it provides insights into the context of intercultural and linguistic interactions. Teachers agree that the ultimate objective of learning English is to equip students with the ability to effectively engage in intercultural communication while retaining their own cultural identity, thereby enabling them to interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds without concerns about miscommunication. As stated by Mohamed (2020) 'The intercultural dimension of language teaching seeks to educate learners as intercultural speakers or mediators capable of dealing with complexity and diverse identities while avoiding preconceptions that follow one's view'.

This reduces the diverse gaps between the institutional policies, the educational practices and the needs of expectation of the learners. Furthermore, the documentation of the participants' perceptions and practices of ICA may be used to re-evaluate the strategies and concepts still used in English language classroom of the countries where first language is not English.

1.7   Outline of the following chapters

Chapter 2 presents the literature review, beginning with an introduction to the chapter's purpose. It explores the relationship between language and culture, followed by a historical overview that traces the evolution of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) from language competence to communicative competence. The chapter then introduces the concepts of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) and cultural awareness, culminating in the current understanding of ICA. It discusses the significance of perceptions in ICA, supported by relevant studies, and concludes with a synthesis of the literature in relation to the research context.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, starting with an introduction to the chapter. It details the study's nature, type, and approach, followed by information about the research settings and participants. The chapter also describes the data collection tools used, including classroom conversations, interviews, focus groups, and teaching material analysis, and addresses the ethical considerations involved in the study's implementation.

Chapter 1

Subsequent chapters present the analysis, highlighting themes relevant to answering the research questions. The discussion chapter synthesizes the data analysis with the literature review to address these questions, while the conclusion chapter summarizes the study's key findings and implications.

Chapter 2   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This study looks into how instructors and students in Saudi Arabian higher education perceive and use intercultural communication awareness (ICA). The research topic is discussed in the following sections in the context of the body of existing literature, which aids in understanding the concept of ICA. Section 2.2 provides an explanation of the ICA concept. Subsequently, Section 2.3 addresses the significance of perception in intercultural communication, while Section 2.4 reviews the literature on intercultural communication. Furthermore, Section 2.5 addresses synthesising literature in the context of this study. Section 2.6 concludes with a summary of the chapter.

2.2   Intercultural Awareness

Culture has always been a vital aspect of English language teaching, but its significance has grown in recent decades. This section outlines the interconnected theoretical concepts that shape our understanding of Intercultural Communicative Awareness (ICA), beginning with Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) and Cultural Awareness (CA). The literature review establishes a hypothetical circle of inclusion, providing a theoretical framework applicable to this research by considering context and participants.

2.2.1   Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

To grasp Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), one must consider its historical development. Chomsky (1965) established that a person with sufficient language knowledge is "an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community" (p. 3). He introduced linguistic knowledge as the first element necessary for effective communication. This understanding was early adopted in Saudi Arabia with a grammar-centred approach, emphasizing "the convenience of vocabulary drill and grammar presentation" (Fageeh, 2011). Applying Chomsky's rationale, we can form the initial hypothetical circle of inclusion, focusing on linguistic knowledge (Figure 2.1). However, Hymes (1972) contends that simply knowing vocabulary and grammar is insufficient for effective communication. He argues that mental linguistic capacity cannot be equated with speaking ability, as various sociocultural factors influence a person's communicative competence. In connection with the real-time communication in a language, Hymes (1972, p. 281) raises the following four queries:

    1- Whether (and to what extent) something is formally possible.

2- Whether (and to what extent) something can be accomplished under available implementing methods.

3- Whether (and to what extent) something suitable, happy, and successful is appropriate in the context in which it is used and evaluated.

4- Whether (and to what extent) something is truly done and what does it include.

These inquiries underscore the significance of not only linguistic knowledge but also the sociocultural context in which communication takes place. This understanding is essential for Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC), as it illustrates that effective communication transcends mere grammar and vocabulary, involving the ability to navigate cultural subtleties and contextual appropriateness. Consequently, further research is warranted to investigate how these elements are incorporated into classroom practices, particularly in diverse educational environments such as Saudi Arabia, where cultural and linguistic backgrounds profoundly influence communication dynamics. Such research could yield valuable insights for developing more comprehensive and culturally responsive language teaching methodologies.

In examining these foundational theories, it is crucial to differentiate between their historical relevance and their application to contemporary ICC models. While Chomsky's (1965) emphasis on linguistic competence established a foundational understanding of language knowledge, Hymes' (1972) concept of communicative competence expands this framework by incorporating sociocultural dimensions. Figure 2.1 illustrates a model that integrates these perspectives, reflecting the progression of ICC from a purely linguistic focus to a more holistic understanding that encompasses cultural and contextual factors. This model emphasizes the necessity of a multifaceted approach to language education that adequately prepares learners for real-world intercultural interactions.

However, Hymes' (1972) conception of communicative competence posits that a specific group of individuals—ideal language users—should serve as the benchmark for other language learners to emulate. This assumption can be inferred from his discussion of the perspective of individuals possessing a sense of "a normal member of the community" and the notion of "ideal fluency in a homogeneous community" (Hymes, 1972, p. 287), suggesting that this group should be regarded as the standard. This perspective, prevalent in educational contexts, particularly in English language textbooks, is problematic not only due to the current diversity of native speakers, which complicates the identification of a singular standard, but also because it positions language learners in a subordinate role (Baker, 2015a). This issue is especially pertinent in the context of English as a lingua franca, where speakers come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds,

including the focus of this research. Indeed, if language educators aim to facilitate communication, adhering to such an ideology may hinder rather than promote effective communication. It is imperative to consider the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners rather than relying solely on the native speaker model for language acquisition. This perspective highlights that while the traditional concept of communicative competence serves as a valuable starting point, it is inadequate on its own to address the complexities of communication in increasingly multicultural settings.

Given the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of English language learners globally, it is crucial to develop educational frameworks that go beyond the native speaker model and embrace a more inclusive approach to language teaching. Research by Baker (2015a) and others underscores the need for pedagogical strategies that recognize and value the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners. By doing so, educators can better prepare students for real-world communication in a globalized context, where English functions as a lingua franca.

Byram (1997, 2021) defined ICC as the "ability to communicate and interact across linguistic and cultural borders appropriately and efficiently". This concept relates to the language users' range of skills, knowledge, and attitude that expands into other cultures when trying to learn other languages that may or may not have common cultural features. Byram (2021, p. 62-66) summarised intercultural competence as "five savoirs" as follows:

- **Attitudes (savoir etre):** Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

- **Knowledge (savoirs):** Specific knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general knowledge of processes of societal and individual interaction.

- **Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre):** Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own.

- **Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire):** Ability to acquire new knowledge of cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

- **Critical cultural awareness/political education (savoir's engager):** An ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Indeed, one of the key elements of the ICC model is that it recognizes "inextricable links between 'learning language' and 'learning culture'" (Young *et al.*, 2009, p.152). This concept expands on what previous researchers have proposed by adding new dimensions to communication competence, namely the linguistic knowledge dimensions of Chomsky (1965), the feasibility, appropriateness, and actual performance dimensions of Hymes (1972), and finally the intercultural dimension of Byram (2021). As a result, the hypothetical circle of inclusion has been stretched even further with the addition of an intercultural element (Figure 2.1).

Byram's ICC critiques the native speaker model and substitutes it with the goal of assisting learners in reaching the level of "intercultural speaker" by providing interlocutors with equal positions and authority during a communicative event, regardless of whether they are native speakers or not. In such cases, both interlocutors demonstrate tolerance for prospective differences while establishing a mutual agreement that is acceptable to both parties.

Therefore, rather than emphasizing how participants' understanding of the interaction—that is, how it relates to their identity, their "own" culture, and "other" cultures—ICC concentrates on how participants' interactional competences are employed and developed within interaction (Baker, 2011). The experiences related to the participants' surroundings are excluded from the current circle of inclusion, despite the fact that it contains many crucial components that should be taken into account when teaching English (Figure 2.1). The participants may have accumulated these experiences over the course of their lives in a particular setting.

2.2.2   Cultural Awareness (CA)

One of the critical components of Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework is Cultural Awareness (CA), which is described as "the progressive development of an internal feeling of cultural equality, a greater knowledge of one's own and other people's cultures, and a positive curiosity in how cultures are connected and how they vary" (Byram, 2012, p. 9). This proactive stance towards understanding culture plays an essential role in language education, as it not only enhances tolerance and promotes international communication and collaboration (Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2004) but also helps learners develop a more encompassing worldview.

Cultural Awareness transcends traditional pedagogical approaches by emphasizing the skills and knowledge necessary to understand the intricate relationship between language and culture (Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2002). It can be succinctly defined as the conscious recognition of the significant roles that culture plays in language learning and communication (Baker, 2012, p. 65).

Byram (2012) articulates that CA encourages intercultural speakers to analyse their own and others' texts and activities critically, promoting a deeper understanding and preventing superficial judgments. This analysis entails examining both one's ideology and values and those of others, reinforcing the belief that meaningful intercultural engagement requires such awareness.

A notable limitation of CA, however, is its reliance on the Native-Speaker Non-Native-Speaker (NS-NNS) dynamic, which prioritizes British or North American cultures within English foreign language pedagogy (Byram, 1997). While cultural understanding is integral to the model, it does not explicitly address the intricate connections between linguistic competence and cultural comprehension, nor does it deeply explore how language and culture mutually reinforce each other.

Guilherme (2002) expands upon the concept of CA by incorporating a critical dimension, known as Critical Cultural Awareness. She describes it as a "reflective, exploratory, dialogical and active stance toward cultural knowledge and life," enabling individuals to navigate dissonance and conflict while fostering consensus and transformation (Guilherme, 2002, p. 219). Guilherme emphasizes the necessity of embedding critical cultural awareness in foreign language and culture classrooms, as well as in teacher training programs. She argues for the cultivation of a "critical disposition" among students, promoting social responsibility and encouraging learners to view the "Other" from an ideological perspective that transcends their own societal norms. This broadened perspective stimulates self-reflection and an appreciation of one's everyday communication and cultural practices as potentially foreign or strange.

While CA is recognized across various disciplines, it holds particular prominence in foreign and second language pedagogy (Risager, 2004). The rationale behind this emphasis is that integrating cultural contexts throughout all stages of language instruction is vital. Risager highlights that CA embodies a post-modernist view of cultural differences and relations to the "Other," whether those differences stem from national, ethnic, social, regional, professional, or institutional perspectives (Risager, 2004, p. 159; Sercu, 2007, p. 66). Reflexivity emerges as a central characteristic of CA, involving an awareness of one's own culture and the target culture as well as recognizing similarities between them (Baker, 2009, p. 82). This reflexivity is complemented by both cognitive and affective elements derived from ongoing cultural discussions, highlighting the complexity of cultural interplay in language education.

Despite the strengths of the CA framework, it is circumscribed by its focus on geographical boundaries, which does not fully accommodate the multilingual and multicultural realities of modern societies. Today's world is characterized by fluid cultural identities that often transcend national borders; individuals frequently belong to transnational organizations such as professional

bodies, global sports affiliations, and religious groups (Baker, 2015a). In the context of the current thesis, the CA approach may be particularly relevant for native-speaker teachers, as their target culture is closely aligned with their own. However, for Arabic-speaking and local teachers, who may lack full access to native-speaking cultures, interpreting and teaching CA may prove problematic.

Therefore, a more comprehensive and inclusive approach is necessary—one that embraces the fluid and interconnected nature of culture. To this end, the next section will delve into the concept of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA), positioning it as a critical avenue for enriching our understanding and teaching of intercultural competence in language education.

2.2.3 Intercultural Communication Awareness

Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) emerges as an expanded version of Cultural Awareness (CA) and presents a more nuanced construction of cultural awareness within the framework of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as proposed by Byram (1997). In the context of Saudi Arabia, ICA is characterized by the practical application of assumed cultural knowledge when engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds. This encompasses the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are inherent in one's own culture, which may be relevant in intercultural scenarios where English is used as a global lingua franca. As noted by Baker (2012), English transcends a singular cultural association, allowing for a more fluid interaction across varying cultural contexts.

Baker (2011, p. 9) defines intercultural awareness as "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context-specific manner in real-time communication." This definition highlights the complexity of intercultural exchanges, as it emphasizes that cultural forms, practices, and cognitive frameworks can significantly influence communication dynamics. ICA, therefore, moves beyond the traditional national or ethnic dichotomy of "we" and "they," addressing cultural interactions in a more globalized context.

One of the distinct advantages of ICA is its inclusivity; it amalgamates various notions, knowledge, skills, and attitudes from both CA and the ICC models, emphasizing what is most pertinent for teaching and learning English. Baker (2011, p. 199) notes that ICA operates in a space of "constant tension between individual, local, regional, and global context," recognizing that English may not serve as the first or second formal mode of communication in every interaction. This perspective

is particularly relevant in the Saudi context, where students may encounter diverse cultures through the English language, necessitating a more adaptable communicative approach.

Baker (2011) supports the ICA model through empirical studies focused on intercultural communication within English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). This research underlines ICA's strengths in accommodating the fluid, dynamic, and emergent characteristics of culture and language in intercultural communication, as noted by Baker (2012, p. 67). A comprehensive understanding of these cultural dynamics is essential, particularly in real-time communication scenarios.

2.2.3.1   Theoretical Framework and Historical Context

Figure 2.1 illustrates the proposed circles of inclusion, incorporating the ICA dimension as a theoretical framework that connects participants and the research context. This model traces the historical evolution of ICA, starting from linguist Noam Chomsky's foundational concepts regarding linguistic competence. Chomsky (1965) posited that language knowledge is inherently linked to communication within a "completely homogeneous speech community," which initially influenced the grammar-centred pedagogical approaches commonly applied in Saudi Arabia (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3; Fageeh, 2011).

However, the ICA model extends beyond Chomsky's structural focus, incorporating sociocultural dimensions advocated by Hymes (1972), who emphasized that effective communication must acknowledge the influences of culture. Thus, Hymes' concept of communicative competence introduces a broader understanding but still hinges on an outdated notion of linguistic homogeneity.

In contrast, this research pivots towards a model that integrates elements of ICC and CA relevant to the multicultural landscape of Saudi Arabia. It underscores the importance of grasping cultural dynamics and devising language teaching methodologies that surpass the traditional native-speaker paradigm.

2.2.3.2   Shift Toward Inclusivity

Thus, Figure 2.1 not only maps the transition from linguistic to communicative competence but also highlights the crucial shift towards a more inclusive model of ICA. This evolution is essential for equipping learners to engage in effective intercultural interactions in a context where English functions as a lingua franca across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes.

2.2.3.3   Limitations of the ICA Model

Despite its advantages, Baker (2015a) identifies key drawbacks of the ICA model, including the complexity of its components and the lack of comprehensive empirical data. Additionally, the varied perspectives of teachers, influenced by their individual knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards culture and language—especially given its fluid and emergent nature—present further challenges.

This study aims to examine these limitations within the context of teachers from different linguacultural backgrounds: English-speaking, Arabic-speaking, local educators, and a language teacher from France. By delving into these perspectives, the research seeks to provide insights into how ICA can be effectively implemented in teaching practices and language curricula in Saudi Arabia, fostering a more robust framework for intercultural communication.
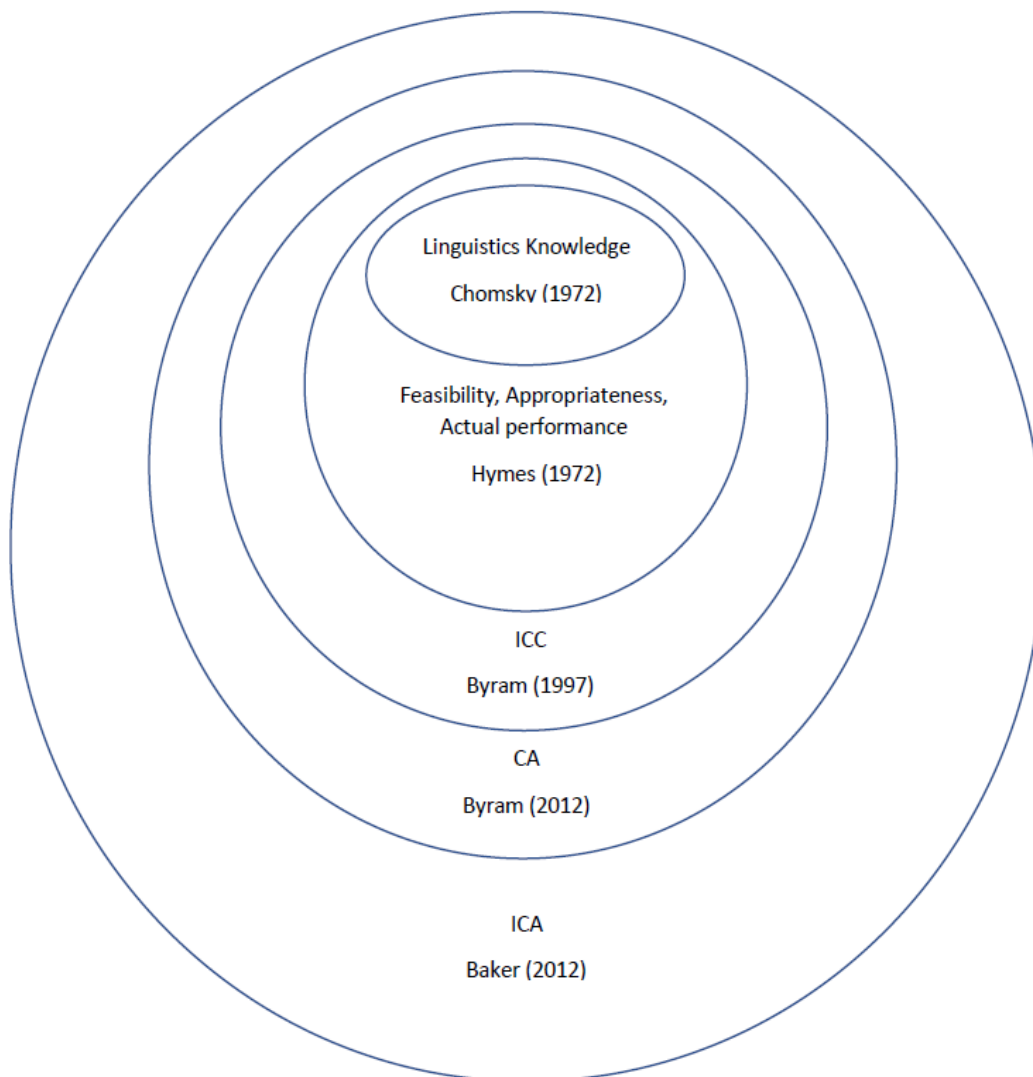
Figure 2.1 Proposed Circles of Inclusion

2.2.4 Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) in Action

Moving forward from the conceptualization of Intercultural Awareness (ICA), teachers play a pivotal role at the micro level, particularly within English language classrooms. In the context of this study, educators are primarily responsible for the delivery of the English language curriculum, irrespective of advancements in curricular design focused on enhancing student engagement, motivation, and autonomy (Alonazi, 2017). The following discussion explores teachers' understanding and application of ICA within their pedagogical practices.

For many teachers who lack formal intercultural training (Guilherme, 2002) and may not fully recognize the interplay between language and culture in their own teaching context, fostering ICA can be challenging. Teachers influence students' perceptions of the significance of intercultural awareness, regardless of whether students share a common first language with their instructors. In contexts where students' intercultural experiences are limited, this gap in preparation and understanding can diminish the potential for fostering expected behaviours. Specifically, the conscious attention to language and culture described by Byram (2012, p. 6) requires educators to facilitate reflections on the connections between language and culture, as they exist both in society at large and within individuals themselves.

Numerous studies have underscored the importance of ICA in language education and intercultural development, as evidenced by empirical research from countries such as Thailand, China, Indonesia, Iran, and Japan (Baker, 2012; 2015a; Yu & Van Maele, 2018; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Abdzadeh & Baker, 2020; Humphreys & Baker, 2021). These investigations affirm that ICA is crucial for understanding students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding intercultural communication. Moreover, research has suggested that ICA can be nurtured through teaching interventions and experiential learning, such as study abroad programs (Baker, 2022, pp. 45-46).

However, this study does not aim to actively cultivate ICA. Instead, it seeks to explore the concept from a macro-level perspective that involves educational stakeholders, down to a micro-level analysis specific to English language classrooms. The decision against fostering ICA was made due to temporal constraints within the research timeline and the complex procedures required to implement such programs effectively in classroom settings. Nonetheless, this examination aspires to shed light on the concept itself, providing valuable insights for fellow researchers and educational stakeholders regarding the integration of ICA within the local educational context.

Investigating the contributions of other researchers in the field of intercultural communication offers significant insights into the diverse local cultures that influence English language teaching

and learning processes, as well as the relevant intercultural interactions that facilitate meaningful communication. For instance, Abdzadeh's (2017) work on Iranian cultural norms, such as alcohol consumption prohibitions, illustrates how cultural values can significantly impact communication practices and pedagogical approaches. Similarly, Ronzon Montiel's (2019) research on Mexico's celebration of the deceased underscores the profound ways in which cultural traditions shape instructional methods and engagement strategies in educational contexts.

These examples highlight a pressing need for research on ICA in classrooms, particularly focusing on how educators can successfully incorporate diverse cultural insights into their teaching methodologies. This necessity is critical as it addresses the gap in comprehending and applying local cultural nuances, which, although often overlooked, play a crucial role in enhancing the educational experience. By scrutinizing the integration of cultural norms and practices into educational settings globally, researchers can cultivate more comprehensive and culturally responsive teaching strategies. Such endeavours not only broaden educators' perspectives but also promote tolerance and foster more effective international communication and collaboration—ultimately enriching the learning environment for students coming from varied backgrounds (Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2004).

Thus, these studies exemplify the varying dimensions of ICA that are pertinent in different cultural contexts, underscoring the necessity of tailoring intercultural communication strategies to align with specific cultural settings. This approach ensures that English language instruction transcends mere language acquisition, fostering a deeper understanding and respect for cultural diversity among learners. By doing so, educators can prepare students not only to communicate effectively in English but also to navigate and appreciate the complexities of an interconnected world.

The need for research into intercultural communication within the context of Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, is pronounced. Specifically, there is a scarcity of studies that delve deeply into the cultural and intercultural dimensions of English language teaching. Understanding how English teachers—both local and international—navigate and mediate these intercultural interactions is critical, as it highlights the role of educators as intercultural mediators. These educators must recognize and respect not only their own cultural values but also those of their students. By fostering an inclusive learning environment, they can significantly enhance students' comprehension of intercultural dynamics.

The forthcoming doctoral theses will contribute valuable insights into these interactions across various culturally diverse contexts, including Iran, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Thailand. For instance, Abdzadeh's (2017) study focused on the cultural dimensions of English language teaching in Iran, highlighting the unique challenges there due to the relatively homogenous

culture and limited exposure to diversity. Abdzadeh critically evaluated how prevalent teaching methodologies often neglect the importance of culture, frequently confining cultural discourse to English-speaking contexts. This oversight does not adequately prepare learners for the realities of using English as a lingua franca, where an inclusive appreciation of multiple cultures is essential for effective communication.

Abdzadeh's research aimed to enhance cultural awareness among Iranian adolescent learners through targeted curriculum development, encompassing two main phases. The first phase included qualitative focus group interviews with 17 students from both state schools and private language institutes, alongside an analysis of two significant English textbooks. The findings indicated that while students expressed aspirations for intercultural communication, the existing curricular materials fell short of addressing these objectives. The second phase involved a ten-hour teaching intervention, which resulted in a measurable increase in cultural awareness among participants, thus emphasizing the importance of tailored methodologies in language education. Furthermore, Abdzadeh's work highlighted that individual differences among learners influence the development of cultural awareness, indicating an area for future research to optimize educational practices.

In exploring another relevant context, Sasani's (2018) research investigated non-native English teachers' perceptions and practices regarding culture and intercultural competence within English language teaching (ELT) in the UK. Through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, Sasani's findings revealed that teachers conceptualized culture in varied ways—ranging from transferable facts to skills that facilitate understanding and communication. However, while the educators acknowledged the importance of intercultural competence, they expressed challenges in systematically integrating these concepts into their teaching due to constraints such as time limitations, students' proficiency levels, and inadequacies in teacher training.

Sasani's findings underscore the necessity for further exploration of pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing intercultural competence in diverse educational contexts. This calls for a re-evaluation of language curricula to better prepare learners for global intercultural interactions.

Both Abdzadeh's and Sasani's research indicate a pressing need for educational reforms that recognize the complexities of intercultural communication and the integral role of cultural context in English language teaching. By harnessing insights from these studies—particularly in regions undergoing cultural transitions like Saudi Arabia—educators and researchers can collaboratively develop more robust, culturally responsive curricula. This will not only enhance learners' language

acquisition but also equip them with essential intercultural communication competencies, fostering mutual respect and understanding in an increasingly interconnected world.

In a form of continuance and as Taibah University and similar institutions reflect on the integration of intercultural communication into their English language programs, they stand to benefit from a comprehensive understanding of cultural dynamics informed by existing research. Future investigations should focus on how best to implement these findings and develop teaching strategies that foster intercultural competence in diverse classroom settings, ultimately improving the educational experience for all learners.

The exploration of intercultural awareness (ICA) in the context of English language teaching (ELT) presents a multifaceted challenge, particularly in diverse educational environments like the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. Recognizing the varying backgrounds of teachers and their intersecting cultural identities is crucial for understanding how these factors influence their teaching practices and, subsequently, students' learning experiences regarding intercultural communication.

In Ronzon Montiel's (2019) research, the emphasis was on the perceptions and practices related to intercultural communication and ICC in a Mexican higher education setting. The findings revealed that while institutional policies acknowledged the importance of intercultural education, practical classroom implementation remained limited, particularly within the expanding context of English as a lingua franca (ELF). The study highlighted that educators primarily viewed linguistic competence as sufficient for effective communication, often neglecting the broader competencies associated with intercultural communication. This gap signifies a critical need for teacher training programs to align with contemporary uses of English, focusing more on intercultural education principles that embrace different cultural contexts and communication modes.

Similarly, Pattaraworathum's (2021) qualitative study in Thailand illuminated the culture teaching practices among English language teachers and identified a lack of awareness regarding intercultural education. The participants demonstrated some level of cultural integration in their teaching but did not fully recognize the complexities of teaching culture in the ELF context. This underscores the responsibility of ELTs as pivotal figures in promoting intercultural education, emphasizing the need for professional development in intercultural competency and ELF pedagogy.

At the micro level, the diversity of teachers at the ELC at Taibah University offers a unique context for investigating how various cultural backgrounds influence teaching practices and the transmission of intercultural awareness to students. Local teachers who share language and

customs with their students may approach cultural themes differently than those from other Arabic-speaking countries or native English-speaking countries. Additionally, teachers from non-English-speaking backgrounds, like the French participant, can contribute a distinctive perspective that may enrich the classroom experience, particularly regarding shared Islamic culture.

Understanding the linguistic resources utilized—such as codeswitching—becomes essential in this context, as it can facilitate meaning-making and cultural exchange during ELT. The interplay of different cultural narratives, themes, and educational dynamics demands a nuanced examination of how these aspects converge in practice.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has propelled educational institutions toward adopting online and blended learning methodologies, reshaping the delivery of curriculum content. The integration of multimodality in teaching—where text, images, and videos complement traditional instructional methods—offers teachers new avenues to engage students and foster intercultural dialogue. Such approaches can enhance students' understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, making the teaching of intercultural competence even more imperative.

Thus, the objective of the forthcoming research is to delve into the perceptions and practices of ELC participants regarding ICA. By employing a structured framework, as illustrated in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, the study aims to unpack the complexities of intercultural teaching within this rich, multicultural environment. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute valuable insights into how intercultural education can be effectively integrated into English language instruction, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of communication in a globalized world. This research not only seeks to enhance pedagogical strategies at the ELC but also aspires to inform broader discussions on intercultural competence within the realm of ELT, emphasizing its significance in cultivating global citizens ready to navigate diverse cultural landscapes.
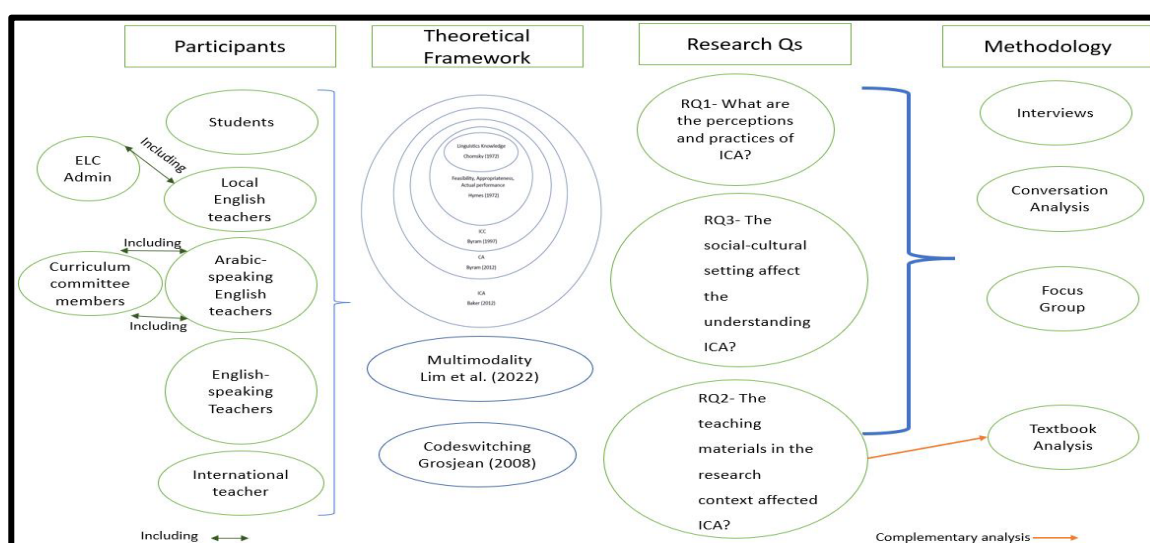
Figure 2.2 Research Framework

Figure 2.2 illustrates the diverse composition of participants in this study, highlighting that some teachers hold dual responsibilities as instructors and members of the ELC Administration and Curriculum Committee.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key drawbacks of ICA is the lack of empirical studies in the field of intercultural communication. Hence, this research will add to the literature in the context of English language teaching. It will do so by investigating the perceptions of ICA, which are addressed in the following section.

2.3   Importance of Perceptions of ICA

Teachers' perceptions significantly shape their pedagogical approaches and practices within language classrooms (Pajares, 1992). For educators to effectively impart an understanding of intercultural awareness to their students, they must themselves possess a clear and accurate perception of such awareness. Without a solid grasp of intercultural awareness, teachers are unlikely to facilitate the same understanding in their students.

Although the terms "perceptions" and "beliefs" are often used interchangeably, their meanings can differ based on the context and the researchers involved. For instance, Borg (2001, p. 186) characterizes beliefs as "evaluative propositions which teachers hold consciously or unconsciously." Conversely, Pajares (1992, p. 316) describes beliefs as "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition," highlighting that this judgment can only be inferred through a collective comprehension of human expressions and actions. He notes the importance of evaluating each component to ensure that the inferred perception accurately reflects the underlying judgment (Pajares, 1992, p. 316).

In this study, the term "perception" is employed in a broad sense to encompass both cognitive (beliefs) and affective (attitudes) mechanisms that participants utilize to understand the research issues presented (Richardson, 1996). Beliefs play a crucial role in shaping perceptions, guiding the processes through which knowledge is selected, organized, and interpreted, which ultimately influences classroom behaviour (Pajares, 1992). Additionally, Nespor (1987, p. 317) emphasizes the significant connection between cognitive mechanisms and attitudes among teachers, asserting that "teachers' ways of thinking and understanding are vital components of their practices." Similarly, Buehl *et al.* (2015, p. 74) acknowledge that teachers hold beliefs regarding various aspects of teaching, including their content knowledge, their students, and their instructional methods. Therefore, when examining perceptions, it is essential to consider the characteristics that contribute to an individual's perception system and their relationship to

knowledge, which aids in identifying relevant teaching practices and the intercultural dimensions of English language instruction.

Czura (2016) employed a questionnaire to investigate the perceptions of 162 Polish pre-service teachers regarding culture teaching across eight different countries. While the Polish participants demonstrated an "accurate" understanding of intercultural competence (ICC) (Czura, 2016, p. 94), an in-depth analysis revealed a disconnect between their perceptions and actual practices. This disconnect included their views on the integration of language and culture and their reluctance to implement these aspects effectively, particularly due to limited contact hours with students (Czura, 2016). Despite having a reasonable understanding of ICC and its implications, the teachers appeared to lack the necessary skills and experience to apply it in the classroom. This discrepancy highlights a notable deficiency in teacher training programs regarding practical intercultural communication skills, emphasizing the need for more comprehensive and experiential learning opportunities in teacher education.

In their investigation, Javid *et al.* (2012, p. 56) analysed the perceptions of 103 Saudi undergraduate English majors and 31 English teachers from Taif University to identify factors hindering effective English language teaching (ELT). Their findings revealed that effective teaching requires educators to possess specific knowledge, utilize appropriate instructional methods, inspire students, and ultimately achieve desired learning objectives. This connection is particularly relevant to the present research, as it underscores the importance of teachers' knowledge and practices in motivating students to develop a deeper understanding of intercultural awareness, which leads to an exploration of students' perceptions of intercultural awareness.

Students' perceptions of intercultural awareness are closely linked to their recognition of their own cultural identities and their development as intercultural speakers. This development is fostered through exposure to diverse cultures within their English language classrooms, where various curriculum components are addressed. Such settings are particularly effective when opportunities for social interaction among different linguistic groups are available, as positive attitudes toward this interaction are believed to influence foreign language learning motivation (Ushioda, 2017). The underlying premise is that the motivation to learn a new language differs significantly from motivation in other educational domains, such as history or science. This desire entails not only acquiring the language but also expanding one's behavioural repertoire and incorporating "elements of another culture into one's own lifespace" (Gardner, 1979, p. 193). While students' understandings may differ from those of their teachers, it is widely accepted that educators significantly influence their students' learning outcomes, given their direct involvement in the instructional process. Kern (1995) asserted that it is reassuring to observe that students'

perceptions often align with those of their teachers, reflecting contemporary trends in foreign language pedagogy (p. 77). These insights are crucial for this research, as they highlight the reciprocal influence between teachers' and students' perceptions of intercultural awareness in the classroom, emphasizing their interconnected teaching and learning experiences.

2.4 Relevant Studies in the Field

Several studies have delved into the intricacies of intercultural communication within the Saudi Arabian education system, as well as in analogous contexts globally (Fageeh, 2011; Ahmad and Ahmad, 2015; Almujaiwel, 2018; Kristanti *et al.*, 2023). For instance, Fageeh (2011) highlights the critical necessity of enhancing cross-cultural awareness among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students. This study examines the contrasts between Arabic and English cultures, emphasizing the vital role cultural awareness plays in English Language Teaching (ELT) environments.

An investigation conducted by Aldosari and Mekheimer (2019) assessed the effectiveness of an acculturation program designed for college learners in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that the program substantially improved intercultural communication competencies among participants, indicating that such initiatives represent valuable tools for enhancing students' preparedness for intercultural interactions. However, the study also pointed to the necessity for further research to investigate how these competencies can be sustained over time and applied within real-world contexts.

In a related context, Kristanti *et al.* (2023) examined the development of intercultural awareness in classroom discourse among university students in Indonesia, which is pertinent to ongoing research on intercultural awareness in Saudi Arabia. Through a qualitative lens, these researchers explored student perceptions of intercultural awareness, particularly in extensive listening activities. Their findings underscored that intercultural awareness is a crucial attitude for navigating the linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity inherent in classroom interactions. Furthermore, the study highlighted the significance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in facilitating effective communication among students from varied linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Practical insights emerged from this research, including recommendations for enhancing ICC through the implementation of intercultural tasks and digital media, such as photographs. While this study employed intercultural communication tasks within a similarly diverse context, the current research specifically seeks to first explore ICA in Saudi Arabian classrooms. This analysis will provide a foundational understanding of the existing state of ICA and help identify specific gaps and needs for further development.

In examining the perspectives of educators, Ahmed and Ahmed (2015) focused on ICC among English language teachers in Saudi Arabia through a case study at Jazan University. They discovered a pressing need to revise the curriculum to foster students' ICC, suggesting that current materials inadequately address intercultural elements. Supporting this view, Almujaiwel (2018) conducted a corpus linguistic analysis of cultural and intercultural content in Saudi EFL textbooks. The findings revealed a predominance of local culture over target cultures, with intercultural content being the least represented. This imbalance highlights a pressing need for a more diverse cultural curriculum that adequately prepares students for global interactions.

Similarly, Karolak and Guta (2015) discussed the evolution of tertiary education in Saudi Arabia toward a knowledge-based economy, noting that Arab students often prefer communicating in Arabic with their professors, despite acknowledging the necessity of English for career advancement with Western counterparts. This duality reflects a broader issue within the educational framework, where linguistic preferences and cultural comfort zones could potentially hinder more extensive intercultural engagement.

To elevate perceptions and practices of intercultural awareness, researchers have proposed various strategies. Some advocate for transitions between educational approaches, while others emphasize the importance of revising course materials to incorporate contemporary ideas. In their research, Byram and Guilherme (2010) argue for the necessity of further studies into intercultural communication, stressing that "no list fits all cultures, all contexts, and all conditions." This perspective underscores the importance of flexible and context-specific strategies in developing intercultural competence, illuminating the need for continuous adaptation and responsiveness to the unique cultural dynamics present in each educational setting.

Through this body of work, it is clear that while significant strides have been made in addressing intercultural awareness and communication within the Saudi educational context, considerable gaps and opportunities for enhancement still exist. Future research must continue to explore these areas to foster a comprehensive understanding of intercultural dynamics, ensuring that both educators and students are adequately prepared for the complexities of contemporary global communication.

2.5   The relationship between religion, culture and ICA

Religion is an intricate tapestry of principles, practices, and moral declarations that permeate societies, shaping individual and collective worldviews. It encompasses rituals, services, and religious laws that not only create a framework for communal identity but also provide guidance

on how to engage with a perceived divine being. These frameworks often dictate behavioural norms, serving as compasses that guide followers in their daily lives (Reisinger & Crotts, 2010). The considerable influence of religious tenets on culture has been emphasized by Samovar et al. (2016), who argue that culture inherently reflects religious paradigms across diverse domains, including communication styles and social interactions. Religion serves critical functions such as social control, conflict resolution, reinforcement of group cohesion, and providing explanations for phenomena beyond human comprehension. Additionally, it offers emotional support to individuals grappling with existential challenges. This multifaceted influence of religion extends to various aspects of life, affecting personal conduct, professional ethics, and political alignments, thereby establishing it as a formidable force in human existence.

The psychological dimensions of religion have gained considerable attention in contemporary studies (Spilka et al., 2003). The existence of numerous religions, shaped by ancient traditions, demographic profiles, and cultural contexts, contributes to variations in religiosity across different groups. Each culture imbues religiosity with unique meanings, implications, and characteristics, particularly notable in Muslim contexts, where religious tenets can express multifaceted implications for social behaviour. Furthermore, the perceptions of what constitutes being "religious" can differ widely, contingent upon individual interpretations, illustrating the complex interplay among religion, traditions, and broader cultural norms (Hood et al., 2009).

Research by Ameli and Molaei (2012) has demonstrated that intercultural communication is significantly influenced by religious affiliations, revealing that individuals from different sects often emphasize their commonalities rather than differences in their beliefs. This finding underscores the role of religion in enhancing intercultural sensitivity, which subsequently influences communication competence. In another vein of inquiry, Holmes and O'Neill (2012) explored the expansion and assessment of intercultural competence through an ethnographic lens, advocating for research that prioritizes understanding the impact of religious identities on intercultural interactions. Wrench et al. (2006) also deemed religion an essential aspect of intercultural communication, suggesting that this domain remains ripe for further scholarly exploration. They urge emerging scholars to engage in empirical research examining the nexus between religiosity and intercultural communication competence, particularly noting the oversight of religious considerations in prior studies focused on intercultural adaptation.

The gap in existing literature reveals a critical oversight: many prior studies have predominantly taken place within Western contexts, neglecting the multifaceted role of religiosity in intercultural interactions across different cultural settings. The intricate dynamics of religiosity combined with other contributors to intercultural adaptation remain underexplored, especially in non-Western

environments, such as Saudi Arabia. This gap signals a rich avenue for future research, where the interplay of faith and communication can be examined more thoroughly in culturally distinct settings. The integration of religiosity into the study of intercultural communication not only enhances theoretical models but also offers practical insights into fostering better understanding and cooperation among diverse cultural groups in an increasingly globalized world.

2.6   Synthesising Literature in the Context of the Research

In the past, traditional language learning in Saudi Arabia predominantly focused on grammar-centred approaches, which paid little attention to cultural content in a purposeful, overt, and planned manner. Fageeh (2011) argued in favour of moving from grammar-translation teaching to acculturation by incorporating cultural aspects into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education programs. This shift is particularly pertinent given the diverse cultural backgrounds of participants in this research, which includes Saudi teachers and students representing a range of local cultural nuances, Arabic teachers from various cultural backgrounds who share the mother tongue with their students, and teachers from English-speaking countries, as well as a teacher from France. While the latter group may not share the native language with their students, they often connect through a shared Islamic faith and familiarity with the local culture, gained through significant exposure and time spent in the region. This diversity necessitates a comprehensive approach to intercultural communication awareness (ICA), which is critical for managing the complex educational dynamics in this context.

Given the cultural diversity among participants and the potential for varied input, ICA is proposed as a comprehensive framework to address the challenges inherent in such an educational environment. Second language use should be treated as an intercultural communication process, emphasizing the significance of the social backgrounds of participants and the communication setting. This includes evaluating students' cultural backgrounds and their impact on communication, understanding different cultures, critically analysing cultural contexts, anticipating areas of potential miscommunication, mediating and negotiating across cultures, and cultivating an awareness of broader cultural norms. This approach validates the use of ICA in the current research context, as it provides a structured way to address these complex factors.

This research will explore the teachers' and students' perceptions of ICA as a starting point for more empirical studies. Understanding how perceptions and practices merge, diverge, or interrelate becomes essential to identifying teaching tasks and organizing knowledge and information related to those tasks (Mansour, 2009). Unlike previous studies, which primarily focused on enhancing cross-cultural awareness (Fageeh, 2011), developing better intercultural

communicative competence (ICC) through curriculum adjustments (Ahmed and Ahmed, 2015), or analysing cultural and intercultural content using a corpus linguistic approach (Almujaiwel, 2018), this study seeks to delve deeper into the participants' experiences, opinions, and approaches to learning and teaching regarding ICA.

There is a clear gap in the literature concerning the comprehensive examination of teachers' and students' perceptions and practices related to ICA in Saudi Arabia. Addressing this gap, this study will provide valuable insights into how these perceptions influence educational practices and outcomes, thereby highlighting the need for more nuanced and targeted approaches in future research. By focusing on the lived experiences of both educators and learners, this research aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of intercultural dynamics in the Saudi educational landscape, ultimately fostering an environment conducive to effective intercultural communication and learning.

2.7   Chapter Summery

This chapter examines Intercultural Awareness (ICA), exploring its historical development, highlighting key research gaps, and clarifying the importance of ICA perceptions in educational settings.

Initially, the historical development of the term ICA is delineated, beginning with the foundational concepts of communication competence. Early theories in this domain emphasized the ability to engage effectively in communication across cultures, laying the groundwork for the subsequent emergence of Intercultural Competence (ICC) and Cultural Awareness (CA). The transition from communication competence to ICC marks a pivotal shift in scholarship, as it began to encapsulate the cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions necessary for successful interactions among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This historical perspective is crucial, as it contextualizes ICA within a broader framework of intercultural communication studies, illustrating how the conception of effective communication has evolved to incorporate a multifaceted understanding of cultural dynamics.

Furthermore, this chapter explores the significance of perceptions of ICA as evidenced by the existing literature. The examination reveals that perceptions play a critical role in shaping individuals' understanding of intercultural interactions and their subsequent behaviours. Educators' and students' perceptions of ICA not only influence their engagement in intercultural communication but also impact teaching practices and learning outcomes in multicultural learning environments. The literature suggests that a nuanced understanding of these perceptions is

essential for fostering effective intercultural exchanges and promoting inclusivity in educational settings.

Subsequently, the chapter sheds light on the extant literature relevant to the context of the present study, specifically within the field of intercultural communication. This review uncovers a range of studies that have addressed various aspects of ICA, highlighting the contributions of different theoretical frameworks and methodologies utilized by researchers. However, it also reveals notable gaps in the literature, particularly in the exploration of how these theoretical constructs are perceived and operationalized by educators and students in practical contexts.

In synthesizing the literature within the broader context of this research, the chapter accentuates the interconnectedness of historical developments, perceptions of ICA, and their implications for intercultural communication education. It underscores the necessity of further empirical investigations that align theoretical perspectives with practical applications, thereby addressing the identified gaps in the existing body of knowledge. By doing so, this work aims to contribute to a more profound understanding of how perceptions of ICA can be effectively integrated into pedagogical approaches, ultimately enriching the learners' intercultural competencies and preparing them for successful interactions in an increasingly globalized world.

In summary, this chapter not only elucidates the evolution and significance of ICA but also sets the stage for the subsequent empirical inquiry, highlighting the need for continued exploration of perceptions surrounding intercultural awareness in educational contexts. The discussions presented herein collectively underscore the importance of a robust theoretical framework that can guide further research and inform practice in intercultural education.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters offered a comprehensive examination of intercultural communication awareness (ICA) within the context of English language classrooms. This topic was extensively reviewed in the literature review (Chapter 2), which highlighted the scarce practical research on teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of ICA. This study aims to address this research gap. The current chapter outlines the methodologies utilized in this study and provides rationale for the selected data collection methods to address the following research questions:

RQ1 - How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?

RQ2 - What relationships exist between instructional materials utilized in the research setting and participants' understanding of intercultural communication awareness?

RQ3 - What is the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of intercultural communication awareness?

First, the nature of this research and the kind of knowledge sought through this study are presented in Section 3.2. Then, Section 3.3 outlines the type of research conducted, followed by a description of the research approach in Section 3.4 and an overview of the research setting and participants in Section 3.5. Next, Section 3.6 outlines the research tools and the rationale behind the selection of these tools and Section 3.7 provide insights on data analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations for this research and the chapter summery are presented in Sections 3.8 and 3.9, respectively.

3.2 Nature of the Research

In examining the participants' perceptions of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA), this research adopts a philosophical stance that recognizes the existence of multiple realities. This approach is grounded in the belief that individuals construct their understanding of the world based on their unique experiences, backgrounds, and social contexts. Consequently, this study acknowledges that ICA is not a singular, objective phenomenon but is interpreted differently by various stakeholders within the educational environment.

Chapter 3

The insights into the educational stakeholders' understanding of ICA were gleaned specifically from the two English program administrators who serve on the curriculum committee of the English Language Centre (ELC). Their perspectives are crucial, as they provide a managerial viewpoint that shapes the curriculum and instructional strategies related to ICA. By analysing their interpretations of ICA, the research establishes a foundational understanding against which the perceptions of both teachers and students can be compared. This comparison is vital, as it uncovers any potential disparities or alignments in how ICA is understood and operationalized within the broader educational context.

In adherence to an ontological philosophical assumption, this research is premised upon the notion that our understanding of reality is intimately connected to the concept of being and existence (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This ontology posits that multiple realities can coexist, shaped by the varied experiences and social contexts of the participants. As such, the study positions itself within a constructivist framework, emphasizing that knowledge is co-created through interactions and discourse among individuals. By engaging with the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and students, the research seeks to paint a multifaceted picture of ICA that reflects the diverse understandings present within the ELC.

Moreover, this ontological stance allows for a deeper investigation into the social constructs surrounding ICA. By recognizing that different stakeholders may possess distinct yet valid interpretations of ICA, the research explores how these interpretations influence pedagogical practices and curriculum design. This approach not only enriches the understanding of ICA within the context of the ELC but also highlights the need for culturally responsive teaching practices that acknowledge and embrace the diverse perspectives of all educational participants.

Ultimately, this ontological perspective enhances the rigor of the research by ensuring that it captures the complexity and richness of human experiences related to ICA. It facilitates an inclusive approach to data collection and analysis, seeking to understand how multiple realities coexist within the educational landscape and how these realities inform the practices of teaching and learning in an increasingly interconnected world.

According to Creswell (2007), different classifications and terminology – including post positivism, pragmatism, advocacy/participatory, and social constructivism/ interpretivism, among many others – can be applied to existing paradigms (p. 19). Social constructivism/interpretivism is the paradigm or worldview adopted for this research. Interpretivism is "associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness" (Collins, 2010).

According to interpretivist approach, it is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate differences between people (Saunders *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue. In this paradigm, researchers aim to gain insights into individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them. Interpretivism looks to be the perfect tool to deal with this research as it focuses on the following Key Assumptions:

1. **Subjectivity over Objectivity:** Interpretivism posits that reality is subjective and differs for each individual. It stresses that people shape their own realities through their interpretations of the world, and as such, researchers should prioritize understanding these personal interpretations rather than striving for objective truths.

2. **Cultural and Social Context Awareness:** Within interpretivism, there is a recognition of how social and cultural surroundings influence an individual's experiences. It highlights the importance of studying these environments to gain a more profound insight into human behaviour. Researchers are advised to consider elements such as cultural background, historical factors, and language when deciphering the significance individuals attribute to their encounters.

3. **Utilization of Qualitative Approaches:** Interpretivism promotes the application of qualitative research techniques to capture the intricate and multifaceted nature of individual experiences. These methodologies, including interviews, observations, and case studies, enable researchers to collect detailed, subjective information that can unveil the subtleties of human behaviour.

4. **Emic Understanding:** The philosophy of interpretivism urges researchers to embrace an emic perspective, which involves comprehending phenomena from the perspective of the individuals under investigation. This approach necessitates researchers to fully immerse themselves in the world of the participants, appreciating their distinct viewpoints and interpretations.

Overall, adopting these principles - including subjectivity, cultural and social context awareness, qualitative methodologies, and an emic perspective - can offer valuable insights for research endeavours, especially within the realm of social sciences. By embracing these ideals, researchers can gain a better understanding of the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences, thus facilitating a more profound comprehension of the intricate and diverse nature of human behaviour and enriching our understanding of the world we inhabit.

When crafting research within the interpretivism framework, researchers commonly utilize qualitative techniques like interviews, observations, and document scrutiny. These methodologies

facilitate a thorough exploration and grasp of the research subject. Furthermore, researchers may apply tools such as thematic analysis or grounded theory to identify trends and patterns within the data.

In conveying research findings in a concise and coherent manner, tables, facts, and lists prove to be beneficial. For instance, a table can succinctly outline the characteristics of research participants, while a list can delineate the primary themes or concepts identified through analysis. Facts can be integrated to substantiate claims and underscore critical discoveries.

By embracing the interpretivism paradigm and tailoring research accordingly, researchers can gain profound insights into social phenomena and augment the existing knowledge within their domain. The integration of suitable research design, coupled with effective data collection and analysis methods, assures the robustness and authenticity of research undertaken within this paradigm.

The meanings are varied and numerous, prompting the researcher to explore the complexities of different perspectives rather than limiting them to a few categories. The goal is to rely on participants' viewpoints to achieve the desired results. Subjective constructivism and interpretations are often socially and historically contested (Creswell, 2007). In this study, participants were viewed through an interpretivist lens, which accommodates the diverse perceptions of teachers and students.

The first reality, as defined by the Ministry of Education, pertains to the intercultural communication skills students are expected to develop during their studies, as outlined in the curriculum. Teachers' views on how these outcomes manifest in their practices can be fluid and varied. Lastly, student perspectives relate to their understanding of intercultural communication skills. Consequently, this study employs the interpretive paradigm, which is well-suited to the context due to the limited prior research. This paradigm facilitates the collection of valuable qualitative data—through conversation analysis, interviews, and focus groups—offering insights into teachers' and students' perceptions of ICA within this research context.

3.3   Type of the Research

The present research aligns closely with the fundamental characteristics of qualitative research, necessitating the adoption of a qualitative approach for its investigation. This choice is informed by the foundational assumptions and interpretive theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, as well as the specific research problems that focus on the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to particular social or human phenomena.

Qualitative research is grounded in the exploration of complexities within human experiences and social contexts. Consequently, it seeks to understand the perceptions, experiences, and underlying meanings attributed by participants to their interactions and relationships. In this vein, qualitative researchers engage in an approach that encourages data collection in naturalistic environments, thereby fostering a sensitivity to the unique contexts and perspectives of those being studied. This methodological stance is particularly significant for this research, as it aims to capture the nuanced understandings of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) from the viewpoints of both educators and students.

To thoroughly investigate the research problem, qualitative researchers employ both inductive and deductive data analysis methods. Inductive analysis allows for the identification of emerging patterns and themes directly from the data, thus enabling a grounded understanding of the participants' experiences. Conversely, deductive analysis facilitates the exploration of pre-established theoretical frameworks, which can enrich the interpretation of the findings by linking them to existing literature. This dual approach provides a comprehensive lens through which to analyse the data, ensuring that the final findings are well-rounded and reflective of participant voices.

As highlighted by Creswell (2013), the conclusions drawn from qualitative research culminate in a written report or presentation that prominently features the voices of participants. Additionally, it incorporates the reflexivity of the researcher, acknowledging the influence of the researcher's perspectives and experiences on the research process. This element of reflexivity is crucial, as it enhances the credibility and authenticity of the findings, allowing for a thoughtful reflection on the researcher's role and its implications for data interpretation. Furthermore, the report includes a detailed description and analysis of the problem investigated, making a significant contribution to the literature or serving as a call for change in practices.

In alignment with this general understanding of qualitative research, methodological researchers such as Dörnyei (2007) and Creswell and Poth (2018) have delineated specific characteristics that further define qualitative inquiry. These characteristics encompass elements such as a focus on participants' meanings, an emphasis on context, the flexibility of the research process, and the importance of interpretation.

To elucidate these characteristics and their relevance to this research, Table 2, adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018, pp. 81-83), presents a detailed overview that outlines each characteristic and describes its application to the study. This table serves as a valuable reference that not only clarifies the inherent qualities of qualitative research but also contextualizes them within the

Chapter 3

framework of this specific inquiry into Intercultural Awareness, highlighting how these traits enhance the depth and rigor of the investigation.

Qualitative characteristic	Description	Relevance to this research
Natural setting	Collection of data in the field where participants experience the issue. Information is gathered through direct communication with participants, which obtains up-close information.	Research conducted within the ELC context at Taibah University.
Researcher as key instrument	The researcher design and conducts interviews, focus group, and classroom conversations. And performs the data analysis.	The semi-structed interviews, focus groups discussion, and classroom observation implemented by the researcher.
Multiple methods	Qualitative researchers collect data from various types of sources, such as interviews, classroom conversation, and documents. The data is reviewed and organised into categories or topics that span all data sources.	Use of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and classroom conversation for triangulation. Collection of data from various sources.
Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic	Qualitative researchers create themes through inductive reasoning. The themes are developed by organising data into increasingly abstract units. Researchers switch between topics and the database to establish comprehensive themes. Deductive reasoning is employed to develop and test ideas against evidence. Advanced reasoning skills are utilised throughout the research process.	This qualitative characteristic employed in the research as part of the data analysis.
Participants multiple perspectives and meanings	Researchers focus on participants' meanings and perspectives in qualitative research. Participants' meanings represent a variety of viewpoints and opinions. Qualitative reports should reflect the diverse viewpoints of participants on a topic.	The research investigated the perception of ICA amongst teachers, students, and administrators. The participants' diverse input contributed to this qualitative characteristic.
Context-dependent	The study should be conducted in participants' context or environment.	The study was conducted at Taibah University in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

	The researcher understands contextual characteristics and their impact on participants' experiences. Reporting on the environment helps understand how events, actions, and meaning are shaped by unique circumstances.	Investigated perceptions and practices of teachers and students from assorted backgrounds. Focus on both English-speaking and non-English-speaking teachers seeking to work in an Arabic and Islamic context.
Reflexivity	In qualitative research, researchers "position themselves" by communicating their background. Researchers share their job experiences, cultural experiences, and history. The researcher's background influences the data interpretation and learning objectives.	More about the researcher's role in the context of the study is provided in Section 3.8.1

Table 2 Adapted Creswell and Poth (2018, p.81-83)

By embracing these qualitative characteristics, the research seeks to elevate the understanding of ICA and its implications in educational settings, ensuring that participants' perspectives are foregrounded in the analysis and that the findings contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge in intercultural communication and education.

Qualitative research methods can educate not only other scholars but also teachers, educational stakeholders, curriculum designers and policy makers about how others interpret and incorporate, as shown in this research, the intercultural dimension of the English language and teaching in other contexts.

3.4   Research Approach

To acquire participants' perceptions on the matter, the researcher will engage in meaningful exchanges and focus on how the subjects of the study interpret and make sense of their experiences within their educational environment. To achieve this, the current research adopts a qualitative, contextual study approach. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret these phenomena based on the meanings that individuals ascribe to them. According to Denzin *et al*. (2024), qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of various empirical materials—such as case studies, personal experiences, introspections, life stories, interviews,

observations, historical accounts, interactions, and visual texts—that describe both routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Therefore, this research will consider the perceptions and practices related to intercultural communication awareness (ICA), exploring these phenomena through interactions with English language teachers, students, and two English administrators at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia.

A qualitative, contextual study (modified case study) approach can be understood as a record of research into the development of a particular person, group, or situation over time, which is particularly applicable to the research at hand. This interpretation of a qualitative, contextual study guided the choice of a case study approach for the proposed research. Taibah University's academic setting provides a natural context in which ICA can be investigated as a single case within a local university. This context encompasses all the essential factors needed for such an investigation, as it includes students from various areas around the city, each with different backgrounds, and teachers who possess the qualities in question, presenting the necessary variation.

To elaborate, this approach focuses on individuals who are representative of a specific group; the students, teachers, and English administrators represent the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. The perceptions and practices of the participants will be investigated in their natural environment throughout the academic year. This research aims to gather rich and descriptive data from the participants over a defined period, creating an understanding of their varied inputs related to their learning and teaching experiences regarding ICA. As stated by Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p. 16), "doing case study research means identifying a topic that lends itself to in-depth analysis in a natural context using multiple sources of information." Thus, the case study research method is appropriate for investigating the aspects of ICA as outlined in Baker's (2012) four areas of ICA practices.

Taibah University's academic environment offers a fitting context for this investigation, allowing for a thorough examination of ICA as a single case. This qualitative, contextual study fulfils the description provided by Dörnyei (2007, p. 152), which emphasizes that it will "maximize our understanding of the unitary character of the social being or object studied." In many ways, it represents the pinnacle of qualitative research, enabling a deep exploration of the intricate dynamics of intercultural communication awareness within the educational landscape of Saudi Arabia. By focusing on the lived experiences of participants, this study aims to contribute to a richer understanding of how ICA can be effectively integrated into language education, ultimately fostering more inclusive and effective learning environments.

3.5   Setting and Participants

3.5.1   Setting

Illuminating the historical and cultural background of Madinah, Saudi Arabia, is essential for understanding the context of this study. As outlined in Section 1.5, Madinah holds significant religious importance for Muslims globally. Situated in the western region of Saudi Arabia, it is recognized as the first Islamic capital and a pivotal site from which Islam spread across the world. The city is home to the second holiest mosque in Islam, the Masjid an-Nabawi, built over the grave of the Prophet Muhammad. This mosque follows the Masjid al-Haram in Makkah, which houses the religion's holiest site.

Muslims worldwide are drawn to prayer and visitation in Madinah, particularly during the holy months of Ramadan and Al-Hajj, the pilgrimage obligatory for all Muslims with the means to undertake it at least once in their lifetime. The influx of visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds significantly influences the research conducted in this thesis, particularly concerning the impact these international visitors have on the local society of Madinah. The interactions among various members of the community—who come from countless cultural backgrounds—enhance communication through religious, commercial, and cultural exchanges. Such evolving interactions not only enrich the social fabric of the city but also enhance the capacity of local individuals to engage with international visitors.

While the participants in this study are academics at Taibah University—many of whom may or may not have direct contact with international visitors—it is pertinent to explore how communication with these visitors can shape their understanding of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) Illuminating the historical and cultural background of Madinah, Saudi Arabia, is essential for grasping the context of this study. The constant presence of visitors speaking various languages fosters a multifaceted exchange of communication within the community through religious, commercial, and cultural interactions. Regardless of the nature of these communications, they enhance the local population's capacity to build primary relationships with international visitors.

Although the participants in this research are primarily academics affiliated with Taibah University—either directly or indirectly engaged with these international travellers—exploring whether such interactions influence their understanding of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) is valuable. The religious and historical richness of Madinah likely shapes the local educators' and students' cultural identities, emphasizing how their environment can influence their worldview and educational practices. Deardorff (2009) notes that culture is intricately linked to aspects of

social life, including religious beliefs, highlighting how the context of Madinah can impact the participants' cultural exchanges.

Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge the diverse community of English language teachers within this Islamic city. Local and expatriate teachers, many of whom have moved to Madinah due to its religious significance, bring unique perspectives shaped by their backgrounds. The coexistence of Muslim English language teachers from Arabic-speaking countries, who share a common cultural and religious framework with local students, alongside teachers from English-speaking countries, adds rich layers to the educational environment.

In light of the Saudi Ministry of Education's Vision 2030, which aims to transform the country's educational landscape, further insights can be drawn regarding the English Language Center (ELC) at Taibah University. Newly admitted undergraduate students in science programs are required to undertake an orientation program that reinforces essential English skills alongside other foundational courses. As summarized by Al Dosary and Assaf (1996), this program prepares students for the academic rigors they will encounter, ensuring they have the necessary English proficiency since English is the medium of instruction across most undergraduate disciplines.

The ELC is tasked with delivering and managing the English language program at Taibah University, offering intensive courses structured over two academic semesters—totalling eighteen hours of instruction weekly. Upon successful completion, students are expected to achieve a level of English proficiency outlined by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Al Houssawi, 2016). Given the high demand for English language materials, the ELC's curriculum committee has opted to utilize ready-made teaching resources and e-learning tools, specifically the third edition of "Unlock" published by Oxford University Press. The curriculum committee regularly collaborates with the publisher to ensure that materials are culturally responsive, thus emphasizing the importance of understanding cultural nuances in curriculum development.

Reflecting on the multicultural nature of higher education in Saudi Arabia, the teaching staff at the ELC primarily comprises local Saudi teachers and expatriate educators. The expatriate teachers can be further categorized into native English speakers and bilingual teachers from Arabic-speaking countries, many of whom possess advanced degrees in English language education. These bilingual teachers have essential insights into the complexities of teaching English in an Arabic context, thereby enriching the educational experience for students at Taibah University.

The local Saudi teachers, typically holding bachelor's degrees in linguistics or literature from Saudi universities, provide essential context and cultural insights to the learning environment. Many

have completed postgraduate studies abroad in English-speaking countries, which can further enhance the educational framework within the ELC. Coupled with their previous teaching experiences at various educational institutions, these instructors contribute deeply to fostering an intercultural learning atmosphere.

Ultimately, this research underlines the significant interconnections between the cultural and historical background of Madinah, the educational practices at Taibah University, and the broader implications for understanding ICA within this unique context. While similarities may exist with other countries in the "Outer and Expanding circles" as described by Kachru (1996), the distinctive cultural dynamics of Madinah warrant a focused exploration of how religious, cultural, and educational factors influence the development of intercultural competencies among educators and students alike. Understanding these elements is critical for fostering effective communication and collaboration in an increasingly globalized educational landscape.

3.5.2   Participants

In this qualitative research study, a multifaceted approach was utilized to gather rich data through interviews and focus groups. According to Neuman (2009), implementing a carefully designed probability sampling can yield results that are both accurate and insightful, often more so than attempting to reach every individual within the larger population. In qualitative research, the focus shifts from achieving a representative sample to selecting participants who are most relevant to the research topic, allowing for a deeper exploration of their experiences and perspectives.

The participant selection process for this study was tailored to encompass a range of voices from the educational landscape at Taibah University. This included local English language teachers, teachers from other Arabic-speaking countries, teachers from English-speaking countries, and an international teacher from France. By incorporating these diverse cultural backgrounds, the research aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and cultural interactions occurring within the English Language Center (ELC).

To further enrich the diversity of the sample, four local students volunteered to participate, providing insights from the learner's perspective. Additionally, the research involved input from ELC administrators, including the administrator and two members of the curriculum committee. These committee members represented the various categories of teachers and brought relevant experience and qualifications to the discussion.

The collaborative data collection methods—interviews and focus group discussions—were intentionally designed to facilitate open dialogue among participants. The chosen participant size was considered sufficient; expanding the group would likely increase the workload and yield an overwhelming amount of data that could complicate analysis and interpretation. Maintaining a manageable group size fostered active involvement, ensuring that participants could engage meaningfully with one another, thereby deepening their understanding of the investigation.

Building rapport was a key factor in encouraging participants to express their experiences and emotions openly. By creating a supportive atmosphere, participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts, which ultimately enriched the data collected (Check and Schutt, 2011). This qualitative approach not only highlighted the nuanced perspectives of the participants but also provided a holistic view of the intercultural dynamics within the ELC at Taibah University, contributing to the broader discourse on intercultural awareness in educational settings.

3.6   Research Tools

3.6.1   Triangulation and multiple forms of data collection

Triangulation occurs when various research methodologies or tools are employed to investigate a single phenomenon. Collecting and analysing data from multiple sources enhances the reliability and internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1988). It can be implemented simultaneously with different methods or sequentially, where results from one method inform the next (Morse, 1991). Utilizing multiple data collection methods allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions and practices related to ICA in their environments. Therefore, conversation analysis, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions were recorded to gather adequate data. Consequently, the study adopted a qualitative, contextual research approach (Yin, 2018), enabling a thorough understanding of participants' perceptions and practices of ICA. Accordingly, the study employed a qualitative, contextual study approach (Yin, 2018). This enabled a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perception and practices of ICA.

3.6.2   Classroom content analysis

Content analysis serves as a vital tool for collecting qualitative data, particularly in evaluating Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) through the observer's engagement with various sensory inputs. Traditionally, this method is closely associated with field notes and scientific recording (Creswell and Poth, 2018). However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated

a shift to online English courses, fundamentally altering the conventional dynamics of classroom observation. In this new virtual context, observers faced limitations, as the typical utilization of all five senses was reduced to primarily visual and auditory inputs due to the lack of physical interaction.

In light of these circumstances, content analysis was adopted as an alternative analytical approach. This method allows researchers to dissect the complex structures inherent in human interactions, making it particularly significant in the field of applied linguistics. As noted by Richards and Seedhouse (2016), content analysis plays a crucial role in understanding linguistic phenomena, including translanguaging, thereby providing deeper insights into language dynamics. Within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, content analysis has gained traction for examining the dual aspects of socialization and language learning (Richards and Seedhouse, 2005).

Notably, the use of video-recorded data has become a critical component of conversation analysis in classroom research. Despite its prevalence, many studies have relied solely on conversation analysis, as highlighted by Seedhouse (2022), who advocates for a more integrative approach that combines content analysis with other methodologies. This complementary approach can yield richer insights and novel implications for understanding classroom interactions.

Historically, many studies in this domain have utilized audio recordings, which often restrict the analysis to verbal exchanges and overlook non-verbal communication and technology-mediated interactions. This gap is particularly relevant as technology increasingly influences educational interactions, underscoring the necessity for future research to adopt multimodal frameworks that encompass both verbal and non-verbal elements within the content analysis paradigm.

In response to these challenges, this study implemented online classroom content analysis as a means to investigate the ICA dimensions present in the practices of teachers and students. This approach aligns with the fluid and emergent nature of the research, allowing for the incorporation of valuable data regarding participants' verbal communication.

To ensure a thorough analysis, the study focused on classrooms led by four distinct categories of teachers: local English teachers, English teachers from Arabic-speaking countries, English teachers from English-speaking countries, and an international teacher from France. By including diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The researcher collected 21 distinct online recorded English classroom sessions, each lasting two hours, culminating in a total of 42 hours of footage.

Chapter 3

The primary objective of this analysis is to identify classroom interactions that exemplify elements of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA), thereby contributing to the broader discourse on effective communication practices in diverse educational settings. Through this focused examination, the study seeks to illuminate the intricacies of intercultural interactions and enhance understanding of how these dynamics manifest in online learning environments.

3.6.3   Interviews

Interviews are widely regarded as one of the most effective research tools, particularly for gathering subjective information regarding perceptions, beliefs, insights, and practices (Duff, 2007). This qualitative research method facilitates the collection of data about participants' present and past experiences, as well as their behaviours (Cohen *et al.,* 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018; Duff, 2007; Harrell and Bradley, 2009; Yin, 2018). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p. 3) describe the qualitative research interview as an effort to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world." Compared to other research tools, interviews offer numerous advantages, particularly in the context of this study, enhancing its practicality.

One key advantage of interviews is that the researcher can control the order of questions, allowing for a naturalistic flow that aligns with the fluid nature of the research questions and the diversity of interviewees and their anticipated responses. This flexibility enables interviewees to seek clarification about the questions, enhancing the quality of the interaction. Yin (2018, p. 161) notes that case study interviews "resemble guided conversation rather than structured queries," emphasizing that, while there is a consistent line of inquiry, the actual questioning process tends to be fluid rather than rigid. This approach resonates with the interpretive stance of the research, acknowledging the existence of multiple realities.

As discussed by Duff (2007, p. 132), interviews can be classified into various types, including structured, semi-structured, unstructured interviews, and focus groups. For this study, a semi-structured interview format was adopted, specifically designed to extract perceptions related to teaching and learning English, with a focus on Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA). Although organized around a central theme, these semi-structured interviews were designed to maintain an open dialogical flow, promoting a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions, views, and beliefs on the topic.

To facilitate this type of interaction, Check and Schutt (2011, p. 318) recommend using an interview guide rather than a fixed set of questions. This flexible approach was employed in this research, allowing the researcher to engage in realistic interactions, selecting questions based on

participants' responses. The three interview guides utilized throughout this research are provided in Appendices A, B, and C. Despite the structured nature of the guide, a natural conversational flow was encouraged, utilizing comparisons between the researcher and each participant. This alignment with interpretivism fosters collaborative meaning-making, enabling both the researcher and participants to understand each other's intent more clearly.

Given the constraints on conducting physical one-on-one interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted through real-time, audio-visual online platforms, such as Microsoft Teams. Cohen *et al.* (2018, p. 540) highlight the benefits of online visual methods, noting that they allow opportunities for reflection and review through recording features. Prior to the interviews, both the interviewees and researcher agreed on suitable times to conduct the sessions. During the 2020/2021 academic year, the participants already engaged in online teaching and learning, thus familiarizing them with this interview format (Alshaikh *et al.*, 2021).

The online semi-structured interviews with teacher-participants were carried out during the second semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. This approach facilitated natural responses, which could be organized with relative ease. Additionally, online semi-structured interviews were conducted with students enrolled in classes taught by the selected teachers. Questions were posed in both Arabic and English to ensure clarity and accessibility for participants. Students had the option to respond in either language, allowing them to express their ideas more effectively.

Moreover, secondary semi-structured online interviews were conducted with two English program administrators representing the curriculum committee of the English Language Centre (ELC). Questions posed to these administrators regarding their perceptions of ICA were asked in English to further enrich the data collected from the primary participants. A table detailing the qualitative interviews will be provided in the following section, offering insights into the conducted research activities.

No.	Alias	Type	Gender	Country	Role	Length	Skill
1	A1 teacher	Arabic Teacher	Male	Jordan	Teacher	42:12	Experienced
2	A2 teacher	Arabic Teacher	Male	Egypt	Teacher and Curriculum committee member	46:35	Experienced
3	A3 teacher	Arabic Teacher	Male	Jordan	Teacher and Curriculum committee member	33:08	Experienced
4	A4 teacher	Arabic Teacher	Male	Jordan	Teacher	24:17	Experienced
5	E1 teacher	English Teacher	Male	UK	Teacher	48:41	Experienced
6	E2 teacher	English Teacher	Male	UK	Teacher	28:14	Experienced
7	E3 teacher	English Teacher	Male	UK	Teacher	51:11	Experienced
8	E4 teacher	English Teacher	Female	France	Teacher	1:13:35	Experienced
9	S1 teacher	Saudi Teacher	Male	Saudi	Teacher and ELC Director	54:15	Experienced
10	S2 teacher	Saudi Teacher	Female	Saudi	Teacher	26:18	Experienced
11	S3 teacher	Saudi Teacher	Female	Saudi	Teacher	29:45	Novice
12	Student 1	Saudi student	Male	Saudi	student	25:01	n/a
13	Student 2	Saudi student	Male	Saudi	Student	25:38	n/a
14	Student 3	Saudi student	Male	Saudi	Student	20:46	n/a
15	Student 4	Saudi student	Male	Saudi	Student	38:45	n/a

Table 3 Summery of interviews

A total of 15 interviews were conducted for this research, consisting of 12 male and 3 female participants. Among them, only one was a novice teacher with less than 5 years of experience. The group included 11 teachers and 4 students, reflecting diverse perspectives.

Regarding language proficiency, 11 participants were native Arabic speakers, with seven of them being Saudi nationals. Three participants were native English speakers, and one spoke French. The interviews collectively lasted 9 hours and 49 minutes, yielding a wealth of information and insights from these in-depth discussions. All interviews were transcribed and line-numbered in separate files.

3.6.4 Focus group

According to Duff (2007, p. 132), focus groups can serve as an effective supplement to interviews, particularly in situations where interaction among participants is likely to elicit richer information. The advantages of using focus groups include their ability to draw out perspectives when participants share similarities and are cooperative, making them effective in contexts where time for data collection is limited or where individuals might be hesitant to provide information in one-on-one interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Duff, 2007).

In this research, the focus group was moderated by the researcher, who guided the conversation, directed the group as needed, and ensured that discussions remained focused on the main points. The discussion was closely aligned with the interview guides used previously, facilitating the exploration of opinions, experiences, and perceptions, thereby validating and reflecting upon the data collected from individual interviews.

While focus groups are often considered 'contrived' settings, this structure offers both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, although they lack the natural ambiance of personal settings, they are intentionally focused on specific issues, yielding insights that might not emerge in straightforward interviews. On the other hand, they may generate less detailed data than traditional interviews with the same number of individuals, yet they are time-efficient, often producing useful information in a condensed timeframe. The group dynamic creates a synergy where several individuals engage in conversation and collaborate on the issue at hand, leading to a richer dialogue than solitary discussions (Cohen *et al*., 2018). Hence, this research tool was utilized to triangulate findings with the previously discussed methodologies (Sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.3).

One focus group was scheduled in conjunction with this research and took place after the individual online interviews had been conducted. The focus group session was held in a setting conducive to discussion (Cohen *et al*., 2018), promoting reflective thinking without interruption. To address ethical considerations associated with in-person gatherings during the pandemic, safety measures were implemented, including the wearing of masks, use of hand sanitizer, and maintaining safe distances among participants. Additionally, the duration of the focus group was

kept brief yet ample, and all participants confirmed they had received up to date COVID-19 vaccinations.

The focus group aimed to delve deeper into the participants' perspectives on Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) and provided supportive triangulation when combined with the other data sources collected throughout the study. The session involved teachers A1, A2, A3, A4, and E1, and lasted for a total of 50 minutes. This collaborative environment fostered open dialogue, enriching the overall understanding of participants' views on ICA within the context of the study.

3.6.5   Summary of Research tools

The data was collected during the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, which took place between 16 January 2022 and 25 May 2022. The study and research tools were conducted during February to May 2022 with no collection of data over the weekends. The participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the researcher's aims of the research and what was expected of them as participants. They were asked to sign a consent form before taking part in the study, providing their agreement for the information gathered from them to be used for research purposes only. Moreover, the participants were made aware of the ethical standards that ensure their confidentiality and anonymity throughout the course of the research.

A noteworthy point relative to this schedule is that the second semester included two long weekends that encompassed the 2nd and 3rd of February 2022 and the 23rd and 24th of the same month, as well as a midterm holiday from the 10th to the 20th of March 2022. One possible limitation was created by the common practice among some students of not attending classes for the whole academic week if that week includes a long weekend. To overcome this limitation, data collection was conducted in March and May in case any interviews or focus group sessions needed to be rescheduled.

3.7   Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher acts as the key instrument for both data collection and analysis. In qualitative data analysis, the focus is on obtaining in-depth, context-specific, and rich subjective data, capturing the meanings provided by participants in their particular situations (Cohen *et al*., 2018). The data analysis process encompasses several stages: organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the dataset, coding the data, identifying and organizing emerging themes, representing the data, and ultimately generating interpretations based on the findings.

A systematic method for identifying, categorizing, and understanding meaning patterns, or themes, within the data is referred to as thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). This approach enables researchers to discern similar patterns in how participants discuss a subject, while recognizing that what is common among responses may not always carry significant meaning. Thematic analysis empowers researchers to identify patterns relevant to the research subject and questions, allowing for both a surface-level (semantic) understanding of the data and a deeper exploration of hidden meanings, assumptions, and underlying concepts (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Several scholars have laid out frameworks and guidelines for conducting thematic analysis, with Kiger and Varpio (2020) among them. Braun and Clarke's (2022) approach to thematic analysis is particularly influential in qualitative research and is presented as a six-step recursive process rather than a strictly linear one. These steps are:

1. **Familiarizing yourself with the dataset:** Immersing oneself in the data to gain a comprehensive understanding.

2. **Coding**: Systematically identifying and labelling relevant data segments for analysis.

3. **Generating initial themes**: Organizing codes into broader themes that capture the essence of the data.

4. **Developing and reviewing themes:** Refining initial themes by reviewing the data to ensure they accurately represent participants' contributions.

5. **Refining, defining, and naming themes:** Finalizing themes, ensuring clarity and relevance to the research questions.

6. **Writing up:** Composing the analysis and results in a coherent narrative that reflects the themes and participants' contributions (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

During the analysis process, computer software can be utilized to facilitate tasks, often making them more efficient and manageable (Creswell and Poth, 2018). One such program is NVivo, available via the University of Southampton software website, which aids researchers in the organization, shaping, and analysis of qualitative data. The decision to use NVivo stems from its capacity to help categorize and analyse qualitative datasets effectively. Furthermore, the University of Southampton provides various resources, including courses, training sessions, and workshops, to assist researchers in mastering the program.

In the course of analysis, separating interviews, focus group discussions, and video recordings into distinct themes will enable the researcher to match participants' outputs to the appropriate themes. This organization will facilitate the extraction and categorization of comments, ensuring their inclusion within the discussion and results sections of the thesis. By systematically approaching the data through thematic analysis and leveraging appropriate software tools, the research will aim to derive meaningful insights that contribute significantly to the understanding of intercultural communication awareness in the educational context at Taibah University.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

3.8.1 The researcher

One of the primary concerns regarding the interview method employed in this study was the potential influence of the researcher on the participants, which could affect the validity of the data collected (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989). To mitigate this issue, the researcher took several steps to establish transparency and promote ethical research practices. Specifically, the researcher disclosed their personal history and background to the participants, clarifying that the data gathered would solely be used for research purposes. This approach is in line with Sultana (2007, p. 382), who emphasized the significance of "positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge, and power relations" in conducting ethical research. By acknowledging the researcher's position and perspective, participants and readers can better understand the context and implications of the research.

As an insider, I share the same language and cultural background as the participants, which significantly informs the research context. Having been an undergraduate at Taibah University prior to the implementation of the preparation year program, I possess firsthand knowledge of the institution's environment and dynamics. Currently, as a Saudi English language instructor with experience in the preparation year program across two universities—one in Jeddah and the other at Taibah University in Madinah—I have developed a nuanced understanding of this educational framework. My roles at different English language centres, including involvement in the recruitment of English language teachers, fostered professional relationships with teacher participants, positioning me as a colleague rather than an outsider.

Additionally, my academic background, which includes studying abroad in Australia for a master's degree in Applied Linguistics, followed by pursuing a doctoral degree in the UK, has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of research methodologies and data analysis techniques.

This academic preparation allows me to navigate the research tools effectively and ensures that the analytical framework is sound.

Disclosing my background serves a dual purpose: it not only constructs a more complete picture of the participants' perceptions and practices within their context but also enhances the richness of the data collected. By sharing a cultural and linguistic connection as a Saudi educator, I aim to foster a rapport with the participants, which may further encourage openness and candidness in their responses. This shared background can facilitate deeper dialogues, allowing for a more transparent exploration of the themes central to this research. Ultimately, this reflection on my positionality enhances the trustworthiness of the findings and contributes to a more ethical and informed approach to qualitative research.

3.8.2   Other ethical considerations

When conducting research involving human participants, it is essential for the researcher to address various ethical issues to safeguard participants' rights. Key ethical considerations include informed consent, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the study at any point, avoidance of harm to participants, and the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality (Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Duff, 2007). These factors are often cited as challenges within the case study approach, which is employed in this research (Duff, 2008). Thus, it is crucial to effectively address these potential ethical issues.

To ensure adherence to ethical standards, this research followed the ethical guidelines and procedures set forth by the University of Southampton, receiving ERGO ethics committee approval under the number 68283. Participants provided informed consent prior to involvement in the study, facilitated by an information sheet that outlined the aims of the research, the participants' contributions, the data collection tools utilized, the time commitment required for each research instrument, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time during the study.

The protection of participants' anonymity and confidentiality was a top priority throughout the research process. All recordings of interviews, classroom conversations, and focus group discussions were deleted once they had been transcribed. Furthermore, the data were securely stored in a manner that ensured access was restricted solely to the researcher and their doctoral supervisory team.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional precautions were implemented to ensure that participation in this study posed no risk to the participants. The researcher adhered to the Saudi government's pandemic guidelines during the focus group discussions. This included maintaining

safe physical distances and conducting all interviews and classroom conversations online, thereby mitigating the risk of virus transmission while facilitating meaningful engagement.

3.9   Chapter Summery

Chapter 3, titled 'Research Methodology', provides a comprehensive overview of the various components that constituted the research design and execution. The chapter begins with Section 3.1, which introduces the study by outlining its primary aim and specific research questions. This section sets the stage for the reader by indicating how the chapters are organized and what to expect in terms of content and methodology.

Following this introduction, Table 6 offers a concise summary of Sections 3.2 to 3.8, highlighting key elements that pertain to the research implementation within each subsection. These sections collectively encompass essential topics such as the theoretical framework guiding the research, the selection of participants, the data collection methods employed (including individual interviews and focus groups), data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

In Section 3.2, the theoretical framework is delineated, explaining how it informs the research design and illustrates the underlying principles that guide the interpretation of the findings. Section 3.3 details the participant selection process, outlining criteria for inclusion and the demographics of the participants involved in the research.

Section 3.4 focuses on data collection methods, discussing the rationale behind choosing interviews and focus groups as primary instruments for gathering qualitative data. This section emphasizes how these methods align with the research objectives and facilitate in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives.

In Section 3.5, data analysis techniques are described, including any software or analytical frameworks used to interpret the data. This segment illustrates how the collected data was systematically analysed to draw meaningful conclusions related to the research questions.

Subsequent sections address ethical considerations (Section 3.6), emphasizing the importance of informed consent, participant confidentiality, and adherence to safety protocols during data collection—particularly pertinent in the context of the ongoing pandemic. Section 3.7 discusses limitations of the study, acknowledging constraints that may affect the generalizability of the findings and offering insights into how these limitations were mitigated.

Finally, Section 3.8 wraps up the methodology chapter by summarizing the key points and reiterating the overall research approach. This structured framework not only clarifies the methodology employed but also underscores the validity and reliability of the research outcomes, preparing the reader for the subsequent presentation of findings and discussions in later chapters.

Section	Name	Details
3.2 Nature of the Research	Ontological Assumption	Social Constructivism / Interpretivism Paradigm
3.3 Type of the Research	Qualitative Methodology	
3.4 Research Approach	Contextual study	
3.5 Context: Setting, participants	Setting: ELC at Taibah University, Madinah, Saudi Arabia Participants: 4 Different Teachers and 4 students	Local Saudi Teachers Teachers from Arabic speaking countries Teachers from English Speaking countries A teacher from France 4 Students 2 Administrators
3.6 Research Tools	Triangulation: Classroom Observation Online interviews Focus Group	Field Notes Audio recording Interview recording
3.7 Data Analysis	Triangulation of data	Use of NVivo
3.8 Ethical Consideration	My role as a researcher Other Ethical considerations	Consent Form Confidentiality Anonymity Not causing harm Volunteering participation Right to withdrew

Table 4 Chapter 3 summery

Chapter 4   Interviews and Focus Group Analysis

4.1   Introduction

All interviews conducted in this research were transcribed and analysed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. Following transcription, thematic analysis was employed to identify and extract common themes from the data set, which is a widely recognized method for analysing qualitative research. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), one of the primary advantages of thematic analysis is its ability to reveal patterns and themes within qualitative data, thus providing deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants.

The researcher initiated the coding process with a list of codes derived from the three main research questions. These codes provided a framework for data analysis, but the process was also adaptive, allowing codes to evolve from the data itself throughout the coding process. This mixed approach to coding aligns with Richards (2003), emphasizing the flexibility inherent in qualitative research.

The themes were strategically chosen to address the research questions directly or indirectly. The first main theme focused on the perception and practice of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) in the classroom. The second theme revolved around the use of English textbooks, while the third theme examined the socio-cultural context of the interviews in relation to ICA.

Once the interviews were transcribed in NVivo, the researcher conducted multiple reviews—three or more—to thoroughly identify the main themes and establish subthemes that emerged through the coding process. For the first main theme concerning the perception and practice of ICA in the classroom, two distinct subthemes were identified:

> **1. Perception of ICA:** This subtheme explored how participants viewed and understood ICA.

> **2. Practice of ICA:** This subtheme focused on the implementation of ICA principles within classroom settings.

The second main theme centred on English textbooks, which was also broken down into two subthemes:

> 1. **Previous English Textbooks**: This subtheme addressed participants' experiences and opinions concerning older editions of English textbooks.

2. **Current English Textbooks:** This subtheme examined perspectives on contemporary textbooks and their relevance to ICA.

The third main theme dealt with the socio-cultural context related to ICA, which encompassed four subthemes:

1. **Cultural Background Change in Saudi Arabia:** This subtheme explored shifts in cultural dynamics and their impact on ICA.

2. **Social Shift in Saudi Arabia:** This subtheme considered broader social changes and their significance in the context of ICA.

3. **Dealing with Sensitive Social Topics:** This subtheme focused on how participants navigated sensitive social issues related to ICA.

4. **Madinah and Local Context:** This subtheme examined the specific local context of Madinah and how it influenced participants' understanding and practice of ICA.

The emergence of these subthemes was rooted in the interviews, demonstrating how participants' insights illuminated key aspects of ICA and its application within the educational framework. This rigorous coding and thematic analysis not only highlighted the diverse perspectives of the interviewees but also contributed valuable insights into the overall research objectives.

Broad theme	Emerged sub-themes
The perception of ICA	Holistic view of culture
	Acknowledgement of self and other cultures
	The relationship between language and culture
The practice of ICA	Teachers' actions
	Students' reaction

Table 5 Perception and Practice of ICA in Classroom themes and sub-themes

4.2   The perception of ICA

In addressing the first research question (RQ1: How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?), this study initially established two key predetermined themes: participants'

perceptions of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) and their practices of ICA within the classroom setting. The theme focusing on participants' perceptions was further dissected into sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative data gathered during the study.

This inquiry into ICA perceptions across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds encompasses a wide array of participants, highlighting the rich tapestry of cultural influences. The participant cohort includes Saudi local English teachers and students, English educators from Arabic-speaking countries, English teachers from English-speaking nations, and a representative educator from France, a non-Arabic and non-English-speaking context. This diverse selection aligns with the previously established hypothetical circles of inclusion elaborated upon in Chapter 2. Moreover, Byram's (1997, 2021) intercultural elements and the Cultural Awareness (CA) approach (2012) were integrated into the analysis, in addition to Baker's (2012) framework of ICA (illustrated in Figure 2.1). Each of these perspectives contributed to a nuanced understanding of how participants, representing a variety of cultural backgrounds, perceive ICA.

In the following sections, the study delves into how each participant group conceptualizes ICA and the insights gleaned from collective perceptions during focus group discussions among teachers. This thematic exploration offers a comprehensive view of the varying perceptions of ICA in relation to the distinct cultural backgrounds of the participants, shedding light on both shared understandings and unique perspectives that arise from their diverse linguistic contexts.

By engaging with this multifaceted approach, the study aims to uncover the complexities of ICA as they manifest in educational settings, thereby enhancing our understanding of how intercultural dynamics play a crucial role in language education and communication practices. This investigation not only contributes to the existing body of literature on ICA but also provides practical implications for educators aiming to foster environments conducive to intercultural dialogue and understanding.

4.2.1   Holistic view of culture

The participants held varied interpretations of Intercultural Awareness (ICA), seeing culture as a comprehensive concept that includes local greetings, cuisine, languages, communication styles, and behaviours. They viewed culture as a way of life, manifested in practices, traditions, and beliefs, and recognized its importance in shaping self-identity and influencing interactions with others. Below are examples of exchanges among participants who shared a similar holistic worldview.

Extract 5.1 A3 teacher

265 …..., Okay, culture is something which is very important. And, again, this applies not only to
266 the country that we are working in, but to any other country, even if you're working in a
267 Western country,

The participant, who is an experienced teacher from Egypt, emphasises that the importance of culture applies not only to the country being discussed but to any country, including Western countries. This suggests a comprehensive understanding of culture that extends beyond geographical boundaries and recognises its significance in a broader context.

<u>Extract 5.2 E2 teacher</u>

114 Okay, sure. culture in general, I think is the shared beliefs, maybe traditions,
115 accepted norms, in a particular site, society, or a particular community, could be it
116 could be a country thing, or it could be a wider community.

The above example is from an experienced teacher from the United Kingdom. Teacher E2 defines culture as a combination of shared beliefs, traditions, and norms within a particular society or community. It demonstrates that the scope of culture can vary, extending from a national to a smaller community level. This perspective aligns with the holistic view of culture, which shows that it as a comprehensive and interrelated phenomenon encompassing beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and norms of a society.

4.2.2   Perceptions of English language teacher from English-speaking countries

The responses to the question on how the participants define "culture" show that English language teachers from English-speaking countries see it as a combination of shared beliefs, traditions, and norms within a particular society or community. This suggests that the scope of culture can vary, from a national level to a smaller community level. This understanding is consistent with the concept of CA (Bayram, 2012; Guilherme, 2002; Masuhara & Tomlinson, 2004), which emphasises that intercultural speakers should consider the beliefs and values of others as well as their own. This is evident in Extracts 5.2 (refer to 4.2.1), 5.11 and 5.13 (refer to 4.3.1) where the teacher is not only acknowledging their own culture and the culture of others, but also negotiating a mutual understanding that is acceptable to both the teacher and the students.

<u>Extract 5.3 from the Focus Group</u>

282 You're teaching students the language, I mean, to be to mean to know the other, and to
283 prepare them also for the future now at the vision of 2030 Okay, and now students, many

284 students are graduating and getting the scholarships and they travel abroad. So, we need to
285 hit the kind of broad, broad, broad, you know, knowledge about the culture and about that
286 concept and about the ideas of other countries as well.

The focus group extract 5.3 presents a collective perspective among the teachers on the importance of teaching students about culture to prepare them for the future, particularly in the context of Vision of 2030. The speaker highlights the need to provide students with a broad understanding of culture and the ideas of other countries, since many students are graduating and traveling abroad. This perspective aligns with the holistic view of culture, which recognises that culture is a multifaceted and integrated concept that encompasses beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and norms, among other aspects of a society. By emphasising the need for students to have a broad understanding of culture, the speaker highlights the importance of considering culture from a holistic perspective, rather than as a narrow or isolated concept.

4.2.3 Acknowledgement of self and other cultures

Some participants share their view of their own culture and other cultures in a variety of statements during the interviews with relations to English language teaching. The first example is from an Arabic teacher who considered his culture the same as the students' culture.

Extract 5.4 from A4 teacher

136 Well, I mean, for me, I take my culture as the same as the students' ones, given that we live
137 in the same geographical area. Yeah, so I'll probably think focus on the things that are in
138 the book, and the things that are probably happening in the area. Yeah. So, students can
139 relate to Yeah. But so, I'll take myself as part of this culture, actually, maybe if a teacher
140 maybe comes from a different country, maybe he would probably give them an example of
141 his own culture. Yeah. So yeah.

4.2.4 Perceptions of English language teacher from Arabic-speaking countries

In this research, Arabic teachers demonstrated a heightened awareness of both their own cultural identity and the cultures of others, as indicated in Extracts 5.1 and 5.4 (refer to sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.3). This awareness closely aligns with the "knowledge" aspects defined in Byram's (1997, 2021) framework of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). The Arab and local teachers' participants demonstrated specific knowledge of social groups, their products, and practices in both their own and their interlocutor's country, as well as a general understanding of societal and individual interaction processes (Byram, 2021, pp. 62-66). This conceptual alignment underscores the integration of these insights into the previously discussed circles of inclusion, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

The Arabic teachers involved in the study had extensive experience, with a minimum of eight years in their educational contexts. This prolonged exposure enabled them to achieve a deep understanding of both local communities and the specific cultural environments of their students. For instance, in Extract 5.4, a particular teacher shared his approach to integrating cultural examples into his teaching. Despite coming from a different Arabic country and cultural background, he indicated a blending of his culture with that of his students. He expressed that he prioritizes examples rooted in their shared geographical context, thereby making the learning material more relatable to the students. This illustrates that the teacher perceives a close alignment between his culture and that of his students, which is nurtured by their common local experiences.

This extract exemplifies an acknowledgment of both self and other cultures. The teacher articulates that his cultural identity is intertwined with that of his students, largely due to their shared geographical location. In response, he plans to incorporate relevant local cultural materials into his lessons, aligning his teaching with the local culture. However, he also recognizes the potential for a teacher from a different cultural background to provide a unique perspective, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and valuing multiple cultures and the diversity they contribute to our understanding of the world.

Other participants in the study similarly shared examples of their own understanding of self and other cultures during focus group discussions. This collective awareness among the teachers reinforces the notion that intercultural communication is not only about recognizing differences but also about celebrating the commonalities that connect individuals from diverse backgrounds. By acknowledging multiple cultural perspectives, teachers can create more inclusive and enriching learning environments that foster intercultural dialogue and understanding among students.

Extract 5.5 from S1 teacher

171 …English speaking countries, you know, now English is spoken the second language in India,
172 in Africa and in Malaysia, let's say in other countries as well. So, English isn't any the whole
173 the only language for the UK or the USA anymore. English now is open for any countries
174 and the learners of English has increased and many and every year, every year you can see
175 the learners of English and is increasing more and more every year.

This participant who is a local Saudi teacher acknowledges the growing trend of English for being used as a second language in various countries around the world, including India, Africa, and Malaysia. It highlights the fact that English is no longer limited to the UK or the USA and is now open to learners from different countries. The text reflects a recognition of the increasing global use of English and the growth in the number of English language learners each year. This can be

seen as an acknowledgement of the importance of understanding and embracing other cultures in a rapidly globalising world.

Extract 5.6 from S1

252 First of all, we have to let them know to respect other cultures, no matter which culture
253 you're talking about. And if you want to be respected, you have to respect other people.

This is another extract from teacher S1 relates to the acknowledgement of self and other cultures by emphasising the importance of respect for cultures other than one's own. The speaker highlights the idea that to be respected, one must first demonstrate respect for others, regardless of their cultural background. This recognition of the importance of intercultural respect aligns with the concept of acknowledging and valuing the cultural differences and similarities between oneself and others.

Extract 5.7 from S3

78 I think culture it can mean many things like around us it can means the language that
79other person can expose attitude believes behaviours, food, music, all of the types like
80 mean culture. And in Madinah, I think it's easy to see different cultures around us like when
81 you work, especially when I work in places like ESL institutes and these things you can it's
82 easy to find many people from different nationalities and you expose different cultures.

The participant, identified as Teacher S3, is a novice teacher with less than five years of experience, having previously taught English at a language institute in the United States as part of her TESOL master's program for international students. Teacher S3 defines culture as a multifaceted concept that includes various aspects of a person's background, such as language, attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, food, music, and more. She recognizes the existence of diverse cultures in her daily life, especially in her work at an ESL institute, where she interacts with individuals from different nationalities. This acknowledgment underscores the importance of recognizing and respecting other cultures to foster an inclusive and culturally aware society.

4.2.5   Perceptions of local English teachers

The interviews highlighted in Extract 5.6 and Extract 5.7 (refer to Section 4.2.2) demonstrate a clear understanding among Saudi English teachers regarding their perceptions of culture. This suggests that these educators possess an awareness not only of their own cultural identity but also of the cultures of others. This finding aligns well with Byram's (1997, 2021) framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), particularly in relation to the circles of inclusion depicted in Figure 2.1.

More specifically, it relates to one of the "five savoirs" of ICC—knowledge (savoirs)—which encompasses insights into various social groups. This includes understanding the cultural

backgrounds of individuals from other nationalities present in the English Language Centre (ELC) and recognition of cultural representations found in the course textbooks. Such awareness is significant as it illustrates the teachers' familiarity with both the products and practices of their own culture as well as those of their interlocutors.

Extract 5.6 also highlights the teachers' appreciation for other cultures, emphasizing their broader understanding of societal interactions and individual engagement processes. This appreciation not only reflects their personal insights but also indicates a pedagogical commitment to fostering intercultural understanding among their students. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of cultural awareness within the educational context, thereby enriching the learning experience and promoting more effective communication in a multicultural environment.

Extract 5.8 from the Focus Group

184 Okay, so that was, I mean, actually, I believe that it, you know, these things would be a
185good opportunity, I mean, to orient our students to highlight the bright science of our
186 culture and the differences and that doesn't mean that the other culture, for example, you
187 know, as the negative or better, but you these are the differences between our culture and
188 their culture. And it's better for us to stick to what we have

The focus group emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and understanding different cultures, as this fosters learning and exposure to varied perspectives. They believe that highlighting the unique aspects of one's own culture and the differences between cultures enhances self and other understanding. However, they agree that this should not imply that one culture is superior to another; instead, differences should be recognized and respected. This perspective aligns with a holistic view of culture, which values the complexities and differences among cultures.

4.2.6   Perceptions of an English Language teacher from France

The perspectives in this study illuminate the dual role of language as both a reflection of and a contributor to cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes. Participants indicated that linguistic choices often reveal deeper cultural assumptions and viewpoints. This relationship underscores language's potential as a tool for fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding. By interpreting linguistic cues within their cultural contexts, individuals can recognize both differences and similarities among diverse groups, thereby enhancing their intercultural competency.

Extract 5.61 E4 teacher:

183-Okay, so I would say the culture, someone's culture, their traditions, their language, and
184-there's no language without culture and no culture without language. So, capture is in the
185-language and their traditions also, beliefs. Of course, also, probably part of the culture is also
186-the genetic heritage, you know, you cannot you know, what, no, it depends, because really,
187-when I see myself, but you know, the customs, the customs, traditions, language, arts also of
188-course, art is a big part of the culture, religion, so, beliefs in terms of religion or whatever, I
189-would say make persons feel like they belong to a certain culture.

An illustrative example of this concept is found in the remarks of an English language teacher from France (Teacher E4). She expresses the vital connection between language and culture in Extract 5.61. This viewpoint encapsulates a widely accepted notion among sociolinguistics scholars, asserting that language is intricately linked to various cultural elements such as customs, traditions, and social practices. Teacher E4 further argues that genetic heritage enriches the cultural environment, fostering individuals' sense of belonging. This comprehensive perspective suggests that culture extends beyond mere linguistic features; it encompasses the lived experiences and social interactions that define human communities.

Teacher E4's focus on the diverse and comprehensive aspects of culture highlights its complexity. Culture is not a singular concept limited to specific elements like language or tradition but is rather an amalgamation of various dimensions that collectively influence human behaviour and identity. This insight is crucial for educators and learners, as it underscores the interconnectedness of language, customs, and beliefs in shaping perceptions of culture and identity.

Acknowledging this complexity fosters a deep respect and appreciation for various cultural backgrounds, creating an environment conducive to effective communication. By nurturing an understanding of the socio-cultural contexts in which language operates, speakers can enhance their intercultural communication skills and promote positive interactions across cultures. As individuals become more adept at recognizing the linguistic subtleties shaped by cultural experiences, their potential for constructive cross-cultural engagements increases. This adaptability is essential for effectively managing the challenges and opportunities presented by a globally interconnected society.

To conclude, the intricate relationship between language and culture is vital for facilitating successful intercultural communication. Participants' reflections in this study highlight the necessity of recognizing how language embodies and communicates cultural values and beliefs. A thorough understanding of this relationship equips individuals with vital skills for meaningful engagement across cultural divides, fostering respectful and productive intercultural relationships. As language educators and learners navigate the complexities inherent in this

relationship, they contribute to a broader framework of intercultural understanding that is increasingly critical in today's globalized environment. This framework is not only advantageous for personal growth but also essential for cultivating a more harmonious and interconnected global community.

4.2.7   Perceptions of a Student

The distinction between language learning and cultural acquisition is a critical discourse within the field of language education, underscored by the findings of the current study, which illuminate the complexities inherent in effective communication. As articulated by a participating student, the synthesis of linguistic and cultural knowledge is not merely beneficial but essential for achieving true communicative competence in English. This notion finds resonance in the work of Young et al. (2009, p. 152), which reinforces the idea that an emphasis solely on grammatical structures and vocabulary lacks sufficient depth for understanding and participating in culturally rich communication contexts.

A key participant in this study, who began his English learning journey at an early age due to his family's relocation to Malaysia for his parents' doctoral pursuits, exemplifies the profound interplay between language acquisition and cultural engagement. His immersion in an English-speaking environment fostered a robust foundation that facilitated ongoing language proficiency. This highlights the significance of early exposure to a foreign language not only for linguistic advancement but also for cultural fluency.

The following extract was recorded from a student participant, who discussed the correlation between language and culture.

Extract 5.9 Student 4:

555 Well, if you're, if you're trying to learn English as a way to speak, as a way to communicate,
556 then definitely you should learn English, with it with the culture surrounding the language
557 itself, not just the grammar and the vocabulary of the language. Because if you would be able
558 to speak but you wouldn't understand everything about a different culture or different or a
559 word that's specific to an English culture, a certain culture. So it definitely helps you be able to
560 talk to other people, if they come from a culture that if you learned once from

The sentiments expressed by Student 4 in Extract 5.9 embody this interconnectedness. His assertion—that language learning must encompass the cultural frameworks within which it operates—articulates a critical pedagogical standpoint. He asserts that knowledge of grammar and vocabulary alone does not equip learners for genuine interactions, especially in cross-cultural contexts. His experience reflects a nuanced recognition that terms and phrases carry specific

connotations that are often culturally bound, suggesting that the richness of a language is inseparable from its cultural underpinnings.

Moreover, Student 4's decision to engage in a voluntary research interview conducted in English not only reflects his linguistic capabilities but also highlights his awareness of the cultural dimensions tied to language use. This approach demonstrates an understanding of how cultural awareness shapes communication, suggesting that learners who familiarize themselves with the cultural contexts of their target language can navigate cross-cultural conversations more adeptly.

The individual narratives shared by student 4 offer a deeper insight into Intercultural Communicative Awareness (ICA), illustrating the vital role that cultural comprehension plays in language learning. Nevertheless, it is crucial to contextualize these insights within the unique backgrounds of the participants. A local student's perspective shaped by personal experiences in an international setting cannot be universally generalized to all students, particularly those with varied cultural backgrounds or learning environments, such as the English Language Centre (ELC).

Nevertheless, recognition must also be given to the limitations of qualitative research in extrapolating findings to broader student populations or different educational contexts. While the insights gleaned from this study are rich and nuanced, they are inherently tethered to individual experiences within a specific setting. Such a perspective, albeit valuable, may not capture the full spectrum of learner experiences across diverse educational landscapes.

Specifically, this study elucidates the essential understanding of student 4 that language learning transcends the mere acquisition of grammatical rules and vocabulary; it necessitates an appreciation of cultural subtleties as integral to effective communication. Additionally, it highlights the pivotal role of early exposure in developing proficiency while reaffirming that individual experiences are not necessarily indicative of broader populations. Moving forward, language education must cultivate an appreciation for the intricate link between language and culture, fostering an environment where learners appreciate the richness that diverse cultural perspectives bring to their communication practices.

Participants' perceptions reflect their understanding of ICA, as shown by their views on culture, acknowledgment of their own and others' cultures, and recognition of the connection between language and culture.

4.3   The practice of ICA

This section continues to address the first research question (RQ1: How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different

linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?). The second theme is practices of ICA in the classroom. The theme of participants' practice of ICA was further divided into sub-themes that emerged from the data collected during the study.

4.3.1 Teachers' actions

The practices of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) in the classroom are a fundamental aspect of this study, which investigates the perceptions and methods utilized by participants from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. One of the notable sub-themes that emerged from the research is the active role teachers play in promoting ICA among their students. This sub-theme underscores the significant influence educators have in shaping their students' perceptions and understandings of diverse cultures.

To enhance the diversity of this sub-theme, the study focuses on three distinct cultural backgrounds, illustrating a rich tapestry of experiences and perspectives. In the following section, a teacher participant recounts their experiences of integrating multiple cultures into their teaching practices. They describe how this incorporation not only enriches the curriculum but also fosters a more inclusive classroom environment.

The participant notes that by exposing students to various cultures through literature, discussions, and multimedia resources, they have observed a marked increase in students' awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. The teacher emphasizes that these practices encourage students to engage in meaningful dialogues about cultural diversity, thus broadening their horizons and promoting empathy.

Furthermore, the participant highlights specific activities they have implemented, such as collaborative projects focused on global cultural traditions or guest speakers from different backgrounds, which have significantly enhanced students' understanding of intercultural nuances. The positive outcomes of these initiatives indicate that when students are provided with opportunities to explore and reflect on different cultures, they develop a greater sense of global citizenship and intercultural competence.

In summary, the shared experiences of the teacher participant illuminate the critical role that educators play in promoting ICA in the classroom, ultimately benefiting students' cultural awareness and fostering an environment of respect and appreciation for diversity.

Extract 5.10 A1 teacher:

20- when I explain things to my students, I've given them like three
21- different cultures. And unless I tell them about the American culture, the

22- Jordanian culture and the Saudi culture …. which is like very nice that you
23- would know about how things are done here, there and in their place. And it
24- will just like give them an insight on what's happening outside their own
25- community.

Below is another response from an experienced teacher from an English-speaking country,

Extract 5.11 E1 teacher:

44- students learning English should not be just solely about you know, the test, you're giving them
45 - the skills that they can then use when they graduate in wider society, wider kind of life. So if
46 - necessary, I will deviate away from the book. But so long as the objectives are met,

An experienced British teacher emphasized the importance of teaching English as a tool for students to gain skills applicable in society and everyday life, rather than just for test preparation. The teacher recognized that straying from the textbook might be necessary to achieve this goal, provided lesson objectives are met. This approach highlights the teacher's role in helping students understand the cultural nuances of English and apply their knowledge in broader social contexts. It also suggests that teachers should be flexible and adapt their methods to ensure students develop skills essential for intercultural communication. Another British teacher offered a different perspective, stressing the significance of fostering cultural awareness by encouraging students to explore the cultures of other countries.

Extract 5.12 E3 teacher:

447- I've asked questions, you know, what do you think they should know, if non-Muslims come
448- here? What is important for them to know, in your opinion about the customs here that
449- would help them settle and be, you know, content and relaxed here? And likewise, I use my
450-experience.

The teacher is encouraging students to explore the culture of other countries by asking them to consider what non-Muslims should know if they were to come to the country. This practice allows students to gain an understanding of the customs and practices of different cultures, which is essential for effective communication in diverse settings. The teacher's use of personal experience also demonstrates a practical application of intercultural awareness, as they share their own experiences and perspectives with their students. This approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of cultural differences but also promotes empathy and respect for diverse cultures.

Teacher E4, who is an experienced female teacher from France, used another approach in class.

Extract 5.13 E4 teacher:

561- We also relate in the fact that my Arabic is a bit broken. So sometimes they sometimes

562- time I, you know, I tell them how do you say that in Arabic, I forgot the word or sometimes
563- I don't know the word or sometimes I'd say the word in a wrong way. And but they can see
564- that, you know, I tell them listen, I'm trying even though my Arabic is not that good. I'm
565-still trying to speak it. So you can do the same with English. And they see that the same
566-boat together, you know, and I think it's important

This extract highlights the importance of the teacher's role in leading by example in the classroom. The teacher acknowledges their own limitations in language proficiency and uses it as an opportunity to show their students the value of effort and persistence in learning a new language. The teacher demonstrates that they and their students are in the same position when learning a language that is not their mother tongue. This approach creates a sense of shared experience and encourages students to see the value in making mistakes and continuing to learn. It also promotes an inclusive classroom environment that values diversity and the importance of respecting and understanding different cultures.

4.3.2   Perceptions of a teacher from France

Similar to other teachers, a French teacher in Extract 5.13 (see 4.3.1) highlighted the distinction between her own culture and others, aligning with Byram's (1997, 2021) ICC framework. Having experience teaching English in the local culture, she shared her journey of learning Arabic with her students, drawing parallels to their struggles with English. She acknowledged her own language proficiency limitations, using this to demonstrate the importance of effort and persistence in language learning. By emphasizing their shared experience of learning a non-native language, she encouraged students to value mistakes as part of the learning process.

The use of the local language was apparent in some of the local teachers in this research and can be explored in the following extract.

Extract 5.14 S1 teacher:

106 I think you have already observed me and you'll notice that I'm trying to solicit the student as
107 much as they can let them speak to let them interact. Let them try to communicate with the
108 teachers and No matter sometimes whether they speak in English or Arabic, because the issue
109- related to the culture by the way more than, you know, English or teaching language

Teacher S1, a local Saudi teacher, emphasizes the importance of encouraging student participation and interaction, regardless of the language used. She believes that the issue of intercultural awareness (ICA) relates more to culture than to the language of instruction. This highlights the significance of cultural awareness in promoting effective communication and inclusivity in the classroom. By fostering participation, the teacher creates opportunities for students to share their diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives, contributing to a more

inclusive environment. This was particularly relevant in the case of a student interviewed in Arabic, who shared his struggles with learning English between school and university.

Extract 5.15 Student 3:

17-At first, It was too hard. I used to struggle with the English courses at school. Maybe because
18-English teachers were teaching us English in Arabic, but that system was not good for me. Then
19-at the university, English speaking teachers taught me English just by using English. It was hard
20-but I had to learn after that.

The student discusses challenges faced in learning English and experiences with various teaching methods. Using Arabic to teach English in school hindered effective language acquisition. In contrast, while English-only instruction at university was initially difficult, the speaker adapted and eventually learned the language. This highlights the significance of persistence in language learning and the role of teachers in fostering intercultural communication by creating a supportive classroom environment.

When the focus group was asked about teaching methods related to other cultures, teachers agreed that most students prioritized passing the final English exam. Exposure to different cultures helps students become more familiar with them, making them less surprising. However, some students exhibit a strong interest in learning about other cultures. One of the teachers in the focus group expressed the statement below

Extract 5.16 from the Focus Group:

343-but I think depends on how the teacher develops the topic and then that is the key thing, if
344-you restrict it to one particular domain, the student is not going to go away having that
345-much interest, they develop a discussion with them, this is this culture, this is in that culture,
346-how is it in your culture? What do you think would you do this and so on,

A teacher's method of educating students about other cultures greatly influences their interest and engagement. The extract indicates that limiting the discussion to a single aspect of a culture may diminish students' motivation to learn more. Instead, teachers should facilitate discussions that explore various facets of the culture and encourage students to share their own perspectives and experiences.

4.3.3 Perceptions of the Focus Group

In the focus group discussions, teacher participants emphasized the distinction between their own culture and that of others, as highlighted in Extract 5.8 (refer to Section 4.2.2). They underscored the importance of integrating cultural education with English language instruction. This point was reinforced in Extract 5.3 (see Section 4.2.1), where it was articulated that understanding other cultures is crucial for students' futures, particularly in light of Vision 2030. The teachers

articulated a need for students to develop a comprehensive understanding of different cultures and global perspectives, especially as many graduates are seeking opportunities abroad. This perspective views culture as a complex, interconnected construct that encompasses beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and social norms.

Furthermore, the role of teachers in Intercultural Awareness (ICA) within the classroom has been emphasized in earlier research (Guilherme, 2002; Bayram, 2012), along with the necessity of applying these concepts in teaching practices (Baker, 2011). Extract 5.16 (refer to Section 4.3.1) showcases how a teacher's approach to presenting information about other cultures can significantly influence students' interest and engagement. The focus group findings indicate that if teachers limit discussions to a single aspect of a culture, students might lack interest in further exploration. Instead, a more effective strategy would involve developing discussions that consider multiple dimensions of a culture, while also encouraging students to share their own perspectives and experiences.

In summary, the participants' perceptions of ICA were derived from interviews with students, local teachers, Arabic-speaking teachers, English-speaking teachers, and a French teacher, supplemented by the focus group discussions. This research revealed varied levels of intercultural communication awareness among the diverse participants at the English Language Centre (ELC) in Madinah. Local English teachers and students exhibited a basic understanding of the distinction between their own and other cultures, aligning with Byram's (1997, 2021) knowledge savoirs. In contrast, Arabic-speaking teachers demonstrated a heightened awareness resulting from their extensive cultural immersion. English-speaking teachers perceived culture as a set of shared beliefs and values that shape communication norms, while a French teacher utilized her experience learning Arabic to create connections with her students.

4.3.4   Students' reaction

It is important to see how students react to their teacher's actions in promoting ICA. The way a student responds to their teacher can help or hinder their ability to communicate across cultures. Therefore, it is important to understand how students feel about their teacher's approach to ICA to create effective teaching strategies that encourage a positive learning environment. For example, an experienced teacher from an Arabic-Speaking country expressed that the act of teaching English nowadays is easier than before when he stated:

  Extract 5.17 Teacher A1:

184-And I started to feel like, teaching itself became easier, even now. Because most of my
185-students, yeah, most of my students, most of the students all over the kingdom, do

186-understand what English is, even with, like, because, like, they started to listen to music and
187-watch movies on Netflix, or whatever. And they started to understand even the jokes.

The extract indicates a positive response from students towards ICA in English language learning. The speaker observes that increased exposure to English through media has made teaching easier, enhancing students' understanding of the language and its cultural nuances. This suggests that students are becoming more comfortable with English-speaking cultures, aiding their development of intercultural communication skills. Additionally, their ability to understand jokes in English underscores their progress in grasping both the language and its cultural context.

The students' interest in other culture was also apparent for another teacher who stated that the students were interested to know the teacher's own culture.

Extract 5.18 Teacher A2:

77-yeah, of course, Yeah. Because some students, mashallah they try to find out more about my
78-culture. So they asked, for example, what about you doctor, What's your favourite food? What
79-is the popular food in Jordan? So I always just, of course, say Mansaf is my best food or most
80-common food in my culture. They also asked, for example, we know that Jordanian blah,
81-blah, blah. So can you explain why, for example, is this correct or not? So yeah, we exchange
82-information about each other's culture.

The students mentioned in the extract are actively seeking information about their Jordanian teacher's culture and engaging in discussions about cultural differences. This reflects their curiosity and openness, essential for effective intercultural communication. The teacher facilitates this exchange by sharing personal experiences and encouraging questions, fostering a positive intercultural learning environment that promotes mutual understanding and respect among students for diverse cultural backgrounds. Moreover, when asked about the utilisation of his English language skills in other university courses, the student provided his perspective in the extract below:

Extract 5.19 Student 2:

22- Yes, even sometimes after university I take the grammar and vocabulary that I learned and
23- use it outside the university like in social media in Instagram.

The student's response indicates that he has found value in the English language skills he has learned in class and has actively applied them outside of the classroom setting, such as on social media. This suggests that the student has developed a deeper appreciation and understanding of the English language and the cultural contexts in which it is used. Additionally, this indicates that the teacher's approach to ICA has been effective in promoting a positive learning environment that encourages students to apply what they have learned outside of class.

4.4 Themes of English textbooks and their use

Regarding the second research question (RQ2: What relationships exist between instructional materials utilized in the research setting and participants' understanding of intercultural communication awareness?), this research identified two primary themes: previous English textbooks and current English textbooks. Since language is vital for communication, it is important to consider how English language textbooks can promote intercultural communication awareness. These textbooks can teach not only grammar and vocabulary but also the cultural aspects of the language.

Broad theme	Emerged sub-themes
Previous English language textbooks	Other cultures
	Cultural suitability
Current English textbooks	Global themes
	Teachers' role
	Local culture
	Curriculum committee's role

Table 6 Themes of English textbooks and their use of themes and sub-themes

4.4.1 Previous English language textbooks

This subtheme concerns the previous English language textbooks and seeks to incorporate the perspectives of experienced teachers, curriculum committee members, and administrator who have been involved in English language teaching at the language centre over the years.

4.4.1.1 Other cultures

First, the administrator, who had the most experience, explained the use of textbooks at the ELC in the extract below.

Extract 5.20 from Teacher S1

85-Yes, when I started teaching the ELC, we used to teach the same kind of Series books, we
86-used to be with Oxford, sorry, with Cambridge first, and then we moved to Oxford. And now
87-we're back to Cambridge.

The administrator proceeded to elaborate on his perspective regarding the issue related to the use of previous English textbooks for teaching purposes.

Chapter 4

<u>Extract 5.21 from Teacher S1</u>

259-We don't have many cultures represented in our books. The focus is only on the western
260-cultures. And this is why I said, cultures for English, it's not anymore for modern English
261- people has to be represented as well, for other cultures, especially from the outset. Native
262-speakers countries,

Extract 5.21 highlights a significant concern regarding the English textbooks previously used in the context of the administrator's experience, which primarily focused on Western cultures while overlooking a multitude of other cultural perspectives. This limitation poses a problem for English language teaching, as it restricts learners' exposure to diverse cultural viewpoints and practices, potentially hindering their overall learning experience. The speaker emphasizes that a more inclusive approach is essential in contemporary English language teaching, advocating for early exposure to various cultures from the onset of language instruction.

Teacher E2 concurred with Teacher S1 regarding the challenges posed by the reliance on Western cultures as a framework for learning English, noting that this approach created difficulties for students in their learning processes. This feedback aligns with broader educational objectives set forth in Sections 1.5 and 3.5.1, where the Ministry of Education (2019) delineates clear goals for Saudi state universities, such as improving student outcomes and enhancing individual skills. Taibah University, as a state institution, adheres to policies that mandate foreign language education, specifically English, to prepare graduates to interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultures and contribute to the global message of Islam and humanitarian service (AlSeghayer, 2014). This focus underscores the government's commitment to equipping students with both English proficiency and intercultural competence as part of its national priorities.

The English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University is tasked with implementing and managing the English language program. The ELC provides intensive courses across three levels, spanning two academic semesters with a total of 18 hours of instruction per week. Upon completing these courses, students are expected to achieve the highest intended level of English proficiency as per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), an internationally recognized framework for language competence (Al Houssawi, 2016). Given the high demand for English language resources in Saudi Arabia and specifically at Taibah University, the ELC's curriculum committee has opted to utilize ready-made teaching materials, course books, and e-learning resources from an international publisher. In this case, the chosen publisher is Cambridge University Press, with the second edition of the Unlock series being the designated textbook (ELC Taibah University, n.d.).

In response to the concerns raised over the previous alignment with predominantly Western cultures, the ELC's curriculum committee is collaborating with the international publisher to

amend the curriculum to be more culturally relevant. The insights from ELC administrators about the content of the English language curriculum are pivotal for this research, as they hold the authority to implement curriculum modifications. Recent explorations conducted by the curriculum committee of various international publishers led them to select the current materials. Extracts 5.20 and 5.21 reveal conversations with the administrator and the head of the ELC, emphasizing that previous textbooks largely neglected other global perspectives, which constitutes a significant shortcoming in the teaching materials employed.

The interviewees underscored the necessity for a more inclusive methodology in contemporary English language instruction, advocating for the early integration of diverse cultural perspectives within students' linguistic education. At the time of this study, the ELC administration was actively partnering with the second edition of the Unlock series, which not only provides valuable digital resources but also seamlessly integrates with learning management systems like Blackboard—a feature that was especially advantageous during the transition to online learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Fortanet-Gómez & Ruiz-Madrid, 2023). To ensure effective pedagogy, the Curriculum Committee routinely organizes professional development meetings for English language instructors, featuring specialists from Cambridge University Press. These sessions are designed to equip teachers with the skills required to effectively utilize the Unlock materials and often include discussions on cultural nuances, particularly beneficial for instructors who are new to teaching local students.

Overall, the focus on diversifying the cultural content in English language education reflects a commitment to enhancing intercultural awareness and preparing students for a globalized world.

Extract 5.22 from Teacher E2

164- Yes, I think I think in the books that I remember, there, were maybe references to us or
165- America or sorry, American or British culture. Maybe, for example, TV programs, or
166- something specific to that culture. Students didn't understand the tool. Maybe they
167- understood the language that was being used, but they couldn't understand the concept that
168- was being taught. If that makes sense.

Teacher E2 noted that previous textbooks included references to American or British culture, such as TV programs, which could have been challenging for students to grasp. While they may have understood the language, they likely struggled with the cultural concepts presented. This implies that the earlier textbooks did not adequately account for the diverse cultural backgrounds of English language learners, potentially hindering their language acquisition and proficiency. The following extract illustrates that cultural appropriateness was still taken into account in these textbooks, even when addressing themes unrelated to Western cultures.

Extract 5.23 from Teacher E2

218-There was something we talked the other day about South Korea, I think it was, where
219-there is a coming of age day where they have the students, sorry, the teenagers become
220-adults. And they have ceremonies and things like this. And there are some things in there, I
221-think it was, like the students maybe not so interested in it, to be honest. And there were
222- some things there were there was a little bit of a culture clash, for example, bowing to your
223-parents. So in South Korea, they were teaching that the teenagers in this ceremony will bow
224-to their parents. And obviously, as Muslims, we don't bow to any other human. Like,
225-yeah, so I think that, like, I can see it's got a use from the language maybe, but not necessarily
226- from the culture, I don't think the students were too interested in that type of thing. It just
227-just to teach them language items, that maybe that could be presented in a more a different
228-type of cultural way that they can relate to.

In this extract, Teacher E2 discusses a cultural nuance that was present in previous English language textbooks when teaching about a South Korean coming of age ceremony. The ceremony involved bowing to parents, which is not a practice in Muslim culture and resulted in confusion for the students. This illustrates the significance of considering cultural sensitivity when developing English language textbooks, as cultural differences can impact students' engagement and comprehension. Teacher E2 suggests that teaching language items in a culturally relevant manner can enhance students' interest and understanding.

4.4.1.2 Cultural suitability

Subsequently, this research considered the input of two members from the curriculum committee, specifically their past practices. A member of the curriculum committee addressed the matter of textbook suitability, specifically reporting and consulting with the international publisher to modify certain contents of their English textbooks. This was due to cultural concerns stemming from the inclusion of images featuring females in previous editions.

Extract 5.24 from Teacher A2

130-the curriculum committee when I came about, yeah, about 10 years ago, as we were
131- discussing that some pictures, for example, for women who are who don't dress cover, on
132-the top of their heads for example, not suitable for Saudi culture. And some topics we ask the
133-people there in Oxford or in Cambridge to change that topic. For me, I mean, to prevent any
134- clashes…………….

209-…. I told you that before towards that forbidden to show a lady with like a T shirt, or short
210- skirt or like without a cover now it's okay.

A curriculum committee member expressed concerns about the cultural suitability of certain content in English textbooks used in Saudi Arabia. They noted that images of women without head coverings were inappropriate for Saudi culture and mentioned their efforts to approach publishers like Oxford and Cambridge to request content changes to avoid cultural conflicts. This indicates that previous English textbooks may have included content unsuitable for the local

context. The committee member's initiative to request these changes underscores the importance of using culturally sensitive materials in language learning. Additionally, during a focus group discussion, participants were asked about their opinions on cultural appropriateness in previous textbooks.

<u>Extract 5.25 from the Focus Group</u>

254-So if you look at the previous book, they were very careful to make sure that women were
255-not their hair was not even artificially, you have a regular western woman. But this just
256-photoshopped the image. And we just cover their hair

This extract from the focus group discussion highlights the issue of cultural appropriateness in earlier English textbooks. Participants observed that past textbooks deliberately avoided depicting women in culturally inappropriate ways, such as altering images of women with uncovered hair to include head coverings. This suggests that the original content was not entirely suitable for the local cultural context, prompting adjustments to improve its appropriateness.

4.4.2   Issues with previous teaching materials

In addition to the administrator's comments regarding the inadequacy of previous teaching materials, other teachers have voiced similar concerns. An experienced English-speaking teacher (Extract 5.22, Section 4.4.1.1) pointed out that earlier textbooks heavily emphasized American and British cultural references, which could pose comprehension challenges for students. This observation aligns with Baker's (2015b, p.8) findings that English language teaching programs have traditionally centred around Anglophone contexts.

The issues raised about past teaching materials appear not only to be related to the textbooks' content but also reflect broader pedagogical approaches to teaching English within the specific cultural context. According to the participating teachers, members of the curriculum committee, and focus group discussions, these concerns highlight the limitations of earlier methodologies.

Teacher A2, a long-standing member of the curriculum committee, shared insights from approximately a decade ago in Extract 5.24 (refer to 4.4.1.2). He recounted negotiating with international publishers to modify images of women in textbooks who were not wearing head coverings, as this was deemed inappropriate for Saudi culture at that time. This sentiment was echoed in the focus group discussions captured in Extract 5.25 (refer to 4.4.1.2), where teachers recounted having to alter images of Western women in English textbooks to artificially cover their hair. Such adaptations illustrate that, despite coming from diverse cultural backgrounds, both Arabic-speaking and English-speaking teachers made efforts to align with local cultural norms.

Chapter 4

This phenomenon resonates with Hymes' (1972) concept of appropriateness, which posits that educators from different cultural backgrounds adjust their practices to fit the local cultural context and norms. This adaptability is crucial in ensuring that teaching materials are not only relevant but also respectful of the cultural values of the students they serve (Seidlhofer, 2011; Widdowson, 2012; Baker, 2022). Overall, these findings underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity in educational materials and teaching practices, reflecting a broader commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment.

4.4.3   Current English textbooks

4.4.3.1   Global themes

The participants held varied opinions of the global themes found in the current English textbooks. Teacher A2 discussed the themes currently featured in the reading section of the textbook.

Extract 5.26 from Teacher A2

113-They're trying also to give us like, information about other cities in different countries and
114-get some information from these reading passages, or listening? Of course, no, I don't think
115-they are very specific. Or, like British or American or Australian, or they are all general things.
116- Because when you read, for example, about a city in Japan or Cairo, or sometimes about
117-Riyadh, for example, so they are not specific. No, they are global ones.

Teacher A2, who comes from an Arabic cultural background, emphasizes the global themes in the reading sections of English textbooks. These themes provide information about various cities worldwide, such as Japan, Cairo, and Riyadh, without focusing on British, American, or Australian cultures. Additionally, another teacher from an English-speaking country shared their perspective on the cultural themes in the current English textbooks, as reflected in the extract below.

Extract 5.27 from Teacher E1

366-So really, I mean, I would say in Saudi Arabia, in institutions that I've taught in the core colour
367- textbooks, have pretty much been aimed at the Middle East Saudi context. sensitive topics,
368-I guess, really have been either omitted, or they've been toned down.

In this extract, Teacher E1 discusses the cultural themes of current English textbooks used in Saudi Arabia. They point out that the core textbooks are aimed towards the Middle East and Saudi Arabia, and that any controversial or sensitive topics are either avoided or toned down. This implies that the textbooks take into consideration the cultural context and strive to present material in a way that is appropriate and acceptable. Likewise, a local Saudi teacher shared a similar perspective regarding the cultural themes of the current English textbooks, outlined below.

Extract 5.28 from Teacher S2

173-I found that Cambridge are aware and they are making efforts in presenting different cultures
174- for example, they are having some themes or some topic topics from the American
175-culture from the Chinese culture from the UK, Italian as well, especially when we had
176- the unit of the healthy foods. So, they are focusing on multi multicultural topics and themes.

Teacher S2 notes that Cambridge, the international publisher of English textbooks, is working to incorporate diverse cultures and themes in their current materials. Topics from American, Chinese, UK, and Italian cultures are included, particularly in units on healthy foods. This indicates that the latest English textbooks aim to be more culturally diverse and inclusive, focusing on multicultural themes. From the students' perspective, it is crucial to consider their experiences as learners using these textbooks to acquire the language. Student feedback is vital for evaluating the effectiveness of the learning materials and themes.

Extract 5.29 from Student 4

179-They definitely, like helped give you like a better understanding of like, certain words that
180-are describing certain other things for like, for global warming, for example, the unit about
181-it, it was it was very helpful to understand like how global warming works at the same time,
182-it's helped with English itself, the language itself, so I think it's pretty good.

In this extract, Student 4 provides positive feedback on the global themes present in the current English textbooks. He noted that the units on topics such as global warming have helped him gain a better understand the meaning of certain words whilst also improving his English language skills.

4.4.3.2   Teachers' role

When it comes to current English textbooks, teachers hold different opinions about their themes. Teacher A3, for instance, believes that the teacher's experience is more important than the textbook itself.

Extract 5.30 from Teacher A3

280-we can determine this you know easily okay we are we have been here as I said for a long
281-time okay 10 years or more and you know, and we can determine whether you know, a theme
282- is culturally sensitive or culturally offensive or it will be accepted by the students okay.
283-So, we as teachers, we can determine this

Teacher A3 discusses the role of teachers in determining the cultural sensitivity of themes in current English textbooks. As experienced teachers who have been teaching for over 10 years, he believes that they are able to determine whether a theme is culturally appropriate or not, based on their knowledge of the local culture and the students' receptiveness to certain topics. This suggests that teachers play an important role in ensuring that the themes presented in English textbooks are culturally appropriate and relevant to the local context.

4.4.3.3   Local culture

When inquired about a topic illustrated in a previous English textbook as a reading passage, featuring a successful Saudi family business group called AlZamil family Teacher E4, who is an experienced English teacher from France, responded by the following

Extract 5.31 from Teacher E4

497-I really like this one. That's the first time in the previous book, that I really liked the
498-lesson because who wants the took example with a local family and I really enjoyed this one,
499-because then I asked them to search for other families. So they talked about AlRajhi, they
500-talked about different families. I showed them the website of Zamil, you know, we went online
501-to to, you know, for them to actually see, you know,………

508-…………..that was interesting. That was in the book, the text was talking about how they
509-started. But then I showed them the now the website and you know, they they're a global
510-company, and mashallah they have, you know, they make a lot of money and they have a
511-lot of businesses and different things. So I really liked this lesson. And that was the only one
512-in the book that finally spoke about like business and they talked about, you know, something,
513-I think in each unit, they could bring, for example, from the Yes, from Saudi, from Emirates,
514-Kuwait, whatever, the gulf, that all Muslims

In this extract, Teacher E4 shares a positive experience with a reading passage in an English textbook that highlighted a successful Saudi family business. This local example resonated with students and encouraged them to explore other local businesses like AlRajhi and Zamil, indicating the value of incorporating content that reflects local business and cultural perspectives in English textbooks. Teacher E4 also proposes that future textbooks include similar examples from other Gulf countries to offer a broader range of cultural insights for students. Similarly, another experienced Saudi teacher shared a comparable view on the importance of including local cultural elements in English textbooks.

Extract 5.32 from Teacher S2

252-For example, I've never seen an example or a topic or theme that represent the Arabic culture
253-in general, if so, we've never heard about the Lebanese culture or the Syrian culture, or the
254-Moroccan culture. So we've never had this topics. So I think that it's it would be a great
255-opportunity for the students to know about the Arabic, which is more closer to them, rather
256-than just jumping to the European and other countries.

Teacher S2 expresses concern about the lack of representation of Arabic culture in current English textbooks, noting the absence of themes related to Lebanese, Syrian, or Moroccan cultures. She believes that including such topics would help students better understand their own culture. In contrast, Teacher S3 argues that introducing aspects of other cultures in the learning materials can enhance the students' learning experience. This perspective suggests that exposure to diverse

cultural viewpoints can improve language acquisition and broaden students' understanding of global issues.

Extract 5.33 from Teacher S3

254-I think no need to use or like make customized book just for the people in the city or this
255-country or like try to add things because we are we are trying to add different tasks to make it
256-related to that. their country or their place, for example, if we teach if we teach a unit about
257-transportation, okay, all the unit about transportation, maybe there is the reading part is
258-about transportation and number of transportation, and different transportation and
259-Thailand. But when we go to the writing task because the writing task they created just for
260-the university, the question they give them a three question, talk about the transportation in
261-your city. So they make it really, I like when the students read about the transportation in
262-different country and then they try to compare for example, in Thailand, they have
263-underground but is like in my city, Madinah or number we don't have underground, we just
264-have cars

Teacher S3 shares their view on customizing English textbooks for specific cities or countries, arguing that this approach may narrow the students' learning experience. Instead, they advocate for including globally applicable topics, such as transportation, and incorporating reading passages that examine various transportation systems worldwide. This enables students to compare their local systems with those of other countries, thereby enhancing their understanding of global issues. The teacher emphasizes the importance of writing tasks relevant to students' experiences, such as discussing transportation in their own city or region.

4.4.4   Current Teaching materials

The interviews conducted with participants reveal a rich tapestry of perspectives on the current teaching materials used in English language education, particularly regarding cultural representation within the textbooks. The diversity of opinions highlights the complexities involved in balancing local and global cultures, which is vital for fostering effective intercultural communication skills among students.

4.4.4.1   Cultural Diversity in Textbooks

Several participants acknowledged the cultural diversity of themes present in the existing textbooks, noting their potential to broaden students' perspectives. The insights from extracts such as 5.26 and 5.28 illustrate that teachers recognize the inclusion of not just British, American, and Australian cultures, but also an array of local and international target cultures. This broader representation aligns with the educational goal of promoting intercultural awareness.

For instance, Student 4 pointed out that the textbooks covered global issues like climate change in conjunction with language skills, reflecting the important connection between language learning and awareness of pressing global challenges. This approach supports the view that effective language education cannot exist in isolation from the cultural contexts in which the language is used.

4.4.4.2 Concerns Over Cultural Representation

Contrasting with these positive views, Teacher E2 expressed significant reservations regarding a specific cultural theme in the textbooks relating to South Korea's coming-of-age tradition. This critique underscores potential cultural tensions arising from the inclusion of practices that might clash with local beliefs and norms. Teacher E2's concern that such traditions could be perceived as uninteresting or irrelevant to students illustrates a broader challenge in language education: ensuring that cultural content resonates with learners' own experiences and beliefs.

Her statement regarding the Islamic principle of not bowing to another human reflects underlying tensions between respecting local cultural beliefs and encouraging students to engage with global practices. This standpoint appears to conflict with the Ministry of Education's mission that promotes intercultural engagement, suggesting a need for curricular materials that foster dialogue rather than division. The broader consensus among the focus group, especially as noted in Extract 5.47, indicates that students are indeed eager to explore diverse cultural contexts, reinforcing the principle of recognizing and valuing cultural diversity as part of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

4.4.4.3 Desire for Inclusion of Local Culture

Further emphasizing the need for local content, Teacher E4 from France criticized the textbooks for lacking representations of local 'source cultures.' She advocated for the incorporation of relevant cultural elements from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region, and broader Muslim cultures to enhance both relevance and comprehension for students. Drawing on Zhang and Su's (2021) assertion, her perspective aligns with the idea that educational materials should reflect students' own cultural backgrounds to facilitate deeper learning.

Teacher S2 echoed this sentiment, stressing the importance of integrating Arabic cultural content into the curriculum to create a more relatable and engaging learning environment. These insights suggest that a significant number of educators believe that while it is essential to include international cultural contexts, recognizing and including local customs and traditions is equally necessary.

4.4.4.4   Balancing Global and Local Perspectives

The call for a balance between local and global content in textbooks reveals the complexities of curriculum development. Argue for the necessity of a comprehensive curriculum that not only highlights local culture but also prepares students for participation in a global context. As observed by Teacher S3, focusing exclusively on local or international themes may restrict students' learning experiences and limit their understanding of the broader world. Instead, integrating universally relevant themes—like transportation systems—while relating them to students' local context can provide a richer learning experience.

This comparative approach enables students to draw connections between their immediate environment and global practices, facilitating a nuanced understanding of both local and international issues. Engaging students in tasks that require them to relate their experiences to broader themes fosters critical thinking and enhances their ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes.

In summary, the insights obtained from the participants underscore the necessity for a deliberate approach to teaching materials in English language education. Achieving a balance between local and global cultural representations is essential for effectively preparing students to engage with a diverse world. While there is significant support for integrating local cultural elements to enhance relatability and engagement, it is equally vital to uphold a global perspective that equips learners with the skills required for an interconnected world. As educators confront these challenges, their reflections can inform the development of teaching materials that enrich cultural understanding and foster effective intercultural communication.

4.4.4.5   Curriculum committee's role

The focus group went beyond the current textbooks and discussed about the future of choosing a suitable English textbook for the ELC.

Extract 5.34 from the Focus Group

514-That's, that's the way in terms of talking about the future, we should include another thing.
515-You know, that is, you know, the students' needs. Okay, needs we should do, we should have
516-some kind of needs analysis, okay, to the students, I mean, to the students' needs, and that
517-would go to, for example, you know, the different colleges from the university, okay. And also
518-include, you know, students, okay, some of the students university, you know, having a
519-sample of students about their learning needs,

Extract 5.35 from the Focus Group

616-you know, I've been thinking about, you know, for example, now, they are preparing the
617-giving us that Middle East version. Okay. When I looked at the International, you know, the

618-international version, I thought, why, why? Why the publisher, for example, you know,
619-doesn't include, you know, topics about our airport. So, for example, the people over there,
620-they don't have, you know, a sound knowledge about our culture and traditions and
621-everything……….
623-…….. The publishers, for example, you know, why not? They include, what do they include
624-some topics, you know, about, you know, our Middle East region, and about our, our, our
625-traditions, our habits. Also, they introduce our environment, our culture, to them to the
626-people over there.

During the focus group discussion, participants emphasized the importance of selecting suitable English textbooks for the ELC based on students' needs. They suggested conducting a needs analysis to identify specific learning requirements, underscoring the curriculum committee's role in ensuring that chosen textbooks effectively support language acquisition. Additionally, participants questioned why the international version of the English textbook lacked topics on Arabic culture and traditions. They proposed that international publishers include content about the Middle East, such as its traditions, habits, and culture, to educate people from other regions.

4.5   Social-cultural Setting and ICA

Regarding the third research question (RQ3- What is the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of intercultural communication awareness?) this research identified the following themes: the social shift in the Saudi society, dealing with sensitive social topics, and the context of Madinah.

Table 7 Social-cultural setting themes and sub-themes

Broad theme	Emerged sub-themes
	Before the social shift
The social shift	Before the social shift
	Dealing with sensitive topics
	The context of Madinah

4.5.1   ICA and Vision 2030

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 embodies a monumental pivot in the nation's economic and social strategies, emphasizing a diversification away from oil dependency towards a robust and multifaceted economic landscape. This comprehensive blueprint is not merely an economic strategy; it signifies a transformative cultural ethos aimed at redefining the societal fabric. Within this framework, the vision promotes significant advancements across various public service

sectors, including health, education, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2023). A pivotal element of this vision is the ambition to cultivate "a culture of high performance and productivity," which is vital for the nation's transformation into a global competitor in diverse fields (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2023).

4.5.2   The Role of Education and Developing ICA

Education stands at the forefront of equipping Saudi citizens with the requisite skills to thrive within a knowledge-based economy. As part of the overarching goal to enhance Saudi Arabia's global competitiveness and boost international tourism, it is imperative for the nation's youth to engage in enriching and meaningful intercultural interactions (Hoven and Al Qahtani, 2023). However, a substantial gap exists in the existing body of research, particularly regarding the actual practices of intercultural communication within various Saudi workplaces and communities, especially in interactions involving Arabic and English.

The development of Intercultural Competence (ICA) among Saudis emerges as a fundamental necessity for the successful realization of Vision 2030. Frameworks such as Byram's model of the 'intercultural speaker' offer indispensable guidelines for assessing the requisite attitudes, knowledge bases, and skills individuals must cultivate to navigate diverse cultural landscapes (Byram, 2021). Intercultural speakers are characterized by their flexible identities, which enable them to serve as mediators across cultural and linguistic divides, fostering understanding and collaboration.

To facilitate this development, it is critical for Saudi higher education institutions to transcend the conventional view of English solely as an academic subject or medium of instruction. Instead, there must be a shift towards a more nuanced understanding of language as a vital conduit for nurturing intercultural relationships within real-world contexts. This transition necessitates a comprehensive documentation of multilingual communication strategies and a thorough examination of the challenges faced in various Saudi settings such as hospitals, businesses, and neighbourhoods. Such empirical insights are essential to enlighten the education of the next generation of intercultural speakers (Hoven and Al Qahtani, 2023).

Equipping Saudi youth with the skills to adeptly navigate the domains of tourism, business, and higher education within intercultural contexts is paramount for achieving the economic and social transformation delineated in Vision 2030. As Baker (2017) articulates, English functions as a lingua franca, facilitating essential intercultural communication required for international engagement.

Aligning with its Vision 2030 objectives, the Saudi government has implemented a policy mandating English language instruction for all students from grades one to twelve, initiated in 2022 (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2021). This policy underscores a critical understanding: achieving global interconnectedness requires a steadfast commitment to enhancing English education as a means of fostering intercultural relationships founded on mutual respect and understanding, as opposed to merely viewing the language as a functional tool for occupational communication (Hoven and Al Qahtani, 2023).

In short, research that delves into interculturality presents invaluable insights that can significantly bolster Saudi Arabia's capacity for effective lingua franca communication, aligning seamlessly with the Vision 2030 agenda. The cultivation of intercultural competence among its youth will be instrumental in steering Saudi Arabia towards a more diverse, innovative, and globally integrated economy. This transformation will not only contribute to an economically vibrant landscape but will also foster a social environment that embraces cultural exchange and collaborative initiatives. Such a progressive approach enhances Saudi Arabia's competitive advantage on the global stage while nurturing a cohesive and interconnected societal framework.

4.5.3 The social shift

The social transformation currently underway in Saudi Arabia represents a pivotal juncture in the nation's historical narrative, spurred by a concerted effort to adopt a more open posture towards global engagement. The focal point of this transformation is the introduction of Vision 2030 on April 25, 2016, by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which delineates an expansive roadmap aimed at overhauling both the economy and society. Central to this ambitious initiative are the themes of economic diversification, social reform, and the growth of non-oil industries, with the overarching objective of moderating Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil revenues and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens.

In the context of the present research, instances of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia that occurred prior to the announcement of Vision 2030 are categorized as "before the social shift," while those that took place on or after this date are referred to as "after the social shift." This classification is pivotal for comprehending the evolving sociocultural framework that influences Intercultural Awareness (ICA) among participants in the study.

4.5.4 Before the social shift

The Saudi Arabian Vision 2030 represents a transformative impetus in the nation's trajectory, fostering a paradigm shift towards increased openness in global engagement and a

reconfiguration of its socio-economic framework. This comprehensive strategic plan articulates a roadmap for the Kingdom's future, accentuating critical priorities such as economic diversification, social reform, and the establishment of non-oil industries. The primary objective is to transition Saudi Arabia towards a modern and diversified economy, effectively reducing its reliance on oil revenues while simultaneously improving the quality of life for its citizens.

In the context of the English Language Centre (ELC) in Madinah, a distinction is drawn between events occurring before April 25, 2016, classified as "before the social shift," and those transpiring after this date, labelled "after the social shift." It is vital to recognize that social change is inherently a gradual process; however, the decision to delineate between these two temporal phases in this research is motivated by two pivotal factors. First, the researcher's personal teaching experiences, which have provided first-hand insights into the impact of these changes on English language education at two universities (referenced in Section 3.8.1, "My Role as a Researcher"). Second, the educational experiences shared by teacher participants within the study. During interviews and focus group discussions, these educators articulated the social and cultural contexts influencing their pedagogical approaches to English language teaching.

The teachers mentioned in many instances what the Saudi Vision 2030 had of an impact on language use and implications, as shown in the extracts below.

Extract 5.36 from Teacher E1

247-I mean, the beginning I was told and if we're speaking to people that are already working in
248-Saudi Arabia, certain things you'd be wary of. And stuff like women was that relationships,
249-politics, religion, areas, which is like try to try to avoid basically because they can be sensitive.

Teacher E1 highlights that they were informed about certain topics that should be avoided in conversations, including women, relationships, politics, religion, and other sensitive areas. This indicates that before the social shift, there were strict cultural norms and expectations regarding what could and could not be discussed publicly. Furthermore, Teacher E2 provided additional information regarding the circumstances surrounding the recruitment process for English teachers in Saudi Arabia in the past.

Extract 5.37 from Teacher E2

281-so sometimes, you know, and also actually, not necessarily my situation. But I know that if
282-people are recruited through an agency, like a teaching agency from appropriate, then that
283-teaching agency will actually tell them maybe in the job advertisement, or in their literature,
284-they will tell them in their paperwork, these are the things you should do. These are things
285-you shouldn't do. So I think, yeah, specifically said, maybe in some people's contracts, or the
286-job, advert and so on.

Chapter 4

Teacher E2 explained that teaching agencies would inform teachers about the cultural norms and expectations in Saudi Arabia through job advertisements, paperwork, and contracts. This indicates that cultural sensitivity and adherence to social norms were of utmost importance in the recruitment process for English teachers in Saudi Arabia before the social shift. This reflects the conservative and traditional cultural values prevalent in Saudi society before the social shift. The cultural norms and expectations were deeply ingrained and extended to various aspects of daily life, including dress, behavior, and speech. Teacher E4 provided another description for the restrictions in the classroom, expressed below:

Extract 5.38 from Teacher E4

274-first of all, as a Muslim, there's some things that I know, you know, from my religion, like I
275-have that I have limits, you know, and there is, you know, like, that's, first of all, that's being
276-respectful. And also, we have the same religion. So that's the thing, you know, there are some
277-things you're not going to talk about, or you're going to be very careful to talk about, because,
278-you know, like, it's a job or, you know, something like this, you know, even as a Western
279-Muslim. And then, yes, yes. Ever since, as soon as I came to Saudi Arabia, of course, they told
280-us don't talk about religion, don't talk about politics.

In addition, there were instances when teachers faced awkward situations in the classroom, and Teacher A1 shared his experience.

Extract 5.39 from Teacher A1

53-the people in Madinah have very high respect towards like, especially teachers at the
54-universities. Yeah. And I didn't act at the time. When he first like started teaching, it was very
55-formal. I was trying to make connections between the culture that I had, and the culture in
56-this place. And it was too hard for me, to be honest, because even the laughed that I had the
57-jokes that I remembered the moves that I had, or like that, that I acted, even examples that I
58-had in mind, were very different than the culture that I was, like, you know, encountering was
59-too difficult for me. Even to give examples, I would like give a sentence using, he drank wine,
60-for example. And students would be like, what, what, why, what do you mean? And then I
61-would just, like, turned it into juice. Or like, Yeah, that guy met his girlfriend. And we would be
62-like, Hey, yo, what are you talking about? What do you mean, my girlfriend, and I have to
63-explain many other things to go into that place, or to go through the lesson. But by time, like,
64-when the time when time as I told you, I had like a very good friends, Saudi friends, I still do.
65-and they gave me advice on how to deal with situations.

The teacher initially struggled to connect their own culture with that of their students, whose cultural norms and expectations differed significantly. For example, when the teacher referenced drinking wine, the students were confused and did not understand. To facilitate understanding, the teacher had to adapt their examples to be more relatable. Over time, however, the teacher formed strong friendships with their Saudi colleagues, who provided valuable insights on navigating challenges while teaching in Madinah.

Another controversial issue in Saudi society was women driving. On June 24, 2018, Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on women driving, making it the last country to do so. This change was part of a broader set of social and economic reforms led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to modernize the conservative kingdom and promote women's rights. Since then, women have been able to obtain driving licenses and drive legally in Saudi Arabia. Teacher E4 shared an activity that she had in the class that discussed this topic.

Extract 5.40 from Teacher E4

279- as soon as I came to Saudi Arabia, of course, they told us don't talk about religion, don't talk
280-about politics. Don't talk about female woman driving, which was funny, because, because
281-because, yeah, at first, but, but actually Subhanallah I had some debates before they open the
282-driving to woman but before that, I had some debates about that. One year, I ran several
283-debates in my class. And so we used to do like a kind of like, every two weeks, the debates on
284-different themes and the debates were on social issues, mostly in Saudi Arabia, because that I
285-found that when I talked about social issues, things that they will talk they will be really fired
286-up to, you know, to talk about what really concerned them.

Teacher E4, as a female teacher, describes her experience in Saudi Arabia where discussing religion, politics, and women's driving is discouraged. However, the teacher found that their students were passionate about social issues and engaged in debates on these topics. The experience highlights the importance of sensitivity and respect for cultural norms when approaching sensitive topics and the value of teaching and learning in promoting understanding and tolerance.

Teacher A2 highlighted another cultural aspect by discussing the use of music in the classroom in the extract below:

Extract 5.41 from Teacher A2

136-And I remember also situation when I came in 2008, I first started teaching in the Najran
137-University. And I was ahhh, I didn't know much about how the culture Yeah, yeah. And I
138-started like, the listening part. And, you know, some CDs start with music at that time, and
139-a two or three teacher students sorry, raise their hands and asked me, so please, we want
140-to go out. I got surprised why you why you want to go out? They told me that we don't listen
141-to music. Okay. From religious perspective so yeah, at that time, I was astonished, because,
142-you know, in Jordan, in Australia and other countries, they don't. And later on, I understood
143-why, why they don't like to listen to music.

This extract highlights the cultural differences between Saudi Arabia in the past and other countries, particularly in terms of religious beliefs and practices. It also shows how important it is for teachers to be aware of these cultural differences and to approach them with sensitivity and respect. In this case, Teacher A2 was able to learn from their students and gain a better understanding of the different religious perspectives in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 4

The cultural aspects in Saudi Arabia before the social shift were not only acknowledged by the teachers but also by the students.

<u>Extract 5.42 from Student 4</u>

410-From a very long ago, time ago, Arabs or in general Saudi Arabia, to be precise, always had,
411-like men and women separate, they're always separate, you know, and, and add to that, the
412-religious side of things where the woman and the man and woman should not like, see each
413-other. For example, like, if you go back, let's say 15 years ago, if it opened TV, you would
414-never see any woman on TV with her face shot.

The perspective of Student 4 highlights the significant role that religion and cultural norms play in shaping gender relations in Saudi Arabia. He suggests that social norms, such as gender segregation, have been deeply ingrained in the country's history and continue to influence current practices.

To effectively comprehend the perspectives of the teachers involved in the study, it is essential to provide a succinct overview of the social history surrounding English language teaching (ELT) in Saudi Arabia from 2000 to 2016. This historical backdrop serves to illuminate the experiences of educators and the educational milieu during this critical period.

From 2000 to 2016, the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia was distinctly shaped by a confluence of global events and domestic dynamics. The aftermath of the September 11 attacks in 2001 precipitated escalated scrutiny from Western nations regarding Saudi educational materials, particularly concerning the potential propagation of extremist ideologies. This scrutiny initially compelled Saudi Arabia to adopt a defensive posture in its educational narratives but eventually catalysed a series of reforms within educational practices, aiming to mitigate international concerns (Elyas, 2008).

Concurrently, the growing importance of English for employment opportunities became increasingly salient, particularly with the implementation of Saudization policies, designed to prioritize the employment of Saudi nationals in key sectors (Al-Braik, 2007). This intersection of global and local priorities heightened the relevance of English language instruction for Saudi citizens, setting it against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming socio-economic context.

Moreover, the period was marked by a burgeoning exposure to Western culture, which engendered both a yearning for modernization and an undercurrent of tension. On one hand, there was a clear impetus for enhancing English language teaching to align with the evolving economic demands; on the other hand, apprehensions arose surrounding the potential erosion of Islamic values amid the influx of Western influence (Elyas & Picard, 2010). Advocacy for learning

foreign languages, including English, emerged as a dual-edged sword—perceived by some as a means to disseminate Islamic teachings more effectively (Elyas, 2008).

In recognition of these shifting dynamics, the Saudi government acknowledged the critical necessity for educational reforms. Initiatives to update curricula, coupled with the introduction of English language instruction at earlier educational stages, were undertaken despite encountering certain opposition (Elyas, 2008). These developments reflect the complex and contested status of English in Saudi Arabia, influenced not only by external pressures but also by domestic economic needs, cultural apprehensions, and the ongoing quest to uphold religious identity.

In summation, a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dynamics governing the experiences of English teachers in Saudi Arabia is paramount, as these educators navigate the intricate intersections between language instruction, cultural shifts, and the evolving societal demands. This historical context underscores the pivotal role of English language teaching prior to the advent of the social shift and establishes a foundational framework for comprehending the transformational changes within the teaching landscape following the Vision 2030 initiative.

The implications of Vision 2030 extend beyond mere economic objectives, enveloping a comprehensive cultural reorientation that affects multiple facets of Saudi society, including education. As the country progresses toward its ambitious goals, the adaptation and evolution of English language teaching practices will undoubtedly play a critical role in nurturing a generation capable of thriving in an increasingly globalized world, thus affirming Saudi Arabia's commitment to fostering intercultural competence and communication.

4.5.4.1   Cultural constraints in classroom discourse

Before the social shift initiated by Vision 2030, teachers involved in this study articulated significant constraints placed on classroom discourse within English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. Their testimonies reveal a landscape where explicit guidelines delineated sensitive topics deemed inappropriate for discussion. These subjects—gender issues, interpersonal relationships, political matters, and religious discussions—were distinctly off-limits, with educators receiving this guidance through two primary channels. Firstly, during professional development meetings at the English Language Centre (ELC), where both novice and experienced teachers convened to discuss pedagogical practices. Secondly, such instructions were also communicated through recruitment agencies tasked with placing international teachers in Saudi institutions.

The adherence to these guidelines was particularly pronounced in the initial teaching experiences of several educators. Data gathered from interviews with British teachers E1 and E2, alongside a French teacher, revealed a consistent narrative: their early days of teaching were characterized by

a stringent avoidance of discussions on sensitive topics. For instance, Extract 5.37 provided insights from an English-speaking teacher, who recounted the explicit restrictions communicated by recruitment agencies regarding interactions on matters such as gender and politics.

A notable example arose from the reflections of the French teacher presented in Extract 5.38. This educator not only acknowledged the cultural constraints surrounding classroom discussions but also identified herself and her students as "Muslims," establishing a shared foundation of faith. However, she nuanced this identity by referring to herself as a "Western Muslim," drawing attention to the cultural variances between her background and that of her local students. This distinction underscores her awareness of the different cultural subgroups operating within the classroom, each bound by its unique set of norms and expectations.

These insights resonate with Hymes' (1972) concept of appropriateness, which posits that educators from diverse cultural backgrounds must effectively modify their teaching styles and curricular content to fit the local context. Such adaptability is essential for ensuring that educational practices are both relevant and respectful of students' cultural sensitivities. The data correlates with scholarly work by Seidlhofer (2011), Widdowson (2012), and Baker (2022), all of whom emphasize the contextual importance in language teaching and the critical need for educators to adeptly navigate the nuances of cultural appropriateness in their instruction.

The findings from the interviews succinctly illustrate a shifting paradigm regarding classroom dynamics in Saudi Arabia. The experiences relayed by the participating teachers reflect a growing awareness of the necessity for cultural sensitivity and adaptability in English language instruction. As societal norms begin to transition, the once-taboo subject matter increasingly finds its way into educational dialogues, signalling a gradual movement towards a more open and inclusive instructional environment.

This evolution in classroom discourse indicates not only a transformation in what constitutes acceptable discussion topics but also an underlying shift in the broader cultural milieu of Saudi Arabian society. As the educators adapt to these changes, they contribute to a burgeoning educational landscape that embraces a more comprehensive engagement with previously sensitive subjects. The teachers' experiences highlight the importance of being attuned to the evolving cultural context, ultimately fostering a learning environment that respects diversity while promoting open discourse.

It would be suitable to conclude that the narratives shared by the participating teachers underscore a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in navigating cultural sensitivities within the classroom. The shift towards a more open educational environment, as

evidenced by changes in discourse norms, reflects broader societal transformations that were initiated by Vision 2030. This adaptability not only enriches the educational experience but also positions teachers as pivotal agents of change, capable of fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding in an increasingly diverse instructional landscape.

4.5.4.2   Navigating cultural norms: teacher experiences and challenges

The experiences of Teacher A1 and Teacher A2 illustrate the challenges that can arise when educators are not fully aware of the cultural norms in Saudi Arabia, leading to awkward situations that can hinder effective communication and relationship-building in the classroom. These cases reinforce the critical importance of cultural competence for teachers working in diverse educational environments.

Teacher A1, who hails from an Arabic-speaking country but studied in the United States, encountered significant cultural dynamics when he began teaching in Madinah. In extract 5.39, he recounted his initial struggles to connect with students due to his lack of understanding of local norms. His attempts to use humour and relatable examples—such as references to drinking wine and discussing having a girlfriend—proved problematic and were met with confusion or discomfort. These subjects carry deep cultural and religious implications in Saudi Arabia, where Islamic law strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol and where casual dating is often frowned upon.

The teacher's reliance on Western norms in establishing rapport did not translate well in the Saudi context, illustrating a considerable cultural disconnect. In Islamic culture, particularly in a conservative environment like Madinah, these topics are not only inappropriate but also capable of causing significant offense, potentially undermining the teacher's authority and relationship with the students. Teacher A1's realization and eventual adjustments—shifting from discussing "wine" to "juice" and clarifying the concept of a "girlfriend"—highlights the process of learning from cultural feedback and the growing importance of cultural competence over time. As he received guidance from local friends, he demonstrated an increasing alignment with Hymes' (1972) notion of appropriateness, adapting to the cultural norms that govern classroom interactions.

Similarly, Teacher A2, an Arabic speaker, reported an incident from 2008 that revealed his lack of understanding regarding the public perception and acceptance of music in Saudi Arabia. His surprise at students' objections to listening to music illuminates the diverse opinions within the Muslim community on this topic. While some view music as inappropriate due to the absence of

clear references in the Qur'an or Hadith, others appreciate its value in enhancing emotions and enjoyment, provided it does not lead to sinful behaviour.

In extract 5.41, Teacher A2 reflected on his own acceptance of music as a practicing Muslim and his shock at discovering that some local students held opposing views. This episode underscores the necessity for teachers to engage deeply with the cultural narratives and beliefs of their students, as what may seem innocuous or acceptable in one cultural context may be contentious or even taboo in another. Teacher A2's realization accentuates the importance of cultural sensitivity and the ongoing journey of understanding diverse perspectives within the classroom.

Both teachers' experiences demonstrate that a lack of awareness regarding local cultural norms can lead to uncomfortable and awkward classroom situations, impacting the educator-student relationship and the learning environment. These cases serve as a reminder of the critical role cultural competence plays in effective teaching, particularly in a culturally rich and diverse setting like Saudi Arabia. As outlined by Hymes (1972) and supported by various scholars, adapting to local cultural practices is essential for fostering meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, and enriching educational experiences. Thus, for educators to thrive in such contexts, continuous learning about and engagement with the local culture is vital.

4.5.4.3 Generational perceptions of cultural conservatism

While it is not surprising that the experienced teacher participants were aware of Saudi Arabia's more conservative past, it is noteworthy that this topic was also mentioned by Student 4 during the interview in Extract 5.42 (refer to 4.5.1.1). This indicates that knowledge of the country's conservative history is common among Saudi citizens.

Student 4, an 18-20-year-old in his first year at the English language centre, illustrated this with his example of women being prohibited from showing their faces on TV 15 years ago. Although he was only 3-5 years old at the time, he is clearly aware of this fact. This suggests that even those who were not alive during that era possess knowledge of Saudi Arabia's conservative past, likely acquired through family, friends, teachers, or media.

4.5.5 After the social shift

During interviews and focus groups, participants reached a consensus regarding the cultural changes that occurred in Saudi Arabia after the social shift. Some participants even provided personal accounts of these changes based on their own observations and perspectives.

Extract 5.43 from Teacher A1

181-But now, I'm just going back to the old way, but with a different way of, let's say, dressing
182-or uniform, I still wear the Thobe now. And my students like, let's say 10% Only, wears the
183-Thobs now, and they have these very stylish hairstyles, and they have these stylish cars and
184-whatever. And I started to feel like, teaching itself became easier, even now. Because most
185-of my students, yeah, most of my students, most of the students all over the kingdom, do
186-understand what English is, even with, like, because, like, they started to listen to music and
187-watch movies on Netflix, or whatever. And they started to understand even the jokes that I
188-would just like, tell a long time ago, we understand perfectly now. And they even tell me
189-jokes that I take some time to fathom or understand. Because I wouldn't, I would just like be
190-what, how do you know these words? How do you know these examples?

Teacher A1 describes how teaching has become easier due to the increased exposure of Saudi students to English through music and movies on platforms like Netflix. Many students now understand English well and can even make jokes in the language. This familiarity with English media has enhanced their language skills and cultural references.

In addition to improvements in language proficiency, Teacher A1 observes that there have been noticeable shifts in fashion among students. Traditional thobe clothing, typically worn by Saudi men, is becoming less common, as students tend to prefer more stylish attire and modern cars. Overall, this extract highlights how cultural shifts in Saudi Arabia have affected not only the way students dress but also their language proficiency and engagement with global media.

Below is another perspective from a teacher from an English-speaking country.

Extract 5.44 from Teacher E2

187-for example, the school books. Yeah, that's how the school books, you can see that maybe
188-some of the pictures have changed some of the way they presented images, for example,
189-women in the books, there's a big cultural shift now. And that's reflected even in Saudi books.
190-So I think the English books, also, maybe there's more of a global culture now. So more
191-things are recognized. And plus, obviously, the internet, and the satellite and TV, the students
192-know a lot more about the world than before as well, and cultures in the world.

Teacher E2 notes a cultural shift in Saudi textbooks, particularly in the representation of women. Additionally, current English books have more emphasis on global cultures, reflecting increased exposure to different perspectives through the internet, satellite TV, and other media. Teacher E2 suggests that students in Saudi Arabia are now more aware of the world and its cultures than previously.

Moreover, a local female teacher observed a change that occurred with the introduction of a sports course for female students at the university.

Extract 5.45 from Teacher S2

Chapter 4

132-For example, when we have sports in school, like five years ago, it wasn't there. But now, with
133-the educational changes, that we have the sport, so even now in, in Taibah University, we
134-have this kind of sports for girls, which is already in our culture. So when we when we
135-had it in the book, so it's not going to be unfamiliar for them that they know they live it, they
136-practice sport, inside the schools inside. Inside University, for example, we have another unit,
137-which is related to nutrition, and how to keep healthy, and how to keep fit and healthy. Like
138-five years ago, when I taught the same unit. My students didn't participate. But now I can see
139-how, how wonderful they are aware of, of health issues, and how do they track their fitness
140-with some international apps, like fitness apps And how do they represent themselves by
141-going to gyms and as well as they go to do sports in in the university And how do they have
142-some yoga classes. So all of these were not there, like five years ago, but now they can relate,
143-they can participate, they can share their personal experience of these different or things that
144-weren't there in the past, but now it's present.

Teacher S2 highlights the significant changes that have taken place in the education system in Saudi Arabia over the past few years. The introduction of sports courses and units related to nutrition and health has promoted physical fitness and well-being among students, challenging previous traditional gender norms. The use of fitness apps and participation in yoga classes has become common among students, reflecting an increased awareness of health issues.

The extract below is from a student, who provides their perspective on the social shift that occurred in Saudi Arabia.

Extract 5.46 from Student 4

437-I mean, no matter what the country, no matter what role, or what direction the country
438-decides to go in, it will have an effect on people, some people will like it, some people won't,
439-you know, maybe, I mean, I understand that. Definitely it will, Saudi Arabia should be more
440-open to other countries to other culture, that way we can maybe become a country that is
441-more friendly, to visit to know about to study about, you know, and maybe fix the different,
442-maybe fix the bad ideas that people have about us know, which is definitely a good thing.

Student 4 recognises that any changes in a country will affect its people, some positively and others negatively. He emphasises the need for Saudi Arabia to be more open to other cultures, in order to become a more welcoming and friendly country for visitors and students. This could help to dispel negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Saudi Arabia and promote cultural understanding. Finally, the focus group shared several examples that illustrate recent social and cultural changes in Saudi Arabia.

Extract 5.47 from Focus Group

370- it's a very important point here, maybe that we should mention students nowadays, in this
371-during this time, okay, during the 2030 vision are very much interested, by the way in knowing
372-about other cultures. Okay, and they are very much interested in knowing the topics and, and
373-for example, for example, you can know this from watching the videos, in our textbooks, we
374-have videos, okay, that you know, prepare students for the unit that for the theme of the unit,

375-so they are very much interested in watching the video and answering questions about the
376-video, you will see them motivated and you know, willing to interact with the video and the
377-questions based on that video. Okay, this shows you that actually, we have a different
378-generation. Okay, it's a different time. And this you know, you know, goes with the vision of
379-the country. In the class, when you ask him about the important events, and we have about
380-this, yeah, they mention Riyadh Season event, and you'd like to know, because I hope to see
381-you know, the people, the bands, the music, that's something you wouldn't, okay, you
382-wouldn't find in the past it is a big transition Now.

The focus group participants indicated that students in Saudi Arabia are now displaying a growing curiosity of other cultures and diverse topics and are highly motivated to interact with multimedia materials in class. This trend reflects a move towards a more open and global outlook, which is aligned with the country's 2030 Vision. Moreover, the fact that students mention popular events like the Riyadh Season indicates a shift towards more diverse and entertainment-focused activities, reflecting a cultural change.

Extract 5.48 from Focus Group

393-Now, when we talk to them. Now, they go to Snapchat, they have groups and Telegram,
394-they told me things that I didn't know other people about other cultures. They will just like
395-confirm things that I honestly did not. I was like, the question of culture. I was like, asking
396-them about, like, places that you would love to go. They told me like, we wouldn't go to that
397-country or that country or that country. Why? They have the same culture, we'd like to go to
398-another culture. Okay, just like, namely, have ideas now about similar cultures and different
399-cultures, and the ones that would go with their own, and the ones that would go against? So
400-the students have, like totally different from the ones we had before. Totally different.

The focus group participants noticed a notable change in the mindset of students in Saudi Arabia, with a growing interest in other cultures and increased exposure to the world beyond their country, facilitated by social media platforms like Snapchat and Telegram. The younger generation now expresses a preference for experiencing cultures different from their own, indicating a shift towards a more open and global perspective. This stands in contrast with previous generations of students, reflecting a significant change in attitudes towards culture and diversity.

Extract 5.49 from Focus Group

453-I would have like a two minute clip to show the students to have a laugh before we start,
454-yeah. And we were talking about movies. And they started like, Do you have any? entitled,
455-they thought that I didn't do the work. I was like what, they said like Anime. Anime what. Just
456-give me the series. They said like something Japanese. Why do you watch the Japanese? They
457-said like, they're good. I didn't know at the time. I was like, Can anybody just like, give me a
458-shot? Give me a clip. One of them just like, Hey, yo, class it is on. We've had it on the screen,
459-and one speaking Japanese and like, subtitled in Arabic, and what do you gain? It's like
460-something that, like, it's unbelievable. Like, these things are like very dump. Like, why are you
461-watching? Maybe they are dump for you? But yeah, It was like the action, at that time, they
462-introduced me to the idea of finding some Anime that would speak English, to introduce them

463-into my class. Okay. And honestly, I had a lot of clips, just to introduce him to class. And
464-students were amazed that the teacher knows about these things later on. Instead of just like
465-bringing some like, comedies or whatever, I would just like start moving things. And it was
466-like, for me, I gained this info from the students. And it's helped me a lot. And it still does me.
467-Right. So that's the thing. Like the students know everything.

The teacher shared his experience of receiving a recommendation from students about a Japanese series with Arabic subtitles for a class activity. Despite initial doubts, the speaker found the series engaging and effective in capturing students' attention. This led the teacher to incorporating more diverse and unconventional media into their lessons, which proved to be beneficial for both the teacher and students.

4.5.6   Notable changes

This section aims to elucidate the alterations witnessed within the social and cultural framework of Saudi Arabia subsequent to the commencement of the Vision 2030 initiative. It does so while acknowledging the inherent gradual nature of social transformation processes. Special focus will be given to those specific aspects that were highlighted as obstacles or areas of concern during interviews and focus group discussions.

4.5.6.1   Madinah and Makkah expansions

Extract 6.13 English Teacher E2 conversation 2:

1. *T: You can see here, destroy. In this picture you can see something like a tornado*
2. *or hurricane yeah. a Storm yeah that going to cause havoc.*
3. *T: a havoc. H A V O C. a havoc. Meaning what? Destruction and damage. And*
4. *whipping out.*
5. *T: Whipping out houses and buildings and even nature like trees. Right?*
6. *T: So That's destroy. Yes. Like sometimes around ALHARAM in Madinah you know*
7. *that area?*
8. *T: There were building being destroyed near ALHARAM to make way for a new*
9. *road. Like near Sultanah. Bank AlJazeerah. You know the place they knocking*
10. *down and destroy it for the new road.*
11. *T: Okay, yes that's destroy.*

Extract 6.14 English teacher E3 conversation 3:

1. *T: So, good good, so destroy is what? Explain? When you explain you helping*
2. *everybody.*
3. *T: We need this for the exam maybe in the speaking assignment of the 7th of April.*
4. *T: So What is Destroy. First of all let us start easy. Is that a good thing or a bad*
5. *thing?*
6. *S1: It is a bad thing.*
7. *T: Yeah, usually it is a bad thing. I mean we can destroy something to get rid of it.*
8. *T: Like we destroy some old buildings and hotels around the Al Haram in Makkah*
9. *because they are old and dangerous.*

10. *T: So we destroy those building in order to put new hotels which is safer. But usually destroy is a bad thing.*

Sections 6.13 and 6.14 have presented two instances wherein educators are utilizing the term "destroy" within the realm of infrastructure growth within the sacred urban centres of Madinah and Makkah. This phenomenon can likely be attributed to the Saudi Vision 2030's objective of enhancing the infrastructure within these urban centres, particularly through the enhancement and modernization of historically significant Islamic and cultural landmarks. Nonetheless, this progress has entailed the dismantlement of older structures and communities to pave the way for new projects, such as amenities and accommodations for pilgrims. The Madinah Region Development Authority (MMDA) and the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites (RCMC) bear the responsibility for these enhancements, which are anticipated to lure investments to these locales. The MMDA is actively engaged in enhancing the level of services for pilgrims by strategizing the enhancement of the road network within Madinah's central vicinity. The RCMC is also working to develop the transport infrastructure in Makkah, which will help to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow in line with the increasing number of pilgrims (Saudi Vision 2030, 2020a).

4.5.6.2 Music

Extract 5.47 from Focus Group

370- it's a very important point here, maybe that we should mention students nowadays, in this
371-during this time, okay, during the 2030 vision are very much interested, by the way in knowing
372-about other cultures. Okay, and they are very much interested in knowing the topics and, and
373-for example, for example, you can know this from watching the videos, in our textbooks, we
374-have videos, okay, that you know, prepare students for the unit that for the theme of the unit,
375-so they are very much interested in watching the video and answering questions about the
376-video, you will see them motivated and you know, willing to interact with the video and the
377-questions based on that video. Okay, this shows you that actually, we have a different
378-generation. Okay, it's a different time. And this you know, you know, goes with the vision of
379-the country. In the class, when you ask him about the important events, and we have about
380-this, yeah, they mention Riyadh Season event, and you'd like to know, because I hope to see
381-you know, the people, the bands, the music, that's something you wouldn't, okay, you
382-wouldn't find in the past it is a big transition Now.

Previously, Saudis had to travel abroad for entertainment like concerts and movies, as such activities were not allowed domestically. However, with the launch of Vision 2030, the Saudi government has actively promoted tourism and entertainment within the country. In 2016, the General Entertainment Authority was established to regulate and develop the entertainment sector, diversify options, and bolster the Kingdom's economy (Hussain and Smith, 2017). This authority has significantly expanded entertainment offerings for Saudi citizens, including theme

parks, movie theatres, and concerts. It regularly hosts prominent Saudi and Arabic artists, as well as international stars like Mariah Carey, BTS, Enrique Iglesias, David Guetta, OneRepublic, and The Black Eyed Peas during events like the Riyadh festival season (Pandey, 2019). The importance of this festival and the General Entertainment Authority's contributions were confirmed in focus group Extract 5.47, highlighting their relevance to upcoming data discussions.

4.5.6.3 Anime

Extract 5.49 from Focus Group

453-I would have like a two minute clip to show the students to have a laugh before we start,
454-yeah. And we were talking about movies. And they started like, Do you have any? entitled,
455-they thought that I didn't do the work. I was like what, they said like Anime. Anime what. Just
456-give me the series. They said like something Japanese. Why do you watch the Japanese? They
457-said like, they're good. I didn't know at the time. I was like, Can anybody just like, give me a
458-shot? Give me a clip. One of them just like, Hey, yo, class it is on. We've had it on the screen,
459-and one speaking Japanese and like, subtitled in Arabic, and what do you gain? It's like
460-something that, like, it's unbelievable. Like, these things are like very dump. Like, why are you
461-watching? Maybe they are dump for you? But yeah, It was like the action, at that time, they
462-introduced me to the idea of finding some Anime that would speak English, to introduce them
463-into my class. Okay. And honestly, I had a lot of clips, just to introduce him to class. and
464-students were amazed that the teacher knows about these things later on. Instead of just like
465-bringing some like, comedies or whatever, I would just like start moving things. And it was
466-like, for me, I gained this info from the students. And it's helped me a lot. And it still does me.
467-Right. So that's the thing. Like the students know everything.

Anime has been popular in Saudi Arabia since the 1970s, when Arabic-dubbed Japanese cartoons gained traction as children's entertainment across the Middle East. However, it wasn't until the early 2000s, aided by the rise of the internet, that anime saw a significant surge in popularity in Saudi Arabia (Sharp, 2023). The West's burgeoning interest in anime also helped legitimize it in Saudi Arabia as shown in Extract 5.49 and other Muslim-majority countries (Sharp, 2023). In recent years, the enthusiasm for anime in Saudi Arabia has continued to grow, thanks in part to dedicated fans promoting and educating the public about the medium. They have lobbied the government to support the anime industry, leading to the emergence of several Saudi companies producing and distributing anime content (Sharp, 2023). A notable milestone was the launch of the Saudi Anime Festival in 2017, which attracts fans nationwide and features screenings, cosplay competitions, and production workshops. Recognizing the potential of the anime industry, the Saudi Ministry of Culture announced in 2021 plans to invest in a new anime production studio aimed at creating culturally relevant and entertaining content for Saudi audiences (Nihal, 2021).

4.5.6.4   Empowering Saudi Women

Extract 5.45 from Teacher S2
132-For example, when we have sports in school, like five years ago, it wasn't there. But now, with
133-the educational changes, that we have the sport, so even now in, in Taibah University, we
134-have this kind of sports for girls, which is already in our culture. So when we when we had it in
135-the book, so it's not going to be unfamiliar for them that they know they live it, they
136-practice sport, inside the schools inside. Inside University, for example, we have another unit,
137-which is related to nutrition, and how to keep healthy, and how to keep fit and healthy. Like
138-five years ago, when I taught the same unit. My students didn't participate. But now I can see
139-how, how wonderful they are aware of, of health issues, and how do they track their fitness
140-with some international apps, like fitness apps And how do they represent themselves by
141-going to gyms and as well as they go to do sports in in the university And how do they have
142-some yoga classes. So all of these were not there, like five years ago, but now they can relate,
143-they can participate, they can share their personal experience of these different or things that
144-weren't there in the past, but now it's present.

The introduction of women's sports courses at Saudi universities as part of Vision 2030 marks a significant step toward empowering Saudi women. Historically, cultural norms and interpretations of Islamic law have restricted women's access to physical education and sports, emphasizing modesty and privacy and limiting participation in public activities (Alghamdi and Aldossari, 2022). These norms often require women to wear covering clothing, which can be restrictive for physical activity, and some interpretations of Islamic law discourage women from engaging in sports with unrelated men, complicating team participation. Furthermore, less financial investment in women's sports compared to men's has resulted in fewer facilities and programs for women (Alghamdi and Aldossari, 2022). The introduction of these courses at universities seeks to address these disparities and promote a culture of physical activity and health. Aligning with Vision 2030's goals of fostering a more active, healthy society and promoting gender equality, these initiatives represent a positive advancement for Saudi women's empowerment and well-being (Alghamdi and Aldossari, 2022; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2023).

4.5.7   Students' interests

The focus group of teachers has highlighted a significant shift in student attitudes towards learning about different cultures, reflecting broader societal changes in Saudi Arabia, particularly under the influence of Vision 2030. This transformation is largely facilitated by the pervasive influence of social media platforms, such as Snapchat and Telegram, which have become avenues through which students explore and engage with cultural diversity (See Extract 5.48).

Chapter 4

4.5.7.1 Emerging Curiosity and Engagement

Teachers noted that students are not only more proactive in their cultural explorations but are also imparting knowledge to their educators about various cultures, indicating a higher level of curiosity and a willingness to broaden their horizons. This enthusiasm marks a notable departure from earlier generations of students, who exhibited less engagement with cultural learning. However, it is essential to recognize that while this new interest is commendable, students largely approach cultural understanding from an essentialist perspective, often linking culture narrowly to national identities (Extract 5.48, lines 395-400).

This viewpoint has been critiqued for being overly simplistic and perpetuating stereotypes, as highlighted by Baker (2020), who argues that individuals belong to multiple cultural groups and that there is considerable diversity within national identities. Despite this simplistic understanding, the eagerness displayed by students to learn about different cultures signifies a positive step forward. Their initial exploration of cultural dynamics enhances the foundation for a deeper understanding of cultural complexities over time.

4.5.7.2 Teachers' Insights and Adaptation

Teachers in the focus group expressed a shared belief that they possess a common cultural background with their students, grounded in their Islamic culture, Arabic language, and local experiences. Yet, as illustrated by the experiences of the Arabic teacher in Extract 5.49, there are cultural interests among students—such as Japanese anime—that educators may not initially recognize. The teacher's use of a brief video clip to elicit laughter revealed this previously unexplored interest. The positive response from students not only enriched the learning environment but also prompted the teacher to adapt their teaching approach in response to student feedback.

4.5.7.3 Student Perspectives on Cultural Openness

The transformative cultural landscape of Saudi Arabia is also echoed in the views of students themselves. Student 4, as referenced in Extract 5.46, articulated the importance of greater openness to other cultures and countries. This student acknowledged the potential for both support and opposition to such changes within the country, but ultimately posited that embracing cultural diversity would position Saudi Arabia as a more welcoming and friendly nation. Furthermore, they suggested that this openness could help combat negative stereotypes, promoting a more positive image of the country on the global stage.

In summary, the discussions within the focus group reveal a noteworthy evolution in students' cultural attitudes, driven by the cultural changes in Saudi Arabia and the impact of social media. While students' understandings of culture may still be rooted in essentialist perspectives, their enthusiasm for engagement is a vital first step towards deeper intercultural comprehension. The adaptability of educators, as demonstrated through their willingness to learn from students, plays a crucial role in fostering this cultural curiosity. Additionally, the perspectives shared by students underscore the importance of continued transformation toward a more open and inclusive Saudi Arabian society. These shifts collectively indicate promising progress towards a future characterized by enhanced intercultural understanding and global interconnectedness.

4.5.8   Dealing with sensitive topics

Dealing with sensitive topics can be a challenging aspect when discussing social and cultural frameworks in ICA. It requires a certain level of cultural sensitivity and respect for different perspectives and experiences. However, open and honest conversations about sensitive topics can also lead to greater understanding and empathy between people from different cultural backgrounds. This subtopic presents participants' different perspectives on how to deal with sensitive topics. When asked about the aforementioned, Teacher A3 ,who is a member of the curriculum committee, provided the following perspective below.

Extract 5.50 from Teacher A3

164-the Middle East edition, okay. Usually, it avoids any cultural, you know, offensive, you know,
165-let's say situations or pictures, for example, you know, or words even that go against the
166-culture of the service. Like for example, you cannot tolerate something like a boyfriend, or
167-girlfriend or dating, you know, something related to dating or something like that, or the mix,
168-okay, the mix between boys and girls, okay, or males and the females or, you know, any, for
169-example, any, you know, women or men, you know, dressed improperly, okay, these types of
170-things. That's why we have a curriculum committee here, which actually review the books
171-from different from different aspects from the cultural point of view, from the academic point
172-of view from the teaching approach, a point of view

Teacher A3 discusses the Middle East edition of the curriculum and how it is designed to avoid any cultural insensitivity or offense. Teacher A3 provides examples of topics or situations that are not tolerated, such as dating, the mix of genders, and improper clothing. The curriculum committee is responsible for reviewing books from various perspectives, including cultural, academic, and teaching approaches. Teacher E4 also offered her input about sensitive topics in the extract below.

Extract 5.51 from Teacher E4

317-I would say that we've always had this warning about politics and religion, not to talk about
318-it. But I find that, you know, I would do it in the class, sometimes we talk about divorce. But

319-not in a deep way. Of course, I wouldn't go too deep into that, you know, but for example, I
320-would bring up, I would bring up the fact that, you know, some women are divorced, and
321-what do you think, for example, if she's a single woman, what would she do? You know, for
322-example, so they see that I'm talking, I'm bringing up the topic, they can think about solutions
323-for this type of woman, but we're not entering into is divorce, okay, or it's not okay. Or she
324-divorces she does? Now that's not the point, you know, but we talk about real life, like things.
325-I know, there's a lot of single divorce women in Saudis, like in the West, you know, we have a
326-lot of similarities. And, you know, so you know, it's, it's, I think it's, we should not, you know,
327-avoid talking about real life, it really depends how you bring up the bring up the issue, you
328-know,

Teacher E4 shared her perspective on discussing sensitive topics in the classroom. While cautioning against discussing politics and religion, she believes it's important to bring up real-life issues, such as divorce, in a thoughtful and sensitive way. This way, students can think about possible solutions without getting too involved in sensitive topics. Teacher E4 expresses the importance of how these issues are addressed and how this can promote open and respectful discussion about real issues that affect both Saudi and Western societies. On the other hand, when the issue of how to address sensitive issues related to Islamic practices in the classroom was discussed, Teacher S3, a local Saudi teacher, expressed her opinion on the issue and stated that it is not her job to deal with such issues engage in discussions as their focus is on teaching the English language. She suggested that while it is important to acknowledge students' cultural and religious context, certain topics should be avoided in class to maintain a professional and respectful environment. Teacher S3 further stated that while she recognized the importance of teaching religion and culture, this was not her area of expertise and therefore preferred to stick to her assigned role as an English teacher. Teacher S3 aims to create a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students by maintaining a clear understanding of their role and boundaries as a teacher.

Regarding sensitive topics, Student 4 compared Arabic culture and western cultures and shared their perspective on the matter.

Extract 5.52 from Student 4

461-I guess the normalization of public affection. I think that's something that it should be kept
462-in private. It should not be I think, like the difference between a big difference between our
463-culture and other people. Other countries culture is showing affection. For example, husband
464-and his wife, for example, in Saudi Arabia, you don't don't do that in public. And I think that's
465-a big, that's a big, that's something that should not change, in my opinion. Also the things like
466-for example, alcohol, alcohol. If the country wanted to be more open to other cultures and
467-other people, then maybe they would have to start having alcohol in the country for other
468-citizens or other people. Sorry. And I don't I don't I don't agree with that. I don't think
469-we should, like they they're visiting. If you're visiting our country, yes, to an extent, we should
470-be welcoming. And we should accept whoever you are, whoever your culture is, but that
471-doesn't mean that we have to change our beliefs for you.

In the extract above, Student 4 shares his thoughts about sensitive issues involving cultural differences between Saudi Arabia and other countries. He believes that couples showing affection in public should keep their behaviour private because it's not part of their culture. He also disagrees with the idea of serving alcohol in Saudi Arabia to welcome visitors, as it goes against their beliefs and customs. Student 4 thinks it's essential to honour and preserve their culture while still being open and welcoming to others.

The focus group engaged in multiple discussions regarding the approach to sensitive topics in their classroom settings. Specifically, the group deliberated on whether they should provide comprehensive explanations of such topics to better equip their students for global work opportunities. One teacher argued in favour of discussing sensitive topics with students to prepare them for future experiences.

Another teacher replied that the students know everything so there is no need to discuss these topics with them. Another teacher shared their opinion, written in the extract below.

Extract 5.53 from the Focus Group

446-I won't talk about it. Okay. And yes, I know that I can take the cultural opinion from a global 447-perspective. Be open. Yes, but not about something that is prohibited.

The discourse surrounding the viability of discussing taboo or sensitive topics in Saudi Arabian classrooms, especially in light of the progressive shifts heralded by Vision 2030, raises complex questions about cultural sensitivity, educational responsibilities, and the evolving landscape of intercultural communication. As the nation increasingly opens up to global cultures, the question remains as to how this will affect the inclusion of potentially controversial subjects in educational settings.

The teacher's firm refusal to engage in discussions about certain sensitive topics reflects a significant tension between personal beliefs, cultural norms, and educational responsibilities. While the teacher recognizes the importance of intercultural dialogue, their adherence to Islamic prohibitions limits the range of acceptable topics within the classroom. This duality highlights the broader cultural context in Saudi Arabia, where traditional values often intersect with emerging global influences. The teacher's decision underscores the necessity of navigating boundaries that respect personal beliefs while contemplating students' exposure to diverse perspectives.

With Saudi Arabia's ongoing cultural transformation, a key question emerges: how should educators balance their approaches to sensitive topics? As noted by Seidlhofer (2011) and Widdowson (2012), the appropriateness and feasibility of discussing such issues can vary widely based on the context of communication and the participants involved. The recent societal shift

suggests that discussions around topics like music have become more acceptable, yet it remains uncertain whether this openness extends to other sensitive subjects like relationships, gender roles, or alcohol consumption.

The insights drawn from the focus group reveal a range of attitudes regarding the appropriateness of discussing sensitive topics in English language classrooms. While the curriculum committee emphasized the importance of cultural appropriateness and avoiding topics that contradict local values (e.g., public displays of affection or discussions of dating), some teachers recognized the necessity of addressing sensitive subjects to equip students for real-world interactions. Teacher E4's arguments point to students' exposure to global issues through social media, suggesting that educators must prepare students for the complexities of intercultural communication.

Conversely, other teachers adhered to a more conservative approach, emphasizing the importance of maintaining Islamic teachings and cultural sensitivities. Teacher S3 articulated a clear boundary between her role as an English instructor and the complexities inherent in addressing multifaceted social issues. This perspective highlights the need for educators to remain focused on language instruction while being cognizant of their students' cultural and religious contexts.

The students' responses further illuminate the broader cultural conversations occurring in the classroom. The student who articulated objections to public affection and alcohol consumption rooted his beliefs in his Saudi upbringing and Islamic culture but simultaneously acknowledged the importance of being welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds. This dual awareness underscores the potential for cultural exchange without the necessity of compromising one's core values.

As Saudi Arabia navigates its transformation in light of Vision 2030, the conversations around the viability of discussing sensitive topics in educational settings will be pivotal. The blend of traditional values and emerging cultural openness will necessitate a nuanced approach that respects personal beliefs while facilitating intercultural understanding. The evolving role of the teacher will be crucial in creating a classroom environment that is both inclusive and respectful of differing cultural perspectives, balancing the need for cultural sensitivity with the benefits of open dialogue about diverse societal issues. Ultimately, educators must strive to foster an educational space that encourages critical thinking and intercultural competence while acknowledging the complex web of cultural identities and beliefs that characterize Saudi society today.

4.5.9 The context of Madinah and ICA

The city of Madinah, as the research site for this study, plays a pivotal role in influencing the experiences of both teachers and students at the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. Known for its rich cultural and social diversity, Madinah attracts students from a wide spectrum of backgrounds, encompassing both rural and urban populations. Teacher A1's insights in Extract 5.54 emphasize the disparities in cultural exposure among students, noting that those hailing from rural areas may have less familiarity with diverse cultural norms compared to their urban counterparts.

Extract 5.54 from the Teacher A1

218-the place is like a normal place like any other place. But like, because of like, we have
219-students coming from different places in the kingdom, some of them might come from
220-villages, that they didn't, let's say arrive at that level of openness. Okay, the city, yeah, the
221-people of the city itself, Madinah, are very much different than before. But like the people
222-coming from villages and areas surrounding place, would still have still learn about the
223-openness, then it's time to know all these things.

Teacher A1 highlights the cultural and social diversity present among students in Madinah, with some coming from rural areas that may not have the same level of openness as the city. The teacher acknowledges that while the city has become more open and diverse over time, it is important to acknowledge that not all students may have had the same exposure or experiences.

Despite these differences, the city's gradual evolution towards inclusivity and openness—fuelled by the steady influx of visitors, particularly for religious purposes—has encouraged a more accepting disposition among local residents, which Teacher A2 articulates in Extract 5.57.

Teacher A2 provided their account of the context of Madinah in his interview, below.

Extract 5.57 from the Teacher A2

249-Because people in Madinah receive a lot of people from outside, especially Muslims or visit
250-like Haram do they have this Yanni they are open more for other cultures, and they talk to
251-these people from all over the world and meet with them see them.

Teacher A2 indicates the prevalence of Madinah's status as a pilgrimage site on its residents' openness towards other cultures. Teacher A2 suggests that the frequent influx of visitors to the city, particularly those who come for religious reasons, has fostered a more receptive and accepting attitude towards other cultures among the locals.

Regarding the setting of the city, Teacher A4 explained why he decided to work in Madinah.

Chapter 4

Extract 5.55 from the Teacher A4

54-I mean, then I think the ELC at Taibah university is a great opportunity for us. It's a
55-multicultural setting where you can find staff from different different countries. And this is a
56-good opportunity for us to interact with, with all teachers from, you know, different
57-backgrounds, and also the professional development of Taibah University in the ELC was
58-great. We had a lot, a lot of experience in professional development. And this would probably, I
59-hope, that this helped us to develop and as the as a teacher, as teachers.

Teacher A4 discusses the advantages of the multicultural setting at the ELC, Taibah University. He highlights the opportunity to interact with staff from different countries and backgrounds, which can facilitate personal and professional growth for teachers.

The ELC epitomizes a multicultural environment, characterized by a diverse staff representing various nationalities and cultural backgrounds. This variety cultivates significant opportunities for cultural exchange between educators and students. As discussed by Teacher A4 in Extract 5.55, the multicultural nature of the ELC not only facilitates personal and professional development for teachers but also enriches the educational experience for students. The interaction among staff from different countries enhances cultural understanding and potentially contributes to more effective teaching practices.

Further, Teacher S1 expanded on the qualities for working at the ELC.

Extract 5.56 from the Teacher S1

287-And the other thing is one of the most the most interesting things about this when it comes
288-to the culture, and given that we have teachers from more than one country from a variety
289-of cultures, variety of countries, and no, no everyone has to represent and talk about his
290-culture. So for example, if we have a Canadian teacher, the Canadian teacher will talk
291-about his culture. The student as well have to talk about their culture have to present their
292-culture, there are no English and Canadian teacher doesn't know everything about Arabic
293-culture. Okay, so this is why I'm saying it's exchangeable role between the teacher and the
294-student. Student, they are the one who can teach the teacher about their cultures

Teacher S1 discusses the exchange of cultural knowledge between teachers and students in the ELC. He emphasises the importance of teachers and students sharing information about their respective cultures in order to broaden everyone's understanding and knowledge. Teacher S1 notes that the presence of teachers from different countries and cultures creates a valuable opportunity for cultural exchange.

The teachers' appreciation for cultural exchange is evident in their narratives, with Teacher S1 exemplifying the importance of sharing cultural knowledge in Extract 5.56. This exchange not only broadens students' understanding of global customs and practices but also fosters a collegial

atmosphere for teachers, wherein they can learn from the cultural traditions of their students. Such interactions reaffirm the centrality of intercultural awareness in enhancing English language instruction and creating a more holistic educational experience.

Students at the ELC express a keen interest in learning about diverse cultures and languages, recognizing the value of practical English use outside the classroom. The opportunities to engage with native English speakers and learners from varied backgrounds are instrumental in their language acquisition processes. For instance, Student 1 described a rewarding interaction with a fellow African Muslim brother, where effective communication in English helped build their confidence (Extract 5.59). Similarly, Student 3 shared their experience with non-native speakers while volunteering at the Red Crescent near Al-Haram (Al-Masjid an-Nabawī), highlighting the significance of real-world application in language learning (Extract 5.60). These narratives underscore the positive impact of cultural engagement on students' linguistic and interpersonal skills, illustrating how the context of Madinah enhances their learning opportunities.

In terms of the students' perspective, when asked about their usage of the English language outside of the university setting, they shared personal anecdotes.

Extract 5.59 from Student 1

79- I used English once outside the university. It was simple interaction with a Muslim African
80-brother, and he does not speak Arabic just a little English. From my little knowledge we
81-understood each other. He was in Quba Mosque and wanted someone to take him to
82-ALHARAM. He told me that he is a new student at the Islamic university and when used other
83-vocabulary like transport – taxi so I understood him. This interaction gave me courage to
84-interact with other people.

Extract 5.60 from Student 3

69-Yes, because I am a volunteer at the Red Crescent, we are located close to ALHARAM. I
70-remember I met someone from Kazakhstan. I go there every Friday prayer. I used my English
71-to help other who requested a blood pressure and sugar levels. I took people history like his
72-date of birth and where are you from in English. I remember someone else from Nigeria who
73-was a doctor who helped us with another medical case from Nigeria. We communicated with
74-each other in English. Unfortunately, the one we were helping was announced dead
75-afterwards May God have mercy upon him. I recalled many Medical English terms like CBR and
76-so on.

Both students utilized their English language skills in real-life situations outside the classroom. Student 1 shared a positive experience of being able to communicate effectively with a fellow African Muslim in English, which gave them the confidence to interact with others. Similarly, Student 3 discussed their experience of using English while volunteering at the Red Crescent near Al-Haram, highlighting how it allowed them to communicate with people from different countries and backgrounds, including a doctor from Nigeria.

To address the third research question regarding the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA), a diverse range of interviews was conducted. This included local teachers, Arabic-speaking instructors, English-speaking educators, a French teacher, curriculum committee members, and students at the ELC, supplemented by focus group discussions. The research aimed to explore the progression of cultural practices and their implications for English language teaching while assessing historical cultural constraints in classroom discourse.

Key thematic insights emerged surrounding the challenges educators face in navigating cultural norms and the generational perceptions of cultural conservatism. Additionally, the role of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 was underscored as a transformative factor shaping intercultural communication frameworks and educational practices. This initiative highlighted the crucial need for Saudi higher education to prioritize the development of intercultural competence, ensuring that students are well-prepared to thrive in an increasingly globalized landscape.

The research also pointed to significant societal transformations driven by Vision 2030, including infrastructure advancements in Madinah and Makkah, the promotion of entertainment and tourism, burgeoning interests in pop culture such as anime, and the empowerment of Saudi women through participation in sports. These developments have engendered a heightened curiosity among Saudi students regarding different cultures, which reflects a shifting paradigm in educational engagement.

A crucial consideration that emerged from the research is the need for recognizing and appreciating the diverse cultural groups within the classroom, even among students who share a national identity. This has raised pertinent questions regarding the appropriateness of discussing sensitive or taboo subjects in light of Saudi Arabia's evolving social context. The findings advocate for a thoughtful and balanced approach to addressing these topics, suggesting that an awareness of the changing cultural landscape could enhance classroom discussions and educational experiences.

In summary, the context of Madinah significantly influences the experiences of both teachers and students at the ELC at Taibah University. The city's diversity fosters an enriching environment that promotes cultural exchange and learning opportunities, shaping educators' and learners' understandings of intercultural competence. As Saudi Arabia progresses through the transformative phases of Vision 2030, embracing cultural sensitivity and adaptability in teaching practices will be essential in preparing students for their roles in a more interconnected world. The insights gleaned from this research ultimately suggest that the cultural context is not merely a

backdrop but a dynamic force that shapes educational experiences and outcomes in the realm of English language instruction.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings obtained through two critical research methods: interviews and focus groups, aimed at addressing the three research questions outlined in the study. The data collection process was structured around predefined themes while also allowing for the emergence of subthemes. Each identified theme was thoroughly examined, drawing on a rich array of perspectives from a diverse participant pool. This included viewpoints from local teachers, English-speaking teachers, Arabic-speaking teachers, an international teacher, and students. The multifaceted inputs from these varied participant groups enriched the understanding of each theme, allowing for a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis.

The next chapter will build upon these insights by incorporating findings derived from another research tool: conversation analysis. This complementary approach will provide additional layers of understanding, offering a deeper exploration of the interactions and dynamics at play within the educational context. By integrating the insights gained from conversation analysis, the study aims to further illuminate the complex relationships among language instruction, cultural perspectives, and participant experiences.

Chapter 5   Classroom Conversation Analysis

5.1   Introduction

While the previous chapter presented findings from two research methods—interviews and focus groups—this chapter shifts focus to the practices element of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) in English language classrooms. This third research tool employs observation methods to examine classroom practices, aiming to explore relevant elements related to the three research questions. During the observation period, the English Language Center (ELC) utilized the Blackboard online teaching application, which facilitated the observation of classes through an online link provided by the ELC. Additionally, the researcher was granted access to observe other English classes via provided links.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, the study examines classrooms led by four distinct categories of teachers: local English teachers, English teachers from Arabic-speaking countries, English teachers from English-speaking countries, and a separate section dedicated to the observations of a teacher from France, representing an international perspective. By including educators from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, this research aims to capture a diverse range of perspectives and insights on the topic of ICA.

The researcher collected 21 distinct online links to English classroom sessions, each lasting two hours, culminating in a total observation time of 42 hours. The primary objective of this study is to identify classroom interactions that illustrate the elements of ICA. By examining observations from teachers with diverse backgrounds, the research seeks to explore how ICA manifests in various classroom contexts.

Throughout the observation period, the English language classrooms at the ELC employed the Unlock series of books published by Cambridge University Press. The observations specifically focused on two distinct course books: The Unlock Listening and Speaking Books and the Unlock Reading and Writing Books. According to the publishers, the Unlock Second Edition is designed for academic purposes and encompasses six levels, corresponding to proficiency levels ranging from Pre-A1 to C1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Ostrowska *et al.*, 2018). These books served as the primary instructional materials during the observed sessions, providing a consistent framework for analysing the implementation of ICA within the classroom dynamics.

5.2   Local Teacher conversations, perceptions and practices

During a Listening and Speaking class, the local teacher S1 was introducing and discussing Unit 1 with the students that was about humans and animals (See Picture 1).

Picture 1 Local Teacher S1

Following the description of the picture at the beginning of the unit, the local teacher (Teacher S1) engaged in a discussion with the students regarding the provided questions located in the blue box at the bottom of the page (See Picture 2). Notably, during this interaction, the teacher incorporated elements from their shared local culture, encouraging a connection and understanding between the students and the subject matter.

Extract 6.1 Local teacher S1 conversation 1:

1. *T: Do people use animals for work in your country? So do you think guys that we use*
2. *animals? Yes. Do we still use them to carry stuff? Donkeys for example? Horses or*
3. *camels?*
4. *S: no. maybe in the past yes.*
5. *T: Okay, do you think people still use animals to transfer from one place to another?*
6. *Now at the moment*
7. *S: Maybe a little yes.*
8. *T: yes maybe. Maybe a few people using them especially the people who live in the*
9. *countryside or what we call the Bedouin people who live in the desert.*
10. *T: I doubt that people are currently living in camps or tents nowadays. Do you agree*
11. *guys? I mean yes there are people living in villages and in area away from cities.*
12. *S: Yes, I agree with you.*
13. *T: Will maybe yes and maybe no but we don't expect that at all. Anyhow…*

Bedouin, according to Oxford dictionary, are Arab people who traditionally live in tents in the desert. While the teacher continued to question whether people are currently living in the desert these days or not.

Another instance of shared local culture between the local teacher S1 and their students was observed in the same classroom. The course book used in the lesson facilitated the local teacher S1 in presenting aspects of the local Saudi culture. This was apparent when addressing the third question in the blue box, which enquired about other tasks animals can perform (refer to Picture 2). Although the question did not explicitly pertain to the role of animals in the students' country, the local teacher illustrated a specific local use of animals through Extract 6.2.
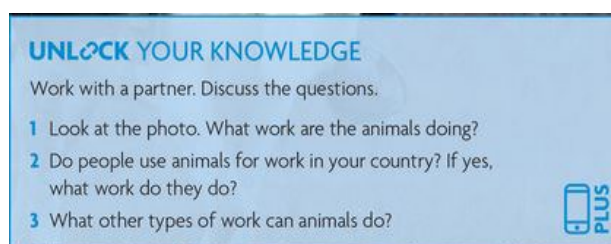
Picture 2 Local teacher S1

Extract 6.2 Local teacher S1 conversation 2:

14. *T: Aha, what can we use animals for? beside transfer and carry our stuff? In addition?*
15. *S: Carry stuff.*
16. *T: We just said carry our stuff. What else? Another example of using camels and*
17. *horses? What else? We are using them especially in Saudi we have other uses of them.*
18. *Can you remember guys?*
19. *S: Camel in travel.*
20. *T: Yes, camels in travel. Yes. What else guys? Hmm. We always use them guys? Haaa.*
21. *(…)*
22. *T: Don't we use horses and camels in competition? Haa. Yes or no.*
23. *S: Yes.*
24. *T: We use them in camel racing and horse racing competition. Yes.*
25. *S: We eat camels.*
26. *T: Yes, we sometimes have camel meat for feasts.*
27. *S: Horses in wars.*
28. *T: Yes, but I think in past we used to, used to ride horses in wars in the past but not*
29. *anymore.*

The teacher initiated the discussion by asking about the various uses of animals, particularly camels and horses, beyond carrying and transporting goods. This prompted the students to recall and mention specific examples of local cultural practices involving animals. Teacher S1 emphasized the importance of camels in travel, highlighting their significance in Saudi Arabia. The conversation continued with the teacher encouraging the students to think of additional uses for camels and horses in the local context. This discussion showcased the students' awareness of various cultural practices and their ability to articulate them within the framework of animal use.

As this research has shown, the participants in this study come from diverse cultural backgrounds. This was also reflected in the classroom analysis, where a local Saudi teacher educated his Saudi students. The teacher and the students hailed from different local cultural backgrounds, with some residing in the city of Madinah and others in the surrounding villages.

The domains of intercultural communication among different linguacultural backgrounds also include the practices of local English teachers with their students. This domain involves both local teachers and students engaging with a variety of cultural themes presented in textbooks. To illustrate this concept, consider a hypothetical model with two overlapping circles: one circle represents the local culture of the teacher and students, and the second encompasses the cultures depicted in the textbooks. Within the classroom setting, the interaction between these two circles becomes a focal point for study.
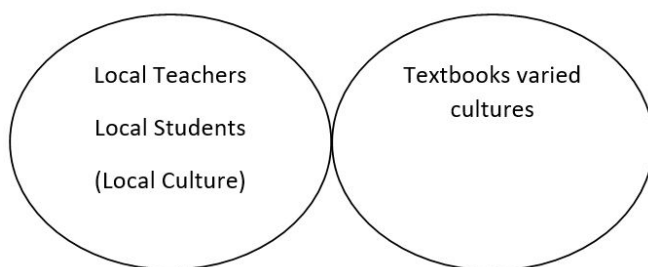
Figure 5.1 Domain of local English teachers

Extracts 6.1 and 6.2 (refer to 5.2) illustrate how the teachers incorporated elements of the shared local culture into lessons discussing the diverse uses of animals. The textbook featured an image of a man riding a reindeer, accompanied by two reindeer carrying his belongings in a rocky mountain area, representing the textbook's hypothetical circle of varied cultures (see Figure 1.1). In the second circle, which includes local culture, the local teacher engaged with students about the written question from the textbook: "Do people use animals for work in your country?" The teacher acknowledged their shared local culture, noting the use of camels for transportation, camels and horses for racing, and camel meat for feasts. This shared culture is well-known within mainstream Saudi culture, with some of these races even being broadcast on national television. This approach fostered a connection and understanding between the students and the subject material.

These interactions align with Byram's (1997, 2021) framework of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), as outlined in the previously mentioned circles of inclusion (Figure 2.1). Specifically, it corresponds to one of ICC's five savoirs: the Skills of Interpreting and Relating (savoir comprendre). This savoir involves the ability to interpret a document, such as an English

textbook, or an event from a different culture, and to contextualize it within one's own cultural understanding.

5.3 Conversations with English Teachers from Arabic-speaking countries

In a Reading and Writing class, Teacher A3, an experienced teacher from Jordan, an Arabic-speaking country, introduced and discussed Unit 7 on food and culture with the students (see Picture 1). Jordan is a neighbouring country to Saudi Arabia that shares many cultural attributes with the local culture, such as language, clothing, and food. Teacher A3's experience teaching in the local culture allowed him to engage with the students.
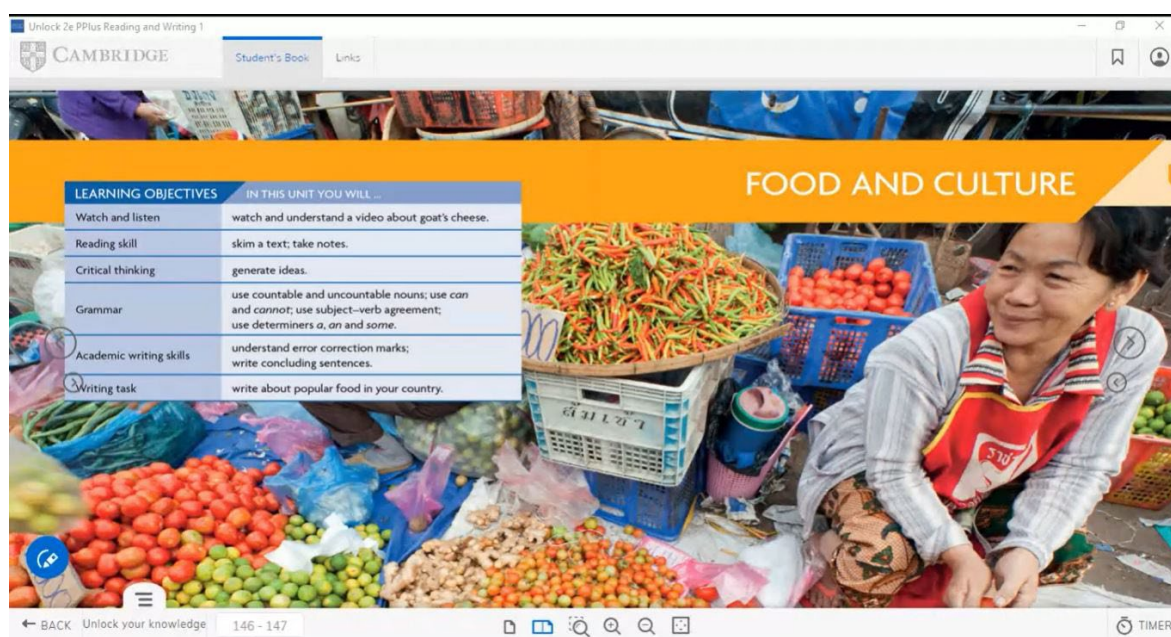
Picture 2 Arabic Teacher A3

Teacher A3 began the English class by stating the unit theme (Food and Culture) then he asked a question, prompting the discussion.

Extract 6.3 Arabic Teacher A3 conversation 1:

1. *T: What do we mean by Culture? What is Culture?*
2. *S: Thaqafah (Arabic translation for the word Culture)*
3. *T: Yes, Culture means Thaqafah as you said. Can you give me an example for*
4. *Culture or Thaqafah?*
5. *S: ahhhh maybe Thobe (An ankle-length robe with long sleeves, worn by some*
6. *Arab men) or clothes in Saudi Arabia?*
7. *T: Yes, Clothes. Very good. Clothes is a part of culture. Like in Saudi Arabia people*
8. *wear Thobe as part of their culture.*
9. *T: Can anybody else give me another example of culture? So clothes are a kind of*
10. *culture, What else?*
11. *S: Aaah maybe food? The food culture in Saudi Arabia is Kabsa.*
12. *T: The food yes. Okay, Food is also another example of culture. Very good yes.*

13. *What people eat in Saudi Arabia. The way they eat. The way they cook all these*
14. *are kind of Culture.*
15. *T: These things give you an idea about the culture in Saudi Arabia for example or*
16. *of course other places or country. So this is culture.*

Furthermore, during the discussion segment of this unit, Teacher A3 initiated a conversation to address questions regarding traditional foods (refer to Picture 5). It was during this exchange that the extract below took place.

Picture 3 Arabic Teacher A3

Extract 6.4 Arabic Teacher A3 conversation 2:

1. *T: So why do you think traditional food is important?*
2. *S: ahhhh, because it is very important to customs and country, is very important.*
3. *T: It is very important for the country?*
4. *S: Yes.*
5. *T: So again, WHY do you think traditional food is important? Aha.*
6. *(…)*
7. *T: Okay let me make it easier for you. Do you think that traditional food can give*
8. *you an idea about the culture?*
9. *S: yes.*
10. *T: Then traditional food in a country can give you an idea about the country's*
11. *culture.*

These observations illustrate the participants' comprehension of culture and their capacity to provide relevant examples. Teacher A3 initiated the discussion by asking students to define culture, to which one student successfully translated the term into Arabic. The teacher affirmed this response and encouraged students to offer examples of culture. The first student suggested traditional clothing, specifically the thobe worn in Saudi Arabia, a valid example acknowledged by the teacher. To promote further engagement, the teacher solicited additional examples, prompting another student to mention food—specifically Kabsa—as a cultural dish in Saudi Arabia. The teacher reinforced this response by emphasizing that food and its preparation are essential components of a country's culture. Teacher A3 concluded the discussion by summarizing that clothing, food, and other customs offer valuable insights into a particular culture, whether in Saudi Arabia or beyond.

This observation underscores the students' understanding of culture as a comprehensive concept that encompasses various societal aspects and their ability to connect it to their own cultural

context. Furthermore, it aligns with the previously discussed theme of a holistic view of culture, illustrating the participants' recognition of culture as a multifaceted concept that includes clothing, food, and customs.

In this English language classroom, led by Teacher A1 from an Arabic-speaking country, a wide range of cultural aspects from around the world was incorporated. This effort extended beyond Saudi culture, as demonstrated in the forthcoming excerpt (see Picture 5), which highlighted a specific instance where this approach was evident.

Extract 6.5 Arabic Teacher A1 conversation 3:

1. *T: So in Reading 1 you are going to read an article about tea. Okay? So do you*
2. *think that tea is popular all over the world?*
3. *S1:Yes. Is very important.*
4. *T: So tea is an example of popular drink all over the world not just a country but in*
5. *all countries in the world. Okay. So if you go to America, Argentina, Brazil. Egypt.*
6. *Russia, Italy. You can drink tea. Okay?*
7. *T: What about coffee do you think coffee is popular all over the world?*
8. *S1: Yes. Nowadays yes. But in the past not popular*
9. *T: Okay. what about food. Do you think there is food that are popular all over the*
10. *world?*
11. *S1: Fast food maybe. Pizza and Italy food. Indian food.*
12. *T: Aha all over the world? I am asking about food that is popular all over the*
13. *world.*
14. *S1: Fast food yes is popular.*
15. *T: Okay Thanks. Another example? Another student ……. Can think of food that*
16. *are popular all over the world? What about fish? Is it popular all over the world?*
17. *S2: No. Maybe yes in some countries not all.*
18. *T: Okay thank you all. We will see in this reading maybe will give us some ideas.*
19. *Okay about if we have popular food all over the world.*

Chapter 5

Picture 4 Arabic Teacher A1

The Arabic-speaking English teacher, A1, employed a well-known Arabic idiom to encourage student engagement during the lesson. As previously noted, the online teaching format via Blackboard limited the usual face-to-face interactions found in a traditional classroom, resulting in decreased student participation. This was evident in the following exchange. Prior to launching into the Reading 1 section, the teacher spent several minutes calling out students' names from the attendance list. Unfortunately, some students were either absent or unresponsive, complicating the transition into the reading activity aimed at grasping essential vocabulary. Teacher A1 then introduced the word "honey," which was marked in red in the reading material (see Picture 6).

Extract 6.6 Arabic Teacher A1 conversation 4:

1. *T: Before we read we need to figure out or read the meaning of these words in*
2. *red, I'd like somebody to read only the words in red. Who would like to read?*
3. *S1: Should I read doctor?*
4. *T: Thanks but I need someone new to read.*
5. *(…….)*
6. *T: (Calling students' names)*
7. *S2: Yes I'm here.*
8. *T: Okay, great can you read the words in red in page 150? The first one is?*
9. *S2: Honey.*
10. *T: Honey very good. Can you put the word honey in a sentence?*
11. *S2: Honey is food made by bees.*
12. *T: Thanks, this is the meaning of the word honey I need you to put it in a sentence.*
13. *S2: I use honey in my breakfast.*
14. *T: Very good. This is a good example. So honey means in Arabic?*
15. *S2: Asal (Honey in Arabic).*
16. *T: Yes you are the Asal.*
17. *S2: Men Baadak ya doctor. (Famous expression in Arabic as a reply when*
18. *someone praise you means "As you are")*

120

19. *T: Allah Yesallemak ya Rab. (Famous reply in Arabic means God keep you safe)*
20. *T: Yes like this I need you all of the students to be Asal and participate all the time.*

The interaction in Extract 6.6 demonstrated the shared Arabic culture between the Arabic-speaking teacher A1 and the local students in the English class. The teacher initiated a discussion about the meaning of the words highlighted in red (Figure 6) and encouraged students to participate. A student provided the Arabic translation for the word "honey" (asal) and the teacher confirmed this by referring to the student as "the asal." The cultural exchange continued as the student uttered Arabic expressions such as "Men Baadak ya doctor" (meaning "As you are, doctor"), to which the teacher responded with "Allah Yesallemak ya Rab" (meaning "May God protect you"). This exchange highlighted the shared Arabic cultural background between teacher and students. Teacher A1 acknowledged and reciprocated the use of these expressions, further deepening the connection and understanding between the teacher and his students in the classroom. This interaction was a conversation between students that focused on the familiar casual conversation or small talk that helped create a local cultural atmosphere in the classroom.

In addition, the Arabic-speaking teacher (Teacher A4) came across various words and images from different cultures in the course book. To enhance understanding and meaning, the teacher intentionally made connections between the course material and the students' local culture. This observation began with students reading paragraph 3 from Reading 1 (see Picture 7).

Picture 5 Arabic Teacher A4

Extract 6.7 Arabic Teacher A4 conversation 5:

1. *S1: In Malaysia, a popular drink at breakfast is the Tarik ('pulled tea').*

Chapter 5

2. *T: Yes. teh tarik.*
3. *S1: Malaysians say it is good for your and tastes good with roti canai – a kind of*
4. *bread*
5. *T: Yes. roti canai. They have a kind or a type of bread like what we have here in*
6. *Madinah Tameez as another type of bread.*

Teacher A4 made a connection between the Malaysian culture from the course book and her own cultural context in Medina by mentioning a similar type of bread called Tameez. Similarly, during another observation, a student began reading from the course book about Turkish tea. The Arabic-speaking teacher (Teacher A4) took the opportunity to point out the popularity of this type of tea in Turkish restaurants, which is reflected in the local culture of Medina. This observation occurred when a student read paragraph 6 differently than reading 1 (see Picture 8).

6 In Turkey, tea comes in a *Çaydanlık*. A *Çaydanlık* has two kettles: one for the water and one for the tea. Drink Turkish tea with some sugar.

7 Arab tea, called *karak*, is made with cardamom[2], ginger, milk and sugar. In the United Kingdom, they add some milk and sugar. The British usually eat biscuits with their tea. In the United States, tea is popular with **honey**.

[1]**kettle** (n) a container with a lid and a handle for boiling water
[2]**cardamom** (n) a South Asian plant with seeds used as a spice

1.3 a Turkish Çaydanlık set

Picture 6 Arabic Teacher A4

Extract 6.8 Arabic Teacher A4 conversation 6:
7. *S2: In Turkey, tea comes in a Çaydanlık. A Çaydanlık has two kettles: one for water*
8. *and one.*
9. *T: Yes, Çaydanlık*
10. *S2: and one for the tea. Drink Turkish tea with some sugar.*
11. *T: Yes, thank you. Do you know what Çaydanlık means? Did anyone go to Turkish*
12. *restaurants in Madinah?*
13. *S2: Yes.*
14. *T: Did you order tea afterwards and did you see the kettles.*
15. *S2: Yes.*
16. *T: Okey everyone look at this picture. (Then he opened a web page showing the Çaydanlık kettles, see Picture 9)*

Picture 9 Arabic Teacher A4

17. *T: Do you remember seeing this in Turkish restaurants.*
18. *S2: Yes, yes.*

Despite the presence of the information in the course book, Arabic Teacher A4 supplemented the students' learning experience by providing a local cultural reference. Moreover, the teacher enhanced their understanding of the word "Çaydanlık" by incorporating an additional image sourced from the web (Picture 9).

Furthermore, this observation highlighted the inclusion of local culture alongside other cultures from around the world in the English language course book. During a discussion on the types of meat consumed in different cultures, Teacher A4 drew upon their shared Islamic culture to comment on certain meats that are not permitted in Islam (See Picture 10).

Extract 6.9 Arabic Teacher A4 conversation 7:

1. *T: So here we have in number 3 in Australia, we have crocodile and kangaroo dish.*
2. *Okay?*
3. *T: So can you imagine trying crocodile meat? Would like to try this dish?*
4. *S3: What dish?*
5. *T: Crocodile dish.*
6. *S3: No I don't like crocodile.*
7. *T: Of course, for us it would be very strange to eat this one. And I think it is not*
8. *Halal to eat this one.*

Picture 7 Teacher A4

In Extract 6.9, the teacher referenced a significant Islamic law that prohibits Muslims from consuming predatory animals, effectively establishing a connection with the students through their shared Islamic culture in relation to the course book content. This integration of cultural relevance showcased Teacher A4's ability to create a meaningful learning experience that resonated deeply with the students' backgrounds.

A notable aspect of the research is the interaction between Arabic-speaking English language teachers and local students. All English language teachers involved in this study were experienced in teaching in Saudi Arabia and hailed from neighbouring countries with similar cultures, such as Jordan and Egypt. Their expertise in English instruction, combined with a nuanced understanding of their students' cultural contexts, enabled these teachers to make relevant connections between the diverse cultures represented in the textbooks and their students' lived experiences. This aligns with Byram's framework of "five savoirs" of intercultural competence, particularly the element of Knowledge (savoirs), as elaborated in Extracts 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.7 (see Section 5.3).

The Arabic-speaking teachers frequently drew on shared local culture, providing examples of material culture, such as traditional Saudi clothing (thobes) and the national dish (Kabsa). Additionally, they displayed a general awareness of various international cuisines, including Indian, Italian, Australian, and Turkish food, enhancing the multicultural dialogue within the classroom. Moreover, in Extract 6.6, one Arabic-speaking teacher employed code-switching (Grosjean, 2008; Klimpfinger, 2009) during a lesson by transitioning from English to Arabic to clarify the meaning of the word "honey." This dynamic not only aided comprehension but also created an inclusive environment where students could engage in multiple languages.

Grosjean (2008) notes that code-switching can effectively facilitate language learning in educational contexts. For example, when Student 2 (S2) translated "honey" into Arabic, the teacher supported this interaction, enriching the understanding for the entire class. The teacher also offered positive reinforcement in both languages, initially in English and then incorporating "Asal" in Arabic, demonstrating appreciation for student contributions. Furthermore, the teacher utilized code-switching to express gratitude through common Arabic phrases, promoting a supportive classroom atmosphere that encouraged participation from all students.

Additionally, the Arabic-speaking teacher employed multimodality to enhance the lesson on a Turkish tea kettle (Çaydanlık). By eliciting students' experiences with Turkish restaurants, the teacher connected classroom learning with their personal contexts. This was further reinforced by the introduction of a visual aid—a picture of the Çaydanlık kettle—which catered to visual learners and reinforced Lim *et al*.'s (2022) argument that multimodality can enrich engagement in lessons. The teacher completed the learning cycle by prompting students to confirm if they had encountered such kettles in their daily lives.

By fusing auditory discussions through Blackboard with visual imagery sourced from the internet, the teacher established a multimodal approach that effectively engaged students and enriched the conversational flow of learning. This approach cultivated an interactive, relatable, and engaging intercultural learning environment.
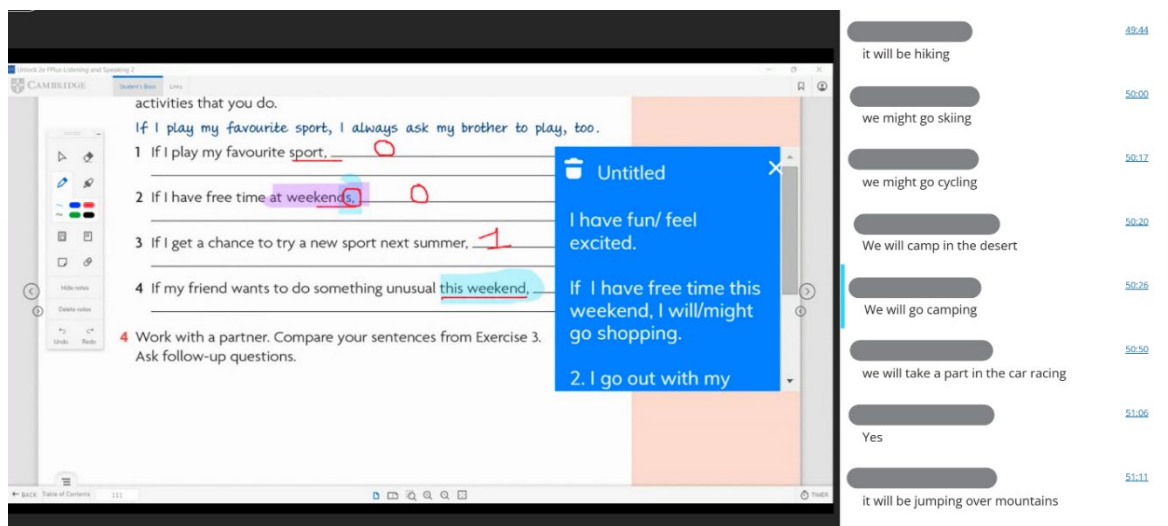
Moreover, Arabic teachers at the ELC not only share local cultural and linguistic elements but also the religious and spiritual dimensions that are integral to their students' identities. This is evident in Extract 6.9, where Islamic culture, a dominant aspect of the Saudi context, emerged prominently throughout the research data. The teacher leveraged this shared Islamic culture to spark discussions about differing cultural eating habits. When the course book mentioned the consumption of crocodile meat in Australia, the teacher connected this to Islamic dietary laws that restrict the consumption of predatory animals, thereby fostering a culturally relevant discussion.

The teacher's reference to a hadith that prohibits the consumption of predatory animals, including crocodiles, reinforced the cultural significance of Islamic dietary practices among students. By bridging the unfamiliar cultural practice of eating crocodile meat and the well-known Islamic principles, the teacher facilitated a deeper understanding of global food cultures while reinforcing students' own cultural identities and values. Through this approach, the teacher created a learning experience that acknowledged the students' prior knowledge and encouraged them to participate from their cultural perspective. Integrating elements from both target and local cultures, the teacher supported intercultural learning in an inclusive and relevant manner, highlighting the effectiveness of leveraging shared cultural touchpoints to enhance educational outcomes.

5.4   Conversations with an English Language Teacher from France

Teacher E4, from France, with 13 years of expertise in Saudi Arabian culture, encouraged the students to respond to question 4, which centred on atypical weekend activities (see Picture 11). Teacher E4 used her broad understanding of Madinah's local environment to provide various examples of unusual occasions in which students may have participated. Despite the limits of the online course, which limited student spoken engagement, they actively offered their replies via the Blackboard application's chat function.

Picture 8 French Teacher E4

Extract 6.10 French Teacher E4 conversation 1:

1. T: So, please complete this sentence, what could you do in Madinah that can be
2. unusual on the weekend?
3. T: There are unusual things now that you could do, I know that. [laughs]. Please
4. type in the chat.
5. T: ahh Okey, We will go hiking. Yes.
6. T: We might go skiing in Madinah? Skiing? [laughs] Okey we can go Sand Surfing,

7. *not Skiing in Madinah. There not enough Sand in Madinah it is more rocks here.*
8. *T: We might go cycling yes. right, yes. that's something. We can camp in the*
9. *desert. Yes.*
10. *T: Yes you typed we Might. Very good. Because we might do it and we might not.*
11. *T: Do you remember the car racing that I talked to you about in this weekend*
12. *there will be one.*
13. *T: I think there is transportation to attend the place of car racing. I saw that in*
14. *their story.*
15. *T: If you are interested, think I sent you the link to their Instagram account. It is*
16. *going to be a long weekend if you don't know what to do I saw in their story that*
17. *they are free busses.*
18. *T: JUMPING OVER THE MOUNTAINS. Wow. [laughs]. How do you do that? Okay.*
19. *But impossible.*
20. *T: Okay you all understand.*

During this observation, the French instructor (instructor E4) engaged the local students in a discussion on atypical weekend activities in Madinah, emphasizing their cultural similarities. They tried a variety of activities together, including hiking, sand surfing, cycling, and desert camping. The teacher also discussed a car racing event and transportation possibilities. The teacher's knowledge with the local environment, as well as her efforts to connect with the students via shared experiences, exemplified the value of classroom culture. The light-hearted discussion and laughing contributed to the students' excellent mood and involvement.

During a grammar exercise in class, the instructor (instructor E4) used a different platform than Blackboard as part of her method to teach verb tenses. Specifically, for question 7, while introducing the word "steal," the instructor used the opportunity to share a personal incident that highlighted the differences between her native country, France, and where she is now in Madinah (see Picture 12). Drawing on her personal experiences, the instructor not only gave a practical example for grasping verb tenses but also sparked a debate about cultural differences in the classroom.

2 The table will break if you [sit] (sit) on it.
3 If he [eats] (eat) all that, he will be ill.
4 If I find your passport, I [will telephone] (telephone) you.
5 The police [will arrest] (arrest) him, if they catch him.
6 If he [reads] (read) in bad light, he will ruin his eyes.
7 Someone [might steal] (steal) your car if you leave it unlocked.
8 What will happen if my parachute [ ] (not open)?
9 If he [ ] (wash) my car, I'll give him $10.
10 If she [ ] (need) a radio, she can borrow mine.
11 If you [ ] (not go) away, I'll call the police.
12 I'll be very angry if he [ ] (make) any more mistakes.

Picture 9 French Teacher E4

Chapter 5

<u>Extract 6.11 French Teacher E4 conversation 2:</u>

1. *T: So here in number 7. What can you put here? Someone space (steal) your car if*
2. *you leave it unlocked.*
3. *T: So what do you think? The word Will? Are you sure? Will steal for sure?*
4. *T: Yes I would say Might. Not Will. Well, it depends on where you live. Okey.*
5. *T: Here in Saudi Arabia, I've, In Madinah I have left my car open many many times*
6. *I forgot to lock it. And Alhamdulillah (Thanks to God) still here. So Might steal it.*
7. *T: Depends in which city and which country. In France Yes they Will steal it. Here*
8. *they Might.*

This interaction highlights the teacher's effective approach to teaching verb tenses by engaging students with practical examples rooted in their cultural context. In question 7, Teacher E4 presented a scenario about the possibility of someone stealing a car if it is left unlocked. This prompted a discussion where students initially suggested using "will" to express certainty. However, Teacher E4 guided them to understand that "might" is more appropriate in this context, emphasizing the nuances of language use.

The teacher, an experienced English language educator from France, illustrated the cultural differences between her home country and Madinah, Saudi Arabia. By discussing the varying likelihood of car theft based on location, she reinforced the importance of considering cultural contexts when selecting verb tenses. This approach not only clarified the grammatical point but also connected language learning to real-life situations, making the lesson more relatable and meaningful for the students.

Teacher E4's intercultural practices align with those of other educators in the study. She utilized multimodality, engaging students through the learning management system, Blackboard, which facilitated interaction via various modes, including chat functions (Lim *et al*., 2022). This multimodal approach introduced local cultural nuances, such as discussing activities that can or cannot be done on weekends in Madinah, thereby enhancing students' understanding and relatability to the material.

In Extract 6.7, the teacher demonstrated her knowledge of local weekend activities—such as hiking, sand surfing, cycling, and desert camping—and even shared information about a car racing event and transportation options. This familiarity with the local context allowed her to connect with students through shared experiences, reinforcing the significance of shared culture in the classroom.

Similarly, in Extract 6.8, the teacher's discussion about the potential for car theft further illustrated her comparative approach. By sharing her personal experiences and highlighting cultural differences, she underscored the variation in safety practices between France and Saudi

Arabia. While her examples served to clarify the use of "will" versus "might," it is important to recognize that generalizations about cultural behaviours can be misleading. As Baker (2015b) cautions, it is problematic to draw broad conclusions about a community based on limited intercultural communication examples. For instance, leaving cars unlocked is generally unsafe regardless of the location, and theft can occur anywhere. Thus, the teacher's experience should be viewed as a personal anecdote rather than a definitive cultural statement.

In summary, the analysis of classroom interactions revealed diverse practices of Intercultural Competence Awareness (ICA) among local, Arabic-speaking, English-speaking, and international teachers. Observations indicated how teachers effectively drew on textbook cultural content while leveraging students' local knowledge, in line with Byram's (1997, 2021) ICC framework and the concept of Cultural Awareness (CA) (Baker, 2012). Local teachers connected textbook material to shared local examples, such as camel racing, demonstrating "skills of interpreting and relating" (savoir comprendre). Arabic-speaking teachers exhibited "knowledge" (savoirs) by incorporating Arab food and traditions, employing code-switching and multimodal methods to enhance understanding. They also integrated Islamic culture to link unfamiliar practices to familiar religious principles.

English-speaking teachers utilized multimodal techniques, including visuals and local linguistic references, to create engaging lessons. They showcased "knowledge" (savoirs) of the local physical culture by referencing landmarks and activities. One teacher even introduced an international example, exposing students to greater diversity. The French teacher also exemplified cultural responsiveness by sharing insights about Madinah's weekend activities.

Overall, the varied approaches to intercultural teaching observed in this study illustrate how teachers can effectively utilize global perspectives from textbooks alongside students' local knowledge to foster engaged learning. However, it is crucial to avoid overgeneralizing cultures based on limited experiences, ensuring that intercultural education remains nuanced and respectful of the complexities inherent in cultural interactions.

5.5   Conversations with English Teachers from English-speaking countries

Teacher E1, an experienced teacher from the United Kingdom, used the reading book to teach paragraph unity (See Picture 13). The lesson centred on a paragraph titled "Bottled Water," which sparked a discussion in the Blackboard chat about the meaning of the word "tap." E1 demonstrated various techniques and utilized different resources to clarify the word's meaning in

English. Having spent significant time in Madinah, the teacher showed a strong command of standard Arabic and provided translations for unfamiliar words when needed. Additionally, E1 engaged with students to learn the colloquial Arabic equivalents of certain words.
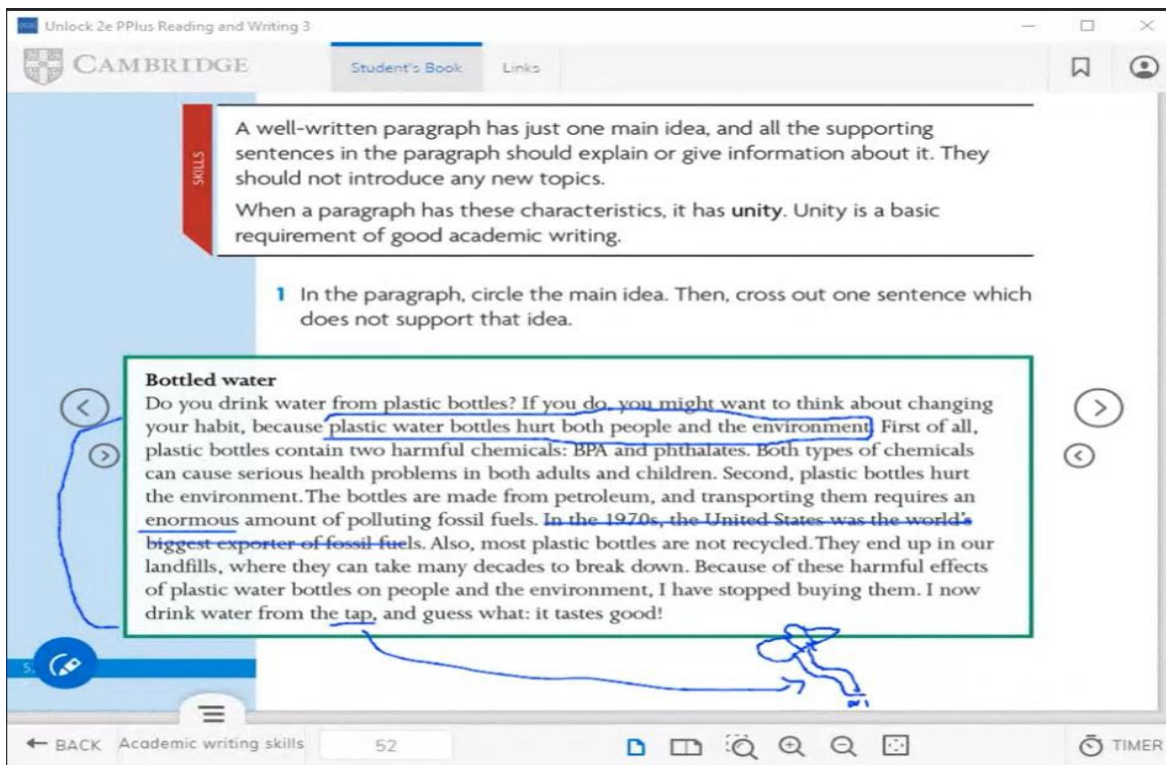
Picture 10 English Teacher E1

Extract 6.12 English teacher E1 conversation 1:

1. *T: Are there any other difficult words here guys that you are not sure about?*
2. *T: okay, Ali is asking about the word tap. Can you guess from the context? I now drink*
3. *water from the tap.*
4. *T: Can you guess the meaning? There is an American word, which is faucet. Do you know?*
5. *T: For example, (starting drawing) this is the tap in sink and the water comes out here.*
6. *T: For example in the bathroom or the kitchen this is where the water comes from. Is that*
7. *clear?*
8. *T: What do you call this in Amiyah (Colloquial Arabic)? In Fusha (Standard Arabic) is*
9. *Hanafiyah.*
10. *T: Okay tap is Hanfiyah in Arabic. And tap in Amiyah in Meghslah.*

In this interaction, Teacher E1 initiated a discussion about the word "tap," prompting students to identify other challenging words. The teacher provided contextual clues by offering an example sentence and relating "tap" to its American equivalent, "faucet." E1 clarified the concept of a tap by visually demonstrating its function in a sink (See Picture 13). The teacher also engaged students by asking for the colloquial Arabic (Amiyah) and Standard Arabic (Fusha) equivalents, referring to the tap as "Hanafiyah" and "Meghslah" respectively. Similarly, Teacher E2 from the United Kingdom utilized a pre-prepared SMART Notebook alongside the Blackboard platform to

visually illustrate new vocabulary, using local knowledge from Madinah to explain the meaning of the word "destroy." (refer to Picture 14).
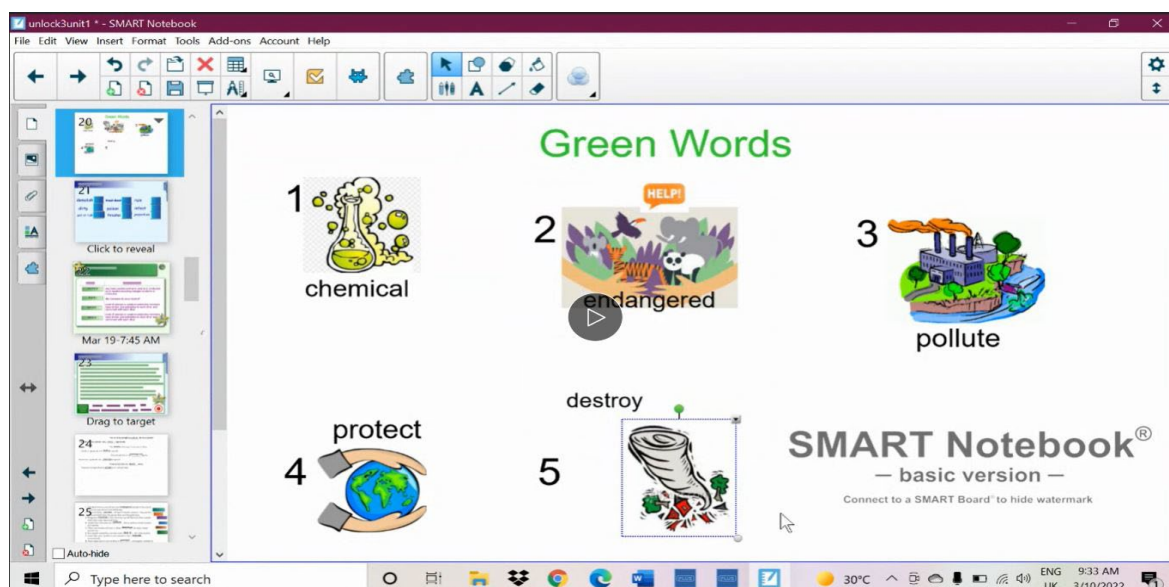
Picture 11 English Teacher E2

Extract 6.13 English Teacher E2 conversation 2:

12. *T: You can see here, destroy. In this picture you can see something like a tornado*
13. *or hurricane yeah. a Storm yeah that going to cause havoc.*
14. *T: a havoc. H A V O C. a havoc. Meaning what? Destruction and damage. And*
15. *whipping out.*
16. *T: Whipping out houses and buildings and even nature like trees. Right?*
17. *T: So That's destroy. Yes. Like sometimes around ALHARAM in Madinah you know*
18. *that area?*
19. *T: There were building being destroyed near ALHARAM to make way for a new*
20. *road. Like near Sultanah. Bank AlJazeerah. You know the place they knocking*
21. *down and destroy it for the new road.*
22. *T: Okay, yes that's destroy.*

This interaction showcased Teacher E2's use of local knowledge to explain the concept of "destroy" to Saudi students. The teacher visually connected the term by showing a picture of a tornado or hurricane, highlighting their destructive nature. By referencing the demolition of buildings near Al-Haram (Al-Masjid an-Nabawī) in Madinah for a new road, he made the concept resonate more with the students' experiences. This approach enhanced their understanding of the term. In a different English classroom, Teacher E3, from an English-speaking country, also aimed to clarify "destroy" by incorporating local cultural references. However, he utilized a distinct cultural reference during the observation.

Extract 6.14 English teacher E3 conversation 3:

11. *T: So, good good, so destroy is what? Explain? When you explain you helping*
12. *everybody.*
13. *T: We need this for the exam maybe in the speaking assignment of the 7th of April.*
14. *T: So What is Destroy. First of all let us start easy. Is that a good thing or a bad*

15. *thing?*
16. *S1: It is a bad thing.*
17. *T: Yeah, usually it is a bad thing. I mean we can destroy something to get rid of it.*
18. *T: Like we destroy some old buildings and hotels around the Al Haram in Makkah*
19. *because they are old and dangerous.*
20. *T: So we destroy those building in order to put new hotels which is safer. But*
21. *usually destroy is a bad thing.*

During the observation between British Teacher E3 and the Saudi students, their shared local culture was evident. Teacher E3 led a discussion on the concept of "destroy," prompting a student to share that it is generally viewed as a negative action. The teacher reinforced this by citing the demolition of old, unsafe buildings around Al-Haram (Masjid Al-Haram) in Makkah to facilitate the construction of new, safer hotels. This exchange highlighted their mutual understanding of the implications of "destroy" within their national context. Additionally, referencing the earlier observation with Arabic Teacher A4, British Teacher E2 utilized his shared Islamic culture to discuss whether Muslims are permitted to eat certain types of meat, specifically wondering about the consumption of deer.

Extract 6.15 English Teacher E2 conversation 4:

1. *T: Yeah. Deer. Exactly. Deer. Not Oh Dear where is everybody. But Deer as in an*
2. *animal. Yeah.*
3. *T: Are we allowed to eat that? Can Muslims eat the Deer? Is it permissible. Its*
4. *Okay or not.*
5. *T: Obviously Khanzeer (Arabic word for Pig) like if you go London you can go buy*
6. *Khanzeer that is Haram.*
7. *T: But Deer. The Ail (Arabic word for Deer) can we eat it or not. Not sure.*
8. *T: Okay let's move on I need somebody to read number 1.*

In this interaction, British Teacher E2 engaged with local students about the term "deer" within their shared Islamic culture. He asked whether Muslims are permitted to consume deer, clarifying the distinction between deer and pig (Khanzeer), which is forbidden in Islam. However, Teacher E2 did not delve deeper into the permissibility of eating deer, as the primary focus was understanding the word itself. In the same class, he also briefly mentioned a phrase in another language after a student completed the first exercise (Picture 15), leading to the exchange in Extract 6.16.
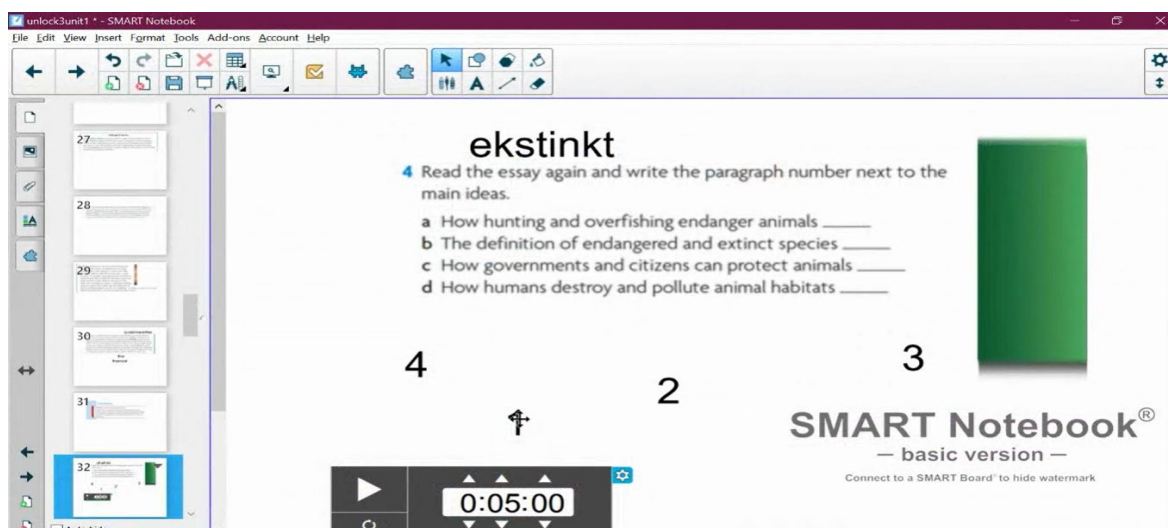
Picture 12 English Teacher E2

Extract 6.16 English Teacher E2 conversation 5:

1. *T: So, where going to say number 1 is about b okay. We will check it later I got*
2. *under the green there.*
3. *T: Thank you Yousef. Anybody wants to read the next one paragraph número dos*
4. *as they say in Madrid.*

In this brief conversation, British Teacher E2 exposed Saudi students to simple Spanish during an English class by referencing the phrase "número dos" while inviting a student to read the next paragraph. This exemplified cross-cultural exchange, introducing students to elements of various languages and cultures beyond English. To encourage active participation, Teacher E3 used SMART Notebook to pose questions, which students answered on Padlet. This activity aimed to engage students and prepare them for an upcoming speaking assessment (see Picture 16), with the interaction of interest occurring during question 9 of the activity.
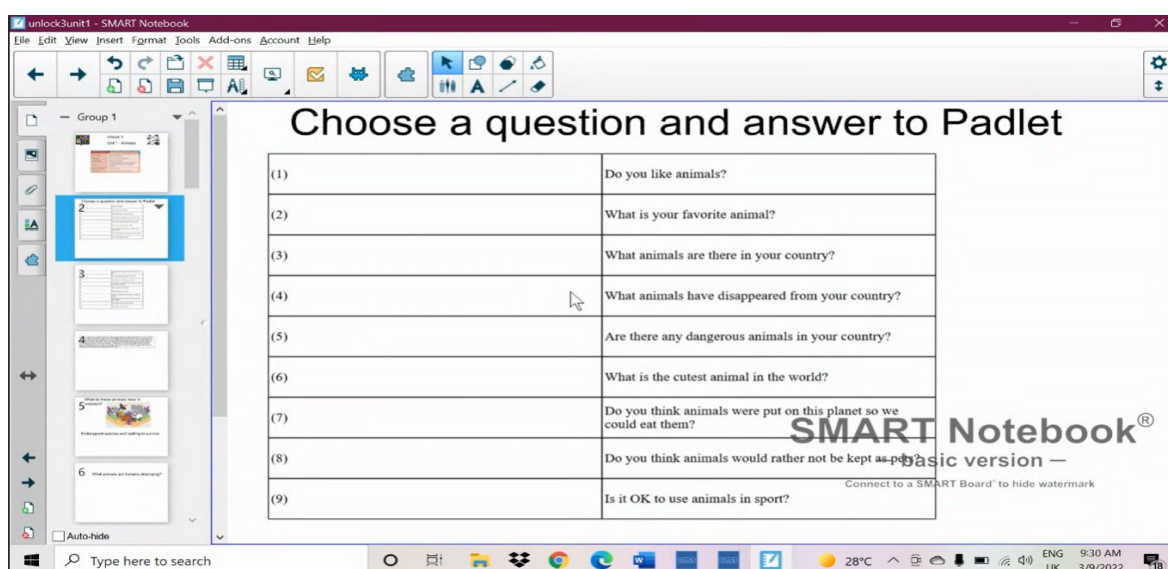
Picture 13 English Teacher E3

Chapter 5

Extract 6.17 English Teacher E3 conversation 6:

1. T: Number 9, do you think it is OK to use animals in sport? Now we took before of
2. course.
3. T: In Turkey we talked about the camel and in Spain you know about the Thaor
4. (Bull in Arabic).
5. T: Now is it okay, do you think its cruel or inhumane it goes against humanities
6. principles.
7. T: Any idea guys what do you. Just any think. It would be happy to hear from you
8. guys.
9. T: okay. Yes. (Reading from Padlet) I like animals because some of them help us to
10. hunt. Yes.
11. T: Great. SO, the dog can help. They can be very helpful right? For blind people
12. who can't see.
13. T: So, animals help us like in Surat An Nahal (Recite the verse in Arabic that
14. translate to 'He also created` horses, mules, and donkeys for your transportation
15. and adornment')
16. T: So, we ride them, so I know we have cars and we have bikes you know you
17. know,
18. T: But animals are still important in many places like the horse, and the camel
19. here of course.
20. T: To be honest, I personally have a phobia from them. Okay.

This observation focused on the acceptability of using animals in sports. Teacher E3 presented examples from different countries, such as camels in Turkey and bulls in Spain, to illustrate the cultural significance of animals in various sports. He then led a discussion on the ethical considerations surrounding this issue and emphasized the importance of animals in different contexts, citing a verse from The Qur'an (2023, 16: 8) that mentions horses, mules, and donkeys for transportation. Additionally, the teacher candidly shared his personal phobia of animals, providing students with a personal anecdote. This observation demonstrated a sharing of international cultures through the lens of animals, as well as the shared Islamic culture between the English-speaking teacher and the students.

Within the same exercise as above, another student commented on Padlet about why he likes animals. That encouraged the teacher to the following interaction, below.

Extract 6.18 English Teacher E3 conversation 7:

1. T: (Reading from Padlet) I like animals because they are protective and loyal.
2. T: Yes they are very loyal. You know in the west. They love Dogs. And they have
3. ton of dogs.
4. T: You know the father of the dogs is the Wolf. And a long long time ago the
5. humans they
6. took the baby wolfs the pups and they domesticated them and trained them.
7. T: So you can find they have many competitions for dogs. Some dogs have a perm
8. like Curly hair. You know.
9. T: You I heard in Riyadh recently they have Camel competition. So, like in the west
10. they have a dog competition, here they have a Camel competition. So I heard
11. some bad stories.
12. T: like people making their camels look better because the prize was a million
13. riyals. A lot of money right.

14. *T: SO I heard they where making the lips or the nose of the camel. Like tampering*
15. *or changing the nose to make it look nicer to win which is obviously not allowed.*
16. *T: But they do that in the west they give like the dog big perms so their body look*
17. *like it is about one mile wide and it is pink all these strange things with dogs.*
18. *T: They say in the west that the dog is a man best friend. Yeah because it is loyal.*
19. *T: But for us the problem is with his tongue in the Hadeeth. His tongue is not very*
20. *pure.*

The observations from Teacher E3's class offer a multifaceted view of how intercultural communication can enrich language learning, particularly in an English Language Centre (ELC) setting. The teacher's ability to weave together local cultural contexts with Western examples provided students with a relatable and comprehensive understanding of the topic of animals and their characteristics.

Teacher E3 adeptly bridged Western and local cultural narratives by contrasting the positive traits assigned to dogs in Western culture—such as loyalty and companionship—with the ethical concerns surrounding animal competitions in both contexts. By discussing the domestication of dogs from wolves and highlighting grooming competitions, he brought a Western cultural lens into the classroom, simultaneously recognizing the significance of camels in the local culture, especially in Saudi Arabia.

The conversation about camel competitions in Riyadh, where unethical practices like tampering with appearances to win prizes are prevalent, offered an opportunity for students to reflect critically on both animal welfare and cultural ethics. Teacher E3's mention of these practices served not just to inform students about local customs but also to invite them into a discussion about integrity and fairness—values that transcend specific cultures.

Incorporating Islamic teachings into the discussion effectively reinforced the importance of cleanliness, crucial in the context of both animals and Islamic practice. By quoting the Hadith concerning the purification of utensils licked by dogs, Teacher E3 emphasized a key aspect of Islamic life, connecting it seamlessly to the broader conversation on animals. This approach illustrates not only the teacher's cultural awareness but also his effort to create resonance with the students' shared identity. It serves as a vivid example of how intercultural dialogue in the classroom can foster a sense of belonging and understanding among students.

The adaptation to online teaching platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic provided English-speaking teachers with opportunities to employ multimodal methods to enhance student engagement. Teacher E3 and others demonstrated this by using various tools available on the learning management system, Blackboard.

In Extract 6.12, the use of drawing tools helped clarify the function of a tap in practical scenarios. This visual representation caters to visual learners and enhances comprehension by contextualizing vocabulary in everyday situations. By incorporating SMART Notebook with Blackboard as noted in Extracts 6.13 and 6.17, teachers were able to illustrate new vocabulary dynamically. Visual aids, such as images and animations, support vocabulary retention and make the learning experience more engaging for students. The introduction of Padlet as observed in Extracts 6.17 and 6.18 exemplified a novel approach to interactive learning. As a collaborative platform, Padlet allows for the incorporation of multimedia resources, enabling students to engage with vocabulary in a manner that is both visual and interactive. By preparing students for speaking assessments through discussions initiated on Padlet, teachers created a supportive learning environment that promoted student participation and peer interaction.

Overall, Teacher E3's approach reflects a strong understanding of intercultural communication principles, effectively connecting diverse cultural contexts while fostering an interactive and inclusive learning environment. The use of multimodal strategies in online classrooms not only made lessons engaging but also allowed for deeper exploration of vocabulary and concepts, facilitating a holistic learning experience that prepares students for real-world communication and cultural understanding. Through these methodologies, educators can bridge cultural divides, instil shared values, and promote critical thinking in their students, all of which are key components of effective language learning in a globalized world.

The incorporation of local culture in English language teaching by English-speaking teachers in Saudi Arabia is a profound strategy that enhances student engagement and comprehension. By integrating local, Islamic, and cultural contexts into their lessons, teachers not only facilitate vocabulary acquisition but also promote intercultural competence among students, aligning with Byram's framework of intercultural communication competence (ICC).

The use of multimodal techniques, as exemplified in Extract 6.12 when teaching the word "tap," illustrates how educators leverage various resources to enhance understanding. By sketching a tap and providing the American equivalent "faucet," the teacher caters to both linguistic and visual learning styles. Importantly, by inviting students to translate the word into colloquial Arabic, the teacher acknowledges the linguistic nuances familiar to the students. This method not only aids comprehension but also validates students' existing linguistic knowledge, creating a scaffold upon which new vocabulary can be built. This approach mirrors Baker's (2012) assertion regarding the intrinsic relationship between language and culture, reinforcing that language learning is deeply contextual.

In Extracts 6.13 and 6.14, teachers effectively employ local physical culture by referencing familiar landmarks in Madinah and Makkah to explain the concept of destruction, using examples such as the demolition of buildings for mosque expansions. These references resonate with the students, as they relate directly to their lived experiences and environments. By linking vocabulary with real-world examples from students' local context, teachers not only enhance vocabulary retention but also illustrate the cultural relevance of language. This methodology directly correlates with Byram's "Knowledge" savoir, emphasizing the importance of understanding local social groups, their practices, and cultural products.

The discussion around camel competitions in Extract 6.18 exemplifies the teachers' ability to draw parallels between local and Western cultural practices. By discussing the ethics of competitions involving both camels and dogs, the teacher fosters an environment where students can critically engage with their cultural practices while considering broader ethical implications. This interaction aligns with Byram's "Skills of Interpreting and Relating," showcasing the teacher's commitment to understanding and respecting the students' cultural context.

The shared Islamic identity becomes a powerful tool for connection in the classroom. In Extract 6.15, UK teacher E2's inclusive language ("we") when discussing dietary laws regarding deer exemplifies the establishment of common ground. This strategy not only reinforces a sense of belonging but positions the teacher as an ally in navigating cultural norms. Furthermore, the reference to the Qur'an in Extract 6.17 serves to further this connection. By utilizing this authoritative text, the teacher shows respect for and a deep understanding of the students' cultural and religious backgrounds, reinforcing the value of animals as created beings within Islamic teachings.

In Extract 6.18, the mention of the phrase "the dog is man's best friend" reflects the teacher's awareness of the cultural significance and implications of language. By prefacing this well-known phrase with "they say," the teacher tactfully negotiates cultural sensitivity, recognizing the importance of Islamic teachings regarding dogs. This demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how cultural identity can influence language use and comprehension. Such adaptations highlight the dynamic interplay between the teacher's background and the cultural context of the students, part of what Byram identifies as crucial in developing intercultural competence.

Lastly, the introduction of the Spanish phrase "número dos" by Teacher E2 in Extract 6.16, although not elaborated upon, still represents a moment of cross-cultural exchange. This instance invites students to connect with a language and culture distinct from their own, promoting awareness of linguistic diversity. While the absence of student engagement may suggest

unfamiliarity or lack of relevance, the teacher's initiative in introducing a foreign phrase can spark curiosity and broaden students' cultural horizons.

Incorporating local culture, Islamic references, and multimodal techniques not only aids English language acquisition but also fosters a richer, more nuanced learning environment. By recognizing and leveraging the cultural contexts that shape students' identities, teachers can cultivate a sense of community and shared understanding in their classrooms. As demonstrated through various extracts, the effective use of local examples, religious teachings, and cultural references aligns with Byram's intercultural competence framework, ultimately enriching the educational experience for both teachers and students in the English language learning context.

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed analysis of online classroom conversations, concluding the data analysis section of this thesis. The study encompassed a range of classroom environments, including those facilitated by local Arabic-speaking teachers, international educators, and English-speaking instructors. The outcomes gathered from this investigation will be further explored and discussed in Chapter 7, which aims to provide a deeper understanding of the implications and significance of these findings.

In addition to analysing classroom interactions, the subsequent chapter will focus on the examination of the English language textbooks utilized at the English Language Centre (ELC). This analysis will contribute further insights into how Intercultural Awareness (ICA) is integrated and manifest in a classroom setting. By evaluating the textbook content and its alignment with the classroom practices observed, the study aims to paint a comprehensive picture of the role that educational materials play in fostering intercultural competence among learners. Through this multifaceted approach, the research aspires to enhance our understanding of how students are prepared to navigate an increasingly globalized world.

Chapter 6   Textbook Analysis

6.1   Introduction

The analysis of textbooks is a critical component in studying the *Practice* aspect of this research. In addition to interviews, focus groups, and observations, analysing textbooks helps in understanding their role in English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom practices. While textbooks may not directly reflect classroom activities, they serve as a foundation for teachers to incorporate cultural and intercultural aspects into their lessons. The collaboration between ELC and the supplier to align the textbooks with the desired cultural focus underscores the importance of integrating cultural elements into language teaching materials. This intentional effort highlights the significance of cultural considerations in language education and emphasizes the need for a culture-friendly learning environment. By examining the adjustments made to the textbooks in collaboration with Cambridge University Press, the analysis of the Unlock 6 course books gains further context and relevance in terms of their cultural content and suitability for English language learners. Therefore, studying the content and design of these textbooks is crucial to understanding how cultural and intercultural elements are integrated into the curriculum. This chapter delves into textbook analysis, focusing on the representation of cultural and intercultural dimensions within English language teaching materials. The aim is to identify the cultures portrayed, highlight specific elements of each culture, and evaluate the frequency and content of these cultural components in the English textbooks.

Richards (2001) argues that globally marketed textbooks prioritize profit over meeting the educational needs and interests of learners in specific regions or countries. These textbooks heavily incorporate the target culture while only superficially integrating aspects of international cultures, making it difficult to fully represent the learners' own source culture within a textbook designed for a particular country. Findings from the study reveal that while 12 out of the 14 reading texts concerning target cultures are presented in a neutral manner, they are based in countries such as the UK, USA, Ireland, and Australia without including culture-specific details.

Benahnia (2012) suggests that familiarity with the source language culture may boost the confidence of beginner EFL learners, but as they progress in their language acquisition journey, exposure to the target language culture becomes essential for a more comprehensive understanding of cultural elements within the language. The incorporation of target culture into learning materials can enhance motivation, as supported by the views of Adaskou *et al.* (1990) and Gardner and Lambert (1972) on the significance of integrating cultural aspects into language instruction.

Pennycook (2010) advocates for foreign language teaching within local contexts, emphasizing its role as a central factor influencing social interactions within specific settings. It is crucial for educators to incorporate culturally relevant components into language teaching that align with the learners' requirements, as social and cultural knowledge not only aids in language acquisition but also fosters a positive awareness of the target language culture.

Hamiloğlu and Mendi's (2010) examination of the textbook New Streetwise found that it lacked any text containing intercultural elements, instead focusing solely on cultures from the USA and UK. This discovery aligns with the perspectives of Hermawan and Noerkhasnah (2012) and Mahmood *et al.* (2012), who assert that EFL textbooks tend to emphasize non-native cultures. The presence of predominantly target culture reading materials diverges from the researchers' expectations, as they cover a wide array of themes that do not necessarily reflect L2 cultural aspects in the textbook. Consequently, the textbook offers limited exposure to diverse L2 cultural experiences.

Following all the studies on how to conduct the textbook analysis based on cultural elements, this research aims to implement theoretical framework that was conducted in Zhang and Su (2021) research to achieve this aim. Zhang and Su (2021) used two distinct frameworks to answer their research questions about textbook analysis.

6.2   Frequencies of Cultures in textbooks

The first framework that Zhang and Su (2021) used Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) that divides culture into three types: source cultures, target cultures, and international target cultures, which are often discussed in the context of English language learning.

1. **Source cultures** refer to the cultures of the learners themselves. Integrating such cultures into learning materials can familiarize learners with the content and to increase their comprehension.
2. **Target cultures** Exploring the cultures of countries where English is the first language can also be beneficial. Drawing on these target cultures can assist learners in developing their attitudes towards language learning and can boost their motivation in the process.
3. **International target cultures** this type of cultural context is growing in importance as English becomes increasingly prevalent in international interactions. The analysis of textbooks also plays a critical role in investigating the role of English as an international language in cultures where it is not the first or second language but is used widely in global communication settings.

McKay (2004) reasons that approaching ideas and beliefs from international cultures that they come across can help learners develop cross-cultural sociolinguistic competence. This help to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to communicate fittingly with people from different cultures. Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) expanded the existing framework of types of cultures by incorporating a fourth category known as "culture neutral." This was specifically introduced to cover cultural content that does not fall within any of the three established divisions. By incorporating the Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2014) division, the Zhang and Su (2021) study aimed to broaden the scope and provide a comprehensive framework and provide a comprehensive framework for analysing cultural elements.

4. **Culture neutral** which denotes elements with a cultural essence that do not align with any particular culture. For instance, the concept of "family" can be seen as a cultural theme, but a discussion about family in a textbook may be depicted in a way that is not indicative of the cultural values of the native language, the target language, or any specific culture, resulting in a culturally neutral portrayal.

6.3   Contents of Cultures in textbooks

The second framework that Zhang and Su (2021) adopted was first done by Yuen (2011) who proposed a four-part framework for classifying cultural elements in English textbooks. This framework, known as the "four Ps," divides cultural elements into products, practices, perspectives, and persons.

1. **Products** refer to tangible cultural objects, such as food, movies, TV programs, merchandise, print, and travel destinations.
2. **Practices** refer to daily life, society, sports, school life, and customs.
3. **Perspectives** include cultural materials that convey perceptions, values, myths, beliefs, and worldviews, which guide people's behaviour in cultural practices.
4. **Persons** refer to famous individuals (fictitious or unknown), figures, and characters. However, fictional characters in stories or movies are considered products, and therefore, they are excluded from this type.

This framework has been used in a number of studies to analyse the representation of culture in English textbooks (Zhang and Su, 2021, p.8). It provides a useful way to think about the different ways in which culture can be represented in textbooks, and it can help to identify areas where textbooks may be lacking in their representation of culture.

6.4   The English Language Textbook at ELC

The focus of this study is the investigation of the Unlock Second Edition, a comprehensive series of English course books. This series comprises six levels, aligning with the proficiency levels outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) from Pre-A1 to C1 (Ostrowska *et al*., 2018), which was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency. Throughout the data collection phase of this research, these books served as the principal instructional materials at the English Language Centre. The analysis was conducted on the Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking books 1, 2, and 3 (refer to Figure 6.1) as well as the Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking books 1, 2, and 3 (refer to Figure 6.2), in order to explore the frequencies of occurrence and the existence of cultural elements within these textbooks, utilising the aforementioned framework.

Figure 6.1 Reading and Writing books used to teach English language at the ELC.

Figure 6.2 Listening and Speaking books used to teach English language at the ELC.

6.5   Data Analysis and procedure

To quantify the frequencies and the contents of cultures in the textbooks, it was necessary to use content analysis to analyse the qualitative data. Content analysis "is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use." (Krippendorff, 2018, p.24).

The investigation analysed six textbooks, each comprising eight units. The Reading and Writing books featured sections like Unlock your knowledge, Watch and listen, Reading 1, and Reading 2 in every unit. On the other hand, the Listening and Speaking books included sections such as Unlock your knowledge, Watch and listen, Listening 1, and Listening 2 in each unit. Although the textbooks contained additional sections covering grammar, writing, critical thinking, and speaking skills, these more active skills requiring student engagement were not the primary focus of the study. Instead, the research concentrated on the receptive skills involved in the selection of books with diverse themes and cultures. These sections were considered as units of analysis due to their substantial contribution to the cultural content within the textbooks. Publishers utilized these sections to communicate a range of cultural elements through the themes integrated into each unit, emphasizing the importance of cultural exposure in language learning materials.

By pinpointing these sections for examination, the study aimed to delve into the cultural richness embedded in the thematic choices of the textbooks, aligned with the research objectives.

The analysis encompassed all 4 sections of the 8 units from the 6 textbooks (Unlock Your Knowledge, Watch and Listen, Reading 1 and 2, Listening 1 and 2), totalling 192 scrutiny units. This was done to assess the frequency and content percentages of cultures (source culture, target culture, international target culture, and culture neutral) and cultural elements (products, practices, perspectives, and persons). For instance, the Unlock Your Knowledge section in Unit 1 of the Reading and Writing book was categorized under these cultural types and contents.

Content analysis often faces criticism for its subjective data collection process (Krippendorff, 2018). To mitigate this issue, the analysis was conducted by the researcher and reviewed by an experienced English language teacher familiar with these textbooks, ensuring consistency and replicability. The investigation focused solely on the students' textbooks, excluding supplementary materials like classroom apps, online workbooks, and websites, to concentrate on the cultural frequencies and contents.

6.6 Findings

6.6.1 Frequencies of Cultures
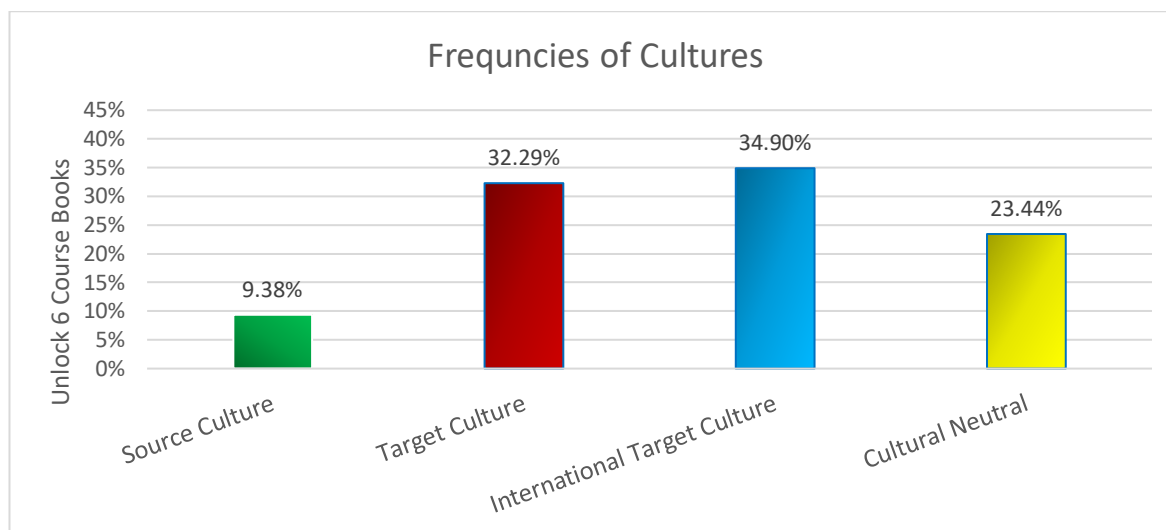
Figure 6.6.3 Frequencies of cultures represented in Unlock 6 Course books

Based on the framework by Zhang and Su (2021), the analysis of the Unlock 6 course books reveals the distribution of cultural elements across various cultural types. The percentages indicate the proportion of cultural content related to each category within the textbooks.

The analysis shows that Source Culture accounts for 9.38% of the content analysed. This category pertains to the cultures inherent to the learners, reflecting their daily routines, traditions, and experiences. All Arab cultures were included as Source Cultures, with examples from Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. References to Arabic cuisine, such as Kabsa and Shawarma, and animals like the Arabian Oryx were identified, along with traditions associated with Ramadan, including specific customs related to doing business in Saudi Arabia.

Target Culture makes up 32.29% of the analysed content, representing the cultures of countries where English is the native language. The Unlock textbooks integrate cultural elements from English-speaking nations, covering their traditions, customs, and historical events. Countries represented in this category include the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, and South Africa.

International Target Culture, the largest portion at 34.90%, refers to cultures where English is used as an international language, highlighting its growing relevance in global communication. This category includes a variety of cultural practices and global issues beyond specific nations. Examples found in the Unlock textbooks include discussions on international festivals in Japan,

Brazil, and Mexico, global environmental challenges in Cuba and Iceland, and telecommunication skills in China and Turkey.

To sum up, the content analysis revealed that Cultural Neutral content accounts for 23.44% of the analysed material. This category involves cultural elements that do not directly align with any particular culture. While possessing cultural characteristics, these elements do not specifically belong to a source, target, or international culture. Examples within this category include discussions on topics such as life on other planets, economic principles, environmental conservation, and the future of biomimicry.

The examination of the cultural content distribution in the Unlock textbooks indicates that there are relatively high percentages of Target Culture and International Target Culture representations. This suggests a deliberate effort to incorporate cultural aspects from English-speaking nations and various international settings, aiming to expose learners to diverse cultural perspectives and foster intercultural comprehension. The presence of Source Culture content underscores the incorporation of learners' own cultural heritages, enhancing familiarity and engagement. Additionally, the inclusion of Cultural Neutral elements recognizes the significance of addressing universal themes that transcend specific cultures, promoting a more inclusive and diverse learning experience.

This approach was designed to establish a clear, cohesive, and comprehensive foundation for developing language syllabi and curriculum guidelines, creating teaching and learning materials, and evaluating foreign language proficiency, contributing to a holistic language learning experience.

6.6.2   Content of Cultures

Utilizing the Yuen (2011) framework, an examination of the cultural elements presented in the Unlock 6 course books showcases a categorization into four distinct types: Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons. The allocation of percentages to each category obtained from the analysis offers valuable insights into how these cultural elements are represented and emphasized in the textbooks.

The Products category, involving tangible cultural objects, constitutes 35.71% of the analysed materials. This emphasis on products serves as an effective method to introduce learners to new cultures. Examples of cultural products encompass traditional food like Arabic cuisine, globally recognized companies such as Google, and renowned travel destinations like Shanghai.

The Practices category, which covers various aspects of daily life, society, sports, and customs, accounts for 41.07% of the analysed content. This substantial percentage reflects a strong focus on providing learners with insights into the practical aspects of different cultures, including activities at Bondi Beach in Australia, societal issues like obesity, sports such as falconry in the United Arab Emirates, and cultural celebrations like the Mid-Autumn Festival in China.

Additionally, the Unlock 6 textbooks incorporate Perspectives, which convey perceptions, values, myths, beliefs, and worldviews shaping individuals' behaviours within cultural contexts. Topics such as technology use, coming-of-age ceremonies in South Korea, and discussions on fast fashion highlight diverse cultural perspectives and their impact on various aspects of life and society. Perspectives account for 15.18% of all cultural references in the textbooks, underscoring their significance in helping learners comprehend the underlying values and beliefs of a culture.

Finally, the Persons category, encompassing famous individuals, figures, and characters, represents 8.04% of the analysed content. Notably, this category excludes fictional characters, considering them as products rather than persons. Although the percentage may seem relatively small, the inclusion of significant figures in textbooks holds substantial educational value by enabling learners to explore the historical and influential figures across various cultures. Examples of notable individuals mentioned in the Unlock textbooks include Mahatma Gandhi, Barack Obama, Princess Diana, Elon Musk, Oprah Winfrey, and Richard Branson.
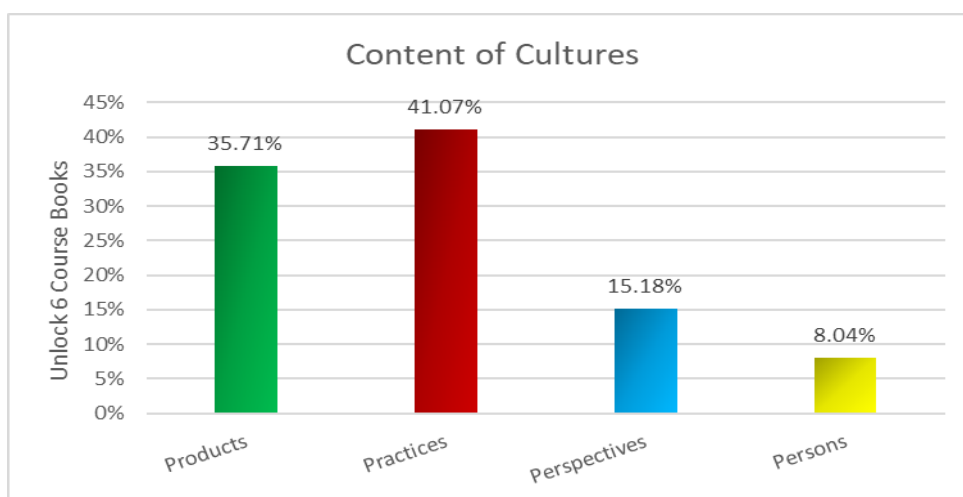
Figure 6.6.4 Cultural contents represented in Unlock 6 course books

6.6.3   Teaching materials analysis

After examining the process of selecting suitable teaching materials at the ELC, addressing issues with previous materials, and exploring participants' diverse views on current materials in preceding sections, there was a need to analyse and assess the current teaching materials from a quantitative research perspective. While the overall research approach was qualitative (refer to

Section 3.3), a quantitative methodology was utilized to scrutinize the content and layout of the textbooks to comprehend the integration of cultural and intercultural elements into the curriculum.

The specific aims were to determine the represented cultures, identify highlighted elements of each culture, and assess the frequencies and contents of these cultural aspects in the English textbooks. Almujaiwel (2018) employed a quantitative approach using corpus linguistic techniques to examine cultural elements in Saudi EFL textbooks, aligning closely with the focus of this study. However, this research adopted Zhang and Su's (2021) quantitative framework, categorizing cultural references in six English textbooks into Source Culture, Target Culture, International Target Culture, or Culturally Neutral. The same framework was used to classify cultural contents into the "four Ps": products, practices, perspectives, and persons (Zhang and Su, 2021).

The analysis of the textbooks revealed how cultural elements are integrated and depicted in the Unlock 6 materials. The quantification of different cultures indicated that the international target culture had the highest representation at 34.90%, followed by the target culture at 32.29%, emphasizing exposure to English-speaking and international perspectives. Source culture accounted for 9.38%, reflecting some incorporation of students' own cultural backgrounds, while 23.44% was culturally neutral (Refer to Figure 6.3).

Categorizing cultural content using Zhang and Su's (2021) framework highlighted a prevalence of practices at 41.07% and products at 35.71%, indicating a focus on customs, daily practices, and tangible objects to engage learners. Perspectives constituted 15.18%, conveying cultural values and mindsets, while persons made up 8.04%, featuring notable individuals to enhance cultural understanding (Refer to Figure 6.4). Overall, the textbooks encompass diverse cultural elements, with an emphasis on the international target culture, practices, and products, providing intercultural exposure through behaviours, customs, and material culture. The inclusion of source culture, perspectives, and notable individuals, though less prominent, contributes to a comprehensive curriculum.

This chapter highlighted the desire of experienced teacher participants to increase the representation of source culture beyond the current 9.38%, believing that a greater incorporation of students' own cultural backgrounds could enhance engagement and understanding. While considering the balance of cultural representation, it is crucial to approach international publishers in a nuanced and critical manner, avoiding simplistic stereotypes and superficial portrayals. Furthermore, teachers play a crucial role in making cultural elements relevant and engaging for students.

Incorporating students' local cultures and experiences into the language classroom enables teachers to create an intercultural learning environment. As demonstrated by Teacher S3 in Extract 5.33, transforming a culturally neutral topic to resonate with the local source culture is achievable. This is further supported by classroom interactions detailed in extracts 6.2 and 6.4, where teachers successfully transformed existing cultural elements in the textbook into intercultural components through active engagement with students' local culture. This understanding of the teacher's role aligns with the findings of Javid *et al.* (2012), showcasing the significance of teacher knowledge, appropriate teaching methods, student inspiration, and meeting educational objectives.

To summarize, data collected from interviews with Arabic-speaking teachers, English-speaking teachers, an international teacher, the head of English language administration, and members of the curriculum committee at the ELC addressed the second research question. Both conversation analysis and textbook analysis were conducted, revealing that past textbooks lacked diverse cultural examples, with teachers adapting content to suit local sensitivities. While current materials show increased cultural variety according to some teachers, others criticize limited local content, reflecting conflicting views on the balance between localization and cultural inclusion. The textbook analysis categorized cultural references using Zhang and Su's (2021) framework into Source Culture (9.38%), Target Culture (32.29%), International Target Culture (34.90%), and Culturally Neutral (23.44%). When examining cultural components through Zhang and Su's (2021) "four Ps," a focus on Practices (41.07%) and Products (35.71%) is evident, with less emphasis on Perspectives (15.18%) and Persons (8.04%). These findings indicate efforts to include diverse cultures, with a priority on target and international cultures, practices, and products. While teachers express a desire for more localization to aid comprehension, they also stress the importance of developing broader intercultural skills, emphasizing a deep understanding of cultures rather than a superficial approach. Teachers play a crucial role in interculturally animating textbook content.

6.7   Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of textbooks in this study has provided insights into how cultural and intercultural aspects are portrayed and incorporated into English language teaching materials. Through an analysis of the content and structure of the Unlock 6 course books, it is evident that efforts have been made to include cultural elements to enrich language learning experiences. Additionally, by applying Zhang and Su's (2021) framework, it is clear that the Unlock 6 course books prioritize the representation of both international target culture and target culture, recognizing the significance of English as a global language and the importance of learners

developing cross-cultural competencies in various communication contexts. While culture-neutral and source culture elements are present, albeit with less prominence, they still demonstrate a commitment to encompassing diverse cultural aspects. Following Yuen's (2011) framework, the analysis indicates that practices and products are prominently featured as key cultural components within the textbooks, emphasizing the portrayal of daily routines, customs, and tangible cultural artefacts to engage learners in cultural exploration. The inclusion of perspectives and persons, though to a lesser extent, enhances learners' comprehension of cultural values, perceptions, and notable figures. In summary, the analysis of the textbooks reveals a deliberate integration of cultural and intercultural dimensions within the Unlock 6 course books. The results suggest a well-rounded depiction of cultural elements, with a focus on practices, products, and the international target culture, providing learners with opportunities to engage with diverse cultures and develop intercultural awareness and competence.

Chapter 7   Conclusion

7.1   Introduction

This research comprehensively explores the relationship between language teaching, learning, and culture through the framework of intercultural awareness (ICA). The motivation for this study stems from the researcher's personal experiences as both a student and teacher of English across various countries, ultimately culminating in a focused inquiry at Taibah University's English Language Centre (ELC). The exploration of cultural dynamics, exemplified by an exercise on Saudi weddings, underscores the diversity present even within a single nation. Additionally, the Language and Intercultural Communication module taken during the researcher's iPhD program at the University of Southampton profoundly influenced their understanding of culture's fluidity.

7.2   Significance of the Research

The study is particularly significant in the context of the evolving linguistic landscape in Saudi Arabia, where the transition from a traditional grammar-centred approach to one aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) poses both opportunities and challenges. This shift has prompted a re-evaluation of established cultural values, making it imperative to investigate how ICA perceptions and practices are evolving at the ELC.

Employing qualitative methods such as classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups, this research investigates the perceptions of learners and educators regarding intercultural awareness (ICA), defined here as an understanding of the essential role of culture in communication and the dynamic interplay between languages and cultures.

The findings align closely with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which emphasizes the internationalization of higher education and the importance of cultivating intercultural communication competencies. The study offers valuable insights for researchers in intercultural communication, curriculum developers, and ELC management, emphasizing the necessity for curricula that accurately reflect diverse cultural contexts and enhance students' intercultural understanding.

The research involved a diverse array of participants, including local and international English language teachers from various Arabic-speaking and English-speaking countries, alongside a teacher from France. This multicultural representation reflects the environment of the ELC, located in Madinah—a city of profound historical and cultural significance in the Islamic world.

The participants' varied cultural backgrounds likely influenced their levels of ICA and enriched the data collected.

This study addresses a significant empirical gap regarding the integration of intercultural dimensions in English language teaching and learning. By examining educators' perceptions and practices concerning ICA and collecting students' perspectives, the research generates crucial data that can inform policymakers and teacher development programs. These insights may facilitate revised teaching methodologies and objectives that align with contemporary understandings of ICA, thereby supporting the goals outlined in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. In the context of the English language centre at Taibah University, this research answered the three proposed research questions:

RQ1- How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?

RQ2- What relationships exist between instructional materials utilized in the research setting and participants' understanding of intercultural communication awareness?

RQ3- What is the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of intercultural communication awareness?

7.3   RQ1- How is intercultural communication awareness perceived and practiced among participants from different linguacultural backgrounds at the ELC at Taibah University?

7.3.1   Perceptions

This study examined participants' perceptions of intercultural awareness (ICA) across a diverse spectrum of lingua-cultural backgrounds, reflecting a variety of cultural perspectives within its research context. Participants included local Saudi English teachers and students, English teachers from Arabic-speaking countries, English teachers from English-speaking nations, and a teacher from France. The study situated participants' perceptions within a theoretical framework that integrated Hymes' communicative competence, Byram's intercultural communicative competence (ICC), and Baker's intercultural awareness (ICA).

Local English teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of culture, indicating an awareness of both their own culture and that of others. This aligned with Byram's ICC framework's "knowledge" aspect, which encompassed specific insights into social groups and societal interactions. Similarly,

local students distinguished between learning language and culture. They emphasized the importance of understanding different cultures and how it facilitated effective communication in English. Their early exposure to English shaped their nuanced understanding of language and culture, although this perspective may not have been universally representative.

Arabic-speaking teachers exhibited a heightened awareness of culture, stemming from their extensive experience within local communities. Their ability to associate their own culture with that of their students reflected a shared local experience, enabling a unique approach to teaching that enhanced relatability. English language teachers from English-speaking countries defined culture as a combination of shared beliefs, traditions, and norms within a particular society or community. They emphasised the importance of understanding both their own culture and those of their students, negotiating mutual understanding. The French teacher, while distinct in her background, displayed a clear distinction between her own culture and the culture of others. Her experiences in learning Arabic and teaching English within the local context fostered a sense of shared learning experiences and persistence in language acquisition. In the focus group, teacher participants reiterated the importance of teaching culture alongside English. They highlighted the interconnectedness of language and culture and the need for students to gain a broad understanding of different cultures and global perspectives.

In summary, the study found differing levels of intercultural communication awareness among participants at the English Language Centre in Madinah, highlighting the qualitative nature of the findings and the potential limitations in generalizing to a wider population.

7.3.2   Practices

The research investigated the practices of ICA among participants of different linguacultural backgrounds in the ELC. It encompassed a range of cultural backgrounds and incorporated various theoretical frameworks, including Hymes' communicative competence, Byram's Intercultural (ICC), and Baker's (ICA). The study explored the practices of local English teachers who taught students from diverse local backgrounds. These teachers leveraged their shared local culture, emphasising the use of local examples like camel racing and traditional dishes to connect with students. This approach aligned with Byram's ICC framework, specifically the "skills of interpreting and relating" (savoir comprendre), allowing students to interpret textbook content within their own cultural understanding.

 Arabic-speaking teachers from neighbouring countries showed an adequate understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds. They integrated elements of local culture and general knowledge of international cuisines into their teaching. They also employed code-switching to

facilitate understanding. Moreover, these teachers tapped into shared Islamic culture by relating it to global cultural practices. For example, they explained the Islamic dietary laws in the context of international cuisine discussions. Furthermore, the English-speaking teachers from English-speaking countries used a multimodal approach to engage students. They drew on local linguistic and physical culture, such as local phrases and landmarks, to create a more relatable learning experience. They also connected with students by referring to shared Islamic culture and values when discussing topics like the permissibility of eating certain animals. This demonstrated their ability to connect with students on a deeper cultural level. Similarly, the French teacher employed a multimodal approach, introducing students to activities that could be done on weekends in Madinah. She connected her own French culture with the local context, showcasing cultural differences and similarities. This approach highlighted the importance of considering different cultural contexts when using verb tenses and emphasised the significance of shared culture in the classroom.

In conclusion, the research revealed that teachers used various strategies to integrate ICA into their teaching practices. They drew upon local and international cultures, linguistic elements, and shared cultural values to make the learning experience more engaging and relevant for students. These practices aligned with the principles of ICC and CA, enhancing the students' understanding of different cultures and global perspectives. However, it's important to note that these practices should not lead to overgeneralisations about cultures and should be approached with sensitivity and respect for cultural diversity.

7.4   RQ2- What relationships exist between instructional materials utilized in the research setting and participants' understanding of intercultural communication awareness?

This research significantly highlights the role of teaching materials in English language education at Taibah University and their influence on intercultural communication awareness among students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Here are some key findings and implications based on the investigation:

7.4.1   Key Findings

The English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University primarily utilizes ready-made materials from Cambridge University Press. While these resources provide a structured approach to language instruction, some participants noted an initial overemphasis on Western cultures, which they perceived as limiting student engagement and cultural relatability.

In response to this feedback, the curriculum committee has undertaken efforts to adapt these materials, demonstrating an increased awareness of the significance of cultural relevance. The adoption of the second edition of the Unlock series reflects an initiative to incorporate more diverse cultural content, in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Although the updated teaching materials now present a broader range of cultural representations compared to previous editions, some participants still expressed the need for a stronger emphasis on Arabic and regional cultures, including those of Lebanon, Syria, and Morocco.

The analysis of the textbooks categorized cultural references into four groups: Source, Target, International Target, and Culturally Neutral. The findings indicated that international and target cultures predominated the content, while source cultures and culturally neutral elements were underrepresented. This suggests a prioritization of global perspectives at the expense of local cultural representation.

Employing the "four Ps" framework—products, practices, perspectives, and persons—the study revealed that while practices and products were well represented, perspectives and individuals received comparatively less emphasis. This indicates a need for a more holistic representation of cultures that encompasses not only tangible aspects but also the values and viewpoints that shape them.

7.4.2   Implications

Effective educational materials must facilitate intercultural communication by incorporating a diverse array of cultural representations. Achieving a balance between local relevance and global exposure is essential, particularly in today's increasingly interconnected world.

Teachers play a pivotal role in mediating between instructional materials and students' needs. Professional development sessions that emphasize cultural nuances are critical for equipping educators with the necessary skills to adapt materials effectively and address cultural sensitivities.

While localizing content can enhance student engagement, it is equally important to provide a broad intercultural perspective that aligns with the Ministry of Education's objectives for fostering intercultural engagement. This dual approach supports students in understanding both their own cultural identities and those of others.

Future research could benefit from a more comprehensive exploration of students' perceptions regarding cultural content, potentially utilizing surveys or focus groups. Such insights would be invaluable for informing ongoing curriculum development and instructional practices.

Continuous assessment and innovation in curriculum design are imperative. Educational materials should evolve to reflect the dynamic nature of cultures and the realities of globalization, thereby equipping learners to navigate a multicultural world effectively.

7.4.3 Conclusion

In summary, the research underscores the importance of teaching materials in shaping intercultural communication competencies among students at Taibah University. By prioritizing diverse cultural content, adapting to local contexts, and emphasizing teachers' roles in material implementation, English language education can better prepare students for meaningful intercultural exchanges. This holistic approach not only aligns with educational standards but also enriches the learning experience, fostering a deeper understanding of various cultural perspectives.

7.5 RQ3- What is the relationship between the socio-cultural milieu and participants' perceptions and understandings of intercultural communication awareness?

To address the third research question, this study explored the social and cultural aspects of Intercultural Communication Awareness (ICA) within the context of English language teaching at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. Conducted in Madinah, a culturally rich setting, the research engaged diverse participants, including local teachers, Arabic-speaking educators, English-speaking instructors, an international teacher from France, and a focus group. Their varying backgrounds provided a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics influencing ICA, particularly with respect to linguistic and cultural exchanges.

The inquiry began with an examination of the socio-cultural dynamics at Taibah University and their impact on participants' understanding of intercultural communication. The diverse experiences and perspectives of the participants illuminated the intricate relationships among language, culture, and communication within the local context.

This study was framed within the context of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a transformative initiative aimed at diversifying the economy, fostering cultural openness, and promoting social reform. This period represents a significant cultural shift, often conceptualized as "before the social shift" and

"after the social shift," during which English language teaching gained prominence alongside increased attention to cultural adaptation and sensitivity. Notably, global events such as the 9/11 attacks heightened scrutiny over teaching materials, leading to a more culturally attuned educational landscape.

Prior to the social shift, English instruction was constrained by cultural taboos, particularly regarding sensitive topics such as gender, politics, and religion. Professional development initiatives reflected this caution, placing Western educators—often unfamiliar with local norms—in challenging positions. Instances of culturally inappropriate references, including mentions of alcohol or Western dating practices, emerged, necessitating adaptations in pedagogical methods over time. These adjustments underscore the critical importance of cultural awareness in the classroom.

The findings indicated that teachers navigated these cultural complexities through feedback loops in their teaching practices. Hymes' concept of appropriateness is particularly relevant here, as educators continuously modified their examples and instructional methods to align with local cultural norms. Interestingly, even younger students demonstrated an awareness of historical cultural constraints, suggesting a deeply ingrained understanding of Saudi cultural narratives across generations.

The study further examined how Vision 2030 transformed participants' perceptions of intercultural communication awareness. The initiative's emphasis on cultivating a high-performance culture underscores the necessity of intercultural competence among students. The research identified a significant gap in existing studies, particularly in relation to bilingual interactions within diverse environments such as workplaces and communities. Byram's model of the 'intercultural speaker' served as a foundational framework for this study, highlighting the essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for bridging cultural and linguistic divides—competencies that are increasingly vital for Saudi students.

The socio-cultural transformations following Vision 2030 are particularly evident in Madinah, where there is a concerted effort towards promoting tourism and entertainment. However, the rapid modernization and development of international attractions have generated tensions between the preservation of cultural heritage and the embrace of progress. This reflects broader societal challenges in balancing rapid change with traditional values.

Moreover, topics previously regarded as taboo, such as women's empowerment and global cultural interactions, are increasingly accepted, partly due to enhanced access to social media. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that students' understanding of culture often remains

framed within essentialist perspectives, viewing cultural identities primarily through national lenses.

7.5.1   Conclusion

In conclusion, changing cultural practices and growing interest in global interactions have created a more complex environment for English language teaching in Saudi Arabia. Although there are positive trends, such as increased openness to diverse cultures and greater inclusivity in education, challenges persist, including students' essentialist views of culture and the need for comprehensive assessment tools. Ultimately, promoting acceptance and understanding within Saudi Arabia's evolving cultural landscape is vital for preparing future generations for effective intercultural interactions. This study enhances our understanding of ICA in a specific socio-cultural context and underscores its significance.

7.6   Contributions of the Study

This research began by unravelling the complexities of "what is" before delving into the realm of "what ought to be." This methodological approach aligns closely with the perspective articulated by Byram and Feng (2004, p. 150), who assert that educators contemplating reforms or innovations frequently adopt a distinct viewpoint. In the context of this study, the initial phase involves a comprehensive exploration of the existing landscape, necessitating an in-depth understanding of the current situation regarding Intercultural Awareness (ICA) within the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. This examination encompasses both macro and micro levels, facilitating a holistic understanding of the intercultural dynamics at play.

By gathering empirical insights during this initial phase, the research establishes a solid foundation upon which prospective interventions and enhancements can be constructed. This meticulous documentation of "what is there," as advocated by Byram and Feng, allows for a more informed and contextually sensitive approach toward shaping "what ought to be" in the domain of ICA within language education. Such a nuanced understanding extends beyond mere observation; it emphasizes the significance of education policies, the intercultural environment, and the participants' awareness of ICA, all contributing to a comprehensive framework for analysis (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2023; Hoven and Al Qahtani, 2023; Baker, 2017; Byram and Feng, 2004).

The contributions of this research to the field of language education are substantial. By providing empirical data, the findings can inform policymakers, teacher development programs, and English language educators about the need to rethink teaching approaches and objectives in light of

contemporary understandings of ICA. Aligning these educational strategies with the Vision 2030 initiative in Saudi Arabia is crucial for meeting the communication needs of increasingly interconnected societies. Data on educators' perspectives and practices can drive changes in teacher education, addressing the gap between institutional policies, educational practices, and learner expectations. Moreover, insights into participants' perceptions and practices regarding ICA can re-evaluate existing pedagogical strategies and concepts utilized in English language classrooms, particularly in countries where English is not the first language. In essence, this research offers valuable insights aimed at enhancing the teaching and learning of ICA in English language education, and encourages the development of more effective and culturally responsive teaching methodologies.

7.7   The Study limitations and suggestions for future studies

7.7.1   Project Limitations

The global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an unprecedented shift in educational practices, sparking a rapid transition to online and blended learning methods across various educational institutions. While this shift was crucial for maintaining continuity in education during a global crisis, it also highlighted significant gaps and challenges within existing pedagogical frameworks. The deployment of Learning Management Systems (LMS), such as Blackboard, played a fundamental role in this transition, providing the infrastructure to facilitate remote instruction while adhering to social distancing protocols. Key studies (e.g., Fortanet-Gómez & Ruiz-Madrid, 2023; Oraif & Elyas, 2021) underscore the relevance of these platforms in delivering content and supporting student engagement during this period.

This research capitalizes on the unique context of the pandemic to delve into how educators integrated multimodal strategies into their curriculum design and content delivery through these digital platforms. However, while this exploration reveals important insights, several limitations warrant discussion.

7.7.2   Limitations around Multimodality Online

Multimodality, a pedagogical concept characterized by the blend of various communicative modes—such as text, audio, images, and video—has emerged as a critical component of effective teaching and learning processes during this shift to online environments. Research by Lim *et al.* (2022) indicates that the assimilation of multimodal resources can significantly enhance lesson engagement and deepen informational comprehension. By offering varied representational

forms, multimodality allows educators to present complex ideas in more accessible ways, catering to diverse learning styles and needs.

However, the effective implementation of multimodal strategies within online contexts has encountered substantial hurdles. For instance, technical issues regarding internet connectivity and access to digital resources can impede the full utilization of multimodal elements. Additionally, the rapid transition meant that many educators and students were unprepared or inadequately trained to leverage these modalities fully, which could affect overall educational outcomes. This circumstance suggests a need for further exploration into how these modalities can be deliberately designed and effectively employed in predominantly digital contexts to optimize student learning experiences.

7.7.3 Limitations of Online Instruction

While the advantages of a multimodal approach are evident, the transition to an online educational framework has simultaneously resulted in significant losses associated with traditional face-to-face instruction. A particularly critical limitation of online learning environments is the restricted capacity for non-verbal communication—such as body language, facial expressions, and environmental cues—that are integral to effective interpersonal engagement in physical classrooms. The vibrant and spontaneous exchanges that can occur in person, where dialogue flows naturally and intuitively, are often diminished in virtual settings, where interaction may rely heavily on chat functions or video calls.

This primary reliance on textual participation raises concerns regarding the qualitative aspects of student engagement, potentially leading to superficial interactions that lack depth. For example, the discussion in Extract 6.10 reveals how students felt constrained by chat functionalities that can inhibit nuanced conversations. As a result, educators face challenges in fostering a sense of community and connection among learners, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of online pedagogy. Therefore, future inquiries should focus on strategies to bridge these communication gaps, exploring innovative techniques to encourage richer interactions in virtual classrooms.

7.7.4 Limitations in Sample Size and Range of Perspectives

Another notable limitation of this study is the restricted sample size, particularly the limited number of student participants involved in the research. Although the goal was to gather a comprehensive view of both educator and student perceptions regarding Intercultural Awareness (ICA) within the English Language Centre (ELC), the study ultimately engaged only four students.

This modest representation arises from the voluntary nature of participation, with reliance on teacher invitations to encourage student involvement.

Despite the limited number of participants, the rich insights derived from the in-depth qualitative interviews with these four students provided valuable perspectives on their experiences. Their narratives offer an essential glimpse into the complexities of online learning during the pandemic and highlight individual experiences that could resonate with a wider student demographic. Nevertheless, the small sample size constrains the generalisability of the findings. Future studies should strive to include a larger, more diverse participant pool to validate these initial insights, enabling researchers to capture a broader spectrum of experiences and enhance the robustness of the data.

7.7.5 Limitations in Accounting for Religion

The research addressed Islam and religion due to their frequent mentions by participants, recognizing that Islam significantly shapes the cultural context of English language education in Saudi Arabia. While these themes were examined as much as possible, given the researcher's insider perspective, the primary focus remained on intercultural communication and linguistic elements rather than a comprehensive analysis of religious influences. Therefore, the discussion of Islam is limited to instances that naturally emerged from the data. Religion, especially Islam, requires further detailed investigation, particularly regarding its impact on English language teaching and learning. Future research should explore the nuanced ways in which religious beliefs affect teaching practices and learner experiences, a topic this study touched upon but did not thoroughly analyse.

7.7.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the rapid acceleration of online learning prompted by the pandemic has catalysed a profound reassessment of pedagogical strategies, underscoring the critical significance of multimodal approaches for effective communication and engagement. While the inherent limitations of online education present noteworthy challenges, the qualitative insights derived from participating students reveal the multifaceted and rich nature of their experiences, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of ICA within the ELC framework.

This research reinforces the importance of ongoing adaptation and innovation in instructional practices as the educational landscape continues to evolve. As educators strive to cultivate online environments that promote meaningful interactions both with the content and among learners, it becomes essential to address the barriers posed by digital learning formats actively. Moving

forward, future research should explore additional strategies and modalities aimed at enhancing the online learning experience, ensuring that it remains inclusive, responsive, and effective for all students. Emphasizing the need for collaborative approaches, feedback mechanisms, and professional development can further enrich the teaching and learning process in increasingly digital classrooms.

7.7.7 Suggestions for future studies

The dynamic nature of culture, as viewed through the lens of Intercultural Awareness (ICA), was vividly illustrated by the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in this research, which focused on the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. This study leveraged the intercultural communication environment that exists not only within the university but also in the broader context of the city of Madinah. Initially, there was an ambitious plan to explore ICA in two universities located in the same city: Taibah University, which hosts the ELC where both local and international English teachers instruct local students, and another university with an Arabic Language Centre that teaches Arabic to international students. The goal was to investigate how both institutions integrate ICA into their language teaching and learning practices.

However, due to time constraints, the research ultimately focused on a single university, allowing for a more in-depth exploratory approach. While this decision limited the scope of the study, it is recommended that future research consider the other university's Arabic Language Centre, particularly in light of its potential to provide a complementary perspective on ICA. A comparative study examining ICA practices between Taibah University and the other institution could yield valuable insights into the nuances of intercultural communication awareness across different language teaching and learning environments.

Future studies could benefit from a deeper exploration of the role of religion, particularly Islam, in intercultural communication within English language teaching. While this research briefly addressed the intersection of religion and culture as raised by participants, it lacked the scope for an in-depth examination of how Islamic values and practices affect teaching methods and student engagement. Given Islam's influence on societal norms and educational frameworks in Saudi Arabia, focused research could investigate the specific ways religious identity intersects with intercultural awareness in language classrooms. This is especially relevant for understanding how English, as a global lingua franca, is taught and perceived in a context deeply rooted in Islamic traditions.

Furthermore, Previous research underscores the significance of ICA for language education and intercultural development. Studies across various contexts have consistently highlighted its

importance (Baker, 2012; 2015a; Yu & Van Maele, 2018; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Abdzadeh & Baker, 2020; Humphreys & Baker, 2021). These investigations have meticulously described different facets of ICA, including students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward intercultural communication. However, this particular research did not aim to directly facilitate the development of ICA within a classroom setting. Instead, it adopted a holistic exploratory approach, engaging with educational stakeholders and delving deeper into the ELC's context.

The decision to refrain from actively cultivating ICA within the study was largely influenced by time constraints and the complexities involved in such pedagogical initiatives. Nevertheless, the researcher hopes that the insights generated from this study will be valuable to fellow researchers and educational stakeholders. It is anticipated that this research will lay the groundwork for future endeavours focused on implementing dedicated intercultural development courses and conducting empirical investigations.

Such future studies should not only aim to deepen the understanding of ICA but also actively engage in its cultivation within educational contexts. By doing so, they can contribute to developing more culturally responsive pedagogies that enhance students' intercultural competencies, ultimately preparing them for a globalized world. Engaging with the complexities of ICA in language education will not only enrich the learning experience but also foster a more inclusive and understanding educational environment.

Appendix A   Teacher Participants Questions Guide

Questions guide	RQs
- Education and Cultural backgrounds. - Experience learning and teaching English - Why did you choose to teach at ELC in Taibah University? - How can you explain your teaching approach during the class.	(Introductory Questions)
Interviewees' own culture	RQ1
- How do you define culture? -How do you explain a cultural theme in the book? -From which perspective or cultural background do you explain a cultural event from the textbook?	RQ1
The interviewees' own culture in connection with different societies	RQ1
-How do you answer questions about the cultural elements that appeared in the textbook? Can you give me an example? -Did you asked the administration to change any aspect from the textbook? If yes, what was the rationale behind your request?	RQ2
The social-cultural settings that affect the understanding of ICA	RQ3
- What kind of cultural experiences did you gain from being in the context? - Do you recall any incidents when you answered a question using your own cultural background experience?	RQ3

Appendix B   Students Participants Questions Guide

Questions guide	RQs
- Education and Cultural backgrounds. - Experience learning English - Why did you choose to study at ELC in Taibah University? - How can you explain your process in learning English language.	(Introductory Questions)
Interviewees' own culture	RQ1
- How do you define culture? -What do you think about the cultural themes in the textbook? - In your opinion, which type of teachers have the best teaching abilities in the English language centre: Local teacher, Arabic-speaking teacher, or English-speaking teacher. And why?	RQ1
The interviewees' own culture in connection with different societies	RQ1
-Did you have any question about the themes in the textbook that were not relative to English learning? - Can you give me an example of unit from the textbook? What was that unit about? Why do you think that you remembered this unit but not others?	RQ2
The social-cultural settings that affect the understanding of ICA	RQ3
- What kind of cultural experiences did you gain from being in the context? - Do you recall any incidents when you asked a question using your own cultural background experience?	RQ3

Appendix C   Administrators Participants Questions Guide

Questions guide	RQs
- Education and Cultural backgrounds. - Experience learning and teaching English - Why did you choose to teach at ELC in Taibah University? - How can you explain your teaching approach during the class. - Why did you choose to be in the curriculum committee?	(Introductory Questions)
Interviewees' own culture	RQ1
- How do you define culture? -How do you explain a cultural theme in the book? -From which perspective or cultural background do you explain a cultural event from the textbook? - Do you recall any incidents when you answered a question using your own cultural background experience?	RQ1
The interviewees' own culture in connection with different societies	RQ1
-How do you answer questions about the cultural elements that appeared in the textbook? Can you give me an example? - Did you asked the administration to change any aspect from the textbook? If yes, what was the rationale behind your request?	RQ2
The social-cultural settings that affect the understanding of ICA	RQ3
- What kind of cultural experiences did you gain from being in the context? -What is the process of determining whether a theme in the teaching materials is suitable for the context in hand. - Did you receive any comments regarding the content of the textbook from teachers or students?	RQ3

Appendix D Using NVivo

Appendix E Extracts from the Participants' Interviews (A1, A2, A3, A4, E1, E2, E3, E4, S1, S2, S3, Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4)

A1 Arabic Teacher

A1 Arabic Teacher

1- When I first arrived, it was like a bit difficult because of the cultural differences and the way
2- people taught and you know, what the language people used and the ideas they had. Like,
3- more and more, I started to understand what the differences are. And I started to act on
4- them, especially when I started, like, friends from outside work. Which was like, a very
5- good thing like, that supported my teaching. Okay, good. Yeah, it did in many parts,
6- because I started like to my friends about the things that I go through and experiences that
7- I encounter, and decided to give me advice about, let's say, the way to handle situations or
8- the words to use, especially with the, let's say, the low level of students because I needed
9- to use Arabic. Like sometimes it was difficult for me to use the Arabic that I knew for the
10- situation that I was in, at times. So yeah, that's it. wanted to be in a place that was like, let's
11- say, with similar cultural ideas, or similar cultural backgrounds. When I first like, got the
12- interview done, I was interviewed by three people. One of them was Saudi guy, and he he
13- convinced me to come and like the way he talked and with the way he presented the place,
14- was he was very finally what I wouldn't have interview when I felt that I could speak out my
15- mind. I told him many things, that was like many things that were about my personality or
16- about my life, and they didn't even mind. They even like the interview more. And that gave
17- me a push me to come and personally, when I first arrived, to be honest, was very
18- pleasant. The place was very nice. People were good, smiling most of the time. And that
19- gave me like, you know what? A liking towards the place. People were very nice to me. I
20- started to learn about them and started teaching them a bit about myself. And it was really
21- a very nice experience after now. I'm still like having a very good experience.

Interviewer

22- Okay, great. So may I ask you, like I want to, can you would you mind if you can explain
23- your teaching process or teaching approach like at the beginning of your teaching, and
24- now with experience what kind of things that change in your teaching? Like, first of
25- all, how was? Yeah, okay.

A1 Arabic Teacher

26- I don't think I understand. Okay, class, like, the first time I get into a class here, Medina, it
27- was like, a four o'clock class, I remember that class very clearly, because like, it was four
28- o'clock, the students were like, you know, very tired, because they, I wouldn't, and a guy
29- wearing jeans or whatever, that they didn't like me, I guess. I didn't like them, to be honest.
30- Because the way they looked and whatever, and they had this look like, this guy is like a
31- novice, he wears jeans, or the way I looked was, like, you know, for me to see now was a
32- bit like, let's say childish, I didn't understand what the place was. And I didn't have like, that
33- idea that people here are like teachers in this place should be like, you know, should look
34- different. They, the people in Medina have very high respect towards like, especially
35- teachers at the universities. Yeah. And I didn't act at the time. When he first like started
36- teaching, it was very formal. I was trying to make connections between the culture that I
37- had, and the culture in this place. And it was too hard for me, to be honest, because even
38- the laughed that I had the jokes that I remembered the moves that I had, or like that, that I
39- acted, even examples that I had in mind, were very different than the culture that I was,
40- like, you know, encountering was too difficult for me. Even to give examples, I would like
41- give a sentence using, he drank wine, for example. And students would be like, what, what,
42- why, what do you mean? And then I would just, like, turned it into juice. Or like, Yeah, that

43- guy met his girlfriend. And we would be like, Hey, yo, what are you talking about? What do
44- you mean, my girlfriend, and I have to explain many other things to go into that place, or to
45- go through the lesson. But by time, like, when the time when time as I told you, I had like a
46- very good friends, Saudi friends, I still do. And they gave me advice on how to deal with
47- situations. And now I just like the students wouldn't even know that I'm not Saudi. Like
48- most of the students that I meet, mistake me for a Saudi. Because Oh, okay, I yeah, I have
49- the accent, I can use like, the, the, let's say the appropriate accent or Medina people both
50- like money or hobby. I can just give examples for both. I can give, like some poetry and I
51- can just like, you know, I know things about the place more than I did. And okay, it helped
52- me a lot. Yeah, it does help me a lot. Even MIT does anything online.

Interviewer

53- Okay, that's great. May I ask you, regarding the textbook, where you mentioned something
54- about wine or girlfriend or so on? Were these were, were these examples, or the things
55- occurred during the classroom? Was it derived from the book textbook that you were
56- teaching in? Lego time? Yeah, at that time?

A1 Arabic Teacher

57- Yeah. Yeah. At that time, we had the interactions, the interactions axis and the other one.
58- They weren't like, using Oxford I guess? Yeah. Yeah. Oxford, I remember. Yeah, they
59- weren't designed. They weren't designed for the Middle East. So these examples would be
60- in the book. And like the teachers were requested at the time by like, default, I should have
61- a thought about it, then that, by default, would like out of respect to the culture and place
62- these examples should be like the unite into something that would be like more secure,
63- more suitable to the culture that we're like, in our lives? Yes. So it was like a bit. It was a bit
64- for me, it was a bit difficult, because I, you know, you need because the book was big. And
65- I needed to, we needed to follow the curriculum and derive things of our own. So yeah, but
66- then, like, you're like, the number of teachers at the time was only like 12 or 14. We didn't
67- have the power to like to change the curriculum. The number of students was very limited.

Interviewer

68- What do you what do you mentioned at that time, what do you want to just remind me to
69- what what time was it when you first started, like how many years ago

A1 Arabic Teacher

70- 2010, Yeah, so At that time, we didn't have the power to change the curriculum or like to
71- play with the court. Because the number of students was limited, then, you know, they
72- started like just saying that we got number of students in the university, and they had the
73- power to change or we had the power to change what the book is orange, the ramekins,
74- changing things in Arizona.

Interviewer

75- Okay, good. So when you when you mentioned this from the books, do you think the
76- books were dependent on which kind of culture like they were targeted for? English? Like
77- as a global citizen, for all?

A1 Arabic Teacher

78- I guess they weren't like, yeah, they were, like, designed to meet the needs of global
79- citizens like citizens. Yeah. Not, not just for United States or United Kingdom or global
80- citizens. Yeah, global citizens. And they never thought about the culture of the
81- Arab world, when they designed these books, because like, you know, it's like, global, it
82- would never like, they didn't at the time, think of like, you know, culture specific books,
83- something like that.

Interviewer

84- And may ask you, like, Would you mind if you can consider me like, someone who
85- doesn't know the place? Like, what? So I like, Well, can you tell me what kind of cultural
86- sensitive topics that should mention or should not be mentioned? Like, in, in the English
87- teaching class?

A1 Arabic Teacher

88- Like, the thing is, like, you know, I'm a funny guy. I depend on like, being funny in
89- feature, because I think that's, you know, if you did shoot, it's like, you would like, what's

90- your argument?

91- Yes, with xiety, and so on, they will feel more, was more like, Yeah, more like stress free

92- classes, I would never like go and, like, kick them or like punch them in the faces. But I

93- would use examples that would make them laugh, or like, smile, at least. So the examples

94- that I had, as I told you, the word like built the US, you could use words that relate to

95- woman drinking, going out to making out whatever, nobody would just like, feel sensitive

96- about. When I first like, that's here, I just started to learn that people shouldn't like be

97- mentioning things about like, let's say, genders, relationships, males and females.

98- Religion, especially when you don't know a lot about these things.

Interviewer

99- Relationship, can you can you give me the one of the one of the examples that occurred to

100- you while teaching like, if you if you can recall.

A1 Arabic Teacher

101- Yeah, like, the first time I left the place I, you know, my wife used to drive. And they were

102- like, at the time, my wife. She used to drive. And I was like, giving them an example

103- about woman driving. And I told him, my wife was driving me around. And they were like,

104- what was said, like, yeah, my wife, like, drove me around. And she was going, like, 100

105- miles an hour. And they were like, what? Do you even like, your wife was like, driving

106- you I will like it. And they said, Yeah, she drove me around, because they were like,

107- colourful, colourful, colorful, you know, the meanings of the word that I thought it's a good

108- word. You know, I felt very proud of myself. And they started like, laughing cough with

109- the flu or whatever. And I thought to myself, like, hey, that must be a bad word. Because

110- of the way it was said that I asked her out, and they told me like, hey, we don't have this

111- thing happening. The man is responsible for everything. And a woman like don't drive in

112- the place. And that was a starter. I never liked me to death again. Okay.

Interviewer

113- Yeah. So it was a good lesson, but I do know that there are like, when at whenever there

114- is something conflicted with your, does this stop you from teaching English? Like, if you

115- if you keep mentioning this, like these events are these things that is not in the Arabic

116- culture? Because the thing is, you share Arabic language with these students, but you

117- don't share the background, just local culture.

A1 Arabic Teacher

118- Yeah, that's the thing. What I didn't like, at the time, I made my, let's say, my approach to

119- I would learn no jokes, to be honest. No, the guys going out with the guys taught me new

120- jokes, new words, new expressions that I would use in class, and that made my life

121- easier. I would like to avoid going into like, let's say, conversations that have like

122- comfortable sensitive issues. And then I learned my own, let's say expressions and my

123- own things that's related to their culture, which was like, nice at the time. I don't know I

124- still like I never like the me luckily, I never liked care, I don't even remember that I had

125- any bad encounter with my students. Because I focus as I told you on the, let's say

126- personal part of the teaching, I allow my students to be, like similar friends to be my

127- senior friends. And I just like, even when we talk, I try to be nice to them. Give them like

128- position that they can ask an answer. And I will tell them a joke. And I don't even mind if

129- only one student understood it. Because he will explain it to the others. Okay, yeah.

130- Yeah, that would, like, let's say, elevates the level of interaction in my class. And that

131- helped me a lot.

Interviewer

132- Okay, that's great. Would you mind if we can move on? So, the next next part, which is

133- like, this is the things that you encountered before, and you told me that the books were

134- changed and so on, so they can be suitable to the culture to the Arabic culture? How

135- about the the culture, for this, the culture of the students these days, like, I think, in

136- Kane, and kind of, like, for example, clothes or kind of examples and so on, like, for

137- example, when you mentioned your wife driving at that time was not like, was not

138- appropriate. But now with with the country, new, new, like Virgin and so on. There are a

139- lot of changes, and that one in teaching it does that effect in your teaching English, like

140- in these two, recent two years?

A1 Arabic Teacher

141- To be honest, like, I became more savvy than my

Interviewer

142- Okay. Can you explain this?

A1 Arabic Teacher

143- Honestly, I would honestly tell you that I you know, I started getting Tobs like maybe like
144- four or five years ago. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I started to hear that thing. And I started to use
145- the even the, let's say, the, the accent that people use the dialects. I know, like, different
146- dialects now. And I use them perfectly. Yeah. And now the suicide like more of like,
147- international students, they're like, they dress differently. And they talk differently. They
148- started listening to music by examples before, would never like, I would never say I was
149- like listening to music. My service. Now I like everybody's listening to music, more than
150- not writing. And things became very different. So now I'm going back to my life to the
151- original me.

Interviewer

152- Which is was 20 years ago. Yeah.

A1 Arabic Teacher

153- Well, yeah. Now I'm becoming like, more of you don't want these things are like built in.
154- And you're like personality? Yeah, just like you just hide them. You didn't just delete
155- them. We'll just hide them for a while, like, for four reasons. Yeah. Yeah,
156- to adapt to the country itself. But now, I'm just going back to the old way, but with a
157- different way of, let's say, dressing or uniform, I still wear the Thob now. And my students
158- like, let's say 10% Only, wears the Thobs now, and they have these very stylish hairstyles,
159- and they have these stylish cars and whatever. And I started to feel like, teaching itself
160- became easier, even now. Because most of my students, yeah, most of my students,
161- most of the students all over the kingdom, do understand what English is, even with, like,
162- because, like, they started to listen to music and watch movies on Netflix, or whatever.
163- And they started to understand even the jokes that I would just like, tell a long time ago,
164- we understand perfectly now. And they even tell me jokes that I take some time to
165- fathom or understand. Because I wouldn't, I would just like be what, how do you know
166- these words? How do you know these examples? And I would just as soon as would be
167- like, you know, even me smiles that I didn't see before the change itself made teaching
168- for everybody, especially for people who lived outside the kingdom very much easier.
169- Because even the level of the students the level of the students would know about
170- different cultures now. A watch many movies, many series, many other killer many other
171- things from different countries. Some ways students speak Korean. Some others can
172- just like, tell jokes in Spanish, like not the ones that I have now. Like yeah, in general, it
173- was like because then growing up, they started to learn things from movies and other
174- things. And they would tell me things are like things in different languages he didn't one
175- of my daughter's speaks very good Korean from, like watching movies and series. Okay.
176- Yeah, it seems like you're coming ready to frame and teaching is becoming getting much
177- easier okay. So, they grasp the language better than now because of the for example,
178- exposure, the exposure to different cultures, yeah.

Interviewer

179- Okay. May I move to like, still in the same topic, but may ask you. So the colour the
180- cultural sensitivity level or the cultural sensitivity topics is not as before, like,

A1 Arabic Teacher

181- oh, no, no, no the level decreased, like, enormously, honestly. Now, you should consider
182- these things when teaching, you don't tell your students about like girlfriends and ever,
183- though they know what the meaning of these things is. Now, you could tell things, but
184- you don't, let's say 10, to teach them about them. If they know about them, that's fine. It's
185- up to them. But you don't teach them about like the sensitive things that they were like,
186- raised on, you don't change them, you will just like when mentioning them, you have to
187- be a bit careful, especially with matters that relate to religion and woman,

172

188- either, okay. So still with this, like openness and exposure to other cultures, there are
189- still some few constraints, maybe a few of them before, I think before but they
190- relate to, let's say they relate to the way these like students were like crazed, said about
191- the place itself, the place is like a normal place like any other place. But like, because of
192- like, we have students coming from different places in the kingdom, some of them might
193- come from villages, that they didn't, let's say arrive at that level of openness. Okay, the
194- city, yeah, the people of the city itself, Medina, are very much different than before. But
195- like the people coming from villages and areas surrounding place, would still have still
196- learn about the openness, then it's time to know all these things.
197- Okay, so you can see the differences between both students, but you can, while you're
198- teaching, you still have these constraints, why you have to manage, you have to manage
199- when you use them have to manage, like, because you can't be open, like, for whatever
200- body even like when dealing with the students outside Dallas and everything, you
201- wouldn't be able to, let's say, talk to all the students in the same way. Some students
202- have, like, let's say, Things at home, some people have, like their own ideas. So you can
203- just like, use the same method with everybody, I would just like laugh with some stories, I
204- wouldn't like make my class as a stand-up comedy. You know, the students like to learn.
205- So you have to be you have to have some balance between your personality, your
206- perspectives, and the things they're like coming to learn. So you need like, an even
207- because of the age, they silly on all the things that you tell them? They just like, memorize
208- them. And I wouldn't be I don't want to be responsible for changing their ideas about how
209- life goes.

Interviewer

210- Okay. Yeah, you have you have to be cautious at the same time, like you, you having
211- less constraint than before, but you have, but still you there are some things that you
212- have to take care of while yes. Okay. And may I ask you? Another thing is, that's okay.
213- How about the context of Medina, you told me that you're one of the Saudi like one of
214- the Saudi teachers who like encouraged you to be in Medina and so on. And you told me
215- about this, there are some sort of sensitivity with the religious background and like within
216- the city, but how, how does this like affect your teaching? Did you bring any examples?
217- How does the context affect your teaching approach like the context of Medina?

A1 Arabic Teacher

218- I see now Medina is a holy city and people here are like supposed to be like, what
219- religious language people outside or even people in other cities. And they are. So you
220- know, teaching itself, especially with like, these kinds of textbooks, being like
221- international books, would like would just like you know, you would like to Going to, let's
222- say lessons that don't fit the place or don't touch the background of the students or like
223- one fit the context itself. Because you might encounter a picture or like an example that
224- was like mistakenly put in the book. So the best way to handle these situations was like
225- to have a good preparation for the lesson. I didn't just go into like, on the internet or
226- YouTube and she was like, listen, that can be given our chart without considering all the
227- religious and cultural background of the students. This would have harmed my, my
228- teaching, and this would kill the acceptance that the students have for me. Okay, what I
229- mean, the cultural context, yeah, the context of the city itself, made it let's say, even the
230- books more of our lightweight approach that older teachers have more of like a religious
231- one, you would use more examples that relate to religion, because the students would
232- understand them more. Because of the background. And the context of Medina itself. As
233- I told you, gave us all a chance I like teachers as a chance to learn more about the
234- country itself before teaching English itself.

Interviewer

235- What do you want to get direct? Remember any examples about this? Because, again, a
236- teaching students, like, I guess most of the students are not in the same religious level
237- or religious background. So it must, but but you're still considering this in your teaching.
238- So you knew that there, there are constraints and so on. So what were there any
239- examples to clarify this kind of confusion?

A1 Arabic Teacher

240- Yeah, when they'd like to use the word, like thrive for the word, or the word, you know,
241- when you explain these things to their students, and you want them to understand this
242- thing from, like, your, my background, I wanted them to understand, like, when you will
243- listen to music more, you could just like get more. They were like asking a lot about how
244- do we get better at English? Or how do we get better at English, I was giving them an
245- advice and advice that you have to listen more. And they wouldn't be like, listen to what I
246- would say like music. They wouldn't be like music, but like music, like Arabic music, I
247- would say no, no, listen to that singer, or like Eminem, why the other thing that I listened
248- to? And they would be like, Isn't there any like, you know, teaching programs, or like
249- audios that could recommend that don't have like using their music and demo?
250- Oh, you would ask this question. Yeah, like a Male Speaker instead of like a female, or
251- like a program or a show that doesn't show like all these females? And I would say no,
252- you should listen to music itself. And they will be like, Victorian, we don't understand. And
253- plus when they taught, and I wouldn't be like, just like, keep on repeating the song itself.
254- I show the effect on some of my students who weren't, like very strict when it came to
255- religion. And they started to give me words from the sons they started to need to listen to,
256- I talked about at the time, to be honest. But then, you know, my main aim was for the
257- students to get better at English. I didn't mind them listening to music, because I still do.
258- And I would like give them examples for movies. Like, I would just go to class and have,
259- like, I taught them once about the pronoun you mean subject, like object pronoun. There's
260- like this very amazing scene from washing out three, with Jackie Shan and the other tall
261- guy. Yeah, Chris Tucker, who me you, whatever. And I showed him and they were like, at
262- the start, they did some of the citizens that stood it and they were like, started lashing.
263- And others didn't even understand what the context was. What what they like why I wrote
264- in this example, but then they started to understand my way. And things became very
265- much easier for me. And I just like, some of the teachers would send me the students
266- comments on Twitter, about this, like, you know, teacher, that he's a very good teacher.
267- And I feel really proud of myself that I could have an effect on these students like even are

Interviewer

268- They so anonymous? If he'd do it?

A1 Arabic Teacher

269- Yeah, yeah. Which is a good thing. Believe me. Yeah, the context itself. atomics itself
270- never like it did affect my teaching. But it wasn't like it didn't prevent me from like
271- applying My way, I needed to have some manoeuvres to manipulate to, let's say,
272- improvise. But I didn't need to stop the way that I was going. I just like needed to adapt.
273- And that was like a very good way. Yeah.

Interviewer

274- Okay, great. I have another question. Okay. You mentioned like, some things about the
275- textbook that have to be changed. You mean, you mentioned like the examples and so
276- on? Is there another examples, like something brought up by a student or something
277- brought up by teachers that this page or this unit have things that need to be changed?
278- And did you talk about the administration of the ALC to us, when we used few skills, the
279- Atlas team committed, they were like lessons about cities, and some of the cities like
280- coastal cities, and they had pictures of me a woman who were like, wearing bikinis,
281- whatever. When we first saw the book, you know, we had a committee that needed to,
282- let's say, review the book to do some editing. And if it is, you know, that was a very good
283- example of

A1 Arabic Teacher

284- So yeah. So had like to raise it for the management and tell them like, we have disposes
285- of case we shouldn't be using these pictures. Then they contacted the publisher, and
286- they made the changes needed, but not on that. We continued using that book at the
287- time. But we skipped these lessons, that has to be spent prevailing, or revealing, like
288- energies.

Interviewer

289- And what did the book the book publisher, do after? Change them instantly? Like on the
290- second edition, which was very different than we had the third edition? And? Yeah, yeah.
291- Well, what did they replace it with? Do you recall or?

A1 Arabic Teacher

292- Yeah, I recall that they replaced the pictures, all the pictures, they just like, took them out
293- and put some pictures from the UAE or pictures from Judah. And they haven't changed
294- some of the names they used and the examples they had, or some of them were like
295- swimming with, like girls and these things to change the listening even.

Interviewer

296- Okay, good. Good. So there are there are still like, Is this, like, ongoing? Like a
297- committee? Like, yeah, ongoing? Or just like? No, no, it's ongoing. Whenever we want to
298- use a new book, we just like have this committee go over a book, or that book, or that
299- series and commentary for like, males and females, and have a look at the book that
300- helps. Like, we have this checklist that we need to fill in. And people would be marked
301- responsible for whatever they decide, You know what I mean? Okay, this would be made
302- dependent on their commitment on the ideas of that culture. May I ask you, have you
303- been a member of this committee? Or?

A1 Arabic Teacher

304- I was. Yeah, it was at the time. And it still is like, I'm still exploring. Okay, good. Yeah.
305- Like, what the queue skills, my name was on the second page and saw him play the
306- university was one of the others. And for this one, now, we use the unlock. I also was
307- particularly, we would like to note the team, like of different backgrounds, who had to
308- have a look at the book. So when I'm still in like a fight.
309- Okay, because my plan is to meet someone from the committee and you're already
310- doing this. Because she had for the committee. Just meet with the heads, you could meet
311- with the head. He's head of the curriculum units once you arrive in the kingdom. Yeah,
312- just have a meeting with him. He would give you very good ideas about this.

Interviewer

313- Okay, great. And he's teaching as well. He's teaching Yeah. Okay. Great. Great. Thank
314- you very much. And the so like, may I ask you? I think, I don't know they asked this
315- question or not, but with the changing of like a people like in Saudi Arabia, I think we've
316- changed now with the new vision and so on. And you mentioned that even the students
317- changed, but you still kept some of the values like that you think you think it's important,
318- but how can you explain some of the global things I know there are some themes in the
319- book that that have just British culture in it or anti Other Other themes in the book that
320- have American culture in it? Or does it or does own the book have global culture in
321- them, like global topics and so on?

A1 Arabic Teacher

322- Let's say that when we talk about places, one of the units, I guess they have the same
323- things about the UK, about London and how London is cultures that you could meet the
324- kinds of like food, they say the people, you would meet the history of London. Case. And
325- we have another one that talks about the EU, let's say the US about, I guess, maybe,
326- let's say it came in, like many, many other things, many other units, they were just like,
327- about, like the dangers of work, or were at work hazards. And they were talking about
328- like a case in the US, I guess that these books don't mean a soulmate to teach English,
329- they also mean to teach culture. Because when they, when we talked about festivals,
330- and one of the things, we talked about the festivals of China, and they explained what
331- the festivals of China are, then we explained at some of the festivals we have in China,
332- and we had like festivals, and the animal world festivals, and the, let's say, and the other
333- cultures, like turkey for the US looks like all the language, but they also teach students
334- about the culture because they want Well, I mean, like, the main intention of books is to
335- change, not the values, but the way people look at other parts of the world. Yes. Okay.
336- So yeah, they have these things, we have the single and they try to teach the values of
337- others, like what he will say, when he shook your head. And like, upside down in Arabic

338- means blah, blah, blah. And the thing is, the other thing in the in China and UK,
339- whatever, you when you go in the house, you should just like do 123 In China, 123 in the
340- US 123 and be okay. So they don't pay the only like teach English, they teach other
341- things, other parts or cultures of other parts of the world also. Okay, you can teach us
342- when they do things, when I explain things to my students, I've given them like three
343- different cultures. And unless I tell them about the American culture, the Jordanian
344- culture and the Saudi culture, and when we come badasses, and yellow, which is like
345- very nice that you would know about how things are done here, there and in their place.
346- And it will just like give them an insight on what's happening outside their own
347- community.

Interviewer

348- Okay, that's great. So like having a sharing? Can I infer from this that sharing the Arabic
349- language made you more accessible to other cultures that you can teach to students?
350- Ask do the students ask for it? Or do you like impulsively do that on your own?

A1 Arabic Teacher

351- No, it's like, it's part of the teacher's job to be fully aware of what's happening in the
352- world and try to convey this message to his or her students. Let's say once that when the
353- students see you, they see an example of somebody who's going to teach them not only
354- English, but values also. So if you know the values and cultures of others, you would just
355- like, let's say that I spread them into them. And they would like learn from these things. It
356- shouldn't be like a part of the teachers like duties or like tweak the teachers
357- understanding that as soon as I'm not there to learn about their own community only,
358- they have to learn about other communities and what other people see outside their like,
359- society or community.

Interviewer

360- That's really insightful. Mr. Anas, sir, and thank you for that last question. Most of these
361- like skills that you develop through your experience. Were there any kind of like, you
362- mentioned that the teacher is teaching through different cultures, either their own or the
363- culture they're in, like in Medina and so on. But did you get any kind of formal training
364- regarding this from the ELC forum that we did we have like we have this.

A1 Arabic Teacher

365- You know what, before when we went to Oxford, and the previous, the previous will be
366- cubicles, but we had so many, like, let's say sessions of training about come term,
367- mentoring students, developing students skills and other like many other things, so it's like
368- you're there is a meeting among teachers that we've experienced one and then a new
369- voice one, like new one. And they exchange experiences and whatever they experience
370- like teaching methods, they to exchange experiences, they exchange like worksheets, we
371- had something called professional learning communities that we used to meet weekly.
372- And people would share like many things that they've done in their class and they proved
373- to be successful. And that was very good.

Interviewer

374- So this is is it just for teaching English skills or also like culture? Incorporation?

A1 Arabic Teacher

375- Yeah. Yeah, cultural and, like language.

Interviewer

376- Okay, so the you benefited yourself from these from this curriculum?

A1 Arabic Teacher

377- Yeah, I did many people, many teachers that

Interviewer

378- Okay, that's great. Because the thing is, like, as a like, from my understanding culture is
379- like, like a circle of experience all over. So you have to get a help wherever we are.
380- Wherever you can get it either from teachers from administration, and you told me that
381- this administration is doing good,

A1 Arabic Teacher

382- they're doing great yeah, they're doing a good job when it comes to this.

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

Interviewer

1- would you mind to explain to us your teaching approach during the class,

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

2- I'd like to use the communication, the communicative approach and the task based

3- approach. I find these two approaches are good ones, and students like to have these

4- approaches while in the class. No, it's up to us, it's totally up to you like, like, for example, if

5- we want to explain further

Interviewer

6- How would you mind to let let me know about if you have a

7- cultural theme, like a new cultural theme that you want to play in like new way like festivals

8- unit or like anything that is new to the students? How can you explain these new themes to

9- the students?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

10- Okay, the one I started with, I usually start with like pictures and short videos, and the

11- unlock series, already have these things in the book, the beginning feature in it. So, I start

12- with asking students to explain what they can see in the like in the book and order on the

13- picture, sorry, and then they see a video. So first, when they when they talk about things in

14- the picture they try to give us will give me what can they see in the picture and what people

15- in this picture do? And I asked them for example, what do you think that this picture is? Or

16- well, where are these people from? And try to figure out why do you think for example,

17- these people are from Japan or from Indonesia or from Cairo from Saudi Arabia, they

18- usually explain that because of that the dress or clothes, because of the way they sell

19- things, buy things or because of the food example kind of food there. I like also to compare

20- what they can see this picture. So even if they see for example, shops, they see buildings,

21- the clothes, I tried to compare with Saudi culture and ask them for example, what about

22- you in Saudi Arabia? What do you do if you are in this situation? Okay. ask the students to

23- discuss

Interviewer

24- Okay, do you bring your means you mentioned that you bring example from the Saudi

25- culture, would you mind do you bring examples from like from the same city that you are in

26- from Medina culture?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

27- Yeah, when asked. Yeah, I usually because now I'm teaching students from for example,

28- Medina and from Yanbu mostly. And I think maybe from Allah. Yeah, I asked them for

29- example, what about your city? What do you do? For example, in your city? What popular

30- food in your city? How do you greet people in your city, for example? And then, yeah, I also

31- asked them a general question like, What about other citizens Saudi Arabia?

Interviewer

32- Good. Do the students ask you? Or do you bring some examples from your own culture?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

33- See, yeah, of course, Yeah. Because some students, mashallah they try to find out more

34- about my culture. So they asked, for example, what about you doctor, What's your favorite

35- food? What is the popular food in Jordan? So I always just, of course, say Mansaf is my

36- best food or most common food in my culture. They also asked, for example, we know that

37- Jordanian blah, blah, blah. So can you explain why, for example, is this correct or not? So

38- yeah, we exchange information about each other's culture. Okay, like, that's very important

39- to me about my culture.

Interviewer

40- So like, now, I'll go back to the culture may ask you a general question. How do you define

41- culture, like, in your opinion, while you're teaching us?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

42- In my opinion, culture is a way of life. It's how you greet people. It's how you eat, how you

43- speak, how you behave with others, how you talk to others. It's all about way of life. So

44- how you eat, what do you what do you think about for example, things in general? So it's a
45- way of life and lifestyle?
Interviewer
46- Okay, thank you very much. And, like, do you think the themes that presented in the
47- textbook, do you think they are all appropriate and they are suitable for the students at this
48- stage? And putting the topics like they put the English language skills under these topics?
49- Of course, topics are appropriate and like suitable for the series?
A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member
50- Yeah, most of us, most topics in this series are the only like, general things. They are not
51- specific things. So for example, something about food, something about sports, something
52- about like, things are your favorite things? Or what do you do in your day job? And you
53- face every time about jobs interview? So this idea? I think they are? They are okay. First of
54- all, not only for Saudi people's, it's okay for all people all around the world. Because they
55- are like general topics. Okay, so the general topics, and it's good for all people from all
56- over the world. So like, it doesn't show something just for British culture, or doesn't show
57- something just for the American culture. It's like, like a global culture. It's Yes. But in some,
58- like, some sections when they, for example, talk about when you, for example, go to
59- Reading section. They're trying also to give us like, information about other cities in
60- different countries and get some information from these reading passages, or listening? Of
61- course, no, I don't think they are very specific. Or, like British or American or Australian, or
62- they are all general things. Because when you read, for example, about a city in Japan or
63- Cairo, or sometimes about Riyadh, for example, so they are not specific. No, they are
64- global ones. Yeah.
Interviewer
65- Okay, good. And they may ask you, during during your teaching, have you met like MIT,
66- like, for example, there was not a particular this book, maybe any other book? Have you
67- noticed? Like, there were some some things that is, for example, not good to teach? Or
68- maybe it's not good?
A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member
69- Maybe it's have some kind of sensitive topics, like with the culture that we teach, and
70- whether you were teaching here or before when you're like in Qatar or in Jordan was okay.
71- I didn't Yanni don't remember that there is something that suitable for Jordanian culture.
72- And also, when I was kata and Kata I just thought I worked as a translator was not like
73- teaching when I can show the Arabia. Yeah, I taught several kinds of series, like unlock
74- and cue skills and touched on before. I also participated somehow, and the community and
75- so the curriculum committee when I came about, yeah, about 10 years ago, as we were
76- discussing that some pictures, for example, for women who are who don't dress cover, on
77- the top of their heads for example, not suitable for Saudi culture. And some topics we ask
78- the people there in Oxford or Cambridge to change that topic. For me, I mean, to prevent
79- any clashes. Yes. Before but for this, for example, unlock, you know, things are changing.
80- Now. It's not like before, I mean, nowadays, you can find some pictures for women who
81- don't dress like covers over the head, you know, because of the development all over the
82- world. And I remember also situation when I came in 2008, I first started teaching in the
83- Najran University. And I was ahhhh, I didn't know much about how the culture Yeah, yeah.
84- And I started like, the listening part. And, you know, some CDs start with music at that
85- time, and a two or three teacher students sorry, raise their hands and asked me, so please,
86- we want to go out. I got surprised why you why you want to go out? They told me that we
87- don't listen to music. Okay. From religious perspective so yeah, at that time, I was
88- astonished, because, you know, in Jordan, in Australia and other countries, they don't. And
89- later on, I understood why, why they don't like to listen to music. And I tried to measure
90- later, though, did you ask a colleague, or did you wait, how did he like, what did he do after
91- that situation?
Interviewer
92- Did you get a list of the things, for example, that should be talked about? Or should not be
93- talked about from from friends or maybe from administration of the language centre at that

94- time?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

95- Yeah, you're right. I asked some, some colleagues there at that time. I told them that
96- situation, they told me yes. And there are other things like blah, blah, and the like this, I'm
97- like that, you need to be careful. Be careful off when you teach. You know, because I, it
98- was my first time just like in high level education. Because Jordan, I started teaching with,
99- like, 10 to about 16 years old. But we that you need to do this and that. And in Saudi
100- culture, it's not good for them to do this.

Interviewer

101- Or to, like, do what what you used to do before?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

102- Yeah, I'm really, yeah, I was really interested by the story, because this is what you said.
103- That was in 2008. When you first start teaching, you are teaching in one way, then they
104- told you that, okay, there is a list of things that shouldn't or should. And so this is what this
105- has changed your teaching approach from the bigger from that time until now. Would you
106- mind to tell me more about what is the changing approach that happening, while teaching
107- now like,

Interviewer

108- what are the differences between teaching English in the past in Saudi Arabia
109- and teaching English nowadays? From like, your like from your experience
110- Yeah, when I started teaching, I type innovation 2009 Also a good surprise when some
111- students sorry, by the way, I just like imagine if I'm like, I know that I am your colleague
112- and I am from Medina, but not from Medina and I don't know anything about Saudi culture
113- or Medina culture. So that's why I'm asking this question.

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

114- Yeah, that's okay. No. So when I started teaching in 2009, I typed University, or even after
115- John University, and the beginning, I was surprised that some students came to the class.
116- And they don't know the irony. This is really, they don't know ABC. Like even the letters
117- from the very beginning don't know. So I tell them to first up and I was expecting that they
118- know they know how to read. They're not out of things began they started only talking in
119- English. And I realized that they don't understand but didn't come to my mind that they
120- didn't understand because they don't understand English. At that time. I thought that
121- because my way of teaching is wrong. And because I'm not using different approaches or
122- different techniques and teaching. When I asked them to to read later, they don't know
123- how to read. Okay, so I asked him, What do you do you know, ABCs I asked some
124- students and they don't know. Yeah, and I started teaching them ABC again. That is in
125- 2009, but the hamdulillah nowadays, mashallah Tabata, Kala Yanni and Sebby subject
126- change. Nowadays, students come mashallah Yanni. Honestly, some students speak
127- better than English teachers, because they spend much time and I mean, not English
128- teachers all I can Arabic teacher, let's say, because they spend much time at like UK,
129- America or in an international school. So mashallah they accent they're like knowledge
130- and vocab. Amazing. Okay, good. Yeah, between pass or not need to change your way of
131- teaching. depends on the level, of course, you know, that when students join type
132- university, they go for a placement test and the how distributed according to their level. So
133- it depends if you are teaching high level or low level students. Okay, good.

Interviewer

134- And I'll ask you a question when you will remember the curriculum committee? So you
135- mentioned that there was some things in the book that need to be changed and you have
136- to speak with like, you have to do a comedy I may ask you What were these things? Like?
137- Like, like for specific if you remember, if you remember, it's okay.

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

138- I remember because from now on from time to time we use to evaluate some books unit
139- units with the Kojima you know, he's the head yeah, we really focus on this also change
140- now, I told you that before towards that forbidden to show a lady with like a T shirt, or
141- short skirt or like without a cover now it's okay. So, both of those Okay, in that look book

142- now, I can show you some examples we have some girls wear a t shirt with ya without a
143- cover. And this is one of the things that we used to evaluate before. And now if we find
144- like pictures that is over, we are not suitable at all, we write that note and ask the
145- company to change so nowadays, there is no restrictions at all or there are still some
146- restrictions it's minor restrictions and I think these companies also in my opinion, start not
147- started let's say they wanted to start it but they know much more about Saudi culture now.
148- Without a nine I think their knowledge was like little Not like now. So what the curriculum
149- now is better than before. And the pictures the music, for example. And now if you open
150- you'll find some music but not like be like before, it's shorter now. So the music we use to
151- focus on pictures, some languages, I mean, some language languages, and inside the
152- book, they sometimes that we think it's not appropriate, or some words we also write the
153- note and ask them to change.

Interviewer

154- Like, is it like swear words or religious words? So for example

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

155- it's like some slang language that's used in like, the street, you know this not Academy
156- one.

Interviewer

157- Okay. Okay. And thank you very much. And so how about So you mentioned even the
158- students, the students were not okay with music before, but now they're okay with it with
159- music. Yes. Yes. So is this like, this is like one of the biggest trends that you see that you
160- saw there? English is better. They are okay with music. They're okay with. But with
161- pictures and so on? And so I think they are, they're fluid, but there still? Is there still some
162- restrictions, even where they are more? Like you can say, now they're advanced, but are
163- there still some restrictions? While teaching them or while like you are you are? Like,
164- while you're teaching English? Do you like still consider some things that culturally
165- appropriate and so on? Or did you just make yourself lose with your imagination, for
166- example, when your teach will lie?

A2 Teacher and Curriculum Committee Member

167- And like, say, I don't remember. Now we have
168- something like this. Also things students culture is changing, you know, Yeah, everybody's
169- culture, you know, they because of the social media because of the internet or this
170- technology. Yeah. And, you know, younger students or let's say, young people like
171- to cope with, like, new technology and the new cultures and they know, they want to know
172- more about other cultures. And in Medina, I think also is different from a DJ, I don't know,
173- if I am in the job, maybe something is different. Because people in Medina receive a lot of
174- people from outside, especially Muslims or visit like haram do they have this Yanni they
175- are open more for other cultures, and they talk to these people from all over the world and
176- meet with them see them. So I think they are this is this affects affected their visions, or
177- their beliefs, somehow about it's okay to see like, now, these pictures, because you can
178- see now this is all all time everywhere, especially with this technology on smartphones, ya
179- know, nowadays, I don't see I can teach everything in the book without like, feeling, this is
180- not good for students or they are more open now. And they can discuss a lot of things
181- with them. Even like, their relationships with like, if they have relationship with girls or not,
182- they, I try to like get some of these, they are not discussed. I mean, in the book, when I try
183- to, you know, now I know students, but I know their their thinking and their beliefs better.
184- So I try to make like a kind of friendship with students. Because I believe that when
185- students, like their teachers, or let's say love their teachers, they like the class and they
186- come and they, they're free to discuss anything they like. So I don't find that this is yeah,
187- some students. Yeah, somehow don't like to express their feelings about this. Because
188- they still believe that this is cultural. Like, type ones. They do like to speak about this, but
189- other students who have okay, they said that we go to mall and try to introduce ourselves
190- to other girls. But not like in details, but I mean, in general. Yeah, I think nowadays is
191- better than not better. I mean, people our students understand and more now than before.

Interviewer

192- Okay, good. And so you've been teaching here in Medina for a long time. And now we're
193- moving to you now. may ask you, of course. You nobody's spent those years except if
194- there is something that it was appropriate, like, or it was suitable for you in one way or
195- another. Why did it choose to stay at like in Medina for a long time after you get your PhD
196- or masters. Yeah like you wanted to stay here in Medina do you plan to stay in Medina for
197- a long time?

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198- Why? Well I personally I like to need to be in different places I do like to stay for a long
199- time in one place of course Danny Medina has a special case and all Muslim people like
200- to stay in Medina because of the Harmon Prophet Muhammad Salah Salem and also then
201- honestly, I didn't get better offers and other universities to join them or to join these
202- universities Yeah, this is our this these are two things now to go out of Saudi Arabia to
203- find some better chances like in Gulf areas or in other countries I couldn't find honestly
204- tried but I couldn't find now when I got my PhD recently I even my original certificate may
205- maybe I will try to find other you know, because now now I want to teach in the PhD level
206- to get the promotions or to get these things so I may I intend to look for other opportunities
207- elsewhere.

Interviewer

208- May God help you and guide you to the right way wherever and did you
209- encounter anything where you used English outside the university like with international
210- visitors to Medina so on Do you remember any stories that you used your English outside
211- the university?

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212- Not much maybe some restaurants Yeah, some visitors but it's not easy to meet these
213- people Yeah, because they don't all speak English. Yeah, but yeah, I use English
214- language and like restaurants here in Madrid because mashallah we have let's say
215- international students from different from different countries or cultures. Also, I see some
216- students from the the Islamic University and yeah, I I like to know more about these
217- people and their cultures Yeah, mostly Yeah. Mostly in restaurants. I find it better to use
218- English and in Medina, like yeah like little cases when you speak to like people from
219- outside, but yeah, I use the English with them.

Interviewer

220- Okay. And may I ask you another question. Well, going back to the cultural the cultural
221- change that happened of course, this is one of the like one of the country's vision now
222- Saudi Arabia 2030 is to be open to all other to make graduate students open to all the
223- global job market and open to all cultures, but at the same time they have their the there
224- are still some values that that still keep keeping on and they don't want to like this is
225- culturally sensitive topic you don't have sport speak about this. so on. So in your opinion,
226- how does this conflict with each other like it how to be open to other countries by still
227- keeping your the, the Assam values and so on? Okay, have you noticed this with your
228- screen? Of course, you've seen this before and your students now like while we were
229- teaching

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230- well I also I can tell you something from my experience in Australia okay. You know that if
231- you want to learn English, English, and you know, this is I know, I think you know, much
232- better than me because now you are living in UK, I think you are studying in UK, sir. Yes,
233- yes. Yeah. So, when I was in Australia, for example, what I believed and I think you know,
234- that if you want to learn English, you have to learn the culture also. Not English, any
235- language. You need to know the culture For example, I used to work at a supermarket
236- when I was a student in Australia to get my get some money to compete to pay for
237- expensive city. Sydney, I wasn't Sydney. Very beautiful city and Charlie will visit it.

Interviewer

238- Yeah, I was there. Very good. That's why I'm asking you. In Sydney, Western Sydney or
239- Brisbane?

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240- Yeah. Western Sydney. So University of Houston. University of Western Sydney.

241- Yes, I remember the university I visited. And also, the area may be Bankstown or

242- Bankstown. Yes. I lived in Obon Oban, yes. Because it's like, a lot of Muslim people there.

243- Yeah. So find, like, halal food and all this stuff. Yeah. And this is where also my

244- colleagues used to live when I came, they got I don't know where to go. But I have I had a

245- colleague at that time and the live there. And so I said there was okay. So I am I worked

246- as a Tokyo as a cashier in the supermarket. And you know, there are many, you have

247- different culture, different people, different beliefs, different thoughts. This is the nightclubs

248- for example. When you go out the age for exam 2829, so you have this human

249- restrictions, like, like, when you go with the when you're young. So I didn't go to club, and

250- I stayed for three years instance, in Sydney, and then didn't go for a club. You know, it's

251- not easy. Because if you go once you have to go every weekend. And the thing is that I

252- don't know the culture of the nightclub. Okay, so yeah, when two or three or four come to

253- the shop to buy things, they used to talk about their nights in the nightclub. So I tried to

254- understand what they are talking about. I honestly, I couldn't. Because I do know the

255- culture, they talk about, you know, some type of dancing and some type of movement

256- and, you know, a lot of things. Yeah, I understand because I don't know, they the club

257- culture.

Interviewer

258- Okay. So that's why I think we know we need to know the the other sculpture we open if

259- you want to study English. Yeah, if you want to be fluent in English, you have to study or

260- you have to know these sculptures, the Iranian so the difference? You told me that?

261- What's the difference? Or how can we make a balance?

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262- Yeah, I remember the decision when the government allowed women to drive cars for

263- example. Yes, yes. Well, I was to be honest, I was my expectations were that a lot of

264- problems will happen. Because you know, this is the first time for women to drive and like

265- males will find it like an opportunity to you know, to to raise with these girls to bother them

266- or whatever. But I got astonished mashallah and nothing happened. And you feel that the

267- woman dry for low time is not a new thing. I think this is because the people nowadays

268- like 10 years ago and then now we I mean, especially young people, and we are like

269- different from vintage we think that they don't know thing they don't know anything about

270- us or they do not think about life. But you got surprise when you when you when you

271- know that students or young people know a lot of things. Yeah, and even maybe you

272- know more than us, like this age. And I discussed this or what do you what you discussed

273- at that time, their opinion, the students opinion, what do you think about woman driving?

274- Cars? Do you think it's okay for you or not? Most people most students said it's okay. It's

275- better than sit, waiting for a driver I was sitting with a strange man and these things. Yes.

276- So they know. So they know their culture, they know their beliefs. And they, they, I mean,

277- when they said it's better than sitting with a stranger, so they Yeah, they will correct. Now

278- women can drive their own cars and go and come. And a very, very nice idea thing.

279- Although it's that easy and easy to to keep your value or your culture or your beliefs away

280- from, like others, affections or affect the effects sorry, and you have to you have to make

281- a balance, but it's not easy to make that in all cultures. And it's a big like, thing, it's not

282- easy for us to keep our culture connected to each other. A lot of Yeah, so connected, yes,

283- you have to accept others, but at the same time to keep what you believe and what there

284- are any things that you can, for example, you can talk to a woman, it's okay to talk to a

285- man but of course don't Yanni like make a friendship that may go behind? What is what's

286- acceptable in our culture.

Interviewer

287- Okay, good. Thank you very much, this is very good answer I like I like an interview with

288- you. As usual, just a few more question, do you have any recommendation that maybe for

289- the book or for your way of teaching or for like, other teachers to to do so they can keep

290- up with this fluid in their understanding of nature? Should we change something in the

291- book? Or do you think the book is fine as it is now?

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292- No, no, the book is fine. As I told you at a&m, the book discusses general, like topics that
293- is acceptable for all and it's like, doesn't Jonnie like doesn't affect the culture and gives
294- you other cultures and other people's way of thinking, you don't Yanni asked you to for
295- example, to follow or to you have to understand this and change your beliefs now. For the
296- way of teaching I like to use different kinds of like techniques or methods, one of them is
297- videos. And still I spent much time now when to you know, to prepare a scene for
298- example, to convey a message or a meaning of a walk or like an idea. Still I spend much
299- time to you know, I cut that three or 405 The like some that say like, I mean, the minutes
300- or maybe 30 minutes or 3030 seconds sometimes yes. What I what I like is to let students
301- see all the whole thing in this video and to discuss or to let them judge if they they think
302- that is okay or not, we don't need to impose things and to say or to like, imagine or think
303- that this is good for them. Yeah, I think we now students with technology, they are they
304- know much, much things and they know a lot of things and they see a lot of videos and
305- games and all these things. So we why not why not discuss or like share this experience
306- with the students and say what you think about for example, a friendship or best friend or
307- with a girl or the boy for example. For example, kissing or for example, wearing like
308- shorts and T shirt or whatever and ask them or try to discuss maybe you will get more
309- ideas you will get more because they know they already see these things when they're
310- even in event if you don't the advertisement in your phone show you these things. I don't
311- think we need to still be close to discuss these things with the students because are mad
312- they are now mature people they their right to discuss everything with parents or like older
313- brother or even teachers? I don't think that is that is something for you should Danny for
314- bed or so yeah, I like to change. I'm trying but you know still afraid of like some reactions?
315- Yeah especially even from the not from only the students from the administration of
316- course because we needed to follow the policies and so but yeah, things are changing
317- and we need to be up to date, culturally and you know,

Interviewer

318- according to methods and these things, you mentioned the administration, would the
319- administration have some sort of cultural training, besides teaching how to teach English
320- but like anything's related to like culture? This is the Saudi culture, is there, like some sort
321- of training of ELC?

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322- And now for culture? I don't remember that. This is specific for our culture. No, no, nothing
323- but our meeting with colleagues. You know, in the semester, when you teach, you may
324- don't meet others, you cannot meet others because, you know, a lot of things to do. And
325- like Elijah, nowadays, we cannot meet. But our this training course is not for culture for
326- other things like, development. Yeah, we sit with colleagues and we discuss things and
327- you know more about their culture, and they know more about our culture. But yeah, it's a
328- good I like this idea to, for ministration to like, manage some, prepare some like, cultural.
329- Yes. I agree. To include that in the training, not just teaching training, but also like, yes,
330- cultural authentic, but it's okay. Also to Yanni to ask some students, some students who
331- can convey this, this training session to other students or to their sections. This is a good
332- ideas.

Interviewer

333- Okay. Thank you very much for your help. And I think we are reaching the end of the
334- situation, and exactly what you have said about culture training, that a colleague like
335- about eight years ago, he came he was new to Saudi Arabia culture. And he said
336- something like, not acceptable because he don't need it doesn't know about that. Doesn't
337- know much about culture. He came from UK, I think. And then too, so it didn't teach
338- anywhere in the Arab countries. And he mentioned something about capture what I
339- remember. Yeah, that's a lot of capture. And you cannot think later. And he got fired the
340- same way? Because he mentioned something inappropriate about culture?

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341- Yes. inappropriate. Yes. Exactly. Because the students direct after the class, they went to

342- administration. So he's trying to, he's trying to like it make fun of culture, yeah, make fun

343- of our culture. Okay. When I asked him again, and the letter that he said, I didn't mean

344- that I just tried to convey a message that you have to think you have to study more, but I

345- conveyed in a narrow way. Okay. My kitchen it's okay to say you eat a lot of burger

346- Angelica Bucha. And you don't think they said that? I thought the same. So yeah, what

347- what you have mentioned is very, very important. I like it.

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Interviewer

1-   Like, first of all, I want to like ask you like a generic question, what do you think about like,

2-   how can you define cultural like, first of all, cultural general and then like, how can you

3-   define culture in English language teaching? What is your opinion about it?

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4-   Yeah, generally speaking, culture is everything, you know, is everything around us. It's the

5-   language. It's And the food that we eat it's the kind of thoughts and ideas you know that we

6-   have it's the habits and traditions okay that we you know apply in our everyday life it's our

7-   beliefs Okay. Our language is part of the culture. So, basically it's everything around us this

8-   is the you know a broader definition of culture from a language point of view you know

9-   culture you know, you know for me as a language instructor is the you know, language as

10- part of the culture you know the way we speak the way we behave, okay the way we we

11- we behave in our everyday lives, okay is also part of the culture

Interviewer

12- okay. So, like may ask you, how do you explain a cultural theme in the book like of course,

13- we know that the books that you're teaching like they have different themes and which

14- depends on different cultural domain like for example, global culture of domains of

15- American or British cultural domain and so on. How can you explain these to the students

16- from a curriculum point of view or from a teaching also point of view?

17- We had you know, we had books Okay, two years or three years before ago when we had

18- we had books you know, made by Oxford University Press, okay. You know, and these

19- books actually focused on you know, American culture or English culture in general okay.

20- But uh, but also these books were made for you know, students in Saudi Arabia or

21- students in the Arab world okay. This year okay, we started we change it you know, into to

22- a different publisher Okay, that is you know, Cambridge University Press. And they

23- basically you know, the books you know, focus on you know, the British you know, kind of

24- accent British kind of language, okay. However, the themes are, are varied this the themes

25- of the books or the textbooks are varied. Okay, for example, here it really I mean, coming

26- back to your question about how do you how do you explain a cultural theme in the book, it

27- depends on the type of theme for example, if something is related to food, for example,

28- okay, so we relate that theme, okay, to the sentence background, okay, for example, we

29- ask the students about, you know, what's popular food in the culture, okay, why why why

30- this type of food, for example, is popular, why do we like it, when two people cook it and for

31- whom do they eat it, okay, and why this kind of food is, you know, particular or is specially

32- important or well liked by the people. For example, another theme, for example, is related

33- to clothes or how people usually dress. So again, when we have a theme like this, as a

34- teacher, I tried to relate it to the students own culture, okay, as a starting point, so that we

35- can, you know, for example, you know, generate a kind of active discussion in the

36- classroom. Okay, about, for example, the similarities and the differences between, you

37- know, students culture and, you know, you know, other cultures, okay, about what, you

38- know, what's what's, what is, what is similar is something similar and what's different, okay,

39- and the way people have different, you know, different types of, you know, different

40- cultures. And so,

Interviewer

41- okay, thank you very much. You mentioned that you bring the cultural assumptions that
42- relate to the students were like, for example, like, within the city and so on, did you bring up
43- another like way from for example, from your cultural Doctor general? Like,

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44- yes, yes. For example, if, you know, related to the theme, which I just mentioned, you know
45- about food, okay. Sometimes the students asking me about, you know, the food that's
46- popular in Egypt, so I told them, you know, the names you know, there's names of some
47- foods, you know, that are popular in Egypt. Like for example, Mashi. Okay. You know, this
48- is when they asked me about my favorite type, my favorite food, okay, so I say it's mushy
49- or, you know, seeing Gary which is a kind of fish you know, cooked enough particular way.
50- So, these types of things, you know, as you know, you know, so, it generates a kind of, you
51- know, active discussion in the classroom and it brings you know, the teacher closer to the
52- students and the students closer to the teacher.

Interviewer

53- Okay. So, you started to explain and then you bring something related from your own
54- culture or from the student culture, but you mentioned something before, yeah, you
55- mentioned something before about you change the book. So, like, first of all, like as a
56- teaching level, did you see that these books like they were chosen for a better approach or
57- for sorry, they were chosen as sort of let me reorganize my question. Well, what do you
58- mind if I can I ask you in the previous book that have some disadvantages?

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59- that's why but the book were changed or did you see this there were some difficulties with
60- the previous books with the new one, which is something you know, the change was done
61- due to some you know, other administrative you know, issues for example, we have been
62- using the BDS books for almost seven years or eight years. So, we wanted to actually you
63- know, you know, a different you know, you know, a different approach and different
64- techniques, different techniques, you know, we want to textbooks which offer different
65- approaches of teaching different techniques, and also teachers want to do to change
66- because they got bored with the older books, okay. And the students also started to make,
67- you know, what we call online drive, have the questions and have the answers in the
68- textbook. So, we wanted to overcome this issue, okay. And then we want to actually you
69- know, some new books which offer which might offer new approaches, new techniques
70- and new ideas, new topics, you know, which can lead you know, which can result in a
71- more lively academic atmosphere in our teaching learning environment.

Interviewer

72- Okay. And regarding the previous textbook, and also with the relation to this textbook, were
73- there do you recall any incidents when there was something that is like, there was
74- something that should be removed from the book, like, for example, like from, from the
75- students point of view, or from the teachers point of view, or also from administrative point
76- of view, that things should be altered or edited or something or, or everything like where,
77- like, like cultural speaking,

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78- actually, I didn't notice anything is significant or, you know, something that is, you know,
79- serious, okay. And, you know, might have a negative effect, you know, a negative effect on
80- the students culture or could be offensive to the students culture. Okay. I didn't notice
81- these in the previous books or in the current books, okay. Because actually, these books,
82- okay, were made for for, for the Arab students, there is an international edition of the
83- textbook, which is you know, different from the addition the, the Middle East what we call
84- the Middle East edition that we are using, and the Middle East edition, okay. Usually, it
85- avoids any cultural, you know, offensive, you know, let's say situations or pictures, for
86- example, you know, or words even that go against the culture of the service. Like for
87- example, you cannot tolerate something like a boyfriend, or girlfriend or dating, you know,
88- something related to dating or something like that, or the mix, okay, the mix between boys

89- and girls, okay, or males and the females or, you know, any, for example, any, you know,
90- women or men, you know, dressed improperly, okay, these types of things. That's why we
91- have a curriculum committee here, which actually review the books from different from
92- different aspects from the cultural point of view, from the academic point of view from the
93- teaching approach, a point of view, from the learning styles, which are presented in the
94- textbooks from the teaching techniques and learning techniques that are presented. Okay,
95- all of these are exempted by the committee.

Interviewer

96- Okay, which is in which involves male and female teachers.

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97- Okay, so, from from that, do you recall any incidents that, that you requested the publisher
98- to change something like upon your review? Or maybe like, for example, you managed to
99- see something like with, of course with pictures, as you mentioned, or what's not to, you
100- know, not something as significant as far as I recall, you know, I can't I can't recall a
101- significant thing that I requested from a publisher for that we requested from a publisher
102- maybe a couple of a couple of pictures, you know, that's all

Interviewer

103- okay. And what were those pictures about?

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104- I think it was you know, maybe it's something you know, where the females are dressed,
105- you know, improperly which does not go well with the students culture or on the other
106- hand, you know, mix between males and females, you know, and the behaving in a way
107- that is against the culture here. So, these types of things, you know, you know, are not
108- tolerated here.

Interviewer

109- Okay. And I want to ask you about this question. And why are these things like just if you
110- can imagine, I know I am your colleague and I am one of like one of the people in was the
111- president in Medina, but I just want you to imagine that I'm not so, I want to know that why
112- are these things are not tolerated here like from your point of view like as an Arabic
113- teacher and also from your point of view as a curriculum administration member and why
114- are these like have this kind of sensitivity because you know?

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115- you know every every country okay every every society has got to happen to some beliefs
116- traditions, okay? It's its norms Okay, its own you know, way of thinking okay. So, we have
117- to respect that okay, we have to respect this kind of thing and we have to respect you
118- know, the kind of you know, the culture okay that we are working within otherwise we are
119- going to have problems okay. And dissidents and teachers are going to resist okay, what
120- is there in the book and this might create a kind of conflict also in the class okay. So, so,
121- you know, sometimes you have to be very careful okay, when something is culturally you
122- think that it's culturally you know, offensive or not allowed or you will not be accepted the
123- you to okay the beliefs the ideas the way of thinking of a particular society then we have
124- to respect that Yes.

Interviewer

125- Thank you very much. May I ask you were these like since this topic did it change from 10
126- years ago, until now or does these like culturally like sensitive topics are the same like
127- from previous front since you start teaching in pipe University until now,

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128- no, this situation was different previous 10 years ago, it was much more difficult okay and
129- things okay. You know, were actually very sensitive but now okay you know, things are
130- started you know, are starting to be more comfortable more easier than before okay. You
131- know more you know, more acceptance of you know, other other aspects of culture okay
132- of other societies okay. What is still Still we I mean we have to be very careful you know,
133- about you know, the topics that are offered in the textbooks about also the kind of ideas
134- that are presented in the textbooks okay and also about the you know, the types of
135- pictures okay words okay. That are presented in the in the textbooks Yes, things are you

136- know, are different than before, okay, but the stem, okay, still we have to be very, very
137- careful. Okay. Because change takes a long time to take place. So and the TA to in order
138- to shape change. Okay, takes needs patients needs time. And the needs also add the
139- patient at the same time.

Interviewer

140- Okay, so the, from Europe from European there are more acceptance now like, do you
141- think the students that you were teaching are like 10 years ago? I would, of course, like 10
142- years, it's a big it's a big period of course, the like they have different generation of
143- teaching, but the student's level of sensitivity, as you mentioned is become a little bit less
144- than before.

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145- Yes, exactly, yes, the order of you know, accept you know, and they are more
146- understanding of the you know, of the change that is taking place in the whole country,
147- they are accepting the, you know, other ways of culture but again, okay, and you know,
148- even even you know, in Western societies, okay, which are, you know, very much
149- liberated, they have got their own also limitations, and they have got also their own, you
150- know, limits with the culture, okay, for example, they are offended by things, okay?
151- Good, which might go against their own beliefs and their own culture and their own ways
152- and ways of behaviour or habits and traditions, okay? So it's the same here, it doesn't
153- mean that you are accepting the others or your mood or your accepting the culture of
154- other people, that you allow everything, okay? You allow everything that that is against
155- your culture, or that can you know, harm your feelings, or hurt or hurt your, your, your
156- cultural heritage, your identity.

Interviewer

157- Yes, thank you very much, like a very, very good point. Thank you, except Jamal. And
158- would you mind if we can move to like another another topic? Sorry, the same topic, but
159- another line of questioning? What kind of cultural experience did you gain from being in
160- the context of Medina? So you've been teaching here for 10 years now and Medina may
161- ask you, what are the difference? Like, in your teaching experience, we were teaching
162- outside the city of Medina and now you're teaching in Medina?

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163- Well, are the students the Saudi students who want your teaching outside Medina are the
164- same or were there any kind of kind of differences between both students, both group of
165- students, almost the same, almost the same, because even the students at the previous
166- university, some of them are coming from, you know, from Medina, from the the cities and
167- the villages around Medina. Okay. And the even the students, the previous students in the
168- other university despite that, the city itself was a kind of cosmopolitan city, okay, but it's
169- still still the same habits, the same traditions, the same ways of, you know, looking at the
170- culture and the being very careful about their own culture and being very proud also about
171- the viewer, their culture, so, we have to act, you know, we had to, we had to act within
172- this frame, as I said, Okay, culture is something which is very important. And, again, this
173- applies not only to the country that we are working in, but to any other country, even if
174- you're working in a Western country, okay, which is, as I said, much more, you know, they
175- claim to be much more liberated or, you know, much more free than in that way own in
176- their own way of behavior. They have their own also sensitivity about their own ways
177- about their own ideas about their own behavior. Okay. And if somebody acts in a way that
178- you know, that goes against this, they would be offended. It's the same way.

Interviewer

179- Okay, thank you very much. And just one second. And other question, what is the process
180- of determining whether a theme in the teaching material is suitable in the context in hand
181- or not?

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182- What for example like a bit yeah yeah simply if a theme is found to be you know
183- against or hurts the culture or you know the feelings of the students okay we have to act
184- accordingly and we have to delete that theme or skip it for teaching or asking the

185- publisher for example to to delete it from the textbook okay and this is you know we can
186- determine this you know easily okay we are we have been here as I said for a long time
187- okay 10 years or more and you know, and we can determine whether you know, a theme
188- is culturally sensitive or or culturally offensive or it will be accepted by by the students
189- okay. So, we as teachers, we can determine this and we shouldn't wait until we come to
190- the class okay and we find or presented the theme okay to the students you know,
191- beforehand okay. The early beginning you know, at the beginning of you know, choosing
192- the textbooks and the choosing the curriculum and choosing the you know, investigating
193- the kinds of themes in the textbook okay, we should be able to determine this okay.
194- And as I said at the beginning, you know, this is one of the things that one of the
195- criteria on which we select or we judge our our textbooks here and our curriculum for
196- you know, for the students

Interviewer

197- Okay, thank you very much. And like another question like about Medina as well as is it
198- okay to ask there are like I have one of the characteristic of Medina having a lot of people
199- visiting from all over the world like visiting Medina does this kind of international presence
200- in Medina does it affect the level of understanding for for example, explaining something
201- for to your students

A3 Teacher and Curriculum

202- Yes, of course, I mean, getting in touch with people from around the world Okay. Allows
203- students here to see people and see different ways of behavior Okay. Around them okay
204- and see people and see get exposed to different you know, different languages Okay,
205- different ways, as I said, or different ways of behavior. So, this actually, you know,
206- contributes to you know, broadening a student's you know, understanding of other
207- cultures and you know, of, you know, accepting you know, aspects from other cultures
208- and also, you know, it allows them to expose and the prison for their own culture as well,
209- because students also here are very proud, okay, if the culture of their own religion if their
210- own language of their own country and this is this is good, this is something which
211- everybody needs to be proud Be proud of your country, be proud of your language be
212- proud of your culture, without Of course, you know, you know, you know, being against
213- any other cultures or any other ways of behavior unless, you know, it's inherits the
214- person's culture or person's identity.

Interviewer

215- Okay, thank you very much. And the last, the last question may ask you like, first of all,
216- like, of course, like the country is going now with the vision going to be up into other
217- cultures as like, like, the vision 2030 with the kingdom, they want to be open to all
218- cultures and to be like, accepting everyone does this like the conflict with you mentioned
219- that the Saudi students they have their own culture, they want to preserve it a more
220- respecting but also the country wants to be like open to others. How does this like in your,
221- in your opinion? How does the CDC this kind of struggle like with the students that they
222- want to, to be opted to other cultures, but at the same time, they have things to be
223- considered? Like culturally?

A3 Teacher and Curriculum

224- Yes, I think I think that our students nowadays are open to you know, to, to know okay
225- about other cultures and to know more about it. other people from other countries and
226- from other cultures okay and they want to be open to the world of it okay because
227- actually, you know, you mentioned that 2030 vision okay which is a great vision for the
228- country and it actually contributes towards this okay towards you know, you know a new
229- wing you know, other people knowing the you know, aspects of other cultures and also at
230- the same time show that are they the people's culture here, okay. And so, the the, the
231- good parts of our culture and also to change some maybe, you know, some of the wrong,
232- you know, misconceptions or the misconceptions that some people outside you know,
233- have, you know, have about us or so, okay. So, that helps, okay, in the direction in that in
234- that direction, accepting other people show me and at the same time showing the good
235- sides, the bright sides of, of the students picture, okay. The people here the students, I

236- feel that the students have got a will have got a lot to offer to other people from other
237- culture, people are more understanding of, you know, of the people's behavior from other
238- culture. And at the same time, they want to show the world, their own culture and their
239- own the bright sides, as I said, the bright aspects of their, of their own culture. So I think, I
240- think that goes with that's well accepted by the young people, okay, but the younger
241- generation, Okay, who wants to be open to the world who wants to achieve, okay, a more
242- prosperity to his country and to the country, okay, who want to, who want to contribute to
243- the development of the country who want to show the people, the other world, okay, or the
244- other countries, okay, the greatness and the bright sides of their own culture and their
245- own country. And that's something which is actually, you know, we'll come to and it's
246- something that should be encouraged. Okay, and supported. And this is what's
247- happening.

A4 Teacher

Interviewer
1- Okay. Well, can I move now to your teaching approach? What do you want to explain me
2- your your current teaching approach by the university?
A4 Teacher
3- Yeah, I mean, I consider myself as, as a facilitator, and motivator, you know, in the
4- classroom, of course, and I tried to, to use my own individual approach and choose from
5- different teaching styles and the different teaching approaches to suit the learning styles of
6- students. So we have to use different kinds of you Now these images like visual visual
7- learning or like, like, for example, we use images, we use videos, we use graphs, we use
8- tables, any anything that can facilitate learning for the students. So we try to model model
9- and explain and try to help students understand at the same time we try to let them have
10- the opportunity to be in charge of their own learning and try to find, to find answers. Yeah.
11- And also, I'll say we, I try to establish a safe and supportive environment for for my tudents,
12- we always feel that we need to create students centered and in instructions for our
13- students. But yeah, sometimes on also collaborative and social, social learning. But yeah,
14- sometimes there can be setbacks, especially when it comes to fulfilling the the basic
15- schedule that we have, sometimes it's tight. And we have to have to finish the curriculum
16- yet handler, but we might want to try our best. Yeah, to create this environment for
17- students. Yeah.
Interviewer
18- Okay, thank you very much. And I'll move on to the next next part of the questions. How do
19- you define culture? Like, what is your understanding of culture in general and culture in
20- teaching English?
A4 Teacher
21- I mean, the culture is the way of life. For for the entire, for example, the entire community
22- or the entire society that we live in. So it can be defined as all the ways of life, when if
23- whether it's art or traditional beliefs. Especially those ones that are best from our parents or
24- grandparents, to our to their kids. So all these ways of lives, they're considered the need to
25- be culture.
Interviewer
26- Yeah, okay. And of course, there are cultural themes in the English textbook that we are
27- teaching now. Correct? And would you mind to explain how can you explain these cultural
28- themes in the book, like, especially if there is something with our that have a new culture
29- for the students? What is your way of teaching?
A4 Teacher
30- I mean, the cultural theme in the book, I mean, they're in every land and every topic
31- that is proposed by the book or the post by the book. I mean, there's always a way to link
32- that to students culture, and there will be questions about students coming up with
33- examples and, and, you know, just examples from their culture to relate to the topic that

34- they're studying.
Interviewer
35- If you have if you have an example, it will be great.
A4 Teacher
36- Yeah, well, that's great. For example, when we taught we taught the students for example,
37- well, what on an altar example of culture or culture from outside, something that happens
38- in China, for example, it's a Harbin Harbin Ice Festival. Of course, in Saudi Arabia, there's
39- no ice festivals. But this festival this event happens in China about the same time we asked
40- our students to, to think of festivals that happen in Saudi Arabia and and they would come
41- with examples like agenda three festival bowrider date festival, or flower festival that or that
42- happens in many cities around Saudi Arabia or yacht season Yeah. So they will there will
43- be a comparison between what they study and the topic and also at the same time, the
44- book that we teach, we find that it gives you example, from from from other cultures, as
45- well from your culture. So we have culture we have for example, Harbin Ice Festival in
46- China, and we have something from Japan for example, which is the cherry blossom
47- Blossom Festival. And we have something from the Arabic culture which is which is the
48- Romani the Muscat Muscat festival. Yeah. The book is it. That's yeah, this is in the book.
49- So gives you it gives you not just examples from other cultures also. It kind of relates to
50- this culture because the book is intended to be, too We sold in the Middle East. So it kind
51- of, you know, takes into account the Arabic culture and give some examples. And one
52- example of from Muscat festival is that we have camel races. And you know, the camel
53- race is popular in the Gulf states. And that's a good example of relates to Yeah. Gives us
54- children from their own culture. Yes.
Interviewer
55- So your mission, you are giving examples from the Saudi culture? Did you bring examples
56- from your own culture? Like, during the class? For example, where the students are
57- curious about what's happened in Jordan, if there is a festival, for example, or anything
58- about you? Did you explain anything from your own culture?
A4 Teacher
59- Well, I mean, for me, I take my culture as the same as the students ones, given that we live
60- in the same geographical area. Yeah, so I'll probably think focus on the things that are in
61- the book, and the things that are probably happening in the area. Yeah. So students can
62- relate to Yeah. But so I'll take myself as part of this culture, actually, maybe if a teacher
63- maybe comes from a different country, maybe he would probably give them an example of
64- his own culture. Yeah. So yeah.
Interviewer
65- And so when you mentioned the book is like, this book is made for the Middle East. You
66- remember any kind of English books that you taught before, by by universities that were
67- not appropriate for the Middle East for in one way or another. And if you have a view,
68- remember an example.
A4 Teacher
69- Remember, I remember that most of the books that we did teach before, we taught
70- touchstone. And touchstone is a series by Cambridge as well. Another book that we taught
71- was, was the Q scan by Oxford, Oxford. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I think most of these books are
72- towards the middle east culture. So they try to, to use us topics that are probably accepted
73- culturally in the Middle East.
Interviewer
74- Okay, but do you remember the things that you remember anything that was not
75- appropriate to teach in one way or another? While you're in your teaching experience? Like
76- maybe there was something inappropriate in the book, or maybe some pictures that is not
77- related to the Arabic culture or something?
A4 Teacher
78- What like, I can't really remember exactly something major. I would say that they might, it
79- might be some details that not we would, as teachers probably try to comment on them try
80- to make things acceptable for the students try to probably gear the students attention to

81- what's appropriate and what's not. But I can't really remember exactly an example from
82- from those previous books that I've taught before.

Interviewer

83- Okay, yeah. Because basically your answer with a couple of next couple of two questions,
84- because my other question is, if there is something that you like, is there something that
85- how can you do you have like a meeting with teachers, that you speak about how to teach
86- them? How to Teach a special unit or some unit how to teach this or that? Did this
87- conversations happen sometimes in the English Language Center?

A4 Teacher

88- Yes, I mean, in English in our ELC, I mean, the structural approach that we use in the
89- classroom is that we, we urge teachers to do as I'm I'm a teacher to be, Oh, does that
90- mean the administration urge just teacher to teach us to be part of the cultural you know,
91- it'd be a coach culturally aware of especially the importance of using culture, cultural
92- awareness in the classroom, and also relating the topics to our culture or the students
93- culture. This would definitely I mean, enhances their learning and Yeah, yeah. And they
94- would we would come up with the with better results in, in language competence. Yeah.
95- Eventually, yeah.

Interviewer

96- Okay, that's good. Thank you very much for that. How about the? How about the culture of
   Medina? Did you? Did you bring up during your time you during your teaching here in
97- Medina? Did you bring up some examples about the context of Medina while you're
98- teaching?

A4 Teacher

99- Yeah, when we speak about celebrations, we would ask the students about, about
100- activities they do in Medina, related to the for example, if we talk about celebration, like a
101- celebration, about about the social events, about events in the city, to celebrate the
102- eighth, and the students who would participate in that and would give examples of an inter
103- interact with it with a topic, for example, about celebration.
104- So we all the time tried to involve students in this discussion in these cultural, cultural
105- discussions that will happen in the classroom, to probably to provoke their curiosity. And
106- to, to, to let them develop communication and language proficiency as well. Yeah.

Interviewer

107- Okay, thank you very much for that. And of course, you you're teaching for a long time
108- now in Medina and elsewhere or martial law? And may I ask you, do you think that, like
109- the teaching cultural, like, like, the culturally aware of things like that you did? Did it
110- change your teaching approach? From long time ago until now, things changed? For
111- example, the students, of course, the culture of diversity is changing from my previous
112- from previous time until now.

A4 Teacher

113- Yes, first time we arrived to Saudi Arabia, we were, I mean, having our beliefs about how
114- the teacher must be acting in the classroom towards his students. But when we were
115- when we started teaching here, we found that our students background, I mean, requires
116- that teacher should probably be respectful and be, and we should we should approach
117- our students with, with I mean, patients, and yeah, we we kind of changed our ways that
118- we we try to deal with the students as their adult students as well, in a way that we're not
119- imposing, not. not threatening, not intimidating. We try to have our classes I mean,
120- promoting safe and supportive environment learning environment. Yeah, for them. So it
121- has changed of course, yeah. We so we wouldn't be so strict in some, some some
122- aspects of, you know, being a teacher in the classroom. Yeah. I became more of more of
123- a, we like, adapted to a more friendly approach. Yeah. Because we are a little bit more
124- strict, but now we are more lenient. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Because because of the culture
   that we have here. Yeah, of course.

Interviewer

125- Okay. And that's because one of the things I'm like, I'm really interested, like, first of all, in
126- you as a teacher, because you as you said, you, you share your your journey, and you

127- share that Arabic language with with your students, but not the local language, but of
128- course, worked for you, you You said yourself, you that you are part of the medina culture
129- now. And you're part of this culture as well, which is, which is better for the better for the
130- city. And another another comment?

A4 Teacher

131- I want to say that, even though the whole country is changing, of course, before before, it
132- was a little bit more strict, and I remember, I like I have an interview with one of the
133- curriculum development members, and they say there was some pictures of, hopefully of
134- girls and so on before and you have to flag it and say, competition, but now it's more
135- lenient now, because the whole country, the whole country is culture is changing with of
136- course with the region and to be more equipped with to develop students skills to be able
137- to work anywhere in the world. Do you think that should we should we be open to old
138- culture without any restraint, or maybe should we to go with with the vision? Or maybe
139- should, there are things that we should take care of, even with, even with this, like, sorry,
140- even with this advancement on openness. So basically, for myself I think I, you know, the
141- cultural event for me, or for even the students now is, I take it from a global perspective, I
142- try to represent things globally, not from my own even perspective, or from the students
143- perspective. Now, we live in a in a village, and the students have access to, to, to, you
144- know, to websites to the worldwide events, they have a lot of knowledge is different from
145- the past. So, for me, I have like a global perspective when I deal with cultural events. So I
146- try to be open to new ideas, issues and solutions.

Interviewer

147- Yeah, so we try to be, you know, culturally sensitive and willing to learn from other
148- cultures. So that's, that's it? Yeah . And is there anything that like, should we even be
149- more open to the other things? Like, for example, I know that I think, like, imagine that I'm
150- not from Medina, or I'm not Muslim, for example, if there is something like, like, for
151- example, the gay matters things or for example, like anything, or, for example, alcohol or
152- something, should we be open to the cultural aspects and other cultures, even even here
153- in Saudi Arabia, and also, which you will, like, eventually, it might help to be open to other
154- cultures?

A4 Teacher

155- I mean, we haven't dealt with things that are taboos for for this community. It's another it's
156- going to be very complicated dealing with these issues, issues of gay marriage and issues
157- that, that oppose the religion of people who live in this area. So are we up to now, we
158- haven't dealt with these issues. And I don't know, really how this going to be to be dealt
159- with. I haven't dealt with that. And, and I'm not sure really, what's, how we're going to deal
160- with these issues if we encounter them in, in Korean in textbooks.

Interviewer

161- Yeah. So I know as a teacher is not your role, like to decide what to teach and what not to
162- teach. But if there is a scenario when if this happened to you, what do you think is the
163- best teaching practice that you should do? In your opinion, of course,

A4 Teacher

164- in that case, maybe if we have to, do explain that this happens in, in, in other parts of the
165- world, and probably try to, to, to teach, I mean, the language that relates to it, but in the
166- same time, probably explain the probably the beliefs that that are that are prevailing in our
167- society about this. Yeah.

E1 Teacher

Interviewer

1- to know you for First of all, what is may ask you? What is your cultural background and
2- educational background?

E1 Teacher

3- Okay, starting with Yeah, thank you. Firstly, Abdullah, for choosing these three parts of
4- your research, we're very happy to help you. And, yeah, it's a very interesting kind of
5- theme that you're looking at, in terms of cultural backgrounds. I mean, at times, I wonder
6- what my culture is. So much like a hybrid culture, I would say, my parents are from
7- Pakistan, my father and my life came to the UK in the 60s. So I was obviously born and
8- raised there. So from one angle, obviously, being born and raised in UK, I have, you know,
9- significant aspects of British culture, in my upbringing, but at the same time, being raised in
10- a household, which was obviously where, you know, with my parents, I spoke that the
11- order, which is the language being used by Pakistanis, but amongst with my siblings, I
12- used English. So food was a combination of the two, when I would go to school, I would
13- sound so the British food. And when I came back home in the evening, I would have the
14- Pakistani food. Like I mentioned, it was a combination of the two, outside the home
15- predominantly English, but in the home, it was mainly like all to do with my parents. And
16- that's more out of respect. Also, I felt maybe, you know, in terms of speaking their
17- language, rather than using English. And beyond that, in terms of, let's say, even dress,
18- yeah, more British dress, I would say, you know, although at times I would you wear like,
19- some of the kind of Pakistani kind of dress and then eventually I moved away. No. But yes,
20- already, I would say it was a hybrid of cultures between the two, British and and Pakistani
21- culture.

Interviewer

22- So you grew up bilingual? We can say this. That's right. And how about the dynamic
23- language? I how good how good are your nose?

E1 Teacher

24- I mean, then growing up in the UK, obviously, very limited, like usage or access to the
25- Arabic language, and it's not learning later on. I would say in my late teens, when I had
26- more money, question Arabic, obviously, since coming to Saudi Arabia, has added a
27- different time dimension. And obviously, was that I think the language I guess, yeah, I
28- picked up more the Arabic language being around in the country, not fully immersed,
29- because the problem is working in the English Department. speaks to you in English? No,
30- so that's like a downside in terms of learning the Arabic language, but outside of work of
31- interacting with the people, you use the Arabic language to some degree, but again, that's
32- limited in its scope. You know, so if you were to say to me, if I can have like a detailed
33- conversation on a topic, I probably can't because I probably didn't have the vocabulary to
34- go. Okay. So maybe the initial kind of thing I could get into it. And then beyond that, if I
35- want to express my opinion about the topic, maybe I've struggled with the vocabulary, but
36- But yeah. Yes. Yeah. So basically, obviously studied in the UK, primary, secondary. Then I
37- went into what is called a sixth form, and some the sixth, the college setting. And then from
38- there I went to university actually did degree in Economics and Business Finance,
39- university and what Brunel University in Westland, very good university and the university.
40- Yeah. So I actually stayed there for four years I was off campus didn't live at home,
41- because it would have been about two hours. So this is Brunel, as you know, is in West
42- London. I live in East London. So it would have been like a much quite long, so I was
43- staying in the same city and two hours. Oh, one end to the other end. Yeah, absolutely.
44- Brunello is actually on the last, the last stop on the X on the X Bridge station to line the last
45- stop on the Metropolitan line so it would have taken a long time to get there. And plus, I'm
46- glad I actually stayed there. It was a very good kind of learning experience. And you're
47- away from home kind of thing. And then obviously after that since I came to Saudi in fact,
48- before I came, so I did that the CELTA equivalent, which is the Trinity College, TCS. Yep,
49- did that intensive course for a month. Then I came to Saudi Arabia and I did the Masters

50- when I was here.

Interviewer

51- Okay, good. Good. Thank you very much. So I may ask you like, in general, like, when you

52- when you use the word culture, you mentioned one of the examples of culture, of course,

53- clothing and food and so on. So how can you define culture? Is it okay to ask you?

E1 Teacher

54- Yeah, sure. I mean, culture is an interesting kind of concept. And I guess maybe it's

55- evolved over the years. But fundamentally, I guess it's looking at the way, maybe the way

56- of life that you find in a society or group of people, and looking at customs, the behavior of

57- the people, social norms, and like you said, I mean, on a basic level looks at language,

58- food dress festival, these kinds of things.

Interviewer

59- Okay, that's great. Thank you very much for that. Just one second. Sorry. I lost. Yeah,

60- here. I was, I went to other other form of questions. So okay. So may I ask you, about a

61- type University have been teaching here for for a long time now? What is your teaching

62- approach? Maybe before? And now? How can you? What is the way? What is your way of

63- teaching our diversity?

E1 Teacher

64- Yeah, in a general kind of things. Now, a little bit in terms of the difference from teaching in

65- the UK and teaching here in Saudi, but generally prefer more of an eclectic approach. very

66- student centered, I feel my role as a teacher should be to act as a facilitator in the class.

67- But again, it depends on the level of the student is also in let's say, if it's high level, for

68- example, then my job I think, is more to ensure discussions, activities, the students are on

69- task and what they're doing. And it does not require as much of like, an input from me.

70- Whereas a low level, I think the students require more support and input, whether it's

71- teacher input, or input. So in terms of scaffolding, you know, more extensive monitoring,

72- feedback. But in both cases, wherever I'm teaching, always try to, you know, activate

73- students schema, try to engage and empower them. I'm giving them confidence to excel.

74- And that's always a challenge. I find probably more I would say in Saudi Arabia, where it

75- seems to with the streets more of a wretched reticence to participate, especially the low

76- levels units. So for that I tried to use different games, activities, YouTube videos, Kahoot,

77- you know, these kinds of things to maybe, you know, encourage students to be more kind

78- of active engaged in the class. But I mean, obviously, my key thing, although we have a

79- core textbook, we look at things that they need to go away with the learning outcomes. So

80- they need to have the skills in the target language, I don't always prepare my class just to

81- say, Oh, look, okay, this is going to come in the exam. So you're going to have to, like

82- study this. Yeah, that's one aspect of it. But for me, students learning English should not be

83- just solely about you know, the test, you're giving them the skills that they can then use

84- when they graduate in wider society, wider kind of life. So if necessary, I will deviate away

85- from the book. But so long as the objectives are met, basically, now, so in a sense, the

86- setup was different in that I was teaching mixed classes. So boys and girls in one class, so

87- that setup is different. Whereas here, obviously, your teaching is just like single kind of not

88- mixed gender classes, single gender thing, we'll set policy, just boys. So that was a bit

89- different in terms of, yeah, so the themes are going to be a bit different, I guess I can target

90- later, but will obviously vary. And I have to think a bit more about the current topics I'm

91- talking about, in my context here in Saudi Arabia, compared to how I was teaching in the

92- UK.

Interviewer

93- Okay, so when, like, I saw what like a couple of your classes, they were really interesting.

94- And you always bring up like a lot of your own culture like to explain some of the themes

95- for for the students. Like, I remember example, for example, you remember fishing, and

96- you said something about, like, you went fishing with your dad or your grandfather. That

97- was That was great, like a great experience, so they can connect your culture, your own

98- culture with the students. So they can you can explain something. Did you bring this more

99- often? Did you this?

194

E1 Teacher

100- Yeah, I mean, what I mean, in terms of any kind of cultural kind of aspect you have in the
101- book. For me, first, I see what students know about that culture. Because obviously, maybe
102- an alien culture to that regard. It could be something due to Japan, or France, UK,
103- whatever it is. Now, if they don't know much about oil is limited. They have limited
104- knowledge. And then I try to relate it back to the students own culture. So for example,
105- comparing contractors in Japan, they have this festival, for example, what do you guys
106- have in, in your country, and I do that way, compare and contrast, it makes the students
107- feel more comfortable with the kind of kind of theme of the topic. So in terms of I can give
108- you maybe an example, let's say, I mean, let's say talking about, let's say, a cultural event
109- that happened, let's say in the book, for example, they have a thing where we're talking
110- about the Chinese New Year. Okay, yeah. Now, most students, you know, if they saw the
111- picture, they might identify this something to do with China, but they had no idea that it's a
112- festival. And so yeah, they just see the Chinese language. And that's it. Yeah. So then I'll
113- try to relate to their culture initially. Okay, guys will kind of festival Do you have your
114- culture? And they will say, for example, they have the Eid festival or something like that.
115- And then ask for what things are similar. Look at the picture, do you have something like
116- this? This is how you celebrate your culture? They'll say, No, we don't have this, we have
117- something different. And then I'll maybe give an example. Or they may even ask, again,
118- depends on the level of the students. Now, if they are high level shoes that mess up your
119- teacher, what do you have in your culture in the UK? Well, if they don't miss that, if they
120- don't mention that, then I will basically, you know, tell them, then you can't resolve people
121- celebrate like a festival, like Christmas, for example. So but I think it's always try to relate it
122- to students culture, just they can relate to it better and understand the theme. But I don't
123- think that only limiting students to that. And not making them aware, not making them
124- aware of other cultures, I think would give students a restricted or somewhat narrow view
125- of the world. Some people think, No, you shouldn't really expose students to other cultures,
126- alien cultures. But I think there's no harm in that. So long as there's not something in that.
127- That is going to be you know, I don't know, offensive, let's say to the students in Saudi
128- culture. But first of all, if you're only going to teach them about things, let's say in Saudi
129- culture, and you're not going to expand their horizons, broaden their kind of scope, I think it
130- limits their mobile need. For example, do go outside, travel abroad, knowing about the
131- culture would help them to better have a better understanding about the people how they
132- are. And the differences in their cultures helps you to appreciate people better, I think. So I
133- think it's always important to give them like a broad kind of perspective on these things.

Interviewer

134- Okay, good. Thank you very much for that. And would you mind if I can ask you? So you're
135- teaching the UK? And now you're teaching in Saudi Arabia? Of course, it's, as you
136- mentioned, the exposure to other cultures through language, English language is different.
137- But while you're teaching Saudi Arabia, did your teaching approach changed when you first
138- taught here? And now when you are teaching now? Like, is there like kind of, is there any
139- kind of change in your approach? Or is nearly the same approach but different? Because I
140- think the culture of the country like the country is different from 20 years before and like
141- now with the new vision? So did you notice this with the students sculpture, for example?
142- So you mean like, hey, in the last 20 years, whether that yeah, when you first start
143- teaching, you have, yeah, in Saudi Arabia, that you had some sort of teaching approach?
144- Did this approach change? Like in the last few years? Or maybe the examples that you
145- bring up or?

E1 Teacher

146- Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I would say it has changed, because I think you have to evolve
147- with the times. So yeah, those of you looking at now, 20 years ago, maybe something a
148- little bit more sensitive, maybe certain things you wouldn't discuss, for example, women,
149- that will no topic at all, but now I'm very comfortable. For example, having a discussion with
150- my students, for example, are things that are changed, how things have opened up, you
151- know, opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia, women basically working, what's the

152- economy is about women in the workplace, women driving? And you know, I mean, some
153- people and interestingly, interestingly, while there are some students that, you know, I don't
154- know what you can say, approve of these changes, there are still a large number that are
155- still quite conservative in their views, which is quite impressive. Now, it couldn't be because
156- of their upbringing, because tuition is quite maybe a conservative kind of city compared to
157- other cities. I don't know. But that's the impression I got from speaking to some students.
158- Can you give me more examples? Because I'm interested in knowing this kind of, like
159- cultural sensitive, sensitive topics in Saudi Arabia. So for example, you mentioned women
160- was one of the topics but did you do you have any other examples? Or do you remember
161- recall any ancient like, occurrences when you think that okay, this this topic was a bit
162- sensitive? I'm not gonna open this topic now. And but now, you cannot have this topic.
163- Um, I mean, the beginning I was told and if we're speaking to people that are already
164- working in Saudi Arabia, certain things you'd be wary of. And stuff like women was that
165- relationships, politics, religion, areas, which is like try to try to avoid basically because they
166- can be sensitive. And from them really, I think women is the only one really that now I
167- have. I've introduced I would say, okay, discuss more relationships. Of course, that's
168- sensitive. I mean, that's something I probably still would not into. Okay, good. And politics,
169- obviously, and, and religion. I mean, I won't directly you know, bring it in to the class.
170- I know in the past, I've had some colleagues that basically you know, students were upset
171- that a colleague was for example, always bringing in religion into his class he said, What
172- can we do we've had to learn English not here to learn Islamic Studies, for example. So
173- some students weren't happy at that colleague was doing that. So I've always thought that
174- you know, my role here to teach English and but first of all, maybe there's something that
175- let's let's bring up the Eid festival or Ramadan has some like an other religious kind of
176- background to it from that angle, maybe you can introduce something about that in the
177- class, but I wouldn't go out of my way to to bring religion so really, I would say yeah,
178- I've done that maybe still only the main one where there's been a change is women but
179- apart from that, apart from the ones I mentioned, relationships, politics and yeah, women
180- and religion to some degree possibly overlap with but beyond that, yeah, I'm not really
181- hungry introducing you other topics. I'm obviously going to legislators changing in a big
182- way with a vision and what Have you? Yes, I relate things with, let's see, I mean new
183- projects that are happening. I always like, you know, current affairs that are happening in
184- Saudi Arabia, I try to bring those into the discussion, nyan project, what the ideas are about
185- that, what they think about, for example, the Riyadh season, the music festivals that are
186- happening, which weren't there, let's say 1015 years ago ago, for example, these awards,
187- what was the city's opinion about that? Did you recommend, like, for example, they
188- approve they disapprove or they like just like, it could just be the students die ahead, but
189- they wouldn't be indifferent to be honest with you. They were different. They were
190- indifferent. They didn't really care either. Again, maybe because this these things were not
191- happening in their city. If the students were from Riyadh, you'd have more of an idea about
192- okay, what did they attend? I asked them, I asked to ask them. Did you guys attend? They
193- said, No, no, teacher? We're not interested in that. Or because we were Medina, for
194- example. And, but, but yeah, I think some of these kinds of things depends. Maybe it
195- doesn't, you know, suit everybody's kind of interest. So but it's there for people that want to
196- obviously participate and attend these kinds of things, you know,

Interviewer

197- okay, good. And it may ask you during, for example, hedge period in Medina, when a lot of
198- like internationals come to, like from all over the world come to come to Medina to visit. So
199- did you bring up some some of these example with the students do the students? Like
200- they have knowledge of these people from which countries and so on? Like, or like, a mask
201- of like, is there anything in the class happened? Like for regarding?

E1 Teacher

202- Yes, yes. Yes. So for example, we had the topic on volunteering, okay. Yeah. And it was
203- about some people that went to different cities in South America as though they were
204- teaching English no volunteering at the same time. So from that, I just said, Okay, guys,

205- what opportunities do you have to volunteer in Saudi and what kind of things we can get
206- involved in mentioned, like the what's called the Jimmy of Haiti, charitable organization that
207- you have in Saudi Arabia, and some people said, they help him that and then some people
208- said, they also help in how much time, so Okay, tail, or some of them, I think, even get jobs
209- to help people during the lunch time as guides, for example, show people around, and
210- some people have said that they were good in English, they could also help in that, in that
211- regard. So yeah, in that respect, it was brought up and obviously we have a discussion
212- about, you know, the kind of the experiences what they feel about directly involved
213- because they meet a lot of people. A lot of people that come from heights, they come to
214- Medina. So but the interaction, I think, mainly is at that level, big. And I don't think they
215- really said they interact with them, let's say in the prophet's mosque, for example, like that,
216- but if they have a certain role, where they have to maybe guide people show people
217- around, then I think from that angle, they interact with the people that come for Hajj.

Interviewer

218- But Okay. Thank you so much. Would you mind if I can go back to the curriculum that
219- you're that you're teaching, you mentioned that if the students didn't get this theme, or
220- Japan or Chinese and so on, do you think the books are like appropriate? Or are they like,
221- for example, considering the students cultural in Saudi Arabia or in Medina? Do they? Are
222- they immersive? Or are some, maybe the themes should be changed? Or maybe
223- everything like this is the teachers role? What is your opinion about that?

E1 Teacher

224- So that's interesting. Yeah. Because there was a lesson. Certainly, maybe a few weeks
225- back, I was looking at festivals, I think it was looking at, yeah. And basically, it looked at a
226- few different festivals, like in Oman, there's a cherry blossom festival in Japan. And
227- basically, but right at the beginning of the unit had a picture of some people that were kids
228- that are throwing color at each other. And the Indian is obviously known as what's called
229- the festival of color or the Holi festival. So that it didn't really go into too much detail, even
230- in the questions that were there. Just say, What do you think they are doing and where are
231- they? But really, I mean, if you go into a bit more detail, there are some kind of religious
232- kind of connotations to that fest. Now, that festival, because I know because I've studied it
233- in the UK. It is more in relation to like the Hindu gods. Yes, the, like demons and how, you
234- know, good, overcame evil and so on. I mean, like I said, the book didn't go into it in detail,
235- but just I don't know, having that picture there was, would that be a problem? If there was
236- like, if some high levels, Jews went into more kind of detail, and asked me Teacher, what
237- what is it? They're celebrating why they're celebrating and so on, then as a teacher, I don't
238- know. I mean, how deep would I should I go in terms of explaining that culture when it's
239- going to be in total opposition to their culture? So that's, yeah, so this, I think you were put
240- in like, a very awkward position where you didn't like I didn't know how, yeah, it's really
241- hard sometimes to know how deep you go. Or maybe sometimes you stopped because
242- this is my role as a teacher is depends on the the students and they want it I suppose. I
243- can I can, I can recall, like, it's a bit of a struggle.

Interviewer

244- But did you get any kind of training at the ELC? Regarding this? Or did you speak with
245- someone to discuss this,

E1 Teacher

246- we had like orientation before we start working, basically. So they get show us the ropes
247- and tell us certain things like I mentioned earlier, certain things you should be wary of, but
248- know about the culture, what things are taboo, what things you shouldn't really talk about.
249- But that's more about the country in Saudi Arabia, but we should really get a better idea in
250- terms something like this. Now, if this comes up in the book, Why is it appropriate to be in
251- the book, and to if it is on a superficial level, then you should maybe be told not to go into
252- too much detail about what underpins that festival? Because, again, that probably will be a
253- bit offensive, possibly to some of the students may be, you know, in terms of what it
254- entails, but it could just be well, angle, you're just finding out about what they believe. And
255- people have different beliefs.

Interviewer

256- Yeah, yeah. Like, so do you agree with most of the themes in the book? Or do you like
257- some of the themes of the book? Do you think it's not culturally or socially appropriate?

E1 Teacher

258- No, because? Yeah, I mean, there was another thing in the same unit about Thanksgiving
259- in the US. Yeah. Which is like religious, originally was that religious celebration. But now
260- it's just more of a family kind of get together. So similar thing where you didn't go into
261- detail. It was a large part of the unit was on Thanksgiving, but it didn't go into detail about
262- the religion on vacation, just about what they do they get together and have some food,
263- meet family and so on. Too much kind of detail. So really, I mean, I would say in Saudi
264- Arabia, in institutions that I've taught in the core color textbooks, have pretty much been
265- aimed at the Middle East Saudi context. sensitive topics, I guess, really have been either
266- omitted, or they've been toned down. Or seen anything really that I think, yeah, does that
267- necessitate it being removed from from the book? Or, you know, it depends on some of my
268- colleagues, I'm sure if they saw, for example, that Thanksgiving or the Holi festival, they
269- may say, No, this is not acceptable because of the religious connotation. So, again, this
270- ethic requires more kind of guidelines from the institution as a whole. And the ELC, in
271- terms of how teachers should, should address maybe some of these kinds of things that
272- come up.

Interviewer

273- Yeah. But you mentioned the orientation. I think it should have been part of that. Is it like,
274- at the beginning of the semester?

E1 Teacher

275- Yeah. Yeah, there should be part of that. I mean, there was a brief kind of orientation. But
276- that's specifically about the Saudi kind of culture, what things to expect, how things may be
277- different from the culture you have in, let's say, in the UK, or the US and coming to Saudi,
278- how it's going to be different. But maybe it should be something can be added to that in
279- terms of the cultural aspects in the core kind of textbook. Which may not be from Saudi,
280- the Saudi culture and how they maybe should be addressed a bit better. I think also, not
281- just that we also have as you know, these professional kind of learning communities, LLC,
282- a PD kind of thing. And maybe that's something that can be discussed in terms of how far
283- we should go. Like, teacher training something Yeah, teach. Yeah. And and that'll be
284- something that'll be useful I think for for teachers, I think new and old, because sometimes
285- just because you've been here 10 years, it doesn't mean you know, you know how to
286- address these. Maybe you've been doing the same thing wrong for 10 years. Yeah. Like, I
287- didn't know about it first. So sometimes good guidance for other teachers or maybe talking
288- to your peers, maybe we'll get more experience. So one of the things that the ALC
289- mentioned ALC did for the curriculum is to do more like PD,

Interviewer

290- as you mentioned, teacher training and so on. Is there any other thing? Like, for example, if
291- there is something in the book that is, for example, do you recall any incidents when there
292- was like, totally inappropriate picture or totally appropriate topic that for the Saudis, that
293- you as you yourself or anyone, you know, ask the administration of AOC to remove it from
294- the book or something? Do you recall any incidents like this?

E2 Teacher

1- Thank you very much. How can you Oh, do you want to let me explain your teaching
2- approach in the class.

E2 Teacher

3- I'm at the moment I do use more of a communicative approach. I think over if I when I first
4- came I obviously I came from a CELTA background. Okay, sorry. Well, you're gonna ask
5- something Yeah, that's okay. I'm with you. When I first came I came from a CELTA
6- background. So very much the initial type of lesson setup was more like a CELTA setup,
7- you know, where you obviously you elicit as you know, elicit first from the students, you
8- introduce the subject, you try and elicit from them the target language. And then obviously
9- you go through depending on what type of lesson it is, you go through some of the skills
10- and then obviously you do a PPP, you get them to produce three or practice at the end. So
11- it's very much like a CELTA type structure when I first kind of started teaching, and then
12- obviously I moved slightly into ESP. So for it was medical terminology, that's fine. So then
13- the lesson was a bit more like a, like a lecture and practice. And I think over the years here
14- in in Liberal University, I think we initially we had more of an academic. That's not as you
15- know, they've moved through different stages, sometimes they wanted more general
16- English for the students. And then the focus became more specified to English for
17- Academic Purposes. So obviously, at the moment, we're trying to teach more like essay
18- writing, you know, give them more practical skills to study in English, as opposed to
19- general English. So okay, yeah, ultimately, it was kind of communicative approach. But
20- now I think the main focus really is to give the students as much time to let them practice
21- as possible. So more student centered. So it kind of depends, I think, depends on the
22- course we're teaching and what stage you're at, in the university year.

Interviewer

23- Oh, you are okay. And so Matthew. I'll move on. Now to the other part of the questions
24- regarding catch up, would you mind to let me know, how do you define culture in general
25- and culture in language teaching?

E2 Teacher

26- Okay, sure. culture in general, I think is the shared beliefs, maybe traditions, accepted
27- norms, in a particular site, society, or a particular community, could be it could be a country
28- thing, or it could be a wider community. I think that's, that's what I'd say is in the general
29- term, specifically, more of so. So what was the second part specifically, relating to teaching
30- and learning English? I think for teaching and learning English, the culture to be two things,
31- obviously, the culture of the language, which is important, but I think obviously, in the
32- culture, it's also the culture of the institution you're in as well. So I think, if you're in a
33- university setting, then it's going to be somewhat more of an academic type of culture, for
34- learning English, and also obviously, the culture that you're teaching and living in, you have
35- to try and be sensitive to that as well as the language, the culture of the language. So you
36- have to try and integrate the two, I think.

Interviewer

37- So have you noticed, for example, when there is like, the culture of the of the language,
38- which is like, for example, in English, it could be American or British, maybe some some of
39- these elements of some of the cultural elements in these cultures may not be suitable for
40- Saudi students.

E2 Teacher

41- Do you mean the cultural the culture in general? Or do you mean the culture from the
42- books that that the books I mean, you mentioned like the one from the books?
43- Sure. Yeah, I think I think especially in earlier days, maybe it was more of a problem.
44- before? Maybe the authors of the books, I think maybe they took more of the host culture
45- into consideration. So I think, maybe in certain books from the past, maybe yeah, there
46- was more things that were not always conducive to this culture. But then I think now,
47- because obviously because it's a big business as well, I think they want to try and cater for

48- the culture that they're producing the books for. Yeah, I think it's, yeah, the culture is
49- always changing as well. I think. Now it's more of a global culture. So yeah, I think they
50- can be clashes at time times. But I think more is accepted now than before, I think in both
51- cultures,

Interviewer

52- I'm interested to know what what was the clashes that you mentioned? Just imagine that I
53- am not from, like Medina and not, for example, I'm not from Saudi Arabia, like, if you can
54- let me know what kind of cultural clashes that happened before, if you remember in stories,
55- you kind of mean specific ones or anything in general, like whether there was a confusion
56- between the host culture and the culture of the context.

E2 Teacher

57- Yes, I think I think in the books that I remember, there, were maybe references to us or
58- America or sorry, American or British culture. Maybe, for example, TV programs, or
59- something specific to that culture. Students didn't understand the tool. Maybe they
60- understood the language that was being used, but they couldn't understand the concept
61- that was being taught. If that makes sense. Yeah. And that gave you extra for so you can,
62- like, make make it clear for the students. I think maybe we had to try and bring some type
63- of cultural reference that they would understand from here, rather than using that cultural
64- reference from the book. Because sometimes you can't, exactly you can explain a lot, but
65- they still might not understand properly, especially if you don't do it in their own language, if
66- you're trying to do it in English, to explain the concept to them that they don't really
67- understand. Sometimes, it's easier to try and bring a reference from this culture that they
68- can relate to relate to more.

Interviewer

69- Okay, good. Thank you very much. And we asked you, so you've been teaching for like a
70- long time now? And like, how about the students? So do you think the culture of the
71- students changed the like, the things or the topics that you should speak about it within the
72- class? These topics change over time?

E2 Teacher

73- Yeah, definitely, yes. I think that the topics have definitely changed. I mean, even from the
74- school books here, for example, the school books. Yeah, that's how the school books, you
75- can see that maybe some of the pictures have changed some of the way they presented
76- images, for example, women in the books, there's a big cultural shift now. And that's
77- reflected even in Saudi books. So I think the the English books, also, maybe there's more
78- of a global culture now. So more things are recognized. And plus, obviously, the internet,
79- and the satellite and TV, the students know a lot more about the world than before as well,
80- and cultures in the world. So sometimes my students surprise me they even know, maybe
81- some type of information about a country that we're teaching, I don't know, a lot of another
82- country, they might know some of the cultural traditions from that country when it comes up
83- in the book. So it's definitely changed.

Interviewer

84- So do you think the students are more knowledgeable now than before? Because I think
85- because of the access to the internet?

E2 Teacher

86- I think so. Yeah, I think a lot of the students are more aware of different things going on in
87- the world and different cultures. But I think there are still a section of this society that aren't
88- so aware. Maybe it's still a transitional phase, phase, sorry, where a lot, a lot more of the
89- students are definitely more exposed to other cultures and other information. And I think
90- maybe students have travelled more now than before, maybe travelled to different
91- countries and seeing things as well. So it's a different, definitely a different context at the
92- moment.

Interviewer

93- Okay, thank you very much. And so now, you mentioned that the books have more of a
94- global themes than more than like, just one culture or American culture or the British
95- culture. How about these global themes? Do you think the students are like, more

200

96- interested to get things from any other culture? Like they think this like, or do you think
97- these books are useful for the students that we are teaching now for example?

E2 Teacher

98- I mean, I think to be honest, in the context of the university that where we teach that it's
99- more the focus should be more on the academic English I think because for example they
100- might teach about. There was something we talked the other day about South Korea, I
101- think it was, where there is a coming of age day where they have the students, sorry, the
102- teenagers become adults. And they have ceremonies and things like this. And there are
103- some things in there, I think it was, like the students maybe not so interested in it, to be
104- honest. And there were some things there were there was a little bit of a culture clash, for
105- example, bowing to your parents. So in South Korea, they were teaching that the
106- teenagers in this ceremony will bow to their parents. And obviously, as Muslims, we don't
107- bow to any any other human. Like, yeah, so I think that, like, I can see it's got a use from
108- the language maybe, but not necessarily from the culture, I don't think the students were
109- too interested in that type of thing. It just just to teach them language items, that maybe
110- that could be presented in a more a different type of cultural way that they can relate to.

Interviewer

111- Okay, good. Good. Thank you very much. So did was there like a cultural theme within
112- the book? Besides, like, of course, like this one that you mentioned, that, for example, did
113- you speak when there was something that you want to speak to the administration to
114- change it or, or you wanted to edit this and, like, if there is something you want to change
115- in the current textbooks?

E2 Teacher

116- Uh, hi. See, I think in all in generally, most textbooks that you're going to use anywhere
117- around the world, there may be something that's not quite appropriate or interesting to the
118- students of that culture. So I think the teacher will always try to adapt some of the material
119- or maybe related to their context. So I think that's something that we as teachers hear,
120- especially here in Medina, maybe we are usually trying to adapt it and maybe just help the
121- students understand it from a different perspective, maybe. So in terms of changing the
122- content, I think naturally, as teachers, we, we always adapt certain things that maybe the
123- students can't really quite relate to anyway. So in terms of like, changing the books, I
124- mean, obviously, it's not always easy to just change the books in an institution. And I
125- think, generally, there's always some type of cultural sensitivity that you have to try and
126- adapt anyway, in any book. So it's not so much about changing the book, but I think the
127- teacher needs to adapt to the material and change that material as they're teaching.

Interviewer

128- Okay, and how about you as a teacher? Did you get any kind of like, for example, cultural
129- sensitivity class, or preparation before teaching or while teaching from the administration
130- of ELC? So how do you how do you meet you mean? I mean, did you get any kind of
131- training or course or some, like, cultural sensitivity sensitivity course? For example? Or, or
132- just an information about to what to teach? And what are the things that we can talk about
133- in class,

E2 Teacher

134- we things that we cannot talk about in class. And so I see, okay, I think when, when I first
135- came, it wasn't we understood, I think, I don't know how maybe because I knew people
136- who were here before, or I don't know, but we understood that there were certain things
137- that you don't talk about, like, for example, politics. Religion, to an extent you don't really
138- discuss the religion religion in the, in the classroom. And I think when we first came, it
139- wasn't actually told to me specifically, but we kind of knew I don't I'm not sure, maybe it's
140- because I knew people who taught here before, or I understood the culture somewhat at
141- that time. And I think also, having been here in this university, we have had a lot of
142- training courses. And we did actually do some, they do actually do some continuing
143- professional development courses. And they have addressed that, for example, like global
144- skills. And also Yeah, definitely cultural sensitivity, how to adapt things to the cultural
145- context. So we did have some some courses but initially, I don't think there was anything

146- that was specifically told to me be don't do this and do that in the class.
147- Okay, so it was more like you got it from experience or from previous teachers like, like
148- informal lunch shots or with the with colleagues. And so you and you've got this
149- information about teaching here. From there. Yeah, and maybe reading some, for
150- example, what if I when I took a job first, maybe there's some In general, what so so
151- material that you can read? Just generally about? Yeah, so sometimes, you know, and
152- also actually, not necessarily my situation. But I know that if people are recruited through
153- an agency, like a teaching agency from appropriate, then that teaching agency will
154- actually tell them maybe in the job advertisement, or in their literature, they will tell them in
155- their paperwork, these are the things you should do. These are things you shouldn't do.
156- So I think, yeah, specifically said, maybe in some people's contracts, or the job, advert
157- and so on.

Interviewer

158- Okay, good. Thank you very much. And did you use your own like, did the for example the
159- students during the class, did they ask you about your own culture? Or, for example, that
160- they wanted to know? What are the things in the UK? Like, and so on?

E2 Teacher

161- Yeah. Yeah, I think, generally here, maybe more in early days, maybe not so much
162- now. But they would ask you, what is your background? Where your parents from? That
163- that, yes, that was definitely there. But I think nowadays is a bit different. Nowadays,
164- they're more used to seeing different types of people maybe from, for example, from
165- Britain, rather than just that, you know, white middle class type image, that you have to be
166- like that to teach English. I think that's changed over the years, someone, maybe because
167- they've seen they've got more access to information in the internet, and so on.

Interviewer

168- Okay, good. And I want to ask about what kind of cultural experience did you gain from
169- being in Medina? So you met for obviously, other colleagues from other parts of the
   world? How about outside the academic context? Did you meet like, for example, some
170- international people in Medina?

E2 Teacher

171- Of course, because we've got the prophets Bosque. So yes, there is obviously we receive
172- people from all over the world. So definitely, we got exposed, and we get, we get exposed
173- to different types of people here anyway, from all over the world. And also just interacting
174- with some of my Saudi neighbors, our colleagues, we learn and obviously living here, you
175- learn a lot about the culture, just from being here and seeing things and understanding
176- how things are done and the way people think sometimes. And sometimes, just for
177- example, just just the driving even for me from the driving, you can understand, not like
178- you can, for me, I can understand a lot about the maybe the wider culture or people's
179- minds and mentalities just from from that, if that makes sense. I can guess Yeah, like, as
180- I'm driving here is a bit different from Makkah driving, but still, like there are some
181- elements of the not not driving very well. Yeah, I think I think you can understand things
182- about the culture and the way people think, from things such as driving, how they, how
183- they follow rules, or they don't follow rules, which which parts of the society follow rules
184- more than the other parts of society. For example, the youngsters here, a lot of the
185- youngsters now and I've spoken to many older Saudis, and a lot of unhappy with a lot of
186- things that the youngsters do, as well. So there's a there's a lot of levels of culture here
187- that are interesting to learn. Yeah, it's really exciting. And that's what what the thing that
188- excites me the most because as teachers we are, we are supposed to teach the same
189- thing, but each of us have his own culture. So I'm a Saudi, I have my local culture and
190- there is a Arabic have his Arabic culture shared with the students. And also there is
191- international teachers, which is shared who shared their Islamic culture with the students.
192- So but still, like there are still more layers of culture. Like for example, in the UK, I
193- remember football Of course, whenever I go to any place, I want to speak with anyone. I'll
194- start with football, then I can complete my conversation with anyone.

E3 Teacher

Interviewer
1- Thank you very much. How can you Oh, do you want to let me explain your teaching
2- approach in the class.
E3 Teacher
3- I have a up. You know, I know that the students, they also know a lot of things from the
4- west. And obviously Britain and America are very close, certainly in their traditions when it
5- comes to Christmas and Easter and these other pagan events, they're very obviously,
6- related these types of things, you know, it can't be separated, obviously, the boundaries,
7- American idioms or American terms are different. You know, when we say gas in America,
8- we say petrol in England, with a gas station with a petrol station, and a trunk or boots, you
9- know, is there going to be some differences here. But when it comes to the students, I
10- mean, of course, I'm in a perfect position to make a comparison. So I can show these
11- things that you've probably seen on TV, or they've seen from other cultures. And I can now
12- show these, like what I now do. So what I tend to do is like, use images of what Saudis
13- have done for many years. So I showed a schema, I talked about things which are
14- accustomed about giving salaam, the greetings of course breaches also part of the culture.
15- So now removed, removing the shoes at the door, these types of things, I put these in, I
16- talk about maybe things, who are famous people who, who, who, who have been like kings
17- and rulers here in the past, you know, I've talked about, I talked about things that we
18- believe in, and then I show like the equivalent of the masjid will be a church, something
19- like this just to show a comparison. And I give examples, both in terms of pictures and
20- photos, and also from anecdotes, and stories from my own experiences. And I point this
21- out, and also I use other cultures to where it's very easy to do that, for example, the
22- Japanese culture, the style of their housing, or their clothing is very easy. Or food, the
23- burger for America and the piece from Italy are usually such things that they maybe see
24- around them in their own environment. We see the pizza shop here, we see a burgers
25- everywhere. So it's something that they are seen, but maybe they didn't think that this was
26- actually part of the culture. So what's it Okay, yeah, then we get capsure. Mandy, maybe
27- we get some other things from them from the brainstorming. Yeah. And also like
28- mentioning food in the day of day, sorry, yeah, sorry. I always like even with the students,
29- and those will make them imagine more, and they know more. And they want to know,
30- what is the meaning of this word that that word is kind of that Exactly, exactly, yeah.
31- So you, you started, how may I ask you about your teaching process? So we start from the
32- book. And then if you want to explain something you mentioned, you start from their culture
33- or from your own culture for everyone. More? I do like to vary things. I mean, I know and
34- I'm sure you know, of being an expert in this field. But there are different types of learners
35- in this in this world, like the read learner, or the kinesthetic I mean, there are settlers, they
36- are actively talking step by step, the top the top most they'd like to learn from by talking.
37- And there's the creative minded one who likes to learn by He listens to you a little bit, but
38- he doesn't get all of what you say he has to learn by doing it and making mistakes finding
39- his way to the answer. So include. Yeah, Yep. Okay, so what what I want to say is that
40- really, because we do have different types of students, different types of learners, creative
41- learners, step learners talk learners, and research learners that we see very important
42- when we approach units to actually not just be mundane or on monotone in the sense that
43- we just use one way. So maybe I would start with the Saudi way, I would actually start with
44- things they can relate to, and personalize it. Or maybe if I felt it was necessary, I would
45- look from my background, or what I know from Western culture, maybe because I think
46- maybe it's something that they would see on TV, and somebody could relate to, you know,
47- more easily than something which is a bit more specific. So something more general to do
48- with maybe transport or something with vacations, you know, maybe there are some
49- famous places that we could we can connect to connect to overseas before starting with
50- time was demand will cover and then we would maybe work that way. So all depends I
51- mean, I'm flexible. And I just make a judgement when I go along. For example, with the the

52- units on festivals and celebrations. I start with eat pizza. So I personalize this. And they
53- may be asked him, you know, what do you know about other cultures and their
54- celebrations, you know, I would branch off to overseas and other parts of the globe to see
55- what they know and then I would I don't I don't know if you know, but I use the Smart
56- Notebook. So I like to put ideas. I don't want to be one of those teachers who doesn't write
57- down the input from the students, I think, you know, it's very important, of course, to ask
58- CTQ questions and ICQ questions. But I think it's very important to write down their
59- answers. It's very, it's all good to say, Yeah, that's correct for some good answer. But I
60- think he's nice to put it down, we can review that later in the lesson. Or we can go back to
61- that in the future. And they can see what they've achieved. It's not just about exams, but in
62- the classroom, you can make achievement, and it's good to recognize that by you storing
63- that information. So we use a Smart Notebook, I use the brainstorming system where I put
64- the title in the middle, then I put arrows away from the title in different directions. And I put
65- their ideas on there. And we go over to accent units. As we did that last time we did this.
66- And you know, you did that. We don't want to pick any national press anybody
67- independent. But as a group, we have this, and we're here to help each other. So yeah,
68- this is what I like to do. So what I'm saying to you is, I am flexible, I like to use different
69- things. Right now, for the one we do in transport unit free book free. I really just I mean,
70- because this type of thing is global. Anyway, aeroplanes are global cars is global. So you
71- don't really need to focus on Saudi culture first, or American culture. First, we could just
72- focus generally here, because you know, everybody pretty much uses the same types of or
73- modes of transportation. So really, we just need to distinguish between air, sea and land.
74- What do you prefer me, for example, today? I asked him some questions. You know, we've
75- just done Unit Two environmental problems. I said, one, which form which form of
76- transportation do you think is the most harmful? Or the worst in terms of pollution for the
77- environment, linking it to what we did before? We're not moving in? I like to link to what we
78- did before. I asked him, you know, we're talking, if you look in the book is obviously a
79- British book. So we're getting the polar bear in Norfolk North Pole. We're getting stories
80- from global warming, I asked him, Do you think global warming is actually something that's
81- present or to be concerned about in Saudi? So we look at it globally. And then we focus yet
82- maybe Jambu? Maybe Robin, you find a lot of smoke that smells in Jubail, so we can
83- relate that and they give me those answers. I asked them, I'd give them the bigger picture.
84- And then let's focus on Saudi now. I think it's very important personal personalization, one
85- way to get them motivated. And secondly, at the beginning of the lesson, you tell them
86- what's in it for them. Because for adults, it's very important to let them know what's in it for
87- them, they want something out of it, it's not like if you tell a child, okay, today, we're gonna
88- study colors are great colors, yellow and green, and blue, you know, you don't need to sell
89- it to them. But when you need to tell them that you're going to be very encouraged, and
90- you're going to be very flexible in your language, if you can do this, this is going to be in
91- exam. So you really need to know this, you're going to be able to interact with people by
92- using this first conditional, much better than if you don't know that you try to use these
93- things, to sell it to them, and make it more interesting. So these things I find do work. And
94- it's really important to give them you know, the incentive to do it.

Interviewer

95- may ask you, thank you very much for that. May I ask you about the context in Medina
96- now? Like, you mentioned, the samples from Riyadh from, from the mom and so on. The
97- famous example was one. Did you the context, that you're teaching approach as well? Did
98- you use it as an example? For example? And so on, if you can give a view if you recall any
99- examples from your teaching?

E3 Teacher

100- Yes, I mean, you know, I've been in in here handler for five what is it? I was two years
101- principal, Korean, German. Army, a nuclear? Yes. Private education. So however, for that,
102- we were teaching headway, you probably know, the serious headway. Here to Oxford and
103- Cambridge. Cambridge unlock now is very important. And the fact is, I've used Medina a
104- lot, particularly for transportation. Like, do we need a metro? Would a metro be good?

105- how would we use that? Here? How would that be useful? And of course, there was a unit
106- on buildings and structures. And I asked him, What do you think is a beautiful structure in
107- Medina? And we get the harem, of course. But really, when they answer we don't have
108- much here. They understand because, you know, you look to Riyadh, they have
109- skyscrapers, they have the borders. They have the height, the tower, the Kingdom tower.
110- And they have, so we can make especially when we have comparative adjectives, we can
111- compare Medina to Riyadh. And that's what I do. I include no dragon having food.
112- I've even done discussions on young boy because none of the students actually have
113- relatives or family in Yanbu. And they've told you that so they know a lot about Jambu as
114- well. When we did some ink on a map and a position of a coffee shop where we're
115- going to put it next to the sea city. center on the main road, where we're going to put it,
116- they knew that area very well. So that worked really well, as well. So I like to use this
117- setting and when it comes to, you know, I like to include I mean, you know, Stories of the
118- Prophets, Allah cinema like to include things which we can relate to, and try to use
119- examples there. And I do, quote examples that we know of, to make it personal, again, to
120- make it personal, who we are, you know, from my background to get people engaged.
121- this from that, from, like, when you mentioned the stories about Prophet Muhammad,
122- peace be upon him and his companion. Examples for that, like, which Hadith or what was
123- the occasion, for example, to bring that? For example, no, yeah, I mean, I'm a bit cloudy,
124- but I do I have included, for example, stories of inspiration to get these guys motivated.
125- And, for example, the story of Saudi Arabia workcast When he walked on water and the
126- rest of Ashoka, they mean, Rahim Allah, because they they conquered the Persians, you
127- know, from Iran. Yeah. And they took the freuen, which was obviously a very important
128- was was magnificent was very full of jewels and riches. So they carried that all the way
129- back to Alma been at the top. And sat said, and almost said, Look, you know, what, look
130- what you did, you know, amazing thing like this, is because you something along the lines
131- that because you're good people, and sad replied, You know, we're only good because
132- you're good or more like this, you know, like saying this type of thing. But particularly
133- particularly, it come to my mind now, the one on manners and behavior, coaching about
134- the manners of the prophets of Assam and this type of thing. And to be honest, I have
135- given up examples, but I just can't recollect them now. But like, I think, even in my opinion,
136- I think this one is like, you're you're doing this too, because it's close relation to the
137- students as you think.But she's what I'm doing. Yeah,

Interviewer

138- may ask you now, like, in comparison, while you were teaching at the past, and while
139- you're teaching now, did your approach change? Because maybe the type of students
140- change? Or is your approach nearly the same? What do you think? Like you've been
141- teaching in Saudi Arabia for long? And in?

E3 Teacher

142- Now? Yes, I think there are two angles to look at here. Now, one of the things for myself, I
143- think you need to look at look at it from both the teacher's perspective and the students
144- perspective. For me, I've always been somebody sporty, and whose likes, I think, you
145- know, I get bored very easily, I can get bored very quickly. And you know, from the
146- research, there's the 27, there 720 rule, the 720 rule, that every seven minutes, teacher
147- should change what he's doing. Okay. And every 20 minutes, the students should change
148- what's what he's doing, because I think you also know from research that students are
149- most attentive at the beginning of the lesson, because they want to know what they're
150- going to be doing. And the end, so they can take something away. But that middle, that
151- middle portion, is, especially with second language learning, because it changes shape
152- of the brain, which can make you tired. So and also the critical thinking section. So you
153- need to be clever. For example, the critical thinking sections, we have now a very long
154- competitor, Oxford, becu skills book, they're very drawn out, they're very long. what I do
155- is I do a bit of a portion, then maybe I go to an activity. One thing I've always done,
156- Abdullah, is I've always tried to include color and creativity and group work and
157- fun, making them the center of attention, making a communicative making good, rapport,

158- relaxed, so there's no burdens, making sure that these guys are not worried about making
159- mistake. I start speaking making mistakes, I don't care what you think. I'm just trying
160- to produce Arabic, because there are some guys that they have some observers paradox,
161- you know, they know that there's a montage student in the class that made me think, you
162- know, I can only be I'm not going to be as good as him. I'm gonna sound like a fool to him.
163- I tried to show them that this is not just always been my way. What I would say with more
164- experience, and also now moving with the times in 2011, that kinks out, I was using less
165- any technology. I was using less websites, but now I use many websites. I'm a members
166- of many websites. I like to include variety different styles. I like students, I blow things on
167- tablets, I like them to use word wall quizzes Quizlet. I use these variety because I don't
168- want them to come into cash on yet. I know what's coming. I want them to be on their
169- toes. And that makes it but also challenging. I missed the classroom. I have a ton of
170- things for the classroom, which of course At a physical, you know, and I prepared all
171- these things for the second semester, but unfortunately, we lost the teachers, and
172- therefore we're all online now. But I think what is really important, like I said, is designing
173- your lessons. And the activities that don't exclude any type of learners. So the type of
174- activities that you design, gets the talkative learn included, gets the research done
175- included, gets the step learn, included, and gets the creative learning. So you want to you
176- want these tools that make everybody involved. So they feel like, you know, I'm not saying
177- that somebody is only creative, and nothing else. But what I'm saying they're
178- predominantly maybe 70% creative, they're more to one one type of learning than others,
179- maybe they're 10%, you know, but their main one, so the main one is to be creative step,
180- research, or talkative, or talk. And these types of learners. Normally, they don't like to
181- work with each other, but you can do the activities where the design of the activity makes
182- it. So everybody, so you give an activity that have steps in it, you have an aspect, which
183- allows talking in it, and you have something where they can give their own type of answer
184- to that just want to give a modern answer from the book, they get their own answer to the
185- word or they get their own spin on it. So they can actually get their own input, because
186- that's what they want to do. They want to get their own identity, on the grammar, they
187- want to get their own identity on the new word. Okay, and the research once you give
188- them time, because the research learner, he wants to think about someone you say, think
189- about this. And then you get into groups, you think about this. And then because they
190- want to be an expert, before they start talking about things they want to learn privately
191- alone before they get into groups. So what's important is to have that variety. So that's
192- always something I've known. But I would say that my my abilities in terms of reaching
193- different levels of students has improved. I mean, the trouble we have and you know,
194- what this is the is the is the is the schedule is so fast, that we don't have the amount of
195- time that we need to spend on the weaker learners. So sometimes I might just throw in,
196- be recommand. However, you know, I might just give a quick one. But I asked him to write
197- a positive negative and question form of the word at home, to to show me that they're
198- using English just to speed up the lesson, because we really, you know, some of the
199- abstract meanings can be, you can give just maybe a translation Arabic, where it's
200- needed, you know, if they're struggling, so you start with getting them to do it. But if you
201- running out of time, and we do have the schedules to stick to, of course, is the issue. But I
202- like to set homework and I set homework, and then they can work at their own pace.

Interviewer

203- Okay, that's really great. So you're more experienced now you're using more resources
204- than before? And this is right. Okay. May I ask you, about the same students? Do you
205- think the students level are nearly the same? Or Did it improve now than a few years ago,
206- when you were teaching other parts are here even here on paper in diversity? Or what do
207- you think about the students level? In general? Of course, not like a specific?

E3 Teacher

208- I mean, it's going to be important, and younger. There is a lack of participation, definitely,
209- it is difficult to assess. But based on the last semester, when we were engaged,
210- definitely, I could definitely use the techniques I was employing, definitely using the

211- strategies. Using visuals. Of course, what you do is you get the better students to get the
212- answers first. And then that's like a demonstration for the other students. So you can go to
213- them. And they can they've seen it model, they've seen what they need to do. And then
214- even if they just repeat the same as the excellent student, and that's okay, because
215- they've achieved something, they've actually produced it. So you know, you start excellent
216- work on that level. Even if I just save Africa, he'd go to the masjid, rather than he goes,
217- she goes, you said, yeah, that's, that's good. And then you get, you get them to listen to
218- other examples where they hit goes, not go. So then they hear it. So you're not like, you
219- know, criticizing you want them to be encouraged. And even if they make mistakes, I think
220- it's really important to, to get more participation is to praise them, and to say, Well done,
221- even if they made a mistake. But what you do is you don't directly tell them, you get other
222- students to point that out, what were their answers, or you just go through it on the board
223- with the model. If it's important for these outcomes within the context of the curriculum, if
224- it's something outside of the cricket, maybe it was not so important, but what's really
225- important is to encourage participation that's being really friendly. And engaging, making
226- things in groups making things in pairs, giving them the opportunity to you know, give you
227- how they want you maybe the argument for photographs, maybe want to record their
228- voice, maybe that's an excellent detail, given them the variety of how they can input into it
229- as well not just one option. Okay. So what I would say is I do feel What is crucial is your
230- techniques to get them engaged. Then you can assess And because I think I'm better that
231- now we're going to watch the 2011 in Excel, then this is important. When I first started, of
232- course, you're just wanting to, you know, get the competence in front of people, you just
233- want to get through the book and get presentations and learn your classroom
234- management. But when you know the second nature, then you really know about
235- assessment, and engagement. And what's important is motivation. And then you can see
236- if the levels if you're increasing people, and I think, in 101, and this 101, in the first
237- semester, I think it was one of my best sessions. And I would, I will say, a lot of
238- participation for people who were in a group of 40 something students, and, you know,
239- good, high percentage of those were engaged, of course, you got, you got few who come
240- from some background where they can't produce much. And I do like to start with the
241- alphabet with with them of phonics, or some some simple structures a little bit more
242- Arabic, to get them going. But of course, ultimately, it's upon them, they need to do more
243- homework to catch up to the level that they need to be. And that's something I've sat on
244- my hands, because the homework really, if somebody needs to do in their own time, but I
245- find that that does differ according to the amount of participation they do outside of the
246- classroom. Now, whether they're too busy or whatever, I don't know, whatever. But I
247- know, it's upon me to at least set the homework and give them more if they need more.
248- Okay,

Interviewer

249- thank you very much. And is there anything where my sample and the textbooks that you
250- came across? That? Were not? Maybe they were culturally sensitive? And maybe you talk
251- to? What did you? Do you remember anything from your experience or from your history?
252- Yeah. What, what happened in that in that, and what is the action that occurred after that?

E3 Teacher

253- I don't know if you know, I don't know if you think he's got more relaxed in the last two or
254- three years, when I was talking cell King cell University. Of course, the books are pretty
255- much tailored or edited for this region, anyway. Yeah, when I was at Kingston University,
256- they had everything listed, they actually encouraged you to, if you found anything in the
257- book, a term or something that could be shirk was something, then they asked you to
258- report that, so maybe there was a musical instrument or something, you would send it to
259- the manager, and you would say, the page number and then they would actually say,
260- don't teach this. So even though the books are edited, there are some things that actually
261- get through the net, and, and therefore need to be so that hasn't been enforced here. I
262- can't say one thing, I think with the video, some of the students maybe are not keen on
263- background music that why is that any need I mean, the main thing is the visual they can

264- see the aeroplanes or the wind turbine, so maybe some of the students are not keen on
265- the musical background part of it. But the example from from our current context, which I
266- would like to share is to do with celebrations and festivals. Because it doesn't have
267- enough I mean, of course, I know why about the New Year's Day. Elements are there.
268- And you know, so obviously, from my experience, I point out some of the things that
269- happen on this day. And it is related to the Romans who drew up the calendar Originally,
270- the calendar this calendar is a romantic calendar. And, and you know, it's based on shirk.
271- And also I pointed out things that if you see C E in the year or not see if you see any ad
272- you know the year can be written like C love the Christ you yes before Christ, I think that's
273- okay. But the one thing which is the big problem is ad you may have seen ad you can also
274- see, so I tell I tell them, if you write the date here and you have to then you see which
275- means Common Era, but ad is Latin for Anna Domina which means our Lord which
276- means Jesus has rubbed off the bill that I tell them not to use ad, okay, because the origin
277- of that is Jesus as God. Okay, so I tell them not to use Jesus as God. But to stay away
278- from so ever see that one, cross that one out and you'll see but I will share one thing with
279- you. Yeah, principle green, we follow the same as King Fahd University of petroleum and
280- minerals in demand. We follow the same syllabus and we have headway but the trouble is
281- that the beginner or elementary, beginner pre intermediate and intermediate book level
282- books have all been tailored for the Middle East or for Saudi. Okay, okay. Good, but the
283- syllabus before they do I have to either say I had to go to either. So he's very good at
284- Prince Margaret. Michelle is very good level. But the one before, I also I'd like to have you
285- want to say it is upper intermediate. Now, upper intermediate has not been edited, has not
286- been edited. So it's just like you're teaching in Spain, or you're teaching in Brazil, or
287- whatever. So the context has women with their legs showing, talking about beer and
288- Christmas. And what are the things that we are not allowed to have here. So I have to edit
289- my presentation accordingly. So I have to, I had to even go through the book and delete
290- as much as I could some things I could not eliminate, like, for example, the word beer,
291- which is alcohol, so I had to explain this to them. So that was a big thing, because the
292- students, you know, we're not very keen to know about this kind of stuff. I mean, most of
293- most of them were Syrians or, or Egyptians in this private soil. Not Not to me, there was
294- some Saudis there, but mainly Syrians who came from the war and resettled in Saudi like
295- this. So I will say in terms of the book being erroneous against the culture here, then that
296- book was the worst. But to be honest, in the current series, I think now, pretty much you
297- don't find anything, like I said, just really the music and some of the pagan festivals like
298- New Year's Day mentioned. So I did notice that some students refused to ask the
299- questions to do with New Year's Day, they asked the other questions instead. Okay.

Interviewer

300- So you think that students have, like the students culture like, this is conflict with their
301- culture? And your opinion? Or does it like it did it? Not to mention it?

E3 Teacher

302- So I think I think what it is a lot of these students may want to study and I mean, it's, it's
303- one that you need to get a balancing act on. For me, some top some things may be useful
304- for them to know if they're gonna study and registers in the West, if you need to. So
305- raising awareness, because, you know, when I came to Kingdom, there were non
306- Muslims teaching there. And some were a bit annoyed by the prayer and the shops
307- closing, they didn't do their research. So they got frustrated, I said, you so it's really
308- important to do your research before you go to the culture. Because we do read about,
309- you know, problems where? Or insults. Yeah, yes. And yes, advice? We have, exactly,
310- yeah, the vice versa is very important. When people come here. I, I've asked questions,
311- you know, what do you think they should know, if non Muslims come here? What is
312- important for them to know, in your opinion about the customs here that would help them
313- settle and be, you know, content and relaxed here? And likewise, I use my experience. So
314- generally, I may point somebody out. But also point out the negatives that go with that.
315- Yes. Which is important that maybe? Well, because your mind, for example, because you
316- know, they all know about Christmas. So that's coming, something I can't really now shy

317- away from I can't really delete that, because I think it's some of this well known. So maybe
318- I can talk about some perspective that, you know, that this type of thing is based on.
319- Obviously, the day is I mean, obviously, you know, I used to be a Christian. So I know that
320- even the research is day is completely wrong. This day is completely wrong. He was to
321- agree with the pagans who were not accepting Christianity, they were not accepting this.
322- So the Christian started compromise. They were compromising to the pagans, too. I
323- mean, let's face it, some some people from Israel or from Palestine going to Greece, and
324- everybody becomes Christian giving Dawa. Come on. No, it doesn't work like that, you
325- know, you see people giving Dawa to Islam that most people reject it. Because why they
326- say if you believe in Jesus died for your sins, you can just keep doing whatever you want,
327- who's not going to accept that? Your sins, I mean, we got to be accountable for ourselves.
328- So that's why it spreads so quickly, because those compromises by people like Paul, and
329- so forth. So with Christian I think Christianity, if it's in the book, then there's no point I'll just
330- say it's a shirk events, make sure you know that because they're going to be familiar with
331- it, it's on TV and these types of things, then, you know, then do that. But if it's something
332- maybe that's new, it may be or it's gonna be very hard to, it's gonna be very deep, and it's
333- gonna take a long time to get through it and maybe cut that out and focus on a
334- replacement or just do something else. But ultimately, I think it comes down to the to the
335- exams, what's going to be in the exams and preparing them exactly what they need in the
336- exams.

Interviewer

337- And so if we don't mind me, recall what some of your said, like at the beginning, you said
338- like, there's some instances in the book that maybe You have some resistance for either
339- from the students or from the culture of the whole country, like, which is mentioned in the
340- book. But this is like the past, but how about these days like this, this curriculum that we
341- have so on, even in my like, I think it's not going to have the same resistance as before.
342- Do you think this statement is true? And or not? Like people are more like, even students,
343- for example, they, they don't have the same meal leave, like resistance, like to stop
344- something to stop this, like other cultures from from teaching us?

E3 Teacher

345- I think I think yeah, I mean, I think what it is, if you mentioned it, or you don't mention it,
346- maybe you won't get a reaction, there's no concern about it. Yeah. But maybe in the past
347- years, you may get some students over Butler, you know, they may just say something,
348- which is, you know, a shield or a protection or refuge, you know, like this, but maybe,
349- yeah, I agree that I think but to be honest with you, I think, like I said, my, my biggest
350- thing, what I have noticed, really. And to give you an example, there's more quoting of
351- music in the book, there's more quoting of musical instruments, and there seems to be a
352- tolerance of this, there may be when I was looking south, they will want you to go forward
353- and say that, and then they will send an email saying, Please don't teach this, maybe 10
354- years ago, they would actually put this and then there's that they actually have a file with
355- all the things that should not be taught from all four or five levels of books. Because no
356- doubt, some things they, like I said, they get through the filter, or they get through the net.
357- And therefore we need to do that, you know, so maybe you're right. But I think even if you
358- did get through the net, and you want to point out, you can just mention it, but obviously
359- like interest river, you can mention it. But obviously you mentioned that it's not you know,
360- it's the harms of it in the bad things. I mean, for example, for myself, I mentioned about
361- alcohol, because I drank alcohol before we sat by so I said if you if you think like it's
362- impressive, it's not. It doesn't doesn't, you know, it's for people who are depressed or
363- people who have a problem. And it leads to violence. You know, I've heard stories, and I
364- wouldn't usually play football or soccer, and some of the team, they will get drunk, and
365- they would vandalize people's property. So I'm saying you're not missing out, you're not
366- missing out here. You actually, you know, it's in the crime for reason, right? And therefore,
367- you know, I can relate to some of these stories. I mean, a lot of students do ask me about
368- my journey to Islam, why don't become Muslim? So I go through this, you know, and
369- these types of things. And, you know, I don't want to bore you with that. But, you know,

370- obviously, I tell them that the nightclubs are no good. I tell them that the alcohol is no
371- good. You know, because I give them a story, for example, of what you may expect in you
372- know, and talk about behavior. I remember when I became Muslim in Australia, I was
373- traveling. And when I went back to England, I needed to get a job. Of course, back then,
374- you know, of course, in Saudi back in 2006, probably not many female managers, but in
375- the West female managers and female directors very common. Yeah. When I, when I
376- went for the interview for this job in Leicester. I went in, I noticed a woman, okay. And you
377- know, the thing they do they shake their hands, no problem, right? They're just very happy
378- to shake your hand like is equal. But of course, we don't do this because it's sensitivities.
379- It's about sensitivities, between the two genders. And it's not to do with men being better
380- than women away has nothing to do with this. It's just a woman can't shake a man's hand
381- and a woman can't shake a man's hand. It's both ways. It's not just mental. It's both ways,
382- right? You can't do it. So anyway, she comes to shake my hand. So sorry. Do that.
383- Because actually, you're not, you're somebody, I can say that. You know that you can
384- marry them, you're not allowed to touch them. Like this. So I said at the beginning, sorry, I
385- can't. So we had the interview. And I asked the questions. And lo and behold, right at the
386- end out of happy because it's their customer, she went to shake my hand to close the
387- interview as well. And again, it looks it looks twice as bad, because I said, sorry. I can't do
388- that. Because initially Oh, yeah, sorry, I forgot. So you just think he's gonna have a
389- negative impact on the interview? And of course, because I didn't get the job. You know, I
390- pointed out that, you know, you may get that, you know, you make it women just think it's
391- normal to shake your hand. And obviously, you know, we've seen that women have made
392- books and you know, it's clear that it's better to get a metal rod through the head and to
393- touch a woman who's permissible for you to touch. So this type of thing, so I do this, but
394- what I have noticed is that the musical references like collocations with music This has
395- definitely grown since my first outing in 2011. So This is where we were told to report it
396- now, we just got through that. And, you know, for myself, I personally don't like to teach.
397- And I say, you know, if anybody doesn't like that, sorry, it's just in the book like this, but I
398- don't really get any reactions and saying,

Interviewer

399- Thank you teachers just assignments really know, well, not like before, I think even I can
400- see this myself as well. Like, before I was they were people were a bit more how can I say
401- this? But I don't want they don't want to say they change the culture, but they just
402- they adapt a little bit. And the last question, is that okay. With the new vision for the
403- country, like 2030?

E3 Teacher

404- of course, the Saudi Arabia wants their citizens to be global citizens,
405- they can work everywhere, and so on and this indication and also their language, but
406- really, in in, like, in the verge of doing that, maybe at the same time they have Saudi
407- Arabia have their core values and cultural, like core values and cultural. How can I say?
408- So I know the name of Arabic, but it's okay. cultural change. That boundaries, okay. Yeah,
409- yeah, boundaries and so on that that cannot be crossed. So how can these two mix
410- together like even in like in a normal English class, so they want to be open? Openness,
411- and like in the virtue of openness, you have to be open to other religions and to other
412- practices, other cultural practices? So how can I think if? Yeah, I think yeah, I think the
413- danger comes if you don't know your own religion very well. I mean, I mean, for example, I
414- think he was even even hedgerows. Kalani said I'm not worried about what the non
415- Muslims do to me from the bad things, but I'm worried what they do on the good things in
416- case my heart inclines and I start inclining towards them. But I know if you're firmly
417- grounded from a strong background and a strong family, I mean, for example, like me, I'd
418- like to go back to the west and give dower rights. You know, I've given data to my own
419- parents and my sister. But if you go out in a park, like in London, you're going to meet
420- people, you're going to you know, you've got to have sovereign, you're going to meet
421- women with perfume, wearing perfume outside, you're gonna see women, you're gonna
422- get people with rough speech saying Muslims kill people with knives, you're gonna say

210

423- Dinesh is, you know what they read on the news, you're gonna have to deal with angry
424- people. Yeah, I mean, there's a lot of karate hatred towards Muslims. And because
425- ultimately, it's the bitter truth, right? 100 is bitter, bitter truth. So, you know, a lot of people
426- are gonna bring some bitterness with them. And you have to have patience, like the
427- Prophet you. So, you know, like I mentioned, the stories of the person going to die from
428- being injured with stones, and not wanting them to be crushed by mountains. And this
429- type of thing is really important. So what what I would say is very important to do your
430- research. What I will say is this, when I was in high school, the book was designed
431- specifically for engineering English, so they wanted to be engineers. So the terms the
432- wording, the Lexus, everything was designed. So I think what they can do here is the
433- managers or the people in charge curriculum is when I see a new book is, is maybe trying
434- to get the publishers to have the units that are going to be specific for their career and
435- future and in line with what they're going to need. Also, in terms of the conversational
436- English and the cultural English, maybe have things there, which make them aware of
437- this, but also with the mornings, that this has a shock background, so it is something that
438- you can't just be happy with. But you talk about it, you'd be I mean, ultimately, what you
439- do is you you, we you know we asked, we want to be good with all different types of
440- people, right, we want to be good accumulative and, and interact with all different types of
441- people. And it's a good to automake that Allah gives you the ability to be good and for
442- different levels of people. So what I would say is, is that you should I mean, for myself,
443- obviously, I come from the west so it's okay for me to point out those things that they
444- could fall into those harms. And you know, the stories I've heard by Algeria as they went
445- to London, because on TV, oh, it looks so nice. But when they got there, they found it was
446- hard to get a job there was racism, they Polish people lost their jobs to Polish people. So
447- they found out rather the streets were dirty, they found a lot of the bad things when they
448- got their foot when they got this is nothing you know, so not Don't be fooled by what they
449- see on the images there. When I went to Broadway in New York, you go off Broadway,
450- you find trash everywhere. So you may look good on TV, but the reality is, is to you know,
451- to follow the process in the best of character, so when you go out there, and you know the
452- stories from from this and that they dealt with people and I Uh, there are people who tried
453- to call you to Christianity, evangelists and people who try to brainwash you and convince
454- you. But if you're firmly grounded, then you know you're doing this for your career. You go
455- there for Dawa, and you go there, and then you can have good conversation because you
456- feel solid in yourself. And then you can have conversation with them. And know, this is
457- what they're upon. And you don't need to belong to them. You don't need to, but you just
458- wanted to maybe promote Islam in a good way. Be good character, good actions, these
459- types of things. But no doubt if you know, when you get to high levels, Abdullah, you
460- definitely need to know the cultural things. Low levels, yes. You know, Present Simple,
461- past simple, I went to them, I went to the mall, whatever. But when you need the idioms,
462- right, you need things that maybe have some sharp elements in them. And I think if they
463- are there, they need to be pointed out by the teachers and made aware that you may
464- encounter this, but you should hate it in your heart, but just be very good on the surface
465- with the people.

E4 F Teacher

Interviewer
1- like how do you explain a cultural theme to the to your students Like, for example, the
2- current book have something about, I hear something about festivals in China and so on.
3- Do you think this bringing things from other countries? Do you think it's more exciting for
4- the students? Or do you think it's confusing for the students? It's not part of their culture or
5- what do you think?
E4 Teacher
6- Okay, okay. Well, nowadays we live in a in a globalized world, they have not like, carrier,
7- I'd say 15 years ago. Even when I shame I felt that the students were pretty open. Okay, I

8- tend to react. So in reality, it was a more open way of speaking really fast. But actually,
9- Almudena is also culturally speaking, there's a mix of concerns. Okay, so, yeah, so at the
10- same time, it's, it's a mix of both, they're kind of open minded, and they don't know, you
11- know, how much are nowadays, I would say, for the past seven years, you know, with
12- social media, I really now when students, you know, all watching Netflix and all of that. So
13- they're used to a lot of fascinated by Korea, you know, stuff like that. So really, now, we're
14- talking about students who are very open to the world, in Saudi Arabia, even students from
15- I get, you know, some what I was physically teaching students from Yunbo, who are really
16- into fashion and stuff that you can only find in America or in Europe, you wouldn't really
17- know that here. So I was like, okay, she's from England, but she really knows our stuff.
18- Like invoices move CT, and they're very good known. Now, we're in a world, we live in a
19- complex where, because of social media, Instagram, and particularly Instagram, and TV,
20- you know, Netflix and stuff, people are really open to too many things. So they know, they
21- might know it, sometimes even students know more about Korean culture than I do that we
22- tend to think that the words about you know, they would say some very specific traditions
23- that they do there, because they they like Kpop, and whatever. So K drama, you know,
24- Korean drama and stuff, so they get to know that. I would say that if I have for example,
25- festival. Or, okay, the other time I like recently, like a few days ago, then the coming of age
26- ceremonies coming of age ceremonies are ceremonies that happened in some parts of the
27- world. cultures where people, you know, like voice you remember the same words. So
28- that's very interesting, because that's completely different. In terms of beliefs, those are
29- beliefs that are not from Islam. A lot of times, it's some culture, they believe in several gods
30- and whatever, you know, you know, their tribes, from very traditional cultures, you know,
31- so, that's a complete cultural shock, let's say, and it's not something that it's really, we don't
32- even know that actually, even in Europe, those kind of ceremonies, that's not Yeah, I think
33- it's nearly the Jewish, like, okay, maybe maybe they have bad, but in the book, they show
34- us captures in Amazon is a good idea, you know, next to backroads to to Australia, you
35- know, those? Yeah, so very, very traditional, you know, like, yeah, and Africa also, so,
36- tribal things and stuff. So I showed them, you know, we talked about that I showed them
37- some videos, and, you know, they were kind of shocked, but it was a lot of fun. And I think
38- that it's, I think for them, you know, to get to know other cultures, and if you make them, I
39- think the best is to make them watch, actually, you know, YouTube videos about that, so
40- that they have a visual and they can actually see, and, you know, because going through
41- the book, it's just a written text or an, like, a listing, you know, exerpt so, I think it's
42- important to to to make them watch, see, you know, actually in real life, what's going on,
43- why those people do that. So I like to use a lot of videos for that. And then we talk about
44- that, you know, I you know, for example, when we when we when I showed them the
45- videos about these cultures, Africans and stuff, who do these kinds of ceremonies and for
46- example, they get they have to do some self harm and go through very difficult challenges,
47- difficulties. equal tests where they could die actually, to be considered adults. Then we talk
48- about that in terms of what what do you think about it? Does does that happen in Saudi
49- Arabia? Do you think that would be possible here? Why do you think they have this belief,
50- we we compare about the, you know, the religion, and, you know, we, we talk about this,
51- you know, I'm not really shy. Because I'm Muslim, first of all, so I'm, it's not like I'm trying to
52- change whatever they believe in. But, so, so, but we, you know, like to, to, for them to to
53- get critical about what they see. And, you know, like, express their thoughts, their opinions,
54- I like to do that, you know, that's what I like to do them to talk about, you know, what they,
55- how they feel you know, about these and you know, and that's interesting, I think that's
56- very interesting to know, you know, and you found some positive feedback from your
57- students about it. So it's always very positive. The most interesting lessons usually are
58- those lessons, not the lesson about transportation and stuff like that. But the lessons about
59- cultures, they're the most interesting, because students, you know, when you talk about
60- culture, you talk about yourself. Sometimes you can talk about very intimate things
61- sometimes. So I've learned a lot of things about the Saudi culture with my students. Even
62- years after I'd been here, and I thought I knew the Saudi culture. And I, you know, there's

63- always some stuff that the 70 that we do that here, we don't do that here or learning new
64- things, because now I you know, it changed, it has changed a lot. Students are very
65- different from 13 years ago, in terms of things that their families let them do, you know, so
66- it's very interesting. And yeah, so now I find that I can talk more about stuff that I used to
67- do when I was young than before. Yeah, before when you started teaching, yeah,
68- sometimes I couldn't say I couldn't talk about some things. But you know, who, who taught
69- you what, to what to speak about what not to speak about? Did you have like, a lens? So
70- different or something? No, but but, you know, because I'm Muslim. First of all, you know,
71- first of all, as a Muslim, there's some things that I know, you know, from my religion, like I
72- have that I have limits, you know, and there is, you know, like, that's, first of all, that's being
73- respectful. And also, we have the same religion. So that's the thing, you know, there are
74- some things you're not going to talk about, or you're going to be very careful to talk about,
75- because, you know, like, it's a job or, you know, something like this, you know, even as a
76- Western Muslim. And then, yes, yes. Ever since, as soon as I came to Saudi Arabia, of
77- course, they told us don't talk about religion, don't talk about politics. Don't talk about
78- female woman driving, which was funny, because, because because, yeah, at first, but, but
79- actually Subhanallah I had some debates before they open the driving to woman but
80- before that, I had some debates about that. One year, I ran several debates in my class.
81- And so we used to do like a kind of like, every two weeks, the debates on different themes
82- and the debates were on social issues, mostly in Saudi Arabia, because that I found that
83- when I talked about social issues, things that they will talk they will be really fired up to, you
84- know, to talk about what really concerned them. So sometimes we have for example,
85- marriage and so marriage is always like, what exciting topic for example, and for example,
86- our mayor our wedding too expensive here. What do you think? Do you think it's good to
87- be you know, we talked about your real staff. So they like that and when I spoke about
88- several times about for or against woman driving so I had two teams one one was for for
89- woman driving and the other was against and this was way before not way before but
90- maybe three years before woman could dry so it was still men knew I need to talk about it,
91- you know, yeah, but I brought it I brought it in a way where I'm not trying to convince them
92- that it's okay or that it's bad. I'm just asking them okay, if you are for women driving, you
93- give me your you know, with your T shirt reasons why, yeah, and the other T and so they
94- debated and it was interesting, and he didn't feel like I'm trying to pass anything because
95- the way I chose I never say I didn't give my opinion. I didn't say, Yeah, I believe this or I
96- believe that, you know, both if they, I would also, when I when they would give me their
97- arguments, I would also criticize sometimes. And what do you think about that in both
98- teams with both teams, so they would never know what I really thought about. It was more
99- about making them, you know, like argument going he put forward arguments, which are
100- well, thoughts, even if I totally disagree with it, sometimes I would absolutely disagree with
101- what they would say. But, you know, I would try to it's not really about what they say it's
102- about how they prove or how they bring, you know, forward their argument to be Yeah. So,
103- and, and at the same time, it was always a learning opportunity, learning some new words.
104- For example, sometimes they would only have the words in Arabic, and I would never let
105- them I would never tell them no, no Arabic, because it's a debate. It's for language, it's to
106- express themselves. So sometimes I would say, Okay, give me the words in Arabic, and
107- we are going to try to find it with the class. You know, so the word in English. Yeah, yeah.
108- Because then my aim is for them to communicate. So I would know, for me, it's a barrier, if
109- you only say, no, no. You know, it's a problem. You know, like, you know, it's not conducive
110- for me, it will make them feel like, okay, I can't do that. I can't do this debate. It's too hard
111- for me. And they will lose the interest. But if you say, okay, it's okay. Sometimes it's okay. I
112- understand that you don't have the ID in English, but it's okay. Just tell me now, because
113- we'll find out. And sometimes I would have, I would know, sometimes I would ask other
114- students, sometimes we look quickly online, you know, yeah. So yeah. So, but yeah, I
115- would say that we've always had this warning about politics and religion, not to talk about
116- it. But I find that, you know, I would do it in the class, sometimes we talk about divorce. But
117- not in a deep way.

118- Of course, I wouldn't go too deep into that, you know, but for example, I would bring up, I
119- would bring up the fact that, you know, some women are divorced, and what do you think,
120- for example, if she's a single woman, what would she do? You know, for example, so they
121- see that I'm talking, I'm bringing up the topic, they can think about solutions for this type of
122- woman, but we're not entering into is divorce, okay, or it's not okay. Or she divorces she
123- does? Now that's not the point, you know, but we talk about real life, like things. I know,
124- there's a lot of single divorce women in Saudis, like in the West, you know, we have a lot of
125- similarities. And, you know, so you know, it's, it's, I think it's, we should not, you know,
126- avoid talking about real life, it really depends how you bring up the bring up the issue, you
127- know, this is dependent on the teacher on, like, just to bring like vocabulary and way of the
128- discussion, but deemed to be too awkward for the students. So you're just kind of like,
129- of course, you cannot go too deep, because you don't want to go into personal situation, if
130- you go deep, you're gonna go into a personal situation where a student might say, Well,
131- my mother is divorced, that this should never happen, because they don't do that here.
132- They don't do that here. They would be ashamed. I mean, not that I don't think they would
133- talk about, you know, a very personal situation. But, for example, for example, I'm recently
134- divorced, like, a year ago. So sometimes I say, okay, my, actually, my ex husband is a
135- French teacher and this and that. And so, you know, I bring that up, you know, it's okay.
136- You know, for example, you know, so I mean, it's not enough because, first of all, I'm
137- not ashamed of it. That's, that's something that other Allama chakra, it's not like, I'm
138- bringing it bringing it up every time. Okay, I'm divorced, by the way. No, but sometimes it
139- happens that, you know, it might happen, you know, like, two three times, I've mentioned it
140- during the year, and nothing happened, you know, it's just like, cool, you know, like, Okay,
141- this team, you know, when I tell them about, you know, I have my kids, sometimes, you
142- know, I took my kids and stuff and it's okay, you know, yeah, you don't go too deep. Of
143- course, I'm not talking about very big issues that I have with my kids as teenagers for
144- example, or of course, of course, you know, you have to be sensitive and, and like you
145- said, you don't want it to be awkward because you don't know people's situation. You don't
146- know what people are going through in your class. You don't know You know, yeah. So
147- you have to be careful about that. That doesn't mean that you have to make everything
148- taboo okay. Okay, some topics I wouldn't talk about although data, for example,
149- homosexuality and stuff like this, that would not be something I would talk about, you know,
150- like, that's like that, you know, like, yeah, I would not, first of all, there's nothing to in the
151- book or, but for example, with If we talk now, I wouldn't talk about some things. No, but I
152- would personally not go into that, you know? Yeah. Okay, good. That's okay. Like, like,
153- especially. You mentioned the book. So how about the themes in the book? Do you think
154- the fields are really good for the students? They are global themes and so on? Do you
155- think all the themes are really suitable for the students and help you in your teaching?
156- There are suitable in terms if you talk about the site, that they're very general, and they're
157- safe. In terms of transportation, festivals, where do we have sports, you know, very safe
158- topics and topics we are over the 13 years, I've been teaching ESL, this, it's always the
159- same topics, and environments. Health Fitness, you know how to be healthy, you know,
160- stuff like that. So this is always the same topics. And in 13 years, they haven't really
161- changed. Nothing has changed. It's always the same topics covered, whatever
162- methodology, new methodology methodology they claim to have, it's always the same
163- step. Now, so are they. Now, do they really motivate students? Depends on the topic, but it
164- depends on how the teacher brings it up. Actually, you have to, you have to be creative. To
165- make it interesting. You have to think about questions about what could my, my Saudi, my
166- students or Saudis? How could I make this theme interesting for them? You know,
167- however, some things still aren't naturally interesting. Like, transportation. Yeah. Yeah,
168- sorry. Yes. Cooking for one week about transport is very boring. Yeah, you know, sports
169- could be very interesting, because students do sports, you know, like, so? before? Yeah.
170- Yeah. So now, it's interesting, actually. Because now there's a lot of girls who are starting
171- to go into fitness. One girl was telling me, her family's into diving divers and stuff, which is
172- very interesting. So because I like diving, so, you know. So yeah, so that could be

173- interesting. But you know, some things are just and only known, I would say that. When
174- you, if a student, a Saudi student had to explain a foreigner who doesn't know about Saudi
175- Arabia, and she had to talk about our own culture and religion, her vocabulary would be
176- very limited. If we based the English her English on what she learns in the book, from the
177- book, okay, you know, we would say, I would say, if her English only came from the book,
178- she would not really be able to express anything about her own culture habits. So this is
179- something which is lacking. They trying to be global, but to a point where they erase some,
180- there is some specificities about the students culture. So so that's, you know, and that's,
181- and most of the time is still favoring Northern American culture most of the time, I would
182- say, but now it's trying to do less of that. But it's so general, that it's diluted, you know?
183- Because it's, I think it would be okay, actually, to talk about the American culture and, and,
184- and, for example, something very specific about American culture. I don't know when and
185- then compare it. Yeah, exactly. Now that we will have discussions, you know, but
186- sometimes, bro than too diluted and too general, you know, to safe, it's safe. But then it's
187- the teachers work to do it. But but, you know, there's only so much time where that you can
188- spend on asking students about their own culture, you know, the, you know, the time
189- constraints you don't have time to you know, yeah,

Interviewer
190- so if you have the freedom to put a new theme, like in the book, what, what that would be
191- what do you think? Oh, like, that can be engaging with the students on the top of my head
192- right now. Wow. I don't know. Do you think anything like related to the context of Medina,
193- for example,

E4 Teacher
194- Okay may be like having you know, for example, a theme where students are Arab or
195- Saudi or college, maybe goes to America and you have like, you know, her experience in,
196- you know, different situations. For example, which would be really hands on because you
197- would have dialogues, you would have the inter, you know, like, for example, she's going
198- to, she's meeting the family and for example, the family wants to shake hands, Madeleine,
199- and she doesn't want to work like this or whatever, and things like that, you know, it's time
200- for salad. It's time for prayer. So how does she ship it? You know, like, when situations
201- maybe, you know, she she has, and it's Ramadan, for example. So, how does she explain?
202- Exactly, you know, like, I remember this, like, when you when you mentioned this, I
203- remember my time when I was first with Portsmouth, I think I was 18 or 19 years old. Okay,
204- I went to Portsmouth to learn English. So yeah, you can figure out the the theme, it's gonna
205- be really exciting. And maybe it will encourage a lot of topics to speak. Yeah, because
206- there's a lot of, like, for example, because we had some students who have traveled, you
207- know, to America or other countries, a lot of travel to Asia, Malaysia and stuff. So, you
208- know, probably you, you could ask them, Okay, what about some weird stuff that you've
209- noticed, you know, when you went there, some things you didn't like you really didn't like?
210- And, you know, for example, so usually, when you talk about the negative things, you
211- know, they would talk about some some things that we'd bring up some some funny
212- discussions, you know, and what would you do if a non Muslim would come for one
213- week to your house? How can you, you know, for example, that's, that's also something
214- interesting, you know, they never think. Yeah, if the opposite happened, what you would
215- do? Yeah, exactly. Yeah, for example. So, Imogen, you know, Samantha is coming to your
216- house for two weeks. And so, you know, you know, you have different things and
217- whatever, you know, so yeah, you can, you can, that would be nice, I think, and more
218- hands on because there would be a lot of dialogues, a lot of, you know, listening about,
219- you know, where there's actually discussions, you know, in a restaurant in a house or
220- whatever, you know, with people so I think it's more lively, you know, that could be more
221- lively. The themes here lack of real life situation, why it's more academic English. So that's
222- the thing you know, so you have to say, Why did I think I hear this tailored for the Middle
223- East? So they are a lot of global themes and so on? Yeah, that's why they make it really
224- safe. That's what I'm saying. So it's good I'm surprised because some some is some stuff
225- was a bit sometimes it would like for example, they will talk about girlfriend boyfriend, you

226- know, my my boyfriend is that, you know, okay, we know everybody knows what a
227- girlfriend or boyfriend is class. But I think it's good that they just removed that, you know,
228- like, let's not let's not go into that we don't want to you know, whatever they do the students
229- in their own time that's not my issue. That's not my problem their personal life but you
230- know, some things I do understand. You know, and particularly now, I don't know if you
231- know, but in the west now in books for kids, they talk about couples, dad and dad and mom
232- and mom we don't have that now, but because it is in the curriculum. Now. You have to
233- understand this is part of the curriculum in the West, and he has to be taught like that, you
234- know, and so now we'll hamdullah I'm happy though that do you have that so that is a good
235- thing, you know, Inshallah, that it won't come to hear you know, from TV like even even I
236- think this is outside the interview like even Netflix today they they dropped their stock drops
237- really down significantly because they put new another show about dad who's pregnant
238- blah, blah, blah, so on, everybody. Yeah, like another another, like another new topic like
239- this and everybody's, so the stock dropped really like they lost a lot of money on first time
240- they lose subscriptions, blah, blah, blah and so on. So they are, they are pushing to that
241- way but now to be They're realizing that it's not like, Yeah, but don't worry, you know, even
242- if they lose money, they don't care. Because in the end, this is how they always start, you
243- know, like to change people's mentality, people will be against it, but then they're going to
244- be used. So they start like this, they know they're going to lose money, they know that, that
245- seems they're going to do it. And trust me, people will come back to Netflix anyway,
246- because they want to watch the show their favorite show. So in any case, they you know,
247- it's something long term they plan on the long term, they don't plan on the short term, they
248- don't care about losing a few millions, one month. But yeah, but yeah, exactly. And, and
249- our students, they see enough of that. So it's not that they aren't aware of that everybody's
250- aware of that, of these of these issues. We know, everybody's aware of that all our
251- students, they watch Netflix and whatever. So they know that it's not like, you know, so
252- yeah, it's not like we are we trying to, to cocoon them or to them from real life, they all know
253- that. Everybody has internet, so it's okay, so we don't have to talk about that in class, you
254- know, Hamdulillah. And I think it's important that as Muslims, we have to impose also
255- some guidelines to editors, and this is something that is needed, you know, probably in
256- China also, when they have books, they probably Chinese people, you know, communities,
257- they all probably tell editors remove these and remove that. So why don't they do that? You
258- know, same? Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer

259- Thank you very much. And regarding the textbook, so like, I remember because, before I
260- went to Southampton to for my PhD, I remember there was a topic about AlZamil family
261- like, yeah, business and exam it.

E4 Teacher

262- I really like this one. That's that's the first time in the previous book, that I really liked the
263- lesson because who wants the took example with a local family and I really enjoyed this
264- one, because then I asked them to search for other families. So they talked about AlRajhi,
265- they talked about different families. I showed them the website of Zamil, you know, we
266- went online to to, you know, for them to actually see, you know, okay, you know, maybe
267- some of them, they usually they know the name, but they might not really know what what.
268- Yeah, and what, yeah, based on this family business. Yeah. So that was interesting. That
269- was in the book, the text was talking about how they started. But then I showed them the
270- now the website and you know, they they're a global company, and mashallah they have,
271- you know, they make a lot of money and they have a lot of businesses and different things.
272- So I really liked this lesson. And that was the only one in the book that finally spoke about
273- like business and they talked about, you know, something, I think in each unit, they could
274- bring, for example, from the Yes, from Saudi, from Emirates, Kuwait, whatever, the gulf,
275- that all Muslims, whatever, that you know, they are Arabic, like the one we have about
276- festival in Oman, there is exactly one example from this book. Yeah, exactly. So instead of
277- like in each unit, but then it's it's the teacher's job to do it. But if it was featured in the book,
278- that's different Yes. Teacher brings. Now it's not just that it's the book acknowledging the

279- students sculpture, it's not just the teacher bring it in, you know, like thinking of ways to
280- include the students culture, it shows that the book is clearly featuring this culture, whether
281- it's an allergy, whatever, or specifically Saudi, but I think it's empowering for the students to
282- see that. We get what I'm saying. I think it was very empowering. When when we saw this
283- lesson about a meal. And I really, like as soon as you told me about it, I clearly remember it
284- because I really enjoyed that lesson, or the two or three years that I taught it. So yeah, I
285- mean, it really marked me that I was so happy that they're showing, you know, a very
286- successful Saudi family and, and I think it's, you know, it motivates the students. So So
287- we're not talking about someone from New York, wherever a big family from whatever
288- we're talking about, you know, their people, you know, and I think it's very important, you
289- know, to show that there's a lot of successful like, for example, I did, maybe I can send that
290- to you. I did. There was a lesson about entrepreneurship and making your own Business
291- being an entrepreneur. And so I went online and I went to Arab news, or news is a Saudi
292- newspaper, which is really cheating. And I took some, I googled that I Googled on that, you
293- know, I found some articles about some Saudi entrepreneurs woman, and I made the art.
294- So I made my own newspaper article. And I put that in a Google Google Doc, Google.
295- Google form, you know, so they had to read it, they had questions they had questions
296- about, but I chose Saudi intrapreneurs, woman female, that against all odds, you know,
297- they started their own business, and they were quite successful. And they were talking
298- about issues. Like, it's not easy, you know, sometimes, even some of my family's against it.
299- So, I wanted, I wanted them, you know, instead of talking about entrepreneurs in general,
300- they showed that is some Saudi woman. Yeah. And that was really interesting.
301- Yeah. Like, a real example for them. Real example, real ones. Because those two those
302- women, they actually exist, you know, I just took that from the newspaper. So I told them,
303- those are real women. Those are not like, I didn't make that up. And they have different
304- types of businesses. And, and, you know, it was very interesting, because now we can
305- really relate, okay, oh, this woman did that. And maybe you don't know, maybe it's going to
306- inspire them to do their own business. You know, to start thinking, like, if another one did
307- that, why can I do it? You know, for me, English is really beyond just the book, you know,
308- it's, it's, it's a way of, you know, for me to make them think to make them see the world in a
309- different way. You know, and yeah, I'm gonna handle and especially, like, even if you have
310- two languages, it's good. And then your case may be three languages. Yeah. Probably, I.
311- We also relate in the fact that my Arabic is a bit broken. So sometimes they sometimes
312- time I, you know, I tell them how do you say that in Arabic, I forgot the word or sometimes I
313- don't know the word or sometimes I'd say the word in a wrong way. And but they can see
314- that, you know, I tell them listen, I'm trying even though I my Arabic is not that good. I'm still
315- trying to speak it. So you can do the same with English. And they see that the same boat
316- together, you know, and I think it's important that you that you really relate with your
317- students like, I really like that. So let me ask you. Let's go to the second part. Have you
318- answered already a couple of questions through our conversation, but what kind of cultural
319- experience that you gain from the context so what did you bring any examples like from the
320- context of the of Tiber like in Medina or in Haram or international visitors who come to
321- Medina? Did you bring up these examples for example, in your teaching, particularly from
322- Medina? Like have you mentioned something example like a shopping mall? Blah, blah,
323- blah? Oh, yes, of course. Yeah. Yeah, of course, we talk about our everyday life here. And
324- some you know, like, for example, the fact that the only activity here at Medina is going to
325- the coffee shop and how much money I spent, you know, I always go to coffee shop with
326- my friends and I spend too much money and then we're joking about and which one do you
327- like? So we talk about places that we like and we talk about restaurants sometimes even
328- then it goes on WhatsApp sometimes I want girl for example, I talked about a restaurant
329- here in Medina and she she WhatsApp me on the on the on the group, you know, the
330- classroom? Teacher, I went to this restaurant, I really liked it and stuff. So he was
331- it's fun, because we talk about Yes, of course, we talk about the life here. I talk to them
332- about my life here, of course, or some activities. For example, if I go to Jeddah, and I went
333- to this place and whatever, so yeah, it's, it's nice, because they see, okay, this teacher, you

334- know, she, she's like, yes, you know, basically, she has a normal life. And yeah, and we
335- talk about things that, you know, for example, because I drive, so I tell them how I'm going
336- crazy on the roads, and sometimes, you know, I get really angry and I say bad words and
337- stuff like that. So they laugh, you know, and, you know, whatever, you know, so I told that I
338- talked to them about you know, the life here. Yes. A lot. My examples are based a lot on, of
339- course, what's going on, you know, what, what are you what I experienced here? And you
340- know, yeah, yeah, of course. Yeah. That's very important for me to think this is how you get
341- you get them to speak actually, if you relate that to their everyday life. This is how you get
342- conversations going. They're really interested in in shape. Hearing what they like to do
343- what they don't like their issues here and stuff. So yeah.

Interviewer

344- Okay, thank you very much. And so how about, so that may ask about that. So you change
345- your ways, as you mentioned, like you were speaking before about. Some topics were
346- taboo before, but now you're more open to speak. So, and you encourage your students to
347- be open to all cultures. What do you think? Should we accept everything from other
348- cultures? Like for example?

E4 Teacher

349- No, no, no, no, no, I, again. The thing is that, you know, okay, when I worked in, in case
350- you and this is where I've done my Masters on this issue, basically, my master's was about
351- foreign teachers coming to Saudi Arabia, which is a conservative country, and for a big
352- number of them, non Muslims, and the issues, the cultural issues that arose from this.
353- Okay, so teaching English, first of all, English is also you know, the quality, control
354- imperialism of English. So there's already this issue of English being your language that
355- tries to kind of that is global and tries to, and it's kind of put above other languages like,
356- Yes, oh, you speak English, you know, wow. You know, and, and then the other issues of
357- cultural, you know, like people's, particularly non Muslims coming here, and then because I
358- witnessed that, why did I come up with that theme with that topic, because I witnessed a lot
359- of cultural issues and clashes when I was in, in rehab, and there's a good number of
360- teachers. Yes, there's a good employer of non Muslim teachers were fired. After one
361- month, two months, sometimes even two weeks. They were they were sent back on their
362- the plane from Australia, by the way. It was in America. Yeah. We had some Australians
363- like nutcases. Honestly, I don't know why they came here are the biller because they really
364- hated you know, but you know, it's not people are not realistic anyway. So anyway, so
365- yeah, recruiting there was like I wasn't recruiting agenda University. There was an
366- American first of all, we wanted to recruit him online before we can meet him and his only
367- qualification that he applied because he speak English and he's in New York. That's it
368- that's exactly what I was. Explained. Those guys back back home, they drivers and
369- cashiers but they think because they are the native speakers, people are going to be like,
370- oh, you know, like, Wow, you're a native speaker and that's enough to teach and before
371- before before it was like this in Saudi Arabia basically you could only you could be just a
372- native speaker that was enough to teach but Hamdulillah you know, they did realize that
373- education is not just that and you need Excellency and you need qualifications and you
374- and teaching requires a lot of skills and knowledge to be effective. So yeah, so
375- alhamdulillah actually me for me in as far as I'm concerned, I've not had the best teachers
376- I've seen were non non natives you know, very involved very motivated doing a lot of
377- activities with the students. The students love them. in my opinion non native maybe
378- because there's they struggled as the same as the students so they know the steps to
379- follow maybe no plus when they become teachers they really want to become teachers so
380- they don't do it just because oh you know I have my you know, I have that set back home
381- and I need to you know, you know there's too much taxes in my country so it's the tax tax
382- with salary let me go to Saudi because that's what they do basically the a lot of normalcy
383- they just come here for because it's tax free and harmless. They they're not coming
384- because they love teaching and not because they love teaching English know that you just
385- take the CELTA if you're lucky and harassed. So what was your initial? Your initial question
386- was worth I'm sorry, because I I want to trade it I want to Yeah, my initial question was if if

387- it I forgot a little bit but just let me remember. The che, like the I forgot. Like yeah, I know I
388- talked about React to to say to prove a point but then I forgot my point.
389- Okay. Because, to be honest, this is true. View is really interesting. That's why I love it.
390- Sometimes when we go from one question to another, like, we jumped with the questions,
391- the way I want what I wanted to say that changing culture before, you could teach
392- something, you could, you could just speak about something, but now you could just think
393- about something. But now you could speak about those things. So this changing culture,
394- what do you think about it in the future? Do you think it's gonna be the same? Or this, this
395- taboo now that we can speak about it in the future? Do you think here? Back before
396- it was women driving, it was institutions, institutions will always tell you even in the West,
397- even in the West, you can talk about everything, you know, even in the West, you can't you
398- can just talking about everything in class, you know, you have to steal a classroom, you
399- know, so you can't just, for example, in France, you call you normally, that's not possible
400- that you have a teacher who says, What do you think about Islam? Should you be Muslim?
401- Or should you not be missing now? You know, now, there's limits, even if they're in a
402- non Muslim country? No, you know, there's you cannot have that. So, of course, you have
403- a ton of racist teachers, but you know, still, you know, it's not. So here, I would say. Again,
404- the books, they're going to always be covering very safe topics, very broad topic, general
405- ones, because they want to be they want to get clients. So the additions the I mean, the,
406- the additions, what do you call it? The Cambridge, Oxford, they will never go into
407- something dangerous, because they want to keep their clients and, you know, the, the if
408- Alice, now it's the job of the teacher to, to, to talk about certain things. Do we need to do
409- that now? It's academic English, do we need to go into these kind of topics, which are big
410- taboo? Why? You know, they might not be good, they might not be useful. For example.
411- Yeah, I mean, because because because we're not in a language center, like, you know,
412- those language centers where people voluntarily go to, to learn English, and they would
413- have a lot of, you know, general English, and you can talk about this is this is University
414- English. So then it's Academy, you need to cover some things, they need to get to acquire
415- some very specific vocabulary. So yeah, I mean, in any case, it's not like it's gonna happen
416- anyway. You know, like, even if we talk about some things like, Okay, if it's driving, for
417- example, for example, we talk about transports, and I tell them okay, what about you when
418- you drive? That could not have been possible before? I could not talk about that,
419- because women weren't driving, but now that the driving, we can talk about it, you know,
420- so I would say it's not going to be really deep, you know, in terms of, we have stuff that
421- we're going to going to talk about in class, usually, you know, because of the theme
422- covered in the book is never going to be really dangerous anyway. But yeah, in general,
423- generally speaking, you can still ask them questions, and yeah, no, I think I think it's, for
424- me, it's my personal experience. Yes. I can ask questions about, about about stuff like
425- woman working, for example, and problems they face at work and, and maybe now
426- Okay, before we didn't have a lot. Now, there's a lot of women working with men, we can
427- see that coffee shops, shops, whatever. Now it's something which is accept. So which is
428- done? I'm not saying accept it. I'm saying it's done. So in Saudi Arabia, in Medina, so that
429- could be something that maybe if I could, I could ask, you know, do you think there's
430- problems with the woman and men working together? What issues? Maybe some teachers
431- would never ask that because they're going to be scared to ask that? I would, I would, I
432- wouldn't have a problem with that. But I would direct the discussion to be very careful
433- about some things, you know, like, you know, for example, if they say, but usually students
434- also they it's not the West here, we're not in France, so they would not talk about direct
435- sexual harassment, but they would say for example, like, like Greece, they would say, No,
436- no, maybe they would say okay, sometimes there's problems sometimes the man, you
437- know, he, he might he might be too friendly with me. She would say that maybe You know,
438- like, they would not say, I'm scared to be raped at work? No, they would never say no. So
439- even even then the students would not. You know, the way they speak with their teacher is
440- still respectful, you know, they will not go too deep. So I'm gonna laugh. That's why I think
441- it's okay. You know, because even the students, they careful about how they speak to the

442- teacher, you know, So Alhamdulillah
Interviewer
443- Alhamdulillah. Thank you. Thank you very much. I think this is the last question hopefully.
444- So with the country's vision 2030, they wanted the Saudi Arabia or they wanted the Saudi
445- students graduate, to be open to all cultures, so they can work anywhere and everywhere,
446- like in the world, or maybe welcome every everyone from the world here and to have, like a
447- multicultural environment within the country. Do you think the this like, a, like we're having
448- this the one of the concerns, like for their concerns, of course, the one of their concerns is
449- how is that can be compatible with some strong religious values, or some strong religious
450- beliefs and so on? Like, how can this does this do you think you have will have a
451- confliction? Or will have? Or maybe what do you what do you think will about these two
452- ways? Do you think we should be open to our cultures? Or maybe something that we
453- should keep it? Or, or adapted? What? No, of course. They Yeah. From your, from our
454- conversation, I understood that there was things in the past we can talk about, but now it's
455- okay to talk about how about like, like, going forward? What do you think?
E4 Teacher
456- Um, okay, so, yes, obviously, it has already changed Saudi Arabia. Vision 2030 is already
457- in progress, you know, to achieve. And, yeah, there's a lot of, there's positives, and there,
458- there are very negative things that have happened in Saudi Arabia. Because of that, so I
459- would say some positive things is that yes, they're more open minded, but, but negative,
460- they're more open minded. And that's both positive and the negativity. The problem, the
461- problem is, the more you know, I believe you can be open to a certain point, of course,

S1 Teacher and Admin
Interviewer S1 Teacher and Admin
1- may ask you what is your teaching approach in a normal English class?
S1 Teacher and Admin
2- I don't follow one teaching approach. I use more than one teaching approach. I am with the
3- one with with the with the phrase that one hat doesn't fit all. You know, you have to assist
4- your students first. See their challenges you have the level and then choose the best
5- approach which can fit with your student levels. I think you have already observed me and
6- you'll notice that I'm trying to to solicit the student as much as they can let them speak to
7- let them interact. Let them try to communicate with the teachers and No matter sometimes
8- whether they speak in English or Arabic, because the issue related to the culture by the
9- way more than, you know, English or teaching language, some students, unfortunately,
10- they are not taught to interact more with the, with the teachers, or the anybody hear me
11- teach them. No, you know that and I know and know now learning teaching approach, and
12- they move. It's not it's not it's not one man show at all anymore now it is exchangeable role
13- between students and the teachers, our students, now our adult students get to your token
14- about 18 years old, 1820 years old, which means that what they have experienced in their
15- lives, I am trying to learn from them, in the same way they are trying to learn from me, they
16- have an experience, they have something to share. And this is why I always try to urge
17- them, please try to interact, even if you make mistakes, don't worry, but at least this is the
18- chance for you to speak and to practice using the language. Some of them they are
19- reacted positively, you know, luck in the other issue as well a big challenge that we have
20- facing currently at the moment and you are teaching online, not face to face, okay.
21- And when you teach online, you have, you know, many challenges. At the same time, you
22- have many possible advantages. And there is pros and cons in this. When it when it when
23- it comes to teaching online. The biggest issue I know you can't see the students that has
24- no eye contact between between you and your students. That is no you can't use the body
25- language. Because you're teaching online, you can't point to the students to any particular
26- student, you can't see them, you know, physically so you don't know whether they are here
27- or not here. They might be they might be online at that time. But in reality, they are not.
28- And this is the case we had with me, I shared with many colleagues as well. There are

29- some problems, you know, they can see that student online, but he is not there. Okay. So
30- this is this is to be honest, this is a big challenge. And at the same time, you know, we
31- are not talking about you know, they're still adult, but they are not yet mature enough, let's
32- say to be with you all the time, you know, they're still fresh student, they still have some
33- times they need some times to to change as ell this culture of the students okay. And even
34- I have noticed, you know, there is nothing, there is nothing related to learning a language
35- even if you teach them in Arabic, even at teaching other subjects rather than English
36- language, you would you would experience the same kind of challenges, you would
37- experience the same type of difficulties, you would find the it believe it or not, not many
38- student interacted with you, even if you teach them, even if you ask them in Arabic. So the
39- issue, it's not related to language at all, what's the difficulty of language? Yes, it is a
40- difficulty some how to some of the students, but this is not the main issue. The main issue,
41- this is my point of view, the main issue with our students is related to the culture, they are
42- not taught to be involved in teaching, they are fortunately, just play the role of receiving
43- only the information not only sharing, you give me like the life before the university.
44- Because exactly in secondary school, Intermediate School, and it's the policy of teaching
45- and learning in our kingdom. So this is something very common, which we are trying to do
46- our best to change this culture. And Hamdulillah we only succeed, we succeed in some
47- levels, and no many of them hamdulillah they start to interact. Many of them they start to
48- communicate as much as we can. We haven't reached our goal. This issue I can handle or
49- we're trying to there is okay, there is a default.

Interviewer

50- Okay, good. Thank you very much. What do you mind if we can move to another like?
51- Another topic which might be not related, but it's related somehow? Would you mind like in
52- your opinion, what do you think about the word culture in like, in general, what is your
53- opinion about culture? What is your idea? What is your definition in terms of learning
54- English or English language?

S1 Teacher and Admin

55- Teaching culture is very important. We can't leave the culture isolated from learning or
56- teaching English. Let's go at some Paraguay they go hand in hand with each other culture
57- and culture is very important. Why it is very important. If you if you teach this Students, if
58- you deal with the students and you want them to be interacted with you, you have to link
59- them with their background you have to link them with their culture you have to use
60- something that they are very familiar with, you can't teach him about something they have
61- not experienced before. This is why any we always try to link the student with the
62- environment around us okay try to give examples from the real life from their background
63- from their culture, learning our culture as good as well, which is they have already any
64- learning in our books, they can any they are discovered or they are open to other cultures,
65- Western cultures, other cultures, but also their culture it has to be represented in their
66- book, how by giving more examples by trying to link them with their culture as I mentioned
67- before, I can see as well and even the updated copies and versions of the books they tried
68- to multi in using cultures, okay, try to use more than one culture which is very good. And
69- English language isn't anymore for another cycle. English speaking countries, you know,
70- now English is spoken the second language in India, in Africa and in Malaysia, let's say in
71- other countries as well. So English isn't any the whole the only language for the UK or the
72- USA anymore. English now is open for any countries and the learners of English has
73- increased and many and every year, every year you can see the learners of English and is
74- increasing more and more every year. And then tested through English they are also
75- increasing more and more. And also let's let's meet me and he mentioned to the vision of
76- 2030 the vision of 2030 they are focusing on learning English and trying to use English and
77- in more than one institution in more than one sector, whether in public sector or private
78- sector, they try now our students have had a chance to learn English in intermediate
79- school now in elementary school now sorry that intermediate is already in intermediate but
80- in elementary school, which is good, which is good, but they have also focused in Arabic
81- languages, which is also more important for me than English. English, it is an important

82- language. But students have to be as well experienced in both languages. And what I can
83- see from the social media now is we have huge spelling mistakes and Twitter Yeah, what
84- have you any we are very shocked for many people that they couldn't even any write two
85- lines, two lines and Twitter without spelling mistakes I'm talking in English and Arabic so
86- what they expect in English if they are in their native language, they made mistakes.

Interviewer

87- Did you notice this with your students here? Like their mother tongue language is not as it's
88- not supposed to be?

S1 Teacher and Admin

89- A comparison within exactly yes. And this is the this is as consequences of social media of
90- using laptops mobiles all the times our students are not open like we were in our DNA I'm
91- not I'm not saying from the oldest generation but yeah Hamdulillah I experienced the life I
92- play football industry in the state which is good. I socialize with other people. Now I have
93- Kenny I can see my daughter my my nephews my any other other children's as well in my
94- family that are not socialized enough with other people they are not exposure to the
95- external life style they only spend many hours and hours on their phones or laptops, which
96- also influence them influence their way of speaking influence their way of interacting
97- influence their way of socializing and they miss this social skills and dealing with other
98- people. So yeah, it's not one on the one reason but you know, it's let's say, I only have
99- more than one reason Okay, yeah, that's gonna affect their way of learning in Arabic
100- quality English, not even.

Interviewer

101- Okay. And may ask you from may ask you like when you were teaching long time ago,
102- and When you're teaching now, did you see any kind of differences in in terms of the
103- themes that were introduced in the English book?

S1 Teacher and Admin

104- Yes, of course, of course. When you learn more, you will discover many things that you
105- are not taking into consideration when you teach the first time. And this is Yoni, whether
106- it's you have tried to develop yourself or even if you don't try developers, sometimes you
107- learn from your experience. Yes. But now, if you have two options, you are trying to learn
108- from your experience Plus, you're trying to develop yourself. I mean, you're taking other
109- people experience, none of the books you read, or the courses you take. It's all it's also
110- based on other people experience. Yeah. Okay. So you try to Yanni, Yanni, Yanni, you try
111- to take the advantage of other people experience, especially when it comes to the people
112- who are teaching in the same environment. By the way, teaching in Saudi Arabia of
113- teaching in the UK doesn't make any difference or teaching in other countries. The only
114- difference the students know they have already taught differently in other countries here,
115- the students they are not open to many things they have to be or they must be open to. I'll
116- give you example, using the lab library, and I graduated, I spent four years studying in
117- favor University, an English Language Center, believe it or not, me, I didn't see that
118- happen only once, during the four years, is that a problem? For me as a student, I don't
119- think so. It's a problem with the curriculum itself. That's a problem with a plan of learning
120- and teaching. When I studied in the UK, from day one, I went to the university and I was
121- open to many features, many devices and the university wide plan of teaching tasks,
122- really, you have to do assignments, and you have to write, they require you to go to the
123- university and study and search for the information and you're not relying only on the
124- books, like what we have here. And we still have this problem here. Okay, learning isn't
125- only limited in the box, or in the notebook learning, it's you can you can search for the
126- ukulele any, any you can try to get the information from not only from the books from the
127- books from experience online from any any from more than one resource is what is
128- happening now. In our universities, and I'm sure all across the universities case say no,
129- they rely on 100% In the book they are any teach there is no there is no opportunity for
130- them to search, there is no opportunity for them to go to the library and search for the
131- familiar resources of the information. The only source of their information is the book they
132- are studying, that's the only source of them. Whereas in the UK law, you have they give

133- you only the elements, the keys, the key parts and they let you swim, swim. Yes,
134- sometimes especially for us men who are not familiar with this way of teaching and
135- learning. We see it we had a big challenges at the beginning. Like when the time goes by
136- later on class, we're familiar we know how to save ourselves from more than one book,
137- you have the skills to verify your searching and to get the information from one from more
138- than one resource with other sources voxel and online books, articles will lay a new name
139- for learning and developing is endless.

Interviewer

140- So, okay, thank you very much. May I ask you, there is a cultural theme that that is new
141- for the for your students. How can you explain or try to explain this cultural a theme for
142- them? Or is there something from any other countries than Saudi Arabia? What do you
143- like for example, if there is like Chinese puzzle like a remember one of the books there
144- was like a Chinese puzzle or introduction to for example, in the US tech when they have
145- celebrating the death or someone so how can you if you have something that came
146- across in a like a one car one f the cultural themes that you came across in the book that
147- is love for example, it's a new for uses, how can you explain this for

S1 Teacher and Admin

148- First of all, we have to let them know to respect other cultures, no matter which culture
149- you're talking about. And if you want to be respected, you have to respect other people
150- and other Captain, as you mentioned, you're right. Sometimes we have some cultures in
151- our book, Chinese cultures, African cultures, Western cultures as well. And you have to
152- as well let the student as well be open to other cultures. This is this is I mean, I believe
153- this is the, the target of learning other countries. Sometimes the cultures it's very, it's very,
154- as I said before, it's very important. It's not only our culture as well, they have also to learn
155- about other cultures, whether it is related to the western culture or even other cultures as
156- well. We don't have any any. We don't have many cultures represented in our books. The
157- focus is only on the western cultures. And this is why I said, cultures for English, it's not
158- anymore for modern English people has to be represented as well, for other cultures,
159- especially from the outset. Native speakers countries,

Interviewer

160- was there a difference between addressing other cultures in when you were teaching
161- English in the past?

S1 Teacher and Admin

162- And like in the present day, like, when you started teaching, of course, these days you
163- used, especially in the in the secondary schools, we don't have many cultures, in our
164- books with the focus on Arabic culture and Islamic cultures. Okay, but now in the
165- university level, you have other cultures. There is other cultures as well, but not too much.
166- But some content as well. Okay, sometimes the theme, or the content, or the title of the
167- topic. Okay, that's the thing they mentioned to some particular characters, okay? Or the
168- activities they do, you know, okay, where's there anything like all the all the cultures that
169- were mentioned, were were there, like, appropriate in Saudi Arabia, or where were things
170- maybe in the past, we're not allowed, okay, or maybe cultural sensitive topics, for
171- example. For my experience, as well, from the books, none of the writer of the books, they
172- are very aware of the cultural difference between, you know, Western culture and
173- Western culture, they take into consideration when they try to present something about
174- the culture, they try to avoid some sensitive cultures or some taboo, let's say language,
175- we shouldn't use in our books, like and what I can see, you know, all the things that are
176- already there in the books, it's quite relevant to students. And it's relevant to their enemy,
177- their background, their level, their age, as well as any I haven't experienced any
178- something, any problems or difficulties about culture. And the other thing is one of the
179- most the most interesting things about this when it comes to the culture, and given that we
180- have teachers from more than one country from a variety of cultures, variety of countries,
181- and no, no everyone has to represent and talk about his culture. So for example, if we
182- have a Canadian teacher, the Canadian teacher will talk about his culture. The student as
183- well have to talk about their culture have to present their culture, there are no English and

184- Canadian teacher doesn't know everything about Arabic culture. Okay, so this is why I'm
185- saying it's exchangeable role between the teacher and the student. Student, they are the
186- one who can teach the teacher about their cultures about their own culture. So both
187- Medina cause. Yes, exactly. And many teachers are very interested to know about
188- dynamic cultures and I'm sure you came across this before. And will they want to learn as
189- well, even our teachers, okay, they want to learn about Arabic cultures. And as the
190- student wants to learn about the Western cultures, okay. The other cultures well, they
191- want to learn about the Saudi culture, they are living here now, they live here in Saudi
192- Arabia, they want to learn about the culture. So, the more you have a variety of cultures in
193- your institution, the more you will be discover more and more about cultures.

S2 F Teacher

Interviewer
1- Okay, and now may ask you during the class, the normal English language class, would
2- you mind to explain your teaching approach within the class?
S2 F Teacher
3- when I would define it as interactive communicative. I always like to engage my students
4- and to to hear their voices during the class. Apart from that, I would say that it's just going
5- to be a passive class if my students wouldn't interact and communicate in a way that would
6- satisfy me as a teacher
Interviewer
7- Okay, and now we'll we'll move to the next part of the questions about culture. What do you
8- mind to let me know how do you define culture and like culture within England within the
9- scope of English language teaching?
S2 F Teacher
10- Okay, so I think it's related to a group of people ideas behavior, that a society or group of
11- people that they share together so it's represent a group of people. I think, maybe this is
12- how I can define culture.
Interviewer
13- Okay, and within the English Language Center with a worldwide are teaching English. How
14- do you address culture like for example, When there is a cultural theme in the book,
S2 F Teacher
15- okay, well, if we relate it to, in the ELC Taibah Uni, I would divide the country into into
16- two different parts, the one that we deal with as a teacher, because as you as you know,
17- that we have a variety of people or different classification of teachers. So we have
18- European culture, we have Arabic culture, and we have Saudi culture. So it's kind of, we
19- have this nice diversity of people around us. But in the class, actually, we had, we rarely
20- have like one or two students, which are not so this. So I think that we always have this
21- kind of scope on on the class that we focus on this od culture. And whenever we have a
22- topic or a theme, in the book, I always like to relate it to the Saudi culture. So in order to
23- make the students participate, and when they give them the chance to, you know,
24- activators, kinetic learning. So this is this is how we usually relate them. But I prefer related
25- to the Saudi culture straightaway.
Interviewer
26- Okay, that's good. But if there is something like it's totally not like, not observable, it cannot
27- be observed in the Saudi culture. Like, for example, I remember one unit in the book, from
28- the other teachers, they told me there was something about the Chinese culture, like
29- Chinese festivals, and so on, how can you this for example, with quite interesting,
S2 F Teacher
30- I would, I would mention this one as an example. For example, we have this unit in the, in
31- the book, which is Unit Four, in Book Two, it was about the different cultures and division
32- different vegetables that we have all around the world. And we started with the Chinese

33- year or the Chinese New Year, and how do they celebrate it, and it was, it was, we just
34- started the unit just before Ramadan. And interestingly, we have some elements, that it's in
35- common, between the celebration of any festival around the world and the celebration of
36- Ramadan. And like, for example, like decoration, the house with the sweets that we do,
37- and in the book that they've mentioned, that the moon cake, which is a very similar to
38- mamool, so when he linked it to my mood, and actually, my students linked it straightaway
39- to the mamool that we made for Ramadan, in order to, to make students interested in the
40- topic, so I find them do better, whenever we link it to this or this, or this, or the culture, even
41- in a way that we can just get some something close to it. And, you know, because with the
42- globalization, I think that all, every culture, whenever they have something, it, it should
43- have something in common with other cultures. So I do think that it's going to be a totally
44- different theme from them. And they find my students always interesting in, in linking these
45- kinds of celebration, these kinds of cultural, let's say events, with what we do. And with the
46- globalization, as I told you, with, with now with the internet access with how can I describe
47- it, I find my students really are open to other cultures. So and it ended, of course, I have
48- seen a difference between like, representing this culture nowadays, with the same topic
49- like five years ago. So it's totally different. I think that my students are now open, they know
50- what's going around, and they always find the link over over different cultures.
Interviewer
51- Okay, about you mentioned, it's gonna be different if you taught the same course or the
52- same thing five years ago, may ask you why is why, in your opinion, why do you think it is
53- going to be difference between Long time ago like five years ago and your experience and
54- nowadays?
S2 F Teacher
55- When I would think that with the with the I think that with the with the quick changes that
56- we have, we recently witnessed in Saudi Arabia, either politically, economically, socially.
57- So I think that my students are now open to other cultures, as well. For example, we have
58- things that are happening now. It was in there in Saudi Arabia, for example, if you can
59- relate, let's say the different seasons with other cultures like Christmas time. Now in some
60- cafes in the shopping centers, now we can see some elements for Christmas, which is not
61- related to our kitchen, but now it's represented here. So And my students are aware of this,
62- for example, they said that we have this seasonal coffee, which is they, of course, they link
63- it to winter, but it's not winter, it's represent Christmas. In some different cultures, for
64- example, in Easter time, for example, with with browsing the internet, the movies and the
65- social media they're representing. Or they, my students came across these kinds of
66- cultures, and they know about it already. Because it's already there. It's been a presented
67- here in our culture. So maybe that's why it's different. It's totally different.
Interviewer
68- So while you're teaching, you think you are more often not, and so on. were things that
69- were were you aware of things that should not be like taught, for example, for the students
70- at this time, because of their, their culture? And so on? Like there were there were some
71- taboos or for, for example, some things that could not be addressed before, but now it's
72- okay to be addressed in the English language, if you remember in exam.
S2 F Teacher
73- I think, I think that we had, it's not like, it's not like it's not allowed to be discussed, or it's
74- not. How can how can I describe it, it's not about that we're not allowed to represent alter
75- presented or to make students aware of them. It just about that. It's already there. For
76- example, when we have sports in school, like five years ago, it wasn't there. But now, with
77- the educational changes, that we have the sport, so even now in, in Taibah University, we
78- have this kind of sports for girls, which is already in our culture. So when when we when
79- we had it in the book, so it's not going to be unfamiliar for them that they know they live it,
80- they practice sport, inside the schools inside. Inside University, for example, we have
81- another unit, which is related to nutrition, and how to keep healthy, and how to keep fit and
82- healthy. Like five years ago, when I taught the same unit. My students didn't participate.
83- But now I can see how, how wonderful they are aware of of, of health issues, and how do

84- they track their fitness with some international apps, like fitness apps And how do they
85- represent themselves by going to gyms and as well as they go to do sports in in the
86- university And how do they have some yoga classes. So all of these were not there, like
87- five years ago, but now they can relate, they can participate, they can share their personal
88- experience of these different or things that weren't there in the past, but now it's present.
89- So maybe that's why even even whenever I try to relate any issues or any different themes
90- in the book, I always find my way, especially with the social media, I always, my students
91- always surprise me that they are on the top of things, and they are aware of what's
92- happening around. So it is amazing. It is amazing.
93- Yeah, like, this is what, like I'm exploring as well. This these topics that were some, like in
94- the past were a little bit vague and so on. But now nowadays, the students have might
95- have more information than their teachers. Yes, yes. And they exposed to it in a way on
96- another if it's not from social media, they can see it throughout for example, when we
97- mentioned the Easter time, they was they straightaway linked to our fasting time in
98- Ramadan and they know what Easter means. But for me, when it was in a students in
99- 2008, I encountered Easter time for the first time so I was asking chicken what does it
100- mean to be fasting and how how do they do their fasting? But like if you can see the
101- difference that they're they're not they're in a different culture. They haven't traveled to the
102- UK they haven't lived there in this society. But now they know everything about it. Yes,

Interviewer
103- thank you very much for that. may ask you How about the theme the themes in the
104- textbook Do you think these themes Is are appropriate for the students like, like culturally?
105- Do they? Do they show like global culture or American culture, British culture? Or do they
106- show some of the local culture as well?

S2 F Teacher
107- Well, until last year, when we had Oxford books, and as if you're aware of that we've
108- changed to Cambridge now, Oxford was focusing on the UK culture only. So we can claim
109- we can have this kind of taboo that it's only for the UK culture and it's not kind of mixed
110- culture, but when I start talking teaching cabbage now, I found that Cambridge are aware
111- and they are making efforts in presenting different cultures for example, they are having
112- some some themes or some topic topics from the American culture from the Chinese
113- culture from the UK, Italian as well, especially when we when we had the unit of the
114- healthy foods. So they are focusing on multi multicultural topics and tapes. So I think this
115- is this is another issue that we are facing now with with the with the with the with the new
116- books, or with the new curriculum in Tabor University. And of course, we prefer the
117- camera John, as it represents more cultures and represents the students liked or they are
118- more engaged with the camera one more than the previous Yes, I think yes, I think and,
119- and honestly and earnestly, I think that's something that's happening before Corona,
120- actually, or the COVID-19 and after the COVID-19 I've noticed that it's like a huge steps
121- from jumping with the students. thoughts and ideas I don't know maybe because they're
122- just for focused on these two years in the last two years, on the on the online or on the
123- social media, because I feel that the students are more aware, more aware of everything's
124- so mashallah, Mashallah. Yanni sometimes I get surprised with the answers. surprised
125- with the knowledge I got surprised with their awareness of not only the topics that we
126- discussed, it's only with the country that we have I think maybe because with the COVID-
127- 19 Maybe they they've just started using the internet more so it came across these things
128- so on Yeah, this is maybe this is maybe this is another point. I really I really got surprised
129- with my students and how do they change maybe it's a different I'm not gonna say it's this
130- not a generation it's maybe it's it's a different students. Different time? I don't know there
131- is something there is something surprised me with with the students before and after the
132- COVID.

Interviewer
133- Okay, thank you very much, and may ask you. So you mentioned before that you that you
134- bring examples, like for example, about the month of Ramadan, and also about the moon
135- cake and so on, and you link it with Saudi culture. Does the same story happen with if you

136- link it to the context of the study, which is Medina, cultural? Did you do the same? Like the
137- word relate with relation to Medina?

S2 F Teacher

138- Yes, I think that yes. As I told you, it was Ramadan, maybe Ramadan, it's the season that
139- discuss culture and how to link them. We talked about the celebration and how we do the
140- steps of celebration and how we celebrate some important events in our culture, like
141- Shaban and how do we, how do we do the Shabana and what do we do in German with
142- things that we have? And we link it to? Just let me remember what topic was that? It was
143- something or some topic. I really cannot remember what what culture was there. How to
144- Follow the steps of celebration, is it the same? It is same steps that we take, is it the
145- same procedures, it is the same sort of celebration, like do the decoration for the house?
146- Do the Shabana and how do we visit and wheeling them from how does it change? From
147- the past to the present? Do we keep the hurry Taj do we keep the this kind of cultural
148- things related to Medina only? And of course, maybe it's related to Asia as only and how
149- do we link them to to other cultures. But if you can just remind me, Dr. Abdullah after
150- class, I will just go look at the book and just tell you the specific example that we
151- mentioned. The cultural celebration and the Medina. My students link it to this example.
152- But I think that we mentioned the same steps that we have like the decoration, inviting,
153- inviting guests to our house exchanging food in Ramadan? And do we have to keep these
154- traditions and habits in Ramadan? And before Ramadan? And how do we do the
155- Shabana with the comics? So I think yes, there is one example. But I really cannot think of
156- the certain culture that they do the same.

Interviewer

157- Okay, no, no worries. It's okay. But like I'm, I'm really excited about your your students
158- interaction. Is it like mascot? Did the students ask you about the British culture about your
159- life? Did you bring any examples from your experience living in the UK? Before?

S2 F Teacher

160- Yes, as I told you, Ramadan, mashallah, it was a rich, rich topic to discuss in Shabbat,
161- and how do we prepare them? They asked me how I did fasting in Ramadan? And how
162- did we manage to do all of these fasting hours, and he told them that how it's different that
163- they are too long, they're starting in in my time 2000, back in 2015. We were fasting from,
164- I don't know if you were there at this time, and we were fasting from 230 until 1030. And
165- how do we and my daughter was there in school, so I wake up normally at seven o'clock,
166- and then we just continue with our day, and it was extremely hot in July. So we linked this
167- one in how we are going to study for the first time from 18 years ago, my here the
168- students, they didn't go and engage in a full school day in Ramadan. And now it's
169- happening now. So we link it to how it was done. What is the difference between fasting in
170- Ramadan in the UK and how it's very easy to manage here in Saudi Arabia and, and how
171- it's difficult, it's there when you are in a culture that they don't do the same thing. They're
172- not fasting, people around you living a normal day, and you have to keep your culture
173- your beliefs in in a totally different in a totally different culture. So we've mentioned this
174- one as well.

Interviewer

175- Okay, thank you very much. I may ask the last question, is it okay? Yes, go ahead,
176- please. If you have the ability to, to change or to add any theme in the book, or if you want
177- to add that, like any other cultural theme in the textbook, what do you think this theme will
178- would be?

S2 F Teacher

179- I think maybe we maybe we could just represent more about Arabic countries. I know my
180- students are aware from the Arabian culture, the Chinese culture, the American culture,
181- but the only example that it was there in the book on how to the traditions of visiting and
182- how do we do a visiting Saudi Arabia and visiting in Brazil and visiting in I think, in new the
183- UK, but we cannot see any relation to the the Arabic culture. For example, I've never seen
184- an example or a topic or theme that represent the Arabic culture in general, if so, we've
185- never heard about the Lebanese culture or the Syrian culture, or the Moroccan culture. So

186- we've never had this topics. So I think that it's it would be a great opportunity for the
187- students to know about the Arabic, which is more closer to them, rather than just jumping
188- to the European and other countries. I totally agree with what you said, because during
189- this book, some teachers told me there is something about the OMA and festival and
190- that's the only Arabic theme in this book. And before I went to scholarship, I remember
191- there was the topic about family businesses, and there was one topic about XAML family
192- and sawmill. Yes, yes, it was. It's it's Until now. yeah, so these the only two, like I
193- mentioned and they agree that you should it should be represented more things we've
194- never heard about the Syrian or Palestinian cultures or Algerian culture. So I think yes,
195- they should represent it more.

S3 F Teacher

Interviewer

1- Okay, so it was the most convenient choice for you? Yes. Okay. Would you mind? Like
2- now we'll go more in teaching but before We go to teaching what do you want to let me
3- know what is your understanding of culture in general? And in culture up to specific culture
4- in general and what is the other thing culture and what while teaching English

S3 F Teacher

5- I think culture it can mean many things like around us commit means the language that
6- other person can expose attitude believes behaviors, food, music, all of the scandals like
7- mean culture. And in Medina, I think it's easy to see different cultures around us like when
8- you work, especially when I work in places like ESL institutes and these things you can it's
9- easy to find many people from different nationalities and you expose different cultures.

Interviewer

10- Okay, would you mind what kinds of different cultures that is there and set up?
11- To be honest and apply by university?

S3 F Teacher

12- Now, a lot of culture, but when I was working at shamrock at Oxford Oxford partnership,
13- maybe we were 60 teachers, okay. And the only Saudi teacher they were five. We were
14- just so we had many teachers from Samal. UK, India, so it was different is like, I feel like
15- even when I work there, I feel like I go for eight hours to work somewhere else. I'm not in
16- Medina. And then when I finished my work, I feel like now I'm in Medina because I expose
17- different culture, even with the food with the events, many things, it was like a different
18- environment.

Interviewer

19- Okay, good. Thank you. And what by when you have like a custom theme within the
20- English, English textbook? How can you explain it to the students especially if it's not their
21- culture? Like, there is something in the book called Chinese festival, a festival and so on?
22- What is your approach and teaching these kinds of things?

S3 F Teacher

23- To be honest, I really like when I have something like this we can like it will like a student
24- will be excited to know more about these things, for example, and book one, and unlock
25- book one we have things about Maldives and three houses in South Africa. I always tell the
26- students like when we try to study or when we when I try to explain something it's like a
27- reading task. But you have to think behind the reading task you have to enlarge your
28- information about many topics you have to find like what is the capital city of this place?
29- You have to go one extra mile to find answers for many questions. And always when they
30- have this kind of curiosity that will improve their earning I think when they search to find
31- other information or answers for the questions that will help them to improve different skills
32- that we don't have it like we don't teach it as a skill. But when we ask many questions,
33- what do you know about this country they Google it they try to find information and I always
34- try to give this task if we have something about different country I always tell them the topic
35- for example, tomorrow we will talk about three houses google it and we will discuss it

36- tomorrow and when we come tomorrow they always try to show that they Google many
37- things Miss Do you know that we have there is more than 103 house and South Africa
38- some of them they are in Thailand some of them and it's like I try to improve the surfing
39- scalp very good very good. Thank you very much for that and if there is something like
40- totally we it was something totally like weird for them that you need to explain more even
41- when they search already students know our martial law it's so smart Yeah, only they can
42- Google things better than me sometimes and bring pictures and websites and and know
43- more about the different cultures.

Interviewer

44- Okay, good. So, like when you want to explain something to cultures do for example,
45- connected to their own culture to Medina culture for example, like if they have a festival
46- over there we have a festival here until I feel like do this. Like to embed it because the look
47- of custom Hmm.

S3 F Teacher

48- To be honest, I use this technique to make It's easy for them to understand that, for
49- example, there is a Chinese festival exactly the same as Riyadh festival because if they
50- don't understand the vocab, they will understand that this is the same as contoura festival
51- that they try. It's like I tried to use something and I need the kind of festival that we have in
52- Medina or maybe not in Medina. Because we don't have many things here to make it easy
53- for the students that they feel shy to, to ask what is the meaning of festival because some
54- of them, they don't understand, like, the basic vocab and they don't ask.

Interviewer

55- Okay. And may I ask you, how about you about your own our like experience of cultural
56- background about one topic or another? Like, for example, when you were in the states do
57- the Jesus asking about the United States update? Um,

S3 F Teacher

58- to be honest, students, personality now our two students personality is totally different. I
59- don't always like they don't ask. I feel like I own. I always say I feel like I'm teaching the
60- students that their age is, for example, 1918. But I feel they are like 1312. They are shy to
61- ask. They don't like to participate a lot. They feel shy to participate. Some of them they
62- come to my office and like ask, they asked me to please no, don't please. I don't want to
63- present something. I don't want to talk in public. I feel shy. I always feel is like they need
64- help. They need help, especially with this Coronavirus, like some of them three years that
65- they were in high school and jump to university. So I feel there is a gap. They cannot like
66- express themselves. They cannot ask questions. They feel like I don't know. Is it
67- appropriate to ask her about her background or not? Is it okay to talk with the teacher not
68- only is like? I don't know how to say it, but I feel they there is so many issues regarding to
69- this topic.

Interviewer

70- So you mentioned that your students nowadays they don't have the same. They don't have
71- the curiosity to ask. But what gets into this situation? Was it the same when we first start
72- teaching? Like where are the students really a bit different from when you start teaching
73- until now? Like the students culture, for example, the students interacting with you.

S3 F Teacher

74- I don't have that like long experience for 10 years to compare. But I can't compare for
75- example, my generation when I was a student, and their time now in classes, I remember
76- when I was a student, we used to have many students that they asked a question that they
77- like participate here is like, not as like, it's not only in my class, I even asked other teacher,
78- they have the same issue. They say they don't they don't want to participate. They don't
79- want to ask, it's hard to engage them. I don't know Yanni. I don't,

Interviewer

80- huh? Yeah, completely Yes. Okay, so your venue started to do this new exercise with
81- Google and so on. It's like a passive exercise. So they will not stay in front of everyone
82- else. So they can encourage them to participate. Correct.?

S3 F Teacher

83- I try this. Sometimes I feel like another thing you cannot, is like it's hard to force the student
84- to participate or like, try to encourage them to talk and participate. If their target is not to
85- learn English here at university I feel they don't want to learn English. It's different than
86- when you teach for example, and English Institute. Like when I teach in, in the States or
87- anyplace else, the student their target, I want to participate. I want to talk I want to speak,
88- Hannah is like I asked the speaking questions and I wait for them. No one would like to
89- answer the question. They don't want to answer. They don't want to improve.
90- Just to English, not to Delta England. Yeah. This is one thing. The other thing, the
91- participation mark. Here Ma is like high for the second thing like I feel too much thing. Too
92- much things they give it to them at the same time. The quizzes every week exams, many
93- things, I tend to blame them sometimes they cannot prepare things. Another thing maybe
94- I'm not sure, maybe the big number of the students make them feel shy to participate. This
95- is something else. And there is something else that I would like to mention a tear at labor
96- University. All the students in the summer semester one would be English one on one and
97- semester two English one or two. For example, last semester, we were teaching not online.
98- We were teaching some classes online and some classes on campus. I had maybe five
99- students, they got six, and their IELTS exam. Six Can you imagine? And it present is an R,
100- and basic. Thanks. Okay, so how to easy for them. And what I feel in my class, other
101- students, low level students they feel is like any participation, any, any speaking task is for
102- these students who have that they always participate. And they always talk and their
103- English is good. Sometimes when you have a high level of students, and like in some
104- classes, it makes other students feel embarrassed to participate. I can think of that ended
105- online, it's harder to like to manage than, like, in front of the class. You Yeah, so um,
106- yeah, honey, we don't have I wish, if we have something to like, different levels for
107- different students, high level students, they are in a special section, and low level
108- students. So like, it's easy for us to encourage them to participate, to encourage them to
109- talk. Because like, if I were them, I will feel the same if some students come participate
110- and talk for five minutes and present something. And it's like it's and some of them they
111- cannot even form a sentence or write or say any sentence in a correct structure.

Interviewer

112- Yeah. Thank you very much. No, it's It's okay, we can move to the books now. What do
113- you think about the themes in the book? Do you think they are? Like, of course, the book
114- change? It was before it was, like just American. I'm British. When I was learning as a
115- student, like a limited period, it was just focused on that British culture and America
116- culture. But this one, maybe it's a bit more global? What is it? What is your opinion about
117- the theme of the book? Do you think it's appropriate themes? Do you think it's good
118- theme?

S3 F Teacher

119- Um, what do you mean like, global I think all its ELA class, oh, E is in box. They are
120- global. I haven't liked any ESL that has like, just thinks about the states or just things
121- about UK. All of them, they speak about different with different cultures. Because the
122- people who wrote books like this, they know like, the people who will learn English as a
123- second language or English as a foreign language, they are different countries and
124- cultures. So like a like it's more like a global Do you think? In your opinion, do you think
125- we should add like something repairs to the local theme or like local contexts, either in
126- Saudi Arabia or in Medina, for example, that I can remember in one of the previous books
127- that it was that I was teaching, I was teaching something about XAML family in a demand
128- when we talk about when we talked about family businesses. I didn't know I'll make
129- cousins by the way. Yeah, so like for example, if the students have something really good,
130- they can relate to like a family or whatever, whatever family business or wherever any
131- other theme when they mentioned some 30 or 30. Examples or Medina examples. Do you
132- think in your opinion, that will benefit the book or benefit you in the class or do you think
133- okay, like we'll keep it as a global theme. I think no need to use or like make customized
134- book just for the people in the city or this country or like try to add things because we are

135- we are trying to add different tasks to make it related to that. their country or their place,
136- for example, if we teach if we teach a unit about transportation, okay, all the unit about
137- transportation, maybe there is the reading part is about transportation and number of
138- transportation, and different transportation and Thailand. But when we go to the writing
139- task because the writing task they created just for the university, the question they give
140- them a three question, talk about the transportation in your city. So they make it really, I
141- like when the students read about the transportation in different country and then they try
142- to compare for example, in Thailand, they have underground but is like in my city, Medina
143- or number we don't have underground, we just have cars. We don't have public
144- transportation. I like when they read two different things and try to compare but if like the
145- transportation is just about Saudi Arabia, and we ask them to write about the
146- transportation in Saudi Arabia there is like I don't think it would like encourage him to
147- compare and think

Interviewer

148- okay, good, thank you very much. And would you mind, Did you like it were there any like
149- while you're teaching us like the multicultural nature of Medina like for example?

S3 F Teacher

150- during high during Gomorrah with the result of people from all over the world come to
151- Medina did you use this in your class before like as an example to illustrate anything for
152- example at the book um and maybe I compared like Milan or something but not head and
153- ombre because we didn't have something in our book like this, but for example, I can the
154- education Okay. Sometimes when we talk about education the classes I try to show them
155- the differences you are lucky here you don't like pay for your education and the other
156- country you have to do this in the other country you have to work and study here the
157- whole time is just for you to study you can focus you can like book more time you can
158- concentrate in just your classes. So I try to show them as like the differences but not in
159- head general camera and to be honest, I try to avoid something is related to Islam.
160- Because I used to discuss something with one students as well that was in 2018. She was
161- a from she was she is students. And I cannot I cannot stop here and I cannot say that you
162- are wrong. And I am right. It's like it was like an embarrassing situation. So it had an
163- ombre and in Medina we have different people we cannot as like say most as an ombre
164- we do this are all of us. We fast in this day. Okay, good, good. Like I kind of don't like to
165- waste and when you have something where you have something much easier you are so
166- you don't want to speak about Islam, not just because like for the sake of it, but like to
167- respect all the students from the controversial issues. You even when you talk about
168- hijab, some people, they say this and some. So I don't like to discuss things like this with
169- the different opinions. And some people they feel they are right. And some people they
170- feel like no, you're wrong, and I'm right. I don't know. It's like with the students, you try to
171- please them all the time. Yeah, so that we can happen in an English class. What is your
172- best practice is to ignore it, or to talk about it briefly, or what is the best scenario that
173- you're doing? Is like a controversial issue in Islam. Yeah. Like if this happened in the
174- cloud, what is the best action that you do? That's happened to me? I told you Oh, no, it
175- was whenever I was discussing that with a student and she was like, saying things in
176- Quran saying verses from Quran and she said that I've seen it in a shared way. I say
177- that's your right. Okay. Maybe I will read about it. Let's discuss that later. I cannot tell her
178- you're right. She came from a family and have family told her something. I cannot send
179- her back to her family and tell her like, I cannot send her back with different perspectives
180- or the views like because this is not as like I'm not teaching Islam. I'm teaching languages.

Interviewer

181- Very good. Very good. Thank you very much for that like. And the last question, is it okay,
182- you mentioned about the atmosphere and the International College, it was more adverse
183- than like a dancer situation in Taibah University.

S3 F Teacher

184- I was the destination as they have the same university on teachers air, like, what is the
185- percentage between Saudis, Saudis Arabic, international, like in the female section? Of

186- course. I think most of them, I have their names here. If you would like me to send you all
187- of the names of the teachers, andI want to know the atmosphere like that, like how
188- Saudis. I don't know the exact number, but like, for example, 20%, Saudis, Arabic
189- nationality. Most of the teacher or Saudis, maybe we have just 10 teachers or seven
190- teachers that they are not Saudis, all of them. They are Saudis. For this reason, I feel like
191- to be honest, let me like, say it another way, I used to work out better, better, understood
192- and feel better. And then I moved to April University, in Medina. And 2021, yeah, okay.
193- 2021. And all of this time, it was like a Corona. Virus. I didn't meet all of them yet. Maybe I
194- am at some of them. I have to work with a lot of them because I am in charge for LSU
195- language support unit. I have contract with them, I have to send them reminders, many
196- things. But it's like, I don't want to say something. And like when they ask other some of
197- my classmates and some of my co workers, they told me the situation is not like this. Like
198- in 2019, an ATM they used to have meeting because they used to see each other. Now
199- even our working hours is different. If I come on Sunday, the people in my area they will
200- come on Monday, I don't come in Monday, they come in Wednesday, they come on
201- Thursday, May they make different schedule, because they don't want a big number of
202- students and teachers to be in the same building.

Interviewer

203- Okay, okay. And by the way, you answered my next question about like, if there is any
204- meetings amongst each other. So like, I think I hear them BLT in the middle section.
205- There was something like training program, and they taught international teachers how to
206- teach in Saudi culture, you have to talk about this. Don't talk about that. They have this
207- kind of meetings. Does these meetings happen? And like why Lu and diversity?

S3 F Teacher

208- Yes, it happened. But it's like, I didn't attend them face to face because as I told you, I
209- went in there and then but versus a small campus, we are just six teachers, all of us are
210- Saudis. Like, I have heard that many things like this happened in Medina, about in 2020
211- 2021. They did two courses where like we talked to courses about this, but all of them
212- they were like this through teams through different application.

Student 1 A

Interviewer

1- In your English book, did you notice any mentioned to other cultures presented in the
2- books? And if yes, how was the idea of learning other cultures than Saudi culture effected
3- your English learning?

Student 1 A

4- Yes, I remember in Unit 3 we were learning about lifestyles. We were learning things in
5- other countries as a general knowledge about cultures. Can I just check the book for a
6- moment? Sometimes the teacher brings an example for our everyday lives.

Interviewer

7- Okey. Now you are being taught English by an Arabic teacher? In your opinion do you
8- prefer a Saudi teacher, Arabic teacher, or English-speaking teacher?

Student 1 A

9- Okey, I do not to say this because my teacher is not here, and he is not with us now. So, I
10- say the teacher who is teaching me know I can fully understand his teaching method he is
11- 100% really good. So, it did not come to my mind that there is a difference between Arabic
12- or English teachers. Although I tried other teachers. I received the same experience.
13- Nearly, all the teachers are I faced in the university were doing good job.

Interviewer

14- Great. May I ask you about your Arabic teacher? How does he use the Arabic language in
15- the class?

Student 1 A

16- He uses Arabic in a very small percentage. if we want to put a number, he uses Arabic

17- maybe less than 5% of the time in the class. In taking attendance and when he advices us
18- after the English class about the exams.
   Interviewer
19- Does the teacher bring example for the local culture in Madinah?
20- **Student 1 A**
21- Of course, it is normal. If the example from the book is not clear, he will always bring
22- example from our daily lives. We spoke once about ALHARAM (The holy mosque) location
23- and when it was built in AL Madinah and other sort of things like that.
   Interviewer
24- Do you think that the themes in the books are suitable for your level?
   Student 1 A
25- Yes, I did. I can see real example from the books in my real life. And I am excited to see
26- the higher-level books.
   Interviewer
27- Did you use English language in your local community?
   Student 1 A
28- I used English once outside the university. It was simple interaction with a Muslim African
29- brother, and he does not speak Arabic just a little English. From my little knowledge we
30- understood each other. He was in Quba Mosque and wanted someone to take him to
31- ALHARAM. He told me that he is a new student at the Islamic university and when used
32- other vocabulary like transport – taxi so I understood him. This interaction gave me
33- courage to interact with other people.

Student 2 A

   Interviewer
1- In your English book, did you notice any mentioned to other cultures presented in the
2- books? And if yes, how was the idea of learning other cultures than Saudi culture effected
3- your English learning?
   Student 2 A
4- At the university, depending on the unit. Some units have new vocabulary to me. For
5- example, one of the new units for me was the festival and celebrations.
   Interviewer
6- What was the new thing for you in the festival's unit?
   Student 2 A
7- Mainly the vocabulary like (decorated, entertainment)
   Interviewer
8- Did the English course at the university helped you in learning the other courses at
9- university?
   Student 2 A
10- Yes, even sometimes after university I take the grammar and vocabulary that I learned and
11- use it outside the university like in social media in Instagram.
   Interviewer
12- Do you mean you are communicating live in English or chatting?
   Student 2 A
13- I use chatting though direct massages.
   Interviewer
14- Okey let us move on, May I ask you relating to the festival unit, during your English course
15- did you learn something else that is new to you about other countries?
   Student 2 A
16- Yes, in the festival unit. I learned something about moon cake in China and Chinese year
17- calendar. Also, I learned and saw pictures and videos about Venice in Italy with the boats.
   Interviewer
18- Thank you very much, May I ask you about your English teachers. Were they local
19- teachers, Arabic teachers, or English teachers?

Student 2 A

20- I tried Arabic teacher before and now my teacher is from UK.

Interviewer

21- Okey, in your opinion which one did you prefer and why?

Student 2 A

22- Well, they are all good but I prefer my English-speaking teacher. He was very clear and his

23- language was very easy. If I did not understand any word I go and search for the meaning

24- of the word using google translate in my mobile.

Interviewer

25- How about your English textbook do you understand the books?

Student 2 A

26- Yes, I get it. What I noticed is that the more we get through the book the harder the

27- vocabulary and grammar.

Interviewer

28- Okey. Did your teachers' brought examples from the local culture in the English

29- classroom?

Student 2 A

30- Yes, in the same unit of festivals in China. The teacher asked us about festivals in Saudi

31- Arabia then some students mentioned the Saudi Arabian National day and others say Al

32- Janadriyah festival. What kinds of food there and what we are celebrating and so on.

Student 3 A

Interviewer

1- So, you are in your second semester, and you told me that your teachers were from an

2- English-speaking country. Did you know they are from which country? And did someone

3- teach you from an Arabic country? Or Saudi teacher?

Student 3 A

4- I think someone was from Canada, the other from UK. And the Arabic teacher was from

5- Jordan. I did not try any Saudi teacher.

Interviewer

6- Okey, in your opinion what was the differences among these teachers?

Student 3 A

7- Will I was learning and listening to English all the time. From the learning point of view, I

8- believe that the English- speaking countries were better. As a communication with the

9- teacher and ask question the Arabic teacher was better.

Interviewer

10- Thank you very much, May I ask you about how each teacher explains other cultures from

11- your English textbooks?

Student 3 A

12- Mainly there are no differences between both types of teachers. They all bring examples

13- from our own culture in Saudi like when we spoke about festivals in China, they told us

14- about the cultural festivals in Saudi Arabia. I really liked when they spoke about the

15- teachers' own festivals.

Interviewer

16- Do you remember any examples?

Student 3 A

17- Yes, when the teacher mentioned "forfeerah" foosball (Table Football), which is very

18- common in the local Madinah culture nearly in local neighborhoods. I was shocked that it is

19- famous, and he used to play it in Canada with Arcade games like the ones you see inside

20- Chuckey Cheese and other electronic games venues. You know sometimes when I go to

21- Riyadh city some of my friends does not know what is forfeerah is but my teacher from

22- Canada knows it that was really shocking for me. And when there was a mentioned of an

23- Island in the Indian Ocean, I remembered the other English teacher told us that his father
24- is from that Island.
Interviewer
25- How about your Arabic teacher, do you recall any stories from his culture?
Student 3 A
26- I do not recall any stories. His role was more like the fun teacher who makes you love the
27- English course.
Interviewer
28- Okey. Did your teachers' brought examples from the local culture in the English
29- classroom?
Student 3 A
30- Yes, they all bring examples from Madinah, like festival and traditional food and so on.
Interviewer
31- Did you use your English that you learned outside the university?
Student 3 A
32- Yes, because I am a volunteer at the Red Crescent, we are located close to ALHARAM. I
33- remember I met someone from Kazakhstan. I go there every Friday prayer. I used my
34- English to help other who requested a blood pressure and sugar levels. I took people
35- history like his date of birth and where are you from in English. I remember someone else
36- from Nigeria who was a doctor who helped us with another medical case from Nigeria.
37- We communicated with each other in English. Unfortunately, the one we were helping was
38- announced dead afterwards May God have mercy upon him. I recalled many Medical
39- English terms like CBR and so on.
Interviewer
40- May I ask you about your English textbooks if you recall any mention to other cultures that
41- was new for you?
Student 3 A
42- Yes, I know about a festival in Oman which last for two months that include hiking,
43- traditional food, and music festivals that looks like the cultural week at the Islamic
44- university. And I remembered another thing about different building styles from the East
45- like Japan and China that are different from the USA and Australia. For example, in
46- USA and Australia most houses top looks like triangle bricks while in Japan and China they
47- used Bamboo sticks

Student 4 E

Interviewer
1- Okay, that's good. And so first of all, your you told me you're learning English in Malaysia,
2- or merrithew. While you were in Malaysia, if that okay.
Student 4 E
3- I don't mind. My parents were one of the people who got the scholarship from the King
4- Abdullah, they may service TVs mobile. And they got they got a scholarship, both of them
5- to Malaysia to get their doctorate for PhD. And while while they were over there, they took
6- me with them. And then they robbed me into multiple different like multiple different
7- schools, whether it be English, they also enrolled me in an Arabic school over there as
8- well. But that wasn't like the last few years, I spent a total of maybe eight years in Malaysia
9- and other different countries in Asia.
Interviewer
10- Okay, so were there other Saudis that time or we will? Nearly the only 30?
Student 4 E
11- No, actually, for the first couple of years, I when I was in the international school, I had a lot
12- of Muslim friends, but not apps. Although in the last maybe two three years, I enrolled into
13- an Arabic school in Malaysia. Because I my I guess you could say my culture was too
14- different. I was too used to Malaysian culture. And my parents were afraid that if I came

15- back to Saudi Arabia, and I would get like a maybe a cultural shock. So they will return to
16- school that like in the last few years, maybe like the last two years in Malaysia, and over
17- there I had many friends from Saudi Arabia.
Interviewer
18- And how was your Liberland public? School here? My what I need to ask, is it the same as
19- English or are your Arabic is better than English?
Student 4 E
20- Well, if I'm being honest, my English is maybe a little bit better than my Arabic although not
21- the accent itself. I never I never fully studied Arabic because when I was young, I started
22- mostly English instead. So but I have no problem speaking writing reading, maybe just like
23- the specifics or if you if I can say like firsthand like the original Arabic the old Arabic I'm not
24- very used to it, but the normal one that the normal Arabic that we speak in, the people
25- speak in Saudi Arabia. Oh, it's fine, perfectly fine.
Interviewer
26- Okay, so normal. Dialect Arabic is fine.
Student 4 E
27- Uh, okay, yeah, it's okay. It's not perfect, but it's okay.
Interviewer
28- explain to me your process of learning English? Like, like, I've been adversity? What is
29- your process of learning? English?
Student 4 E
30- At the university itself? Well, um, here's the thing about it. Kind of, Um, yeah. The, the
31- university itself teaches, I think it's the person's book, Pearson's book for English. And the book
32- itself is available a couple of times already. And I finished it before, like, I've already passed the
33- university itself, because I had some free time. So I just had a measure, I'll just finish it that way
34- to be easier for me. But the book itself I felt is, it's like more than enough for students to get a
35- good understanding of basic English. And most of the stuff that we're learning now, we've
36- already have some background of its back in high school. So it isn't too difficult. The best
37- part if I'm being honest about studying English in university isn't the book itself or the the
38- main like, subject is the doctors, the doctors themselves?
Interviewer
39- Just to be clear, I don't want the best practice our your practice.
Student 4 E
40- You mean my experience with it?
Interviewer
41- Yeah, I like your How is your way of learning English? Not the way.
Student 4 E
42- I see I see. Well, alright, as I said, I already have a decent background in English. So I don't
43- actually need to study too much if I'm being honest. But every once in a while, whether it's with
44- the doctor or with the book, usually it's with the book itself. I'll just read it to it refresh my
45- memory on the things that I know, read before. And that's about it. The book itself, like I
46- said, it's more than enough for me to remember all the things I've learned before.
47- Okay, that's great. Thank you very much. And did you notice like for example, from the book,
48- you think the book, the themes in the book, of course, each unit discussed about a specific
49- theme or general topic, then they will go in detail. Like for example, there is one unit about
50- festival but beautiful, yeah, yeah, yeah. People, multiple stuffs. Yeah.
Interviewer
51- Okay, that's good. Yeah. Like, say various topics. These topics were appropriate for you as a
52- Saudi students. What do you think?
Student 4 E
53- Well, the topics themselves, they never really went into So much detail. You know, they they
54- gave you just general knowledge about certain like festivals or people or countries and stuff like
55- that. So it I didn't think it was like too much. Maybe if they if it went to into too much detail it
56- would affect the students. But in general, they talked, they talked in, in common language, they
57- talked about the subjects commonly, they never went into details of the certain subjects

58- themselves. For example, if I remember correctly, there was a unit about like places and stuff
59- like that. And it showed like multiple different, like, countries, you know, there's another unit it's
60- about, like, if I remember, correct, like global warming, stuff like that search was more mostly
61- even though it was there were topics that weren't exactly about English, you know, they weren't
62- about different subjects. They definitely, like helped give you like a better understanding of like,
63- certain words that are describing certain other things for like, for global warming, for example,
64- the unit about it, it was it was very helpful to understand like how global warming works at the
65- same time, it's helped with English itself, the language itself, so I think it's pretty good.

Interviewer

66- Okay, we're new information about other countries. Where do you think they were exciting to
67- know? Or do you think it was a little bit boring? Because it's not our culture?

Student 4 E

68- Like, no, no, no, definitely. It definitely was exciting. Most of the students in my class, were very
69- excited. Like you could tell, depending on the topic, the doctor was talking about. If I remember
70- correctly, there was a topic about like, I can't remember exactly what but it had to do with China
71- and a festival they had, where they throw lanterns up that fly with the you know, it's pretty cool.
72- Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And the students were, like, really excited. Many people wanted to talk
73- about it with a doctor that was there was teaching us. So definitely, there is definitely an
74- interest in other cultures and other people in other places. But in the students with me, me
75- personally, I've handled I've traveled a lot. So it wasn't like, too exciting for me. Because most
76- of the things like I've already known about, but definitely like when, for example, like the
77- example I gave before many students were like asking about and and talking about it. And this
78- the students who heard about it before, were saying like, Oh, yeah, I saw a video of it and
79- cetera, et cetera, like that.

Interviewer

80- Man, would you mind letting me know who he is? Was he was he International? Or was he
81- Arabic?

Student 4 E

82- No, I think he was. I've never met them the lecture itself, but he had he had an he had a British
83- accent. I think he might have been International, but I'm not sure. Because we never met the
84- doctor himself due to like Coronavirus and stuff like that. So we studied online with him on
85- Blackboard. So I never met him personally. But he had he had a British accent. So either he
86- studied in Britain or he is from Britain. I'm not sure.

Interviewer

87- Okay, good. And so obviously, he was most of the overtakes. They were teaching you in
88- English. They didn't use Arabic words.

Student 4 E

89- No, they they almost 99% of the time they spoke English. Maybe they spoke Arabic. If there is
90- like, if there's a word that is difficult to understand. They may say the word in Arabic and then
91- then continue explaining it in English, but 99% of the things of the things they said were in
92- English.

Interviewer

93- Do you remember which Arabic word was it? Which word was it? That was too hard for that?
94- Let me try to remember. There was one I think they were talking about it? I'm trying to
95- remember it.

Student 4 E

96- No problem. Let's see it was trying to remember it. Well, yeah, I remember there was there was
97- a fluid. There was a food that came out I can't remember. I think it was a fruit. Yeah, it was it
98- was it was a fruit I think if I remember correctly, and he said the name and Arabic. And oh,
99- yeah. They said dates. I think he said dates and then he tells it Oh, uncomfortable and
100- someone said summer. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer

101- Okay, that's good for the teacher. Do you think it's a good idea that he used Arabic like
102- sometimes not all but yeah,

Student 4 E

103- oh, definitely. I mean, if he spoke too much Arabic that would negate the whole process but
104- definitely some words you have to try to speak in the language that student understands so
105- that they can actually know what the word is itself.

Interviewer

106- Okay, good. And so both of them are international teachers, but they don't share the Saudi
107- culture with you.

Student 4 E

108- Yeah. Because they don't care. They don't share the Arabic or that Saudi culture, but
109- they share maybe just an Islamic culture. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I think so like I said I'd never met
110- them before. But there were many times where the doctor would sometimes that made them
111- would go off topic and would ask us, the students about certain things. For example, like they
112- will direct the subject of dates came up. He asked us about about it, like in here in Saudi
113- Arabia. And I remember last time the doctor there was a doctor. I forgot his name for last term.
114- I think he was Egyptian, I think I'm not sure. And he would ask us about like, what what foods
115- we were eating here in Medina and what's in Saudi Arabia exact like the festival we had, we
116- talked about like Riyadh season, etc, like that.

Interviewer

117- Oh, that's very good. International teachers that were teaching where they will be giving you
118- examples from Medina. Like, they were, were they using Medina as an example? Like, for
119- example, a places or shops or something?

Student 4 E

120- If they were, if they are going to give an example of places they would usually it would usually
121- be like an Islamic place. Like they would say, the haram for example, they would give it an
122- example. Sometimes, yeah, yeah. Sometimes they would give up examples from their own,
123- like, experience. Maybe it would be like, whatever percent from Saudi Arabia, but most of the
124- time the students understood and knew it.

Interviewer

125- Very good. Thank you very much. And Matthew, what do you think, like? So you, you've been
126- taught by an Arabic teacher? And then you're taught by an international teacher? And also
127- there are there are, there is another Saudi teacher, but I think just one, so maybe you didn't
128- do it? What do you think? What do you think have the best ability to teach? In your opinion?

Student 4 E

129- My opinion? Um, well, this may this may be because he's the only doctor that I actually met
130- because I studied with him in the university itself. The doctor that last time that I started with,
131- I'm trying to remember his name, I hadit on my phone, but I can't remember it. He was he was
132- the Egyptian doctor we talked about he was to me, he was the best doctor that taught me
133- English. Because maybe like I said, maybe it affected because I saw him face
134- to face. I'm not sure. But he gave many examples that were understood. And he had a very,
135- like, exciting, he looked excited to teach us and that in turn made us excited to learn.
136- No, not not not not a lot from being honest. There aren't there aren't many reasons to speak
137- English in Medina. Mostly because Medina is a religious city so they aren't even that many
138- people from like international can from different countries who speak English. So that's
139- probably the reason maybe if I lived in Riyadh or in Jeddah, then maybe I would speak
140- English more to other people, but not not here in Medina now.

Interviewer

141- How about the international visitors that come to Medina? We of course, Medina, Allah, there
142- are people from all over the world come to the city. Did you have any encounter you meet
143- one of them? Maybe Malaysia and maybe something you've talked?

Student 4 E

144- Well, I was when I was with an Indonesian person today a friend, a co worker, for I think he
145- was my father's coworker, I think. Yeah, and I met him today. Actually, I was with him. And I
146- was speaking with him in English. Not in Arabic. I remember. he come to visit and haram and
147- at the same time, you saw him compensation English. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I met him. I met
148- him today. I think I actually, um, I gave him a ride to the good. Yeah. So when I when I was

149- there, I started talking to him. And then I was like, I don't know your English. There is no
150- English. And then I started like asking him but he didn't know any intermediate awards for him.
151- Well, I did a bit actually. I didn't know. Yeah, Complete in English. Yeah. Exactly. Okay, that's
152- good. That's good. So like, so like being like, if you you mentioned that if you've been in rehab
153- and didn't Maybe you could use English more often than having here but also there is a
154- chance if you want to learn. There are a lot of international students even in the Atlantic
155- University or international business. Yeah, but yeah, oh, yeah, sure, but it's not very common.
156- And most of and most of them already, like, most of them can already speak some form of
157- Arabic. You know? So, yeah, so in general, yeah. If there's a group of four students, one of
158- them is an international. Oh, and he speaks Arabic, the entire group would speak English. No,
159- they will speak Arabic with the fourth person, you know, if they were maybe more common
160- than maybe we would speak English more.

Interviewer

161- Okay, that's good. Man askew, I'll go back to the like, I'll go back to the English classes at the
162- university. Just one second. Let me be with you want just give me one minute. Just take your
163- time. Yeah. Do you recall learning while you're learning English, whether in Indonesia or were
164- in, in Saudi Arabia? Do you think there were something like in the book that were that were,
165- for example, inappropriate, or maybe culturally sensitive? Or some things that maybe it's not
166- good to learn? Like a very good topic, but is not good to learn English about? You recall any
167- like we have incidents like this? You said in Indonesia, or in here? So both?

Student 4 E

168- In Malaysia, like what, while you're learning English, in general? Generally, like I'm more I'm
169- more interested, of course in Saudi, but like, I want to ask you in general.
170- Well, let's see. I'm trying to remember if there is any certain moments, well, there were some,
171- some some, if I, there were some times they will, it was the subject itself wasn't taken in a
172- bad way. It was mostly taken in a joke as a joke. I think I remember there was there was there
173- was a topic I studied about in Malaysia. And the topic itself had something to do with the I
174- guess, relationships between men and women. Okay, yeah. Yeah, it obviously did not go into
175- too much detail, but it did talk about it. And I don't think they're my reaction or me personally, I
176- did not mind me. This, it didn't matter. I was studying English. So i No matter what subject
177- you're going to talk about, I'm gonna gain something some something new. So it doesn't really
178- matter to me. But definitely, some some students, they, they would see it and they would say
179- like, well, they would laugh basically, they would laugh. They wouldn't take it too badly, but
180- they would laugh and maybe not take it seriously.

Interviewer

181- Okay, with this situation happens in like, why learning in Saudi or just in Malaysia?

Student 4 E

182- You know, just in Malaysia and Saudi, you know, the most of the books we read, they don't
183- have any topics that would cause any issues when you're learning it.

Interviewer

184- Okay, that's good. That's good. Thank you very much for that. And so like, what like what do
185- you think about like about Islamic culture here at the University of Babel? So do you think
186- people like of course, before there were no pictures of women are all of course in English
187- books and they were the teachers who will work will not teach those pages I'd like long time
188- ago. But yeah, I think I think they are more lenient now to like, for example, lose some topics
189- like they were they were a bit sensitive in the past, but now I think it's okay with the talk about
190- do you recall any incidents like this? What I'm why is that can you just imagine if I am I am
191- from Medina. I am from university but just imagine that I am not from Medina. My dear, I am
192- really surprised. Why is that? Can you explain? I know, it's a little bit hard to explain. So if you
193- want to use Arabic, it's okay.

Student 4 E

194- Sure, I'll try. Um, well, it has, maybe, to me personally, if I think about it, there's probably two
195- main reasons. One is religious and one is culture. From a very long ago, time ago, Arabs or in
196- general Saudi Arabia, to be precise, always had, like men and women separate, they're
197- always separate, you know, and, and add to that, the religious side of things where the

198- woman and the man and woman should not like, see each other. For example, like, if you go
199- back, let's say 15 years ago, if it opened TV, you would never see any woman on TV with her
200- face shot. You know, that I think that the reason why this changed over the years is the effect
201- of Western culture. I think that many, many, many people from Saudi Arabia, who left the
202- country and came back, because there were 1000s, and 1000s of students 1000s of Saudi
203- Arabian people who traveled abroad and came back who studied abroad, many, many
204- people, and also the internet in general, that everyone can see the difference in culture, if you
205- can see how the Western society is a lot more different, a lot more open about the women and
206- men being together, and then definitely had an effect on the people over here and exchange
207- them whether or not to the good or bad, it's not really up to me. I just, you know, I just I just
208- study and, and concentrate on my work. But that's a different subject. But I think, yeah, having
209- the ability to see different cultures, different societies on your phone, definitely affected the
210- people here and made them I guess you can say more lenient about it. Yeah. Because I
211- agree with what you said. I think, like, I think it's more important to learn new things. And then
212- like to learn new things, and so on, if you have these topics, because at that, at that time, yes,
213- it was a bit strict when I was learning English, yes, it was like, too strict, of course. But it was,
214- it was okay, constantly within the culture of Saudi Arabia. But now the country is going more
215- more to like more, like more open to other societies and so on.

Interviewer

216- But do you think? Do you think we should accept everything from Western culture wherever
217- that thing is? Do you think we definitely. Okay, so what? Federal? What, how can we manage
218- this, we want to be open. But also we there are things that they're like, how can you manage
219- this in your opinion?

Student 4 E

220- Well, I don't think I don't think you can, if I'm being honest. I mean, no matter what the country,
221- no matter what role, or what direction the country decides to go in, it will have an effect on
222- people, some people will like it, some people won't, you know, maybe, I mean, I understand
223- that. Definitely it will, Saudi Arabia should be more open to other countries to other culture,
224- that way we can maybe become a country that is more friendly, to visit to know about to study
225- about, you know, and maybe fix the different, maybe fix the the bad ideas that people have
226- about us know, which is definitely a good thing. But the issue is, who decides what culture is
227- correct? Who decides whether the Western society is going about it the right way? Or if the
228- Middle Eastern societies, the Arabs or the Egyptians, or the Americans or whoever, who has
229- the best societal way to live? No. Okay.

Interviewer

230- I just want to ask you, I know it's a very, very big speak, and I like you're going to speak in
231- front of light, like you'll speak like, for the people of Medina to watch but end, you're a student,
232- I am just one person, we cannot do anything. In your opinion, should we accept everything
233- from other cultures? No. What should we accept? What should we not accept? In your
234- opinion, in private opinion?

Student 4 E

235- I think that things that go against our religion should not be accepted.

Interviewer

236- Okay, okay. For example, I know what you're gonna say, but they just for the sake of of elicit, I
237- want you to take that.

Student 4 E

238- All right. Sure. I guess the normalization of public affection. I think that's something that it
239- should be kept in private. It should not be I think, like the difference between a big difference
240- between our culture and other people. Other countries culture is showing affection. For
241- example, husband and his wife, for example, in Saudi Arabia, you don't don't do that in public.
242- And I think that's a big, that's a big, that's something that should not change, in my opinion.
243- Also the things like for example, alcohol, alcohol. If the country wanted to be more open to
244- other cultures and other people, then maybe they would have to start having alcohol in the
245- country for other citizens or other other people. Sorry. And I don't I don't I don't agree with
246- that. I don't think we should, like they they're visiting. If you're visiting our country, yes, to an

240

247- extent, we should be welcoming. And we should accept whoever you are, whoever your
248- culture is, but that doesn't mean that we have to change our beliefs for you.

Interviewer

249- Okay, that's good. That's good. Thank you very much. And I really enjoyed having interview
250- with you. First of all, before I start, before I stop recording, do you have any questions? Do
251- you have any concerns? Or do you have any? Anything related to the research or Victor's
252- question?

Student 4 E

253- Um, yeah, sure. Actually, I think I, the doctor told me that it's the research itself is about the
254- difference in culture, something like that. It has to do with culture, right. I wanted to know, is it
255- difference between Saudi Arabia sculpture or the religious culture itself? Is it what the country
256- or the religion? Okay, so like, from this research point of view? First of all, there is a theory
257- that, like, Saudi Arabian culture is so vast and so big, you cannot say that someone who is in
258- Saudi Arabia, like, for example, if Abdullah went to another country, I cannot say I've done my
259- will represent Saudi Arabia's culture, because you cannot put culture because every one, its
260- own culture, if you like, for example, like you like as your students, you are you, you have
261- a mixed culture, you have a bit of Malaysian culture, and also you have a bit of Medina
262- culture, you can identify with those people, and you can understand those people when they
263- know, what kind of issues I'm more interested in. It's really exciting to do it.

Appendix F   Focus Group Transcript

SPEAKERS
A3 Teacher, A2 Teacher, E1 Teacher, A4 Teacher, A1 Teacher, Interviewer

Interviewer:
1- This is a focus group for my topic, like intercultural communication and English language
2- teaching at private university. Before we start, I want to give you a little bit about the research,
3- the research is really interested about the cultural change and the cultural differences that
4- happened in like that that is happening now. And also like the effects on that on the curriculum
5- and also in our books, and whether the culture of Medina has affected that or not, we can start
6- by first of all, I want to let you know that one of that one of the interviewers, they mentioned one
7- story that one teacher in the past one teacher in the past that, that he made some sort of
8- comment that wasn't, wasn't appropriate at that time. And he was it was unfortunately, it gave
9- gave the ELC the like, the punish him by, like, my terminating his contract and so on. Because
10- at that time, it was like a cultural, cultural differences. Do you remember any stories like that
11- that happened, whether in Medina or elsewhere in Saudi Arabia or other parts of the world
12- where you thought we can take time, if you remember any stories that happened, some things
13- that happened like that?

E1 Teacher
14- There was a story about preparing the test. and one of the questions that you have in the test,
15- obviously, what not was not appropriate. I think the guys are familiar with it. He was talking
16- about the women of a certain region and describing them, and the options you gave or basic
17- stuff like a body fat and overweight why, why, why why? Different options. So basically, it
18- wasn't right. I mean, the person, you know, format the question, he should know better, I think,
19- because he actually I think was an Arab origin mistake. They should have been familiar that
20- maybe this may be culturally sensitive. So you should have known that were some may be
21- coming from the west may won't be as familiar either way that kind of distract is that the person
22- using that question? I think we're not suitable to that show. cultural insensitivity, and that
23- caused uproar in the institution. And I believe at the end of the day, I've even terminated that
24- individual contract.

A3 Teacher
25- There was also you know, British Nationality wasn't in university. Another University? Oh, yeah.
26- With the culture for example, you know, it's a little bit you know, more religious.

Interviewer
27- How many years was that before? Five years, it can be you know, even less than that. Okay.

A1 Teacher
28- Yeah, white students, like when I got in the class, they were the promos. They had the word,
29- you know, some Oh, yeah. I want to come through some means poison. So when he started,
30- like, calling for names, and he was like, you know, you got to do with vaccines.I thought to
31- myself, like, why does he say something to me? I just teach that I ignored it the first time. I
32- thought to myself that this student must be rude. Then I asked another thing and he was like,
33- again, Sam, I was like, Hey, yo. Like some of you some watch, face poison, like do your face
34- okay? I'm your teacher. He was like, no, no, no, please give me a chance. I was like, No, and
35- our culture it means what I was very curious at the time, okay. Other students like from Medina.
36- He said, like, we need to explain this thing. 70s seminar. And I was like, this way, you know,
37- I'm moving into into some some ammo. You should then like, summer. You know, that's, that's
38- bad in our culture. They've taught me that. It's like, a good word. And I was like, Okay,
39- nevermind, like okay, it's like seeing it again. It was like stem I was like, Okay

A1Teacher
40- We had only like a few people that could remember the time maybe tomorrow remember? We
41- were like only six seven people. Yeah, we were like a very small number of teachers. We had
42- like a head. Two people like, like threating everybody with termination. And like the others
43- doing the job. Have a teacher. It wasn't a better week the number of teachers so like we didn't

44- have any. I came here on Monday and wasn't in class Wednesday. Okay, I think it'd be like a
45- full schedule, like eight hours a day. Just go in class you have the language was like, yes, just
46- go in class. And they gave me like one of these my religious people sections. Okay, all the
47- heads of alhai'a in Medina taught by me, just imagine I had a necklace. Okay, I went into
48- wearing jeans, you know what I mean? Okay, I have like a stick in my mind that you should
49- teach my tongue. So I would like, give them like jokes. And I will tell jokes. And everybody
50- would be like one of them like, spoke to me outside like, Hey, sir, you laugh a lot. I was like,
51- Okay, I teach ya funny. He said, No. These students, they could like very personally, a lot, they
52- would think that you are like lower rank, because I can show it to me laughing. You shouldn't I
53- made some comments about one of them. Like, you know, being the prayer time, he was like
54- the head name up. And his voice was very strange. So I told them a very strange voice in a
55- good way. He understood it in a bad way.

E1 Teacher

56- How would you say in a good way, just having your advice?

A1 Teacher

57- Like I told them like, hey, this sounds like okay. Like, it's like an event. And I went well, but
58- because of the way I did, like, looked very differently. That's why it's like, I still remember like,
59- all these things.

A2 Teacher

60- Yeah. And like, the first last the situation when I wasn't much diversity, okay. That was my first
61- time teaching. And I think I mentioned that in the interview. When I started the listening
62- section, you know, in the beginning, they are listening or the audio is some music. So to hear
63- about, I think two or three students, for instance, raise their hand and said, Please,
64- doctor, we want to meet us. I said, Why do you want to go out? And they said that we don't
65- listen to music. So after that, I mentioned that to the supervisor. And he said, Yeah, we I'm
66- sorry, we have the forbidden and you need to cut this some way and start the listening section.
67- And immediately they taught me some other things that I need to know about. So yeah, that
68- Was okay.

Interviewer

69- So any, any more stories in the past with it remember from Mr. Han Moto, like Allah
70- wants to go to hell for like, he's, he's my teacher. Like in high school. Like I remember, even
71- the books were not like appropriate, I think. We were taught by an Oxford, like elementary
72- school, Oxford books, it was full of colors, and so on. I don't remember the name of the book.
73- But I remember that there was one guy and a banana peel on the floor. And one guy felt off the
74- first picture. And the second picture that everyone was laughing at him. And then he said,
75- Okay, this is, you know, this, this information. And this book is come from the British, like, from
76- the British culture, and so on. But in our culture, if someone fell fell down, you should offer help
77- first, don't ever like we don't laugh on other people. At that time, I thought everything in the
78- book was okay. In the book. That's it. It's for like a forgiving, this is correct. And this is the best
79- way but now from that time, until now, I can know that okay, the cultural the cultural awareness
80- of cultural understanding of where you teach English is important that more important than the
81- target culture, which is the American and British,

E1 Teacher

82- even in the UK, just to defend the British culture. Yeah, we do. We do actually help the person
83- but we laugh first.

Interviewer

84- about it, that's like, do you have like, is there a, that was in the British book, like in Oxford book.

E1 Teacher

85- So to be fair, I don't think that's the norm at all in this perception, and maybe people just come
86- in. I think, in general, I think people will chuckle and laugh or something like that. Yeah, it's
87- somebody else's misery or mishap. But generally speaking, I'm thinking in the UK many times,
88- you know, people have like falling or slipped an old person. Some people come just help them
89- up and they won't laugh.

Interviewer

90- Yeah, but unfortunately, this is what stuck in my mind. Yeah. I know Toby mentioned that.

91- Sorry. It's okay. Yeah.

A3 Teacher

92- other incident about the teacher? Okay, actually, when we're doing get a view for one of the
93- courses, that was vacated by Oxford University Press, and we're doing is I'm going to book
94- review. Books are culturally appropriate. Yeah, one of the elements, of course, is the culture
95- isn't appropriate to the culture here and to, you know, to the students and to the environment to
96- the country, one of the teachers actually gets, you know, you know, canceling many pages,
97- okay, and making comments about these, you know, or inappropriate, inappropriate,
98- inappropriate. And when I looked at the pictures, what's wrong with the picture? He said, You
99- know, the, the woman is uncovering, you know, her face that was just recently recently recently
100- said, So what's, what's wrong the ability, you know, a woman, you know, uncovering, you
101- know, their place order. Now, this is something he said, but, you know, but this is, you know,
102- my offense, you know, offended the students, you know, and, you know, this might cause
103- problems and, and I thought, you know, I came back to the Superbowl Sunday, when he
104- asked me about, you know, these things, what do you think about, I said, well, one, these are
105- now, okay. These, this is, the culture is part of the book. And even when we teach culture, or
106- when we teach, you know, something related to the culture, actually, it's a good chance for us,
107- as teachers, and for the students as well, to know, the differences between cultures have a
108- discussion about even you know, as we mentioned, in the interview, when we teach
109- something, example to, you know, foods, okay, or to the way of dressing or something like
110- that, were related to the students background, okay. And from there, we initiated discussion
111- and deep, we have something good or like, active discussion about this, what's good, what's
112- good, what's bad, what's appropriate, what's inappropriate about this, the differences, but

Interviewer

113- there's currently discussion among students or teachers or knows.

A3 Teacher

114- So even the teacher, okay, when he comes from a background, for example, a very religious
115- background, for example, can have an impact, of course, also, and also on the way he
116- teaches the students, you know, for example, it's not only, you know, whether the book, you
117- know, is good for business or not, it's, it's, again, the teacher, whether he is able to use the
118- cultural points, you know, in a good way, in a positive way, or not. Okay, so, for example, I
119- know that even you know, even sometimes we have a word like a word to whine. Okay,
120- sometimes in some in some textbooks, so for example, in the past, I used to say, Okay,
121- what's wrong with these, you know, these words, we can have it as an opportunity, okay, to
122- show you know, what's good, and what's bad, what's what's, what is, you know, what's
123- acceptable and what's not acceptable, you know, for example, I have an aggression in the
124- habit idea, and the belief, actually, from the very beginning, you know, from my career, that
125- why shouldn't we teach our students you know, these things, okay, for example, you know,
126- when I went to the States, we had the word champagne and word, the word wine and whiskey
127- and whatever, okay, so if a student, for example, does not know about these things, he can do
128- things, you know, by mistaken

E1 Teacher

129- for them to that.

A3 Teacher

130- Okay, so that was, I mean, actually, I believe that it, you know, these things would be a good
131- opportunity, I mean, to orient our students to highlight the the bright science of our culture and
132- the differences and that doesn't mean that the other culture, for example, you know, as the
133- negative or better, but you these are the differences between our culture and their culture.
134- And it's better for us to stick to what we have because of this because, you know, these
135- transcripts 1234

A1 Teacher

136- In our case we had before he used to cram into class, and like ask the students about what
137- they memorize the Quran but it's not like, you should like, you know, he, okay, so just, like,
138- point, some people don't stick to the curriculum itself, they want to, like, you know, personally,

A3 Teacher

244

139- the ideas we have, we have, you know, a negative impact on the cultural side. Okay. Also,
140- you know, and it gives an impression, okay, I mean to the students, okay, it's not your job to
141- see what's what's haram and what's acceptable. I mean, it's our religion that states this, it's
142- your job as a teacher to highlight why this is good and why this is bad. Okay. If it is really to do
143- with the topic of your complaint, if it's related to the topic of the unions,

E1 Teacher

144- even the example you gave of the woman that's maybe got a face uncovered here uncovered
145- if I had too much shootings. I was okay wait for this person is from Saudi Arabia. Why should
146- Saudi Arabia because in Saudi Arabia, how do women dressed, you know, but I still I think for
147- some students will still take offense is about picture why because although your site is more
148- than normal now, but they're not really another really exposed to expose on TV but other
149- cities, maybe it's more open

A3 Teacher

150- this is language, the language of sport, unfortunately, you cannot actually separate both. So
151- for example, if a woman is on this, this sighting which,

A2 Teacher

152- actually we shouldn't read about this, if Abel trembles that he'll be shocked, yes, always going
153- on. And even if I drink the wine that so what happened to us

A3 Teacher

154- when we went to the States and another person and one of our colleagues behaved in a very
155- strange way? It's okay, when he sees you know, my boyfriend. It was a very strange behavior
156- from that, because that, you know, that the triangle, but because our new, a new letter on the
157- T comes along, again, you know, a closed background. Okay, so now in this during this time,
158- with our students, or students here from Saudi Arabia, or traveling abroad, or traveling abroad,
159- and to get into scholarships and studying abroad, it's very, very important to know the
160- differences between our our society and their society so that we can protect them.

A1 Teacher

161- The case? Yeah, I was thinking about driving. I told him like my wife brands, and they will
162- cover and I was like, Yeah, okay, thank you. But they, at the time, they didn't mean as well.
163- And I told him that my wife drags me around, and she drove like 140 in this suite. Know, Like,
164- they've been so bad.

A3 Teacher

165- What's important point before that is search. Culture now in that, with that the you know, it's
166- culturally appropriate or inappropriate. Okay, this is revisited by many people. Okay, so now
167- that the concept that comes with the book is or the textbook or the character, appropriate,
168- appropriate difference? Yeah.

E1 Teacher

169- So if you look at the previous book, they were very careful to make sure that women were not
170- their hair was not even artificially, you have a regular western woman. But this just
171- photoshopped the image. And we just cover their hair for November,

A1 Teacher

172- we had the committee but now moved me and we had like, so like a big committee to edit the
173- book

Interviewer

174- Yeah, like, I don't want to something relation, but like, just for the sake of recording now, I
175- wanted to move from the past to the present, but now to position went that way, anyway.
176- Yeah. Which is, which is good. Thank you very much. So like, at the present, as you may
177- imagine, there is like a curriculum committee that reviews the book and so on, and how about
178- the themes? Now? What how do you think about the themes in this topic?

179- A3 Teacher

180- I mean, to do that, we don't only have a curriculum committee, we have a curriculum unit.
181- Okay. Okay, we have a curriculum unit and the from that unit, you know, the committee, you
182- know, is formed. And it's also not limited to the curriculum unit. But it also includes, you know,
183- old people from the embassy, for example, the head of other units and teachers. Excellent.
184- Okay. But what's missing here? Is that the the, the feedback of students as well, I believe,

185- also, it's very important to include the students in the selection of the text, so that they can
186- have a voice to the culture and have their own feedback.

Interviewer

187- Okay, so, but this, this didn't happen yet, of course. But you wanted to include that in future in
188- the future? Oh, what do you think the publishers will have a special book just for private
189- university? Instead of like they I know that I understand what I understood from the interviews
190- and from the curriculum committee interview as well, that it's, it's this book is made for the
191- whole Arabic region, like Middle East. But do you think it's feasible for them or maybe feasible,
192- which is more important for us that we can prepare or prepare something that is specifically
193- good for five University of Medina, for example, we ask the physician

194- A3 Teacher

195- we ask the publisher customized again, here it is, you know, it's going to have, you know, in
196- my opinion, impacts on the English language education in general. Now, as we said, you
197- know, a few minutes ago, culture and language are very much connected. So are you
198- teaching the students here to us Is the language in the medina community. You're teaching
199- students the language, I mean, to be to mean to know the other, and to prepare them also for
200- the future now at the vision of 2030 Okay, and now students, many students are graduating
201- and getting the scholarships and they travel abroad. So we need to hit the kind of broad,
202- broad, broad, you know, knowledge about the culture and about that concept and about the
203- ideas of other countries as well. So you cannot actually, you know, actually limit that, I mean,
204- to the community of Medina,

E1 Teacher

205- okay, even if it's not limited.

A3 Teacher

206- That number is a very common topic. Now. Maybe I also, you know, got into this, you know,
207- my thesis, you know, English for International Communication. Okay, so now it's English for
208- International Communication, okay? But okay, English as a lingua franca. Okay, so how can
209- you limit the broad vision into that very small,

A4 Teacher

210- narrow the topics that are on the books, the most global topics. So we are living in a very
211- small village with the global village. Now, we have the basic topics, jobs, celebrations. So we
212- can find these topics all over the world.

A1 Teacher

213- And you can just like find a way to talk about it,

E1 Teacher

214- for example, from all of the evil festivals, festivals in the US, in Saudi Arabia. So it comes a full
215- spectrum. So I agree with you why you shouldn't restrict it just to particularly one area to
216- broaden your scope.

Interviewer

217- so within mentioning these cultures, do you think the students were really interested in having
218- you wanted to know about other cultures, or maybe the students were okay, this is very far
219- away from me.

A1 Teacher

220- The problem is Yes, with some students, they are like their exams.

Interviewer

221- Which is, which is another problem,

A1 Teacher

222- like some students are there for like the scores, and some students are better to learn, or
223- want to learn have, let's say, a bullet of like a broader background from the other ones, the
224- ones who want to learn, have the knowledge, but they want to get more. There are some
225- students who came like only for the score, they don't want to learn, they want to learn what's
226- in the book, get an idea? Like, what's the question? Like? How are the questions? I would just
227- like that. I think should I do this? Should I do that? And some others would give you
228- information about other things, because they watch movies they would talk about, I once was
229- like, talking about stories, whatever. They started talking to me about Lord of the Rings. Yeah.

230- Thanks, do we have a lot of things and they're like, why this word, like turned into blue. And
231- like these things, so the students who have no knowledge who are like interested from the
232- beginning, would give you some, like, would be interested in learning more. And some other
233- students have like a goal, they want to study medicine, and I'm not here to learn about
234- countries to study what's important, kind of just like that exists, where to go, how to study,
235- what are the things to focus on, and that's sort of like, you know, they have an aim,

E1 Teacher

236- the students coming out with an objective has to come from earlier, I feel like thing before,
237- before they come to university, and I say, those passions, the language, a limited number of
238- students, most of them like honestly just come in, they're gonna go through the book, because
239- that's the requirements, sit the exam, go past the foundation, yet go into their specialization
240- was if there was brought in maybe I think is being brought in now, can the other kind of
241- curriculum and possibly from elementary, middle high school, when they introduce other
242- cultures, they're gonna become more familiar with it, it's not gonna be something surprising for
243- them, you know, so, but someone might be quite interested in learning about other cultures,
244- but I think depends on how the teacher develops the topic and then that is the key thing, if you
245- restrict it to one particular domain, the student is not going to go away having that much
246- interest, they develop a discussion with them, this is this culture, this is in that culture, how is it
247- in your culture? What do you think would you do this and so on, you can develop these things
248- from the stools, you get an idea in terms of whether they really want to learn about the culture
249- is it just want to learn a second language?

Interviewer

250- That's another another issue I want to ask you about, like, should maybe the publisher that
251- produced the English book, like will contain provide, they can provide other culture but do they
252- have like questions what is in your culture and so on? They like from the from the book, they
253- can guide and help the teacher.

E1 Teacher

254- Especially when the teacher's guide that we have our teachers, manual teachers, it teaches
255- us that the indications are there for them how to develop the lesson.

A3 Teacher

256- Also at the beginning of the unit, okay, sometimes when they introduce a cultural topic, okay,
257- they asked students about their own culture. Is it different Okay? So what about you? What
258- about your site and what the viewer has to be

A4 Teacher

259- preparing for listening, ask you about examples from your poetry,

A3 Teacher

260- then it's a very important point here, maybe that we should mention students nowadays, in
261- this during this time, okay, during the 2030 vision are very much interested, by the way in
262- knowing about other cultures. Okay, and they are very much interested in knowing the topics
263- and, and for example, for example, you can know this from watching the videos, in our
264- textbooks, we have videos, okay, that you know, prepare students for the unit that for the
265- theme of the unit, so they are very much interested in watching the video and answering
266- questions about the video, you will see them motivated and you know, willing to interact with
267- the video and the questions based on that video. Okay, this shows you that actually, we have
268- a different generation. Okay, it's a different time. And this you know, you know, goes with the
269- vision of the country. In the class, when you ask him about the important events, and we have
270- about this, yeah, they mention Riyadh Season event, and you'd like to know, because I hope
271- to see you know, the people, the bands, the music, that's something you wouldn't, okay, you
272- wouldn't find in the past it is a big transition Now.

Interviewer

273- The whole students culture, like, has changed, like, okay, they are more open now do other

A1 Teacher

274- other applications use different applications. Now, when we talk to them. Now, they go to
275- Snapchat, they have groups and Telegram, they told me things that I didn't know other people
276- about other cultures. They will just like confirm things that I honestly did not. I was like, the

277- question of culture. I was like, asking them about, like, places that you would love to go. They
278- told me like, we wouldn't go to that country or that country or that country. Why? They have
279- the same culture, we'd like to go to another culture. Okay, just like, namely, have ideas now
280- about similar cultures and different cultures, and the ones that would go with their own, and
281- the ones that would go against? So the students have, like totally different from the ones we
282- had before. Totally different.

E1 Teacher

283- Facilitated now was previously there wasn't an avenue for them to explore. It was restricted in
284- some way.

Interviewer

285- Oh, yeah. So maybe it was them gate to like, all the cultures within the book are

E1 Teacher

286- now even within the country, even the 2030 museums, everything is open now much more
287- open than before. Yeah. So you know, seems like they can explore more different things and

A3 Teacher

288- don't forget you're not very far away from $1. Okay, all I know is you know, touristic places you
289- know, strict place you know, where many people from abroad you know, they come and visit
290- so now as soon as we have a branch in a border, okay, racial diversity so students there are
291- exposed to this as well, that has an effect the game on the the kind of variety of cultures that
292- students see and are exposed to.

Interviewer

293- Okay, that's great. Another question in that okay. Like and they want to hear from the Prophet
294- Mohammed as well. How about like, Should we be or be of course now you mentioned the
295- advantages of all and the openness to other cultures of course with them like any other
296- country in the world, even the cities are interested, but our do we as teachers? Should we be
297- explaining everything? Or like, Oh, should we accepting everything from everywhere in culture
298- or the word so we can prepare the students to be to can work anywhere in the world? Should
299- students accept everything?

A2 Teacher

300- As our colleague said, Yeah, we need to discuss everything with the students. Now there are
301- mature people, ya know, a lot of times, so why not we can discuss everything. So I like to
302- have gays and lesbians or whatever. So we discuss these things with them.

E1 Teacher

303- To start that discussion, I've never nobody's ever started a discussion from the students in the
304- class, but there's nothing in the book that's gonna generate that discussion. Yeah.

A3 Teacher

305- There is also a limit

Interviewer

306- Yeah. Okay. That this is running what what I what I want to know what is the limit because we
307- want to be open and vigilant of the 2013 to be open to all questions but what is This is

A4 Teacher

308- what sets the boundaries for our culture is religion. Okay, so religion for us topic like this.
309- There's punishment for a village who did this act? So this is something that is terrible that we
310- cannot afford for me. I won't talk about it.
311- Okay. And yes, I know that I can take the cultural opinion from a global perspective. Be open.
312- Yes, but not about something that is prohibited. Okay. What religion? This is some? Even if I
313- had to talk about it, oh.

A1 Teacher

314- Yeah. It's gonna stop everything. Yeah. I'll give you a case I was talking to like my students
315- about movies. I'd like Like before, before the corona case. Yeah, I used to show my students
316- clips. Like, every time I got in class, I would have like a two minute clip to show the students to
317- have a laugh before we start, yeah. And we were talking about movies. And they started like,
318- Do you have any? entitled, they thought that I didn't do the work. I was like what, they said like
319- Anime. Anime what. Just give me the series. They said like something Japanese. Why do you
320- watch the Japanese? They said like, they're good. I didn't know at the time. I was like, Can

321- anybody just like, give me a shot? Give me a clip. One of them just like, Hey, yo, class it is on.
322- We've had it on the screen, and one speaking Japanese and like, subtitled in Arabic, and what
323- do you gain? It's like something that, like, it's unbelievable. Like, these things are like very
324- dump. Like, why are you watching? Maybe they are dump for you? But yeah, It was like the
325- action, at that time, they introduced me to the idea of finding some Enemy that would speak
326- English, to introduce them into my class. Okay. And honestly, I had a lot of clips, just to
327- introduce him to class. And students were amazed that the teacher knows about these things
328- later on. Instead of just like bringing some like, comedies or whatever, I would just like start
329- moving things. And it was like, for me, I gained this info from the students. And it's helped me
330- a lot. And it still does me. Right. So that's the thing. Like the students know everything. It's just
331- the way you manage the things that we're giving them in the class.

A3 Teacher

332- From the curriculum point of view. You Yeah, again, we have to be very careful here isn't
333- changed when it's happening, but it's taking slowly taking place next time? That's the way it
334- should be. So that you can,

Interviewer

335- okay, now I'll move to the future. Like, imagine that we are in control of the books, in my will
336- imagine we are in control of the books of the publishing? And do you think we should keep the
337- same things that our current because as, as we mentioned, the book has changed? It was
338- one book for seven years, I think, then this book for somewhat years, and maybe in the future
339- will change to another publisher, we don't know. Or maybe we'll keep the same one. But if we
340- have the, like, the ability to put whatever we want, what do you think? Like, I know, it's like, but
341- so just like, without a question, if you if you have comments,

A1 Teacher

342- we do have power to like the manager, yeah, we do have the power do you want?

Interviewer

343- Like, for example? So do you want to
344- keep the global culture? And also, or do you want to maybe do, do you want to add, like
345- something from Saudi Medina?

A1 Teacher

346- Because things are like, No, that's the thing, the key for me, like my own point of view, things
347- are changing. And the change is happening. And we don't know what's coming next. So I think
348- that the books that we have now are just fine for me far away. I teach it Yeah, it's like fine.
349- Once we will never know about next year, because the students who come into my room are
350- different. Oh, yeah. They come to complain or whatever, they have a different way of speaking
351- to me, or like, a different, like, let's say, solid argument to talk to you bout, you know, so things
352- might be different next year, so that we have to tell the publishers that they need to change
353- something about

Interviewer

354- and the idea that we should include the students within the committee. That's a great idea.

A3 Teacher

355- There's something else that we should include and should be very careful about. Okay, now
356- we're getting into a new phase in the university where students now are going to be streamed
357- into the different colleges and different faculties of the university where, for example, medical
358- students are going to go straight to medical colleges, engineering students,

Interviewer

359- so no proprietary.

A3 Teacher

360- That's, that's the way in terms of talking about the future, we should include another thing. You
361- know, that is, you know, the students needs. Okay, needs we should do, we should have
362- some kind of needs analysis, okay, to the students, I mean, to the students needs, and that
363- would go to, for example, you know, the different colleges from the university, okay. And also
364- include, you know, students, okay, some of the students university, you know, having a
365- sample of students about their learning needs,

A4 Teacher

366- takes us away from cultural learning,

A3 Teacher

367- it's maybe, maybe, you know, we can include something like that. Okay. So that is something
368- that we did in terms of talking about the future. Now, that's something that we need to include,
369- or we do, for example, if we're talking about the future, are we doing the right thing in our
370- teaching? For example, a mix of general English and academic image? Should we limit for
371- example, ourselves to just academic English? Or maybe in the future to either speak? Okay,
372- and, you know, what are all the cultural aspects in the ESP textbooks? Okay, what y'all okay?
373- And the house? How was that, you know, that element, how's that factor is going to be
374- incorporated? Okay, because an E is V, you know, in ESP has got now it's gonna have
375- something to, you know, ethics, you know, what ethics, for example, you know, so the word
376- ethics, for example, is part of the culture, so it's going to be the same. Okay, or something like
377- that. So that's the future that we need to look at.

Interviewer

378- Just a couple of questions, before we are there. Should we include some themes that is
379- related to the international or multicultural, like nature of the city, or the context that we are in,
380- like, for example, as part of themes, because we have a lot of international visitors who come
381- to Medina from all over the world, and the media will have, like, everyone will talk either in
382- Arabic or English. So as like, like as a working working language of English as a lingua franca.
383- So can we include something like, for example, this is might be one of the future plans? Or
384- maybe, maybe not, what do you think about this?

A4 Teacher

385- The meaning through the theme?

Interviewer

386- The theme? Yeah, I've seen examples. Like, for example, in one of the books that I
387- remember, teaching is love mentioning Amazon and family. Like this is the previous book.
388- This is from my own experience. Yeah, both exam and family, they were in demand and so
389- on. So this is like, this was an interesting, like, local, local, like Saudi culture was made, or
390- like, which, which is mentioned in the book.

A4 Teacher

391- I guess we talked about something about this book. franchise, we teach about his as a
392- businessman.

E1 Teacher

393- Oh, GB specific. Specific Medina, we have already got that specifically, maybe
394- you're thinking maybe introduce something about COBOL? Or machine level? We maybe
395- something like that. I don't know if there? Yeah. I don't think they do some of that. Because
396- like you say the books more like for Middle East inclination, unless they do something
397- customized for us.

Interviewer

398- But if this mention of this theme, was there, or do you think it will be beneficial for the students
399- or

E1 Teacher

400- something they could relate to anymore? And you can generate discussions from that?

A4Teacher

401- Because it's a big it's for the older men,

E1 Teacher

402- many of you help multiple times. Boy Scouts and so on. Yeah, we even the gender race
403- discussion, and makes them feel more comfortable, or at least as a starting point for a
404- discussion. Yes. From that you can expand it into other cultures.

Interviewer

405- Okay, good. Good. Thank you very much. And how about like now that ELC as like, as you
406- know, we have fewer teacher now but there are there are plans, like as we hear like, that will
407- be including more teachers. So in the new teachers who will come here, we don't want them
408- to do the same mistakes as we all did at the beginning, like what to teach what not? What do
409- you think we should do with like, what is the proper way to educate new teachers who come to

410- the ALC about like to make them familiar with with the teaching in Saudi Arabia teaching

E1 Teacher

411- with the orientation we should have? Basically what do you think She's the big fish were of my
412- game. Now the culture is happiness like evolving. We've always we might have said five years
413- ago is that this is taboo. Okay, this made you raise this acceptable, you know, don't let you
414- know shying away from this kind of topic may come up in the class. So I think, yeah, so
415- basically I think orientation like a detail orientation. So when teachers come, they're given like
416- some instruction on current cultural kind of, you know, adaptation to a new kind of thing,
417- especially people coming from the west, I would say, Yeah, you know, and those with the
418- British passport orientation.

Interviewer

419- Should we want like one meeting or maybe a regular meeting? What do you think

E1 Teacher

420- we have a potential program in the DLC as it is? We can develop time discuss knowledge
421- from us.

A1 Teacher

422- Come down. I'm totally different. Why? Because like

E1 Teacher

423- fossilized?

A1 Teacher

424- Yeah. Yeah. Like, we came from a culture. That was when we came to Arabia, like when I,
425- when we first came, everything was good digital immigrants. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, we can just
426- like, into a place that was different. And then they started evolving, but like, our way of
427- evolving wasn't as fast. You know what I mean? So when we came into the place, we tried to
428- learn about the place, okay. And we tried to, let's say, to show the students, our countries, but
429- we were like, very limited. But like, as Muhammad said, we couldn't just like, introduce all our
430- cultures in the complex, because things were like, but now I guess, even countries all over
431- the, like, the globe are similar. Everybody knows about everything. Yeah. So when people
432- come to the place they would know, before they come, and this is happening shortly during
433- the programs would help. Yes,

A3 Teacher

434- something else, you know, I've been thinking about, you know, for example, now, they are
435- preparing the giving us that Middle East version. Okay. When I looked at the International, you
436- know, the international version, I thought, why, why? Why the publisher, for example, you
437- know, doesn't include, you know, topics about our airport. So, for example, the people over
438- there, they don't have, you know, a sound knowledge about our culture and traditions and
439- everything, why do we still get that culture, they don't study that. Our culture is when they
440- come here, and they teach as well. Okay, they come here to suburbia, and they teach, and
441- also they go to where you're at an Arab Emirates, and they teach, so they go to different
442- places in India, and Saudi Arabia. So why not? The publishers, for example, you know, why
443- not? They include, what do they include some topics, you know, about, you know, our Middle
444- East region, and about our, our, our traditions, our habits. Also, they introduce our our
445- environment, our culture, to them to the people over there.

E1 Teacher

446- Yes. And also, this leads to a better understanding and appreciation for

A3 Teacher

447- bringing people together in sometimes we focus on studying the other people. But they don't
448- focus also. And we don't requested upon that people also understand for the international
449- version addition.

Interviewer

450- That's why they have a look of

A3 Teacher

451- something also that we need to consider. And we need to have meetings with the culture with
452- the with the publisher, informing them about this. What Why do you focus on presenting the
453- Western and other people's cultures? And in your international conditions, for example, there

454- isn't too much about us. Yeah.

Interviewer

455- Even if they wanted to teach another language to the Spanish or between language.

A3 Teacher

456- They are still being tackled, for example, to teach the people over there. So they need to be
457- prepared. Not even not here. Not yet. Not until the years just before that is not like a fear okay,
458- it's a two way image.

Interviewer

459- Imagine that. I'm not a Saudi, I'm not Arabic. I'm not from the data, how can like our language
460- is related to our religion?

A1 Teacher

461- Because they're like our claim which is related to Islam, because of the expansion of Islam.
462- They wouldn't. For them, it's like they want let's say, encourage people to learn Arabic. I think
463- we understand how Islam is. So that would encourage more people into understanding Islam.
464- So that's the tea or they have that they wouldn't wouldn't People know about kind of cultures,
465- they would know that we're not all as like bombers and like, you know, like tourists or
466- whatever. So they wouldn't be afraid more of our culture, they would know that we are like
467- normal people look at the movies, they would just like, show our countries as like, countries
468- full of this and everything. And they will be like, very amazed when they see that we have like,
469- better facilities than they do. You know, that guy was making a comparison about how to
470- renew your passport. And England? How long does it take to renew your passport and
471- celebrate? Like, it would take about two weeks to renew your passport. And the UK. Makes
472- only like three minutes to the passport? Was that 10 minute thing, you can get it at home.
473- They don't want their people to know that these people are like, wondering, they have like,
474- more facilities than they do. When I discuss things with my provident take, we have like the
475- internet speed here is like, no one over with me like what you have to download. At home, I
476- have like to manage one to make. Sure. So they don't want their people to know about like the
477- culture of like that approach. Because the damage that they are like, people are like rival
478- horses. And I want to ask like, one of my students before about, he asked you I do like other
479- people. I asked him that. And I told him like, take your time. And one one of the Mexican one
480- time asked his mom, his one told him, of course they have to have that in writing. It was
481- something that indexicality it was like discussing the difference between meanings and you
482- know, in dictionaries and the meanings that people have in mind. So that student came to me,
483- he gave me the paper. And when I looked at it was like, Well, I'm sure he said Yeah, Mom told
484- me that. Because people have tails, they will films. So they don't want their people to know
485- that these people are like more brilliant than they normally are. They have like better culture.
486- The other guy, I have this clip he was discussing things about medicine, and about comes to
487- whatever and he said like the Arab world introduced anesthesia. anesthesia, like, all the
488- places they conquered, and they don't know enough, because like we hit, he wants me to be
489- focused on their security. Yeah. I kind of don't even now, remember the clip that we had, like
490- 10 days ago? MBC. About like mocking Biden. They couldn't even believe it. Even the
491- politicians came out and he said, Well, Saudi Arabian editors mocking us. It was like they got
492- the same thing. Even prints vendor was like, Hey, yo, you've been looking? Let's enjoy it
493- together. You know, that's we have people who could just like, act as you do. Yeah. And it
494- was like for them. It was like, finding a way but some others would be like, Hey, look at the
495- other world and like see him as differently. Biden, you like, you know what I mean? So this is
496- the thing. You don't want their people to know that these people are like more civilized, more
497- facilities, they have better things to go even when we travel out. We go to our companies just
498- think that some people are like, hey, they don't know about like, the technology. Yes, it's like
499- mashallah, he had like things I like more efficiently revolutionized and you could do things in a
500- clinic. You don't know, you don't need to go into queues fill in forms, whatever. It's only like,
501- online. So I guess that it's a very valid point that they need to introduce our culture into their
502- books. Internationally.

E1 Teacher

503- That's the way to fight.

A3 Teacher

504- Of course to reach you know, we need to reach the point where we're where the International
505- Edition and the Middle East just

Interviewer

506- want to send that is acceptable to any final remarks. I think

E1 Teacher

we're successful. There Like for the sake of the one dude?

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264

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