

University of Memphis

University of Memphis Digital Commons

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

2020

**INVESTIGATING TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES TOWARD  
INTEGRATING CULTURE INTO LEARNING AND TEACHING  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Monera Almohawes

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/etd>

---

**Recommended Citation**

Almohawes, Monera, "INVESTIGATING TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES TOWARD INTEGRATING CULTURE INTO LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE" (2020). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 2416.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/etd/2416>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [khggerty@memphis.edu](mailto:khggerty@memphis.edu).

INVESTIGATING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARD INTEGRATING CULTURE  
INTO LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

by

Monera Almohawes

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: English

The University of Memphis

May 2020

Copyright© Monera Salem Almohawes  
All right reserved

## **DEDICATION**

For my lovely mom, Sulmiah Alrubah

My great inspiration

My best friend

My support

My love

Amazing, selfless, best mother ever

For my lovely dad, Salem Almohawes

My strength

My love

Greatest role model

and best father ever

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my wonderful mother for her support, prayers, encouragement, and constant love, and to my wonderful father for his encouragement, love, and prayers. I thank them for their endless love and encouragement. I owe my parents a debt of gratitude for all their support over the years.

My sincere gratitude also goes to my brother Khaled, who was there for me throughout this process and gave me lots of support. I am deeply indebted to him for being there for me. I also would like to thank my sisters for their prayers and support. They always supported me with great encouragement. I always will be grateful to them for their concern and constant support. I also would like to extend my thanks to my other brothers for their prayers and support.

I am especially grateful to my dissertation chair, Professor Emily Thrush, for her precious time, encouragement, and patience throughout the entire process. I also would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Teresa Dalle, Dr. Joseph Jones, and Dr. Angela Thevenot. I appreciate their patience and guidance as I worked through this project.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into language teaching in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the research sought to investigate the reported perceptions and attitudes of English teachers in Saudi Arabia toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The study also examined the relationship between teachers' opinions and their practices, what teachers understand by integrating culture into an EFL context, and the materials and strategies that teachers use in their classrooms related to culture and challenges that they might face. Data were gathered from full-time teachers, and a mixed-methods approach was employed to collect data through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that most teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching. The reasons behind these positive attitudes include, but are not limited to, the fact that culture can help learners improve their language skills, help students become tolerant toward others, and make them understand their own culture. The results showed that teachers include big C culture and little c culture when they refer to culture teaching in foreign language classes. A relationship exists between teachers' opinions and their practices, i.e., teachers try to practice what they believe. The findings imply that teachers try to improve students' intercultural competence by improving learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes by using different strategies and materials. However, teachers in the study faced some challenges when they tried to integrate culture into language teaching, such as insufficient class time and overcrowded classrooms.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter	Page
List of Tables	viii
1. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Significance of the Study	4
Definitions of Terms	5
2. Literature Review	7
What is <i>Culture</i> ?	7
The History of Culture in Language Teaching	9
Culture Models	10
Big “C” and Little “c” culture	12
Cultural Approaches in Language Teaching	13
Challenges in Integrating Culture into Foreign Language Teaching	14
Culture and Foreign Language Teaching	17
Intercultural Communicative Competence	20
Teachers’ Perspectives Regarding Culture in EFL	22
3. Research Methodology	26
Research Design	26
Rationale for Using a Mixed-Methods Approach	27
Participants	29
Instruments	30
Procedure	31
Thematic Analysis	32
Pilot Study	33
Ethical Considerations	33
4. Results	35
Quantitative Results	35
Qualitative Results	47
5. Discussion	64
6. Conclusion	75
Summary of Key Findings	75
Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations	76
Limitations of The Study	78
Recommendations for Future Research	79

References	81
Appendix	87
A. Permission to Adapt Questionnaire	87
B. Questionnaire	88
C. IRB Approval	93
D. Informed Consent Form	94



## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. History of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Garrett-Rucks, 2016)	9
2. Principles of Intercultural Language Learning (Liddicoat et al., 2003)	19
3. Components of Intercultural Competence (Sercu, 2005)	22
4. Participants' Demographic Features	29
5. Culture Teaching vs. Language Teaching Class Time	35
6. How Teachers Perceive the Objectives of Foreign Language Teaching	36
7. How Is Your Teaching Time Distributed Over "Language Teaching" and "Culture Teaching"?	38
8. What Do You Understand "Culture Teaching" to Mean in an EFL Context?	38
9. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Participants' Opinion 1)	39
10. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Participants' Opinion 2)	41
11. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching: Teachers' Practices	43
12. Challenges in Integrating Culture into Language Teaching	44
13. Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Practices and Opinions	45
14. Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Gender and Opinion	46
15. Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Institutions and Opinions.	46

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Second language research has demonstrated that the main goal of second and foreign language teaching is not merely to acquire linguistic or sociolinguistic competence, but also to acquire intercultural competence (Kramsch, 1995). Having intercultural communicative competence refers to being able to communicate in different social and cultural contexts appropriately. Therefore, language teachers should try not only to help learners acquire communicative competence – which is the ability to use L2 in appropriate ways linguistically, socio-linguistically, and pragmatically – but also to help them acquire intercultural communicative competence, as Sercu (2005) has pointed out. To accomplish this goal, we must increase teachers' awareness of the efficacy of integrating culture into language classrooms. Integrating culture into language classrooms improves not only students' intercultural communicative competence, but also their linguistic skills, as many studies have indicated (e.g., Liaw, 2006; Planken et al., 2004; Popsecu & Iordachescu, 2015).

Examining teachers' beliefs and perspectives is very effective in second and foreign language teaching. It can increase their awareness of different issues in L2 teaching and exert a significant effect on improving their actual practices (Borg, 2003). Most extant studies that have examined integrating culture into EFL classes were done by examining students' attitudes. The studies that have examined teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into EFL classes were done in one institution or with a small number of participants, in which the researchers suggested conducting studies with more participants to provide a better understanding of the issue (Al-Amir, 2017; Baltaci & Taniş, 2018; Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017; Gonen & Saglam, 2012).

Thus, this study seeks to investigate teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into language classes in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. It also aims to examine the relationship between teachers' reported attitudes and their practices, along with the main challenges that they might face when they want to integrate culture into EFL. Hopefully, this will increase teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating culture into EFL classrooms and help generate more insight into teachers' beliefs and perspectives toward integrating culture into EFL in the Saudi context.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As Kramsch (1995) has stated, "One of the major ways in which culture manifests itself is through language." Language teachers should realize the importance of integrating culture into their classes to help learners acquire intercultural communicative competence. Learning a language without knowing its culture can result in what Bennett (1997) refers to as a "fluent fool", i.e., someone with linguistic competence in a foreign language, but who does not understand and know how to use this knowledge in culturally appropriate ways.

Several studies have investigated culture's role in EFL settings (e.g., Hua, 2013; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Morganna & Tarjana, 2018). Furthermore, some research has been done to examine teachers' perspectives in teaching foreign language and intercultural communicative competence in language classes (e.g., Al-Amir, 2017; Borg, 2003; Brown, 2009; Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Sercu, 2000), the relationship between teachers' actual practices in culture teaching and their own attitudes and beliefs (e.g., Alptekin, 2002; Hu, 2005; Young & Sachdev, 2011; Sercu, 2005; Zhao, 2011), and textbooks and culture teaching's role in language classrooms ( Aldera, 2017; Al Houssawi, 2010; Gray, 2006).

Language researchers and scholars have studied the relationship between language and culture, indicating that it is deeply rooted (e.g., Kramersch, 2009; Liddicoat, 2015; Sercu, 2005). Language and culture are related to and dependent on each other. The relationship between language teaching and culture is obvious, and culture plays a very important role in language classes. Both teachers and students in language-teaching contexts value culture's role in language learning, but some teachers still do not realize the importance of integrating culture into language education. Therefore, increasing teachers' awareness about that issue is necessary, and this can be done by identifying what they already think about integrating culture into language teaching and what they believe, do, and practice in the classroom (Gonen & Saglam, 2012).

Knowing teachers' beliefs and practices in classrooms on integrating culture into their classes will help increase their awareness by providing effective training programs or improving curricula, textbooks, and/or teaching strategies. According to studies that have investigated the relationship between language and culture teaching, some noticeable differences exist between teachers' beliefs about integrating culture into language classrooms and their actual practices, especially in EFL contexts (Sercu, 2005). Therefore, conducting studies about teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and practices concerning culture's role in learning and teaching EFL will make valuable contributions in the field of applied linguistics, as such research will work toward testing this assumption. Such research also will require many applied-linguistics researchers to be more specific, including researchers of intercultural communicative competence and language and culture integration in foreign language classrooms and training programs, as well as curriculum designers.

### **Purpose of the Study**

It is hoped that this study will contribute positively to the growing body of extant literature on culture's role in learning and teaching EFL. This study will seek to understand teachers' attitudes, perspectives, and practice in terms of culture's role in learning and teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it will examine teachers' awareness of the importance of that role in improving learners' intercultural competence, as well as the challenges that they might face when they want to integrate culture into language teaching.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the reported perceptions and attitudes of English teachers in Saudi Arabia toward culture's role in learning and teaching EFL?
2. What do teachers understand by integrating culture into an EFL context?
3. Is there any relationship between teachers' perspectives and their practices? What materials and strategies do they use in their classrooms related to culture?
4. What challenges might EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia face when they want to integrate culture into foreign language teaching?

### **Significance of the Study**

This research was conducted to investigate teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into language classrooms, and it is hoped that raising their awareness of this issue might lead to intercultural development of teachers' skills and positive improvements in learners' intercultural competence, as well as their linguistic proficiency (Kramsch, 2009). When language teachers realize the positive role that integrating culture plays, they hopefully will implement it in their classes. Investigating teachers' opinions and practice helps identify how they think, believe, and practice, which can help language researchers, administrators, and program managers improve language learning and teaching. Several studies have concluded that

integrating culture into language classrooms has improved learners' language skills and their ability to use language effectively (e.g., Allo, 2018; Planken, Hooft, & Korzilius, 2004; Popsecu & Iordachescu, 2015), while exerting a positive effect on their motivation (e.g., Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013).

### **Definitions of Terms**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language refers to learning English in a non-English-speaking country. For example, students in Saudi Arabia who are learning English are considered EFL students because English is not the country's official language, but if the same students were learning English in the U.S. or U.K., they would be considered ESL students.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language refers to learning English in a country where English is dominantly spoken or where English is the official language. For example, students from non-native English-speaking countries who come to the U.S. and U.K. for an extended period of time learn English as a Second Language. They acquire English as a means to communicate in the dominant language spoken in the community where they reside.

**ICC:** Intercultural communicative competence refers to the ability to understand cultures, including your own, and use this understanding to communicate with people from other cultures successfully.

**L1:** A speaker's first language or mother tongue.

**L2:** A speaker's second language.

**Big "C" culture:** Visible cultural forms, e.g., literature, art, food, holidays, geography, architecture, classical music, political issues, societal norms, legal foundations, core values, and history.

**Little “c” culture:** Invisible cultural forms, e.g., communication styles, lifestyles, verbal and nonverbal communication, behavior, myths, legends, patterns of daily living, perspectives, preferences/tastes, gestures, body posture, and use of space.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

This chapter examines extant literature and research on integrating culture into EFL classrooms, as well as teachers' perspectives. It starts by defining *culture*, then presents the history of culture in language teaching. It then shifts to a brief overview of cultural models, such as those of Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1980), then presents the meaning of big "C" and little "c" culture, the differences between them, and how they work in the field of foreign language teaching. Afterward, it describes the approaches that have been identified with culture teaching in foreign language education and the main challenges and difficulties with integrating culture into foreign language teaching. It then presents five proposed principles that could work as a starting point in integrating culture into language teaching. After that, the focus is narrowed to describe intercultural communicative competence and integrating culture into language classrooms, then presents studies about teachers' perspectives regarding culture in foreign language teaching.

#### **What is *Culture*?**

The word *culture* is derived from the Latin word *colere*, which means to cultivate and originally referred to what has been grown and groomed (Kramsch, 1998). The term *culture* could be defined from different perspectives. Hofstede (1984) defines it as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another." Most scholars define *culture* as learned, transmitted, and shared behavior, as well as any interactive community's human patterns (Useem, Useem & Donoghue, 1963; Damen, 1987; Linton, 1945). These patterns may be inherited, i.e., "passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes," as Parson (1949) has stated, as cited in Holliday (2013).



According to Lederach (1995), culture is “the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them.” Thus, culture comprises the implicit or explicit patterns and knowledge transmitted and acquired by different means and symbols, and these patterns could be rational, irrational, and non-rational, as Kluckhohn and Kelly (1945) have stated. Kramsch (1998) defined *culture* as “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings.”

Although many researchers have tried to define the concept of culture, it is still not easy to define. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as: “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively” or as “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.” In the past, the field of language studies did not focus on culture as defined in the aforementioned *Oxford Dictionary* definitions, but rather as literature, music, and arts of L2 (Clouet, 2006). *The Longman Dictionary* defines *culture* in three main definitions – “in a society,” “in a group,” and “art/music/literature” – i.e., culture could be defined as: (a) “in a society,” the beliefs, ways of life, art, and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society; (b) “in a group,” the attitudes and beliefs about something that is shared by a particular group of people or in a particular organization; or (c) “art/music/literature,” i.e., activities related to art, music, literature, etc. As mentioned above, second language teaching once taught culture using the third *Longman Dictionary* definition; however, most language studies research recently has moved toward a communicative and social approach in cultural and language learning, as Risager (2007) has stated. Thus, the language studies field views culture as it is defined in the first and second *Longman Dictionary* definitions and the second *Oxford Dictionary* definition.

## The History of Culture in Language Teaching

Before the 1960s, almost no relationship existed between culture and language learning. When people studied a language that was not their mother tongue, their goal mostly was to read its literature (Clouet, 2006). Then, in the 1970s, strong emphasis was placed on communication and communicative competence and social interaction in language teaching. This remarkable change from focusing on literature and linguistic competence to more communicative approaches led to a new notion in language teaching that emphasizes culture's role in foreign language teaching (Risager, 2007). In the 1980s, some research examined the relationship between culture and language in terms of integrating culture into foreign language teaching, along with linguistic and sociolinguistic learning. The importance of culture in language teaching increased in the 1990s, and many studies have been conducted to examine that issue, e.g., Byram (1997). Table 1 provides a summary of Garrett-Rucks' (2016) time line of how culture has been taught. Garrett-Rucks showed that in the grammar-translation method, culture's role in foreign language teaching was just for reading literature, as mentioned earlier. Then culture's role in language teaching became more about building vocabulary, which was represented in the audiolingual approach. In the 1970s and 1980s, in the communicative language approach, culture was associated with sociolinguistic competence, and the goal was to communicate successfully to the target culture. According to Garrett-Rucks (2016), culture's role in foreign language teaching becomes important from the 1990s to the present, and it is integrated into language teaching in a much more intercultural way, in which learners understand their own culture and the target culture to develop better language skills.

Table 1

*History of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Garrett-Rucks, 2016)*

---

Period	Trends and Movement	Culture's role in an FL classroom
--------	---------------------	-----------------------------------

---

1950s–1960s	Grammar translation	Cultural knowledge for reading literature
Late 1960s	Audio-lingual movement	Knowledge of culture necessary for building vocabulary
1970s–1980s	Sociolinguistics, communicative competence and proficiency; CLT emerges	Knowledge of culture to avoid communication breakdowns
1990s–present	CLT continues with trends toward teaching for intercultural competence; ICC and literary-based approaches emerge	Context and purpose for authentic language instruction

## Culture Models

Different culture models have made people in the field of applied linguistics realize differences between cultures, helping to create an effective intercultural communicative environment and improve learners' ICC. Culture models mainly are introduced to understand different societies and help bridge the gap between cultures. One of the most famous culture categorizations is Hall's (1976) model of high context and low context cultures. Hall divided cultures based on people's communication styles, so it is a context-based model. In high context cultures, people rely on implicit communication, as they share background knowledge. Verbal communication in high-context cultures is somehow indirect, and its use of nonverbal elements and facial expressions is significant. Low-context cultures rely on direct, explicit communication and rules. Some cultures tend to be high-context, e.g., some Asian and Middle Eastern countries, while others are more low context, such as some Western European countries and the United States. However, it is important to realize that no culture is completely high context or low context. For example, in low-context cultures, high-context communication, such as family conversations, is necessary. Generally speaking, teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia entails teaching a

language with a low-context culture to students who live in a society with a high-context culture. Native speakers of English tend to use direct and explicit communication, whereas native Arabic speakers tend to share background knowledge and use indirect communication.

Hofstede's (1980) proposed new model comprises four dimensions of culture: power distance; uncertainty avoidance; individualism vs. collectivism; and masculinity vs. femininity. Two more dimensions were added later: Long-term vs. short-term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint. Hofstede examined how the culture in a given society affects people's values, beliefs, and behaviors. People with high collectivism and low individualism tend to appreciate and follow group decisions because they have a strong sense of belonging to their society. Conversely, in high individualism cultures, people tend to make their own decisions and appreciate one's goals and desires in a self-oriented society (Hofstede, 2001).

It is important for language teachers to understand the differences between cultures that might affect the learning process. For example, according to Hofstede (1980), in small power distance societies, using power usually is legitimate and is subject to good and bad criteria, but in large power distance societies, older people and parents have the power. As a result, as Hofstede has stated, we find student-centered education in small power distance cultures and teacher-centered education in large power distance cultures. In Saudi Arabia, most classes are teacher-centered, and we can see student-centered education as the main approach to teaching in English-speaking societies such as the U.S.

Hofstede's (1980) uncertainty avoidance dimension studied to what extent cultures make their members feel comfortable in unusual situations, so it works on societies' tolerance for ambiguity. Weak and strong uncertainty avoidance cultures exist, as Hofstede (1980) suggested. In a weak uncertainty avoidance society, people have lower levels of stress and anxiety, and

teachers may say “I do not know.” However, in a strong uncertainty avoidance society, people have higher levels of stress and anxiety, and teachers are supposed to have all the answers. In addition, in individualistic societies, education’s main goal typically is learning how to learn, whereas the goal in collectivistic societies usually is learning how to do (Hofstede,1980). Unlike Western culture, which appreciates individualism, Saudi Arabia’s culture appreciates collectivism, as Havril (2015) has stated. Ultimately, all these dimensions of culture and differences between cultures could affect EFL learners, and they should be taken into consideration when teaching EFL and integrating culture into language education (Yoo, 2014).

### **Big “C” and Little “c” culture**

Big “C” culture comprises visible cultural forms, representing a society’s achievements in literature and the fine arts, political systems, social institutions, history, and geography (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). Thus, when trying to learn a new language, the most obvious cultural elements are referred to as big “C” culture, e.g., literature, art, food, holidays, etc. They are easy for learners to discover. According to Peterson (2004), big “C” culture could include themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, societal norms, legal foundations, core values, history, and cognitive processes. However, little “c” culture refers to communication styles, lifestyles, verbal and nonverbal communication, behaviors, myths, legends, patterns of daily living, etc. (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). In Peterson’s (2004) classification, little “c” culture includes opinions, perspectives, preferences/tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, etc. We could say that “little c” is the invisible cultural type, the kind that is subject to change over time, unlike big “C” culture (Peterson, 2004). It is believed that foreign language learners learn more “little c” than big “C” culture, as Herron et al.

(2000) found in their study when they examined beginner French students and exposed them to a video-based instructional language and culture program.

Brooks (1971, as cited in Garrett-Rucks, 2016) proposed a shift in culture teaching to include little “c” culture in addition to big “C” culture in foreign language teaching. Since the late 1960s, language researchers have found that understanding a target culture’s behaviors, beliefs, and values helps students improve their language proficiency, yielding effective and appropriate communication skills in the target language. The emphasis on cultural understanding in foreign language teaching has continued to increase over time (Garrett-Rucks, 2016).

### **Cultural Approaches in Language Teaching**

Four major models have been identified with culture teaching in foreign language classrooms, as presented by Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, and Kohler (2003). These four approaches represent different views on integrating culture into language teaching. Foreign language teachers should know them to integrate culture into language classrooms appropriately and improve learners’ intercultural communicative competence. It is recommended that language teachers avoid using traditional models and instead use the “culture as practices” model (below), which would help increase learners’ intercultural skills, as well as their linguistic and other social communicative skills. Liddicoat et al. (2003) explained these four models and defined them as follows:

#### 1) The traditional approach to teaching - high culture

In modern language teaching, this paradigm is viewed as the most traditional one. It is used mostly in teaching high culture, especially literature. In this approach, learners’ cultural competence refers to their knowledge of target language literature. In addition, in this approach,

the language and culture teaching goal is not to teach how to communicate in social contexts appropriately, as language and culture are studied by using texts, not authentic social contexts.

2) The “area studies” approach

In this approach, culture teaching in language classrooms means teaching its history and geography. Therefore, the target language country’s body knowledge is considered the intended cultural competence. According to this paradigm, area knowledge plays an important role in understanding language and society. In this view, language learners study the culture of the target language from an external perspective. Thus, language’s essential role in this paradigm is to name places, events, people, and institutions, as Liddicoat et al. (2003) have stated.

3) The “culture as societal norms” approach

To have cultural competence in this approach is to know the target language’s practices and values. It was popular in the 1980s, when language learners were asked to understand and know target language speakers’ cultural beliefs and values. In this paradigm, that view of cultural competence is not effective for language learning, as language learners are just observing and knowing target culture values without relating them to their own culture or understanding the differences and similarities between them.

4) The “culture as practices” approach

Cultural competence in this paradigm refers to the ability to interact appropriately in the target culture. In this approach, language learners should understand both their own culture and target culture’s values and practices. This will improve their intercultural communicative skills, as language is integrated successfully in the social and cultural context.

### **Challenges in Integrating Culture into Foreign Language Teaching**

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of integrating culture into foreign language teaching, proposing many models and techniques and suggesting that various advantages come with such integration. However, it is difficult to find this approach implemented in foreign language classrooms (Byram, Holmes, & Savvides, 2013; Byram, 1997; Sercu, 2006). According to language and culture studies, teachers face many problems and challenges when they want to integrate culture into foreign language classrooms, one of which is lack of class time and overcrowded classes, in which teachers cannot find time to teach both textbook content and discuss cultural issues. Although a need exists for much more culturally oriented instruction in EFL settings, as Al-Amir (2017) suggested, considering that EFL learners are not exposed to the target culture, teachers sometimes find it hard to integrate culture into language classrooms, as many aforementioned factors affect language learning in EFL, such as overcrowded classrooms, textbook content, and classroom atmosphere, which Khouya (2018) found in his recent study. Overcrowded curricula are a serious problem for foreign language teachers when they want to integrate culture into language, as Gonen and Saglam (2012) have stated. Therefore, teachers tend to focus on grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing skills, and forgo teaching cultural content. Baltaci and Taniş (2018) investigated teachers' perceptions of integrating culture into language teaching and the challenges that they faced. In this study, the participants comprised 40 Turkish pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. The researchers reported that both groups of teachers found that a lack of time due to course curriculum restrictions is the main challenge that they faced when they wanted to integrate culture into language classes.

Furthermore, teachers' lack of understanding as to the actual meaning of integrating culture into language classes is another challenge in the integration process. Some EFL teachers



think that teaching target culture means teaching its values and practice without paying attention to the notion of how to use them appropriately in cultural and social contexts. Sercu (2005) argued that teachers' knowledge of intercultural competence is very important in implementing it appropriately in language classrooms. Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017), in their mixed-methods research, examined 18 native and nonnative EFL teachers' perceptions and concluded that teachers had a general, but not firm, grasp of language and culture integration, which was a big obstacle in integrating culture into their classes successfully. Therefore, the researchers argued that teachers' education programs should be revised to include much more intercultural communicative content to help teachers understand intercultural teaching and implement it in a professional way.

A third challenge that teachers might face is not knowing when to teach culture during the language learning process. Some EFL teachers think that learners should acquire linguistic competence first, then move on to intercultural competence, and do not realize that culture can be integrated into language teaching. Kramsch (1995) argued that the main goal of foreign language teaching is to achieve intercultural competence, which includes both linguistic and communicative competence. Furthermore, learners cannot be intercultural speakers, who know how to use the language appropriately in different cultural contexts, in classes in which culture is separated from language teaching. Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017) argued that a lack of a systematic assessment in language and culture integration is a very challenging factor for teachers. They argued that the assessment methods do not appear to be reliable, as they are subject to opinions, making it very difficult for teachers to integrate culture effectively. The researchers suggested that teachers use different instruments to help them evaluate their learners effectively, such as portfolios and problem-solving tasks. However, these would add much more

work to teaching tasks and make integrating culture into language classes a challenge for these teachers, as the researchers have stated.

### **Culture and Foreign Language Teaching**

Liddicoat et al. (2003) proposed five principles that function as a starting point in integrating culture into language teaching, as shown in Table 2: active construction; making connections; social interaction; reflection; and responsibility. They explained how important these principles are and explained how each principle can be enacted by teachers and students in language classrooms. For example, in the first principle, teachers should encourage noticing and interaction between learners. For the second principle, language teachers should encourage learners to compare cultures and languages. In the third principle, language teachers should promote discussion, thinking, and arguments to improve learners' social skills. For the fourth principle, teachers should encourage and promote reflection on different linguistic and cultural concepts. With responsibility, the final principle, teachers should help learners generate personal goals and encourage self-monitoring and assessment. Liddicoat et al. (2003) elaborated and presented many examples of how both students and teachers could enact each principle in classrooms. These principles could work as a theoretical background and a stable framework for language teachers when they want to integrate culture into their classrooms successfully.

Many researchers in language teaching have emphasized the importance of integrating culture into foreign language teaching (e.g., Baltaci & Taniş, 2018; Hua, 2013; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Mao, 2009). They emphasized that it provides language learners with different skills and knowledge that help them use language appropriately. Integrating culture effectively into language classrooms will improve learners' intercultural communicative competence, which in many cases also helps improve learners' linguistic

competence, as many studies have concluded (e.g., Allo, 2018; Furstenberg, 2010; Kourova & Modianos, 2013; Planken, Hooft, & Korilius, 2004; Popsecu & Iordachescu, 2015). Other studies have focused on learners' perspectives toward integrating culture into language classrooms, e.g., Abbasian, Kouhpayehzadeh, and Asgharpour (2015) and Doganay and Yergaliyeva (2013).

Planken et al. (2004) studied how foreign language courses can be contextualized to promote intercultural learning. They found that EFL learners in culture-integrated classrooms learn a wide range of business vocabulary, as well as better oral and written communication skills in new genres. Likewise, Mao (2009), in his study, examined factors that influence cultural teaching in foreign language classes. He concluded that integrating culture into EFL classes achieves a deeper understanding of the language. Studying the same issue, Popsecu and Iordachescu (2015), in their intercultural experimental study, found that students are willing to learn more about different cultures, and that their linguistic knowledge improved significantly while integrating culture into language learning. They also reported that both learners and teachers were ready to understand several intercultural aspects of other cultures. Ho's (2009) study concluded that cultural components in EFL textbooks help learners raise their cultural awareness and engage them cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively in language and culture learning.

Allo (2018), in his recent quantitative study, reported that learners need new cultural knowledge in EFL classes, and students suggested that teachers should create intercultural environments and encourage effective intercultural dialogue in EFL classrooms to end up with what the author refers to as pedagogical, personal developmental, peaceful, economic, demographic, and ethical imperatives of intercultural communication. In addition, Abbasian et al. (2015) investigated learners' attitudes toward integrating a target culture in a language

classroom. They found that EFL learners consider culture to be an important element in learning the target language, and that integrating target culture is very effective in learning the language. Similarly, Doganay and Yergaliyeva (2013) examined learners' attitudes and perceptions toward integrating target culture in language classrooms. They concluded that learners believe that this approach has helped improve their linguistic skills and communicative competence. All these studies have revealed how important it is to integrate culture into language education and to include cultural elements in language classes, which cannot happen if we do not have teachers who realize such importance. Thus, examining teachers' beliefs and perspectives can give us insight onto their opinions, which would help raise their awareness about integrating culture into the language classroom and improving learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Table 2  
*Principles of Intercultural Language Learning (Liddicoat et al., 2003)*

General principles	Application in language learning
1. Active construction  Learning involves the purposeful and active construction of knowledge within a sociocultural context of use.	Exploring language and culture through active engagement; developing a personal intercultural space with multiple dimensions
2. Making a connection  Learning is based on previous knowledge and requires challenges to initial conceptions that learners bring with them.	Comparing languages and cultures, and drawing connections and building relevant bridges between home and target language and culture
3. Social connection  Learning in social and interactive contexts	Communicating across linguistic and cultural boundaries and recognizing them as boundaries and why they are constructed
4. Reflection  Learning involves becoming aware of the processes that underlie thinking, knowing, and learning through conscious awareness and reflection.	Reflecting critically and constructively on linguistic and cultural differences and similarities

5. Responsibility	Accepting responsibility for contributing to successful communication across languages and cultures
Learning depends on learners' attitudes and disposition toward learning.	

## Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate with people using language appropriately and effectively. The concept of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) emphasizes the goal of teaching language by integrating culture into language studies. It refers to the ability to understand one's own culture and a foreign language and culture, and to use that understanding to communicate effectively (Kramsch, 1993). According to Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), ICC means being able to understand other people's social identities and interact with them, as they have multiple identities in society and as individuals. Many models for intercultural competence and for integrating culture into language classrooms exist (e.g., Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). These models show how to develop learners' ICC and assess it. The models work as a framework for teachers and have helped them greatly in integrating culture into language teaching. Even though ICC models are very effective in language and cultural teaching, and help improve learners' skills and intercultural competence, it is very important not only to implement the models, but also to change teaching methodologies, as Tran and Duong (2018) suggested in their recent study, in which they examined a model for integrating culture into language teaching in the Vietnamese context. The model they applied in their study helped improve learners' intercultural competence, but the researchers argued that teachers should change their traditional teaching methods into intercultural teaching methods.

Byram (1997) explained the meaning of *intercultural competence* and organized it into a model of five main factors: skills to interpret and relate; knowledge of self and others in

interactions with individuals or society; political education and critical cultural awareness; attitudes relativizing self and valuing others; and skills to discover and interact. Byram's (1997) intercultural competence model is one of the most famous models in this field. In his more recent work, Byram (2012) is still using the same factors, but no longer mentions political education – merely referring to it as a critical cultural awareness factor.

Deardorff's (2009) model of intercultural competence is a research-based framework comprising attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes. The author explained *attitudes* in terms of openness, respect, curiosity, and discovery, which refer to the ability to take risks and move beyond the comfort zone. *Knowledge* refers to cultural self-awareness and knowledge of other views and sociolinguistic awareness, as she pointed out. By *skills*, she meant those that are used to process knowledge, e.g., evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, observing, listening, and relating. According to Deardorff (2009), these three components – attitudes, knowledge, and skills – lead to internal outcomes with a unique perspective and empathy. In addition, they lead to external visible outcomes, which are evident through communication and behavior.

Sercu (2005) identified three essential components of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching that are presented in most models: knowledge; skills/behavior; and attitudes/traits. She presented the meaning of each component, as shown in Table 3, one of which is to understand culture-specific and general knowledge, and how to interact and communicate successfully. Foreign language learners need to acquire as many of these components as possible to attain a solid level of intercultural competence. Ultimately, language learners need to be equipped with such knowledge, skills, and features to be able to engage in the foreign culture and

achieve better intercultural communicative competence. This will help them communicate with other people effectively, easily, and meaningfully.

Table 3  
*Components of Intercultural Competence (Sercu, 2005)*

Knowledge	Skills/behavior	Attitudes/traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture-specific and culture-general knowledge</li> <li>• Knowledge of self and others</li> <li>• Knowledge of interactions: individual and societal</li> <li>• Insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to interpret and relate</li> <li>• Ability to discover and/or interact</li> <li>• Ability to acquire new knowledge and operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction</li> <li>• Metacognitive strategies to direct one's own learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes to relativize self and value others</li> <li>• Positive disposition toward learning intercultural competence</li> <li>• General disposition characterized by critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own culture.</li> </ul>

### Teachers' Perspectives Regarding Culture in EFL

Growing evidence indicates that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are very critical in language teaching and learning. Some researchers (e.g., Borg, 2003) have emphasized the importance of investigating what teachers know, think, and believe, which, in one way or another, influences their practices in classrooms. Extant research has investigated EFL teachers' perspectives regarding integrating culture into language classrooms (e.g., Baltaci & Taniş, 2018; Cheewasukthaworn & Suwanarak, 2017; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Karbinar & Guler, 2012; Yeganeh & Raeesi, 2015). Furthermore, some studies have been done in the Saudi EFL context, e.g., Al-Amir (2017).

One of the first studies that investigated EFL teachers' perspectives toward language and culture teaching is Sercu (2005). In her large empirical quantitative and comparative study, Sercu (2005) examined teachers' perspectives toward culture and foreign language teaching in seven countries: Belgium; Bulgaria; Poland; Mexico; Greece; Spain; and Sweden. The participants

comprised 420 teachers, and the researcher concluded that teachers could be divided into two groups in terms of their perspectives toward integrating culture into foreign language teaching. The first group comprises teachers who are not in favor of integrating culture into language teaching, and the second group comprises those who are in favor. The first group thinks that it is impossible to integrate culture into language teaching and that intercultural skills are acquired outside of schools. The researcher concluded that they did not agree that intercultural competence elicits positive effects on learners' attitudes toward foreign languages. However, the second group of teachers believed in the importance of integrating culture into language teaching and that culture teaching is as important as teaching language. The participants in this group agreed that students become more tolerant when they are exposed to intercultural teaching. To sum up, Sercu (2005) showed that no general agreement exists between teachers on culture's role in foreign language teaching.

Baltacı and Taniş (2018), in their recent study, investigated the perceptions of 20 pre-service and 20 in-service Turkish teachers working in a private university as English instructors. The researchers concluded that both groups of teachers believe in the importance of integrating culture into EFL and that it helped learners respect not just English culture, but also all other cultures. Language teachers in this study emphasized and realized the importance of EFL teachers' role in helping students gain intercultural communicative competence. Similarly, Karbınar and Guler (2012) studied teachers' perspectives toward culture teaching in a Turkish EFL context. The participants came from different backgrounds and teach at universities. The researchers reported that different groups of teachers (i.e., native and nonnative English-speaking teachers working at either state or private universities) emphasized the positive influence of integrating culture into language classrooms. This study also emphasized the importance of



training courses for EFL teachers to improve their awareness of the importance of integrating culture into their classrooms. The researchers concluded that the more training courses teachers took, the more positive their attitudes toward integrating culture.

Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017) examined teachers' perceptions and the role of integrating culture into language classes, as well as its effects on students. They examined 18 EFL teachers' perceptions in a Thai context. The study took place at an institution for undergraduate students and concluded that EFL teachers perceived that integrating culture into language teaching is a very important element in teaching language, but they did not believe that it helps learners with communication. Likewise, Al-Amir (2017) investigated teachers' perceptions toward integrating culture into language classrooms in a Saudi context at one public university, using a sample comprising 25 female teachers. The results showed that teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching. The participants believe that such integration improves learners' cultural competence and linguistic skills. Cheng's (2012) qualitative study with five EFL teachers in Taiwan investigated EFL teachers' self-reported practices and understanding of culture teaching in foreign language education. The researcher used semi-structured interviews as an instrument, i.e., five interviews lasting an average of two hours each. The results revealed that EFL teachers in the study have only surface and limited understanding of integrating culture into foreign language teaching. They believe that intercultural competence can be developed when one lives in a culturally diverse society. The researcher suggested that most EFL teachers are not ready to practice what they really believe in their classrooms in terms of integrating culture into language teaching, which is the same conclusion that Sercu (2005) reached. One of the pedagogical implications in Cheng's (2012) study was emphasizing the importance of cultural self-awareness in EFL, i.e., teachers should

understand both cultures – their own and that of the target culture. As seen above, many different views exist regarding the efficacy of integrating culture into language classes. Thus, investigating EFL teachers' perspectives, attitudes, and beliefs on integrating culture and intercultural communicative competence is a critical issue in language studies. This kind of research would increase teachers' awareness of integrating culture into language studies and provide data for different organizations that could offer exchange or training programs and curricula, or any improvement suggestions.

## Chapter 3

### Research Methodology

In this chapter, I present the methods that have been used to conduct the research study and the rationale for using them. This chapter describes study participants, instruments, and procedures used in the present study, including data collection and analysis. It also explains the pilot study that I conducted before the actual study, as well as some ethical considerations.

#### Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study to examine teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the research aimed to investigate the following:

1. The reported perceptions and attitudes of English teachers in Saudi Arabia toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language
2. Teachers' understanding of integrating culture into an EFL context
3. The relationship between teachers' perspectives and practices
4. The materials and strategies that teachers use in their classrooms related to culture
5. The challenges that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia might face when they want to integrate culture into foreign language teaching

By using a mixed-methods approach, I tried to provide a complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem by using both deductive and inductive reasoning. Such an approach also helps reduce any personal biases. A questionnaire was used to investigate teachers' perspectives and attitudes, along with a follow-up semi-structured interview. Since my research investigated teachers' perspectives and attitudes, a questionnaire is very effective, as Brown (2001) pointed out, stating that Likert-scale questions are very effective in investigating

participants' opinions, attitudes, and views in language studies. A semi-structured interview is used to provide reliable qualitative data and can help in gathering detailed information about my research questions. According to Mackey and Gass (2015), interviewing is a very effective technique in second language research for eliciting additional data on phenomena that cannot be observed directly, such as attitudes and perceptions, which are the present study's primary concerns.

### **Rationale for Using a Mixed-Methods Approach**

In this research study, I incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data, i.e., a mixed-methods approach, which is defined by Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) as “research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry.” Qualitative and quantitative data are combined at all stages of this study, including data collection, data analysis, research results, findings, discussion, and interpretation. I believe that this helped me end up with highly reliable and valid results. Qualitative data enriches quantitative data, and it helped me verify and validate the findings to improve the study's reliability.

By using mixed methods, I benefitted from both qualitative and quantitative approaches' strengths (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In addition, using two approaches helped me deeply understand teachers' perspectives and attitudes toward integrating language and culture in language teaching and the challenges they might face. These two approaches worked to support each other and yield valuable results. This point is strongly supported by Trochim (2006), who has stated: “In fact, in almost every applied social research project, I believe there is value in consciously combining both qualitative and quantitative methods in what is referred to as a

‘mixed methods’ approach.” Using such an approach is very helpful in investigating teachers’ perspectives and beliefs because using different data sources in language studies can provide a richer understanding of the issue, as Mackey and Gass (2015) have pointed out in explaining qualitative and quantitative methods: “Using both approaches competently and responsibly gives the best of all possible worlds when attempting to draw conclusions from data.” Bryman (2006) mentioned various reasons behind using mixed methods in research studies. I used Bryman’s (2006) rationale in my study to explain why I used a mixed-methods approach. The following are some elements of Bryman’s (2006) rationale:

a. “Triangulation, or greater validity, refers to the traditional view that quantitative and qualitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated.” One of the reasons why I chose a mixed-methods approach to study teachers’ perspectives on integrating culture into language teaching was to ensure greater validity. As mentioned before, quantitative data provide statistical data and qualitative data provide contextual data and insight into teachers’ perspectives, which help provide a fuller understanding of the issue through valid results.

b. “Offset refers to the suggestion that the research methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research have their own strengths and weaknesses so that combining them allows the researcher to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both.” In the present study, quantitative data could not provide me with a full understanding of the challenges that teachers might face when they want to integrate culture into language classes, which is a weakness that qualitative data were used to overcome. At the same time, qualitative data could not provide me with a large-enough sample to produce generalizable results, but quantitative data can do so.

- c. “Different research questions are the argument that quantitative and qualitative research can each answer different research questions.” In this study, quantitative and qualitative data worked together to answer the research questions and support each other to ensure reliability and validity. However qualitative data were used to answer the second part of the second research question: What materials and strategies do they use in their classrooms related to culture?
- d. “Unexpected results refers to the suggestion that quantitative and qualitative research can be fruitfully combined when one generates surprising results that can be understood by employing the other.” In this research, I used qualitative data to check and validate quantitative data, and whenever I found unexpected results in the questionnaire, I asked the participants in the interviews to double-check, validate, and fully understand the issue.
- e. “Credibility refers to suggestions that employing both approaches enhances the integrity of findings.” As mentioned before, one of the main reasons why I chose a mixed-methods approach for this study was to ensure the results’ credibility. I also wanted to ensure that the findings were well-developed and comprehensive.

### **Participants**

The sample group for the research comprised 225 teachers teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia with various levels of teaching experience and different age ranges. These teachers included males and females in different schools and universities (public and private). All participants were full-time teachers who had completed at least a bachelor’s degree in English language. Table 4 provides participants’ demographic information.

Table 4

#### *Participants’ Demographic Features*

Teaching experience (years)	Frequency	Percentage
0-2	18	8.0

3-5	27	12.0
6-10	55	24.4
11-15	49	21.8
16-20	39	17.3
21-25	23	10.2
26 or more	14	6.2
Total	225	100.0
<hr/>		
Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	116	51.6
Male	109	48.4
Total	225	100.0
<hr/>		
Institution		
	Frequency	Percent
School	124	55.1
University	101	44.9
Total	225	100.0
<hr/>		
Institution type		
	Frequency	Percent
Public	144	64.0
Private	81	36.0
Total	225	100.0
<hr/>		

## **Instruments**

### ***Questionnaire***

A Likert scale questionnaire was utilized in this study to investigate teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire was adapted from Sercu (2005) after obtaining permission (see Appendix A) and comprises four main parts (see Appendix B). The first section focuses on how teachers generally perceive the objectives of foreign language teaching. The second section concerns how teachers understand cultural teaching and integrating culture into foreign language teaching. The third part focuses on teachers' opinions about integrating culture into foreign language teaching. The last section asks teachers about their actual practices in classrooms. It seeks to find out whether language teachers practice what they believe and what

problems and challenges they might face when they want to integrate culture into foreign language teaching.

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

After completing the questionnaire, 15 randomly selected volunteer teachers participated in semi-structured interviews, which helped gather more detailed information and allowed participants to express their own thoughts and feelings through their own voices, as Berg (2007) notes about the method. The teachers were asked whether it is important to integrate culture into foreign language teaching and why they support or do not support such a practice. They also were asked about their understanding of integrating culture into language teaching. They then were asked to specify the challenges they faced in integrating culture into foreign language teaching in Saudi Arabia. Finally, the teachers were asked about their experiences using textbooks and other class materials when they integrate culture into foreign language teaching.

## **Procedure**

### ***Data collection***

The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and posted online for teachers. The researcher sent the link to teachers and encouraged them to participate in the study by telling them that it is completely optional. They were asked to volunteer for an interview. The interviews were audio-recorded, and the teachers were encouraged to speak freely about their thoughts and provide any suggestions that could help generate more accurate inferences and implications. The goal was to elicit their perceptions and investigate the challenges they face and materials or strategies they use in the classroom. The semi-structured interviews averaged between 5 and 10 minutes each for each participant.

### ***Data analysis***



Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. The researcher numerically coded the items and participants, with numerical values for each scale: strongly agree, 5; agree, 4; neutral, 3; disagree, 2; strongly disagree, 1. Means, percentages, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS and are included in the findings and discussion sections. Descriptive statistics and percentages were used to present teachers' reported opinions and practices. Chi-square testing was used to determine the correlation between participants' genders and their reported beliefs about integrating culture into foreign language teaching, as well as determine the correlation between participants' institution type (i.e., school or university) and reported beliefs about integrating culture into EFL. In addition, an SPSS chi-square test was employed to compare and find the correlation between teachers' reported perspectives and beliefs about integrating culture into EFL and their actual practices. For qualitative analysis, the interviews were transcribed, then thematic analysis was used to code and discuss the interviews' results, which helped validate the questionnaire's results, enrich the discussion, and lead to new ideas and insights about integrating culture into foreign language teaching to help facilitate language learning and acquisition.

### **Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data, i.e., the semi-structured interview data. Since thematic analysis offers flexible research tools with rich and detailed data, can help generate unanticipated insights and highlight similarities and differences across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and is based on intuitive analysis (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), I used it to analyze my data. This helped me understand teachers' thoughts and ideas on various issues, such as the difficulties that they faced; challenges, motivations, and strategies they used; and their perspectives on culture and language integration in English classes in Saudi Arabia.

Taking research questions into consideration, the thematic analysis in this research followed the six steps that Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended as a guide when doing thematic analysis:

1. Familiarize yourself with your data, i.e., through data transcription and taking notes
2. Generate initial codes, i.e., write codes and collect data for each code.
3. Search for themes, i.e., classify codes into themes.
4. Review themes, which mainly refers to checking the correlation between different themes and the entire data set.
5. Define and name themes, i.e., generate names for all themes.
6. Produce the report, i.e., select extracts and analyze them.

### **Pilot study**

I conducted a pilot study before collecting the present study's actual data. The pilot study's goal was to check the study methodology's validity and reliability, and reduce the number of unanticipated problems. It also was used to detect any problems in the measuring instruments. The pilot study was conducted on 22 English teachers in Saudi Arabia. They completed the questionnaire and were asked whether they had any suggestions or if they found any problems in the questions. After completing the questionnaire, three of the 22 were interviewed to test the interview questions' reliability and determine how much time the interview process would take. The collected pilot study data also were used to check the data analysis process. After finishing the pilot study, I changed or deleted some questionnaire questions and added interview questions.

### **Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations were addressed in Institutional Research Board (IRB) applications submitted to the University of Memphis IRB. My study's IRB approval is attached (see Appendix C). All participants' information and privacy are highly respected, and all information that they provided was used only for purposes of the research study. The participants were told in the informed-consent forms (see Appendix D) that the study was anonymous and that no one could access their information, including the researcher. To ensure information security, all data were kept in a Google drive personal account with a very strong password. The researcher also enabled the laptop passcode and firewalls. All questionnaire and interview records were kept in a digital file, which I destroyed after the study was completed. The participants were told that no records would be kept after the results were written in this dissertation.

To ensure confidentiality, the participants were told that the researcher would not report individual data, but instead report aggregate findings by combining all the participants' information. Thus, any participant could be assured that he or she would not be identified personally in any way. All the records and transcripts of the interviews were kept in a very secure device until they were moved to a digital file, as mentioned above. Since some of the participants preferred not to record their interviews, the researcher just listened to their ideas, contributions, and suggestions regarding the research study. They then were replaced by new participants who agreed to be recorded during the interviews. The researcher explained to the participants that no one, not even the researcher, would know that the information they provide came from them, which also is stated in the informed-consent form.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Quantitative Results

The questionnaire was used to ask questions that elicited teachers' perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching. They were asked whether they wanted to devote more time to culture teaching during their EFL classes. They also estimated the average distribution of teaching time devoted to "language teaching" and "culture teaching" in their classes. The questionnaire primarily was used to elicit teachers' opinions regarding culture in foreign language teaching, their practices, how they generally perceive foreign language teaching objectives, and their understanding of "culture teaching" in a foreign language teaching context. The questionnaire was divided into four sections based on these four categories that I mentioned above. In the Likert scale, weights are assigned as 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). Table 5 shows the frequencies and percentages of teachers' responses regarding their willingness to devote more time for culture in language teaching. The responses show that most participants (71.6%) would like to devote more time to integrating culture into language teaching. Some participants (24.4%) agreed to spend time in integrating culture up to a certain extent, and about 4% of teachers expressed disagreement.

Table 5  
*Culture Teaching vs. Language Teaching Class Time*

Would you like to devote more time to integrating culture into your language classes?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, very much so	161	71.6
Yes, up to a certain extent	55	24.4
No, not particularly	8	3.6
No, not at all	1	0.4
Total	225	100.0

To get a better understanding of how teachers perceive foreign language teaching objectives, they completed a section in the questionnaire that presented general statements about language teaching goals, with some focusing on culture in language teaching. To gain a better understanding of participants' perspectives, I combined *strongly agree* and *agree* to obtain agreement, and *strongly disagree* and *disagree* to obtain disagreement. Most participants (97.4%) reported that one of the objectives of foreign language teaching is to promote the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition toward unfamiliar cultures, and no one disagreed, as shown in Table 6. The majority of participants (84%) confirmed that language proficiency will allow students to read literary works in the target language, and about 11.6 % disagreed and 3.6% were undecided. Participants also viewed helping students develop a better understanding of the target culture and helping them respect other cultures and appreciate diversity as objectives in foreign language teaching, with percentages of 96.9% and 99.2%, respectively. Most teachers responded positively in the questionnaire regarding objectives related to culture in language teaching, but some participants (16%) were unaware that language teaching can help develop a better understanding of students' own identity and culture, with almost 3.6% undecided.

Table 6  
*How Teachers Perceive the Objectives of Foreign Language Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Generate students' enthusiasm for learning foreign languages	176 (78.2)	49 (21.8)	0	0	0
Help my students acquire proficiency in the FL that will allow them to read literary works in the FL	50 (22.2)	141 (62.7)	8 (3.6)	26 (11.6)	0

Promote the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition toward unfamiliar cultures	64 (28.5)	155 (68.9)	6 (2.7)	0	0
Help my students develop a better understanding of their own identity and culture.	89 (35.9)	92 (40.9)	8 (3.6)	36 (16)	0
Help my students develop a better understanding of the target culture	73 (32.4)	145 (64.5)	7 (3.1)	0	0
Help my students respect other cultures and appreciate diversity	114 (50.7)	109 (48.5)	2 (0.8)	0	0

Since most teachers have positive attitudes toward culture in language-learning objectives, it is not surprising that over half the participants (53.8%) reported that they divided teaching time at 80% language teaching/20% culture teaching, with 31.6% spending 40% of class time in culture teaching, as shown in Table 7. Table 8 presents results from eight items in the questionnaire that asked participants about their understanding of the meaning of *culture* in language teaching. The means of the first two items, “provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture” and “provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions: literature; music; theatre; movies; etc.,” are 4.41 ( $SD = 0.99$ ) and 4.66 ( $SD = 0.70$ ), respectively, indicating that participants agreed that big C culture is included when they refer to culture teaching in foreign language classes. About 88.4% of participants agreed that integrating culture can mean to provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture, Item 1. Most participants (95.6%) reported that culture teaching means providing experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions: literature; music; theatre; movies, Item 2 in Table 8. They also believed that small c culture is included when referring to culture teaching in EFL, as is shown in the mean of Item 3, “provide

information about daily life and routines” ( $M = 4.46, SD = 0.87$ ), and Item 4, “provide information about shared values and beliefs” ( $M = 4.69, SD = 0.71$ ). The majority of participants (91.5%) agreed that teaching culture means providing information about daily life and routines, Item 3, and most of them (96%) reported that culture teaching in language classes can mean providing information about shared values and beliefs, as shown in Item 4. Table 8. The other four items had high means, indicating that participants agreed that *culture teaching* means to “develop attitudes of openness and tolerance toward other people and cultures” ( $M = 4.66, SD = 0.73$ ), “promote reflection on cultural differences” ( $M = 4.73, SD = 0.53$ ), “promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures” ( $M = 3.98, SD = 1.32$ ), and “promote increased understanding of students' own culture” ( $M = 4.40, SD = 0.97$ ). The lowest mean was ( $M = 3.98, SD = 1.32$ ) for Item 7, “promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures.”

Table 7  
*How Is Your Teaching Time Distributed Over “Language Teaching” and “Culture Teaching”?*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	100% language teaching/0% culture teaching	10	4.4
	80% language teaching/20% culture teaching	121	53.8
	60% language teaching/40% culture teaching	71	31.6
	40% language teaching/60% culture teaching	9	4.0
	20% language teaching/80% culture teaching	14	6.2
	Total	225	100.0

Table 8  
*What Do You Understand “Culture Teaching” to Mean in an EFL Context?*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	M	SD	Total (%)
	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)	Count (%)			
1	144 (64.0)	55 (24.4)	4 (1.8)	18 (8.0)	4 (1.8)	4.41	0.99	225 (100)
2	168 (74.7)	47 (20.9)	3 (1.3)	5 (2.2)	2 (0.9)	4.66	0.70	225 (100)
3	140 (62.2)	66 (29.3)	6 (2.7)	9 (4.0)	4 (1.8)	4.46	0.87	225 (100)
4	174 (77.3)	42 (18.7)	2 (0.9)	4 (1.8)	3 (1.3)	4.69	0.71	225 (100)
5	168 (74.7)	49 (21.8)	1 (0.4)	3 (1.3)	4 (1.8)	4.66	0.73	225 (100)
6	172 (76.4)	48 (21.3)	3 (1.3)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	4.73	0.53	225 (100)
7	121 (53.8)	42 (18.7)	8 (3.6)	45 (20.0)	9 (4.0)	3.98	1.32	225 (100)

8    141(62.7)    58 (25.8)    3 (1.3)    21 (9.3)    2 (0.9)    4.40 0.97    225 (100)

---

Table 9 provides descriptive statistics for the first five items that examine participants' opinions about integrating culture into language classrooms. Whereas the fifth item, "before you can teach culture, students must possess sufficient proficiency in the foreign language" ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ), has the lowest mean, the third item, "It is very important to promote students' culture and target culture" ( $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ), has the highest mean, in which almost all participants (99%) agreed and just 0.9% disagreed. This item suggests that participants believed in the importance of intercultural communicative competence, in which learners should understand both their own culture and the target culture. About 84.5% of the participants agreed that culture teaching is as important as language teaching, whereas 0.8% were undecided and 14.7% disagreed. Most participant (87.6%) agreed that it is very important to integrate culture in language classroom, about 11% disagreed and 1.4% were undecided. In addition, 91.6% of participants agreed that understanding the target culture will help use the language appropriacy, whereas 5.8% expressed disagreement and 2.7% were undecided. In fact, the means for all items are high ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ;  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ;  $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ;  $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ;  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ), indicating that participants overall believe that culture teaching is important in the language classroom.

Table 9  
*Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Participants' Opinion 1)*

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	M	SD
Culture teaching is as important as teaching language.	139 (61.8)	51 (22.7)	2 (0.8)	27 (12)	6 (2.7)	4.29	1.12



It is very important to integrate culture in the language classroom.	134 (59.6)	63 (28)	3 (1.4)	21 (9.3)	4 (1.8)	4.34	1.01
It is very important to promote students' culture and target culture.	171 (76)	52 (23.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	4.74	0.49
Understanding the target culture will help use the language appropriately.	137 (60.9)	69 (30.7)	6 (2.7)	8 (3.6)	5 (2.2)	4.44	0.88
Before you can teach culture, students must possess sufficient proficiency in the foreign language.	67 (29.8)	71 (31.6)	2 (0.8)	56 (24.9)	29 (12.9)	3.40	1.45

As can be seen in Table 10, most of the participants ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) agreed that “foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.” To gain a better understanding of participants' perspectives, I combined *strongly agree* and *agree* to obtain agreement, and *strongly disagree* and *disagree* to obtain disagreement. Accordingly, we can say that 96.9% of participants believe that language and culture teaching should promote learners' own culture (Item 3). Almost all participants ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ) agreed that “the more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are,” and roughly 3% disagreed. Similarly, most participants (93.8%) agreed that improving students' culture knowledge can improve their linguistic skills (Item 4), about 3.5% disagreed, and approximately 3% were undecided. Item 5, “When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching,” generated a slightly lower mean ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ). In other words, more than two-thirds of participants (68.9%) believe that teaching language is more important than culture when they do not have enough time, and 30.2% disagreed. Item 1 shows that about 88% of the participants disagreed that “it is impossible to

teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way.” Therefore, it is not surprising that most participants (Item 6:  $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) reported that they are ready to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through their teaching.

Table 10  
*Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (Participants’ Opinion 2)*

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	M	SD
1	16 (7.1)	8(3.6)	3(1.3)	161(71.6)	37(16.4)	2.13	0.97
2	177 (78.7)	41(18.2)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.8)	3 (1.3)	4.71	0.68
3	169 (75.1)	49 (21.8)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.3)	4 (1.8)	4.67	0.72
4	168 (74.7)	43 (19.1)	6 (2.7)	3 (1.3)	5 (2.2)	4.63	0.79
5	66 (29.3)	89 (39.6)	2 (0.9)	41(18.2)	27 (12)	3.56	1.38
6	164 (72.9)	42 (18.7)	1 (0.4)	17 (7.6)	1 (0.4)	4.56	0.87

Items

1. It is impossible to teach a foreign language and a foreign culture in an integrated way.
2. The more students know about a foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.
3. Foreign language teaching should enhance students’ understanding of their own cultural identity.
4. When students improve their cultural knowledge, this will improve their linguistic skills.
5. When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching must give way to language teaching.
6. I would like to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching.

Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics on the 16 items that assess participants’ practice. Across these items, Item 8, “I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country,” has the lowest mean, at 4.29 ( $SD = 1.12$ ), followed by Item 12, “I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom,” with the second lowest mean, at 4.34 ( $SD = 1.01$ ). Item 9, “I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom, if I could,” has a lower mean compared with the other items, at 4.35 ( $SD = 1.01$ ). The highest mean is 4.73 ( $SD = 0.52$ ), for Item 6, “I use videos or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign

culture,” suggesting that participants are trying to use technology to support integrating culture into language classes. Almost 87.6% of the participants reported that they ask the students to think about the image that the media promotes about the foreign country (Item 1), and 9.8% of them did not. About 97% of participants agreed that they tell their students about what they heard or read about foreign language and culture (Item 2), and around 92% agreed that they tell their students about the fascinating and strange things about the foreign culture (Item 3). Most of the participants (91.6%) reported that they ask their students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign country (Item 7), whereas 0.4 % were undecided and 8% disagreed. The mean score for “ I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture” is 4.69 ( $SD = 0.69$ ), and the mean for “I ask my students to notice the difference between their own culture and the target culture” is 4.62 ( $SD = 0.81$ ), indicating that the participants had positive attitudes toward both cultures – students’ culture and the target culture. Similarly, most participants (91.5%) supported using both cultures in language teaching, as shown in Item 14, “I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.” In Item 10, the participants are asked whether they ask students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language, and 96.5% of the participants said they did. Table 11 also shows that participants used different strategies in culture teaching, such as role playing (Item 11;  $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) and decorating the classroom with posters (Item 13;  $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ). Most participants (91.5%) reported that they ask students to participate in role-playing situations in which people from different cultures meet, and about 93.8% of the participants reported that they decorate classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture. In addition, about 96% of participants agreed that they talk with students about stereotypes, whereas 0.9% were undecided and 3.1% disagreed, and 95.6% believed that

they “touch upon an aspect of the foreign culture regarding which they feel negatively disposed.”

Overall, high mean scores in all the items in Table 11 indicate that participants tried to adopt culture teaching in language classrooms.

Table 11

*Culture in Foreign Language Teaching: Teachers’ Practices*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	M	SD	Total (%)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)			
1	132 (58.7)	65(28.9)	6 (2.7)	18 (8.0)	4 (1.8)	4.53	0.98	225 (100)
2	160 (71.1)	59 (26.2)	2 (0.9)	3 (1.3)	1 (0.4)	4.66	0.61	225 (100)
3	137(60.9)	69(30.7)	6 (2.7)	8 (3.6)	5 (2.2)	4.44	0.88	225 (100)
4	173 (76.9)	45 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.8)	3 (1.3)	4.69	0.69	225 (100)
5	168(74.7)	44 (19.6)	2 (0.9)	7 (3.1)	4 (1.8)	4.62	0.81	225 (100)
6	171(76.0)	49(21.8)	3(1.3)	2(0.9)	0(0.0)	4.73	0.52	225 (100)
7	166 (73.8)	40 (17.8)	1 (0.4)	17(7.6)	1(0.4)	4.57	0.87	225 (100)
8	139 (61.8)	51(22.7)	2(0.9)	27(12.0)	6(2.7)	4.29	1.12	225 (100)
9	135(60.0)	62 (27.6)	3(1.3)	21(9.3)	4(1.8)	4.35	1.01	225 (100)
10	168(74.7)	49 (21.8)	3(1.3)	2(0.9)	3(1.3)	4.68	0.67	225 (100)
11	140(62.2)	66 (29.3)	6(2.7)	8(3.6)	5(2.2)	4.46	0.88	225 (100)
12	133(59.1)	64 (28.4)	3(1.3)	21(9.3)	4(1.8)	4.34	1.01	225 (100)
13	164 (72.9)	47 (20.9)	6 (2.7)	3 (1.3)	5 (2.2)	4.61	0.80	225 (100)
14	136 (60.8)	69(30.7)	6(2.7)	8(3.6)	6(2.3)	4.42	0.89	225 (100)
15	179(79.6)	36(16.0)	3(1.3)	4(1.8)	3(1.3)	4.71	0.70	225 (100)
16	171(76.0)	45(20.0)	2(0.9)	3(1.3)	4 (1.8)	4.67	0.73	225 (100)

Items:

1. I ask my students to think about the image that the media promotes about the foreign country.
2. I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture.
3. I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture.
4. I ask my students to explore independently an aspect of the foreign culture.
5. I ask my students to notice the difference between their own culture and the target culture.
6. I use videos or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.
7. I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign country.
8. I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country.
9. I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom, if I could.
10. I ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language.
11. I ask my students to participate in role-playing situations in which people from different cultures meet.
12. I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom.
13. I decorate my classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture.
14. I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.
15. I touch upon an aspect of the foreign culture regarding which I feel negatively disposed.
16. I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.

In terms of the challenges that teachers might face when they want to integrate culture into their classes, the participants have been asked to complete a part of the questionnaire that asked them some questions about the challenges. Table 12 shows participants' responses regarding these challenges. Most of the participants (79%) reported that it is not easy to integrate culture in language classrooms. Regarding "class time," most participants (79%) agreed that it is a challenge, approximately 19% disagreed, and about 2% were undecided. After asking them about "number of students" as a challenge, almost 73% reported that it was a challenge, and 21% reported that it was not. For "textbook content," 55.5% of the participants reported that textbook content was not a challenge in integrating culture into language teaching, and about 42% agreed that it was a challenge. Overall, most of the participants agreed that "class time" and "number of students" are challenges. However, nearly half reported that "textbook content" is not a challenge. The mean scores for "class time" and "number of students" are 4.12 ( $SD = 1.26$ ) and 4.01 ( $SD = 1.49$ ), respectively, whereas it is 2.83 ( $SD = 1.57$ ) for "textbook content."

Table 12  
*Challenges in Integrating Culture Into Language Teaching*

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	M	SD	Total (%)
It is a challenge	123(54.7)	56 (24.9)	2 (.9)	31 (13.8)	13 (5.8)	4.09	1.27	225 (100)
Class time	129(57.3)	49 (21.8)	4 (1.8)	32 (14.2)	11 (4.9)	4.12	1.26	225 (100)
Number of students	142 (63)	22 (9.8)	13 (5.8)	17 (7.6)	31(13.8)	4.01	1.49	225 (100)
Textbook content	52 (23)	43(19)	5 (2.2)	64 (28.4)	61(27.1)	2.83	1.57	225 (100)

To get a better understanding of the relationship between participants' opinions and their practices, chi-square testing was used, with alpha equal to .05 as a criterion for significance. As Table 13 shows, the number of participants (n= 176) who integrate culture into language teaching and who reported its importance was higher than expected (n= 171.6). However, several participants (n= 21) indicated that they did not integrate culture in language classes and reported that its importance was lower than what was expected (n= 25.4). According to the chi-square test of independence, this difference was significant ( $X^2 [1, N = 225] = 7.005, p = .008, p < .05$ ), so we could infer that a relationship exists between participants' practices and their opinions regarding integrating culture into language classrooms.

Table 13  
*Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Practices and Opinions*

		It is very important to integrate culture in language classes			
			Yes	No	Total
Practice	Yes	Count	176	20	196
		Expected Count	171.6	24.4	196.0
		% Within Practice	89.8%	10.2%	100.0%
	No	Count	21	8	29
		Expected Count	25.4	3.6	29.0
		% Within Practice	72.4%	27.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	197	28	225
		Expected Count	197.0	28.0	225.0
		% Within Practice	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%
		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square		7.005 <sup>a</sup>	1	.008	

Tables 14 and 15 present the correlation between participants' reported beliefs about integrating culture into language classrooms and other factors, such as their gender and institution type. To determine whether gender affects participants' opinion, chi-square testing has been used, with alpha equal to .05 as the criterion for significance as mentioned before. According to the chi-square test of independence, as shown in Table 14, no significant relationship exists between participants' gender and their reported perspectives on integrating

culture into language teaching ( $X^2 [1, N = 225] = .969, p = .325, p > .05$ ). Since  $p > .05$ , we concluded that participants' gender did not affect their reported perspectives and beliefs in any way. On the other hand, chi-square test results show that a significant relationship exists between participants' institution type, i.e., school or university, and their perspectives and opinions on integrating culture into language classrooms. As can be seen in Table 15, a greater number of participants who work in universities ( $n = 96$ ) than was expected ( $n = 88.4$ ) agreed that it is important to integrate culture in language classes, whereas a lower number of participants who work in schools ( $n = 101$ ) noted the importance of integrating culture into language classes, which is lower than what was expected ( $n = 108.6$ ). According to the chi-square test, this difference was statistically significant ( $X^2 [1, N = 225] = 9.446, p = .002, p < .05$ ), so we can conclude that teachers who work in universities are more likely to agree on the importance of integrating culture into language studies than those who work in schools.

Table 14  
*Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Gender and Opinion*

		It is very important to integrate culture in language classes			
		Yes	No	Total	
Gender	Male	Count	93	16	109
		Expected Count	95.4	13.6	109.0
		% Within gender	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%
	Female	Count	104	12	116
		Expected Count	101.6	14.4	116.0
		% Within gender	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	197	28	225	
	Expected Count	197.0	28.0	225.0	
	% Within gender	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%	
Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-sided)		
	.969 <sup>a</sup>	1	.325		

Table 15  
*Results of Chi-Square Test and Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Institutions and Opinions*

		It is very important to integrate culture in language classes			
		Yes	No	Total	
<u>institution</u>	University	Count	96	5	101

	Expected Count	88.4	12.6	101.0
	% Within Institutions	95.0%	5.0%	100.0%
School	Count	101	23	124
	Expected Count	108.6	15.4	124.0
	% Within Institutions	81.5%	18.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	197	28	225
	Expected Count	197.0	28.0	225.0
	% Within Institutions	87.6%	12.4%	100.0%
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (two-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	9.446 <sup>a</sup>	1	.002	

## Qualitative Results

This section presents findings from the semi-structured interviews. The data gathered during the interviews were transcribed and coded using thematic analysis. Fifteen teachers volunteered to be interviewed individually. After transcribing and coding the data, taking into consideration the research questions, I ended up with four main themes, with three categories under each theme as follows:

### 1. Positive attitude toward integrating culture into language classes

- a. Openness and tolerance toward other people and cultures
- b. Improving learners' language skills
- c. Understanding students' own culture

### 2. Negative attitude toward integrating culture into language classes

- a. Wasting time
- b. Students' linguistic skills
- c. It is not important.

### 3. Teachers' practices, materials, and strategies



- a. Teachers' practice
- b. Materials
- c. Strategies

#### **4. Challenges**

- a. Number of students
- b. Class time
- c. Textbook content

As the first and second themes show, when the participants are asked about their perceptions and attitudes toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language, some agreed that it is effective and important, but others did not. Thus, the participants can be divided, based on their responses, into two main groups: those with a positive attitude and those with a negative attitude. The positive-attitude group showed that there are many reasons to integrate culture into language teaching, one of which is that it not only improves students' language, but also can make them more tolerant (Excerpts 1, 2, and 4) and encourage them to respect other cultures and appreciate diversity, as in Excerpts 3 and 5. More interestingly, one participant believed that language and culture learning can improve learners' positive thinking (Excerpt 6).

#### **Positive attitude toward integrating culture into language classes**

After analyzing their responses, many participants stated that integrating culture into language teaching can improve learners' language skills (Excerpts 7–15). They stated that this method of teaching increases students' self-confidence, which helps them improve their language skills (Excerpt 9). In addition, participants agreed that understanding the culture will make students love its language and use it effectively (Excerpt 11), which helps both teachers and students (Excerpt 13). Sometimes, students' first language affects how they learn a second

language, and integrating culture into language teaching can resolve this problem, as in the writing example in Excerpt 10. Generally speaking, most participants stated that language and culture teaching improves students' language skills, i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Excerpts 9, 10, 14, and 15).

The responses to the semi-structured interviews showed that teachers with positive attitudes toward language and culture teaching believe that this way of teaching not only helps learners improve their linguistic skills and respect other cultures, but also helps them understand and respect their own culture (Excerpts 16–22). Noticing the differences between cultures makes learners appreciate the target culture and their own culture (Excerpt 19), as well as gain a better understanding of the world (Excerpt 21). To sum up, most participants agreed that integrating culture into language teaching is effective, as it helps learners become tolerant of other people and cultures, improves learners' language skills, and makes students understand their own culture.

### **Openness and tolerance toward other people and cultures**

Some teachers pointed out in their interviews that integrating culture into language teaching makes students understand other cultures and, thus, respect people from different cultures. It also can help them notice the differences between languages and cultures, which will make them more tolerant:

Excerpt 1: “You know, I guess teaching my students culture and language together can help them not just respect themselves, but also respect other people from other cultures.”

Excerpt 2: “When you teach them that way, you will help them know that cultures are different, like languages, and this improves their language skills and their cultural awareness.”

As mentioned before, teachers stated that language and culture teaching can promote respect for other people's culture and make students understand the difference between their culture and other cultures:

Excerpt 3: "Yeah, and this will teach them how to respect other people from other cultures too."

Excerpt 4: "I believe that teaching culture and language helps my students understand cultural differences."

As cultural diversity has become very important in today's world, and culture can shape people's identities and influence their behavior, these teachers believe that integrating culture into language teaching is important in motivating students and improving their positive thinking skills:

Excerpt 5: "You teach them to respect other cultures since all the world now should respect diversity."

Excerpt 6: "Culture in my class is important, (and) you know this will develop students' positive thinking."

### **Improving learners' language skills**

Some teachers argued that language and culture teaching can improve learners' linguistic skills. One teacher stated that when students learn the culture of a language, they will understand it, then they will respect the language and learn it quickly:

Excerpt 7: "You know when students understand the culture of any language, they will appreciate it and learn that language easily."

Excerpt 8: "Yeah, and even their skills are going to (be) improved."

Other teachers mentioned that integrating culture into language teaching can improve students' skills, such as speaking, and can improve students' confidence and self-esteem. It also

can help them overcome first-language interference, as in direct and indirect language while teaching writing:

Excerpt 9: “That is true, especially in speaking, I feel students became more fluent. They felt more confident.”

Excerpt 10: “You know student culture has an impact on students’ writing! So, I found them using a lot of digression and indirect language, and when they understand the other culture, and that is direct, this improves their writing.”

Integrating culture into language teaching makes students love the language, as teachers suggested, then helps them use it appropriately. The teachers contended that when students love the language, they will learn it faster. One teacher stated that learning a language without its culture is not easy:

Excerpt 11: “And yeah, when they know the culture, they will love the language, and this will help them learn it, practice it, and use it correctly.”

Excerpt 12: “I think learning any language without its culture is so difficult; students must learn the cultural aspects that (are) associated with the language they want to learn.”

Some teachers mentioned that culture and language integration in teaching improve learners’ skills. They suggested that since language and culture are connected, it is beneficial to integrate culture into language teaching:

Excerpt 13: “I found that teaching language with its culture helped me a lot as a teacher and helped students improve all the language skills.”

Excerpt 14: “And you know culture and language are connected, and especially nowadays, students need to be taught using this way to learn how to speak, listen, and write correctly.”

One teacher stated directly that culture and language integration in language studies can improve students' skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing:

Excerpt 15: "Well, from my experience, integrating culture into language study has helped my students a lot to improve all their skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing."

### **Understanding students' own culture**

Teachers argued that integrating culture into language teaching can improve students' awareness and understanding of their own culture, as well as make them respect their own culture with respect to the target culture:

Excerpt 16: "I guess this can improve their understanding of their culture too."

Excerpt 17: "You know, in my class, I noticed students are respecting both their culture and other cultures."

Excerpt 18: "And yeah, they become aware of our culture too."

Some teachers stated that integrating culture into language teaching makes students compare their own culture and the target culture, and they also appreciate their own culture and the target culture:

Excerpt 19: "I remember some students told me the differences between our culture and English culture."

Excerpt 20: "You know, I guess the students appreciate our culture, not just the target culture."

Furthermore, some teachers argued that integrating culture into language teaching helps students understand and appreciate their own culture and other cultures, which can lead to them understanding the world around them:

Excerpt 21: "And yeah, I think they will focus on understanding different cultures, including ours, which will help them gain a better understanding (of) the world."

Excerpt 22: “Not just other cultures, but also they appreciate their culture.”

### **Negative attitude toward integrating culture into language classes**

However, some participants held negative attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching. The main reasons for their views are that they think it wastes class time and that they should focus on students’ linguistic skills, not on culture, and that simply integrating culture into language teaching is not important. Some of the participants stated that there is no need to waste class time on cultural issues (Excerpts 23 and 25) and that teachers should focus on language teaching to turn out students who use the language correctly (Excerpt 26). Some participants believed that teaching language skills is the main goal for a successful language teacher and that language and culture integration is not the goal of language teaching (Excerpts 27 and 28). Others believed that it is hard to integrate culture into language teaching (Excerpt 29). However, some participants stated that language and culture teaching is not important, as learners can learn languages with or without culture (Excerpts 31–33) and that students can improve their cultural competence outside the classroom by using the Internet and interacting with people from different cultures (Excerpt 30).

### **Wasting time**

Some teachers stated that integrating culture into language teaching wastes class time, and that the main goal is to teach language, not culture:

Excerpt 23: “We do not have to teach culture and language; I think this will waste class time.”

Excerpt 24: “Teaching language is enough since you know when we focus on something else, this will take our time.”

In addition, some argued that language and culture integration is not important, takes up time, and that students should understand and use the language, not its culture:

Excerpt 25: “Oh yeah, I think no more time for me to do so; it is not that important, I guess.”

Excerpt 26: “Class time is not helping me to teach that way, and I guess no need to work on culture if my students understand and use the language correctly. That is my goal.”

### **Students’ linguistic skills**

Some participants argued that the main goal in language teaching is to improve students’ linguistic skills, not to teach culture. They believe that teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing is more important than integrating culture into language studies:

Excerpt 27: “I guess as teachers, we should focus on students’ skills, not on cultures.”

Excerpt 28: “You know, for me, teaching my students how to listen, speak, read, and write is more important than anything else.”

However, one teacher, in the following excerpt, said that it is not easy to integrate culture into language teaching and teach both language skills and grammar successfully:

Excerpt 29: “I don’t think that teachers can integrate culture and language and at the same time teach grammar and other skills; this is hard.”

### **It is not important**

Some participants stated that students can learn culture outside the classroom, and that there is no need to integrate culture into language teaching, as the following excerpt explains:

Excerpt 30: “You know, I guess students can learn culture when they contact people and also by using the Internet, e.g., YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc., so there is no need to spend time in class teaching them things that they can learn by themselves.”

Others said that cultural content and culture integration in language teaching are not important, as students can learn the language with or without its culture:

Excerpt 31. “Yeah, for me, it is not that important to integrate culture in language classes – no need – they learn the language, and that’s enough.”

Excerpt 32: “I do not believe that language learning is affected by culture.”

Excerpt 33: “I noticed that students can learn language with or without cultural content.”

### **Teachers’ practices, materials, and strategies**

This section presents participants’ responses regarding the materials and strategies that they use in their classrooms related to culture. Participants mentioned that they integrate culture into language teaching implicitly (Excerpt 35) and that sometimes, they use comparisons, in which students compare and contrast their culture with the target culture (Excerpt 34). As one of the participants stated in a culture and language class, teachers tend to use examples and personal experiences (Excerpt 36). Regarding the materials they used, participants stated that they use video clips from different websites, such as YouTube, TED, National Geographic, (Excerpts 37, 42, and 43), and some use clips from movies and TV shows (Excerpts 38, 41, and 42), which are very effective tools in language and culture classes, as one of the participants stated (Excerpt 41). In addition, posters, PowerPoint presentations, music, social media, and podcasts are all examples of the materials that teachers stated they are using when they integrate culture into language (Excerpts 40–43). Also, some of the participants mentioned that they use real objects from both target and students’ cultures (Excerpt 44), worksheets, and flashcards (Excerpt 45). Regarding strategies, participants mentioned that they use game playing to motivate students while integrating culture into language teaching (Excerpt 46), and they work on the similarities and differences between cultures, such as geographical sites, weather, clothes, family, money, gender concepts, relationships between people, personal space, individuality vs. group-oriented cultures, etc. (Excerpts 47, 49, and 52). Interviewing people from the target culture and writing



reports are a strategy that a participant said she used (Excerpt 50). There are many strategies that teachers stated that they used while they integrate culture in language classes, such as group work and discussions (Excerpt 51), students' presentations (Excerpt 52), writing tour information, and fact sheets (Excerpt 48).

### **Teachers' practices**

Teachers stated that they compare cultures to help them with language teaching. Others mentioned that they do not refer to culture directly, but rather let students understand it indirectly:

Excerpt 34: "And yeah, I told them about the differences between their culture and the target culture, like in food, festivals, ways of communication."

Excerpt 35: "It is interesting to make them understand the language through its culture implicitly without telling them that this is that culture and this is the other culture. I let them figure it out by themselves."

One teacher stated that she asks students to provide examples of the target culture as a way of integrating culture into language teaching:

Excerpt 36: "You know I sometimes ask my students to give examples of the target culture. They tell the class things from their experiences when they travel or from their online friends."

### **Materials**

Teachers use many tools and materials to integrate culture into language teaching. Some mentioned that they used videos and movies, while others preferred utilizing online chatting and applications:

Excerpt 37: "You know, I use video clips from YouTube and other websites."

Excerpt 38: "In my classes, I prefer using clips from movies."

Excerpt 39: “My students told me that they are using online chatting apps to learn the language from its speaker in their home countries, so they try to contact them and ask them about their daily activities and other things.”

However, some teachers try to integrate culture into language teaching by using posters, presentations, music, TV shows, and movies. They stated that these materials help them teach students foreign languages and their cultures:

Excerpt 40: “I used to use posters and PowerPoint to present pictures from English culture, and play some music.”

Excerpt 41: “For me, TV shows and movies are very interesting tools to teach my students the language and its culture. At the same time, you can say it is an effective way of integrating culture into language teaching.”

Moreover, one teacher stated that students like these kinds of materials:

Excerpt 42: “Yeah, I use films, National Geographic website, and sometimes social media posts; you know students love them.”

Some teachers mentioned that they use podcasts, talks, and real objects. Others stick to flashcards and cannot use electronic resources, as they do not have access:

Excerpt 43: “You know I used short videos from TED talks and encourage them to listen to some podcasts.”

Excerpt 44: “I like using real clothes, objects, and food from students’ own culture and the target culture.”

Excerpt 45: “I like to use worksheets and flashcards since you know I do not have (a) projector in my class.”

## **Strategies**

Teachers use many strategies to help them integrate culture into language teaching. For example, teachers mentioned that they use games because students like them and that this motivates students. Others use cultural comparisons to help them integrate culture into language teaching:

Excerpt 46: “I like teaching by playing games to motivate students, and you know, most students like it too, so I usually add games and activities in language classes.”

Excerpt 47: “And yeah, like working on the similarities and differences between cultures like geographical sites, weather, clothes, etc.”

Writing an information sheet is a strategy that some teachers use to integrate culture, and interviews are also a good strategy, as one teacher suggested:

Excerpt 48: “Asking my students to write a tour information sheet and fact sheets about their country and then compare it with a city in the USA, for example, I remember this was an interesting activity in their book.”

Excerpt 49: “And, you know, talking about the differences between cultures like family, money, gender concepts.”

Excerpt 50: “Yeah, I remember one of the activities was to interview an English speaker and ask him about Saudi culture.”

Some teachers stated that they use group work and writing reports to encourage students to understand and use the language with its cultural content:

Excerpt 51: “In my classes, I used to use group work and asked students to find out an aspect about the target culture that is not the same as in their own culture, then write a paragraph about it and share it in the class too.”

Class presentations also are an effective strategy that teachers can use to integrate culture into language teaching, as one teacher suggested. The teacher asked students to do class presentations to explain the differences and similarities between cultures:

Excerpt 52: “One of my strategies is to have students do presentations about different aspects, like the differences and similarities between these two cultures, like in (the) relationship between people you know like personal space, individuality vs. group-oriented cultures.”

### **Challenges**

Participants’ responses in the semi-structured interviews show that most teachers agreed that integrating culture into language teaching is important and effective in language learning, yet they faced some challenges, namely class sizes, class time, and textbook content. Participants mentioned large class sizes as a big challenge (Excerpts 53, 55, 56, 58, and 61). They said large classes sometimes prevent them from doing class activities (Excerpt 54), and that assigning homework is one way to solve this problem (Excerpt 57). Taking into account so many individual students’ differences takes time and effort, a situation that is difficult for some teachers to handle (Excerpt 60). Many participants argued that class time is not enough to integrate culture into language teaching successfully (Excerpts 62–69). They said it is challenging to formulate lessons that include language and culture integration, grammar rules, instructions, reading passages, and classroom activities (Excerpts 62, 64, and 67). Some of the participants mentioned that textbook content presents a challenge to integrating culture into language classes (Excerpts 70–74). One participant argued that textbooks are great, but that a need exists to add some discussion activities (Excerpt 70). Thus, some teachers must use activities from other resources and use them within the class to support textbook content (Excerpt 71). It has been suggested that adding more culture-based content successfully can

integrate culture into language learning (Excerpt 74). However, overcrowded curricula and crowded books present challenges, as some participants have stated (Excerpts 72 and 73).

### **Number of students**

Some teachers argued that overcrowded classes are not helping them integrate culture into language teaching. They stated that with large numbers of students in classes, they cannot do class activities like they are supposed to be done. Large numbers of students take up lots of class time and prevent teachers from integrating culture into language teaching successfully:

Excerpt 53: “Well, you know we have many students in the class. I used to teach classes with 25, 26, 28, and 30 students.”

Excerpt 54: “While we are trying to do some activities, I found that students are too (numerous), and that takes a lot of the class time. It sometimes takes us as (as much as) 30 minutes to do an activity, you know, a culture and language activity, (when) we are supposed to do it in 10 minutes.”

Other teachers argued that large class sizes and short class periods are challenges that hinder any effort to integrate culture into language teaching. Teachers tried to overcome this challenge by giving homework assignments:

Excerpt 55: “I guess (the) number of students is a big challenge.”

Excerpt 56: “For me, I focus on the language content rather than culture and language integration. Student numbers in the class and the number and length of class periods in the week are not helping me do (a) good job, I guess.”

Excerpt 57: “You know, one of the challenges is students in the class; (there) are many, (which) is (why) I usually assign them tasks to do at home.”

Having 30 to 35 students in one class is a big challenge, some teachers stated, noting that students have individual needs, which makes integrating culture into language teaching a challenge:

Excerpt 58: “In some classes, student numbers are not helping me.”

Excerpt 59: “I have in my classes around 30 to 35 students sometimes. I guess this is a challenge.”

Excerpt 60: “You know, I have many students, and I should consider their individual differences...and that was a challenge.”

In fact, many teachers argued that large numbers of students pose a big challenge, with one teacher suggesting that a maximum number of students per class is needed:

Excerpt 61: “I can say (the) number of students in the class should be a maximum of 15.”

### **Class time**

Some participants mentioned that they do not have enough time in class to integrate culture into language teaching successfully. They argued that 45 minutes of class time is not enough to do activities and integrate cultural content:

Excerpt 62: “You know, 45 minutes is not enough for explaining the lesson and giving instructions and doing activities, etc.”

Excerpt 63: “Yeah, I guess the classes that last for just 45 minutes, four times a week, are not helping teachers successfully integrate culture into language teaching, even though we have very good materials and book content.”

Teachers also argued that they only have time to explain lessons and provide instructions:

Excerpt 64: “I found that class time is not enough for language and culture integration teaching. I just have time to deliver the main content or grammar and reading passages without touching upon cultural aspects; class time is not helping me to do so. I wish I (could) do it.”

In fact, one teacher suggested adding more class periods to manage class time:

Excerpt 65: “I guess we should have much more time and more weekly periods or less content in books and syllabi to do a (better) job of integrating culture into language study.”

Some teachers argued that they don’t have much time to teach language and grammar, and also integrate culture into teaching. They believe that they are not doing a good job of integrating culture into language teaching because of short class periods:

Excerpt 66: “I think we do not have enough time in our class periods, so we are not good in integrating culture into language teaching.”

Excerpt 67: “I believe one of the challenges is time; you know there is no time for explaining grammar rules and integrating culture into language use.”

Excerpt 68: “I can say class time is a challenge. I cannot finish the lesson and book activities and integrate culture into language in just 45 minutes.”

One of the teachers noted that integrating culture into language teaching is effective and that students like it; however, teachers don’t have enough time to practice it in a good way:

Excerpt 69: “Yeah, it is very effective to integrate culture and language in teaching, and even students love this way. I remember I do it in my classes, but still, we have some difficulties like class time and the crowded curriculum.”

### **Textbook content**

Some teachers believe that textbooks are good, but they need discussion activities and tasks to integrate culture into language teaching successfully:

Excerpt 70: “You know these new book series are great, and there are many cultural aspects. We have units like sports, food, nationalities, technology, etc., but I think we should have much more discussion activities in these units to successfully integrate students’ culture and target culture into language teaching.”

Others suggested that textbook content is a challenge. Teachers tend to use alternatives such as worksheets and activities to integrate culture into teaching language:

Excerpt 71: “I can say book content is a challenge. Books are good, but I guess there are some gaps. That’s way I usually print out worksheets from the Internet and use them with my students.”

Overcrowded curricula are not helping teachers integrate culture into language teaching. Teachers suggested that textbooks are valuable, but that they have overcrowded content, with many units, activities, tasks, and reading passages, making it difficult to integrate culture in language teaching:

Excerpt 72: “For me, I guess the student book is very crowded; there are many things that we have to do, and there is no time.”

Excerpt 73: “I think students’ books are a challenge for me to integrate culture in language teaching. We have overcrowded curricula, which make it hard to do (a) good job. The content is good, but it is overcrowded. We have many units (and) passages for reading, speaking, listening activities, (and) writing tasks for each lesson.”

However, one teacher suggested adding culturally based content to textbooks to help integrate culture into language teaching:

Excerpt 74: “Well, I think we should add more culturally based content to our textbook to help teachers integrate culture into language teaching.”



## Chapter 5

### Discussion

This mixed-methods study was concerned with examining foreign language teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into language teaching. Chapter 4 presented this study's findings in two main sections, comprising quantitative results from a questionnaire and qualitative results from semi-structured interviews. This chapter aims to discuss these quantitative and qualitative data sets in relation to the research questions laid out in Chapter 1, as well as extant literature.

The first research question concerns the perceptions and attitudes of English teachers in Saudi Arabia toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language. To elicit answers to this question, participants' responses in the questionnaire's third section were analyzed (see Tables 9 and 10, Chapter 4), and their responses in the semi-structured interviews were coded and analyzed (see Chapter 4). It clearly can be seen that in both the questionnaire and semi-structured interview responses, teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language learning. Most teachers (87%) agreed that "it is very important to integrate culture in language classrooms" (see Table 9, Item 2). Also, 84.5% of participants agreed that "teaching culture is as important as teaching language." The descriptive statistics on teachers' answers to opinion questions showed that most teachers promote the idea of integrating culture into language teaching. The means for all items are high ( $M = 4.29, SD = 1.12$ ;  $M = 4.34, SD = 1.01$ ;  $M = 4.74, SD = 0.49$ ;  $M = 4.44, SD = 0.88$ ;  $M = 3.40, SD = 1.45$ ), as shown in Table 9. It seems that most participants agree with Kramsch's (1995) notion that language teaching's goal is not only to acquire linguistic or sociolinguistic competence, but also to acquire intercultural competence. After analyzing participants' interview responses, I categorized them into two main

groups: positive attitude and negative attitude. Most of the participants tended to have a positive attitude toward integrating culture into language learning. They mentioned many factors as to why they hold this opinion, such as improving learners' language skills, helping students become tolerant toward other people, and helping learners understand their culture.

According to the participants, integrating culture into language teaching can help improve students' linguistic skills. For example, they said that this teaching method increases students' self-confidence, consistently improves their language skills (Excerpt 9), and that language and culture teaching make them love the language, which will help improve their skills, as students more easily learn what they love (Excerpt 11). Also, they mentioned that this method allows them to reduce first languages' effects and helps them practice foreign languages (Excerpt 10). Most participants stated that when using this teaching method, they noticed improvements in students' foreign-language reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Excerpts 9, 10, 14, and 15). The quantitative findings also showed that 91.6% of participants agreed that "understanding the target culture will help (in using) the language appropriately" (see Table 9). Most participants (93.8%) agreed that improving students' cultural knowledge can improve their language skills (Table 10). This result is consistent with those of previous studies that emphasize how integrating culture into language teaching improves learners' linguistic skills (e.g., Planken et al., 2004; Popsecu & Iordachescu, 2015). In fact, some studies (e.g., Doganay & Yergaliyeva, 2013) indicated that even students themselves noticed this difference and believed that this method helped improve their language skills.

The second reason why teachers have a positive attitude toward integrating culture into language teaching is that this method can make students more tolerant toward other people and cultures. Quantitative results showed that 96.9% of the participants ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ , Table

10) agreed that “the more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.” Semi-structured interview data supported the statistics analysis. Some participants mentioned that integrating culture into language teaching encourages students to respect other cultures and appreciate diversity (see Excerpts 1–6). Another participant stated: “You know, I guess teaching my students culture and language together can help them not just respect themselves, but also respect other people from other cultures.” Baltaci and Taniş (2018), in their recent study, concluded that teachers believe that integrating culture into EFL helped learners respect not just target culture, but also all other cultures. In fact, when students become more tolerant and teachers believe in this way of teaching and practice it, it can improve learners’ intercultural competence. In other words, it improves their ability to communicate using the language and culture knowledge effectively and, as Byram et al. (2002) have stated:

Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching involves recognizing that the aims are: to give learners intercultural competence, as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values, and behaviors; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience (p. 10).

Furthermore, most participants (96.9%, Table 10) believed that language teaching should enhance not only target culture, but also students’ understanding of their own cultural identity. Almost all participants (99%, Table 9) agreed that “it is important to promote students’ culture and target culture.” It seems that teachers believe in Liddicoat et al.’s (2003) “culture as practices” approach. In this approach to integrating culture into language teaching, learners should understand their own culture’s values and practices, as well as the target culture’s values

and practices. Furthermore, as the researchers suggested, this can improve students' intercultural communicative skills since language is integrated successfully in the social and cultural context. The qualitative data of the current study also showed that teachers believe that integrating culture into language teaching has helped learners understand and respect not only the target culture, but also their own culture (Excerpts 16–22). One participant stated: “You know, in my class, I noticed students are respecting both their culture and other cultures.” These findings emphasize the importance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which suggests that language learners should understand both their culture and target culture, and use that understanding to communicate effectively, as Kramsch (1993) has suggested. Essentially, from the 1990s to the present, this notion of integrating culture into language teaching became important and is used in an intercultural way, in which learners understand their culture and the target culture to improve their language (Garrett-Ruck , 2016). The findings showed that no significant relationship exists between participants' gender and their attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching ( $X^2 [1, N = 225] = .969, p = .325, p > .05$ ). In other words, we can conclude that participants' gender did not affect teachers' reported opinions and beliefs in any way. On the other hand, chi-square test results indicated a significant relationship between participants' institution type, i.e., school or university, and their opinions on integrating culture into language classrooms [ $X^2 (1, N = 225) = 9.446, p = .002, p < .05$ ]. Thus, we can infer that teachers who work at universities are more likely to agree on the efficacy of integrating culture into language studies than those who work in schools.

As mentioned above, most participants have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching, which is consistent with previous studies, such as Baltacı and Taniş (2018), Cheewasukthaworn and Suwanarak (2017), and Karbınar and Guler (2012). However,

some participants have a negative attitude toward integrating culture into language teaching. Those with this view stated that this teaching method is not important and wastes class time (Excerpts 23–33). Although these participants expressed a negative attitude toward integrating culture into language teaching, they did not criticize the method itself. They think that not enough class time is available to integrate culture into language teaching.

One participant said: “I don’t think that teachers can integrate culture and language, and at the same time teach grammar and other skills; this is hard. “ Another stated: “Teaching language is enough since you know when we focus on something else, this will take our time.”

Some of the participants think that their goal is to teach the language itself. One teacher remarked that “class time is not helping me to teach that way, and I guess (there’s) no need to work on culture if my students understand and use the language correctly; that is my goal...I guess as teachers, we should focus on students’ skills, not on cultures.” It seems that these participants think that integrating culture into language teaching refers to focusing on culture and forgetting language. Their perspective on integrating culture into language teaching seems to resemble the first and second approaches that Liddicoat et al. (2003) explained. In the traditional approach, teachers teach high culture, like literature, and in the “area study” approach, language teachers work on the target culture’s history and geography. Therefore, language learners study the target language’s culture in an external context.

The second question investigated what teachers understand to be culture teaching in an EFL context. Answers to this question were gathered from teachers’ responses to part two in the questionnaire and their responses to the interview questions. The results showed that the participants believed that big C culture and little c culture are included when they refer to culture teaching in foreign language classes. Almost 88% of the participants agreed that

integrating culture into language teaching includes providing “information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture” (Table 8, Item 1). In addition, most teachers (95.6%) agreed that culture teaching in an EFL context means “to provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions: literature; music; theater; movies; etc.” (Table 8, Item 2). These findings indicate that participants believed that big C culture is included when they refer to culture teaching in foreign language classes. Similarly, participants in the interviews mentioned big “C” culture when they talked about culture in language teaching. For example, they stated, “I used to use posters and PowerPoint to present pictures from English culture, and play some music” (Excerpt 40) and “You know these new book series are great, and there are many cultural aspects. We have units like sports, food, nationalities, technology, etc.” (Excerpt 70). They are talking about big C culture when they refer to language and culture teaching. Big “C” culture, as Peterson (2004) has stated, could include themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, societal norms, legal foundations, core values, history, and cognitive processes. However, 91% of the participants agreed that to “provide information about daily life and routines” is included when integrating culture into language teaching (Table 8, Item 3), and 96% believed that culture teaching can mean to “provide information about shared values and beliefs” (Table 8, Item 4). Based on these results, we can infer that participants believed that little c culture is included when they refer to culture teaching in an EFL context. Little “c” culture includes opinions, perspectives, preferences/tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, etc. (Peterson, 2004). Qualitative data also showed that participants referred to little c culture when they were talking about culture teaching. For instance, one of the participants said, “My students told me that they are using online chatting apps to learn the language from its speakers

in their home countries, so they try to contact them and ask them about their daily activities and other things” (Excerpt 39). In fact, participants in this current study agreed with language researchers, who concluded that including both big C and little c culture in language teaching exerts a positive effect on language learning (Garrett-Rucks, 2016).

Furthermore, participants ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) agreed that *culture teaching* can mean to “develop attitudes of openness and tolerance toward other people and cultures,” “promote reflection on cultural differences” ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ), and “promote increased understanding of students' own culture” ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ). Furthermore, some participants believed it to mean to “promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures” ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ). Participants’ beliefs that culture teaching can refer to developing open and tolerant attitudes toward other people and cultures, as well as understanding students’ own culture, were discussed earlier in the previous section. Qualitative data support the notion that integrating culture into language learning can mean “reflection on cultural differences.” Many teachers in the interviews viewed integrating culture as comparing the two cultures.

For example, as we can see in Excerpt 34, the participant said, “Yeah, I told them about the differences between their culture and the target culture, like in food, festivals, ways of communication,” and in Excerpt 47. one teacher said, “Yeah, (it’s) like working on the similarities and differences between cultures, like geographical sites, weather, clothes, etc.” Also, this can be seen in Excerpt 49, “And you know, talking about the differences between cultures, like family, money, gender concepts,” and in Excerpt 52, “One of my strategies is to have students do presentations about different aspects, like the differences and similarities between these two cultures, like in (a) relationship between people – you know, like, personal space, individuality vs. group-oriented cultures.” This finding is consistent with the “culture as

practice” approach that Liddicoat et al. (2003) suggested to improve students’ intercultural communicative skills. Moreover, as can be seen, some teachers in the previous examples are referring to some dimensions of Hofstede’s (1980) model, such as individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity. As we know, Western culture appreciates individualism, but Saudi culture appreciates collectivism, and, as Havril (2015) has stated, some teachers in this study referred to this point. As mentioned before, it is very important for language teachers to understand these cultural differences to facilitate successful learning processes. As Yoo (2014) suggested, Hofstede’s 1980 model should be taken into consideration when teachers want to teach foreign language in a different culture. Yoo (2014) studied the effect of power distance on interaction between students in a collectivistic culture and an EFL teacher from an individualistic culture.

The third question in the present study examined the relationship between teachers’ practices and beliefs regarding integrating culture into language teaching and explored the materials and strategies that teachers use in their classrooms related to culture. Chi-square testing showed that a relationship exists between teachers’ opinions and their practices ( $X^2 [1, N = 225] = 7.005, p = .008, p < .05$ ), so we could infer that a relationship exists between participants’ practices and their opinion that integrating culture into language classrooms is important and effective. As can be seen in Table 11, 87.6% of participants said that they ask their students to think about the image of the foreign language’s country that the media promote. Most participants (97%) said they tell their students what they hear or read about the target culture, and about 91% said that they tell their students fascinating or strange things about the target culture. Also, about 97% reported that they ask their students to explore an aspect of the foreign culture independently. Furthermore, 94.3% said that they encourage students to note the



differences between their own culture and the target culture, and 91.5% reported that they ask students to compare an aspect of their own culture with the same aspect in the target culture. In Table 11, we can see that participants used different strategies in culture teaching, such as role playing (Item 11;  $M = 4.46$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), talking with students about stereotypes (Item 16;  $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ), and decorating classrooms with posters (Item 13;  $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ). Unlike teachers in Sercu (2005) and Cheng's (2012) studies, in the present study, teachers' practices are congruent with their opinions, i.e., their reported opinions are depicted in their reported practices. Overall, the results imply that teachers are trying to improve students' intercultural competence by improving their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which are explained in Byram (1997) and Deardorff's (2009) models. The present study's findings also indicate that teachers have been practicing Liddicoat et al.'s (2003) five principles: active construction; making connections; social interaction; reflection; and responsibility. Teachers tried to encourage noticing and interacting among learners, and they also urged learners to compare cultures and languages. Furthermore, some stated that they tend to promote discussion, thinking, and arguments to improve learners' social skills, as well as reflection on different linguistic and cultural concepts.

The qualitative results also showed that teachers use supplemental resources, realia, video clips, technology, posters, etc. (see Excerpts 37–45), as well as different types of strategies (see Excerpts 46–52), in their language classrooms to support culture. The teachers cited many strategies that they are using to keep students motivated and engaged in their language classes, such as group work and discussions (Excerpt 51), students' presentations (Excerpt 52), interviewing people from target cultures and writing reports (Excerpt 50), comparing cultures (Excerpts 47, 49, and 52), and writing tourism information and fact sheets (Excerpt 48). These findings indicate that teachers are trying to work on students' intercultural communicative

competence. As mentioned earlier, they are trying to increase students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which are the main components of intercultural competence, as discussed in Byram (1997) and Deardorff's (2009) models. And as Sercu (2005) described these three components (see Table 3), teachers in the present study are trying to improve students' knowledge of self and others, as well as knowledge of interactions. The questionnaire and interview results indicated that some of the teachers are trying to improve students' ability to discover and interact, as well as improve their ability to acquire new knowledge and use it effectively in interaction and communication, as in the interviews, writing reports, and social media examples. The results also showed that teachers also are working on students' attitudes toward valuing themselves and others, as in the comparison activities.

The last question investigated the challenges that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia might face when they want to integrate culture into language teaching. Although most participants believed in the efficacy of integrating culture into language classes, about 79% reported that it is sometimes a challenge. Most of the teachers (79%) think that insufficient class time is a challenge, and about 73% reported that large class sizes hinder any efforts to integrate culture into language classes effectively. Quantitative results show that just 42% think that textbook content is a challenge. In the interviews, teachers argued that large class sizes hinder their efforts to facilitate class activities (Excerpt 54), so they tend to assign homework to overcome this issue (Excerpt 57). Teachers mentioned that they have many students with different abilities, learning styles, and individual differences in each class, preventing them from teaching successfully (Excerpt 60). The participants also argued that they do not have enough time to provide instructions, explain lessons and grammar rules, and have students read and write passages (Excerpts 62, 64, and 67). Insufficient class time is a challenge that also was reported in previous

studies, such as Baltacı and Taniş (2018), in which teachers stated that lack of time, which is restricted by the course curriculum, is the main challenge that they faced when they wanted to integrate culture into language classes. In the current study, some participants cited overcrowded curricula and overcrowded books as challenges (Excerpts 72 and 73). They suggested adding more culturally based content and discussion activities to help teachers integrate culture into language effectively (Excerpts 70 and 74). The results are consistent with Gonen and Sağlam (2012), who have stated that overcrowded curricula present a serious problem for foreign language teachers when they want to integrate culture into language. Generally speaking, overcrowded classrooms, textbook content, and classroom atmosphere have been found to impact language learning in the EFL context significantly, as Khouya (2018) found in his study.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary of Key Findings**

This study was conducted to investigate teachers' perspectives toward integrating culture into language teaching and learning in an EFL context in Saudi Arabia. This study's primary aim was to investigate the reported perceptions and attitudes of English teachers toward culture's role in learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language. In particular, the study sought to examine these EFL teachers' opinions and practices, as well as the challenges that they might face when they want to integrate culture into foreign language teaching. This study's participants comprised 225 full-time teachers who had completed at least a bachelor's degree in English language. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with data collected from a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The present study sought to answer four primary research questions. The first one examined English teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward integrating culture into language learning. The second question examined what teachers understand by integrating culture into an EFL context. The third question investigated the relationship between teachers' perspectives and their practices regarding integrating culture into language teaching and the materials and strategies that they use in their classrooms related to culture. The fourth research question addressed the challenges that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia might face when they want to integrate culture into foreign language teaching.

The present study's results indicated that teachers have a positive attitude toward integrating culture into language teaching. They believe that it can help learners improve their language skills, become tolerant of other people, and better understand their own culture. According to the participants, integrating culture into language teaching can include "developing

attitudes of openness and tolerance toward other people and cultures,” “promoting reflection on cultural differences,” “promoting increased understanding of students’ own culture,” and “promoting the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures.” The findings indicated that teachers include big C culture and little c culture when they refer to culture teaching in foreign language classes. According to Peterson (2004), big C culture themes can include geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, societal norms, legal foundations, core values, history, and cognitive processes, while little “c” culture includes opinions, perspectives, preferences/tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, etc. Furthermore, the results showed that a relationship exists between teachers’ opinions and their practices, namely that teachers’ practices are congruent with their opinions. The findings imply that teachers try to improve students’ intercultural competence by improving their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers use different strategies to integrate culture into language teaching, such as role playing, comparisons, talking about stereotypes, decorating classrooms with posters, group work and discussions, students’ presentations, and writing reports. Teachers also used supplemental resources, realia, video clips, technology, etc., to help them integrate culture into language teaching effectively. However, teachers faced some challenges when they tried to integrate culture into language teaching, such as insufficient class time and large class sizes. The findings indicate that short class periods, overcrowded curricula, and large class sizes are challenging. Overall, most English teachers have a positive attitude toward integrating culture into language teaching in the Saudi context, and they try to put their opinions into practice, but face some challenges.

### **Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations**

Some pedagogical implications and suggestions can be drawn from the study's findings. Most are practical recommendations for people involved in foreign language teaching, such as curriculum designers, policy makers, instructional coordinators, academic program developers, teachers, and teachers' trainers.

The findings indicate that most teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching and believe that this could improve learners' linguistic and intercultural communicative skills. Teachers are highly motivated to integrate culture into language classes, but some do not know how to do it and need training. It is recommended that administrators and universities offer training courses and workshops to improve teachers' skills and help them integrate culture into language studies successfully. In addition, teachers are encouraged to take online or in-person courses and attend workshops to help them improve their teaching skills, particularly their intercultural skills.

Administrators and policy makers should be encouraged to rethink strategies to address overcrowded curricula, insufficient class time, and overcrowded classrooms. This will help teachers significantly when they want to integrate culture into language teaching. Administrators could extend class times or weekly periods, or modify the school calendar and overcrowded curricula. The current study's findings show that teachers found insufficient class time and large class sizes to be big challenges when trying to teach culture in language classes; some also cited textbook content issues and suggest that better curriculum management is needed.

It is recommended that the language teacher's role be redefined. As we know, this role no longer entails only traditional methods of lecturing and teaching grammar and skills. It is important that curriculum designers and program developers take into account that language teachers are not simply language providers: Language classes are no longer teacher-based, as we

know them, but are student-based, and classes also have changed to become more need-based. Thus, integrating culture into language teaching is necessary. Administrators and teachers themselves need to understand teachers' new role and implement it as part of teacher training.

Program developers at universities should take into account that language teaching means not only teaching skills, but also integrating culture, and that teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into teaching and are ready to make this part of daily practice. It is recommended that universities develop academic programs that train teaching students how to teach language effectively and include some culture courses, or they might even add some culturally based courses to existing academic programs. The more professional our teachers are, the more effective the learning process becomes.

### **Limitations of The Study**

The study has some limitations that should be mentioned, the first of which concerns the data collected through a self-reported questionnaire and semi-structured interview responses. It would have been better if the researcher had observed the teachers' practices, as self-reporting might not portray teachers' practices accurately. Furthermore, observing them would have helped the researcher collect a large amount of data on their behaviors (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Observation also would have allowed researcher to compare teachers' behaviors across research contexts, as Mackey and Gass (2015) noted about observation, allowing for the examination of the relationship between teachers' opinions and their practices regarding integrating culture into language teaching. This would have provided additional evidence to validate the study's results. As Cowie (2009) has suggested: "Observation is often used in tandem with other methods of data collection to triangulate or provide additional evidence for a research study."

Second, although the study worked well in the reported context, i.e., teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia, the results still were limited to this context, i.e., the findings cannot be extrapolated to other EFL contexts. EFL teachers' beliefs are affected by the teaching context, as well as cultural and language differences. Each context has its unique language and cultural influence.

Third, the study was limited in scope, i.e., this study focused primarily on teachers' perspectives and practices regarding integrating culture into language studies. It was beyond this study's scope to examine students' textbooks or apply and test intercultural models.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study examined teachers' opinions and practices regarding integrating culture into language teaching in Saudi Arabia. Although the findings indicated that teachers have positive attitudes toward integrating culture into language teaching and that a strong relationship exists between teachers' opinions and their practices, teachers' practices and beliefs might be different in other contexts. Future studies of other EFL contexts are highly recommended to help substantiate the current study's findings. Furthermore, it would be of interest to collect similar data among ESL teachers and compare it with data from EFL teachers to examine any similarities and differences, as well as determine whether teachers notice any advantages from integrating culture into language studies.

Research designs to study the same problem could include other data-collection methods to triangulate the research, such as observations, analyzing students' textbooks, and examining culture-based content and activities, or students' interviews. These tools can help validate the present study's results and enrich the discussion.



Furthermore, to better understand the relationship between teachers' opinions and their practices, focused research on this issue is needed. Instead of examining challenges, it would be better for the study to focus on teachers' opinions and practices, as well as examine their practices using other methods, such as through observation, as mentioned above.

More research is needed to investigate teachers and students' perspectives toward integrating culture into language teaching. The current study investigated teachers' perspectives, but students' perspectives in this context would help validate and substantiate the present study's results.

## References

- Abbasian, G., Kouhpayehzadeh, M., Asgharpour, G. (2015). Iranian EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Target and Source Cultures. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, 8(16), 1-19.
- Al-Amir, B. A.-H. (2017). Female Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Culture in EFL Classrooms at a Saudi University. *English Language Teaching*, 10(6), 28–36.
- Aldera, A. S. (2017). Teaching EFL in Saudi Arabian context: Textbooks and culture. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, (2), 221
- Allo, M. D. (2018). Intercultural Communication in EFL Classrooms. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, Vol 5, Iss 2, pp 159-170 (2018), (2), 159.
- Baltaci, H.S & Taniş,S (2018). The Place of Culture in EFL Classes: Perceptions and Challenges of Pre-Service and In-Service English Teachers. *International Journal of Languages' Education and Teaching*, Vol 6, Iss 2, pp 260-272 (2018), (2), 260
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. London: Pearson.
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36, 81-109.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887
- Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language programs*. New York: Cambridge: University Press
- Bryman, A. (2006) Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6 (6), 97-113

- Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. *Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.*
- Byram, M. (2012) Reflecting on Teaching “Culture” in Foreign Language Education in Newby, D. (Eds). Insights into the European portfolio for student teachers of languages (EPOSTL). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub.
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Byram, M., Holmes, P. & Savvides, N. (2013). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education: questions of theory, practice and research. *The Language Learning Journal*, 41(3), 251-253.
- Cheewasukthaworn, K., & Suwanarak, K. (2017). Exploring Thai EFL Teachers’ Perceptions of How Intercultural Communicative Competence Is Important for Their Students. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, 54, 177–204.
- Cheng, C. (2012). The influence of college EFL teachers’ understandings of intercultural competence on their self-reported pedagogical practices in Taiwan. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 11(1), 164-182
- Clouet, R. (2006) Between one's own culture and the target culture: The language teacher as intercultural mediator. *Porta Linguarium* 5, 53–62
- Cowie, N. (2009). Observation. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (p. 165 - 181) New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Damen, L. (1987). *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension on the Language Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

- Deardorff, D. K. (Ed.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Doganay, Y., & Yergaliyeva, A. M. (2013). The impact of cultural based activities in foreign language teaching at intermediate (B1) level. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 89, 734-740.
- Furstenberg, G. (2010). Making culture the core of the language class: Can it be done? *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 329-332.
- Garrett-Rucks, P. (2016). *Intercultural Competence in Instructed Language Learning: Bridging Theory and Practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Gonen, S., & Saglam, S. (2012). Teaching Culture in The Fl Classroom: Teachers' perspectives. *International Journal of Global Education*, 1(3).
- Havril, A. K. (2015). Improving Intercultural Competence of Female University Students in EFL within Saudi Arabia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 554–566.
- Herron, C., Dubreil, S., Cole, S. P., & Corrie, C. (2000). Using Instructional Video to Teach Culture to Beginning Foreign Language Students. *Calico Journal*, 17(3), 395–429.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). National cultures and corporate cultures. In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (Eds.), *Communication Between Cultures*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across cultures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Holliday, A. (2013) *Understanding intercultural communication:: Negotiating a grammar of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Hua, Z. (2013) *Exploring Intercultural Communication*. *Exploring Intercultural Communication: Language in Action*

- Karabinar, S. & Guler, C. Y. (2012). The attitudes of EFL teachers towards teaching culture and their classroom practices. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(2), 113-126.
- Khouya, Y. B. (2018). Students Demotivating Factors in the EFL Classroom: The Case of Morocco. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(2), 150–159.
- Kluckhohn, C., & Kelly, W.H. (1945). The concept of culture. In R. Linton (Ed.). *The Science of Man in the World Culture*. New York. (pp. 78-105).
- Kourova, A., & Modianos, D. (2013). Inter-cultural awareness and its role in enriching students' communicative competence. *The International HETL Review*, special issue, 60-70.
- Kramersch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (1995) The cultural component of language teaching: *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 8(22)83- 92
- Kramersch, C. (1998) *Language and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kusumaningputri, R. & Widodo, H.P (2018) Promoting Indonesian university students' critical intercultural awareness in tertiary EAL classrooms: The use of digital photograph – mediated intercultural tasks. *System*, 72, 49 – 61
- Liaw, M. L. (2006). E-learning and the development of intercultural competence. *Language Learning & Technology*, 10(3), 49-64.
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2015). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Second edition. Routledge.

- Mao, W. (2009). Teaching culture within and beyond language. *English Language Teaching*, 2(4), 144-148.
- Mirzaei, A., & Forouzandeh, F. (2013). Relationship Between Intercultural Communicative Competence and L2-Learning Motivation of Iranian EFL Learners. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 42 (3), 300-318
- Peterson, B. (2004). *Cultural intelligence: A guide to working with people from other cultures*. Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press.
- Planken, B., van Hooft, A., & Korzilius, H. (2004). Promoting Intercultural Communicative competence through Foreign Language Courses. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 67(3), 308-315.
- Popescu, T., & Iordachescu, G. D. (2015). Raising Students' Intercultural Competence through the Process of Language Learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 2315-2319
- Risager, K. (2007) *Language and Culture Pedagogy: From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*. Clevedon, Multilingual Matters..
- Savin-Baden, M. & Major, C. H. (2013). *Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice*. NY: Routledge.
- Sercu, L. (2005). *Foreign language teachers and intercultural competence: An international investigation*. Clevedon: Cromwell Press
- Sercu, L. (2006). The foreign language and intercultural competence teacher: the acquisition of a new professional identity. *Intercultural Education*, 17(1), 55-72.
- Shukri, N. A. (2014). Second language writing and culture: Issues and challenges from the Saudi learners' perspective. *Arab World English Journal*, 5(3), 190-207.

- Tashakkori A, Creswell, J. (2007) *The new era of mixed methods*. Journal of Mixed Methods Research. 2007; 1:3–7
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *The foundations of mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tran, T. Q., & Duong, T. M. (2018). The effectiveness of the intercultural language communicative teaching model for EFL learners. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second & Foreign Language Education*, 3(1),
- Trochim, W.M. (2006) *The research methods knowledge base, 2nd Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>
- Useem, J., & Useem, R. & Donoghue, J (1963) Men in the Middle of the Third Culture: The Roles of American and Non-Western People in Cross-Cultural Administration. *Human Organization*: Fall 1963, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 169-179.
- Yeganeh M. T., & Raeesi, H. (2015). Developing cultural awareness in EFL classrooms at secondary school level in an Iranian educational context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192(24), 534-542
- Yoo, A. J. (2014). The Effect Hofstedes Cultural Dimensions Have on Student-Teacher Relationships In The Korean Context. *Journal of International Education Research (JIER)*, 10(2), 171-178.

## APPENDIX A

### Permission to Adapt Questionnaire

Dear Monera

Of course you can!  
Best wishes,  
Lies Sercu

Prof. dr. Lies Sercu  
KU Leuven - University of Leuven  
Faculty of Arts, Blijde-Inkomststraat 21, POBOX 3308, 3000 Leuven, Belgium.  
Kantoor: Lett 01.32  
[www.kuleuven.be/cv/u0010757e.htm](http://www.kuleuven.be/cv/u0010757e.htm)

...



Monera Salem Almohawes (mslmhwes)

Tue 2/5/2019 7:53 AM

lies.sercu@arts.kuleuven.be



Dear Dr. Sercu,

This is Monera Almohawes a PhD student in applied linguistics at The University of Memphis. I am working on a study about integrating culture into EFL. I was wondering if I could adapt the questions that you used in the questionnaire in your study: Sercu, L. (2005). Foreign language teachers and intercultural competence: An international investigation. Clevedon: Cromwell Press.

Thank you and look forward to hearing from you.  
Monera



## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire

#### **Your gender**

##### **Select your age group**

18-24 years old

25-34 years old

35-44 years old

45-54 years old

55-64 years old

65-74 years old

75 years or older

##### **What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?**

High school graduate

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate degree

##### **Select your prior years of teaching experience**

0-2

3-5

6-10

11-15

16-20

21-25

26 or more

##### **Your institution is**

School

University

##### **Your institution would be best described as**

Public

Private

##### **Did you travel outside Saudi Arabia**

Yes

No

##### **Do you have the feeling that you would like to devote more time to integrate culture teaching during your foreign language teaching classes?**

Please tick the answer that best matches your opinion.

Yes, very much so

Yes, up to a certain extent

No, not particularly

No, not at all

No opinion

**How is your teaching time distributed over ‘language teaching’ and ‘culture teaching’?**

Please tick the option that best corresponds with the average distribution of teaching time over ‘language teaching’ and ‘culture teaching’.

100% language teaching–0% culture teaching

80% language teaching–20% culture teaching

60% language teaching–40% culture teaching

40% language teaching–60% culture teaching

20% language teaching–80% culture teaching

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>How do you perceive the objectives of foreign language teaching?</b>					
Enthuse my students for learning foreign languages.					
Promote my students' familiarity with the culture of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken.					
Assist my students to acquire a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow them to read literary works in the foreign language.					
Promote the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures.					
Promote the acquisition of learning skills that will be useful for learning other foreign languages.					
Promote the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes.					
Assist my students in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture.					
Assist my students in developing a better understanding of the target culture.					
Assist my students to respect other cultures and appreciate diversity.					
<b>What do you understand by ‘culture teaching’ in a foreign language teaching context?</b>					
Provide information about the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign culture.					
Provide information about daily life and routines.					
Provide information about shared values and beliefs.					

Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, movies, etc.)					
Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other people and cultures					
Promote reflection on cultural differences.					
Promote increased understanding of students' own culture.					
Promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures.					
Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.					
<b>Intercultural foreign language teaching: Your opinion</b>					
In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.					
It is very important to integrate culture in language classroom.					
It is very important to prompt both cultures students' own culture and target culture.					
A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society.					
When students understand the target culture this will help them to use the language appropriately.					
Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently proficiency in the foreign language.					
Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school.					
It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way.					
I would like to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching.					
Intercultural education has no effect on students' attitudes.					
The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.					
In international contacts misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.					
Foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.					
It is important that students acquire intercultural competence.					

When students improve their cultural knowledge, this will improve their linguistics skills.					
When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.					
Every subject, not just English, should promote the acquisition of intercultural skills.					
A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of a foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society.					
If one wants to be able to achieve anything at all as regards intercultural understanding one should use texts written in the mother tongue and discuss these texts in the mother tongue, even when in a foreign language classroom.					
Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. You have to separate the two.					
I would like to teach intercultural competence through my foreign language teaching.					
Intercultural education reinforces students' already existing stereotypes of other people and cultures.					
Providing additional cultural information makes students more tolerant towards other cultures and people.					
Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences.					
Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students' understanding of their own culture.					
<b>Culture in foreign language teaching (practice)</b>					
Integrating culture into language teaching is a challenge.					
Class time is a challenge to integrate culture into language teaching.					
Number of students in class is a challenge when I want to integrating culture into language teaching.					
Textbook content is a challenge when I want to integrating culture into language teaching.					
I ask my students to think about the image that the media promote of the foreign country.					
I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture.					

I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture.					
I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture.					
I ask my students to notice the difference between their own culture and the target culture.					
I use videos or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.					
I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.					
I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country.					
I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom, if I could.					
I ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language.					
I ask my students to participate in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.					
I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom.					
I decorate my classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture.					
I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.					
I touch upon an aspect of the foreign culture regarding which I feel negatively disposed.					
I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.					

## APPENDIX C

### IRB Approval

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

March 1, 2019

PI Name: Monera Almohawes

Co-Investigators:

Advisor and/or Co-PI: Emily Thrush

Submission Type: Initial

Title: Investigating Teachers' Perspectives Toward Integrating Culture into Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia.

IRB ID : #PRO-FY2019-364

Expedited Approval: March 1, 2019

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

1. When the project is finished a completion submission is required
2. Any changes to the approved protocol requires board approval prior to implementation
3. When necessary submit an incident/adverse events for board review
4. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at [citiprogram.org](http://citiprogram.org) every 2 years

For additional questions or concerns please contact us at [irb@memphis.edu](mailto:irb@memphis.edu) or 901.6783.2705

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

## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent Form

#### Consent for Research Participation

---

<b>Title</b>	Investigating Teachers' Perspectives Toward Integrating Culture into Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia.
--------------	--

<b>Researcher(s)</b>	Monera Almohawes, University of Memphis (PhD student) Dr. Emily Thrush, University of Memphis ( advisor)
----------------------	---

#### Researchers Contact Information

mslmhwes@memphis.edu  
ethrush@memphis.edu.

---

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher(s) any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of about 300 people to do so.

#### Key Information for You to Consider

**Voluntary Consent:** You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty of loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research is to investigate teachers' attitudes, perspectives and practice in terms of the role of culture in learning and teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the study seeks to examine teachers' awareness of the importance of that role in improving learners' intercultural

competence, and the challenges that they might face when they want to integrate culture into language teaching.

**Duration:** It is expected that your participation will last 5-8 minutes to complete the survey and 10-15 minutes to complete the interview.

**Procedures and Activities:** You will be asked to complete an online survey and then a follow-up interview with the researcher.

**Risk:** Some of the foreseeable risk or discomforts of your participation is that the interviews might take time.

Benefits:

No direct benefits but the researcher hope to investigate teachers' opinion toward integrating culture into language studies in Saudi Arabia.

**Alternatives:** Participation is voluntary, and the only alternative is to not participate

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

You are being invited to take part in a research study about Integrating Culture into Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are teaching English in Saudi Arabia and we want to ask you about integrating culture in language teaching. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 300 people to do so.

## **WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?**

The person in charge of this study is Monera Almohawes (Lead Investigator, LI) of University of Memphis Department of English. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Emily Thrush [Advisor].) There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?**

By doing this study, we hope to investigate teachers' attitudes, perspectives and practice in terms of the role of culture in learning and teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the study seeks to examine teachers' awareness of the importance of that role in



improving learners' intercultural competence, and the challenges that they might face when they want to integrate culture into language teaching.

### **ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

If you are not an English teacher in Saudi Arabia, you are excluded from participating in this study.

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

By accepting to volunteer in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey will take about 5-8 minutes to complete. You might be also asked to volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview. The interview can be conducted either online or by phone. The interview will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

### **WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?**

The online survey consists of demographic questions (your background information) and a scale of questions about integrating culture into language teaching. The questions are about four main things:

- 1) How do you perceive the objectives of foreign language teaching?
- 2) What do you understand by 'culture teaching' in a foreign language teaching context?
- 3) Intercultural foreign language teaching: (Your opinion)
- 4) Culture in foreign language teaching (Your practice)

You are presented with 67 statements and are asked to choose your level of agreement with each statement (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)

If you decide to participate in the interview, your answers will be audio recorded and you will be asked questions such as:

Why and why not you think that it is important to integrate culture into a foreign language teaching?

What are the challenges that you might face in integrating culture into a foreign language teaching in Saudi Arabia?

How do you find English textbooks in terms of integrating culture into language teaching?

How do you find class materials in terms of integrating culture into language teaching?

What do you think about curriculum, syllabus, class time and students' number in the class?

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

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

### **WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand

important things about integrating culture into learning and teaching English as a foreign language

### **DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?**

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

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

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

### **WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?**

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

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

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

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?**

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

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

This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give came from you. All data will be kept in Google drive (personal account) to retrieve and combine data easily and securely from the researcher laptop. For your privacy, all survey data and interview records will be kept in a digital file under the researcher Google drive account and will be destroyed after the study is completed. There will be no records to keep after writing the results of the study.

### **CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?**

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

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

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

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Monera Almohawes at [msلمhwes@memphis.edu](mailto:mسلمhwes@memphis.edu). You may also contact the study advisor, Dr. Emily Thrush at [ethrush@memphis.edu](mailto:ethrush@memphis.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

### **WHAT IF NEW INFORMATION IS LEARNED DURING THE STUDY THAT MIGHT AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE?**

If you would like to participate in a follow-up interview, please contact the investigator Monera Almohawes at [mسلمhwes@memphis.edu](mailto:mسلمhwes@memphis.edu). If you participate in the interview your identifying information will not be associated with your responses except for the study related information and variables such as: age, gender, education level, teaching experience and other important factors.

This consent form will be included at the beginning of the survey and participants will be asked to continue if they agree to participate in this study. This consent form will be also given at the beginning of the interviews and participants will be asked to continue if they agree to participate in the interview.