

Manifestations of Intercultural Competence in EFL Classrooms

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31918/twejer.2582.20>

Published: 10/08/2025

Abstract

Intercultural Competence, as the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, has become a fundamental element of language education in today's globalized world. This study investigates the manifestations of intercultural competence in EFL classrooms, based on teachers' perspectives, strategies, and difficulties. Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence serves as a central framework for this study. A mixed-method approach was implemented, using questionnaires and interviews with EFL teachers at Salahaddin University. The findings indicate a strong consensus among teachers about the importance of integrating cultural learning alongside language instruction. Teachers believe that encouraging intercultural competence helps students become more confident, open, and prepared for global communication, as well as improving their language proficiency. Teachers actively incorporate strategies such as authentic materials, group discussions, and digital tools to foster students' intercultural skills, though integration varies by subject. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for curriculum reforms, targeted teacher training, improved resources, and institutional support to strengthen intercultural education. The findings offer valuable insights for curriculum developers and educators, aiming to better prepare students for communication in multicultural settings.

Keyword: Teachers' Perspectives, EFL Classrooms, Intercultural Competence, Cultural Diversity.

Manifestations of Intercultural Competence in EFL Classrooms

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Introduction

Recent societal changes have increased the call for the integration of intercultural learning into EFL education. To engage in meaningful communications in real-world settings, students must develop cultural awareness and effective interaction skills (Gogolin, 2002). The role of cultural sensitivity becomes more significant in teaching and learning, as communication is influenced by various cultural aspects (Byram, 2008; Kramsch, 1993). This study emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness in language education. University EFL learners often face challenges that prevent their academic success. For example, language anxiety is a key concern, which manifests as fear when engaging in English communication and often leads to reduced classroom participation (Hamamorad, 2020). In addition, stereotyping, negative attitudes toward other cultures, and misinterpretations may cause a limited understanding of intercultural issues. Such gaps in intercultural awareness contribute to social isolation, hinders the development of effective cross-cultural relationships, and can prevent students from being open-minded and adaptable in multicultural settings (Hang & Zhang, 2023). Additionally, weak communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, make it challenging for students to express themselves effectively and establish meaningful connections within the academic community (Odağ, Wallin, & De Santis, 2015). Placing cross-cultural content in the curriculum has been emphasized to enhance students' knowledge, emotional

intelligence, and behavioral adaptability, thereby improving their overall intercultural competence (Milani, 2018). Thus, further research is essential to explore effective methods for enhancing intercultural competence among EFL students.

The study focuses on Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which is one of the foundational and most influential frameworks. This model has been developed from a narrow focus on grammar and vocabulary toward a more comprehensive approach that integrates cultural learning into language education (Byram, 2000), providing a framework that educators can use to teach students how to engage with cultural diversity (Byram & Feng, 2006). This model comprises five principal components.

As the first component of Byram's model, *Attitudes* focuses on cultivating specific attitudes toward cultural diversity, which enable students to engage in intercultural interactions with empathy and open-mindedness. The second component is *Knowledge*, which encompasses a critical knowledge of one's own cultural background in addition to comprehending the behaviors of other cultures. *Skills of Interpreting and Relating*, the third key component, refers to the ability to interpret and relate to cultural differences. Interpreting refers to the capacity to understand the meaning behind behaviors and practices from a different culture (Byram, 1997). While relating, as described by Byram (2000), involves putting oneself in the place of others from different cultural backgrounds and trying to see the world through their perspective. The fourth component represents *Skills of Discovery and Interaction* within intercultural contexts. Discovery refers to the learner's capacity to explore and acquire knowledge about a new culture independently (Byram, 2000). Interaction, in this context, requires the learner to participate actively in real-life intercultural exchanges. In the language classroom, teachers can foster this skill by encouraging learners to engage in authentic

communicative situations where they must use both their language skills and cultural knowledge (Meyer, 2010). Finally, *Critical Cultural Awareness*, as the fifth component, involves the ability to reflect critically on one's own and others' cultural values and practices (Byram, 1997, as cited in El-Kafri, 2023). As Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) argue, critical cultural awareness encourages learners to question stereotypes and engage in deeper reflections on the power dynamics that shape intercultural encounters.

The research aims to answer the following three core questions that shape the focus of this study.

- 1) How do teachers perceive the importance of intercultural competence in language learning?
- 2) How is intercultural competence incorporated into EFL classroom activities, teaching strategies, and materials?
- 3) What are the obstacles teachers face in promoting intercultural competence?

1. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

1.1 The Role of Intercultural Competence

Cross-cultural communications are more important than ever as the globe gets linked, particularly in educational settings where students interact from many cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997). Though complete IC is still unattainable, as remarked by the Council of Europe (2014), continuous involvement in intercultural interactions results in a slow improvement.

Different theories and models guide individuals to combine their understanding and abilities with their cultural outlook to successfully interact with people from diverse backgrounds, such as Byram's Model of Intercultural Competence, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, Cultural Intelligence developed by Earley and Ang (2003), Hall's high-context

and low-context communication, and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory. Since fields including education, business, and social work depend on regular cultural interactions, the growing global connections make intercultural competence indispensable (Baker, 2015). In addition, Gertsen (1990) notes that IC encourages social inclusion and cultural sensitivity, both of which are vital for reducing prejudice and advancing social cohesiveness in increasingly varied populations. Along with the skills in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary for English language education, Sevimeh-Sahin (2020) claims that culture is one of the five basic competencies needed alongside speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In line with this, Risager (2007) claims that students must be able to adapt their communication styles to different cultural settings and grasp the complicated link between language and culture to fully grasp how language works in practice.

Martinez (2019) also identifies that by reducing cultural shock, intercultural competency is essential for students studying abroad to develop their academic performance. Apart from that, Hammer (2012) argues that IC is the capacity of an individual to simultaneously maintain their social relationships and succeed in their working life. Menlimuratova (2023) also highlights that students with such competency exhibit some traits, such as critical knowledge of one's own and other cultures, the ability to act as a mediator, the capacity to see the links among many civilizations, understanding one culture in terms of another, and awareness of their worldviews, beyond the consistency of their ideas.

1.2 Activities and Pedagogical Approaches

There is a strong need for further research on exploring effective teaching methods and educational approaches to cultivate intercultural competence among students. In order to encourage IC in their lessons, EFL teachers employ a variety of instructional techniques. Communicative Language Teaching, as a

pedagogical approach, helps students perform better in real-world situations by strengthening language proficiency (Savignon, 2002). The primary goals of IC's development are directly supported by Task-Based Language Teaching as an instructional strategy, which supports students in developing their multicultural problem-solving skills (Willis, 1996). According to Brinton et al. (2003), Content-Based Instruction helps students develop their critical thinking skills, intercultural awareness, and in-depth study of cultural subjects. By giving access to global viewpoints, the incorporation of media, technology, or online platforms also improves intercultural learning. Digital tools produce rich learning environments that increase students' exposure to different cultures (Dooly, 2008). Students can communicate and collaborate in real time on academic projects with peers from around the world through virtual exchange programs. Furthermore, group work is essential for enhancing learning and intercultural competencies in multicultural classrooms (Croese, 2011). It is a useful teaching strategy for fostering IC, which empowers students to interact meaningfully with their peers and grow into global citizens. Moreover, humor exposure, as emphasized by Bell and Pomerantz (2015), enables students to develop intercultural dialogue because it helps them recognize cultural stereotypes and comprehend humor as a cultural form.

1.3 Challenges of Intercultural Competence

Acquiring intercultural competence is not without challenges. For instance, Achieng (2023) acknowledges that a significant problem that contributes to prejudice, misconceptions, and stereotyping is the lack of understanding of different cultures among EFL teachers. A lack of resources and training for teachers frequently results in misconceptions about cultural differences, which may fail to handle students' different needs. However, as Risager (2007) points out, time management is still a major obstacle in EFL instruction for introducing

cultural subjects and fostering cultural awareness. Additionally, Pope (2020) pinpoints that a further barrier to students' development of empathy and intercultural sensitivity is their lack of exposure to cultural experiences. Furthermore, Tatum (2021) contends that since students have preconceived ideas about different cultures, stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings commonly occur in classrooms.

The use of stereotypes obstructs meaningful communication. Another issue, according to Banks (2019), is that some students are reluctant to learn about other cultures because they are resistant to new ideas. This resistance stems from a lack of enthusiasm, a fear of change, or even a belief in the superiority of their cultural identity. Byram (1997) also reveals that educators frequently struggle with the issue of Western culture being overgeneralized. Non-Western perspectives may be marginalized by the widespread assumption in educational institutions that Western norms and values are universal. However, Deardorff (2006) emphasizes that measuring and evaluating intercultural competency is another difficulty, in which IC's subtle and dynamic nature is not adequately captured by the majority of standardized tests.

2. Methodology

The study uses a mixed-method approach to explore manifestations of IC in educational settings, focusing on Byram's ICC model. The data were gathered from teachers' views and experiences regarding such competence through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015). In the study, 16 EFL teachers were selected for questionnaire participation, and eight of them were interviewed in a purposive sampling at Salahaddin University, College of Languages and College of Education, English departments. All questionnaires employ a Likert-scale format. The items focus on assessing how teachers view IC through their teaching practices. Open-ended interview questions guide teachers to examine their educational encounters with students during EFL instruction (McKinley & Rose, 2020). The interviews are first audio-recorded, and then transcribed for analysis. The data collected from the interviews undergo thematic analysis for interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While descriptive statistics is used to analyze quantitative data to identify consistent trends regarding teachers' attitudes and behaviors about such competency (Dörnyei, 2007). The following table shows the questionnaire reliability result based on Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha reliability for the questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.802	44

Table 1 shows the result of Cronbach's Alpha, which indicates good internal consistency among the questionnaire items, suggesting that the scale measures the intended construct and serves as a reliable tool.

3. Findings

This section presents the key findings from the qualitative and quantitative data collected from interviews and questionnaires, describing teachers' viewpoints, attitudes, and strategies about intercultural competence in EFL settings.

A structured questionnaire containing 39 closed-ended items is distributed to 16 EFL teachers to obtain quantitative data based on teachers' experiences and activities regarding intercultural understanding. The items focus on teachers' perceptions about students' intercultural attitudes, behaviors, communication skills, and interactions with cultural content in language learning. The responses were analyzed using a Likert scale ranging from "1- Strongly Agree" to "5- Strongly Disagree". Table 2 displays the demographic information of the respondents.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Information

Characteristics of the Respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	62.5
	Female	6	37.5
Age	25-34	2	12.5
	35-44	8	50
	45-54	5	31.25
	55+	1	6.25
Nations	Kurd	13	81.25
	Arab	2	12.5
	Assyrian	1	6.25
Years of Teaching	3-5	1	6.25
	6-10	3	18.75
	11+	12	75
Academic Title	Asst. Lecturer	7	43.75
	Lecturer	2	12.5
	Asst. Professor	7	43.75

The respondents' demographic information includes their gender, age, nations, years of teaching as an EFL teacher, and academic title. The results obtained from the questionnaires are divided into three sections, each of which is aligned with one of the research questions.

Table 3 indicates the teachers' responses regarding the role of intercultural competence in EFL classrooms, including the frequencies and percentages of the responses.

Table 3: Teachers' Responses on the Importance of Intercultural Competence in EFL Classrooms

Items		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I believe that my students should learn about cultural differences in language learning. -١	Agree	5	31.25	31.25	31.25
	Strongly Agree	10	62.5	62.5	93.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I find it useful if my lessons include content related to intercultural competence. -٢	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Strongly Agree	8	50.0	50.0	93.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
In my opinion, my students are able to adapt their communication style when interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds, especially in group work activities. -٣	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	81.25
	Neutral	2	12.5	12.5	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I believe that learning about cultural norms helps my students communicate more effectively. -٤	Agree	10	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Strongly Agree	6	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Agree	9	56.25	56.25	56.25

I feel that my students effectively handle misunderstandings that arise due to cultural differences. -٥	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	68.75
	Neutral	4	25.0	25.0	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
My students actively engage with media in the target language to learn about cultural trends and current events. -٦	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	62.5
	Neutral	6	37.5	37.5	100.0
I believe it's important to consider cultural differences while planning language activities. -٧	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	7	43.75	43.75	93.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I feel delighted when my students interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. -٨	Agree	6	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Strongly Agree	10	62.5	62.5	100.0
I am satisfied that my students have self-awareness, empathy, and respect towards different cultural backgrounds. -٩	Agree	5	31.25	31.25	31.25
	Strongly Agree	5	31.25	31.25	62.5
	Neutral	6	37.5	37.5	100.0
I think my students show interest in discussing cultural differences during lessons. -١٠	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	4	25.0	25.0	93.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I believe that my students make meaningful connections between cultural contexts and language expressions (e.g., understanding idioms or slang). -١١	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	4	25.0	25.0	75.0
	Neutral	2	12.5	12.5	87.5
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
	Agree	12	75.0	75.0	75.0

I trust that my - ^{۱۲} students feel comfortable when interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds.	Neutral	4	25.0	25.0	100.0
I assume that my - ^{۱۳} students respond appropriately to cultural differences in both verbal and non-verbal communication.	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	75.0
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I reckon that my - ^{۱۴} students have a solid understanding of how culture influences language use in different social contexts (e.g., greetings, politeness norms, humor).	Agree	9	56.25	56.25	56.25
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	62.5
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	81.25
	Disagree	3	18.75	18.75	100.0
In my view, when - ^{۱۵} discussing religious differences in class, my students are respectful and open-minded, even when they encounter beliefs or practices unfamiliar to them.	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	3	18.75	18.75	87.5
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I believe that my - ^{۱۶} students actively participate in class discussions after watching documentaries or series that highlight intercultural issues.	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	81.25
	Neutral	2	12.5	12.5	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I suppose that my - ^{۱۷} students are	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	62.5

resistant or uninterested in learning about cultural differences.	Disagree	6	37.5	37.5	100.0
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In Table 3, teachers had a positive attitude towards IC in language learning. According to the data, participants entirely agreed that cultural understanding is essential for language instruction. The majority of teachers (93.75%) agreed or strongly agreed that it is beneficial to include cultural content in language classes and thought that students should be taught about cultural differences.

In interaction with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, especially in group projects, many educators emphasized that their students are equipped to adjust their communication styles. For this reason, 81.25% of the teachers agreed that students adapt to interactions in cross-cultural groups. Regarding the importance of cultural norms in communication, there was another strong point of consensus; nearly all respondents agreed that students' communication skills improve when they comprehend cultural norms. There are different viewpoints about students' abilities to handle culturally-based misunderstandings. Although 12.5% strongly agreed, 56.25% agreed that students effectively manage such misunderstandings, a significant 25% selected the neutral option, and the remaining respondents disagreed. Responses to questions about students' media-based exposure to cultural content revealed a certain amount of hesitancy, when 50% of the respondents agreed, 12.5% strongly agreed, and 37.5% were neutral.

Additionally, respondents acknowledged the importance of cultural sensitivity in their instruction, since 50% agreed and 43.75% strongly agreed that they take cultural differences into account when organizing language activities, with only 6.25% remaining neutral. In addition, all participants reported positive feelings about their students who feel comfortable when interacting with

individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Teachers' views on their students' communication skills were generally positive but slightly more varied; 31.25% agreed, 31.25% strongly agreed, and 37.5% were neutral about their students' self-awareness, empathy, and respect for cultural diversity.

Students' interest in discussing cultural differences during lessons received more positive ratings. 93.75% of teachers emphasized that their students are interested in these conversations. This demonstrates a high degree of interest, at least when these subjects are covered in class. Teachers' responses were somewhat more divided when asked if students make connections among language expressions and cultural contexts, with 50% agreeing, 25% strongly agreeing, 12.5% being neutral, and 12.5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Likewise, only 62.5% of respondents agreed that students understand how language is influenced by culture in various social contexts, while 18.75% were neutral and another 18.75% disagreed. Regarding sensitive topics like religion, the results are notably optimistic, with positive student behaviors extending into more sensitive cultural contexts, 68.75% of respondents agreed, 18.75% strongly agreed, and 12.5% disagreed when asked if students were respectful and open-minded when discussing religious differences, indicating that most students have a tolerant and open-minded attitude even in sensitive discussions.

Additionally, most teachers agreed that students participate in class discussions after watching documentaries about intercultural issues, compared to 12.5% who were neutral and 6.25% who disagreed. A more divided view was noted when asked if students are resistant or uninterested in learning about cultural differences, 43.75% agreed, 18.75% were neutral, and 37.5% disagreed. This variation revealed that although a significant number of students may not be interested, others are willing to interact with cross-cultural content.

Table 4 presents the teachers' responses about the strategies and approaches to implement IC in EFL classes.

Table 4: Teachers' Responses Concerning the Strategies and Approaches in Incorporating IC in Classrooms

Items		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I use cultural references in my lessons to help my students understand the language better. -١٨	Agree	13	81.25	81.25	81.25
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I use textbooks, short stories, videos, and resources that reflect diverse cultures. -١٩	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	3	18.75	18.75	87.5
	Neutral	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
I encourage my students to share their own cultural perspectives during lessons. -٢٠	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	4	25.0	25.0	93.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I inspire my students to maintain intercultural competence through group discussions and presentations on cultural topics. -٢١	Agree	9	56.25	56.25	56.25
	Strongly Agree	5	31.25	31.25	87.5
	Neutral	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
I frequently include role-play activities that focus on cultural scenarios. -٢٢	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	56.25

	Neutral	6	37.5	37.5	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I incorporate discussions related to religious practices and traditions into my lessons to promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity. -۲۳	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	56.25
	Neutral	5	31.25	31.25	87.5
	Disagree	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
I incorporate collaborative projects that involve exploring different cultures. -۲۴	Agree	9	56.25	56.25	56.25
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	62.5
	Neutral	5	31.25	31.25	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I incorporate real-world materials, such as documentaries or films from the target culture, to enhance my students' understanding of cultural issues. -۲۵	Agree	11	68.75	68.75	68.75
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	81.25
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	100.0
I use humor in the target language to help students develop a deeper understanding of cultural subtleties and communication styles (e.g., sarcasm, irony, or wordplay). -۲۶	Agree	8	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	2	12.5	12.5	62.5
	Neutral	4	25.0	25.0	87.5
	Disagree	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
In my classes, I promote the idea of "culture as a lens" to better understand cultural behaviors. -۲۷	Agree	10	62.5	62.5	62.5
	Strongly Agree	3	18.75	18.75	81.25

	Neutral	3	18 .75	18 .75	100.0
I encourage my students to -٢٨ compare their own cultures with others through activities like group discussions or presentations.	Agree	10	62 .5	62 .5	62.5
	Strongly Agree	4	25 .0	25 .0	87.5
	Neutral	2	12 .5	12 .5	100.0
I introduce vocabularies, idioms, -٢٩ and expressions that are tied to specific cultural contexts (e.g., holidays, customs, or societal norms).	Agree	10	62 .5	62 .5	62.5
	Strongly Agree	6	37 .5	37 .5	100.0
I use topics such as social media, -٣٠ migration, and human rights to spark discussions and teach empathy and understanding across cultures.	Agree	7	43 .75	43 .75	43.75
	Strongly Agree	4	25 .0	25 .0	68.75
	Neutral	5	31 .25	31 .25	100.0

Table 4 contains 13 questionnaire items and teachers' responses about the use of strategies and approaches to incorporate intercultural content in EFL courses.

The results closely matched Byram's ICC model, demonstrating a strong propensity to incorporate intercultural elements into classroom activities. Using cultural references to develop language understanding was reported by the majority of teachers (81.25% agreed and 12.5% strongly agreed), indicating a strong commitment to fostering understanding of diverse cultures. This is supported further by the fact that 68.75% of respondents agreed and 18.75% strongly agreed that they use a variety of cultural resources, including stories and videos. This shows that they intentionally expose themselves to a range of cultural contexts, which is crucial for the development of intercultural knowledge and comprehension skills. With 68.75% agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing, students

were also encouraged to share their cultural perspectives. This practice supports the development of critical cultural awareness and social interaction, enabling students to relate and compare different viewpoints, which is integral to intercultural communication.

Similarly, group discussions and presentations on cultural topics show strategies that encourage interaction and discovery skills, with 56.25% agreeing and 31.25% strongly agreeing. Even though the majority of teachers expressed a strong support for these cross-cultural tactics, there is some variation in the responses, which are more scattered when it comes to role-play and humor. For instance, just 50% of respondents agreed and 6.25% strongly agreed with the use of cultural role-play, whereas 37.5% were neutral, and the remaining respondents disagreed. This implies that experiential approaches should be adopted with greater caution or variety. In a similar way, the difficulty of interpreting indirect linguistic cues like irony and sarcasm in language learning is reflected in humor, which is often culturally nuanced. Topics with strong cultural influences, like religious practices and traditions, received a range of responses, with 50% agreeing and 6.25% strongly agreeing, 31.25% remaining neutral, and 12.5% disagreeing. This may indicate that teachers are reluctant to address sensitive topics despite their relevance to intercultural awareness, and similar caution appears in collaborative projects, possibly due to curricular constraints. Teachers' support of using real-world materials like documentaries showed that they aligned with Byram's emphasis on finding and analyzing cultural contexts, while the promotion of "culture as a lens" (62.5% agreed, 18.75% strongly agreed) affirmed a critical pedagogical perspective, raising awareness of implicit cultural frameworks.

The greatest consensus appeared due to introducing culturally contextual vocabulary, idioms, and expressions, in which 62.5% of respondents agreed and

37.5% strongly agreed, pinpointing a practical language-integrated method of teaching culture, which supports both knowledge acquisition and interpretive skills. Finally, 43.75% of respondents agreed and 25% strongly agreed with the use of current and globally relevant topics like social media and human rights, indicating a moderate but significant engagement with larger socio-cultural discourses that foster critical awareness.

Regarding the challenges of incorporating cultural content in language learning, the following table presents the findings based on teachers' responses to nine items from the questionnaire about the challenges teachers encounter when cultivating cultural content in their lesson plans.

Table 5: Findings on the challenges teachers encounter in promoting IC in the classroom

Items		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cultural misunderstandings often arise during students' interactions in the classroom. -۳۱	Agree	9	56.25	56.25	56.25
	Strongly Agree	3	18.75	18.75	75.0
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I struggle to find suitable materials that effectively address both language and cultural aspects. -۳۲	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	50.0
	Neutral	5	31.25	31.25	81.25
	Disagree	3	18.75	18.75	100.0
My students identify their own cultural biases when discussing cultural differences in language learning activities. -۳۳	Agree	6	37.5	37.5	37.5
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	43.75
	Neutral	7	43.75	43.75	87.5
	Disagree	2	12.5	12.5	100.0

Class time is too limited to have meaningful cultural discussions. -۳۴	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Strongly Agree	4	25.0	25.0	68.75
	Neutral	1	6.25	6.25	75.0
	Disagree	3	18.75	18.75	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I encounter challenges when my students refuse to participate in cultural discussions. -۳۵	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Neutral	7	43.75	43.75	87.5
	Disagree	2	12.5	12.5	100.0
I have difficulty in keeping a balance between language learning and cultural instruction. -۳۶	Agree	3	18.75	18.75	18.75
	Strongly Agree	3	18.75	18.75	37.5
	Neutral	3	18.75	18.75	56.25
	Disagree	6	37.5	37.5	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I find it challenging to assess my students' ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. -۳۷	Agree	5	31.25	31.25	31.25
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	37.5
	Neutral	7	43.75	43.75	81.25
	Disagree	2	12.5	12.5	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
My students feel embarrassed when they make cultural mistakes or experience misunderstandings in front of peers. -۳۸	Agree	7	43.75	43.75	43.75
	Strongly Agree	4	25.0	25.0	68.75
	Neutral	4	25.0	25.0	93.75
	Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0
I struggle to explain cultural differences without resorting to stereotyping. -۳۹	Agree	5	31.25	31.25	31.25
	Strongly Agree	1	6.25	6.25	37.5
	Neutral	6	37.5	37.5	75.0

	Disagree	3	18.75	18.75	93.75
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.25	6.25	100.0

Table 5 demonstrates teachers' views about their obstacles in connection with fostering cultural awareness in EFL classrooms. Concerning the third research question, the data showed a variety of challenges, identifying both typical difficulties and individual differences in experience. 56.25% of teachers agreed and 18.75% strongly agreed that cultural misunderstandings often occur during student interactions. This implies that students frequently have difficulty interacting with people from different cultures, reflecting challenges in the development of Byram's skills of discovery and interaction. It also highlights the necessity of providing students with more organized chances to practice and reflect on these abilities.

Teachers also face difficulties in finding appropriate materials that address both language and culture, with 43.75% agreeing and 6.25% strongly agreeing, while 31.25% were neutral. The participants who disagreed suggest that some teachers may already have access to their culturally-rich materials, but for many, this is a practical challenge. Lack of available and integrated resources hinders their ability to consistently incorporate intercultural content into lessons, thereby impacting the development of students' cultural knowledge and communication skills. Another issue involves students' ability to recognize their own cultural biases during intercultural discussions. Only 6.25% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed that this happens in their classrooms, while 43.75% stayed neutral. This neutrality might mirror uncertainty about whether students are developing this level of self-awareness or perhaps a lack of strategies to effectively draw out insightful reflections. Time constraints emerged as another widely shared concern,

with 43.75% agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing that there is not enough time for meaningful cultural discussion in the class. Interestingly, 25% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, pointing out that a minority of teachers have found ways to integrate cultural components despite these limitations, possibly through creative curriculum design. Student resistance was also reported, with 43.75% agreeing and an equal percentage choosing neutral when asked whether students refused to participate in cultural discussions. This points to a classroom dynamic that may not always be helpful to intercultural engagement, due to student discomfort, disinterest, or lack of confidence. Such resistance complicates the task of fostering open attitudes and meaningful cultural interaction, and it requires strategies that make students feel more motivated to engage.

Regarding the balance between language instruction with cultural content, 37.5% disagreed that this is a problem, while 18.75% agreed, 18.75% strongly agreed, and 18.75% remained neutral. This range shows that while some teachers have successfully integrated both domains, others are still negotiating how to do so effectively. For those who find it challenging, the obstacle may be attributed to the demands of the curriculum, the pressure of assessment, or inadequate training in intercultural methodologies.

Assessment of intercultural skills is another complicating challenge. Thus, 31.25% of the respondents agreed and 6.25% strongly agreed that they find it difficult to assess students' intercultural communication abilities, while 43.75% were neutral. This high neutrality implies either uncertainty about assessment methods or limited use of specific IC assessment tools. Without clear ways to evaluate students' progress in cultural communication, teachers may feel less confident in the effectiveness of their instruction in this area. Additionally, emotional barriers emerged, in which 69.25% expressed agreement that students feel embarrassed when making cultural mistakes in front of peers. This may

prevent students' active participation and taking initiative, both of which are important for developing intercultural competence. Teachers must not only instruct but also manage emotional dynamics and create supportive classroom environments where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities. In addition, the barrier of avoiding stereotyping while explaining cultural differences was emphasized by 31.25% of teachers. Another 37.5% chose neutral, and 25% disagreed to varying degrees. Developing critical cultural awareness requires attention to details since basic generalized information should be avoided in teaching.

However, in qualitative research, the interview is the main technique used to gather data from each participant's experiences, attitudes, and opinions about certain occurrences (McKinley & Rose, 2020). Thus, this study also includes semi-structured interviews with eight EFL teachers in a purposive sampling. Teachers are required to answer 15 open-ended questions. The findings are organized into three sections, each corresponding to one of the research questions.

Regarding teachers' perceptions on IC's role in EFL classrooms, there is a consensus among the teachers since language and culture are strongly interrelated. Hence, without learning about the culture, students will not be able to attain success in their language study. All the teachers agreed that students need to understand cultural norms, values, and traditions to communicate more effectively. That is, IC is essential for students' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors as emphasized within Byram's model. Most of the interviewees believed that learning about other cultures influences students' confidence in using the language. In addition, openness towards other cultures helps students feel more comfortable using the language, and this will reduce anxiety about making mistakes. Some teachers thought that cultural awareness guides students to be more confident in speaking with individuals from different cultures and

languages, and it also reduces communication breakdowns and misunderstandings.

According to the teachers, students can express themselves and adapt their communication styles. According to the teachers' views, the most important cultural topics to cover in an EFL classroom are the ones that are directly associated with learning English, topics related to the traditions, habits, daily usage of the language and culture, food, clothes, social interactions, body language, and those things that could be the meeting point between these two languages. Another teacher emphasized more on the social dynamics and the inter-family relationships, and finds it essential for students to know about the target language culture. In addition, another teacher contended that the most important cultural topics include politeness norms, non-verbal communication, social customs, and taboo topics to avoid in communication. However, another EFL teacher, having more than 11 years of experience, believed that cultural topics should be integrated into the classrooms according to the level of students, for example, first-stage students should be taught very simple cultural subjects, such as what's accepted or not accepted in our and other cultures. All these aspects of culture are included within the framework of Byram's model.

Expressing openness toward engaging with different cultures among students varies from student to student, as each one has different ideas. Some students show their openness and interest in learning about the culture of the target language. In contrast, such openness, energy, and eagerness will not be noticed in some others. Students often show openness by asking questions about cultural differences, sharing their own cultural experiences, and participating in activities like role-plays and discussions about other cultures. However, some other students demonstrate their openness by participating in social events, comparing their own culture with others, and discussing films and culture-related

sources. Another teacher with 20 years of teaching experience pointed out that there is a difference between the generations in terms of openness, in which the newer generation is more open and enthusiastic toward cultural differences.

In relation to strategies and activities for teaching intercultural competence in EFL settings, many approaches and strategies are used to facilitate students' cultural understanding, which vary according to the subjects taught in the class, and many of which reflect the components of Byram's model. Seven teachers, which equals 87.5% of the participants, used authentic materials like movies, stories, short video clips, books, and other real-life examples to help students understand all IC's dimensions in the target language. Besides, the teachers emphasized certain terms, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and culture-specific phrases to make students aware of how these terms are used in different cultures. In addition, social media is used to understand cultural differences and similarities. Teachers also focused on classroom-based sessions like seminars, presentations, and group work discussions that stimulate real-world situations. These approaches address cultural knowledge, behavior, and awareness to encourage understanding and respect for different views. Teachers employed different activities to integrate IC into their lessons, for example, inviting native speakers to the classes to talk about their specific culture is another vital technique to support students in understanding the culture of the target language. Most of the teachers focused on digital tools to place culture-related topics in their lessons. However, 37.5% of the interviewees argued that incorporating these strategies varies across subjects that are taught in the classroom. For example, such strategies may not be as effective for teaching grammar as they are for subjects such as translation, communication, or academic speaking.

Many teachers shed light on integrating visual and digital resources, such as YouTube links, video clips, and social media platforms, that contribute to the

development of knowledge by exposing learners to different cultural contexts. Several interviewees described the use of body language, gestures, and active listening that reflect the skills of discovery and interaction. Interpreting meaning in cross-cultural interactions and adapting communication to various cultural standards rely heavily on these verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. Teachers highlighted experiential strategies such as organizing extracurricular activities and participation in global exchange programs, which are directly linked to the skills of discovery and interaction. Furthermore, the teachers identified various aspects of intercultural competence that mirror a practical application of Byram's model in classroom contexts, emphasizing that adaptability, empathy, and cultural knowledge are equally important, in which adaptability reflects Byram's concept of skills of discovery and interaction, where learners are expected to adapt their behavior and communication style in response to different cultural contexts, and empathy as an important element in understanding and valuing other cultures, corresponds with Byram's component of attitudes, which includes curiosity, openness, and readiness to temporarily set aside biases about one's own culture.

Cultural knowledge was another recurring theme, reflecting Byram's knowledge component. The interviewees illustrated that teachers' cultural backgrounds play a significant role in shaping their approach to teaching intercultural competency. Their personal and academic experiences, particularly exposure to multicultural environments, have enhanced their sensitivity to cultural differences and informed their classroom practices. Many teachers focused on the importance of understanding one's own culture as a foundation for appreciating others, while others relied on storytelling, personal experiences, and academic debates to foster openness and cultural awareness among students. This also reflects Byram's components of attitudes and knowledge of both one's

own and others' social identities and practices. These activities and strategies reflect another research aim, which refers to analyzing the way intercultural content is incorporated in classrooms.

Concerning the challenges teachers encounter in promoting IC in their lessons, the participants underlined different barriers which approximately 25% argued that limited access to authentic materials related to intercultural competency can be regarded as the biggest obstacle and another 25% highlighted that misunderstandings or stereotypes that students might come across could be the top challenge, while the others say that time constraints within the curriculum, limited library sources, lack of suitable technological environments, lack of teachers' cultural knowledge, and having students from diverse cultural backgrounds create a complicated environment which make it more difficult to include this competency into language instruction.

Limited real-life exposure to other cultures is a challenge students come across when building intercultural awareness, as it limits their opportunity to experience cultural interactions. Restrictive academic schedules, a lack of institutional support, and limited technological resources all restrict opportunities for significant cultural involvement. However, a lack of motivation leads certain students to focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary instead of cultural learning. Students encounter prejudices and stereotypes that hinder their ability to effectively use international knowledge. Educators find it difficult to address sensitive cultural and religious topics.

Teachers face challenges when searching for educational materials such as books and resources designed for student comprehension. So, instructors often have to rely on online resources. In addition, teachers express concern about discussing culturally or religiously sensitive topics which could trigger misunderstandings or offend students and cause them to avoid these topics

completely. Instructors highlighted the challenges they face in keeping cultural content accurate while ensuring balanced representation and avoiding stereotypes about different cultures. A group of teachers expressed the need for institutional research to develop classroom materials that represent diverse cultures. The challenges identified relate back to the fundamental issue of what prevents educators from successfully developing students' intercultural competence.

The data illustrated that dealing with gender-related issues in EFL classrooms from different cultures is a complicated and sensitive concern. Some instructors actively promote gender equality and inclusivity, while others choose to avoid discussions related to gender. All these impediments represent the findings explored in the final aim of the study, which was to discover difficulties encountered by educators in the integration of intercultural competence in their professional practice.

Conclusions

Findings show a widespread consensus among teachers on intercultural competence as an essential element of language education, and teachers consider IC as crucial for successful global communication and student growth. Both the quantitative and the qualitative data confirm that teachers believe in a strong connection between language and culture, and that in order to be able to use language with confidence, openness, and sensitivity, students must understand cultural norms, values, and traditions.

Teachers point out that IC not only helps in decreasing communication breakdowns and anxiety but also improves students' adaptability in changing their communication styles in intercultural situations. Teachers emphasize that learning about cultural dimensions such as politeness, taboos, gestures, and social

customs indeed engages students and contributes to their communicative competence.

Teachers implement intercultural competence in their lesson plans through various techniques, including group discussions, cultural expressions, idioms within the materials, and the use of authentic resources such as stories, films, and video clips. Collaborative projects on cultural topics, presentations, and role-plays are used to promote critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability in the students. The use of digital tools and social media has also become widespread for promoting global perspectives. Interviewees argued that incorporating these strategies varies according to the subjects taught in classrooms. For example, such strategies may not be as effective for teaching grammar as they are for subjects such as communication skills or academic speaking.

Also, teachers face multiple challenges in promoting this competence, such as limited access to culturally appropriate teaching materials, students' lack of real-life exposure, over-generalization of Western culture, and time constraints within the curriculum. Teachers also identified institutional limitations, including inadequate training and insufficient technological or library resources. Student-related challenges include reluctance to engage in cultural discussions, embarrassment when making cultural mistakes, difficulty in identifying their own biases, and discussing sensitive issues like religion and gender, often avoiding such topics to prevent misunderstandings or offense. Moreover, evaluating IC remains problematic. Such obstacles highlight the need for curriculum reform, institutional support, and teacher development programs to facilitate the integration of intercultural competence into EFL education.

Recommendations

According to the findings, it is strongly recommended that the institutions focus on curriculum reforms that balance intercultural competence and language specificity. Intensive teacher training should be incorporated in intercultural pedagogy to help teachers implement IC more systematically in all subjects, not just in communication-based subjects.

Universities should provide diverse and culturally rich teaching materials, as well as improve technological resources to facilitate global exposure for students. In addition, there is a need for specific assessment tools to measure students' growth regarding intercultural competence. Creating supportive settings where students feel comfortable dealing with sensitive cultural issues is also critical, asserting that opportunities for intercultural exchanges need to occur on a daily basis such as classroom group work, exchange programs, and cultural discussions.

Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks are due to the teachers who took part in the interviews and filled out the surveys, whose insights shaped the outcomes of this research. Special thanks to Salahaddin University, in particular, the College of Languages and the College of Education for their facilitations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Questionnaire Items

No	Questionnaire Items
	Demographic Information Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Age: Under 25 ☐ 25–34 ☐ 35–44 ☐ 45–54 ☐ 55+ Kurd ☐ Arab ☐ Turkmen ☐ Assyrian Other Academic title: Asst. Lecturer ☐ Lecturer ☐ Asst. Professor ☐ Professor ☐ Years of teaching English as a foreign language. 0–2 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ 11+ years ☐
1	I believe that my students should learn about cultural differences in language learning. Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
2	I find it useful if my lessons include content related to intercultural competence. Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
3	In my opinion, my students are able to adapt their communication style when interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds, especially in group work activities. Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

4	I believe that learning about cultural norms helps my students communicate more effectively. ☐ ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
5	I feel that my students effectively handle misunderstandings that arise due to cultural differences. ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
6	My students actively engage with media in the target language to learn about cultural trends and current events. ☐ ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
7	I believe it's important to consider cultural differences while planning language activities. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
8	I feel delighted when my students interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
9	I am satisfied that my students have self-awareness, empathy, and respect towards different cultural backgrounds. ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
10	I think my students show interest in discussing cultural differences during lessons. ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
11	I believe that my students make meaningful connections between cultural contexts and language expressions (e.g., understanding idioms or slang). ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
12	I trust that my students feel comfortable when interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds. ☐
	Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐
13	I assume that my students respond appropriately to cultural differences in both verbal and non-verbal communication. ☐

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14	I reckon that my students have a solid understanding of how culture influences language use in different social contexts (e.g., greetings, politeness norms, humor).				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	In my view, when discussing religious differences in class, my students are respectful and open-minded, even when they encounter beliefs or practices unfamiliar to them.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	I believe that my students actively participate in class discussions after watching documentaries or series that highlight intercultural issues.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	I suppose that my students are resistant or uninterested in learning about cultural differences.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18	I use cultural references in my lessons to help my students understand the language better.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	I use textbooks, short stories, videos, and resources that reflect diverse cultures.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20	I encourage my students to share their own cultural perspectives during lessons.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21	I inspire my students to maintain intercultural competence through group discussions and presentations on cultural topics.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22	I frequently include role-play activities that focus on cultural scenarios.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	I incorporate discussions related to religious practices and traditions into my lessons to promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity.				

	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
24	I incorporate collaborative projects that involve exploring different cultures.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
25	I incorporate real-world materials, such as documentaries or films from the target culture, to enhance my students' understandings of cultural issues.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
26	I use humor in the target language to help students develop a deeper understanding of cultural subtleties and communication styles (e.g., sarcasm, irony, or wordplay).				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
27	In my classes, I promote the idea of "culture as a lens" to better understand cultural behaviors.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
28	I encourage my students to compare their own cultures with others through activities like group discussions or presentations.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
29	I introduce vocabularies, idioms, and expressions that are tied to specific cultural contexts (e.g., holidays, customs, or societal norms).				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
30	I use topics such as social media, migration, and human rights to spark discussions and teach empathy and understanding across cultures.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
31	Cultural misunderstandings often arise during students' interactions in the classroom.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
32	I struggle to find suitable materials that effectively address both language and cultural aspects.				
			☐		

	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
33	My students identify their own cultural biases when discussing cultural differences in language learning activities.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
34	Class time is too limited to have meaningful cultural discussions.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
35	I encounter challenges when my students refuse to participate in cultural discussions.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
36	I have difficulty in keeping a balance between language learning and cultural instruction.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
37	I find it challenging to assess my students' ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
38	My students feel embarrassed when they make cultural mistakes or experience misunderstandings in front of peers.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐
39	I struggle to explain cultural differences without resorting to stereotyping.				
	Strongly Agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly Disagree ☐

Appendix B: The Interview Questions

No	Interview questions
1	Why is intercultural competence important (or not important) in language learning?
2	How do you think learning about other cultures influences students' confidence in using the language?
3	What do you think are the most important cultural topics to cover in an EFL classroom?

4	How do your students express openness toward engaging with different cultures?
5	How do you help your students understand the cultural nuances that might influence language use?
6	How do you integrate intercultural competence into your lessons? Can you provide a specific example?
7	How do your students demonstrate knowledge in diverse cultural norms in classroom activities?
8	What types of communication strategies do you use in the classroom to build stronger intercultural understanding?
9	Which aspects of intercultural competence (e.g., empathy, adaptability, cultural knowledge) are most important to focus on, and why?
10	What types of classroom activities or teaching materials do you find most effective in raising cultural awareness among your students?
11	How has your own cultural background influenced your approach to teaching intercultural competence?
12	What do you think are the biggest obstacles to teaching intercultural competence in your classroom?
13	What challenges do your students face in developing their intercultural competence?
14	In your experience, what are the most difficult aspects of preparing materials that include cultural content?
15	How do you address gender-related topics in a culturally diverse classroom to promote intercultural competence?

تجليات الكفاءة بين الثقافات في فصول اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية

أصبحت الكفاءة بين الثقافات - باعتبارها القدرة على التواصل بفعالية مع أفراد خلفيات ثقافية مختلفة - عنصراً أساسياً في تعليم اللغات في عالمنا المتحضر اليوم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في مظاهر الكفاءة بين الثقافات في فصول تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، استناداً إلى وجهات نظر التدريسيين واستراتيجياتهم وصعوباتهم الدراسية. لقد شكل نموذج يرام للكفاءة التواصلية بين الثقافات إطاراً مركزياً لهذه الدراسة، وقد طبق الأساليب الوصفية باستخدام استبيانات ومقابلات مع تدريسيي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة صلاح الدين. وتشير النتائج إلى وجود إجماع قوي بين التدريسيين بشأن أهمية دمج التعلم الثقافي مع تعليم اللغة. ويعتقد التدريسيون أن تشجيع الكفاءة بين الثقافات يساعد الطلاب على أن يصبحوا أكثر ثقة وانفتاحاً واستعداداً للتواصل العالمي، بالإضافة إلى تحسين كفاءتهم اللغوية. ويدمج المعلمون بنشاط إستراتيجيات مثل المواد الأصلية والمناقشات الجماعية والأدوات الرقمية لتعزيز مهارات الطلاب بين الثقافات المختلفة، على أن التكامل يختلف باختلاف المادة الدراسية. وتختتم الدراسة بالتأكيد على ضرورة وجود إصلاحات في المناهج الدراسية، وتدريب موجه للتدريسيين، وتحسين الموارد، والدعم المؤسسي لتعزيز التعليم بين الثقافات. هذا، وتُقدّم نتائج هذه الدراسة رؤى قيمة لمطوّري المناهج والتدريسيين، بهدف إعداد الطلاب بشكل أفضل للتواصل مع بيئات متعددة الثقافات.

دەرکهوتنه کانی لیهاتوویی نیوان کولتورره کان له پوله کانی (EFL)

لیهاتوویی نیوان کولتوریه کان، وهک توانای په یوه نندیکردنی کاریگه رانه له گهل تهو که سانه ی پاشخانی کولتووری جیاوازیان ههیه، بوو ته به شیکی بنه رته په روه رده ی زمان له جیهانی پیشکه وتووی ته مرؤدا. ئەم توئینه وهیه لیکۆلینه وه له دەرکهوتنه کانی لیهاتوویی نیوان کولتوریه کان ده کات له پوله کانی EFL، به پشتبهستن به دیدگا و ستراتیژی و بهربهسته کانی بهردهم مامۆستایان. مۆدیلی بایرام له لیهاتوویی په یوه نندی نیوان کولتورره کان چوارچۆیه کی ناوه ندییه بۆ ئەم توئینه وهیه، و شیوازی وه سفکردن جیبه جیکراوه، به کارهینانی پرسیارنامه و چاوپیکه وتن له گهل مامۆستایانی EFL له زانکۆی سه لاهه ددین. دۆزینه وه کان ئاماره به وه ده کهن که کۆده نگیه کی به هیژ له نیوان مامۆستایاندا ههیه سه بارهت به گرنگی تیکه لکردنی فیژبوونی کولتووری شانبه شانی فیژکردنی زمان. مامۆستایان پپیان وایه هاندانی په یوه نندی نیوان کولتورره کان یارمهتی قوتابیان ده دات زیاتر متمانه یان به خۆیان هه بیّت و کراوه بن و ئاماده بن بۆ په یوه نندی جیهانی و باشتکردنی شاره زایی زمانیان. مامۆستایان چالاکانه ستراتیژییه کانی وهک سه رچاوه ی راسته قینه ی زمانی، گفتوگۆی گروپی و ئامرازه دیجیتالییه کان به کارده هیژن بۆ په روه رده کردنی تواناکانی قوتابیان سه بارهت به لیهاتوویی نیوان کولتورره کان، هه رچه نده تهو تیکه لکردنه به پپی بابته کان ده گۆریت. توئینه وه که به جهختکردنه وه له سه ر پپووستی چاکسازی له مه نه هج، راهینانی مامۆستایانی ئامانجدار، باشتکردنی سه رچاوه کان، و پشتگیری دامه زراوه یی بۆ به هیژکردنی په روه رده ی نیوان کولتورره کان کۆتایی دیت. دۆزینه وه کان تیروانینیکی به نرخ پیشکesh به گه شه پپنده رانی مه نه هج و په روه رده کاران ده کهن، به ئامانجی باشت ئاماده کردنی قوتابیان بۆ په یوه نندیکردن له شوینه فره کولتوریه کان.