Original Paper

Glocal Intercultural Communicative Competence among Young EFL Learners from English Native-teacher's Perspective within Saudi Vision 2030

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims, first, to address key issues in the language classroom with regards to fostering the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence among Saudi EFL foreign language young learners under the influence of VAS 2030, and second, to provide practical ideas for EFL teachers to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence at the GLOCAL level in a more integral way. It intends to investigate glocal intercultural communicative competence among young EFL learners from English native-teachers' perspective within Saudi vision 2030. The sample of the study included 4 English native teachers from America, England, South Africa and Canada. This qualitative-quantitative research used questionnaire survey and texts as data collection instruments. The data was analyzed textually and numerically. The findings of the study showed that the participants showed their consciousness about the significance of glocal intercultural communicative competence in developing young EFL learners' language skills within Saudi Vision 2030. Also, the results showed the significance of the glocal intercultural communicative competence in developing Saudi EFL learners' language skills (competence). Also, it is concluded that raising young Saudi EFL learners' awareness about the importance of the glocal intercultural communicative competence should be incorporated in EFL textbooks, course material and teaching curriculum in Saudi Arabia. This study recommends that further future research be conducted in this regard.

Keywords

Intercultural, Communication, Language Skills, Competence, Saudi Vision 2030

1. Introduction

During the past few decades, the term intercultural competence was reviewed as intercultural communicative competence (ICC) due to its significance and contribution to the process of English as a foreign language teaching (Hennebry, 2014). The difference between the two terms should be clearly reintroduced when making decisions on the Glocal cultural level in designing the curriculum. Concerning this point, one of the basic issues to be addressed by EFL teachers and specialists in this regard is whether or not they are preparing EFL young learners for such kind of challenging Glocal demands.

That is, are EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia providing general information expecting their EFL young learners will develop their language and interpersonal skills that they require to communicate more professionally and understand Glocal cultural tendencies? Or, conversely, are Saudi EFL teachers creating the conditions for young EFL learners to develop skills preparing them for the Glocal intercultural challenge within VAS 2030? This project aims, first, to address key issues in the language classroom with regards to fostering the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence among Saudi EFL foreign language young learners under the influence of VAS 2030, and second, to provide practical ideas for EFL teachers to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence at the GLOCAL level in a more integral way. The main point is that Saudi EFL young learners need to be Glocally further challenged and guided so that they can develop critical communicative language and interpersonal skills. According to Hennebry (2014, p. 135) "culture is the marginalized sister of language".

Therefore, it "would be nice if we are studying the language to know a bit more about the country and what people are like there" (Jones, 2000, p. 158). Having viewed this, the key point continues to remain the same, which requires Saudi EFL teachers and learners' attention, is how can they help their EFL young learners learn about Glocal culture and develop intercultural awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence? Although it is true that they are Glocal EFL teachers and learners endeavor to provide a cultural foundation for language learners, this often presents significant shortcomings. One of the most significant problems is that Saudi EFL teachers, perhaps unintentionally, may indeed reinforce stereotypes under the influence of 2030 because, instead of fostering Intercultural Communicative Competence, they frequently emphasize utterly on the language as communication, while the context in which that communication takes place, and which provides meaning to the messages, is repeatedly referred to second place.

It is thus essential to be aware of what is meant by the culture that should be promoted in the language classroom. One way to picture it is by viewing the Iceberg Theory advanced by Edward T. Hall (1976), contrasting the surface/conscious (food, language, festivals) and deep/unconscious (beliefs, values, perceptions) elements of culture. These constructs affect our actions, behaviours and the method EFL teachers and learners interact with each other.

It is essential to differentiate between Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence. The former refers to people's "*ability to interact in their own language with the people from another country and culture*", whilst Intercultural Communicative Competence considers language teaching and emphasize on *"the ability to* interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language" (Byram, 1997, p. 71).

Byram (1997) demonstrates that a person who has developed Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is able to build relationships while speaking in the foreign language; communicates effectively, taking into account his own and the other person's viewpoint and needs; mediates interactions between people of different backgrounds, and strives to continue developing communicative skills.

Glocalization has become a very popular term that refers to connection between global and local culture. It urges the necessity for incorporating interculturality in language learning in varied settings. This is claimed in order to develop teaching and learning of the basic language skills (Council of Europe, 2001). Thus, understanding the glocal cultural variation helps in designing authentic curriculum that focuses on teaching language skills in real world situations. It means that a language learner should explore the authentic image of the Glocal culture as contrasting to apparent components. Therefore, the development of Saudi Vision 2030 implies that glocal language learners are encouraged to value the cultural differences and similarities and understand identity in which the responsibility of preparing capable glocal citizens is highly demanded (Al Zahrani, 2017). This is because the objectives of teaching and learning language skills is viewed in terms of glocal communities, connectivity, interaction, cultures and comparisons so that language learners can develop language essential to intercultural and linguistics' competence (Schulz, 2007).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Glocal intercultural communicative competence has become a very necessary cultural aspect and considered to be worldwide (Furstenberg, 2010). In Saudi Arabia, most EFL learners complain that they face difficulty understanding some linguistic component to English language culture diversity. They state that it is difficult for them communicate effectively glocally and they lack communicative competence in both the receptive and productive skills. Their teachers state that they find it problematic to handle linguistic issues and cultural competence due to the lack of glocal intercultural competence understanding. Also, they add that EFL learners in Saudi Arabia are incompetent in glocal cultural aspects that affect their language skills' development. Despite the efforts provided by EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia to accomplish the objectives of 2030 Vision, language learners still face many obstacles that slow the development of students' language skills such as glocal intercultural communicative competence.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

i.   To investigate the effect of glocal intercultural communicative competence on the development of Saudi young EFL learners' receptive skills (listening and reading) within Vision 2030.

ii.   To examine how attaching intercultural communicative competence to teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia can impact students learning of the productive skills (speaking and writing).

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objectives, this study addresses the following questions:

1.   What is the effect of glocal intercultural communicative competence on the development of Saudi young EFL learners' receptive skills (listening and reading) within Vision 2030?

2.   To what extent can attaching intercultural communicative competence to teaching EFL in Saudi Arabia can impact students learning of the productive skills (speaking and writing)?

2. Literature Review

Much research has acknowledged the significance of the development of glocalization as a new trend in the international business (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005).

The Glocalization Manifesto (2004) points out that an innovative method must be established, including both global and local interests while observing the intimidations and prospects of this integration. Glocalization plays as a connection between local and global learners, involving local societies to global assets and information contributing to learners' determination and progress. The original approach of glocalization deals with an exceptional platform for a common appreciation of necessities, difficulties and clarifications, and it also distinguishes the vigorous role of learners and the significance of comprising their perspectives and aptitudes in improvement activities. The image of glocalization emphasizes on an optimistic future, while continuing to be firmly embedded in existing authenticities (The Glocalization Manifesto, 2004).

Similarly, Brooks and Normore (2010, p. 74) demonstrate that the active, interconnected nature of glocalization "*demands that educational leaders develop new skills, and broaden their understanding of the way local and global forces are enmeshed in an increasingly sophisticated manner*". It is significant for learners and teachers to understand that publics in a glocalized world live in multiple cultures concurrently, and the specific cultures of which everyone has a thoughtful influence on teaching.

Likewise, Javidan (2008) argues that those learning cross-culturally ensure two main responsibilities. First, these learners should appreciate their own social lens. Secondly, centered upon the first responsibility, if they need to continue and impact cross-culturally, they should realize the significance of the other's culture and respect their traditions and customs.

This research applies the innovative language of glocalization to stress that global effect is nowadays an indigenous authenticity (Robertson, 1995). With this developing "glocal" certainty as the setting, this research states how glocal intercultural communicative competence helps in developing EFL learners' language skills in a Saudi context. This research also stresses the practices of glocalization in teaching EFL within 2030 Vision in Saudi Arabia.

3. Research Methods

This qualitative research adopts and adapts the interpretive analysis design. It uses interview techniques as research instruments which includes 5 items for examining the elicited data in order to see the attitudes and views of the participants concerning the development of young Saudi EFL learners' language skills and glocal intercultural communicative competence within the realm of Saudi Vision 2030. The use of textual analysis urges participants to give their illustration of their own attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the written text elicited in the process provides necessary data and information for interpretation and analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Qualitative study proposes that in social research an adequately selected and investigated sample can give a great contribution to the interpretation and analysis of the problem investigated. But when using questionnaire and interview research, the language used by the participants comprises a filter in which their setting is viewed. In connection, this research study uses written text and questionnaire surveys to formulate the answers without using technical terms but rather implying ordinary language. This is because providing responses in informal and colloquial language is somewhat interacted with formal setting which was considered the time of the analysis.

The analysis of the findings included textual analysis and classification of responses as the focus was on participants as individual. The researcher attempted, on the basis of investigations conducted, to provide an explicit view of the representative native teachers of English on intercultural learning in a Saudi setting. The findings are discussed mainly with the country of Saudi Vision 2030's references as this appears to show a more intricate way of depicting the elicited data and information. The analysis and interpretation of the findings from the participants' responses as well as from what the researcher himself has contributed to the study through his way of thinking.

4. Discussions and Findings

This section provides a detailed discussion on the findings of the present research. In most cases, the intercultural communication training and education question was not well understood by the involved teachers and sometimes left blank without responses. But, three participants admitted that they were never taught intercultural communication / competence explicitly through compulsory and optional courses at university level. As viewed in Table 1 in the following section, it is realized that the sample of the study included four native speakers of English representing four different nationalities (American, South African, British and Canadian).

Table 1. The Participants Responses on Item No.1

Question	1. Was intercultural communication training part of your own teacher education, in what way if any?
Teacher (Native)	**Response**
1. American	"I have not received any training in intercultural communication neither at school or college".
2. South African	"I do not really remember that I did so".
3. British	"I do not think so that I had intercultural communication training at tertiary education level".
4. Canadian	"_____".

All the responses that were elicited by the researcher show the absence and existence of intercultural communication competence. One of the local students (Saudi) demonstrated that "*being taught by many native English teachers from America, England and South Africa whether at school, university or professional level it was potential, but intercultural communication competence was not integrated explicitly in the syllabus*". This reflects that culture is viewed as the entity and privilege of local not global people. It concludes that why intercultural communication does not exist in countries that have a great contribution to educational expertise such as Saudi Arabia, particularly with the launch of Vision 2030 and NEOM project. Based on the answers of both global teachers and local language students in Saudi Arabia, there should be an emphasis on the interaction between the target language cultures (such as Arabic in Saudi Arabia where the study is conducted) and the contribution of English as the medium of instruction amongst non-native learners. In addition, it stresses an effective training of teachers on intercultural communication competence so that there will be a strong integration between theory and practice of personal experiences.

Table 2 presents the responses of the participants on interview item number 2, which asks about teachers' own experiences with people of other cultures and the way they affect their teaching. As observed, most of the teachers (American, South African, British and Canadian) have varied teaching experience abroad. For instance, the American showed to have an extensive teaching experience but the rest of them (South African, British and Canadian) possessed short period of teaching experience abroad.

Table 2. The Participants Responses on Item No.2

Question	2. Describe some of your own experiences with people of other cultures. How do these affect your teaching?
Teacher (Native)	**Response**
1. American	"I taught English in different countries in Europe and Asia" and "I didn't have the opportunity to explore much about others' culture for being conservative ones, particularly middle east"
2. South African	"This is my first time teaching experience abroad".
3. British	"I have been to many countries as a teacher of English mainly Europe and some parts of East Asia".
4. Canadian	"This is my only teaching experience abroad; otherwise, I am an experienced teacher in my homeland".

Most of the participants indicated that their contact with other cultures is a relevance of travelling, business and conferences but they merely contacted people with other cultures on common basis. As learners in their classes belong to similar educational and social background. Some of the participants revealed that they have close contact with people of other cultures, respectively from the United States and England. They reported that they have sufficient teaching experience in a multicultural society which was not the case for the Canadian teacher. The participants stated that communicating with people of other cultures is very influential on personal attitudes in terms of making an individual open minded and understanding. The American teacher demonstrated that "*I taught English in different countries in Europe and Asia*" and "*I didn't have the opportunity to explore much about others' culture for being conservative ones, particularly Middle East*". The British teacher stated that "*I have been to many countries as a teacher of English mainly Europe and some parts of East Asia*". Whilst, the South African said that "this *is my first time teaching experience abroad*". In relevance, the Canadian teacher spelled out that "*this is my only teaching experience abroad; otherwise, I am an experienced teacher in my homeland*".

Based on the participants' responses, it was concluded that, getting in contact with people of other cultures makes them very experienced, thoughtful, open-minded, incorporating some intercultural elements in native language acquisition, developing language skills as well as teaching styles and techniques. Also, experiencing other peoples' cultures can help teachers build confidence and creditability with language learners so that they can develop authentic textbooks and course materials. Further, the native teachers showed that meeting people from other cultures assists developing learners' pronunciation, fluency and accuracy in the right way by being in direct contact with their teachers.

Table 3. The Participants Responses on Item No.3

Question	3. How much importance do you attach to teaching intercultural competence compared to teaching grammar, vocabulary and the four skills? Why?
Teacher (Native)	**Response**
1. American	"Everything that brings the best of our learners is important, Intercultural communication competence is an essential necessity that is taken as educational requirements nowadays. It should be given special attention when teaching languages, I guess".
2. South African	*"EFL learners are required to possess the necessary knowledge and information as they will be experiencing multicultural education setting".*
3. British	"Teaching intercultural communication competence is something great that provides a rich cultural context for better understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity".
4. Canadian	*"Intercultural and multicultural competence is very significant for building up vocabulary, grammar and effective communicative skills".*

Table 3 in the previous section depicts item No.3 of the interview which inquires about the importance of teaching intercultural competence compared to teaching grammar, vocabulary and the four skills. All the participants showed the significant of Intercultural communication competence in practical educational and academic life but it is unfortunate that most of them did not study ICC at colleges and universities. Also, some of the participants stated that teaching intellectual communication competence is an ideal topic that provides a rich environment for discussion in certain cultural context. A British teacher said that "*teaching intercultural communication competence is something great that provides a rich cultural context for better understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity*".

To conclude, some of the teachers showed that teaching intellectual communication competence is more or less important in a way that can help teachers avoid cultural misunderstanding, positive interaction, and learning new vocabulary as well as accommodate to new linguistic environment. A teacher from America stated that "*Everything that brings the best out of our learners is important, Intercultural communication competence is an essential necessity that is taken as educational requirements nowadays. It should be given special attention when teaching languages, I guess*". It is observed that the importance of intercultural communication competence is a very essential part in the learning and teaching. A teacher from South Africa stated that "*EFL learners are required to possess the necessary knowledge and information as they will be experiencing multicultural education setting*". A Canadian teacher focuses on the point that "*intercultural and multicultural competence is very significant for building up vocabulary, grammar and effective communicative skills*".

The answers to the question in relevance to the contribution to teaching Intercultural communication competence as compared to teaching and learning the basic language skills is not obvious but the focus is highly on grammar, writing, speaking, listening and reading without less attention to ICC. That is,

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ICC requires more attention to be included in classroom activities so that learners can build on their communication competence.

Table 4. The Participants Responses on Item No.4

Question	4. In what ways do you create opportunities for students to understand and experience other cultures? How do you help them to avoid intercultural misunderstandings?
Teacher (Native)	**Response**
1. American	"*Learners' interaction and attempts to discuss specific related-cultural issues that they believe an acceptable or strange*".
2. South African	"*I Request them to write their experiences in form of assignments and projects and present them as real materials to the rest of the class*".
3. British	"*He supports his students to be tolerant and progressive and not to be partial so that their communication will be flexible and easy going*".
4. Canadian	"*English native speakers should be invited for classroom visits and observations in order to conduct workshops so that students will find them useful for learning English in real situation using authentic materials*".

As stated in Table 4 in the previous section, most of the teachers attempted to find a chance or room for their students to live other cultures so that they can be involved in real life situations and effective learning environments and experience others' cultures. The teachers provided enough attention and information on the variation amongst different cultures and how people from other cultures understand things.

An American teacher demonstrated that I consider "*learners' interaction and attempts to discuss specific related-cultural issues that they believe acceptable or strange*". Some teachers said that they react actively with their students when it comes to accepting cultural issues. For example, they encourage learners who have experienced English-speaking cultures or any other cultures to speak about their experience to their peers and classmates, and a South African teacher stated that "*request them to write their experiences in form of assignments and projects and present them as real materials to the rest of the class*".

Another teacher from England pointed out that "*he supports his students to be tolerant and progressive and not to be partial so that their communication will be flexible and easy going*". Further, to course materials, which most language learners and students feel very useful and happy about in relation to cultural openness that involves knowledge, many participants take advantage of other real resources. These comprise recordings, websites programmes and TV shows.

The Canadian teacher stated that "*English native speakers should be invited for classroom visits and observations in order to conduct workshops so that students will find them useful for learning English*

in real situation using authentic materials". This helps students formulate interaction and natural language communication with native speakers of English.

Based on the discussion of the native-speakers teachers concerning the possibility of providing the students with the chance to communicate and interact in real situations, it was felt obvious that most of the teachers did their best to provide effective means of learning English language such as websites, internet technologies and media channels. It is viewed in the teachers' attempts to provide students with the opportunities to be open to other cultures for being consequential and significant in the teaching process. So, many of the participants / teachers stated that they took use of personal experiences and their students' as well to provide authentic educational settings. They believed in the philosophy of achieving all the necessary knowledge so that their students can survive when experiencing others' culture.

The analysis of the findings indicates that most of the participants attributed to the significance of incorporating intercultural communication competence in teaching English for speakers of other languages such as Saudi Adult learners. An apprehension about its significance resulted from their communication with foreign cultures that influenced their teaching and learning circle. The teachers feel that their students are in real need for the chance to acquire linguistic and communicative competence by adopting and adapting to others' intercultural knowledge, as they are certain that this can develop their personal, professional and intercultural competence.

Table 5. The Participants Responses on Item No.5

Question	5. Do you think intercultural competence should be given more/less emphasis in foreign language teaching? What are the potential benefits?
Teacher (Native)	**Response**
1. American	"I believe this is a very significant part to be considered when teaching EFL in English non-speaking countries".
2. South African	"Intercultural competence should be given more attention as an effective component in teaching EFL".
3. British	"I think schools and colleges should reconsider incorporating ICC to develop students' linguistic and communicative competence".
4. Canadian	"Intercultural communication competence should be included in textbooks, course materials and other educational requirements without offending other people's cultures".

As stated in Table 5 in the earlier section discusses the participants' responses concerning the focus and attention that to be provided to intercultural competence when teaching foreign languages, particularly English. Thus, when it comes to the first part of the question, most of the teachers-participants indicated that they have given little attention to the issue of intercultural competence since it has never

been part of their educational background but they demonstrated that it is really significant to give enough awareness concerning cultural elements that to be considered when teaching in an EFL context such as Saudi Arabia. An American teacher stated that "*I believe this is a very significant part to be considered when teaching EFL in English non-speaking countries*". The South African teacher revealed that "*Intercultural competence should be given more attention as an effective component in teaching EFL*". The British teacher said that "*I think schools and colleges should reconsider incorporating ICC to develop students' linguistic and communicative competence*". On the other hand, the Canadian teacher pointed out that "*Intercultural communication competence should be included in textbooks, course materials and other educational requirements without offending other people's cultures*".

Participants find it necessary to provide attention to such cultural and academic issue. This is because they believe that such issues are useful in offering the necessary grounds for achieving effective communication. Therefore, intercultural communication competence can enrich EFL learners' interpersonal interaction. As a result, learners may develop interactive interpersonal skills without being in conflict with people of other cultures. That is, exposing EFL learners such as those in Saudi Arabia helps them learn the customs and traditions of other culture so that they can develop their linguistic and communicative abilities. To sum up, Glocal intercultural communication competence can enrich EFL students' understanding of different cultures as posed in a Saudi communal belief. Also, the optimal option of cultural aspects that may be incorporated in classroom delivery is intercultural communication competence in order to motivate students' interest to learn other languages.

Mostly, the responses to this item show the teachers' perception that glocal intercultural communication competence should be provided enough attention in EFL context. This is because Glocal intercultural communication competence is pragmatic enough to be incorporated in an ideal teaching setting, particularly in English as a foreign language. Such strategy will establish a glocal knowledgeable and understanding society that would provide peaceful coexistence amongst nations and create unbiased community of young learners around the world in general and Saudi Arabia in particular.

To conclude, the participants showed their consciousness about the significance of glocal intercultural communicative competence in developing young EFL learners' language skills within Saudi Vision 2030. This is because introducing Glocal intercultural communication competence to Saudi EFL learners will help them improve their mental, linguistic and communicative competence. The fact that teaching EFL bridges the gap between cultures since it connects people of different cultures with each other. Consequently, showing attention towards the incorporation of intercultural communication competence and English as a foreign language teaching in a Saudi context is a very essential issue for decision makers, curriculum designers, language teachers and learners.

The findings of this research proposes that there is a number of practical issues behind the focus on Intercultural communicative competence such as developing young Saudi EFL learners' language skills for the sake of better and attractive touristic industry, industrial professionalism, travelling, motivated community and glocal openness.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the findings showed the significant of the glocal intercultural communicative competence in developing Saudi EFL learners' language skills (competence). Also, it is concluded that raising young Saudi EFL learners' awareness about the importance of the glocal intercultural communicative competence should be incorporated in EFL textbooks, course material and teaching curriculum in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the point of views of EFL teachers in varied based on educational and cultural background. This is posed by native speaker teachers who taught in a multicultural setting indicating the need for teachers-training with regard to glocal intercultural competence and EFL teaching. Believing in the significance of glocal intercultural communicative competence, it is necessary to realise the important connection between language teaching and culture. That is, this research finding emphasizes the necessity for teachers' training and contact with international cultures.

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