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**Exploring the Role of International Educational Scholarships in Fostering
EFL Teachers Intercultural Competence**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirement of the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

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Dedication

To me, myself, for all the passion, love, time, and efforts I devoted to complete this dissertation.

To my sweet mother “Nora”, my lifelong source of inspiration and strength.

To my father “Abdelkrim”, my superhero and unwavering supporter.

To my sisters “Nihed” and “Sarrah”, for believing on me and affording me the required environment to finish my work.

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Dedication

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Abstract

The present study aims at exploring the role of International Educational Scholarship in fostering the intercultural competence of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at the department of Letters and English Language in the University of 8 Mai 1945- Guelma, Algeria. It focuses on EFL teacher's perceptions and attitudes toward intercultural exchange, the challenges faced in foreign countries with foreign cultures, and the effectiveness of the international scholarships in the teaching experience. The research adopts a qualitative exploratory method. A semi-structured interview is conducted with eight (08) EFL teachers from the department of Letters and English Language who have experienced International Educational Scholarships. The analysis of the results demonstrates that EFL teachers have positive attitudes towards studying abroad regardless of the various challenges they faced in the host country. Furthermore, the scholarship experience has developed EFL teachers' intercultural competence, increased the sense of empathy and tolerance towards other cultures, and enhanced their intercultural understanding and cultural exchange, which in return, highly effected their personal and professional growth.

Keywords

International Educational Scholarship; Intercultural Competence; English as a Foreign Language; Teacher; University of 8 Mai 1945- Guelma.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

IC: Intercultural Competence

DMIS: Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Competence

IES: International Educational Scholarships

SCAS: Sociocultural Adjustment Score

FCDO: Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office

SUSI: Study of the U.S. Institutes

FSB: Foreign Scholarship Board

P.N.E: Programme National Exceptionnel / Exceptional National program

EFL: English as a foreign language

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Arabic Summary الملخص

General Introduction

The successful integration and co-existence within diverse cultures require developing intercultural competence which is considered by Deardorff (2006) as having the required skills, knowledge, and attitudes in order to effectively deal with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (p.1). In the field of higher education, this skill becomes as important as linguistic proficiency because it promotes respect and open mindedness, fosters cultural appreciation and acceptance, and develops a sense of empathy and tolerance towards cultural differences. In an attempt to develop this competence, international educational scholarships are offered by the Ministry of Higher Education to EFL teachers as a form of training to enhance their required skills for being an effective teacher. Scholarships, as an important element, allow EFL teachers to travel abroad and engage in international exchange programs with the aim of providing opportunities to practice and develop intercultural competence, and enabling them to transfer their knowledge and experiences to students from their home country while also preparing them for a globalized world. Accordingly, this study focuses on exploring the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teachers' intercultural competence.

1. Statement of the problem:

Intercultural competence is a crucial element in EFL classrooms as it promotes empathy and tolerance, celebrates cultural diversity and awareness, and enables effective communication. Developing this competence allows teachers to better prepare students for interaction in a globalized world. While many EFL teachers possess a theoretical understanding of intercultural competence, the ability to apply this knowledge in practice often remains limited. International Educational Scholarships (IES) are designed to bridge this gap by offering teachers exposure to diverse cultures and teaching contexts through study-abroad experiences. Farah et al. (2024) found that Palestinian teachers have adequate knowledge of intercultural

competence, but when it comes to practice, their capacities remain moderate. Such limitations in practice could be related to the lack of access to such programs due to some political and technical restrictions. The current study seeks to explore how the IES contribute to enhance the intercultural competence of EFL teachers at the University of 8 Mai 1945.

2. The Aim of the Study and Research Questions

This research aims at investigating teachers' attitude towards Intercultural exchange. It attempts to look for the challenges and difficulties that EFL teachers face in a foreign country with a foreign culture. Similarly, it tries to figure out the effectiveness of Intercultural educational scholarships in enhancing EFL teachers' Intercultural competence. Therefore, the findings of this study would contribute to answering the following questions:

- To what extent do the International Educational Scholarships (IES) contribute to enhancing EFL teachers Intercultural Competence?
- What are the attitudes of EFL teachers at the University of Guelma towards the intercultural exchange?

3. Research Methodology and Design

3.1. Research Methodology

The current research aims to explore the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teachers' intercultural competence. An exploratory qualitative method is employed to gain in-depth insights from teachers who have previously been part of such scholarship programs, as their experience abroad emphasizes the core of this research. The study allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena, and the different attitudes and perceptions of EFL teachers toward the intercultural exchange.

3.2. The Sample of the Study

The study targeted EFL teachers from the department of Letters and English Language and Culture at the University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma who benefited from international educational scholarships. The sample consists of eight teachers (8) from both genders: males and females, who were selected purposely based on their international experiences. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the extent to which studying abroad contributes to the development of their intercultural competence and intercultural exchange.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

The current study explores the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teachers' intercultural competence. In order to collect relevant qualitative data, a semi-structured interview is chosen as a tool due to its flexibility, clarification and probing, and its ability to generate in-depth data from the interviewees' personal experiences during their international educational scholarship programs.

The Structure of the Dissertation

This research is divided into two main parts in addition to the general introduction and the general conclusion. The theoretical part encompasses chapters one and two, while the practical part includes chapter three. The first two chapters discuss the two variables of the research. Chapter one provides an overview of the concepts of culture and intercultural competence, and its development through education. The second chapter is devoted to the International Educational Scholarships. It reviews international educational scholarships, their types, purposes, and their impact on EFL teachers' intercultural competence and building global citizenship. The practical part includes chapter three, which is devoted to the exploratory study. This chapter covers all aspects related to the population under investigation. It presents data gathered from eight EFL teachers of the University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma, from the

department of Letters and English language, who had received an International Educational Scholarship, through using semi-structured interviews. Besides, it analyzes the participants' answers in order to obtain the needed results that help in answering the research questions. This chapter also includes some pedagogical implications, recommendations, and limitations.

Chapter One

Intercultural Competence

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

In the age of globalization and technological advancements, IC becomes a necessary skill and requirement that EFL teachers are urged to develop, since it affects their personal and professional growth. In light of this, this chapter aims to provide an overview about the concept of culture, including its components, dimensions, and its relationship with language. Then, it explores the emergence of IC as a reaction to communicative competence. In addition to covering all its aspects including its models, components, and its development through education. Finally, the chapter concludes by highlighting some challenges and barriers that affect the development of IC.

Culture

1.1. Definition of Culture

Etymologically, the term Culture according to Berger (2000) comes from the Latin ‘Cultus’ which means ‘care’ (para. 2). The term is also associated with the Latin word ‘Cultura’, which means ‘Cultivation’ or ‘tilling of the land’, and is derived from the verb ‘colere’, which stands for ‘to cultivate’ (O’sullivan et al, 1994, p. 69). In its original sense, it refers to the act of cultivating the land, planting the soil, or simply farming. Over time, the meaning expanded, and started to be used in education to refer to the cultivation, and the enlightenment of people’s minds.

The word culture is a ubiquitous and multifaceted concept that cannot be given a single, and specific definition. It is defined by the English anthropologist E.B. Tylor (1871) as “Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morale, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Similarly, Matsumoto (1996) considers culture as a combination of shared elements between members of the same social group that are transmitted through generations (p. 16). Additionally, Hofstede

et al. (2010) argues that culture is the collective cognitive programming that differentiates members of a specific community from (p. 6).

Based on the previous definitions, culture can be considered as a polyfunctional concept that belongs to humans. It is shared by members of the same group, and transmitted from one generation to another, which means that it is acquired, and not static, but rather in a constant evolution overtime. Moreover, it is considered as a combination of elements like: values, beliefs, symbols, language, attitudes, clothes, food, buildings, art and literature. These elements are integrated together to represent people's unique way of life. This representation differs and distinguishes one from another, and satisfies the sense of belonging. Culture is found everywhere, it is part of our daily interaction, found in the way we behave, the way we deal with people, the way we dress, and perceive things in life.

1.2. Elements of Culture

Culture is divided into two major parts, which are: material culture and non-material culture. Material culture refers to the cultural elements that are visible and can be recognized by the outsiders such as: artifacts, and non- material culture that refers to the cultural elements that cannot be seen, and recognized by people from other cultures like: values, norms, and assumptions

1.2.1. Non-material Culture

1.2.1.1. Values

According to Andreatta and Ferraro (2013) values are standards that are shared, and agreed on by members of the same society. These standards decide about what is acceptable in a particular society (p. 36). This means that values are culturally defined standards for what is good and desirable. Also, Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel (2009) claim that "values tell a member of a culture what is normal by identifying what things are good and bad, or right and

wrong.” (p. 189). In other words, they are considered as the general guidelines about what is right and wrong, coming from the inside, and reflected through behaviors, as an example: honesty.

1.2.1.2. Norms

Andreatt and Ferarro (2013) defines norms as the set of rules and instructions that govern people’s actions and behaviors (p.37). Similarly, Shaules (2007) views them as: “expectations about what should be done or how things should be done”. In short, norms are culturally defined expectations of behavior that determine what it is considered as good and desirable. They are the application of values, and the specific guidelines that are required to be practiced in order to respect the outside like: not stealing.

1.2.1.3. Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs that are shared, and accepted as being true or certain without proof, by members of a given culture. Spencer (2012) argues that assumptions form the invisible part of culture that affects the way people behave, feel, and perceive things (p. 3). Schein (2004), describes in his book “Organizational Culture and Leadership” that assumptions are very powerful and unalterable, since they are deeply rooted and learned in early phases of human lives. Additionally, he claims that if an individual does not hold the same assumptions as those of his cultural group, he will be perceived as a stranger and an outsider (p. 28).

1.2.2. Material Culture

1.2.2.1. Artifacts

Schein (2004) says that artifacts are related to the visible objects and products that can be seen, felt or heard as: language, literature, architecture, and other aspects that belong to a specific culture. This implies that material culture is represented through artifacts which are

used to symbolize a specific thing, to convey meaning and transfer information about a particular culture.

1.3. Dimensions of Culture

The social psychologist Geert Hofstede conducted a cross-cultural study of more than 110,000 employees in 50 different countries, as a result he came up with a cultural framework that is commonly used to analyze intercultural differences. His framework consisted of four cultural dimensions that are: Power Distance, Uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus Collectivism, and Masculinity versus Femininity. These four dimensions were supplemented by two other dimensions, as a result of consultation with Michael Bond and Michael Minkov, which are: Long term versus Short term orientation, and Indulgence versus Restraint.

1.3.1. Power Distance

Power distance is related to the degree to which people accept the unequal distribution of power within a society or organization, hierarchies, and human inconsistency. Due to the varying perspectives about power, this dimension differs across countries. High power distance means a great acceptance of social and economic inequalities, which results in accepting social order as natural, and not requiring further justification. In countries with high power distance, people respect authority more and for them it is not allowed to be challenged like: Asian, African, Latin countries, and East European. In other countries with low power distance, people are more likely to see each other as equals. They tend to question authority, demand justification for any kind of unequal power distribution, and are generally more comfortable challenging hierarchy. Examples of such countries include Austria, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 61).

1.3.2. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance, also known as risk avoidance, is related to the level of stress of a particular society in the face of an unknown future, and its tolerance for ambiguity. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance value more authority, status, seniority. Furthermore, they tend to appreciate very clear instructions, have a greater level of stress, and intolerance for deviant people and ideas such as: Latin countries, Central and East European countries, German, Japan, France. On the other hand, countries with lower uncertainty avoidance are more tolerant of fewer rules and regulations, they are more willing to take risks, have lower level of stress, and great tolerance for deviant people and ideas like: China, Singapore, Denmark, Australia (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, pp. 190-191).

1.3.3. Individualism versus Collectivism

According to Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) this dimension measures whether a society is concerned with the interests of the individual or the group. In addition to considering the degree to which societies are integrated into groups. People coming from individualistic societies identify themselves in terms of “I”. Moreover, they tend to care about themselves and families, and do not really focus on maintaining interpersonal relationships for example: The U.S. and Northern European countries. Unlike people coming from collectivistic societies that identify themselves in terms of “we”. These people place a greater emphasis on intra-community relationships, consider the interest of others, and have a sense of responsibility and spiritual obligation towards the whole group for instance: Korea, Mexico, and Arab countries (p. 91).

1.3.4. Masculinity versus Femininity

It is also referred to as “tough” vs. “tender”. This dimension is about whether a society holds more masculine qualities, such as competitiveness and assertiveness, or feminine

qualities, such as modesty and caring for others. In masculine- oriented cultures, men are more assertive and less similar to women like in: Japan and Latin America. Whereas, in feminine-oriented cultures men and women are similar to each other, and are more oriented toward modest and social care values such as: Switzerland and New Zealand (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 138).

1.3.5. Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation

Based on Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) this dimension considers the extent to which a society views its time horizon. Long-term orientation cultures focus on the distant future by delaying short-term success in order to achieve long-term success as in: China, Korea, Central and Eastern Europe. However, short-term orientation cultures focus on the near future by delivering short-term success and emphasizing the present as in: The United Kingdom and The United States (p. 260).

1.3.6. Indulgence versus Restraint

It is related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life. Indulgence indicates that a society allows relatively free gratification related to having fun in life as: Australia, Canada, U.S. While, restraint indicates that a society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it through social norms as in: Russia, China, Japan, and South Korea (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p. 280-281).

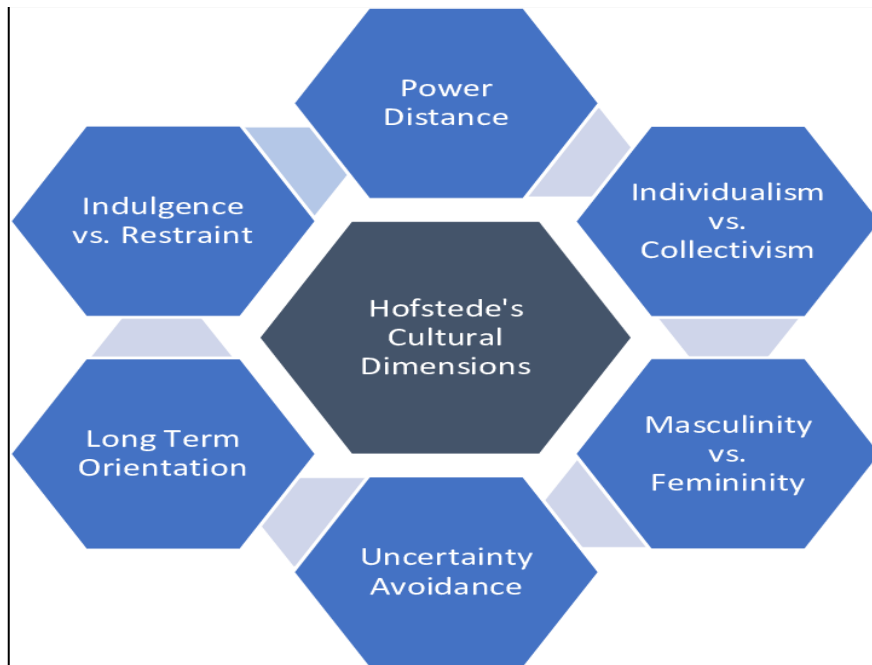


Figure 1.1. *Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture* (Retrieved from Vizmonte & Ligot, 2024, p.3).

1.4. Exploring the Relationship between Language and Culture

Brown (2000) claims that “A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 177). Accordingly, language and culture are inseparable concepts, since language is considered as an integral part of culture that shapes, reflects, and mirrors it. Similarly, Sapir (1985) states that language is the verbal expression of culture that carries its significance (p. 7). Furthermore, Bennet (1993) describes language as a “system of representation” of thoughts and perceptions, rather than only being a way of communication (p. 16). In other words, besides being a tool for socialization and interaction, it is used to share social expectations and beliefs, transmit cultural values and attitudes, convey cultural specificity, and maintain cultural norms.

Intercultural Competence

1.5. The Emergence of Intercultural Competence as a Reaction to Communicative Competence

1.5.1. Communicative Competence

Communicative Competence is a concept that was introduced by the American linguist and anthropologist, Dell Hymes in late 1960's. This concept came as a reaction to Chomsky's linguistic competence, in which he argued that native speakers have intuitions depending on grammar rules, vocabulary, syntax and phonology. Hymes criticized Chomsky's claim, and he added the notion of social context, through arguing that the social aspect of language is very important, and emphasizing the appropriate use of language in various real-life situations (Theresa, 2006, p. 2). Additionally, Theresa stated that Hymes accepted the importance of grammatical knowledge, but argued that in order to communicate effectively, speakers had to know not only what was grammatically correct/incorrect, but what was communicatively appropriate in any given context. In this regard, Communicative Competence represents an individual's ability to utilize language in different social contexts. The latter does not rely only on knowing grammar and vocabulary, but also requires knowing the cultural norms, and how to adjust language based on its context, audience, and intentions.

1.5.2. Intercultural Competence

The concept of IC came to emergence in 1994 when Byram and Zarate proposed for foreign language learners, that instead of trying to come near native speakers, they better to be taught how to become 'intercultural speakers', who are able to mediate between potentially conflicting behaviors in their own and others' social lives (Aguilar, 2002, as cited in Byram & Zarate, 1994, p.91). Furthermore, Kramsh (1998) claims that a competent language user is

someone who develops IC, in addition to the adaptability to use accurate and appropriate forms needed in a given social context of use.

Intercultural Competence is defined as “the ability to relate and communicate effectively when individuals involved in the interaction do not share the same culture, ethnicity, language or other common experiences” (Samdperil & Gunther, 2012, p.2). Similarly, Hammer et al. (2003) argues that IC is related to having the ability to deal with people from diverse cultural backgrounds appropriately, and coping with various cultural experiences (p. 422). Moreover, Schengen (2015) asserts that communicating effectively across cultures requires developing the sense of empathy, tolerance, and openness towards cultural differences. In addition to being respectful, flexible, and adaptable to all what is unfamiliar (p. 5).

1.6. Models of Intercultural Competence

1.6.1. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Milton J. Bennet came up with his developmental model of intercultural sensitivity in 1993, which explains the six stages that people go through in order to develop cultural differences, and become more cognizant and tolerant. The first three stages which are: denial, defense, and minimization are considered as ethnocentric stages, that are related to the issues associated with seeing the world from one’s own cultural lens. The last three stages are: acceptance, adaptation, and integration. They are ethnorelative stages that are related to seeing the world through the lens of other cultures (Kim, 2017, p. 3).

According to Etri (2022) the six stages of Bennett’s Developmental Modal of Intercultural Sensitivity can be defined as the following:

-Denial: it refers to denying the different perspectives of other cultures (p. 2).

-Defense: it refers to defending one’s own perspectives (p. 2).

-Minimization: similarities of different perspectives are more important than differences (p. 2).

-Acceptance: it refers to accepting and valuing others perspectives (p. 2).

-Adaptation: it refers to the ability to adapt and communicate like others (p. 2).

-Integration: it refers to the ability to internalize and easily shift different perspectives (p. 2).

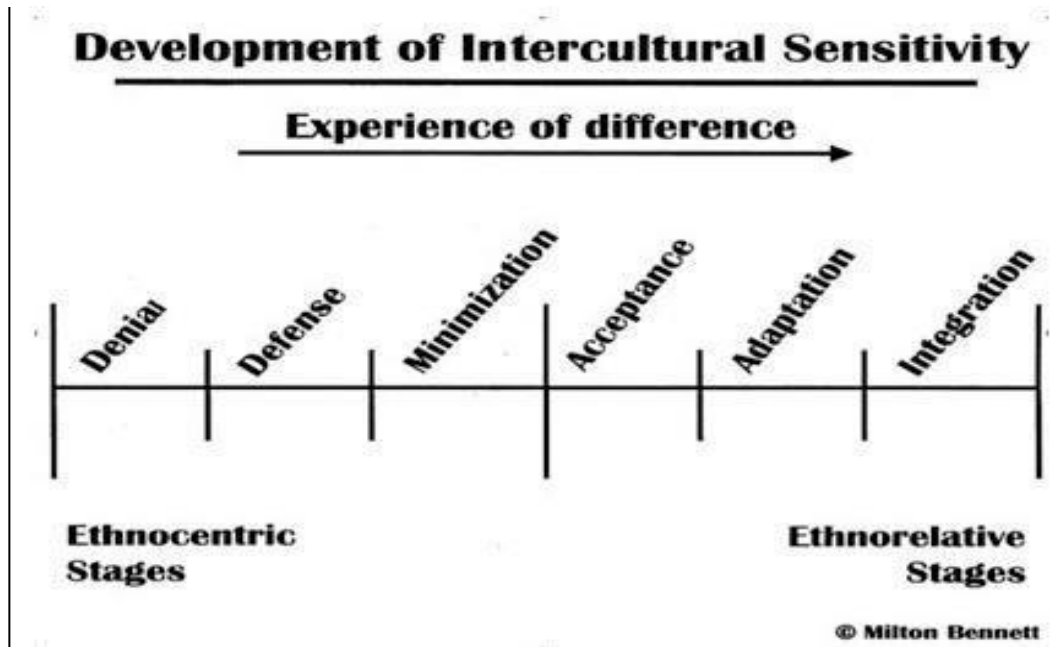


Figure 1.2. *Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* (Retrieved from Lange, 2011, p. 12).

1.6.2. Byram's Model of Intercultural Competence

In 1997, Byram introduced his model of intercultural competence as a guide for teachers, in order to foster their understanding of intercultural competence. He was influenced by Hymes communicative competence. As a result, his model defines intercultural communicative competence as the interplay between linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence (Lange, 2011, p.14). Byram's model is composed by the following:

-Knowledge (savoir): it refers to the factual knowledge concerning one's culture and another's culture. In addition to understanding social practices, traditions, history, and social institutions of the target language and culture, as well as the learner's awareness of native culture.

-Attitudes (savoir être): it emphasizes open-mindedness, curiosity, empathy, and respect towards others culture.

-Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre): it refers to the ability to look for similarities, and understand differences between one's culture and another's culture.

-Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre): it is about using previous knowledge about cultures in real life situations, and includes competencies like: observing, asking questions, and engaging with speakers to learn more about their customs, behaviors, and communication patterns.

-Critical cultural awareness (savoir): it is about having the ability to critically evaluate and reflect on cultural practices and values of both native and target culture.

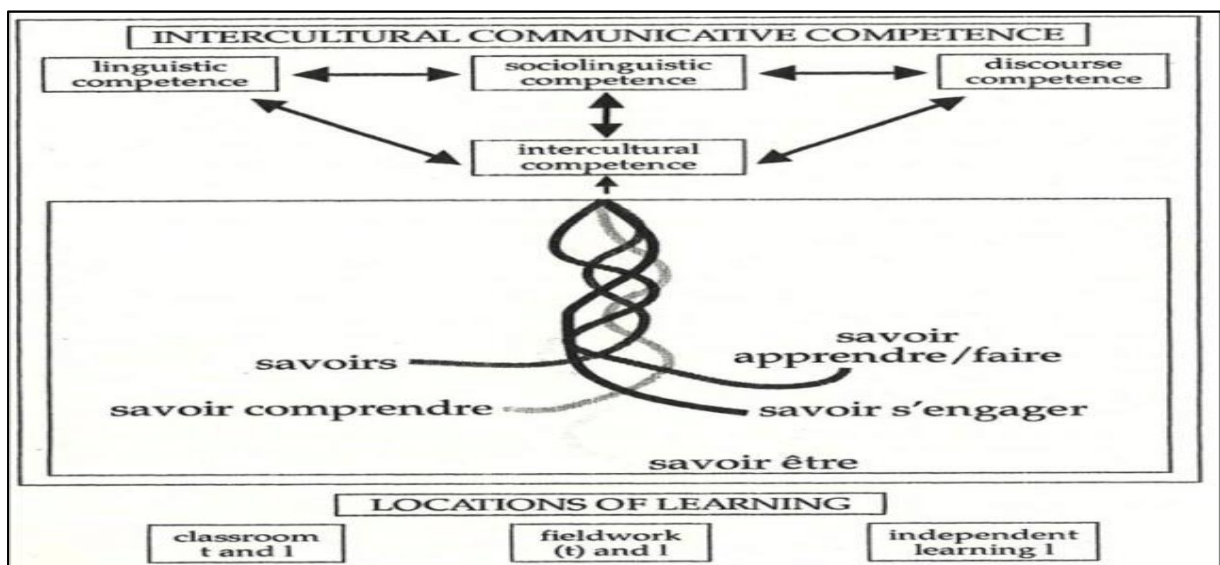


Figure 1.3. *Byram's Model of Intercultural Competence*

Note (Lange, 2011, p. 16).

1.6.3. Kramersch's Model of Third Space

According to Lange (2011), Kramersch introduced the model of Third Space in her book “Context and Culture in Language Teaching”, published in 1993, as a way to help teachers get better understanding of Intercultural Competence from learner’s perspectives, and be aware of the difficult position that learners are in while being exposed to a new culture. Kramersch claims that language and culture influence the intercultural approach, and emphasizes on learner’s identity, which means that learners should not be asked to “copy and paste” language and culture, because it would result in being “linguistically and culturally schizophrenic”. (Byram,1997, p. 11). Accordingly, it is not logical to compare Foreign Language learners with native speakers of a particular language, because they will lose their own identity. She criticized the native speaker model and developed the concept of looking for a third space; a space where two or more cultures intersect together and create something new as a bridge between them. Moreover, Kramersch asserts that an intercultural speaker is someone who is able “to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use”. That is to say that an intercultural speaker is the one who puts boundaries between two cultures in order to create a new culture as a third space, and does not acquire a new identity after being exposed to a new culture and language (pp. 13-14).

1.7. Components of Intercultural Competence

Barrett (2012) defines IC as a set of values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge, which are necessary to understand and respect people from different cultures, to interact and communicate appropriately (p. 3). Accordingly, they are ordered as the following:

-Attitudes: it encompasses respecting other cultures, being curious and open-minded, having the willingness to learn, suspend judgments, and tolerate ambiguities, and valuing cultural diversity.

-Skills: it refers to an individual's ability of listening and interacting with people from other cultures, adapting to various cultural environments, managing breakdowns in communication, mediating intercultural exchanges, discovering information, and interpreting cultures and relating them to each other.

-Knowledge: it includes cultural self-awareness, communicative awareness, general cultural knowledge about: processes of cultural, societal, and individual interaction, and culture-specific knowledge about: perspectives, practices and products of a given group.

-Behaviors: it includes behaving and communicating effectively in cultural settings, being flexible in communication and the way of behaving, and being action oriented through minimizing prejudice and discrimination.

1.8. Developing Intercultural Competence through Education

Barrett et al. (2014) suggests that intercultural competence can be developed through the following:

1.8.1. Formal Education

Formal education refers to the structured form of education and training system that takes place in educational institutions like: schools, colleges, and universities, where there is a shared responsibility among teachers to develop student's intercultural competence. These teachers follow a specific and planned curriculum with defined goals, that includes courses about cultural diversity, global issues, and intercultural communication. Usually, it leads to certification and obtaining a degree or diploma (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 28).

1.8.2. Non-formal Education

“Non-formal education means any planned program of education designed to improve a range of skills and competencies outside the formal educational setting, and throughout

lifelong learning” (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 27). Accordingly, it is a flexible and voluntary form of learning that takes place in workshops, community programs, intercultural exchange programs, and training sessions. It involves planned activities that aim at improving practical skills related to intercultural competence, and focuses more on learner’s personal development. Unlike formal education, it does not provide a certification or qualification.

1.8.3. Informal Education

Informal education refers to the process through which individuals naturally acquire attitudes, skills, knowledge, and develop intercultural competence through everyday life experiences, social interactions with: family, neighbors, peers, encounters, media, or cultural exposure through traveling. This type of education does not involve formal or planned instruction, but it is rather spontaneous and occurs subconsciously (Barrett et al., 2014, p. 27).

1.9. Challenges and Barriers to Intercultural Competence

Ilie (2019) claims that when people from different countries and cultural backgrounds interact, there will be both positive and negative aspects to the intercultural exchange. That is to say that obstacles will always take place in any intercultural context.

LaRay Barna (1994, as cited in Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 4) is considered as the first who studied intercultural communication barriers in the field of education. She mentioned a set of barriers ordered as the following:

1.9.1. High Anxiety

“The high anxiety stumbling block is a feeling of stress or tension resulting from uncertainties in intercultural encounters” (Barna, 1994, as cited in Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 5). In other words, the feeling of discomfort and stress that results from not comprehending how to communicate with people from different cultures is the fundamental cause of high

anxiety in intercultural communication. This uncertainty can hinder the effectiveness of intercultural communication, and challenge its flow.

1.9.2. Language

According to Barna, language is another stumbling block to intercultural communication. She states that even people who speak the same language, may use it differently, which can result in creating misunderstandings, because of the fact that words have different meanings depending on the context and cultural interpretations. She adds that not being aware of the different language usage can be problematic and affects the intercultural context and interaction (Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 5).

1.9.3. Nonverbal Misinterpretations

Barna argues that there is no universal nonverbal language, and each culture has its own way of decoding nonverbal signs and symbols. Nonverbal cues such as: gestures, facial expressions, body movements, eye contact and space vary across cultures, and have different meanings depending on specific cultural norms. Not being aware of these differences can result in falling into confusion and misunderstanding as an example: maintaining eye contact is seen as a sign of respect and attentiveness in Western cultures, whereas in Asian cultures it is seen as a sign of disrespect. For this reason, it is important to be cognizant of the varying meanings of nonverbal cues, in order to not hinder the effectiveness of intercultural communication (Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 6).

1.9.4. Stereotypes and Prejudices

Another barrier to intercultural competence highlighted by Barna is stereotypes and prejudices, which involves having an image full of overgeneralized or oversimplified beliefs and assumptions about people belonging to a different culture. In this regard, making

prejudgments and misconceptions about the other, will harm the process of developing intercultural competence (Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 7).

1.9.5. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism refers to "... the belief that one's culture, values, beliefs, language, or way of thinking is superior to other cultural groups (Zhu, 2020, cited in Seeger & Gustafsson, 2021, p. 7). In short, being ethnocentric gives a sense of superiority that erases aspects of IC including: tolerance, open-mindedness, and empathy.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, much focus has been put on the study of intercultural competence, including discussing its interrelationship with culture, its emergence, models, components, its development through education, and the barriers and challenges that affects its development. Undoubtedly, developing intercultural competence is a must because of the world's constant evolution. The thing that urges people to leave a space for change and flexibility, and tolerance for differences.

Chapter two
International Educational Scholarships and their Role in Fostering Intercultural
Competence

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Introduction

In an attempt to develop the field of higher education and the quality of teaching, international educational scholarships were awarded to EFL major students and future teachers. These scholarships generally enable recipients to gain a certain amount of knowledge from a cross-cultural experience. As a result, EFL teachers will endeavor to apply this knowledge with students at the University of 8 Mai 1945 in Guelma, Algeria, upon completing their studies. Building upon this, the chapter begins with an overview of the concept of international educational scholarship and its purposes, highlighting the major types and programs it entails. Moreover, it examines the evolving role of international educational scholarships in building global citizenship and the major challenges faced by EFL recipients. Finally, it explores the impact of international educational scholarships on EFL teachers' intercultural competence.

2.1. Definition of International Educational Scholarship (IES)

Before delving deep into the definition of IES, it is crucial to understand both concepts of 'scholarship' and 'international scholarship.' In its broader sense, scholarship is a financial aid granted to students to cover their education expenses (Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service, 2024). Campbell and Eff (2020) defined international scholarship as:

grants to individuals where individuals must study at the higher education level outside their home countries and work toward a university degree at an accredited university, and that the award must cover the majority (over 50%) of the total costs to study, travel, and live abroad. Moreover, the scholarship must be part of a program, and winners must be competitively selected for participation. (pp. 260–261)

Hence, IES can be defined as a type of financial support granted by universities to students selected for some required characteristics to help them pursue their studies abroad and

build the necessary competencies that would help them enhance their educational and professional experiences.

2.2. Role of International Educational Scholarship

Generally speaking, scholarships are used to select the most talented students, offering them the chance to choose the schools that would best support their academic and professional growth while also strongly encouraging them to pursue their higher education.

Refining the focus of this discussion, we will now examine, in greater detail, the specific role of international educational scholarships. In addition to helping students develop their technical skills and leadership abilities, Dassin et al. (2017) claim that international educational scholarships also expose students to civic leadership, democratic governance, and political processes, which contributes to social change by encouraging students to develop global awareness, social responsibility, and a deep appreciation for diversity. As a result, learners are prepared to engage effectively in international and multicultural contexts and undergo significant interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive growth. In other words, international educational scholarships play a crucial role in promoting student mobility, aiding in the development of nations, fostering global connections, and advancing broader global agendas.

2.3. Types of International Educational Scholarships

2.3.1. Merit Based Scholarship

Merit-based scholarships are those scholarships granted to students as a reward for their academic performance. They are designed to increase access to higher education, enhance student's academic achievement, and retain high-ability individuals within a state (Thiessen, n.d., p.3; Muhammed-Shittu, 2019, p.669). Furthermore, Doyle (2020) argues that these awards

are considered as useful tools for universities to attract specific students, and they are offered for various reasons such as adjusting the classrooms in a certain way or for improving the academic standing of the school or of a particular program. States also use merit-based scholarships to encourage more students from within the state to attend college and to motivate high school students to work harder (Westrick et al., 2020, p.4).

2.3.2. Need Based Scholarship

Thiessen (n.d.) argues that need based scholarships are those funds awarded to students based on their financial need (p.3). Naturally, need-based assistance, loans, and grants are intended for those who qualify. In terms of persistence and college accessibility, a need-based scholarship is shown to have the strongest association with less prosperous families (Muhammed-Shittu, 2019, p.669).

2.3.3. Fellowships

Fellowships are competitive, merit-based internal or external rewards given to qualified graduate students to fund their full-time studies. Fellows are given financial assistance so they can concentrate on their graduate studies and training without having to work for the institution (“External Fellowships Frequently Asked Questions,” 2021, p.1).

Such grants are given to qualified learners to help them boost their educational endeavors. They are long-term investments in the future of society because they are invested in the future of highly capable individuals. In addition to that, they are easily distinguished from grants intended to finance particular research and development initiatives, as no particular services are demanded from the students (National Science Foundation, 1963, p.1).

2.3.4. Teacher Training Scholarship

Richards & Farrel (2005) suggests that one method of teacher development that seeks to improve performance, productivity, and capacity is training. It has to do with developing the knowledge and skills that are necessary for professional competence. It includes applying what has been learned as well as comprehending it. Hence, training is defined as "the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom" (as cited in Rauteda, 2023, p.99).

From this definition it can be understood that teacher training scholarships are financial aids designed to support students who are pursuing their career as teachers. It covers all the costs related to tuition and the teacher training programs, and it aims to help students to acquire the essential skills and capacities needed for their professional development.

2.4. Major International Educational Scholarships Programs

2.4.1. Intercultural Exchange Program

Intercultural exchange programs are established through intergovernmental or interuniversity agreements between governments or universities. This scholarship is an umbrella term for many other programs including the Erasmus+ program which is supported by the European Union, Fulbright Program, and the Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) program. These programs are often promoted through official university websites and are designed to foster international academic and cultural exchange. At their core, exchange programs aim to enhance the intercultural competence of learner who have applied for it (personal communication).

2.4.2. Erasmus Scholarship

González et al. (2010) emphasize that the European Union launched the Erasmus Program in 1987 with the goal of encouraging student's mobility and collaboration across European higher education institutions. It makes it possible for students to study or work as

interns abroad, which improves their educational and cultural experiences. This scholarship encompasses a wide range of initiatives carried out by the European Commission's Directorate of General Education and Culture, what makes it arguably the most well-known activity, where over 2,000 universities from the EU-27 (and beyond) are now taking part of it (p.3).

2.4.3. Fulbright Scholarship

Fulbright scholarships are funds granted to students because of their academic achievements, career aspirations and leadership potential. The final confirmation of whether your file is accepted or not depends on several criteria, such as the approval and acceptance into an adequate academic program at a US university, your nomination by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, and the availability of funding (Fulbright Foreign Student Handbook, 2011, p.1).

The Institute of International education (2012) also notes that Fulbright are grants for graduate study, research, teaching assistantship, or training abroad. The J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FSB) and the Fulbright Commission/Foundation or Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the nation will assess and recommend your application for such a scholarship after consulting with a panel of experts in the relevant field of study before accepting your demand (p.1).

2.4.4. Chevening Scholarship

The UK government's international fellowship and scholarship program is called Chevening. Talented students are given the chance to study in the UK through this program, which is funded by the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and partner organizations. Chevening provides two sorts of awards; Chevening Scholarships which is given to qualified students wishing to enroll in a top UK university for a fully financed master's program; and Chevening Fellowships which is given to professionals in their mid-career who

want to study, do research, or complete a professional placement in the UK (Chevening Awards, 2022).

Chevening (2022) further explains that this scholarship is awarded to talented students who possess the passion, vision, and skills necessary to bring about constructive change in their own nations, and who wish to pursue a fully supported master's degree at a prominent, leading UK university. A wide variety of nations and backgrounds are represented among the successful applicants of such program (p.4).

2.4.5. Programme National Exceptionnel / Exceptional National program (P.N.E)

PNE is a competitive scholarship granted by the Algerian ministry of higher education for learners who are in their final phases of the PHD program. Candidates will typically apply for such scholarship, the ministry will treat their files, but only few are selected to pursue their studies at internationally recognized institutions with high standards and great opportunities. Upon completing their research abroad, learners will be granted a six months period to finalize and defend their doctorate thesis in order to be ready for their future professional career. Such program is not currently working anymore; however, the Algerian ministry can reactivate it at any time again (Personal Communication).

2.5. The Role of International Educational Scholarships in Building Global Citizenship

Before talking about the effect of international educational scholarships on promoting global awareness and endorsing cultural sensitivity and empathy, we need first to have an insight about the definition of global citizenship which involves awareness, caring, embracing diversity, promoting social justice and sustainability, and a sense of responsibility to act. It is influenced by sociocultural settings and the degree of identification with the group. A social identity perspective suggests that a person's degree of identification with a group predicts

adherence to its content, such as beliefs, behaviors, values, and emotions, and endorsement to its pro-social values and behaviors (Reysen et al., 2013, p.50).

Silas (n.d) also suggests that the idea of global citizenship has become increasingly common. She argues that a person who identifies as a member of an emerging world community and whose actions help to shape its values and practices is considered a global citizen. This person embraces a feeling of responsibility and empathy for others from different backgrounds, and from diverse political, cultural, and geographical borders (p.3).

2.5.1. Promoting Global Awareness

Global awareness is a concept that encompasses more than just factual world knowledge. It involves understanding global issues, values, cultures, cultural norms, and economic and international relations. While some theorists argue that global awareness is a result of learning factual knowledge, others suggest it is a combination of factual world knowledge and a sense of interconnectedness with others (Reysen et al., 2013, p.51).

Hiller & Woźniak (2009) state that this awareness can be promoted through engaging in international exchange programs that allow students to study abroad for a set period of time, such as the Fulbright programs or Erasmus+ programs. This exchange would help students gain more knowledge about the different cultures, norms, values, and the different global challenges that may take place while settling in a foreign country as a result of the individual differences. This was explained by Silas (n.d.), as she argues that participation in international exchange programs exposes youth to different cultures, languages, and perspectives, fostering cultural empathy and global awareness. By the end, these programs promote personal growth, enhance language proficiency, and build cross-cultural communication skills, preparing young people to navigate and contribute to a diverse world.

2.5.2. Cultural Sensitivity and Empathy

Cultural sensitivity is defined as, being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value, whether it is positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong. It simply means that you are aware that people are not all the same and that you recognize that your culture is not better than any other culture, and it is one of the key components of global citizenship as it promotes respect for cultural diversity. Global Citizens embrace diversity and avoid ethnocentrism while appreciating and respecting the distinctive traditions, values, and practices of the different cultures. This sensitivity minimizes cultural tensions and encourages harmonious cohabitation (Creedon and Al-Khaja, 2005, p.35).

Jiang & Wang (2018) suggest that empathy is also one of the key aspects of global citizenship. Global Citizens are motivated to behave compassionately by their capacity to empathize with others, particularly those from different backgrounds or experiencing hardship. This empathy encourages people to stand together and support efforts that reduce suffering and promote well-being (p. 1165).

Through intercultural exchange programs, students can study and live abroad for a considerable period of time, therefore, interact with people from different cultural settings, which would allow them to see the world from another perspective and foster the sense of openness and empathy towards other cultures. As a result, we can say that international education aims to foster a global mindset that recognizes and respects cultural variety in addition to spreading academic knowledge (Silas, n.d., p.10).

2.6. Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in International Educational Scholarship Programs

While studying abroad, international students may encounter various difficulties that may obstruct the process of learning:

2.6.1. Language Barriers

International students are usually language learners of the target language which means that they do not have as much knowledge of the target language as the local people of the host country. For this reason, we can say that such learners may face language difficulties in the four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Such challenges include understanding lectures, participating in classroom discussions, developing language skills in social-academic contexts, and spending time reading and writing. Studies have also reported problems with unfamiliar accents, grammar, vocabulary, and meanings in specific situations (Yang, 2016, p.23).

Mendez (2009) suggests that Language barriers decrease the effectiveness of communication with others in the target language, such as daily interactions, class interactions, and group discussions. This contains listening difficulties, such as understanding fast speech styles and colloquial language; Speaking difficulties, such as lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge that hinder expressing thoughts and achieving learning goals; and Language difficulties which also slow academic reading and writing, affecting students' comprehension of letters and discouraged participation in intercultural engagement (p.250).

EFL teachers are also EFL learners. From this point, it can be noted that they would face the same language difficulties as EFL learners but with fewer degrees. To say more, EFL beneficiaries can have sufficient skills and knowledge that would help them communicate effectively in a host country, but at the same time, they may lack the required accent and vocabulary, which are important elements that would differentiate them from the native speakers.

2.6.2. Cultural Shock

Due to the cultural gap between their own and the target cultures, international students typically face cultural challenges when studying abroad. One of these challenges would be cultural shock, which is a psychological distress experienced by individuals when they encounter cultural differences in an intercultural context. The development of cultural shock is usually suggested as a U-curve or a J-curve:

(1) The U-curve consists of five phases: honeymoon, disorientation, irritability and hostility, adjustment and integration, and biculturality. The first phase is the honeymoon, where the individual experiences excitement and hopefulness but still focuses on their first culture. Disorientation occurs when the individual faces difficulties in adaptation and communication, leading to irritability and hostility as he would seriously suffer from homesickness and believes that he has less adequate knowledge of the new culture than of the familiar one. The adjustment and integration phase is when interpersonal communication and social activities become less stressful and predictable. Finally, biculturality occurs when the individual understands the key elements of the new culture and feels comfortable living and communicating within both cultures (Hofstede et al., 2002; Samovar et al., 2010, as cited in Yang, 2016, p.31).

(2) The J-curve hypothesis suggests that learners initially experience negative emotions in an unfamiliar culture and that academic adjustment for postgraduate international students starts at a low point and gradually increases during study abroad. Studies also show that these learners often struggle to adjust to the target culture in the first few months, with adaptation rates decreasing in the first half-year. This suggests that international students often face difficulties during their study abroad experience especially the first few months after arrival (Biddle, 1979; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001, as cited in Yang, 2016, p.32).

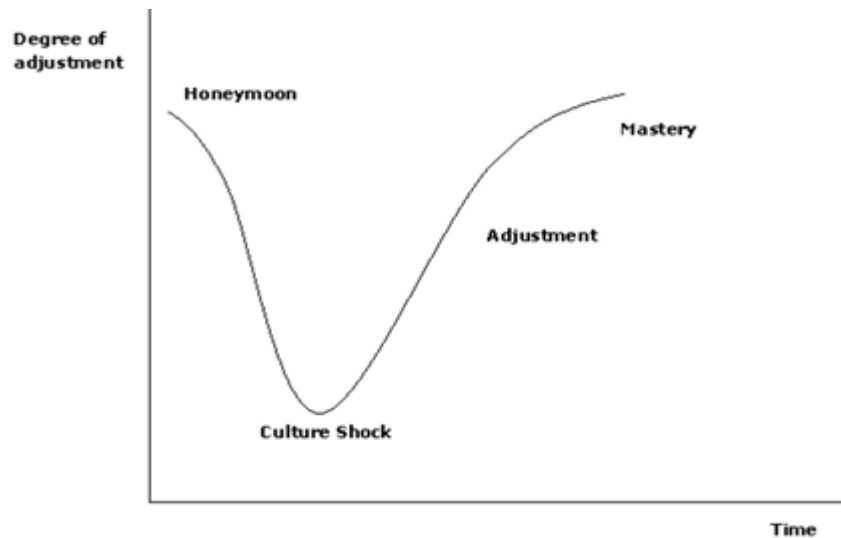


Figure 2.4. *Stages of Cultural Shock*

(Retrieved from Pihl et al., 2005, p.14)

Therefore, it is inferred that EFL teachers are likely to experience similar forms of cultural shock as international students. Although in some cases teachers may have adequate knowledge of the target culture of the host country, they will again face the same challenges because of the continuous interaction with different individuals from different cultural backgrounds, and as it is impossible to cover their knowledge about all cultures of the world. Therefore, misunderstanding can occur at any time within the educational setting.

2.6.3. Homesickness and Loneliness

Thurber & Walton (2012) suggest that homesickness is the mental distress caused by separation from home, causing constant thoughts of families and friends or any attached objects. It can lead to depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and difficulty focusing on studies, negatively impacting international students' academic performance (p.1564). While Peplau & Perlman (1982) argue that loneliness is a social issue resulting from less fulfilling or meaningful relationships than desired, which is likely to worsen due to an increasing gap

between expectations and actual experiences in real-life relationships (as cited in Thurber & Walton, 2012, p.1564).

International students often experience social isolation due to language barriers, foreign surroundings, disconnection, and limited resources and support. This can lead to feelings of resentment, social unrest, and potentially unsafe campus environments. Such isolation can prevent students from receiving necessary academic and professional help, cause them to experience confusion and uncertainty when studying in the foreign settings, and make them feel unsupported in navigating the educational system (Alshammari et al., 2023, pp.1236-1237).

As a result, it is concluded that EFL teachers are exposed to loneliness when moving on to study abroad due to academic pressures, linguistic barriers, cultural differences, and the loss of familiar support systems. They find it difficult to establish new connections and a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar setting where expectations and social norms may be different. Therefore, the scholarship experience may be both beneficial and challenging, and the emotional strain could overshadow the excitement.

2.6.4. Financial Constraints

According to Bilas (2016), many international students face financial constraints such as the substantial sums of money spent for both academic and living costs, when first moving to study abroad which, sometimes, lead to negative implications. Financial assistance varies by nation; some depend on scholarships, some have parents who can cover the huge costs, and some work many part-time jobs to help themselves. In other words, EFL beneficiaries will have to pay extra fees in order to ensure a respectable living in a foreign country: The cost of living, which includes housing, food, transportation, and personal expenses, can be a significant challenge; The academic costs, which can increase rapidly, including textbooks, course

materials, lab fees, and necessary technology; Also, in many cases, scholarships only cover tuition. Thus, students are left to handle these extra expenses on their own.

2.6.5. Cultural Adjustment

Gabel, Dolen and Cerdin (2005) define cultural adjustment as the transformations people go through in order to establish a relationship with the host society. Constantine, Okazaki and Utsey (2004) claim that understanding and integrating with the host culture's behaviors, values, and beliefs from the standpoint of one's own culture of origin is recognized as cultural adjustment. According to Kagan and Cohen (1990), cultural adjustment is a process that incorporates a number of interrelated factors connected with behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and demographic components. It leads to varying degrees of adjustment, ranging from cultural assimilation to cultural transformation.

When foreign students move to a new country, they face a number of challenges related to adjusting to a new social and academic setting. These issues might include communication and language barriers, housing and accommodation issues, adaptation to new foods and tastes, a changing environment, and trouble forming social bonds (Nasir, 2011). Gabel, Dolan, and Cerdin (2005) identify three aspects of cultural adjustment as follows in their study of cultural adjustment of international managers: General adjustment which refers to adjusting to everyday living issues like food, language, life satisfaction, etc.; Social-cultural adjustment that refers to establishing positive interpersonal relationships with members of the host society; and work adjustment which refers to relating to the culture of the workplace (or educational institution, in the case of students); and work requirements.

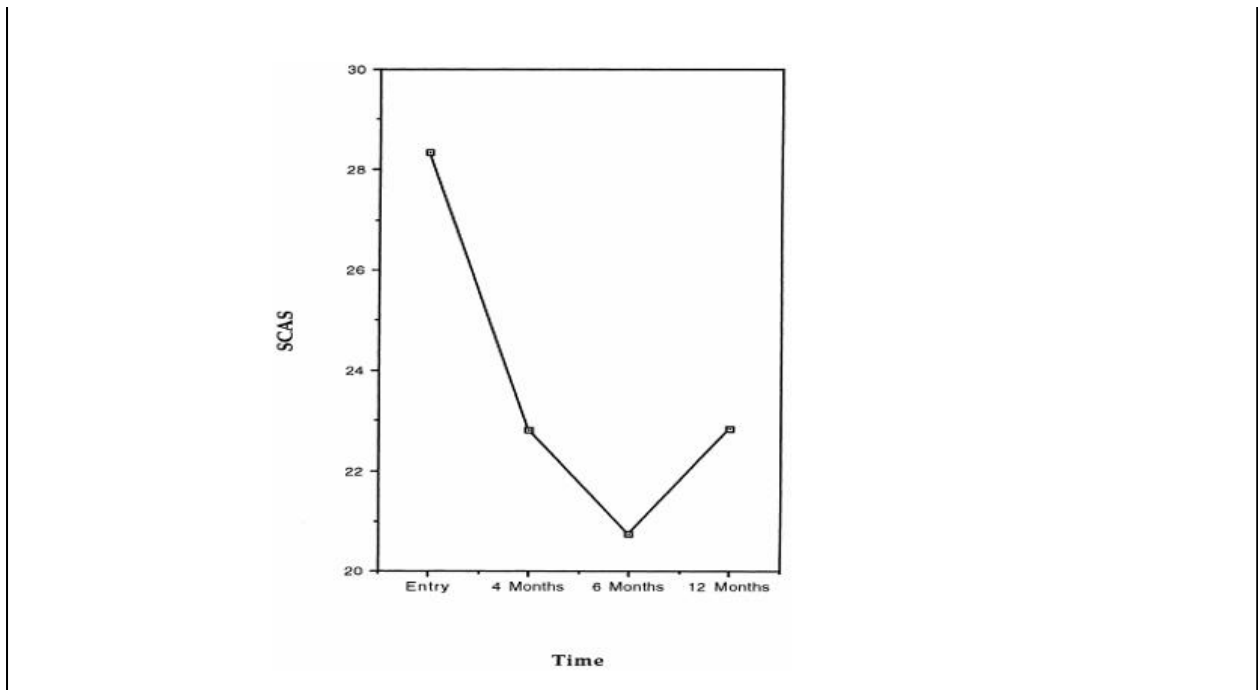


Figure 2.5. *Sociocultural Adjustment Score (SCAS) over time*

(Retrieved from Ward et al.,1998, p284).

Accordingly, EFL beneficiaries may face the same challenge when studying abroad but with slight changes: On the professional level, they may find it challenging to adapt to the new teaching methods used by the teachers of the host country while in the personal level, as it was mentioned in the previous paragraphs, EFL recipients may struggle with adapting to the different communication styles, cultural norms, and social customs, as well as facing difficulties while making new interpersonal connections.

The Impact of International Educational Scholarships on EFL Teacher’s Intercultural Competence

2.7. International Educational Scholarships and Intercultural Competence

Deardorff (2006) defines IC as “the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate

in intercultural interaction,” and is the most widely researched learning outcome associated with International Education experiences.

2.7.1. Development of Intercultural Communication

Studying abroad has a significant impact on students' intercultural communication abilities. Song and Austria (2024) find that throughout the time abroad, students' cultural sensitivity, awareness, and communication skills increase. The study indicates that the participants were more comfortable interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds, they were able to adapt their communication styles to fit various cultural settings, and that they exhibited a greater appreciation for cultural diversity. In addition, students were able to gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and communication dynamics by immersing themselves in foreign cultural contexts, which eventually improve their intercultural competence.

2.7.2. Broadening Perspectives on Language and Culture

Until recently, Freed's (1995) research on developing a language during study abroad was the most useful one. According to that document, the effects of studying abroad on language proficiency were, at best, mixed and, at worst, somewhat questionable. New discoveries about language development during study abroad have been brought forth by more current researches. To explain more, this research demonstrates that studying abroad can significantly enhance international students' language acquisition, particularly in oral-aural skills, speaking fluency, and overall communicative competence. It also emphasizes that short-term programs can lead to measurable improvement in speaking, listening, and language confidence (as cited in Cohen et al., 2005).

On the other hand, other studies show that Study-abroad participants develop a deeper understanding of the target country through social interaction with native speakers. These programs positively influence the affective domain, promoting openness to cultural diversity, global-mindedness, and patience, most significantly, the impact is more maximized when participants form close social networks with native speakers. Therefore, students will develop a deep knowledge of the culture of the host country by engaging in such programs.

2.7.3. Personal Growth

Study abroad programs significantly impact an individual's personal development. According to Dwyer and Peters (2004), 97% of college students believe that studying abroad leads to increased maturity, self-confidence, and tolerance of ambiguity. This rapid personal growth is attributed to the lack of direct support from parents and friends (p.56). Additionally, students living with host families learn independence, which is crucial for their growth. Hadi (2004) revealed that 79.6% of students agreed that studying abroad taught them to make their own decisions (p.62).

Empirical research demonstrates that scholarships are part of study abroad frameworks, significantly contributing to educators' multidimensional personal development (Anderson et al., 2016). Therefore, it is significant that scholarships help EFL beneficiaries to boost their self-confidence, maturity and independence as well as other positive traits that would help them later in the process of teaching.

2.7.4. Strengthening Pedagogical Practices

While study abroad programs help students develop their IC, research indicates that teaching abroad has a greater and more enduring impact on instructors' classroom practices. According to Mahon & Cushner (2002, p.5), new teachers can develop the skills necessary for

working with people from different cultural backgrounds through strong, extended, direct, and captivating face-to-face interactions.

Feryok (2006) observes that international experiences provide future educators with opportunities to critically reflect on their teaching beliefs while learning new instructional strategies. Similarly, Lee (2011) notes that scholarships increase self-confidence and innovative ideas for managing their classrooms. Hence, scholarships play a significant role in enhancing EFL recipient's knowledge about the different teaching methods, approaches and strategies used in EFL classrooms and that facilitate the process of learning.

2.8. Literature Review

This research aims at exploring the role of IES in fostering Algerian EFL teachers IC, at the University of 08 Mai 1945 of Guelma, who had received an International Educational Scholarships, highlighting their perceptions and attitudes towards the Intercultural exchange, the challenges and the difficulties that they faced in a foreign country with a foreign culture, and the effectiveness of IES in enhancing their IC. The matter under investigation was highly investigated however, it tackles a new dimension which is the role of IES in developing EFL Algerian teacher's IC.

Zhou (2011) conducts a mixed method study, where quantitative data were collected using a survey from 201 Chinese EFL teachers of the University of Windsor, and qualitative data from eight teachers who participated in a follow-up interview. The research reveals that the Chinese EFL teachers of the University of Windsor recognized the importance of IC, but often lacked the necessary training. The findings suggest that IES that facilitate international exposure could address these gaps and improve teaching practices.

Zhao (2016) argue that teachers in Chinese universities have a lack of intercultural communicative competence. Despite increased doctoral degrees, many teachers lack real

experiences in foreign cultures and rely on book knowledge. Because of this lack, many teachers tend to use traditional teaching methods to implement culture in their classrooms. Therefore, the appropriate solution that teachers can undertake is to study or live abroad for at least one year to gain more skills and cultivate their cultural awareness and IC.

In another study, Wolff and Borzikowsky (2018), investigate the impact of educational stays abroad on IC. The results show that international experiences have a positive impact on IC. Educational professionals who went abroad for a considerable period of time developed their IC after 3 months of experience, and a further increase in global IC can be expected with a longer period of time spent. A quasi-experimental design was conducted between participants who stayed in Germany and those who moved abroad. Therefore, the findings of this investigation became particularly remarkable.

Fatriyah et al. (2024), examine the role of Indonesian teacher's international experiences on the development of their IC. Through following a narrative approach to collect and analyze biographical narrative data from two higher educational teachers from Indonesia. Data were collected via document study, and three-cycle interviews. The findings show a significant growth in their IC, highlighting the transformative impact of such scholarships on their teaching practices and cultural understanding.

Cullen-Tran (2024), investigates the development of IC within EFL teachers in Thailand, where eight local EFL professors from the University of Isaan participated in a four-week Intercultural workshop. The results demonstrate a significant increase, and measurable improvements in teacher's IC, indicating that structured programs supported by scholarships can enhance cultural awareness.

Faraj et al. (2024), have recognized the overall importance of international contact and training in IC in influencing teachers' perceptions and teaching practices. It is assumed that

while EFL Palestinian teachers have adequate knowledge of IC, they would face challenges while applying it in an EFL classroom. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers receive adequate training through participating in international activities like the educational scholarships.

In summary, while the previously mentioned studies have addressed both concepts of IES and IC, they often examined them separately, without explicitly investigating the relationship between the two elements or stating the direct impact of one on another. The majority of the reviewed literature emphasize the broad importance of studying abroad, often concluding that such experiences contribute to the development of IC. In return, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the role of IES in fostering EFL teachers' IC, particularly in the context of the University of 8 Mai 1945 in Guelma, Algeria.

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the major international educational scholarships, which represent a transformative phase for EFL graduate students and future teachers, as it helps them develop academically, personally, and professionally through meaningful experiences. Despite challenges such as cultural adjustment, financial constraints, etc., these programs promote intercultural communication, enhance pedagogical practices, and foster global citizenship among participants. Upon their completion, EFL teachers would gain various skills and knowledge that help them make significant contributions when they return to their home countries.

Chapter Three

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Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is designed as the practical part of the study. It aims to examine EFL teachers' perspectives towards the role of international educational scholarships in fostering their intercultural competence. In light of this, it attempts to apply the theoretical frameworks on the collected data. Then, it describes and analyzes the research methodology, data collection tool, sampling methods, and the interview procedures. Finally, it provides the summary and the discussion of the results.

3.1 Research Method and Design

3.1.1. Research Methodology

The current research aims to explore the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teachers' intercultural competence through an exploratory qualitative method that is defined by Stebbins (2001) as: "a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalizations leading to description and understanding" (p.3). It is employed to gain in-depth insights from teachers who have previously been part of such scholarship programs, as their experience abroad emphasizes the core of this research. Furthermore, this method allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena, and the different attitudes and perceptions of teachers toward the intercultural exchange.

3.1.2. Data Collection Tool

This study examines the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teachers' intercultural competence. In order to collect relevant qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection tool due to their flexibility, clarification and probing, and their ability to generate in-depth data from the interviewees' personal experiences during their international educational scholarship programs. According to Barclay

et al. (2018), “A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that combines a predetermined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further.” (p.1)

3.1.3. The Sample

The study targeted EFL teachers from the department of Letters and English Language and Culture at the University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma who benefited from international educational scholarships. The sample consists of eight EFL teachers (8) from both genders: males and females, with teaching experience ranging from five (5) to more than thirty (+30) years. Furthermore, the interviewees were purposely selected based on their diverse international experiences across different countries, which span from two (2) months to nine (9) years. The contribution of these participants would serve well the aim of this study which is to investigate the extent to which studying abroad helps to the development of their intercultural competence and intercultural exchange.

3.1.4. Quantification of Qualitative Data

Barclay et al. (2018) claims that, “Qualitative research captures information that is not numerical in nature. It records people’s attitudes, feelings and behaviors, and provides an in-depth but usually indicative picture about why people act in a certain way” (p.1). Accordingly, qualitative research is the type of research that occurs in a natural setting, where the researchers record and analyze non- numerical data to fulfil the research aims. Despite that, qualitative research can also be analyzed using the process of “quantitizing data” which is about converting qualitative data into numerical data (Dornyei, 2007, p.269). As it is highlighted in Sandelowski (2001), “numbers are integral to qualitative data, and skill with numbers is essential to good qualitative research” (p.231). This process offers a more structured way to analyze and interpret qualitative data, as well as, ensuring credibility and reliability.

Semi-structured interviews are the primary source of collecting data, but some results are quantified in order to reach a deeper understanding of EFL teacher's experiences by categorizing similar answers and calculating the frequency of particular themes. This process does not ensure only the credibility and the reliability of the research, but also offers a thorough understanding of the collected data.

3.2. EFL teachers' Interview

3.2.1. Description of Teacher's Interview

The interview is composed of (11) open-ended questions that are formed to explore EFL teachers' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards the role of IES in fostering their IC. The questions are organized from general to specific to fulfil the relevant aims of the topic under investigation.

Questions 1-4 focus on gathering data about the various types of scholarships and their duration, assessing teachers' attitudes, recognizing the challenges and the implemented strategies used to overcome them. Questions 5-7 focus on collecting teachers' background knowledge about intercultural competence, the aspects that contributed to its development, and the ways that enhanced their understanding of other cultures. Questions 8-9 investigates whether studying abroad helped teachers to be more confident in teaching EFL, and how it contributed to their overall career development. Finally, questions 10-11 aims to collect teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of the scholarship experience in fostering their intercultural competence, and gather their perceptions about the importance of integrating intercultural competence in teaching EFL (Appendix A).

3.2.2. Procedures of Data Collection

The interview took place at the department of Letters and English Language and Culture at the University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma. Eight teachers (8) were interviewed from April 14th to April 20th. The data collection procedure varies between face-to-face, on-line, and written interviews depending on teachers' preferences. The duration of each interview approximately took from 25 minutes to 50 minutes. The answers were recorded with the consent of teachers to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, highlighting that the findings will be used only for academic purposes.

2.3. Analysis of Results from the Interview

This part is dedicated for the analysis of findings from the interview. Qualitative data is going to be thoroughly analyzed following the process of "Quantitizing data" to ensure more credibility and reliability.

Question one: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

This question seeks to identify the different types of international educational scholarships that were granted to EFL teachers. As it is shown in figure (3.6), some EFL teachers participated in more than one scholarship which makes the total percentage over 100%.

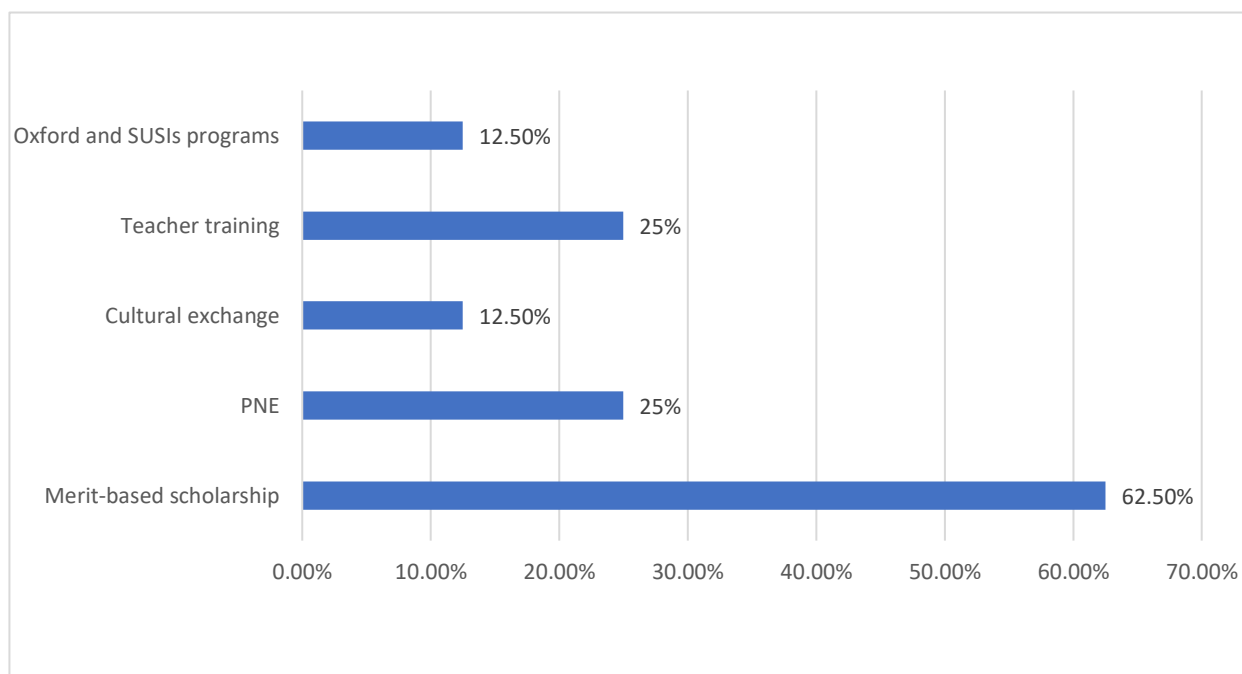


Figure 3.6. Types of International Educational Scholarships (IES)

Results show that the majority of teachers (62.5%) benefited from merit-based scholarship, as it is fully funded by the Algerian ministry of higher education for the major students in each University. Other respondents (25%), revealed that they participated in Programme Nationale Exceptionnelle (PNE), while only (12.5%) of them applied for the cultural exchange scholarship. The aforesaid are considered as long-term scholarships for the sake of academic expertise.

Furthermore, 25 % of teachers were concerned with a teacher training scholarship mainly for the purpose of improving their teaching skills and capacities. A small proportion (12.5%) of interviewees reported that they participated in the Oxford program and SUSIs program. The aforementioned scholarships are classified among short-term scholarships for the sake of academic development.

Question two: How long did this scholarship last?

Table 3.1.

Duration of the International Educational Scholarship (IES)

Duration	Number of teachers	percentage
2-24 months	1	12.5%
3-5 years	6	75%
+5 years	1	12.5%

Question two explores the duration that EFL teachers spent abroad while participating in an international educational scholarship. Data reveals that 12.5% of EFL teachers spent

between 2 to 24 months abroad, 75% stayed between 3 to 5 years, while the remaining respondents spent more than 5 years studying abroad. These intervals of time correspond to the different types of scholarships: for example, Oxford, SUSIs, and teacher training programs last for two (2) to three (3) months, PNE eighteen (18) months, Merit based three (3) years, and Cultural exchange for five (5) years. The aforementioned serve the different academic purposes required for fulfilling EFL teachers' needs.

Question Three: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad?

This question aims to figure out whether EFL teachers have positive or negative attitudes towards studying abroad. The findings show that all teachers have positive attitudes towards the international educational scholarship experience, due to the academic, linguistic benefits, and the emotional support of the local citizens. Also, the majority of teachers stated that they would recommend studying abroad for any EFL learner who can afford it. As teacher one stated, "I have very positive attitudes towards studying abroad and I would really recommend it to everyone who can afford it or who can have this opportunity".

Question four: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad? What type of challenges did you face? How did you overcome these challenges?

This question seeks to understand the different types of challenges faced by EFL teachers in a foreign country with a foreign culture and how they managed to overcome these challenges. At the beginning some EFL teachers reported that they did not encounter any significant challenges while studying abroad, attributing this either to the welcoming nature of the host country's citizens or to their open-mindedness and tolerance for cultural differences.

However, after emphasizing on key aspects of their experience, it became evident that all teachers faced several common challenges as shown in figure (3.7):

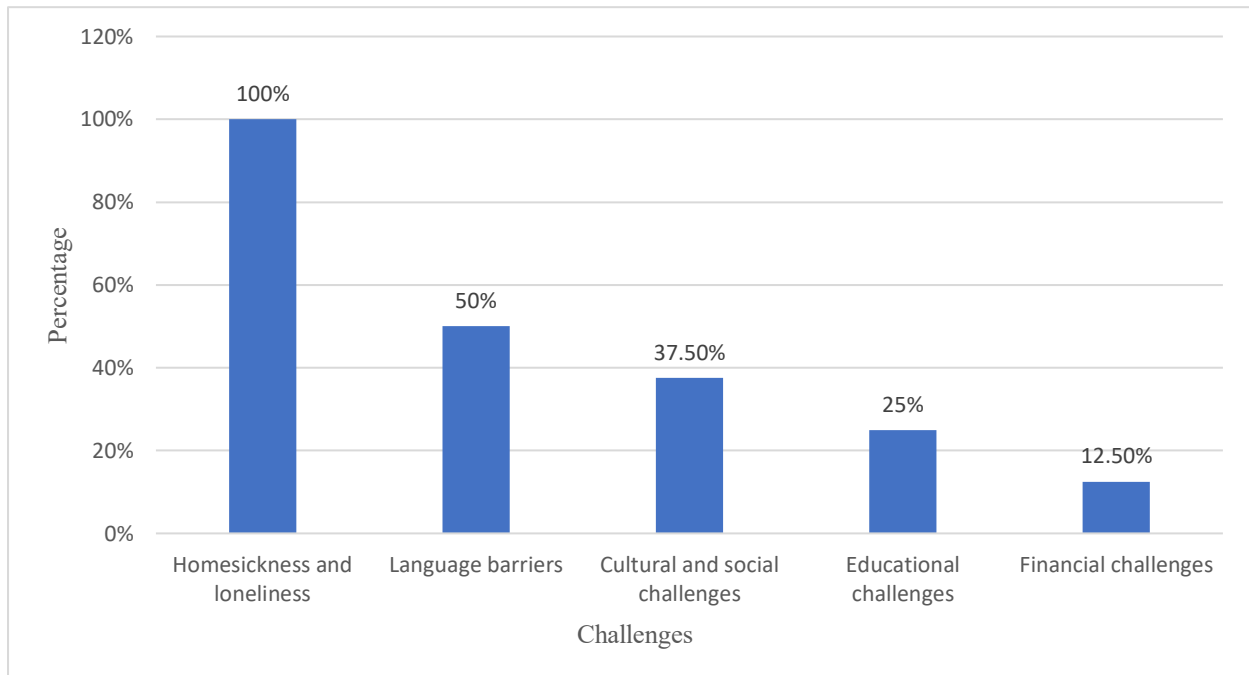


Figure 3.7. *Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers*

Homesickness and loneliness: All participants (100%) mentioned that they faced homesickness and loneliness, because of the emotional separation from their families and home country. As it is described by one of the teachers: “the emotional part was not an easy thing for girls and boys being separated from our parents and home country. You know! it remains a tough thing”. However, they managed to deal with this issue through the continuous emotional support of the surrounding environment including: teachers, colleagues, administrative staff, and even the local citizens, the use of technology that was highly beneficial to bridge the emotional gap, and the constant social integration within the collective groups that were created for international students.

Language barriers: Half of the interviewees (50%) noted that they found difficulties in communicating with the local community using different languages and dialects, such as:

Spanish, Catalone, Chinese, standard English, and local English. Yet, they overcame this challenge by taking language courses to improve their understanding of the standard language and the regional dialects.

Cultural and social challenges: 37.5% claimed that culture and social differences were problematic, because of the lack of exposure and awareness about the diversities existing within cultures, as it is stated by teacher five, “Outside the classroom, cultural differences in social interactions, classroom etiquette, and even daily life required conscious adjustment”. In spite of that, they were able to address these issues through integration and cultural adaptation as it is stated by teacher four: “once we arrived there, we faced many differences and we had to adapt their culture. This process was very difficult, but finally we were able to integrate ourselves within the new society”. As well as fostering their understanding of social and cultural differences over time as highlighted by teacher four: “in this way you are going in the end to accept this new culture, accommodate people’s traditions and norms when they invite you to celebrations, and behave as if you are a member of this society”.

Educational challenges: A small proportion (25%) of teachers participating in this study openly admitted that they faced some challenges in the educational setting, for example the sudden shift from teacher centered to learner centered approach, lack of autonomy in learning, time differences, and learning methods. Teacher four argued that:

We had to adapt to their styles of teaching and learning that were very different. We were not used to prepare ourselves, our lessons. Studies there depended on individual students. You have to study by yourself. The teacher was only a guide. You have to convince your classmates with your seminar. You have to answer questions and things like that. This demanded a lot. And we worked day and night in order to try to compensate for the lack of knowledge we didn't learn here in Algeria.

Such difficulties were overcome through self-reliance and increased efforts to meet the required academic standards, complemented by support from their surrounding environment including their teachers who played a significant role in facilitating the process of navigating these challenges by providing them with guidance, mentorship, and valuable advice.

Financial challenges: Only 12.5% indicated that the scholarships were not fully funded by the government, therefore their demands and needs including: food, transportation, and accommodation were not highly covered because of the expensive living conditions in the United Kingdom. But they handled the situation through managing their budget and working in part-time jobs.

Question five: How can you define intercultural competence according to your experience of studying abroad?

This question seeks to understand the different definitions provided by EFL teachers who studied abroad, in order to figure out whether they share a similar understanding of the concept of IC.

Results show that all respondents share a similar understanding of the concept of intercultural competence. Since all of them define it as the ability to interact and communicate effectively across cultures by being culturally sensitive, respectful and tolerant of cultural differences, and adjusting one's behavior accordingly. Moreover, IC requires knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow people to integrate into new cultures without losing their own unique identity. Accordingly, it is about creating a balance between cultures, managing cultural sensitivities, and being able to operate effectively in diverse cultural settings. Moreover, it is considered as both an inner ability and a learned skill to navigate through diverse environments successfully.

Question six: In your journey abroad were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that journey?

This question aims at gathering opinions of EFL teachers regarding their experience abroad, and the various aspects that enhanced their intercultural competence. Responses demonstrate that all interviewees agreed that their experience abroad was impressive and outstanding, because of the lasting impact that affected their personal and professional growth. Additionally, most of the teachers affirmed that aspects like cultural immersion, interpersonal interaction, maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, attending workshops, events or celebrations, joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities, exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments fostered their intercultural competence. Another influential aspect to be added is reflecting on the individual's own culture to familiarize the unfamiliar and question what is already familiar. As highlighted by teacher one: "...like you can critically think about your own culture. So, you understand more about your own culture and sometimes you do not accept some aspects of your own culture that were inherited without questioning".

Question seven: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

This question seeks to understand EFL teachers' perspectives about the way in which studying abroad helped them understand other cultures.

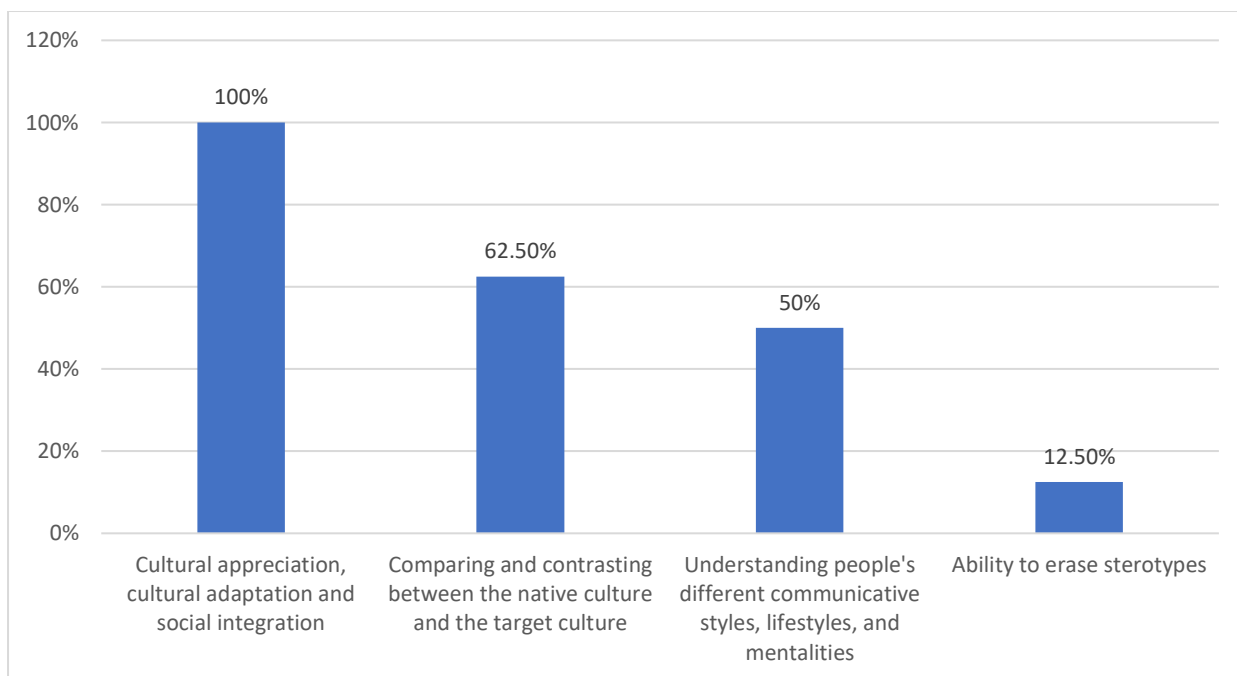


Figure 3.8. *The Impact of Studying Abroad on Teacher's Understanding of Other Cultures*

Cultural appreciation, cultural adaptation and social integration: The most commonly cited impact identified by all participating interviewees (100%) is cultural appreciation, which contributed to the development of their overall intercultural personality by fostering a sense of open mindedness, smoothness, respect, tolerance, acceptance, and appreciation of other cultures. Additionally, studying abroad taught EFL teachers to adapt to the different cultures existing within a foreign society therefore, adjusting their behaviors, attitudes and communication styles according to the norms, values, sensitivities and expectations of the new people and the new culture. Finally, social integration helped teachers to become fully incorporated in the new society by maintaining interpersonal relationships, either through a direct interaction with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds or by engaging with all types of activities. This, in return, strengthened their sense of inclusion within the host community, hence, their understanding of other cultures.

Comparing and contrasting between the native culture and the target culture: A good proportion (62.5%) of EFL teachers find that comparing and contrasting between the two

cultures help them to understand the cultural differences and the individualistic social norms of the host community. This process enabled them to understand people's sensitivities and adjust their behaviors accordingly. In this regard, Teacher five explained: "What began as culture shock gradually developed into cultural literacy - I learned not just British customs, but how to observe, adapt to, and respect any cultural context. Most importantly, I gained the ability to recognize my own cultural biases while appreciating alternative perspectives, a skill that continues to benefit my professional work with international teams."

Understanding people's different communication styles, lifestyles and mentalities: Half of the teachers (50%) agreed that studying abroad helped them make new connections with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, both in social and academic contexts. This exposure potentially led them to deal with individuals who possess different ways of thinking, communicating and even living. As a result, they were obliged to learn new dialects, customs, traditions and norms, while also demonstrating respect for those standards and trying to understand people's mentalities before interacting with them. In understanding the host culture, EFL teachers also participated in various aspects of daily life, including community festivals, ceremonies and even protests. They also explored the new food and accepted the unfamiliar clothing styles as a part of their cultural adjustment.

Ability to erase stereotypes: A matter raised by 12.5% of teachers was the ability to erase stereotypes by taking time to observe foreigners, compare what is different, and then directly interact with them to have a clear picture about these people. Teacher six stated:

The duration of the experience helped. The longer we stayed there, we allowed ourselves to really see the people, to get to know the people. We really took our time observing people so that these stereotypes vanished because we were able to see, to have a clearer image, a clearer picture of these people.

Accordingly, this quote highlights the transformative role of time in the process of promoting intercultural understanding and challenging prejudices, that may arise from the idea of superiority.

Question eight: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

This question attempts to understand teachers' opinion on whether the international experience has to do with improving their confidence in teaching EFL. Results show that all teachers acknowledged the role of their scholarship experience in shaping their personality as EFL teachers and more specifically, they claimed that it helps them to: understand student's challenges and struggles, provide authentic examples, develop their sensitivity towards all cultures, and implement the different teaching methodologies acquired abroad.

Such experience has also played an integral role in helping the interviewees to integrate the Sub-Saharan students, from different cultural backgrounds, such as Mali, Niger, and Comoros, by being nice and smooth with them as they themselves have experienced their feelings as international students. Responses revealed that the majority of teachers (62.5%) had the opportunity to teach the Sub-Saharan category, whereas the rest (37.5%) had only the chance to teach Algerians. Therefore, they were able to put themselves in their position, understand their feelings, and behave accordingly through giving them the same advice they used to hear in their past international academic context.

Question nine: How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

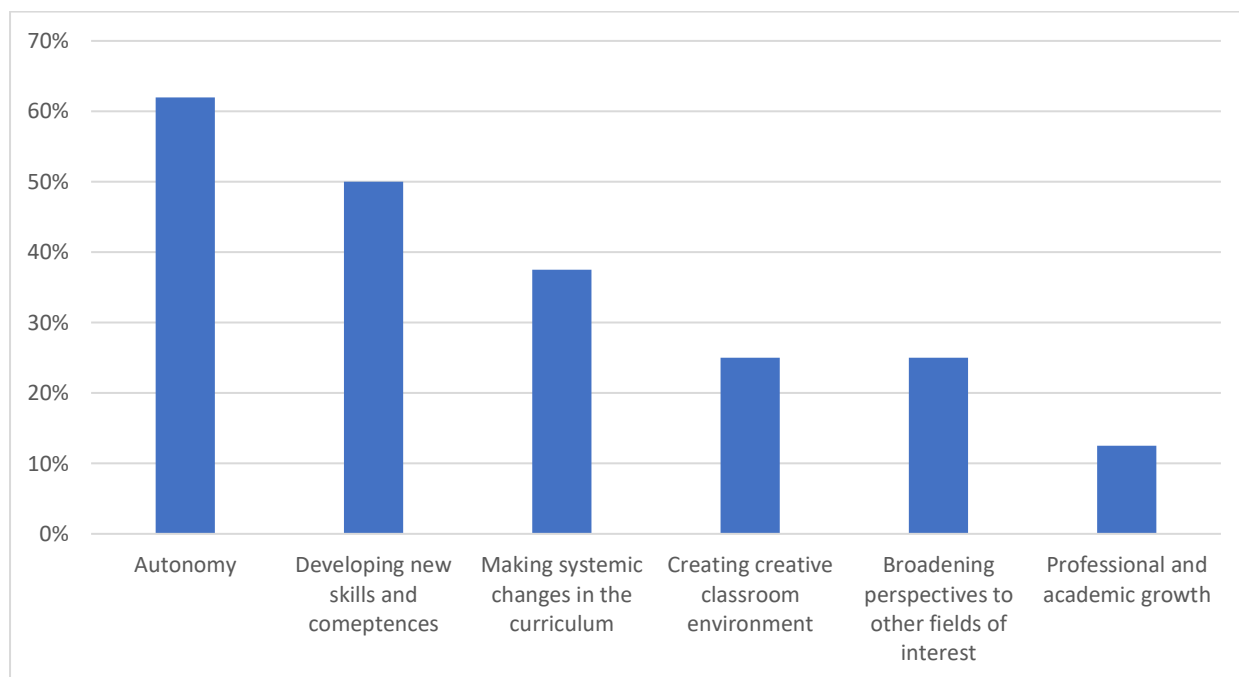


Figure 3.9. *The Impact of International Experiences on EFL Teachers Overall Career Development*

This question sought to explore the impact of studying abroad on EFL teachers' overall career development. Findings show that:

Autonomy: A considerable amount of (62.5%) claimed that studying abroad has developed their personality as EFL teachers in terms of becoming more autonomous, independent and self-reliant, because the international educational context encourages active learning and learner centered approach.

Developing new skills and competencies: Half of the teachers (50%) indicated that studying in a foreign context has contributed to fostering their four skills and many other pedagogical competencies like: critical thinking, problem solving and classroom management.

This experience has also enabled them to deal with different communicative styles exhibited by their learners such as kinesthetic, auditory, visual, and audio-visual learners.

Making systemic changes in the curriculum: 37.5% of EFL teachers have gained the ability to make systemic changes in the curriculum through developing new courses that cover learners' needs. In addition, to applying authentic, relevant and practical methods in their classrooms. This was highlighted by teacher five:

I have developed courses that explicitly bridge cultural gaps in academic English, using concrete examples from my own struggles with British academic conventions (...) I have implemented programs like peer mentoring for international students and staff training on intercultural feedback (...) living through the EFL-to-academic transition myself allows me to advocate meaningfully for systemic changes, ensuring our curriculum covers not just language proficiency, but the hidden cultural competencies vital for success in English-medium academia.

Creating inclusive classroom environment: Some EFL teachers (25%) reported that their experience abroad has taught them to accept learners' differences, their diverse cultural identities and learning styles. In other words, creating a classroom that ensures that all students are welcomed, respected and supported regardless of their cultural background.

Broadening perspectives to other fields of interests: (25%) of respondents claimed that their experience abroad has exposed them to various disciplines by maintaining relationships with peers that share the same area of inquiry. As it is highlighted by teacher two, "Also directed me towards other specialties... Now I have my initial educational background, and I work on other disciplines, and this is thanks to the experiences I had during these scholarships abroad."

Professional and academic growth: A small proportion of (12.5%) revealed that their scholarship experience has contributed to their overall professional and academic growth. They observed the pedagogical approaches and techniques employed by their international teachers, such as organizing workshops and providing peer mentoring to teach students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Subsequently, teachers adapted these practices within their home country educational contexts. Moreover, EFL teachers demonstrated that they became more active and confident in publishing their academic works. As mentioned by teacher five, “This practical perspective informed my research on culturally responsive pedagogy, leading to publications and workshops adopted across our faculty. Institutionally, I have implemented programs like peer mentoring for international students and staff training on intercultural feedback.”

Question ten: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence? Why?

Table 3.3.

The Perceived Benefits and Challenges of the Scholarship Experience in Fostering Intercultural Competence

Perspective	Number of teachers	Percentage
Beneficial	6	75%
Challenging but more beneficial	2	25%
Total	8	100%

This question aims to get insights into teachers' perspectives about whether the scholarship experience is more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering IC. Data demonstrates that the majority of teachers (75%) consider the experience abroad as more beneficial, because it helped them to practice their background knowledge and skills in real life situations, and straightened their personality and the way they interact with others.

The remaining respondents (25%) displayed that the journey was challenging but more beneficial, as they found difficulties in accepting, understanding, adapting and then integrating within a multicultural environment that is composed of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. In spite of that they managed to develop intercultural strategies that helped them to deal with diverse cultural struggles.

Question eleven: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL?

This question attempts to figure out whether the scholarship program helped teachers to understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL. All participants agreed on the importance of intercultural competence in education and specifically in teaching EFL, because it helps them to transmit the bulk of knowledge and skills they acquired during their journey, which will eventually influence their learners' comprehension, acceptance and tolerance towards other cultures.

3.4. Summary and Discussion of Results

The interview is conducted with (8) EFL teachers of the department of Letters and English Language at the University of 8 Mai 1945 to explore the role of international educational scholarships in fostering intercultural competence. The analysis of the results provides a comprehensive understanding of the research aims and covers the research gap.

Teacher's participation in different types of international educational scholarships which varied from one to another, according to each one's academic purposes, demonstrates positive attitudes towards studying abroad. Regardless of the challenges faced including: homesickness and loneliness, language barriers, cultural and social challenges, educational and financial challenges. EFL teachers were able to overcome and cope with these obstacles, which show their ability to apply the background knowledge and skills learned in their home country, particularly, problem-solving skills and adaptability to diverse cultures existing within the surrounding environment.

However, the way of dealing with these challenges differs according to multiple reasons. Firstly, the time interval demonstrates that teachers who studied in the 1900's faced more difficulties compared to those of the mid 2000's, due to the lack of exposure and openness to the external world. Secondly, the technological advancement and globalization of the last decade played a significant role in bridging the emotional gap that teachers felt because of the separation from their families and home country, compared to those of the 1900's who had less contact with their families since technology was not as highly advanced as nowadays, and telephones were expensive and not affordable. Therefore, they were obliged to communicate through letters which took considerable time to be sent and received.

Finally, the cultural affinity of Eastern countries like Jordan led to providing a sense of closeness and more understanding, as many Arab countries share similar cultural aspects that contributed to facilitating the process of learning and integration. In contrast, Western countries like the United State, United Kingdom, China, Turkey that represent "the other" with a completely different culture in terms of values, norms, traditions, religion, lifestyle, clothing, etc. made it more difficult for individuals to cope with the new environment.

The findings of this study show that EFL teachers highly developed their understanding of intercultural competence because of recognizing the complexity of the multicultural environment. Simultaneously, they developed the skill of intercultural competence and mingling between cultures using different aspects like cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values and norms, interpersonal interactions, maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, attending workshops, events or celebrations, joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities, exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments, which eventually enhanced their understanding of other cultures. That is to say, when individuals are subject to different cultures, they start comparing and contrasting their native culture and the target culture, once they understand the difference in general between them, they start developing general understanding between all cultures, not necessarily while living in the host culture but also while watching series, listening to talk shows, or short reels on social media.

EFL teachers acknowledged that the scholarship experience is extremely beneficial since it made them more confident in teaching EFL and helped them to develop a sense of empathy towards Sub-Saharan students. As they share the same experience, EFL teachers were able to transfer their expertise, provide peer mentoring, and create a nurturing environment that offers hospitality and encourages international students to integrate. Additionally, studying abroad contributed to their overall career development as EFL teachers in terms of broadening their perspectives to other fields of interests, developing new skills and competencies, creating an inclusive classroom environment, and affecting their professional academic growth. Subsequently, they asserted the importance of intercultural competence and the necessity of integrating it in education, and particularly in teaching EFL.

3.5. Pedagogical Implications

The study investigates the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teacher's intercultural competence. The findings demonstrate several pedagogical implications. These implications extend to teachers and the broader faculty, highlighting the various aspects that help to enhance intercultural competence.

The faculty is recommended to offer more opportunities for major students to study abroad and benefit from a fully funded international educational scholarship, in order to apply their theoretical knowledge through exchanging their native culture with the diverse cultures existing within the host country. Moreover, it is advisable to allow EFL teachers to participate in more training programs to develop the required skill of intercultural competence. In addition, the faculty is encouraged to make changes in the curriculum through implementing new lessons, courses, and even major of study, like intercultural competence and cultural exchange.

Teachers, on the other hand, need to recognize the importance of developing their intercultural competence for their academic and professional growth, and take advantage of the scholarships provided to enhance their capacity in dealing with diverse cultures through cultural immersion, interpersonal interaction, maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, attending workshops, events or celebrations, joining clubs, participating in some programs or activities, exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments. In addition, teachers who already developed the skill of intercultural competence are recommended to provide peer mentoring to exchange expertise.

Findings suggest that EFL teachers are recommended to develop a sense of empathy among their learners towards international students through creating an inclusive environment that offers hospitality. Eventually, as being experts in the field, they are required to transfer their intercultural experience and the acquired competencies to their learners through modeling

methods of teaching and different communicative styles to broaden students' perspectives, foster global awareness and provide real world context to their lessons.

3.6. Limitations of the Study

The process of conducting research is often problematic. Several difficulties that occur while investigating can hinder the successful completion of the research. Like many other researches, this study as well faced many obstacles. Since the topic under investigation is original and authentic, we as EFL learners faced some challenges regarding content generating and finding primary sources that discuss the matter of interest. At the level of data collection, teachers did not demonstrate collaboration. They agreed to be interviewed at the very beginning of the research, then many of them backtracked. Thus, the sample decreased from fifteen (15) to eight (8) participants.

Another issue that disrupted data analysis was the inappropriate way of conducting the interview with some participants. Two (2) interviewees opted for written interviews instead of recorded ones. One of them consisted of brief, direct answers to the questions, which limited the opportunity to ask further questions. Consequently, it effected the quality of the in-depth analysis.

Finally, some of the teachers asked for a copy of the interview's questions in advance. While this was done to ensure participants' comfort, it may have affected the authenticity and the reliability of the results. Having prior access to the questions could lead participants to look for answers using the new artificial intelligence or any research machine, potentially reducing the richness of naturally occurring insights that helps a researcher to extract the needed information.

3.7. Recommendation and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of the research offer a range of suggestions for future researchers to work on the topic under investigation. Firstly, it is encouraged to make a comparison between teachers who benefited from international educational scholarship and teachers who did not, or comparing between Western and Eastern countries regarding the improvement of intercultural competence. Moreover, it is proposed to examine how the scholarship experience helps EFL teachers to transfer their intercultural knowledge to their students and the strategies that were implemented to teach intercultural competence. Future researchers can also investigate the development of some specific skills like communication, empathy, critical thinking, etc. Through the scholarship experience. Finally, it is suggested that future studies use larger samples and new methods like mixed method approach, through combining both qualitative and quantitative data, in order to make a clear image about the impact of studying abroad on improving intercultural competence.

Conclusion

The practical chapter focuses on exploring the gap between international educational scholarships and intercultural competence through analyzing the data collected from semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers. Findings reveal that receiving a scholarship to study abroad have a significant positive impact on their intercultural competence. Therefore, the result of this inquiry has fully answered the research questions outlined in the general introduction proving that scholarships highly improve intercultural competence as it exposes EFL teachers to new cultures.

General Conclusion

In an interconnected world, international educational scholarships are assumed to have a pivotal contribution in developing EFL teachers' intercultural competence, as they provide immersive experiences in diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, this research is conducted to explore the perspectives of EFL teachers at the University of 8 Mai 1945 Guelma, regarding the role of international educational scholarships in fostering intercultural competence. In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative method is implemented, using semi structured interviews to gather data from a sample that is composed of eight (8) EFL teachers at the department of Letters and English Language and Culture. This method provides a comprehensive understanding of participants insights and experiences.

The dissertation is composed of three chapters; the first and second chapters fall under the theoretical part, while the third chapter is considered as the practical part. The first chapter provides an overview about the concepts of culture and intercultural competence, and its development through education. The second chapter reviews international educational scholarship, their types, purposes, and their impact on EFL teachers' intercultural competence and building global citizenship. The practical part combines the two variables by analyzing and interpreting the revealed findings.

Subsequently, this study succeeded in fully answering the research questions. Results indicate that EFL teachers who participated in various scholarships, exhibited very positive attitudes towards studying abroad, despite facing challenges such as homesickness and loneliness, language barriers, cultural and social issues, and educational and financial difficulties. Additionally, international educational scholarships have a major role in improving EFL teachers' intercultural competence through cultural immersion, interpersonal interactions, and cultural affinity. The scholarship experience increased EFL teacher's confidence in

teaching Sub-Saharan students and contributed to their personal and professional growth through developing a sense of empathy, tolerance, acceptance, and understanding of others' cultures.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Interview Questions

- 1- In which type of scholarship did you apply?
- 2- How long did this scholarship last?
- 3- What are your attitudes towards studying abroad?
- 4- Did you face any challenges while studying abroad? How did you overcome these challenges?
- 5- How can you define intercultural competence according to your experience?
- 6- How would you describe your journey abroad? Were there any aspects that helped you to enhance your intercultural competence during that journey?
- 7- In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?
- 8- Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?
- 9- How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?
- 10- Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence? why?
- 11- Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

Teacher Interviews Transcription

Teacher Interview transcription

Teacher one:

Interviewer: Okay miss, should we start?

Interviewee: Yes, of course. But well just something my internet is not good these days, okay?

So, Hhhh for any interruption or something so just wait for I don't know sometimes few seconds sometimes like maximum one minute and I get back I connect again okay in case?

Interviewer: Okay no problem

Interviewee: Okay

Interviewer: Okay miss so our first question for you is which type of scholarship did you apply to?

Interviewee: What like in which term like long short or like this?

Interviewer: Yes, you can tell us the name of the scholarship first then it will come a question about this

Interviewee: Ah okay. Offf let me remember, It's PNE

Interviewer: Yes, so it's National Exceptional Program

Interviewee: I have also applied for a short-term scholarship like this one-month scholarship

Interviewer: Does it have a name?

Interviewee: They don't have. I don't know it's like training or something I don't know I am not sure what the name is but you the same this one-month scholarship is the same program ahh that my colleagues are also doing these days or these years

Interviewer: Okay. So, what motivated to apply for this scholarship?

Interviewee: Well so for different reasons usually they are research scholarships. So uhh we need them to see how people abroad are investigating similar topics to the ones we are working on. So, what are the available materials, what are the research labs they are using, what type of activities they are participating in. ok, so we also inter-exchange you know like exchange experience and expertise, uhh, how they work? how we work? well things like this

Interviewer: Okay, so how long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: The PNE was supposed to be 18 months and of course in general it is 18 months but there are the holidays like summer holidays and winter brakes so if we don't count them, it's kind of 16 but let's say the official program Is 18 months. The others like one month three times so three months in total

Interviewer: Okay so the third question is about what are your attitudes towards studying abroad? Do you have positive or negative attitudes?

Interviewee: Being abroad or about the scholarship itself?

Interviewer: it's about studying abroad

Interviewee: Ok for me like I mean of course it's difficult to have such opportunity, but if possible, I would recommend it to everyone. like you learn a lot from studying abroad. You learn like umm in terms of uhh the field you are majoring in but you also develop many other skills at the personal level so I have very positive attitudes towards studying abroad and I would

really recommend it to everyone who can afford it or umm who can have this opportunity you know

Interviewer: Yes, so the fourth question is: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad?

Interviewee: Okay, well I will talk about my own experience. I don't think that I had issues or challenges while studying abroad, maybe language issues, okay? Because my umm scholarship was in Spain and I did not speak the language there, okay? So, I had some issues like not really I cannot say really issues or challenges but, at the beginning yes okay? Uhh specially when umm like uhh when trying to rent a place because with normal people it's difficult to use English but at the academic institution I had no problem because most of them spoke English okay? So, I could communicate from the beginning with everyone using English so the only issues I had as I said like outside the university this is in terms of language. Other issues I didn't have like okay I was very much aware about the cultural differences that I come from different cultural background. There were like cultural differences but I did not have any problem I feel like umm generations of televisions and you know of umm foreign tv shows, movies and it was like internet and everything I already knew the people I am going to live with, okay? So, I had no issues I don't know I feel like no cultural shock many people talked about cultural shock hhhh but I did not live this

Interviewer: Exactly that was our point

Interviewee: Yes, I got it, but I did not have any issues. Maybe also my background as well because umm my magister degree in my interest, I worked a lot on intercultural communication, I worked a lot on the role of culture and the influence of culture on learning foreign language. So, I had enough uhh knowledge about differences and how to deal with cultural differences so this is why I did not really I don't know I did not really face any challenges or issues

Interviewer: What about in the educational setting? Did you face any challenges with people from diverse cultural backgrounds or with the teachers?

Interviewee: Umm well no, you know because mostly in Europe, the environment itself is intercultural, you know, like, I was in a situation in which the Spanish people were minority. So, there was from Italy, from Brazil, from Asia a lot like China, Jeparne, from UK. I mean like uhh, we were from different cultural backgrounds you know and we had few Spanish people with us. This why I guess like in I am not sure if it is in all over Spain but I am talking mostly about Barchalona because it is a big city and universities of Barchalona are ranked the first in Spain so it attracted a lot of students from different countries, from European countries, from uhh Asian countries. So, the environment itself was intercultural, and I don't know like because of these Spanish students are also used of having people from different cultural backgrounds. For the teachers the same, they are used to have students with such cultural background, so you feel like they know how to uhh deal with these students and such situations. They are very careful in choosing their words, they are very careful in dealing with students with different cultural backgrounds so I never had issues like this. The only time, this wasn't at the university I thought like at some point I thought of taking Spanish classes, uhh, classes of Spanish language, and I had like two incidents hhh. Uhh I am not going to say, uh well, the teachers wasn't a racist really, but she had two comments that well it's not I didn't like it was fine but I commented. I remember once, she talked about the south of Spain, she said like they are not very, how to say, hard-working, lazy, because they are from the south so they are like African hhh

Interviewer: Okay hhh

Interviewee: Yes, I remember that I said but how do you if African are lazy or not? So, I commented this. This was the only comment and she apologized like she said no no I don't

mean things like this. The second time, there was a British English with us and uhh and he came to the class very tent and he said because I spent the previous day like at the beach and this is why I have this tent skin and she said no you can not spend this much like under the sun because you know you are British so you have white skin. If you were an Arab hhh it's okay, and I commented this as well and she said no no I don't mean anything but Arabs usually don't have white skin and she told me like my children are Arabs because my husband is Palestinian and my children are Palestinian this is why I said so. She said because when we go together like to the beach nothing happens to them while if I spend a lot of time, so I get my skin burned. Yes! Like in eighteen months these are the only two comments I faced but, in university itself no never, with the teachers I had no incidents like this

Interviewer: Okay miss, so how did you overcome the challenge of the language?

Interviewee: Ah okay. The challenge of the language. As I said like umm, because in umm Barchalone two languages are spoken: there is the Catalan language and there is the Spanish language. So, from the second month, I remember I arrived in umm October so starting from November, I attended Catalan classes because they were offered by university like free. Umm so I attended Catalan classes and by the end of my scholarship, I reached the B2 level of Catalan. For the Spanish, because I had France like from Spain and from Colombia and Argentina and they helped learning Spanish. So, this is how I faced the language challenge. I also love learning languages and I decided to learn both of them.

Interviewer: Actually, this is obvious. Okay so miss our fifth question is how can you define intercultural competence according to your experience which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: Ah okay. Well I guess my definition of Intercultural competence according not only to my experience you know like sometimes it's difficult to depend on my experience only because I also like know about Intercultural competence you know. So, hhh I will use both. For

me like intercultural competence is always about three components, is about the person's attitudes, the person's knowledge and the person's skills. So, attitudes is in terms of positive attitudes towards otherness, whatever this otherness like another language, another culture, another community. So, to have positive attitudes, how? To be curious, to be open, ok? So, to be curious like I want to know, I went to umm different country and I went with this curiosity to know more about this country, to know more about umm I don't know like lifestyle, beliefs, values, attitudes of these people, and also like this openness is umm like how to say is like, I mean like, because I always distinguish between adopting and adapting, like this openness adapt my let's say behavior to their culture. To adapt I mean like to know how to behave in a culture that is different then mine, I don't have to behave the same way, I behave in my culture. So, I behave in a way to respect the other culture. So, curiosity, openness, then there is also the respect. So, whatever their beliefs are, whatever their lifestyle is, so, maybe, well, it's different than mine, it's something that maybe I don't like, I don't accept, I don't find logical but I respect this is how they are ok? So, I don't have to criticize or to say okay this the way of life. I feel attitudes is the most important component because, attitudes is what leads to the other components. So, when you have positive attitudes towards otherness, towards this different culture, this different community. So, you are open, you are curious, and you are respectful this would lead to the second component which is knowledge, which is knowing about the other culture. So, you know the cultural items, the cultural aspects, so language, beliefs, values, norms, whatever, and you understand in this case you would understand the cultural differences ok? Then, after that comes the skills because once you have enough knowledge about their values, their norms, their uhh communication conventions, their behaviors, etc., here you develop the required skills that enables you to deal with people from different cultures. So, you know how to communicate with them effectively avoiding any communication breakdowns or any communication issues you know or any disrespectful uhh behavior or any confrontation,

this cultural clash. So, you develop these skills that enable you uhh dealing or behaving appropriately in a different culture

Interviewer: Okay miss, so our sixth question is how would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: Very fruitful. I feel like spending time abroad helps develop your personality and umm, I am going to talk about personal level and academic level ok? So, at personal level yes it enriches your cultural knowledge not only about the country you spend time in but your knowledge in general because, this also will develop more curiosity in you knowing about other cultures in general not only the one you spend time in. ummm you know that, look you travel abroad, before that you already knew that people are different, ok? So, people have or people come from different cultures, different religions, different languages, you knew that but when you live it it's different so you realize that people are really different. When you come back, ok, we come from same country, same language, the same culture but you still know that people are different. So, we have different mindsets, we have different views, different ideologies, even if we come from the same culture, the same religion, the same country, the same language but we still know we are different and you develop your own way of behaving with your own people accordingly. According to what? According to their mindsets, according to their ways of thinking, according to their lifestyle, because at the end we are not the same, we are different, ok? So, this is something I developed as I said at the personal level. At academic level I learned a lot from the educational system abroad and the teacher you knew me for instance is not the same teacher I used to before my stay in a different country. I feel like I became even as a teacher I became a better teacher umm, I don't know, I am not sure you noticed this or not but I will tell you this: before I go I was the kind of the teacher who is very serious, who doesn't smile in the class, because we came from this traditional teaching way, like I knew teachers who were serious all the time. Teachers who thought you should be serious so you can umm to be able you know to keep discipline in the classroom, to be able to control the students and

their behaviors and everything but when I spent time abroad and saw how the teachers are called by their first names and the teachers are so cool with their students. Well not friends, but so friendly, I realized that this more umm, I don't know, more useful, more beneficial and I became different teachers as well, I guess. Am i? or was I so with you?

Interviewer: Of course, miss.

Interviewee: Yes, I guess so because the one I used to before that is different. So, I said no, we don't have to be so like you can still impose respect in the classroom but you can be the friendly teacher, the smiling teacher, the cool teacher. You know? Yes and also I always knew that umm the learners have different learning styles, this is something I knew from the beginning like different learning styles, I don't know, they have different learning strategies but again, the more you are aware of differences in general, the more uhh you are more considerate to your students and their different learning styles, even if they are from the same cultural background as you the same uhh, the same culture as you, but you still know that they are different ok? They are different in other terms, as I said, they are different in their learning styles or even their ideologies or even their learning preferences and you take this into consideration more and more

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that journey?

Interviewee: Would you repeat the question please?

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that journey which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: Umm aspects.

Interviewer: If you want me to clarify more, I will

Interviewee: Yes please

Interviewer: Okay so, I will state for you some aspects and you can tell me which one of them you have contributed to

Interviewee: Okay

Interviewer: So, we have:

- Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values, norms, etc.
- Interpersonal interaction
- Maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Attending workshops, events or celebrations
- Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities
- Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

All of them and I may add more hhh

Interviewer: Okay

Interviewee: As I told you like because attitudes, for me again, is the most important component. So, when you have positive attitude towards otherness in general ok? towards difference in general, so you have this curiosity and you have this will to know and learn, so this is why like I was not stick or I did not stick to university and academic environment. So, first, this immersion in the culture, yes, like I had, umm, I had and still have friends from that culture, I asked a lot of questions, I traveled to different parts of the country like to discover more, like everything. I hear about celebration or something that is national day, that is traditional, I don't know, celebrations, ceremonies, I attend it ok? umm I hear about I don't know like umm very famous movie I watch it from that country, play I go to the theatre and

watch it, I don't know, opera, like I really wanted to know everything and worked to know everything umm about the place. As I said, like I learned even both languages because I want to know about both languages and both cultures, how they communicate with each other, what they celebrate, like everything ok. Interacting with people so, my interaction was not only with my peers, with my classmates and teachers or mentors, but also with other people abroad: I go to a shop, I don't just buy what I want to buy, but I also you know, because they also start communication when they find people or when meeting people from different cultures so I start talking. I am not the kind that you know that stop or, no, I start like they open conversation and I go hhh, I follow the conversation uhh and we talk like for fifteen minutes, twenty minutes. So, I meet people, because there is something very different from ours: people who live in the same neighborhood, even, I leave a building, I meet someone living in the other building, they greet each-other, it's not that they just say good morning, no they say it's beautiful day, ah yes you're not from here because they notice the accent, where are you from, what are you doing, ohh, they start talking ok hhhh? So, every morning I had such conversation of five minutes with locales if we can call them ok? So, they asked at the beginning, they used to ask questions and I used to answer, later I started asking questions as well, they ask questions and I ask back to know like what are you doing, you student? Ok what about you? What are you doing here. If they are old people, ok, what used to do? I guess you are retired, but what work you did? Are from? And I knew also many people not from Barchalona, from other parts of Spain and I started asking, oh you don't have the Catalon accent where are you from. So, I became like I started behaving like them.

Interviewer: So, you were totally involved and engaged with them

Interviewee: Yes, like immersion, interaction, you talked about, umm, what was the third aspect?

Interviewer: Attending workshops, events, celebrations

Interviewee: Yes, yes, a lot. I mean like you know, let's say on my way from university, is ee weddings in the church, I attend it I don't know how many, four or five, I attend it because it's open, you know in church, so I attend it just to see the ceremony how it goes hhh from the beginning to the end because I always used to live before you know starting like they have by the end offering things so I always left before offering these things or things like this. So, yes, I also participated in their ceremonies. Well I may tell you more, because in this region of Spain, they want independence from Spain and the made like a lot of protests, I also attended these protests, not supporting them or something, this is not my business, but just to see what they want, what are their objective, and what are their motifs, and how they see the history, so, even these protests, I was part of them, I mean like I felt house early just to go and see them protesting, and uhh check their slogans, and understand their slogans

Interviewer: You were very motivated and active

Interviewee: I like to know about other cultures, if you are living in one of course and this helped me a lot. Another aspect I may add is reflecting on your own culture, because at some point you comparing, not comparing to say which one is good, which one is bad or which one is wrong or which one is correct, it's not in this sense at all, but just to highlight the difference, but at some point, even If the difference, if the norms are different, if the behaviors are different, or even if the values are different, but you feel that they all come from the same .. because the way you believe in your own culture, it's the same way they believe in their own culture, and the way you value your norms and values is the same way they do value their norms and values. As I said, the more you interact with people, the more you participate in such uhh events, the more you became aware of your own cultural values, norms, aspects in general, and even your own identity. So, you develop like you know critical thinking, like you critically think about

your own culture. So, you understand more your own culture and maybe sometimes you don't accept some aspects of your own culture that we inherited them without questioning

Interviewer: Okay miss. So, our seventh question is: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: This is what, maybe the part I was saying earlier because, you know, when you are subject with different cultures you start comparing and contrasting like so, you look at your own culture from uhh the other's let's say angles or eyes, then you try also to reflect on the other culture from your own culture or from your own side ok? So, because when you are subject to different culture, usually people think that you think, you analyze, you critically think or reflect on the other culture only which is not true. This would also make think of your own, so, you understand better your own culture, you understand as well the other culture. Be careful, each time I say I understand this, it does not mean you adopt the cultural values or aspects of the other community, but you understand the other community and you understand the other cultural values or the norms or the beliefs or the values of the other culture. Then, once you understand the difference in general between your culture and this culture, you start develop general understanding of differences between all cultures, whatever this culture is, not only the Spanish, I don't know like the German, the American, the British. So, not necessarily while living in this culture, but also while watching series, or while listening I don't know talk-show, or even you know this short-reels on social media. So, because you develop this cultural awareness and this critical thinking, and you start analyzing the cultural differences of any material, because the general material itself is not cultural, but for sure it's cultural because culture is always what drives the behaviors of people, so, we started reflecting and critically analyzing any material, like any video or any text you are subject to and it comes from different culture

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Yes, yes. Well, because this is my field which is English as a foreign language but I guess experience abroad, yes it helps a lot and it improves teacher's confidence in teaching any foreign language. I had umm discussion with a colleague of mine like years ago. So, my colleague, she did not umm like had scholarship or something like scholarship abroad, but umm she lived abroad for some time because she's Algerian-Frensh and uhh she also studied at university there for some degree, and we had this discussion, because both of us used to teach umm the course of culture and foreign language teaching umm remind of the name of the course please? The one you are having in master two

Interviewer: Yes, it is CFLT: culture and foreign language teaching

Interviewee: Yes, it is culture and foreign language teaching, because we used to be the ones and we had this discussion, like it's not only the background we have from books which helped us teaching this course, because this is how we evaluated our way of teaching this course, as I said it's also our experience abroad. It's also umm like how to say umm the persons we are, which means our personality, our mentality and our openness to otherness, so, these are very important components to teach this course and they are important components like to teach foreign language in general, so yes, my answer is yes. If without umm without spending time abroad umm I don't but like yes, spending time abroad yes, it may mean like better teacher of foreign language or of English as foreign language

Interviewer: Okay, so my next question is: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? (those from different cultural backgrounds like: Mali, Niger...)

Interviewee: Well, to be honest I have never had one hhhh

Interviewer: It's okay, so we skip this question

Interviewee: I mean yes, because I know like at our department uhh like we had Palestinian students

Interviewer: Yes, and others from Mali, from Niger.

Interviewee: Yes, I know, I see them but I never had one in my groups hhh never. All my students were Algerian. I don't know like umm for instance from western Sahara, from Palestine, from Mali, I see them but I never had a foreign learner in my groups

Interviewer: Actually, most of the teachers said so

Interviewee: I don't know where they go hhh

Interviewer: Hhh okay we skip this question. How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: I guess it is what I said. I feel like I have already answered this question

Interviewer: Yes miss, I think so too

Interviewee: Yes, hhh so, I guess as I said like umm. Well, let's say first in the way I umm I create uhh inclusive classroom, okay? Which means I always think of creating an atmosphere or a classroom that takes into consideration umm the different students. Well, in our case, not different in terms of cultural identities but different in terms of learning styles, or learning preferences, or learning ways of thinking, okay? Umm. Yes, this is very important point, in terms of teaching materials, okay? I feel like yes I umm became let's say better in choosing uhh culturally relevant teaching materials, specially when teaching oral expression, because oral expression is always about the language and the culture, so I felt like what I used as teaching material before is not as good in quality as what used to teach after that, and like also for this umm the course of culture and foreign language teaching, I also feel like I had umm or

I used better methods and more practical ones to teach this course. It was more practical umm teaching methods yes, because we had a lot of how to say theory of teaching methods but also like teaching abroad, and comparing uhh educational systems and curriculum and approaches and methods. Yes, it helped a lot in reflecting on the methods we are using in Algeria and uhhh improving the methods I was using as a teacher. Umm what else? Also like, yes because I always talk about communication style like how to communicate, how to deal with students, how to communicate with them, but when you realize that there are different cultural communicative styles, you know that there are also different individual communicative styles, so you adapt your communicative style to meet the different umm preferences of the students. Well and somehow, I feel like umm I was modeling as well the intercultural communication for students and modeling the, how to say, somehow not modeling the culture in a way that I adopted the culture related to uhh the English speaking communities, but I was modeling the difference to make students realize that they are learning foreign language that is associated to different culture that is different from their own culture to become more aware of the difference itself

Interviewer: Okay miss, so our next question is: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence and why?

Interviewee: Sure, sure, because as I said knowing is different from living and uhh yes and living the situation. As I said, as foreign language learners, we knew that we are learning a language that is different related to a culture that is different umm, as people we always watch tv, we watch movies and series from different cultures and different countries, and we know that there are differences, ok? we know that there are different cultures, but this is different from living this difference, so yes. You know that this is appropriate in one culture, it's not appropriate in the other, this is accepted in one culture, this is not accepted in another, but it's

not like living this, because while living this, you are going through different situations in which you have to adapt, you know, you have to consider and you have to behave appropriately, so which means like I had the attitudes, I possessed the knowledge, and I had the skills, or I knew about the skills, but during the stay I had to use the skills in real life situations, yes which fostered my intercultural competence

Interviewer: So, our last question is about: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? Why?

Interviewee: Umm

Interviewer: Here, it's more focused on the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL

Interviewee: Yes, yes, I know. I think like me as a teacher of EFL and someone, because my working interest were always about this, about you know intercultural competence, interculturality, intercultural differences. I feel like I already knew which means like knowledge is something I already have. Maybe, what I developed is uhh the practice itself, is the experience, it's like putting what I know into practice but knowing, this is my field hhh, I read a lot of books about this uhh, I listen to people experiencing this, to people's you know like, their works, their research, I feel like I already knew, you know, but what was fostered is the skills

Interviewer: Okay miss, thank you a lot. You helped a lot with your contribution. We appreciate you help

Interviewee: Thank you for considering me in this research and I wish you best of luck

Interviewer: Have a nice day miss

Interviewee: Thank you so much, bye.

Interviewer: bye.

Teacher two:

Interviewer: Can we start

Interviewee: Yeah, sure

Interviewer: So, the first question is: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: Ok uhh

Interviewer: The name of the scholarship

Interviewee: Umm, I applied to multiple types of scholarships. Uhh, I benefited from the national governmental PNE program National exceptional for around two years to complete my PhD. I also applied and got the uhh American Department of State Susi program study of us Institutes on religious pluralism in the United States of America and I also applied and got umm scholarship provided by uhh the Oxford University the role of law and something like that,yeah, these short-term scholarships yeah and some competitions, also but uhh these are the main scholarships I have participated in

Interviewer: What motivated you to apply for these scholarships?

Interviewee: Yeah because of the opportunities available at the host institutions in the I mean these scholarships umm allowed me exposure to extraordinary academic opportunities at uhh very prestigious universities uhh : Temple University at the United States, New York University, Oxford University in the United Kingdom, uhh in Turkey the allies of civilization institutes, Iben khaldoun university and others, so mainly I was motivated by the uhh academic opportunities, expertise uhh available as the host institutions which usually provide these scholarships.

Interviewer: How long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: For the PNE program, it was supposed to last for one year and half, but it lasted more two years. I think for the Susi program, it was only two months but uhhh the intensive uhh, the Oxford scholarship also lasted for two months or three months I believe, that's it

Interviewer: So, what are your attitudes towards studying abroad?

Interviewee: It's not studying abroad for the sake of studying abroad, but if the host institution abroad is prestigious institution of course it would be great to benefit from uhh the great opportunities, the expertise, for example for me studying abroad allowed me to meet and learn from some of the greatest authors I had read for before for example I used to read the names of some authors on the covers of books but I had the opportunity to know them, learn directly from them, and I became friends with them. This is very important for what we call networking, if you are specialized in particular domain you need to know people who work on the same domain, so, including the authorities, if you get to know the authorities and become friends with the authorities in your field of study, I think this is very helpful for an Academician, for your career in a great way, yeah

Interviewer: So, you had positive attitudes

Interviewee: Totally positive of course hhh

Interviewer: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad at the very beginning?

Interviewee: uhhhh, I mean generally no obstacles but there are some obstacles uhh pertinent to cultural differences especially in Turkey I faced this a lot so uhh people have different mentalities. I am kind of person who is very spontaneously I say everything but I discovered that in the two or the three previous years everyone hate me hhh, then I was asking myself what's wrong, then I get to learn the mentalities of those people in general. you can call it lack

of competence intercultural incompetence which leads to some problems, some of them are serious problems and still there is kind of chauvinism among people, even you joke about their country or you complain about any condition in the University or culture, they will hate you forever, so these are types of cultural sensitivity I was not aware of, but later on I got to know about them. I remember only this is the only type of challenge

Interviewer: Ok, so how did you overcome this challenge?

Interviewee: So, it needed time getting to know people, their mentalities, the sensitivities, because sometimes we have expectations about the sensitivities of other cultures, but not the extent of the real sensitivities. Sometimes, it is exaggerated, some sensitivities are exaggerated that's why, it has to do also with the types of people we are yeah, so you cannot behave spontaneously at any cultural uhh context yeah

Interviewer: What about in the educational setting. Did you face any challenges?

Interviewee: I don't think so, yeah. I think uhh

Interviewer: Even with people from diverse cultural backgrounds?

Interviewee: Uhh, maybe in few occasions, but not so serious problems. Usually we deal people from different cultural backgrounds uhh in a way that avoids I mean any conflicts, misunderstanding, or provoking any sensitivities. If there are some uhh issues, they are in very few occasions, yeah. But generally, it was ok no problems

Interviewer: Ok, so how can you define intercultural competence according to you experience (studying abroad)?

Interviewee: Intercultural competence: usually I understand intercultural competence being aware, it is a skill first of all and ability and knowledge about the different sensitivities, differences uhh among other cultures so that when you behave, you behave on the basis of

being aware of all these sensitivities and having the skill to deal with people, to ask for things, to coordinate, to deal with, to behave, to joke. So, this is my .. it's more of a skill yeah that can be developed of course through different ways

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: Journeys hhh, extraordinary. Those were the best days I believe in my life uhh have taken place abroad: Learning and uhh making tourism too, academic tourism, I love academic tourism

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that journey?

Interviewee: Yeah, including having lectures and courses about intercultural competence

Interviewer: I have some aspects, I will cite them for you, and you tell me which one of them you have participated in

Interviewee: Yeah, for example in the United States, Susi program, it was a visit, discover religious pluralism in America, so we visited like maybe tens or hundreds of different religious affiliations, we get to visit people, talk to them, know about them, make interviews with them, so, at the heart of this journey is to get to know the sensitive cultural, religion is a part of culture, the religious sensitivities of those people, so at the heart of the mission there is to know about these people, yeah

Interviewer: I will provide with some other aspects, we have:

- Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values, norms, etc
- Interpersonal interaction
- Maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds

- Attending workshops, events or celebrations
- Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities
- Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: Ok, I think I can relate to every aspect of the one's you just mentioned

Interviewer: Actually, all teachers said the same.

Interviewee: Yeah, all of them are involved in a way or another you are embarked on journey for scholarship abroad, educational day for you, you will get all of these. Specially in the exchange programs, because in the exchange programs like the Susi, the one in the United States uhh or in Britain, they are uhh they target raising one of the main reasons, purposes of this exchange programs is to raise intercultural awareness among the visitors so they design programs, particularly to improve the intercultural competence of the visitors, yeah

Interviewer: Sir, would you please remind me of the name of the program Susi?

Interviewee: Susi: study of the US institutes. I believe there is seven or seven forms I believe there are versions also for students so there is, i think, study of the US Institutes uhh, we have American presidency, you can apply to study American presidency uhh, communication or Media or something like that, political system in America uhh, religious pluralism. I believe there is a program maybe for uhh high school teachers and for students or something like that uhh. Yeah, study for the US Institutes

Interviewer: Yes. In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Of course, first of all, getting in touch directly with people from different cultures, by receiving lectures and lessons about Intercultural differences uhh, Yeah, by having living experiences yourself of communities, or in the case of Susi program about religious pluralism

in America, we get to visit different religious affiliations including the Amish people who live in isolation and to get their customs, their views, we discuss with them, we ask them, to interview them

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: In a way yes, of course, because you know better the cultural aspect of the language, so when you give examples to your students for example uhh you are more confident about uhh the example is precise and relevant to the culture you know more about by using these experiences and scholarships and so on and so forth. Yeah, I believe yes

Interviewer: So, do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? (those from different cultural backgrounds like: Mali, Niger...)

Interviewee: Here? yeah in Algeria, yes, but I mean most of the scholarships have been taking place in in the West it's not about, yeah it teaches you to be more sensitive to all cultures yeah in a way that in this aspect you can say this helps more in how to deal with foreigners with different cultures but essentially we get to know more about the western cultures, anglophone cultures, the culture of the countries we visited, but of course yes, having received uhh education about how to deal with different cultures, how to be sensitive towards cultures, this helps yes with dealing with sub-Saharan students and i taught a lot of them yeah here in this department

Interviewer: Okay, so how did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher? Here we are more focusing on the career development

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly, i believe one of the elements which most contributed to my career development is the many experiences I had the chance to have abroad. I mean within the framework of these international scholarships I got, at all levels level of personal competence,

skills, knowledge uhh, so a lot of aspects contributed uhh combined together to my career and uhh also directed me towards other specialties i have, for example my initial background, educational background, but now I work on other disciplines uhh this is thanks to the experiences I had during these scholarships abroad

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence and why?

Interviewee: It is more beneficial for sure, yeah, you may have you may face, anyone my face challenges, but at the end you know you are uhh using these experiences mainly to improve your Intercultural competence, so uhh it is beneficial, mainly beneficial for Intercultural competence and to your career as an academician

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? Why?

Interviewee: Exactly, because before uhh going abroad and discovering, let's say, the different cultures that people have different sensitivities, have this different cultural aspects, you don't uhh have in mind or you don't appreciate the importance of these aspects of Intercultural competence, but when you get to know that uhh people have different cultures, different sensitivities, different sense of humor, and so on and so forth, so you get to know for real the real importance of intercultural competence. Before we didn't have that understanding of Intercultural competence or of cultural differences in general

Interviewer: So, you agree on the point that intercultural competence must be integrated in education?

Interviewee: Of course, yes, if certain teacher lacks uhh this competence or have problem in this competence or is incompetent culturally or intercultural speaking, this would necessarily influence the overall outcome of his teaching

Interviewer: Sir, I want to refer you back to the term PNE. Would you please give us a definition of this term?

Interviewee: This is program scholarship provided by the Algerian government it's called PNE: exceptional National program. If you are at the final phases of your PhD program, you can apply, the government, the ministry treats your file and some people are selected and given a leave to uhh join University approach with high standards and great opportunities to finish, to have all Free time to finish your PhD, so when you come back you will have 6 months to defend your PhD, this is the idea it's called program National exceptional. Now, I think it is not working, but they can announce it at any time again, yeah

Interviewer: What about the intercultural exchange programs. Can you provide us with a definition?

Interviewee: Exchange programs are usually intergovernmental or inter-university programs between uhh governments or universities. Algeria for example have agreement with other governments, governments uhh that provide exchange programs like the famous Erasmus program with the European Union and the many programs provided by the American Department of states. So, the American Fulbright program, we have tens of them, if you go to the website often the American embassy. Fulbright many versions, Susie program many versions and so on. These are exchange programs, and I said that the exchange programs are the heart of this programs, the main purpose is to improve the Intercultural competence the excellent people who win in these programs

Interviewer: Thank you sir, we really appreciate your contribution and your help

Interviewee: You are much welcome

Teacher three:

Interviewer: Shall we start?

Interviewee: Yes sure

Interviewer: Ok, so our first question is: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: So, first of all, I did not apply for the scholarship, but I won a scholarship it was like offered by the ministry of higher education. It was based on the classification of the Majors in each wilaya, so I was like the major in my group so I was lucky to have one and it was in Jordan

Interviewer: So, it's merit based

Interviewee: Yes, and it was fully funded by the ministry

Interviewer: Okay, how long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: It lasted for 3 years, yeah

Interviewer: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad? Whether you have positive or negative attitudes

Interviewee: very very very positive attitudes towards studying abroad. Well based on my personal experience I was like lucky to be umm hosted in Jordan, well maybe because the Jordan people were so nice, yes, and what made it so special was umm the teaching stuff, the teachers themselves, all of them, umm it was an American University. Well uhh the program was American, it is Jordanian the Yarmouk University, however, the whole stuff of the University, they were talking about most of them on the UK and the US, so, you can guess if we can include the aspect of the cultural uhh influence People, so, they were Jordanian teachers with US mentalities, so, I always tell my students, it was very okay for them if you come to the class holding your mug and you are going to have your cappuccino for example. It was so good

Interviewer: So, did you face any challenges while studying abroad?

Interviewee: In what aspect?

Interviewer: For example, in the sense of cultural shock or language barriers

Interviewee: Well, the cultural shock when I was back to Algeria honestly, because me personally if I want to compare Algerian to Jordans, Jordans were so amazing compared to Algerian in terms of progress, carrier development, so speaking about the cultural shock or the cultural indifference, well actually no, maybe because other than we are open to the TV shows and the language itself, so I can recall that from our first day in Jordan we had no problem in addressing them, the minimum especially we had Barber students with us, they were from Tizi Wizou and Bijaya, they were not really open to their dialect so the least they did was to speak the standard language, the Arabic language, yes

Interviewer: What about the homesickness and loneliness? The emotional side?

Interviewee: Well, that's a challenge, that's a challenge. I will tell you why, because umm we were there alone, we went there alone, and even the whole group I believe we were 55 students from different Wilyas in Algeria, so each one of us was afraid to get in touch with the other one, so we try to isolate ourselves until we get used and to know the personalities of each-others. However, it was amazing I'll tell you why, because we were like strangers on a strange planet uhh, so we were obliged to umm cooperate with each-others, I mean to be able to start, specially I believe the first challenge was how to do the registration in our magister degree, how to pay the fees, especially it was using the dollar instead of our like dinar, so this is how it started we started to ask each other's where did you go, how did you register, and we got in touch with the previous Algerians, yes, so this is how it was

Interviewer: So, you overcome this challenge by getting in touch with others

Interviewee: Yes, being so lonely is not good, well, so it was by obligation that you get in touch with the other and there is something that I need to mention is the stuff, the administrative stuff in Jordan, they were very helpful, it was even if you want to isolate yourself from the other team, well you will not really face a problem because once you ask them and just they state that you are Algerian, oh, you cannot guess, you cannot expect how warmly they welcome and they ask you to: what's your problem. Me personally if I can have this detail, I was fan of Applied linguistics okay, and my colleague Rima, she was, we were like, we graduated having the same the same diploma which is General English and culture I believe, so in Jordan no, it was not something common it was like you are going to choose like whether civilization, literature, or applied linguistics, so without asking us, from reading the title or the name of our license certificate, they expected that we are more specialized in literature, so my colleague was fan of literature, I was not fun of literature. I believe I was really depressed, I said I cannot be here studying literature and reading novels specifically because this is not my type okay, so, I believe like I was sitting on the stairs I don't know if the department and one of the professors she was like, I got her attention because I was crying she said what's your problem I said I want to study applied linguistics and here I am studying literature, she took my name and my number and the next day she called me saying don't worry I will make sure that you are going to study the branch you want, and it did happen, you can guess. Well, this was amazing actually

Interviewer: So, you did not face any problems in the educational setting

Interviewee: Not at all, however we were enjoying you know, because we were special, especially when the teacher is off or when there is a break, okay? Us as Algerian, we used to speak to each-others of course using our Algerian dialect, so you can guess all the Jordanian students around us they were like silent and they were like staring at us trying to decode our language. That sense of uniqueness gave us the sense of joy and how to say uhh of uniqueness, yes.

Interviewer: So, how can you define intercultural competence according to your experience which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: Yes, so I believe Intercultural competence is the individual's ability to establish a successful communication despite the differences in culture especially regarding the language, because there is something common which is Intercultural difference or Intercultural misunderstanding, and it happened even with us as we are, how to say, as Arabs and Barber. I believe once one of us said a word it was very normal words here in Guelma, Constantine, and Annaba. I believe a barber student said oh wow that's a taboo word

Interviewer: I know the word hhh

Interviewee: Yeah, that's a taboo word, but in fact that was not a taboo. Yes, for them it was a taboo, however here it was not a taboo. Like this we umm we tried to overcome I believe by explaining ourselves, we were successful in establishing a successful international intercultural competence

Interviewer: Yes. How would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: Generally, it was amazing, it was unique, it was one life experience and I all the time I wish I can really experience it again, and by the way I'm having InshAllah next month I'm having a trip, an academic trip, and I for the third time choosing Jordan

Interviewer: Umm, were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that journey? Here I will state for you some aspects and you tell me which one you did

Interviewee: Okay, and I can add extra ones

Interviewer: Okay, so we have:

- Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values, norms, etc

- Interpersonal interaction
- Maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Attending workshops, events or celebrations
- Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities
- Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: Well, in fact, I would choose like having a relationship with Intercultural how to say individuals, okay, from other cultures what was like amazing or what was special about Jordan is that at my University, Yarmouk University, there were 49 International students, I mean from 49 different countries so you can imagine how much it was the diversity in the University so this is how to say the first key to success in the Intercultural communication and the success without facing any further challenges

Interviewer: Do you have other aspects?

Interviewee: I believe for me this was the only one, because as I told you, we went to Jordan already having the language background, so, well sometimes we used to speak Lebanese and we did not notice, and sometimes we used to speak Syrian and we did not notice, and sometimes we thought we are speaking Jordanian dialect however we are not successful in speaking purely Jordanian dialect, because the dialects of the Middle East they are similar, so maybe because we used to have, how to say, habits of watching their series and their documentaries, so it was like a plaster for us, it was like a privilege

Interviewer: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Well, it helped it a lot. I'm going to tell you how it helped me personally, well after studying abroad in Jordan of course I was me and my colleagues affected by the Jordanian

culture. when I was a student for 3 years and a half here in my University, none of my teachers ever allowed us to eat inside the classroom, or to drink anything inside the classroom, or to be late, okay, however and like we traveled to Jordan and i was like having these pre-judgments that these habits are not allowed, Okay, so what was special because our classes started from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. so there was time for prayer, prayer time, or how do they call it prayer time to pray Aser and Maghreb, we used to pray them and like in the middle of our courses, so what was special when it is calling for prayer, the lesson is going to take a pause and the teacher is going to go to his or her office and he go to pray or like to have his cappuccino or coffee, it depends. Well imagine if you are a student, if you want to get in touch with the teacher during that break, well before starting to speak and telling your issue they tell you شو بدك well for the first time I was like what? really? and I thought it is a joke.

Interviewer: They are very friendly

Interviewee: yes, and it was very behavior before you speak you are my student I am your professor but you are my guest inside my desk sorry inside my office so they used to ask for example if we say coffee they would ask you sweet coffee or umm like sweet cappuccino. Well, you have to be served before like sharing like pedagogical issue. So, I believe after getting back to Algeria and being here a teacher, I don't recall that I ever judged one of my students why you drinking or why you are holding a cappuccino, and once one of my students came to the class late holding a mag, okay, a mag of coffee and once I starred at the mag, she said I am sorry I am going to throw it, I said no why? You are welcome and your coffee is welcome

Interviewer: so, the Jordanian culture influenced you

Interviewee: exactly, yeah and even if I didn't go to Jordan, I would never allow such Behavior
yeah

Interviewer: okay, so do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Yes, absolutely, I didn't know how to say this but us Algerian we have harsh, how to say, harsh mentality. It's not harsh however we are more serious and severe

Interviewer: Conservative

Interviewee: Yeah. We don't accept many many behaviors. Jordanian, they were so smooth, so sweet, so open. So, it made us see as Algerian oh wow and by the way, they used to say, you Algerian are so nervous, we discovered that they have already a pre-judgment that Algerian are so nervous. Yes, maybe because we speak too fast we react to fast

Interviewer: Our tone

Interviewee: Exactly we are Sharp so thanks to them thanks to them I'm being nicer each time it's time I go to Jordan I'm even being smoother with my students like this is a piece of fact

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? As those from different cultural backgrounds like: Mali, Niger...

Interviewee: Yes, yes I uhh 2 years before I had like foreign students, we were, they were all Africans I believe from Mali, and Wagadoua or something like that and I could feel how they feel inside Algeria. So, umm I mean I believe I was very open to even to give them privilege inside the classroom at the expense of my Algerian students, why because they were how to say visitors. I believe they were so shy, well I have to admit this they were so shy and they were not very active so I was like trying to give them special how to say space to give them more like sense of freedom and easiness.

Interviewer: Okay, so how did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: Well, I'm afraid to repeat myself, as I said just now it made me how to say open, how to say easy going even compared to my colleagues. Me and my colleague went through the same experience and other colleagues I believe, and your supervisor, yes your supervisor, before I went to Jordan she came from Jordan, yes, and before I leave i asked her some questions so how was the experience, is it something safe to go there. Well, she was one of the most influencers at that time, well she said if I had the chance to go to Jordan I would go every year, yes so this is why when she came I believe she was very open having no no problem in stopping by the corridor and having the students questions. Well without citing names, when I was a student one of my colleagues wanted to ask a teacher before getting into the classroom a question about I mean about previous class, she said how dare you ask me like in the corridor, it was like a crime. However, before the Jordanian they were professors, highly ranked teachers, they give you their phone numbers. By the way in every special event they used to invite us to their homes to their parties and they were very proud to introduce us to their family members these are my Algerian students, oh my God, they were amazing

Interviewer: It gives you sense of uniqueness hhh

Interviewee: And this is why for the 3rd time of the 4th time I am going to Jordan and I can't believe maybe after three week I am going to take the plane to Jordan. I am not getting enough of Jordan, I love Jordan

Interviewer: What about the methods of teaching? Did you learn any new methods of teaching

Interviewee: Yes, well here in Algeria in my University they never teach you the workshops or maybe they limit workshops to oral expression, in Jordan they were of course Advanced I'm going to name modules and you can guess: syntax, Advanced pragmatics, and semantics, and discourse analysis. Here in Algeria all of these modules are content. They are very important courses, but some teachers believe that all of these courses they need to be though like having

the teacher like the center of the class, no in Jordan no, even phonology and phonetics were taught all the time using like the workshops and the classes, they were not like tables like this and rooms like this, it was round Circle, I believe I can recall one of my phonology and advanced pragmatic classes with my professor of phonology and we were speaking about the pitch and the Rhythm now how was the language when it is a short vowels and long vowels, he said when we say banana it's like banana banana uhh so we as Algerians we recalled this very funny verse from the tv show الفهامة if you can recall it البطاطا والبنانا we started to say this and he was happy, the teacher, he said what are you saying then we explained to him there is a funny tv show on the Algerian tv which is having the word uhh banana, and we said once you said banana we said البطاطا والبنانا and he said yes batata is said in slow motion and banana is fast, thank you for this example, and I believe in Algerian teachers would not expect this, it's like making fun of him

Interviewer: Yes, exactly

Interviewee: You can say they are very open

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence and why?

Interviewee: More beneficial, more beneficials, the stuff is is highly professional, the content of the course is very unique, and the mentality, you are going to reshape your ideas and the way you interact with others especially Intercultural communication, you are going to how to say to acquire a very professional Intercultural competence

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL and Why?

Interviewee: Yes, it helped me and I assume this because it gained me this Intercultural competence and I really feel so happy once I hear one of my students, they are going abroad

even for a very short period of time because being in touch with others, with other cultures will help you a lot and I want to mention the name of your colleague who went last year to Romania.

Interviewer: Yes Chahrazad

Interviewee: Chahrazad before the scholarship and after the scholarship, she's not the same person, she's more open. Well, personally I had in touch with her before going and after going. This is why Chahrazad or as I was saying want to go back, and I believe if you don't like something you would never wish to have it again

Interviewer: Thank you miss, thank you very much

Interviewee: You're welcome and best of luck

Teacher four:

Interviewer: Our topic is about exploring the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teacher's intercultural competence. Our first question is: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: It was a state scholarship. At that time, that happened more than 40 years ago. In times that were very different from nowadays, at that time, we had no internet, no other connections except the phone. It's better to tell you these things in order to put you in the right direction, so that you can understand that things were very different from our times today. It was, as I said, the state scholarship. In those years, majoring students used to have a scholarship. I think it's the first, the second, and the third student who usually benefited from this state scholarship to study abroad. We used to go to United States, to Great Britain, other students used to go to Canada, even other European countries. But for those measuring in English, they usually go to the United States, to Great Britain, United Kingdom, precisely.

Interviewer: So, your scholarship is merit-based?

Interviewee: Yes. Of course, yes.

Interviewer: How long did the scholarship last?

Interviewee: It lasted three years. Exactly from October, I think, 1982 to about May, 1985.

Interviewer: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad? Do you have positive or negative attitudes?

Interviewee: Very positive. Of course, it was very positive. It was a very good experience. Things were very different in terms of probably academic differences or social differences. Many things were different at that time. Living in Algeria in the 1980s was very different from living in Great Britain or the United Kingdom. Even in terms of the academic differences, we used to, I think, to have teachers who mostly talk in their lectures, and we were there listening passively. Sometimes no participation at all. But when we went to Great Britain, things were very different. You have to depend on yourself. Uhm, they tried to probably teach you critical thinking skills, active participation, preparing seminars, lectures for yourself, and You were expected or you are expected to present these seminars, and the teacher is there listening, probably making remarks, questions, but students did everything. That was very different from what we experienced in Algerian universities. Precisely, I studied at Annaba University. At that time, what helped us probably was that most of the teachers at that time were from Great Britain and from the United States. Other teachers were from, I think, Pakistan and India, but most of them were from Great Britain, and this was a kind of cultural adaptation before going to the Great Britain. They tried to teach us some aspects of their culture. So, once we went to Great Britain, we did not really face a cultural shock. There were times we were probably, uhhh, we faced some differences, like in terms of food, communication styles, and the language itself. People used to talk different, let's say, regional languages, and it was very difficult to understand them. There is probably an anecdote. Ummm, a person went from one of the

European nations, I don't remember exactly. Once he arrived to London, he went precisely to London. He lived there for a moment, and then he asked himself. Do the English people speak English? He learned English, academic English, but once he went there, he found it very different. People used to speak different languages, and believe me, it was very difficult to understand them. Even if you tell them to repeat their question or to speak slowly, you find it very difficult to understand. You have to make efforts in order to learn this, let's say, local languages. People do not speak academic English, in particular in the streets or let's say in shops and things like this. So rarely you understand what they say. But we made efforts and finally we were able to understand some idioms, some local languages, and things like this.

Interviewer: Actually, you have answered the half of the next question, which is: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad? What type of challenges did you face and how did you overcome these challenges?

Interviewee: Yes, we, like all other foreign students, we faced many challenges. As I said, the first challenge was the academic adaptation or the cultural adjustment to social norms in Great Britain. You know we are Algerians, and we are Muslims. Well, our customs are very different from theirs. And once we arrived there, we faced many differences and we had to adapt. This process was very difficult, but finally we were able to probably integrate ourselves within this social or this new society, but things were not easier. We faced many challenges, cultural challenge, academic challenge. As I probably talked previously, we had to adapt to their styles of teaching and learning that was very different. We were not used to prepare ourselves, our lessons. Studies there depended on individual students. You have to study by yourself. The teacher was only a guide. You have to convince your classmates with your seminar. You have to answer questions and things like that. This demanded a lot. And we worked day and night in

order to try to compensate for the lack of knowledge, uhhh, we didn't learn here in Algeria. We faced as well, loneliness, homesickness in particular during holidays. When other students leave the university, and generally, we find ourselves alone. This would remember us our families. At that time, as I said, we have no internet, we have only the phone. We used even to write letters. At that time, we write letters to friends, to family and members. Even the phone was very expensive, so we could not afford to talk often. We just probably use it once in a week or things like this. We have to cope with other living expenses, accommodation, transportation, our fees and things like this. We faced some of the difficulties. But as I said, what helped us at that time, that we were members in an Algerian society. It is a society within the university, like a club. We usually met once in a week. At weekends, we cook together, we have dinners or even lunch together. This probably helped us to overcome these feelings of homesickness and things like this.

Interviewer: How can you define intercultural confidence according to your experience, which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: Well, I think that the first thing that a person must learn is to adjust himself, first of all to this new culture. He has to integrate within the new society, he has to accept the new norms, and try to adopt them to the norms of his own society. He has to integrate within this new community, he has to mingle with new students coming from different parts of the world, and even local students. So, in this way you are going in the end to accept some elements of this new culture, and sometimes you compare them with your own culture, and in the end, it is not a total assimilation, but in the end you feel that have become a part of this new society, and you accept this new culture. Since you are living in this, you have to be a member in this society, at least to show to your teachers and classmates who are from Great Britain that you managed to integrate within this new society. You accommodate people's traditions, and norms when they invite you to parties, and to celebrations and things like this. You have to behave as

if you are a member of this society, but still, you have to show some elements of your own culture. By the way, we used to organize from time-to-time events, in which we tried to show some elements of our Algerian culture for example: cooking couscous, inviting people to dinners, and things like this. So, in the end I think that intercultural competence needs from foreign students to try to stick to their own culture, and adapt to the new one, accept those which you believe are very positive, which you believe that they will add to your experience, and do not accept anything that probably you feel, or you believe it is a negative aspect, and that it is going to harm your own culture

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: It was very positive, extremely positive in all aspects. It was a long journey, it was not easy, it was full of difficulties and challenges, and we managed to cope with all these difficulties and challenges, we tried to adopt. Even our teachers at that time were extremely helpful. I remember professor Adams, probably one of the most influencing teachers of these times, even his name was included in a dictionary known as "Who Is Who?". This professor was an English professor, and he lived also in the United States, he is specialized in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the new deal. This professor used to give us advice, he helped us, he supported us, and he tried to ask us to integrate within the society, to make friends, to be open minded, do not stay alone... So, his ideas and advice were very helpful, and believe me as Algerians compared to other Arab nationalities, we did not have that difficulties like them, because at that time, in my time we used to study French, which helped us to acquire the English language easily, and even our traditions as Algerians are mostly influenced by the French culture, that's why once we were there, we could not really find great difficulties simulating to this new society. Though, at first, we faced some challenges, trying to adjust to this new culture, we felt sometimes loneliness, homesickness, in particular in the first year, and then we made some friends, some acquaintances, we came to know other people, officials within the

university, they all gave us or extended us help, in particular during holidays, during religious celebrations, they used to invite us within their families. This was, I think, something that marked us deeply. Families came to our rooms and provide us with an official invitation to go visit them in their homes and spend, for example, Christmas or the New Year with these families. They used to take us outside to visit different places and the experience was, as I said, very positive. We had the chance to visit different places in Great Britain. It was a fruitful experience. Very positive in all aspects.

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you to enhance your intercultural competence during that journey? Here, I will state for you some aspects, and you need tell me which one of them you did.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer:

-Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local costumes, values, and norms.

-Intrapersonal interaction.

-Maintaining a relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

-Attending workshops, events, or celebrations.

-Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities.

-Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: Yes. I can tell you that all these aspects, I experienced all of these aspects. Even as I said, teachers used to ask us to be part of these events or to participate in these events, to visit different parts of the country. We even went to Scotland. We visited the Lake known as Loch Ness. Different places, very different places. We went to different activities, football,

games, matches. We went to musical concerts. We became part of societies, clubs, different clubs. As I said, our teachers used to advise us to be part of all these events. We did not miss any event that happened within our university. I used to be a member in the football club of the university. I played different games in my own university, in all the different universities. This helped me to become fully integrated within this society. I used to have friends, English friends, friends from other European countries and from Africa. I remember, I used to have a One African, I think, student from Cameroon. He used to be a football player with me, as well as other English people, in particular from Ireland, from Scotland, from Wales. I used to have very close friends from the first place, Wales, from Scotland, and from Ireland. The English people, to be frank, were not very friendly. They usually become friends with foreigners until they probably test you and see that you are really a good person. At that time, they will try to communicate, or at least to say friend, not a friend. But the Irish, the Welsh people, and the Scottish, they used to like the Algerians. They make them their friends, and there is no problem. So, all these aspects, as a foreign student, I experienced them, and this helped me a great deal. I never felt that I was a foreigner, and I never came across any incident, racism, for example, or we didn't experience things like this. There were probably other students, but in Great Britain, according to my own experience, if you behave well, no one would talk to you or provoke you or things like this. I remember we used to go from the university to the city, to the nearest city for shopping. We used to take the bus, and in the bus station at first, as foreign students, so people used to stare at us from a distance. But as Algerians, as Muslims, we were brought up to help older people and things like that. We behaved probably like we were brought up. We used to help these old people when coming up to the bus, going into the bus, or we usually... They were surprised. They were really surprised to see that we helped them. We are very respectful and things like this. With time, these people started to know us even by name. Whenever they see us, they come and they express their joy, feeling of happiness. It's your

behavior that will attract people to you. As young students, they ask us, where did you come from? We say from Algeria. Some of them don't even know or didn't even know where Algeria was located. But once they looked at our behavior and they were deeply, I think, or when they became aware that we are helpful people, we are good guys, and so on, they started to like us, and even to say, What is your name? And then, Oh, yes. I think my experience as a foreign student was very fruitful, very transformative as well. It transformed me from an Algerian student to an international student with a culture that is broad and that encompasses all the elements in addition to what I learned in my own country.

Interviewer: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Well, it helped me, as I said, a lot. It helped me a lot because as I said, we didn't stay aloof or at a distance from other people. We tried. At first, it was very difficult because of the language that I said. You We cannot understand. We even faced some situations where people talk to you and you don't even understand what they say. Sometimes we ask questions and they do not understand us, and you have to speak slowly. They said, we are not accustomed to this English. We only speak our local languages and things. I said, A foreign student who is prepared and ready to interact with people, in particular the local community, and try to understand their language, their traditions, their food, the way they behave, the way they probably talk and things like this, in the end, you will feel that you have made a great, let's say, step towards understanding this culture, this new culture. Even you become aware about the differences that exist between your own culture and this new culture. But the most important thing that helped us was that we tried to become part of this new culture, to understand it, to adjust to it so that people would not feel that you are a foreigner. If they feel that you are a foreigner, that you are keeping yourself at a distance, they would not talk to you at all. But when they feel that you are ready to become part of their culture, you show that you understand

their traditions, aspects of their history and things like this. They would be very willing to invite you to parties, to games, to things like this. This, in the end, helped us a lot.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Of course, yes. We learned a lot, as I said. For us at that time, all these methods were new for us, teaching and learning methods, as I said. When I was at the university in Algeria, we envied listening to teachers presenting their lectures. It was teacher centered approach, sometimes we did not have time even to ask questions, we have only to listen to teachers who will in the end give us handouts. But when we went to Great Britain, things were different. From the beginning they told us that we have to depend on ourselves, you have to be an independent student, an individual learner, you have to develop your critical thinking skills, and this helped us. It was very difficult but we tried to adopt, of course with the help of our teachers. Each time we asked them for help, they were ready to help. They gave us advice even about the books that we must consult and read to prepare our seminar. The library was very rich, contains everything you need. Even if you need a reading material, a book that does not exist in the library, they would ask for another university, a library of another university, and bring you the book in, let's say, about one, two days maximum. So, this helped us greatly to develop our skills, critical thinking skills, depend on our own abilities instead of listening to the teacher giving us a lecture and so on. We were lecturers. Even as students, we started to lecture. There was interaction between the students, asking different questions, giving our own opinions. In the end, this helped us in terms of culture adaptation, in terms of education. We tried to go beyond these barriers. I consider them as barriers because when I was in Algeria, I never was told to prepare a seminar and to act as if I was a teacher in front of my colleagues. This was a new experience for me in Great Britain, but we managed to cope with these new methods, and finally we were able to become good students. We were praised by our teachers for the efforts we made. At first, it was really difficult. We find it as a hardship, but things went

easier in the long run. The language barrier as well. We were able to overcome this language barrier because with our teachers, we found no problem because they speak academic English. The problem is with the students themselves and with the community outside the university. So it was very difficult. Even if you go now to Great Britain, you are going to discover this. Even when you went up in the bus or train and you try to listen people what are saying and you understand nothing. Because there are many different regional languages, and we call these slangs or local languages. Sometimes these languages are very difficult to understand, even if they speak slowly, because most of them contain idioms and some expressions that are abbreviated. We have really to make great efforts in order to understand these local languages. As I said, we made these efforts, and in the end, we started to understand some expressions and local expressions. Well, we coped with the other difficulties. We have to manage our budget. At that time, we used to have, let's say, the scholarship was not really high, so we have to manage between the fees, the accommodation, transportation, things like this. One aspect that we learned there that we became independent cooks. We for ourselves because you have to manage your budget. If you go to the restaurant, your scholarship will not probably be enough to cover all the expenses, living expenses. We started to cook, and in the end, we became, at that time, fine cooks. So, all these were enriching experiences. It added to our personality. We learned Many different things there.

Interviewer: Did you use these new methods of teaching that you learned here in Algeria?

Interviewee: Of course, yes. Once I came to Algeria, I tried to apply things that I learned in Great Britain.

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate sub-Saharan students? Those from Mali and Niger...

Interviewee: Yes. I remember I used to have I didn't teach many students from sub-Saharan Africa, but I remember that was probably about 15 or even 15 years or more. I used to have some students from Mali. I knew how to interact with them, and they used to come to my office. At that time, I was the head of the department. That was about 2008 or 2010. They were very happy that I used to understand their demands, their difficulties, their problems, trying to adapt within the Algerian society, even within their classmates as well. They said many students do not really behave well with us. They do not try to make us friends and things like this. But I used to talk to them, to extend help, to provide advice. Yes, this is because I experienced these difficulties myself when I was a student in Great Britain. But still, I would emphasize the fact that before going to Britain, we used to have foreign teachers, and mostly from Great Britain, from the United States. These teachers, they try to teach us many aspects of their culture. As if I was or become used to these different aspects of their culture before going there. But even with this knowledge of many cultural aspects of Great Britain, once I went there, things were very different. Sometimes you experience events that you do not probably know how to cope with these incidents and things like this. At first, it was very difficult. Even we were shocked by the way they used to dress at that time in the 1980s. For example, girls used to wear very short skirts. We never saw this in Algeria, but it is something that is, let's say, a routine, it's something that is usual for them. We immediately, or let's say we quickly, became accustomed to this as if it is nothing. At first, we were shocked, but let's say after a few months, we become accustomed to all these new things. I don't know when you see something again and again, so it becomes as if it's nothing new. Living there and studying there as a student is, as I said, a very, very positive experience. It helped me to discover many aspects of their culture even their history, their local traditions, how they celebrate feasts, because we lived within families during celebrations, in particular Christmas and the New We went to festivals, different festivals, fairs. Well, we asked people about anything that we believe it is new or it is not understood. So, this

enriched our culture, our local culture with this new culture, and helped us in our career as a teacher

Interviewer: How this experience contributes to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: Yes, it helped me greatly. I highly benefited from this experience. I still like this country. I have many memories, even after more than forty years, but I still remember some friends. I used to have contact with many colleagues and teachers, most of them passed away. So, as I said it was a very positive experience that helped me in all aspects. Even as a person, as a human being. It helped me to bring up my own daughters and son. I tried to help them. I have three daughters, two of them master the English language more than I do. Even if they do not study English. One of them is a doctor and the other is specialized in computer sciences. But because I studied in English, I had many memories. I have souvenirs and things like this. They were influenced by my own experience. At home, believe me, they talk in English instead of talking in Arabic. Yes, this is part of my experience that I was able to transmit to my daughters. But I have another son and another the daughter who English for them is totally irrelevant.

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence and why?

Interviewee: It was challenging. It was beneficial in all aspects, as I said. It helped me a great deal to develop my own personality. Now, if I would go to Great Britain, I would live there without any problem because I experienced the local culture. I know people, how they behave. I would know how to probably interact with them. So, the experience was very positive. It helped me in my own career, and it helped me even to remain in touch with the different people from Great Britain, from the United States. Sometimes I behave as if I was probably a local

citizen and not a foreigner. All the Algerian students, compared to other, even from Africa or from the Arab world. They used to probably interact with us as Algerians more than they interact with other nationalities. I think the secret behind this is that our culture was a blend between our Muslim Arabic culture and the French culture. I remember students from other Arabic countries, from Yemen, they ask us questions, why do you find it easy to interact with this English people when we cannot interact with them as you do. We knew the answer. The answer is that our culture is part of this French culture, which is not very different from the English culture. Believe me, in particular, Yemen students, when they were asked, where do you come from? They said, we are Algerians. They believed that when they say they are Algerians, they would It's very interesting. I find it easy to interact with other people. The problem is not like this, but it is in the culture itself. Our culture, Algerian culture, let's say Algerian culture, is a mixture between let's say, Arabic Muslim culture and the French culture. If I talk about myself, I remember when I went to the primary school, everything was French. I didn't study Arabic until I was probably after six years or so we went directly to a French school. We used to study only French. The first year I went to school was in 1964. So, at that time, everything was French. They tried to... Even my teachers, I remember, some of my teachers were French, Monsieur Montenegro, Monsieur Montau. All these were my teachers. Teachers, Monsieur Savaise, and other teachers, all were French. So, in my generation, as if we learned the French culture more than the Algerian culture. Though the Algerian culture is part of our life. We learn it from our parents, within our families, within our friends, and so on. That's why we didn't really find any difficulties, any extreme difficulties, apart from Probably more cultural adaptation at first. The language barrier was also a problem. We had to make efforts to understand people outside the classroom. Inside the classroom, there was no problem because everyone spoke the academic English, the one we learned at school at the university. But outside, it was really very difficult. It was a challenge. But we were able to overcome this

challenge by doing efforts, by trying to talk to people to ask them about the different expressions, what do they mean, do they mean, and things like this. You have to make efforts. In the end, these efforts are satisfactory.

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you to understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL and why?

Interviewee: Yeah, of course, yes. I have to tell you that my scholarship was granted to me to study American civilization. At that time, I remember I used to have an inclination towards the literature, but the government at that time, they asked us to study American civilization. When I went there, as if I imposed on myself will to leave this literature apart and try to concentrate on trying to learn, to acquire different aspects of this new history. But in the end, after three years of mixing with the local community, with other people from other nationalities and so on, this developed me great in my intercultural competence, and this in the end helped me as a student there. Even after coming back to my country. So, I didn't find any difficulty once I started my career as a teacher, though most of the time I taught American civilization. First I taught some modules of literature, and grammar, but mostly I used to teach American civilization. But it was as I said very positive, enriching experience in terms of intercultural competence, you know. Whenever you live in a society and make efforts to become part of it, this would develop your intercultural competence. Once you go back and start to teach, you are probably more inclined to help your students with some cultural aspect, because you experienced them there, you lived them, you know what you are talking about, and not like a teacher who never went abroad, experienced these cultural aspects, and local people. So, it is very different. I know some teachers try to teach and include some cultural aspects in their lessons, but if they do not experience these cultural aspects within this society is quite different from a one who lived there, and experienced these cultural aspects, and who tried to teach these aspects to his own students. That's why our experience is very beneficial because we lived in

a society of the target language, of the English we are teaching here. We experienced cultural aspects about their food, clothes, the way they talk, the way they behave, what is good and what is bad, uhm, everything...

Interviewer: So, you agree on the point that intercultural competence is important and must be integrated in Education?

Interviewee: Of course, yes. Nowadays, there is a talk about the necessity and the importance to include the course or even programs of intercultural competence, but it depends on the teachers themselves. I think this week we have some meetings, and we are expected to talk about our teaching programs, and we are expected as well to make some changes. We can include intercultural competence as a new module or course. The ministry is asking us to make efforts in order to include what is necessary for our programs. If there is a course that is irrelevant, we drop it and replace it by another course or program. Even the content of modules we can change them. So, that's why I said that it depends on teachers themselves. If they believe that intercultural competence is necessary they can include it, and it is okay.

Teacher five:

Interviewer: In which type of scholarship did you apply? What motivated you to apply for it?

Interviewee: It was an Algerian State Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies, which supports outstanding students pursuing Master's and PhD degrees abroad. The host country was obviously the United Kingdom. A major motivation was the global reputation of British universities—their rigorous academic standards, research excellence, and well-structured curricula are exactly what I needed to achieve my goals. The UK education's stress on critical thinking and innovation matched my approach to learning, and I was eager to experience its world-class teaching methods firsthand. The received grant gave me the financial stability and

comfort that allowed me to concentrate entirely on my academic and research work without distractions.

Interviewer: How long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: The scholarship award lasted through my entire degree program—comparable to similar postgraduate courses in the UK system. More explicitly, it covered the full duration of my postgraduate studies in the UK, from initial enrollment through degree completion. This included all academic terms, research periods, and the thesis phase—essentially the entire standard timeline for my program at the university.

Interviewer: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad?

Interviewee: So positive when taking into account my own experience! Studying in the UK represented the perfect opportunity for me, both academically and linguistically. As an EFL student, I recognized that immersion in an English-speaking environment would dramatically develop my language skills—not just in academic writing and research, but in professional communication and critical thinking. In this case, British universities reflected the ideal setting for this growth. Beyond language development, I deeply liked the UK's academic tradition of combining theoretical knowledge with practical application. Yet, I was fully aware that while adapting to a new education system presented challenges, I saw them as needed steps in becoming a more versatile scholar. The multicultural environment of UK universities was particularly appealing— it meant I could refine my English while learning alongside international students, deepening my cross-cultural competence. This combination of language immersion, academic excellence, and international exposure made the UK the clear choice for my postgraduate studies.

Interviewer: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad? What type of challenges did you face? How did you overcome these challenges?

Prob Question 1: Did you face challenges in educational setting?

Interviewee: Coming from an entirely different cultural and educational background, I had to overcome demanding adjustments due to stark cultural and academic differences. Adapting to the fast-paced discussions, precise academic writing standards, self-directed learning style, shift to rapid seminar debates, and independent study methods required considerable effort—particularly when expressing technical or abstract thoughts in English. Outside the classroom, cultural differences in social interactions, classroom etiquette, and even daily life required conscious adjustment. Although I had a good command of English, the academic language used in lectures and readings was often more complex than I anticipated. To overcome these hurdles, I took a proactive approach: I attended academic seminars, sought regular feedback from professors, joined study groups to improve my language fluency, and immersed myself in campus activities to better understand British academic culture. While requiring considerable effort, these experiences strengthened my adaptability, cross-cultural communication skills, and confidence—transforming what began as obstacles into invaluable lifelong lessons.

Interviewer: How can you define intercultural competence according to your experience (studying abroad)?

Interviewee: Based on my experience as a former international postgraduate student, intercultural competence means developing the ability to operate effectively across cultural boundaries while maintaining my own identity. It is less about perfect adaptation and more about productive interaction with difference. I moved from initially seeing British academic culture as ‘foreign’ to eventually combining aspects of it with my own background—whether in seminar debates (where I learned to blend assertiveness with the UK preference for qualified arguments) or peer feedback exchanges (where directness initially felt confrontational). This mirrors what Deardorff

(2006) identifies as the core outcome: ‘the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes’ (p. 247). For me, this appears practically—like learning when to use British academic conventions in my writing while still adding distinct ideas from my home education system. True competence came not from removing cultural friction, but from using it to improve my research collaborations and teaching practice.

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey as a student abroad? Were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that stay? I will state some aspects, and you need to tell me which one you did.

- Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values, norms, etc
- Interpersonal interaction
- Maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Attending workshops, events or celebrations
- Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities
- Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: The experience of my studies abroad profoundly developed my intercultural competence through daily immersion in academic and social contexts. The classroom itself became a training ground as I learned to understand British educational norms like seminar debates and critical feedback styles that differed from my home country's traditions. Beyond academics, I actively sought cultural exposure by joining campus clubs, attending local festivals and celebrating some of the events provided that they do not antagonize my religious beliefs and cultural norms, and exploring historical sites - each interaction helping me decode unspoken social rules. Living with British flatmates and international students created natural

opportunities to practice adapting communication styles while maintaining my cultural / national identity. Unexpected situations like interpreting indirect language cues or differing teamwork approaches proved particularly instructive, transforming initial difficulties into practical skills for building cross-cultural relationships. These experiences did not just help me survive as an EFL student; they equipped me with lasting tools for collaborating in diverse professional settings.

Interviewer: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Studying abroad deepened my cultural understanding through immersive daily experiences that went far beyond taught / learned knowledge. Having Lived in the UK exposed me to how cultural values shape behaviors - from classroom interactions where debate styles shaped British respect for independent thinking, to everyday situations where indirect communication taught me to 'read between the lines.' Simple activities like grocery shopping or using public transportation became lessons in local norms, while academic collaborations showed me how different education systems approach problem-solving. What began as culture shock gradually developed into cultural literacy - I learned not just British customs, but how to observe, adapt to, and respect any cultural context. Most importantly, I gained the ability to recognize my own cultural biases while appreciating alternative perspectives, a skill that continues to benefit my professional work with international teams.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Tremendously. My experience as both an EFL student and postgraduate researcher in the UK fundamentally transformed my approach to teaching English. Having personally experienced the difficulties of academic writing, seminar discussions, and dissertation / thesis

supervision in my second language, I understand my students' struggles at a visceral level. I can anticipate where they will stumble - whether it is interpreting critical feedback, structuring arguments the 'British academic way,' or grasping disciplinary jargon. More importantly, I have developed practical techniques to bridge these gaps, like contrastive analysis activities comparing rhetorical styles across languages. My time abroad also showed me what truly matters in academic English - not perfect grammar, but clear communication of complex ideas. Understanding influences how I assess student work and design classroom activities. Most valuably, I can model the growth mindset I want from my students, sharing concrete examples from my own journey from hesitant EFL learner to published researcher. These are not theoretical strategies; they are methods I have tested on myself.

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? (those from different cultural backgrounds like: Mali, Niger...)

Interviewee: Without question, my UK experience fundamentally changed how I support international students. Having been in their position, I recognize both the visible struggles (academic writing, pronunciation) and the hidden ones (cultural disorientation in classroom interactions). My seminars deliberately mix discussion formats - pairing direct and indirect communication styles to build mutual understanding. When giving feedback, I adapt my approach based on cultural backgrounds; for the concerned (Sub-Saharan) students from education systems that emphasize correctness over creativity, I explicitly validate their ideas before suggesting revisions. What looks like simple pedagogy is actually cultural translation - every teaching choice acknowledges that my foreign students are not just learning English, but learning how to learn in English.

Interviewer: How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: My UK experience fundamentally shaped my career by transforming how I approach EFL teaching at every level. As a professor, after a cautious sift and selection of what is positive, I have developed courses that explicitly bridge cultural gaps in academic English, using concrete examples from my own struggles with British academic conventions. This practical perspective informed my research on culturally responsive pedagogy, leading to publications and workshops adopted across our faculty. Institutionally, I have implemented programs like peer mentoring for international students and staff training on intercultural feedback—initiatives directly inspired by the support I wish I had abroad. Most importantly, living through the EFL-to-academic transition myself allows me to advocate meaningfully for systemic changes, ensuring our curriculum covers not just language proficiency, but the hidden cultural competencies vital for success in English-medium academia.

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence? why?

Interviewee: The scholarship experience represented both my most rigorous intercultural learning environment and most transformative professional development. The challenges themselves became the training ground—each difficulty forced me to develop specific intercultural strategies I have always taught. While intellectually intense at times, this constant problem-solving accelerated my competence far beyond what passive observation could achieve. The real benefit was not just exposure to British culture, but the necessity to actively bridge divides—a skill that defines my role in supporting international scholars. Practically, the scholarship did not just teach me about intercultural competence; it made practicing it a required / necessary skill, that is why those lessons remain so valid and forcibly applicable today.

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? Why or why not?

Interviewee: Absolutely. The scholarship program made me recognize why intercultural competence cannot be separated from effective EFL teaching. Experiencing firsthand how British feedback like ‘This is an interesting approach’ often meant major revisions—rather than praise—made clear that language proficiency alone falls short — I understood that linguistic accuracy alone means little without cultural context. These experiences and the hard-learned lessons have strongly and progressively formed my professional career: In my teaching, I have relied on exercises analyzing and comparing how different cultures construct arguments, used simulated scenarios to teach indirect communication norms, practiced decoding indirect feedback through role-plays, and explicitly discussed how academic expectations vary worldwide. My struggles abroad simply became favored teaching tools and my experiences abroad are certainly considered a teaching booster. Research indicates that students trained with the aforementioned methods achieve 30% stronger retention of academic writing skills. Rather than simply defining and identifying cultural differences, the scholarship gave me concrete methods and pushed me to generating effective solutions for overcoming them.

Teacher six:

Interviewer: The first question is, in which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: It was a cultural exchange scholarship in which students from Algeria were sent to Jordan to study English and mathematics as well. Some of their students were sent, I mean Jordanian students were sent to study medicine. I believe it was called a cultural exchange scholarship.

Interviewer: What motivated you to apply for it?

Interviewee: It was a good chance to obtain my PhD, of course, and again, to meet with new researchers, new teachers, to exchange experiences, and so on.

Interviewer: How long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: For five years.

Interviewer: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad, whether positive or negative?

Interviewee: No, they are quite positive. It is an amazing opportunity to meet people, to exchange thoughts about a multitude of things and subjects. Also, if people get the chance to actually to study or to meet native speakers of English, that would be a great opportunity. It will enhance their language skills, of course, their speaking and writing skills and so on. Listening skills also. Yeah, that's it.

Interviewer: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad?

Interviewee: Can you be a bit specific? What challenges are we talking about?

Interviewee: For example, cultural shock, language barriers or challenges with people themselves?

Interviewee: No, not really. I did not have or faced any problem with language or with culture. Like I have told you, it was in Jordan. So, It's an Arab country. They are Muslims. They have some Christian minorities and so on. But more or less, I did not face any challenges regarding language or culture.

Interviewer: What about the homesickness and loneliness?

Interviewee: Sometimes we did experience that. But again, the similarities between both cultures, those societies, helped us in regarding this issue.

Interviewer: What about the challenges in the educational setting with the teachers? If they were very native speakers, you didn't understand them or something like this?

Interviewee: No, they were not native speakers, although they did obtain their degrees from prestigious English and American universities themselves. But no, I did not face any problems with that. They were quite helpful, and they were knowledgeable.

Interviewer: How can you define intercultural competence according to your experience which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: If people get a chance to meet others from other cultures. It will help, of course to widen their scope, their cultural scope. It will establish a middle ground between cultures in which a cultural exchange can happen, a scholarly exchange also and so on.

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: Can you clarify more?

Interviewer: In general, your journey, was it good? Was it challenging?

Interviewee: It was a great experience. Of course, the early days of that experience were marked with a bit of homesickness. We were busy making or comparing both societies and cultures. We were trying to, ummm. Fine, if I want to be here, I want to be 100% honest, sorry. We were trying to see or to prove that our culture was superior to their culture. But of course, with time we had the chance of meeting people, exchanging ideas, exchanging experiences, getting to know the culture and the people. Of course, our perspectives shifted, our points of view, the ideas say, the stereotypes that we had vanished, and it turned to be one of the best experiences of our lives.

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you to enhance your intercultural competence during that journey? Here, I will state for you some aspects, and you need tell me which one of them you did.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer:

- Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local costumes, values, and norms.
- Intrapersonal interaction.
- Maintaining a relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Attending workshops, events, or celebrations.
- Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities.
- Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: Actually, I have experienced all of these aspects and they were helpful. We wanted to make the best use of our experience of our being there. We explored their history, and their culture. We had some personal relationships with the natives, of course, Jordanian people. What else?

Interviewer: Visiting other places like monuments.

Interviewee: We did. Yes, we did that also. We did visit some sites like the castle of Salah Eddine, museums and so on...

Interviewer: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you to improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: First of all, we are from the Orient, right? We are from the third-world countries, from the Orient. The Westerners know us as the Orient. We have been subjected to stereotyping

for so long. As intellectuals, we became aware of these stereotypes as students. We were students. We've taken Orientalism. We became aware of stereotyping others and so on, to the point where we thought that we are above this. We are above stereotyping, not the stereotypes themselves. We are above the idea or the act of stereotyping others and creating stereotypes for others. This experience allowed us to come face-to-face, say, with ourselves. We found that we were creating or we had stereotypes of other people. It was a chance to see, like Edward Said in one of his works. He said that the difference between the colonizer and the colonized is power, that nationalism or nationalistic ideas and so on, they will provide a ground for these people, if they have power, to colonize others. There is no, say, a victim and... I mean, here the division of a victim and an aggressor is not clear-cut. We used to say Westerners are the ones guilty of stereotyping, and we are the victims in this case. When we had this chance to go and to interact with other people, we found, we discovered that we were stereotyping others and so on. It was such an eye-opening experience in regards to stereotyping.

Interviewer: How did you solve this problem of stereotyping and became aware of the importance of understanding other cultures?

Interviewee: The duration of the experience helped. The longer we stayed there, we allowed ourselves to really see the people, to get to know the people. We really took our time observing people so that these stereotypes by the end vanished because we were able to see, to have a clearer image, a clearer picture of these people.

Interviewer: You started accepting the new culture that you have faced and other cultures as well?

Interviewee: Yes, we started seeing. You see, when you have a stereotype, you do not really see the thing you're looking at or, say, dealing with. When the stereotype vanishes, the moment it vanishes, you get the chance to actually see, to actually get to know the people and the culture.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: More confident in teaching EFL. So, I went as a student, I was not a teacher yet, so I had the chance to meet other students, and I started comparing not the competence but the efforts made by me as a student, my Algerian colleagues and the Jordanian students, so that I can see the difference. So, this experience and interacting with this type of students and teachers of course impacted my EFL teaching in many ways.

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? Those from Mali, Niger...

Interviewee: Honestly, I did not get the chance to teach them

Interviewer: Fine, we will exclude this question.

Interviewer: How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: As an EFL teacher. Okay. As I have told you, dealing with students because I was a student showed me to what extent I was not making, uhh, so much efforts in studying, as I thought I was. As a teacher, of course it made me want to do more, to contribute more, and to enhance and have an impact on the students: their mentality, the way they see, they experience the University and so on.

Interviewer: Can you state for us some elements that developed your personality as a teacher?

Interviewee: My personality as a teacher?

Interviewer: Yes, for instance is there certain skills that you have developed after this experience?

Interviewee: Ummm, I am still working at that because I did not go as a teacher, and I was not thinking of myself as a teacher. It is only now that roles are switching and shifting. So, I am still working on that.

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence? and why?

Interviewee: Oh, it is challenging, but it is more beneficial. Especially if you give yourself the chance to actually see the culture, and actually interact with the culture and so on. So, it is really beneficial to the point that the challenges that you will face at the beginning of your experience will vanish, no longer be challenges.

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you to understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? And why?

Interviewee: Yes of course it did help, because if you are able to work on your intercultural competence, you will be able to deal with subjects like if I am going to talk about myself: literature, western society, and the interaction between cultures and so on. So, if you yourself have first-hand experience with an intercultural context and situations, you will have a better perspective in teaching multiculturalism for EFL students.

Teacher seven:

Interviewer: Our topic is about exploring the role of international educational scholarships in fostering EFL teacher's intercultural competence. Our first question is: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: My name is teacher seven. I'm a teacher of English at the University of Guelma. Uh, specialty English literature and criticism. Well, I benefited from a scholarship to Jordan,

uh, 2014, 2015. And I didn't apply to any scholarship. It was given to me by the state. So, yeah, the dean came to me providing me with a paper to sign and asking me to prepare my documents. And then. Yeah, I was chosen out of four, we were selected four of us. And then only two were able to benefit, because we were the majors of our promo

Interviewer: So, this scholarship is a merit-based scholarship?

Interviewee: Uh, yeah. You can say so. It was called a cultural exchange. Our country chose from each state two students. And the whole number who went to Jordan were about 52 students. Hum, and the Kingdom of Jordan sent also other students. So, it was a cultural exchange.

Interviewer: Uh, I will exclude this question. It's about: what motivated you to apply for it? Since you didn't apply.

Interviewee: Yes, I did not

Interviewer: How long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: Three years. It's a long term. One of the long-term scholarships, because we have two types of scholarship: short term and long term. Short term scholarships are called in our country formations. Yes. So they are short 3 to 6 months. They are very much known in Tunisia and France. However, long term they can go beyond the third world countries. They can go to uh, first and second world countries, uh, Jordan, United Kingdom, I don't know, Belgium and other countries.

Interviewer: Okay, so what are your attitudes towards studying abroad?

Interviewee: Uhh, attitudes. I do not know what you mean exactly by attitudes. I believe you can rephrase it so that I can understand it.

Interviewer: Do you have positive or negative attitudes?

Interviewee: Uhh, thank you so much for providing options. It's better so that I can understand what to answer you. Uh, definitely. Positive attitudes. Definitely. We had all of us The vibe of going abroad and experiencing something else and trying to compare the knowledge that we have. Is it enough or not? Because, you know, our educational system is condensed. So we were unaware whether we had what it takes. All the studies we had were enough to face what they have abroad or not. And luckily, yeah, we were able to do that. So yeah. Highly positive attitudes.

Interviewer: So, did you face any challenges while studying abroad?

Interviewee: Based on what I just answered? No.

Interviewer: At the beginning. At the very beginning?

Interviewee: No. You know, every student who goes abroad from any country in the world, have to pass, you know, those tests, TOEFL, IELTS or anything. Because they need to match the level they have with what you had in your country. We had that test easily. It was an easy test. And the first stress that we had to face is to pass that test. And it was an easy thing. So from the beginning, we didn't have any difficulty from those simple things because of the good background, apparently, that we have.

Interviewer: Even for the culture?

Interviewee: The culture? uh, when they provided us with this scholarship, we thought we had two options. They said either, uh, Jordan or the United Kingdom. And at the end, we left. We went to Jordan. We were afraid to go to United Kingdom because of the cultural bias and racism that we hear that they have there. And the difficulties that we may face as we were, uh, majority of us were females and veiled females. So, we were afraid of this clash of cultures and how they face, even if we know they are open minded and everything. However, we were afraid of this. Besides, the education and how we were easily, umm, melting with the things they have

there. Uh, you know, the emotional part was not an easy thing for girls and boys being separated from our parents and home country. You know, it remains a tough thing.

Interviewer: What about the educational setting? Do you think that lessons were long or short?

Interviewee: You have no idea how their educational system, and the Jordanian educational system is amazing and easy-going system. Uh, we were in LMD. We were following the LMD system in in Algeria. However, when we went there, we automatically changed to the classical one, because they only have the classical one. They didn't hear about these two systems. They only know one system which is the classical system. The Jordanian educational system is amazingly, uh, comprehensive type of system. Any student with any level here in Algeria, boys or girls, will easily, uh, cope. We easily coped there. The educational system is so amazing. They don't have, uhh. Listen, we studied since we went to study a master's degree. Yeah, we studied the Sunday Monday from 3 to 6 only. So, three hours, two days a week. And the whole week was left for us to read books. And they really, really read books there. You have all that free time to do the job, really do the job. The system was amazingly helping the students. However, it was good in terms of quality. A good, uh, rich system.

Interviewer: Uhh, since you have said that you had an emotional shock. How did you overcome this challenge by the end?

Interviewee: Well, it was not easy. I personally, and I speak about my own personal experience. I didn't. I lost weight. I lost a lot of weight because of the emotional separation. And I used the technology a lot 24 over seven. I was on Skype with my family. Uh. Um, and because also of the rich educational system, we did not have much free time to think about our parents and going home and everything. We were so immersed in education, and reading books and textbooks and doing the assignments. Um. What else? Yeah. The price that we had at the end of this scholarship made the experience more durable. Because we were promised, once we

finish those three years, we will go back to our country, to our university, to occupy our full-time job.

Interviewer: How can you describe intercultural competence according to your experience which is studying abroad?

Interviewee: Intercultural competence, umm. Definitely We will find a variety of answers because each person has got his own experience. What I can say is that I can go back and thank our educational system, which we won't know its value until we go outside and compare. While we are studying our three years of license in Algeria, we complained a lot and criticized the overload of the modules and lessons. However, thanks to that, we were competent enough to go there and be easily able to interchange our culture and our education that we have. We truly were, uh, top of class compared to Jordanian students. We were in top of the class. Yeah, to the point that the natives, the Jordanian students, they really at first they hated us and they made a barrier between us until, uh, bit by bit, they recognized we will be here for a period and then go back.

Interviewer: About the term of intercultural competence, do you have a definition for it?

Interviewee: Uhh, not really. I do not know exactly what may serve you for your work. Umm, intercultural competence is having an innate ability within you to cope within two cultures, and be able to live what you found there interchangeably. And being able to mix your native culture and the culture you are living in.

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey abroad?

Interviewee: Amazing amazing If they ask me to go back, despite the emotional sufferance, I will go back there, yeah, I will. We were in contact with friends who after us, the year after us, they were able to go to UK, and they truly suffered. Comparing to them, the 52 of us who went to Jordan. We stayed in one campus; we were one group. Yeah, we moved as one group, and

we went back together as a group. Uhh, we were inseparable. Also, there was no racism since we were in an Arab Muslim country. It was an amazing experience. However, other students who went to UK; the country of the English that we are speaking, faced a lot of racial and religious problems. So, the experience was not that pleasant for them. However, our experience, my experience personally is an amazing experience.

Interviewer: Were there any aspects that helped you to enhance your intercultural competence during that journey?

Interviewee: Uhh, any aspects?

Interviewer: So here I will state for you some aspects and you need to tell which one of them you did

Interviewee: Please, yes.

Interviewer:

-Cultural immersion through daily exposure to local customs, values and norms.

-Interpersonal interaction.

-Maintaining relationships and networks with people from diverse cultural background.

-Attending workshops, events or celebrations.

-Joining clubs and participating in some programs or activities.

-Exploring the country's history and visiting places and monuments.

Interviewee: All the above. Truly when you were citing you reminded me of those three years.

We participated in workshops especially those who studied at Irbid, which is a state there. And the University of Irbid is like a universal village, that contains a lot of cultures from: China, Japan, Indonesia, uhhh, even African countries, Americans, Canadians. Uh, yeah, a lot of

cultures. Every year there is an annual event where they present their cultural elements: food, drawings, clothes... and everything. I even cooked some Algerian food, and participated in that event. What else? Uhh, interpersonal interaction. Yes, I personally made good friends through educational interpersonal interactions. Uhhh, we visited many places. Who goes to Irbid and Jordan and does not visit Wadi Ram and Petra, which is a very famous place in Jordan. We definitely visited it, and made a very good historical exchange.

Interviewer: In what ways do you think that studying abroad helped you to improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Uhhh, it was a big switch in my way of thinking, and now this way of thinking helped me to change my way of teaching from the way teachers here educated me as a student. Aaaaah, experiencing this intercultural exchange through this scholarship helped me to change a lot of things in my way of teaching, and hopefully some of my students noticed this in the way I deal with them, and the type of lessons. I am trying even if our educational system is not much comprehensive to make it more comprehensive and understandable. Because we are still traditional, giving students knowledge and then expecting them to throw it back to us. I was trying with any module I taught, to interact more with the brains of my students and relay more on critical thinking in a way to make them truly face the real life after they finish this phase of studies. Because this was the major message that those professors who taught me there in Jordan tried to deliver to us. This is the major message, yeah.

Interviewer: So, your experience there helped you to be more tolerant with people from different cultures? I mean you were not defensive somehow

Interviewee: No, we were so open, and again this goes back to the way we were raised, taught..., and thanks to our religion too.

Interviewer: Can you give us some examples of the things that you have learned from other cultures?

Interviewee: Uhh, let me think, umm. Japanese and Chinese, they respect and give value to everything, every single detail they have in their day, they give it a big value, and this will make you appreciate the little things in your life, because as you know, the little things will lead us to bigger things. We learned this from our religion, however living day to day life made us forget about this. Meeting people who still value the little things in life reminded us that those things truly matter. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Umm, yeah definitely. One of the things that I keep mentioning to my students is that while uhh, as I told you we studied three years there and we were promised that when we will be back, we will be teachers in our University. So, this idea was nice and frightening at the same time, because for three years I was a student and then quickly I will become a teacher. That was a frightening idea, because I will be standing here and teaching other brains and generations. However, from what I saw in Jordan and their educational system, even their teachers, and I told you that they were all professors, uhh, they had this idea that we are all learners, and that we are all still learning. So, this is what I had in my mind, and I still have it while teaching and communicating with my students. Now I have 8 years of teaching, over these years I have always calmed myself and assured myself that uhh, I do not know, that having all answers to give to my students was okay because we are still learning and they can exchange things with me, they can provide me with new things that I do not know. So, thanks to that system I am truly believing that I am still learning

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? Those from Mali, Niger...

Interviewee: Oh. Sub-Saharan students. I was not that lucky to teach any students from Sub-Saharan countries. However, integration is one of the principles that I have in my mind that I will be applying with any type of students and I am so open to deal with them.

Interviewer: How did this experience contribute to your overall career as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: From the way that we were taught, when we went back here as teachers keeping in mind how to start our career, develop it and keep it vivid. We tried to apply the norms and principles that we were taught with in our education, however it was not that easy because our fixed system has been here for years. However, we are trying to do that bit by bit. What I can say is that in my whole career I am trying to change the things that I can control here in my class. I will not be able to change the whole system, I know, however I will be able to change the few minds that I am teaching. This is the only principle that I am working with in order to have a good and a rich, hopefully a good career of teaching.

Interviewer: So, this experience helped you to develop yourself in all sides?

Interviewee: Definitely all sides. Human, spiritual, mental... uhh, all the sides that you can think about. I am trying to be open as much as I can and give students the values they deserve. I keep telling my students that thanks to them we are here. I am trying to bring back the importance of students on our lives as teachers.

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in term of fostering your intercultural competence?

Interviewee: Umm, definitely more beneficial. We can not use the word challenging as one of the points when we speak about intercultural scholarships and intercultural experiences because

you only benefit, definitely. Challenges are everywhere, in every aspects of our lives. Uhh, so it is so beneficial in all sides.

Interviewer: Why do you think that it is beneficial?

Interviewee: It is beneficial in all the levels: your critical thinking, the way you deal with students, and the way you deal with different minds you have in class, the openness that you have if maybe you face students from other country. Yeah, it is beneficial in all levels both personal and educational.

Interviewer: Do you think that the scholarship program helped you to understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: Definitely, definitely, it is the first thing that allowed me to experience and have this intercultural competence. I can say that I did not know that I have this thing in me until I benefited from that scholarship. And while teaching the very first session we get to introduce ourselves to students I always encourage them to study because I tell them every time, every single one of you here got the same chance that I had, and if you study you never know maybe one day you will benefit from the same scholarship, and this will be a turning point in your life as a human, student, or any occupation you want to occupy. This will change you forever in dealing with your social life.

Interviewer: So, you agree on the point that intercultural competence is an important thing and must be integrated in education?

Interviewee: Yes, definitely.

Teacher eight:

Interviewer: In which type of scholarship did you apply?

Interviewee: Chinese/ Algerian governmental scholarship.

Interviewer: What motivated you to apply for it?

Interviewee: I won a regional, national contest for a scholarship abroad.

Interviewer: How long did this scholarship last?

Interviewee: It lasted 4 years for the MA, and I applied for another 5 years Chinese government scholarship for the PhD.

Interviewer: What are your attitudes towards studying abroad?

Interviewee: It was a great experience.

Interviewer: Did you face any challenges while studying abroad? What type of challenges did you face? How did you overcome these challenges?

Interviewee: Of course, at first the language barrier made me stumble for a few months. I didn't know a single Chinese word, but I took some courses to learn it.

Interviewer: Did you face challenges in educational setting?

Interviewee: Not really, the overall environment was welcoming and encouraging.

Interviewer: How can you define intercultural competence according to your experience (studying abroad)?

Interviewee: In my opinion, intercultural competence is the individual's knowledge of the host culture's details and ability to coexist with and around these specifics. Reciprocity is often expected from the host culture.

Interviewer: How would you describe your journey as a student abroad? Were there any aspects that helped you enhance your intercultural competence during that stay?

Interviewee: It was a great decade of my life that I got to spend with a second family in a second home country. Having Chinese friends made my experience a lot easier and more beneficial. And I did all those things that you have mentioned.

Interviewer: In what ways do you think studying abroad helped you improve your understanding of other cultures?

Interviewee: Studying abroad made more understanding and accepting of the others and their differences.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your experience abroad has made you more confident in teaching EFL?

Interviewee: I totally agree that studying abroad helps gain confidence in one's ability to acquire not only new languages but also new different skills.

Interviewer: Do you think that your experience abroad helped you to integrate Sub-Saharan students? (those from different cultural backgrounds like: Mali, Niger...).

Interviewee: Yes, it did.

Interviewer: How did this experience contribute to your overall career development as an EFL teacher?

Interviewee: I am more open to accepting and understanding the differences between my EFL students.

Interviewer: Would you consider the scholarship experience more beneficial or more challenging in terms of fostering your intercultural competence? why?

Interviewee: More beneficial, I believe I was lucky to have chosen a nurturing environment to study at. The Chinese people, as well as the government, showed me so much hospitality.

Interviewer: Do you think the scholarship program helped you understand the importance of intercultural competence in teaching EFL? Why or why not?

Interviewee: It did help me form new perspectives on how to coexist in a host (rather hospitable) culture.

المخلص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف دور المنح الدراسية التعليمية الدولية في تعزيز مهارة التواصل بين الثقافات لدى مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة 8 ماي 1945 – قالمة، الجزائر. تركز الدراسة على تصورات ومواقف مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية تجاه التبادل الثقافي، والتحديات التي واجهوها في الدول الأجنبية ذات الثقافات المختلفة، وفعالية المنح الدراسية الدولية في تجربتهم التعليمية. اعتمد البحث منهجًا نوعيًا استكشافيًا، حيث تم إجراء مقابلة شبه منظمة مع ثمانية (08) من مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية من قسم الآداب واللغة الإنجليزية ممن خاضوا تجربة المنح الدراسية الدولية. أظهر تحليل النتائج أن مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه الدراسة في الخارج رغم التحديات المختلفة التي واجهوها في الدولة المضيفة. علاوة على ذلك، ساهمت تجربة المنحة الدراسية في تطوير وتعزيز مهارة التواصل بين الثقافات، وزيادة مشاعر التعاطف والتسامح تجاه الثقافات الأخرى، وتعزيز فهمهم الثقافي والتبادل الثقافي، مما أثر بدوره بشكل كبير على تطورهم الشخصي والمهني.

الكلمات المفتاحية

المنحة الدراسية التعليمية الدولية، مهارة التواصل بين الثقافات، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، المدرسون، جامعة 8 ماي