Saudi EFL Learners' Perceptions of the Role of Face-to-face Intercultural Communication in Enhancing their English

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Abstract
In the present global society, face-to-face intercultural communication has become inescapable and English has played a prominent role as a tool for this communication. This study aims to: (1) investigate the role of face-to-face intercultural communication in enhancing learners’ levels in English, and (2) identify the role of other elements on the participants' perceptions of face-to-face communication and language learning. Using a questionnaire, 288 Saudi EFL learners from University of Bisha, Al-Namas Campus participated in this study. The results showed that the students positively perceived the influential role of face-to-face intercultural communication in enhancing their English. This included motivating them to learn English, develop their speaking and listening skills, and build more vocabulary. Furthermore, they became more confident and less worried while communicating with others. They also showed respect and got more knowledge about others and their cultures. In addition, the results revealed that there were statistically significant and positive differences in the face-to-face intercultural communication scores for the variables of gender and university level. However, there were no statistically significant and positive differences in the face-to-face intercultural communication scores for the other variables of age, foreign friendship, using English, and visiting English-speaking countries. It is hoped that students should be sensitized to grasp every intercultural opportunity for developing their English.

Keywords: Intercultural communication, learning English, Saudi context.