**Saudi EFL Learners' Intercultural Competence Development through Reading International Culture-Related News on Twitter**

**Prof. Mofareh Alqahtani**

**King Khaled Military academy**

**Saudi Arabia 2023**

# Abstract

In recent years, cultural contact and global communications have developed in an unprecedented manner as the world has transformed into more of a global village. Thus, the issue of intercultural competence has been the focus of different disciplines, including second language acquisition (SLA) and English as a foreign language (EFL). This study explores the intercultural competence of Saudi university EFL learners. It seeks to improve the intercultural competence and understanding of EFL learners through the reading of international culture-related news on Twitter. The premise is that reading culture-related news on Twitter can improve Saudi EFL learners’ sensitivity to the differences of other cultures, which will lead to intercultural competence. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) developed by Hammer et al. (2003), was used along with interview and observation methods, to measure and evaluate participants’ sensitivity to cultural differences before and after the reading intervention experience. Pre-intervention results indicated that the participants had serious problems with understanding of and sensitivity to the differences of other cultures. After the intervention program, the intercultural competence of the participants improved significantly. The findings of the study highlight the role of social media networking and platforms such as Twitter as effective resources for developing the sensitivity of learners to cultural differences and improving their intercultural competence. It is recommended that EFL instructors stress the importance of intercultural understanding in EFL classes by integrating cultural aspects into their teaching practices.

*Keywords:* EFL, intercultural competence, Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), international culture-related news, Twitter