

Research Article

Teaching Deep Culture to Develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) for EFL Pre-service Teachers

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ABSTRACT

In common, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers primarily provide surface-level cultural knowledge to their pupils, who are then expected to use critical thinking to delve into the material. Unfortunately, Universitas Billfath's pre-service teacher education program experienced the same situation. However, candidates for language teachers should possess intercultural competency, which means they should learn about both visible and hidden aspects of culture. To prepare pre-service teachers for their future careers, this study suggests that they be taught profound cultural issues. This will help them to enhance their intercultural communicative competence (ICC). To be specific, this study began with a brief overview of the teaching context and participants. Additionally, a critical analysis of incorporating deep culture to develop ICC was examined. This article also provided an illustration of how the method of teaching deep culture is organized and the reasoning behind it.

Keywords: Deep Culture, Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), EFL, Pre-service Teachers

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1. Introduction

The English language education program at Universitas Billfath aims to prepare students to become prospective teachers in all levels of educational settings. One of its courses is a two-month teaching internship in schools. In response to this, the students called pre-service teachers are trained with important courses such as English proficiency skills and a small scale of cultural study. However, the study of English proficiency skills only will impede pre-service teachers' intercultural competence. In fact, globalization has spread widely which in turn, requires language teachers to be not only linguistically competent but also culturally competent. More essentially, the cultural study taught in this program mainly focuses on surface target-language culture. This may cause pre-service teachers to disregard intercultural practice as a significant aspect of their future teaching. Consequently, they may not be aware of incorporating elements of deep cultures in their prospective classroom which may render students culturally incompetent.

Therefore, this study aims to provide an alternative so that pre-service teachers can enhance their ICC as groundwork for their future teaching. As conceptual research, this study designed one-day pre-departure internship training of teaching deep culture to develop ICC for pre-service teachers. This training is purposively devised for pre-service teachers in English education and teacher training program at Universitas Billfath, Indonesia. In this context, pre-service teachers are sixth-semester students who are prepared for a two-month teaching internship in various schools. There will be

approximately 30 participants based on annual data on the number of sixth-semester students at this university.

2. Critical Examination

2.1. Is Teaching Elements of Deep Culture Justifiable for Pre-service Teachers?

The inclusion of cultural content in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has a scant attention among language teachers (Gómez Rodríguez, 2013; 2015). They might incorporate culture into their teaching and learning process, but the focal point is merely about visible culture (Olaya & Gómez Rodríguez, 2013; Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). Gómez Rodríguez (2015) defines surface culture as cultural features that can clearly be apparent representing a particular area, for instance, food, clothes, arts, and miscellaneous elements. However, exposing students to merely objective culture is not a salient way to enhance students' intercultural awareness (Gashi, 2021), and, instead, it will direct them as passive receivers who only consume representative cultural information into their minds. This refers to a given perspective of cultural incorporation in the classroom where learners only obtain the cultural aspects and there is no further discussion about it (Atkinson, 1999; Bhowmik & Chaudhuri, 2022). Such practice will cause students to construct fixed ideas about certain cultures which, accordingly results in stereotyping (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). In other words, incorporating sole observable features of culture will not pave the way for creating intercultural awareness among pre-service teachers, on the contrary, it will indirectly be a plausible source of stereotype practice. It is, therefore, worth noting to bear in mind that elements of culture that should be included in the foreign language teaching is not only superficial culture but more inclined to deep culture.

Deep culture or so-called small culture encompasses a wide range of components, many of which are connected, such as attitudes, presumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms, and values; social relationships; customs; celebrations; rituals; standards of etiquette; ways of interacting and discourse organization; the use of time in communication; and the use of physical space and body language. (Chlopek 2008). Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez (2013) assert that pertinent materials of culture such as ideas, behaviours, ideologies, and beliefs should be constructively discussed in the classroom. This is reasonably supported by the notion that intangible aspects of culture represent the complexity of diverse aspects and instances (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). A case in point, some girls in a certain community may regard young age as a big matter for marriage while others may perceive that pursuing career is more important than having an early marriage. It implies that culture is not a series of static facets which can be easily observed and labelled as fixed representative of a certain community, otherwise, as (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015) alleges, culture should be learned in depth since it changes and develops gradually.

The importance of deep culture for pre-service teachers' can be highlighted in some crux. First, teaching varying deep culture to pre-service teachers can be an aid to halt the dissemination of stereotype. Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez (2013) suggest that this kind of practice can reduce false misinterpretations of other culture. In addition, exposing subjective culture can heighten pre-service teachers' awareness of diverse culture. Frank (2013) affirms that the idea of teaching unconscious values and attitudes or deep culture can raise students' awareness of different cultural facets and, in turn, can engender self-explanation of "why people behave differently" (p.4). Furthermore, encouraging students to put their mindful thoughts on varying cultural aspects enables learners' critical ability to perceive culture (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). This is supported by Morganna, Sumardi and Tarjana (2018) who accentuate that English teachers should

draw students' attention on understanding cultures critically instead of receiving cultural information and perceiving as contrasting culture to local cultures. More essentially, exposure to in-depth cultural understanding may benefit pre-service teachers to deal with multicultural classes in their prospective teaching career (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). Thus, it can be asserted that the incorporation of cultural content in the EFL classroom should not perpetuate congratulatory features of big culture only, but it should envision students to more dynamically study the complex topics of deep culture because teaching deep culture is justifiable to promote pre-service teachers' intercultural awareness, develop their critical ability of understanding different subjective culture and, accordingly, can reduce generalisation of other cultures.

2.2. Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) for Pre-service Teachers

Incorporating cultural contents in a thoughtful manner can yield pre-service teachers become interculturally competent. Intercultural communicative competence constitutes the concept where learners are able to recognise, understand another culture and deal with cultural differences (Byram et al., 2001; Byram, 2020). It can be then asserted that promoting ICC enables pre-service teachers to acknowledge and understand why people behave distinctively as well as critically reflect on their own culture. Byram (2020) notes three critical elements of intercultural competence which embody knowledge, skills, and behavior. Knowledge comprises superficial culture and deep culture, skills encompass ability to observe, analyse and interpret certain culture, and, in addition, behaviour exemplifies attitudes toward diverse culture such as tolerance, appreciation, openness and positive manner of reacting to the cultural practices. These aforesaid components of ICC can raise critical cultural awareness of pre-service teachers which can bring about the capacity to scrutinise intricate and amalgamate components of deep culture (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015). Hence, such a competence is inevitably prominent for students to face multicultural society (Alptekin, 2002; Purwani & Arvianti, 2020) since it can aid pre-service teachers in examining the manifestations of different cultures in detail to impede the dissemination of stereotyping, intolerance, and misconceptions of other society (Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez, 2013).

Developing ICC among pre-service teachers apparently concerns with the intercultural approach to language learning. Corbett (2003;2022) perceives the intercultural approach as a method which evokes students' ability to observe divergent culture from broader perspective to build comprehensive understanding. This approach affords students with the ease of acquiring knowledge of distinctive world societies, examining them critically and correlating them with their native culture to foster students' transferable skills in both communication and non-communication. This is in accordance with the vision of incorporating deep culture in the EFL teaching which provides us with direct insight into the perspectives of other cultural groups, and it is this understanding that results in interactions that are more productive (Dabou et al., 2021; Novita & Purwati, 2021; Snighda, 2022). To develop ICC, there are diverse areas of cultural content that can be taught in EFL teaching such as apologizing, politeness and face and miscellaneous topics. In sum, teaching elements of deep culture meets the goal of intercultural approach to developing ICC among pre-service teachers.

2.3. Which Culture?

Which subjective culture should be taught while incorporating elements of deep culture has been a question among language teachers which enquires whether to include target-language culture, own culture or multiple cultures. It has been commonly believed that language and culture are inextricably linked. Consequently, it inflicts the tenet among

teachers that learning English as a language also means learning its culture which mainly bases on British or American culture (McKay, 2002;2018). This belief is fairly explained by the paradigm of Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL) which perceives English belongs to the inner circle and disregards the outer and expanding circle (Kachru, 1985; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). Herein lies the territory of English teaching paradigm which demonstrates that the United Kingdom and the United States of America are in the inner circle which consequently causes the inseparable link between English language and British or American culture. In fact, this paradigm has disseminated widely in non-English spoken countries, including in this context where teachers mainly transform American superficial culture to the pre-service teachers.

However, the exclusive induction of target-language culture seems to be futile. It is because English has been widely spoken by people over the world as a means of intercultural communication (McKay, 2018), so it is not necessary to refer language culture merely to native cultures. Furthermore, teaching and presenting language linked to sole target-language culture may cause several problems which emanate learners experience strange paradoxes and create a new identity or even otherness (Darong & Menggo, 2021). It is, therefore, apparent that it is not necessary to be concerned with cultural aspects of the target language only in inducing invisible culture to pre-service teachers.

Instead of focusing cultural content on sole target-language culture, pre-service teachers will gain solid knowledge of vast cultural perspectives if they are exposed to their own culture, target-language culture and international English cultural varieties. Darong and Menggo (2021) affirms that providing learners with a broad look of subjective culture can afford learners the opportunity to broaden their perspectives of English culture in a wider range and reflect on their own culture. This spurs the openness of TEFL paradigm to explore intercultural view of international English uses which is frequently addressed by the paradigm of Teaching English as a Lingua Franca (TELF) (Jenkins, 2004; Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021) or Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) (McKay, 2002;2018), Teaching English as Intercultural Communication (Corbett, 2022) and Multicultural Awareness through English (Fay et al., 2010; Gashi, 2021). Such paradigms underpin the notion of English is used widely among speakers from different contexts and cultural backgrounds for intercultural communication or raising multicultural awareness. Hence, it is important to prepare pre-service teachers to move beyond the known paradigm that languages are not inextricably linked to the sole target-language culture, but openly associated with a wide range of English culture. In this training, therefore the inclusion of cultural content comprises an international variety of English culture.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Organisation of Training and its Rationale

The intercultural training will be conducted for a full day which is sequentially split into four sections as follows: (1) holding intercultural simulation as a lead-in phase; (2) introduction to deep culture to develop ICC; (3) analyzing short stories; and (4) verbalizing critical understanding of deep culture and recapping final thoughts.

a. Section 1 Intercultural Simulation “Five Tricks Tournament”

As the initial phase to raise pre-service teachers’ awareness of the importance of studying deep culture, the training will carry out an intercultural simulation, i.e. Five Tricks Tournament. Adapted from Fay (2007), it is a model activity which represents the importance to not distort the picture of other society, but become more open with

unexpected cultures that we may not have seen obviously. By involving pre-service teachers in this activity, they will be able to gain cultural awareness (Wiggins, 2011; Gashi, 2021), and, accordingly, acknowledge the importance of studying deep culture instead of superficial culture to develop their intercultural competence.

This 'Five Tricks' tournament is an intercultural simulation which is based on a simple card game, the full version is called the Barnga game (Hofhuis et al., 2020). By playing this game, pre-service teachers are expected to be aware of interculturality and understand on both expected and unexpected culture they may face. In this context, this game is also used to lead pre-service teachers to the topic of deep culture to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

To guide participants through the intercultural game, there will be a series of steps as follows:

- 1) Participants will be divided into several groups of 5 by counting them so they gather with theirs in the same number as one group sitting on the same table.
- 2) Afterward, the trainer will administer the guidelines for the game as well as the cards and ask them to read and understand carefully the rules of the game.
- 3) Each group has different rules to play.
- 4) Next, they can practice the game and accordingly practice it without any verbal communication.
- 5) During the practice, they are allowed to ask the task clarity to the trainer.
- 6) Then, as a whole class, they will be instructed to start the game without oral communication. If there is a participant who breaks the rule, they should be penalized from the game.
- 7) The participants are encouraged to win the game which runs till 7 rounds then calculate their total score.

After the simulation, the trainer should invite the participants to reflect on the game including what they learn through the simulation game and what they feel. In response to their reflection, the trainer needs to draw their attention to the focal points of the simulation game encompassing the importance of learning not only superficial culture but also the unexpected or deep culture to avoid stereotypes and to develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as their preparation to be an interculturally competent teacher in EFL context.

b. Section 2 Introduction to Deep Culture to Develop ICC

Moving on to session 2, it will introduce participants to the importance of learning deep culture so as to develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as competent prospective teachers. Firstly, students are exposed to elements of deep culture with its corresponding cultural information. Secondly, they will also be exposed to intercultural communication.

To initiate participants' content of schemata, the trainer will assign them to brainstorm ideas of cultural features that belong to surface and deep culture. One by one participants are encouraged to write one for each division, namely surface and deep sides. After they brainstorm both surface and deep culture, the trainer will then show them more and fewer elements of surface and deep culture. When exploring elements of deep culture with the participants, the participants are invited to engage in further discussion about the importance of learning deep culture. First, the trainer will ask them

to discuss it with their group. Then, the trainer grabs the participants' thoughts about it and highlights its importance for them as follows:

- 1) To avoid stereotypes. Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez (2013) suggest that this kind of practice can reduce false misinterpretations of other cultures. This is because transforming surface culture only will cause students to have fixed ideas about certain cultures which, accordingly results in stereotyping (Gómez Rodríguez, 2018).
- 2) To promote intercultural awareness. Frank (2013) alleges that the nature of including unconscious values and attitudes or deep culture can raise students' awareness of different cultural facets and, in turn, can engender self-explanation of "why people behave differently" (p.4).
- 3) To understand cultures critically. Furthermore, encouraging students to put their mindful thoughts on cultural aspects enables learners' critical ability of perceiving cultures (Gómez Rodríguez, 2014). This is supported by Atkinson (1999) who affirms that English teachers should draw students' attention on understanding cultures critically instead of receiving cultural information and perceiving as contrasting culture to local cultures.
- 4) To prepare multicultural class in EFL teaching. More essentially, exposure to in-depth cultural understanding afford pre-service teachers the opportunity to be aware of multicultural class that they may benefit from it in their future teaching career (Gómez Rodríguez, 2015).

This section is also an attempt to promote interculturality by introducing participants the notion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). ICC is an individual's competence to communicate other people's cultures to deal with cultural differences (Byram, 2020). They list three critical elements to enhance ICC among learners as follows: 1) knowledge which comprises superficial culture and in-depth culture; 2) skills that encompass ability to observe, analyse, and interpret of certain culture; and 3) behaviour which exemplifies attitudes toward diverse culture such as tolerance, openness and positive manner of reacting to the cultural practices.

Subsequently, this stage will raise critical opinions among participants that which culture should be taught while incorporating elements of deep culture in EFL learning. Target-language culture, own culture, or multiple cultures? The inclusion of the target culture only seems to be futile. It is because English has been widely spoken by people all over the world as a means of intercultural communication, so it is not necessary to refer to language culture merely to native cultures.

Instead of focusing cultural content on target-language culture only, pre-service teachers will gain a solid knowledge of vast cultural perspectives if they are exposed to their own culture, target-language culture, and other English cultural varieties. Darong and Menggo (2021) affirm that providing learners with a broad look of subjective culture regardless native-speakers culture can afford learners the opportunity to widen their perspectives of English culture in a wider ranger and reflect on their own culture.

c. Section 3 Analysing Short Stories

In the following phase, pre-service teachers will be exposed to analysing short intercultural stories. They are split into several groups and some short stories encompassing some elements of deep culture will be administered to every group. Gómez Rodríguez (2015) ascertains that involving pre-service teachers in group work will aid them to share and express their personal and critical opinions about the topics related to deep culture. In this context, since cultural sources mostly used are not other

than American culture, stories devised in this training come from various cultural context to raise intercultural awareness of pre-service teachers, such as “No Speak English” (Cosby, 2014), “Why didn’t she want my help?” (Dave Keir Team Resources, 2016) and “Betting on the Bull?” (Cushner and Brislin, 1996, p.59) and “Japanese Cultural Encounters”, (Kataoka and Kusumoto, 1991, as cited in Lingley, 2006). Analysing these short stories will spur pre-service teachers to figure out the manifestations of deep culture, such as prejudice, misperception, etc.

Story 1 “No Speak English” by Sandra Cisneros, summarised by Cosby (2014)

Mamacita is married to one of Esperanza’s neighbors. Her husband worked hard to bring her and her baby to America. She is a huge woman, and when she emerges from the taxi for the first time she looks like an enormous flower. Once she arrives Mamacita never leaves the apartment, and she refuses to learn English. Some of the neighbors think she never leaves because she is too fat to get down the stairs, but Esperanza thinks it is because Mamacita is afraid of English. Esperanza’s father told her that when he immigrated to the United States, he ate “ham and eggs” for three months because that was the only English word he knew. Esperanza describes Mamacita sitting by the window all day, listening to Spanish radio and thinking about her pink house back in Mexico. Sometimes her husband gets angry and yells at her. A final heartbreak for Mamacita is when her baby boy starts to speak English, singing the song from a Pepsi commercial. Mamacita starts to cry and tells him “no speak English” over and over.

Prompts for Discussion:

- Figure out what elements of deep culture in this story!
- State your opinion that sum up your interpretation about this story!
- Give possible reasons underlying your opinion regarding why Mamacita cried to her son and said “no speak English”!

Story 2 “Why didn’t she want my help?” adapted from Dave Keir Team Resources (2016)

This semester at your institution there is a short-term English Training Course being offered by several Western teachers and you have been assigned as one of the assistants for the programme. The Western teachers have not been in Indonesia before, and don’t speak Bahasa Indonesia, so your duty is to help them with daily life issues and to generally serve as a host while they are in Indonesia. It is also your duty to make sure that they remain safe while they are in Indonesia. During a break between classes, you overhear Jane, one of the older Western teachers, say that she needs to buy some T-shirts. You offer to go out shopping with her this afternoon, but Jane says, “No thank you” and then rushes off to class. The next day you overhear the students talking about how Jane got lost yesterday when she went off alone to a market on the other side of the city to shop for the T-shirts.

Prompts for Discussion:

- Figure out what elements of deep culture in this story!
- State your opinion that sum up your interpretation about this story!
- Give possible reasons underlying your opinion regarding why Jane rejected your help!

Story 3 “Betting on the Bull?” adapted from Cushner and Brislin (1996, p.59)

George is an American salesman working for a multinational company in Spain. He had expressed an interest to his Spanish colleagues in attending a bullfight, so when the first *corrida* (fight) of the season was announced, they invited him to accompany them. As

the first bull was let out, George jokingly asked the others, “*So who’s going to win? I’ll put my money on the bull*”. The rest suddenly became silent, and one of his fellow salesmen remarked tartly, “*You Americans know nothing*”. George did not know what he said to offend them and felt very uneasy throughout the *corrida*.

Prompts for Discussion:

- Figure out what elements of deep culture in this story!
- State your opinion that sum up your interpretation about this story!
- Give possible reasons underlying your opinion regarding why George’s fellow suddenly snap at him!

Story 4 “Japanese Cultural Encounters” by Kataoka & Kusumoto (1991, as cited in Lingley, 2006)

Tom rented a car one weekend. It was his first time driving a car in Japan, but he had been an excellent driver in the United States. On his way to his friend's house, however, he had an accident. A young child about four years old ran into the street from an alley just as Tom was driving by. Tom was driving under the speed limit and he was watching the road carefully, so he stepped on the brakes immediately. However, the car did brush against the child, causing him to fall down. Tom immediately stopped the car and asked a passerby to call the police and an ambulance. Fortunately, the child's injuries were minor. The police did not give Tom a ticket, and he was told that he was not at fault at all, thanks to some witnesses' reports. He felt sorry for the child but decided that there was nothing more he could do, so he tried to forget about the accident. However, after several days, Tom heard from the policeman that the child's parents were extremely upset about Tom's response to the incident.

Prompts for Discussion:

- Figure out what elements of deep culture in this story!
- State your opinion that sum up your interpretation about this story!
- Give possible reasons underlying your opinion regarding why the child’s parents were upset!

d. Section 4 Verbalizing Critical Understanding of Deep Culture and Recapping Final Thoughts

Moving on to the next phase, each group will be assigned to verbalise their critical understanding on the topics of non-congratulatory culture through a group presentation. The rationale underlying this oral presentation is to encourage pre-service teachers to articulate their opinions and further explicate their rational underpinnings their opinions. Willis (2021) states that the presentation stage is necessary to report what students have learned. This session is situated for participants only to present their critical understanding on the short stories of cultural study. Each group has 7 minutes to present their critical understanding including questions and answers session. So, with the estimation of 30 participants (6 groups), the time allocated for group presentation is approximately 42 minutes.

The last, to reflect on what we will have learned in the training, the trainer would like to recap the final thoughts by inviting pre-service teachers to evaluate this training and what its implications in their future teaching career regarding with the incorporation of deep culture features in EFL teaching. Such view is supported by Ellis et al. (2003) that evaluation emboldens students to think about what they have performed and devise strategies for prospective learning. Taken together, the trainer will leave the participants with thoughts emphasizing that incorporating deep culture in EFL teaching and learning is necessary. As preparation to teach in various schools, it is important to learn the

complex topics of deep culture to avoid stereotypes and be interculturally competent as prospective EFL teachers. The trainer will also make suggestions for the participants when they consider teaching deep culture in their internship or future classroom to raise students' intercultural awareness.

4. Conclusion

Taking everything into account, this study has made an effort to create cross-cultural training for prospective teachers who would participate in teaching internships at different schools. The purpose of this course is to increase pre-service teachers' intercultural competency by highlighting the significance of integrating deep cultural components in EFL instruction. However, as a pilot project, this training only offers pre-service students short-period learning where deep culture which they learn is just a drop in the ocean. In fact, the elements of deep culture are abundant and dynamic. Therefore, to prepare qualified future teachers for the global teaching realm, it is strongly advised that this university's English education and teacher program incorporate the study of deep culture in their curricula, rather than just imparting congratulatory cultural knowledge to the pre-service teachers.

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