

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS LEVELS OF INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICUM

Devi Nurhastuti ¹, Basikin ¹

¹ Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Address: devinurhastuti.2020@student.uny.ac.id

Received: 18 August 2022 | Approved: 13 November 2022 | Published: 29 December 2022

Abstract: Culture shocks, miscommunications, and even conflict will occur due to a lack of intercultural communication skills. Effective communication with native speakers requires language abilities, cultural awareness, and familiarity with local customs. Several studies on intercultural relationships have been documented. However, there is still limited research on the levels that affect intercultural awareness. This study aims to examine the intercultural awareness of pre-service teachers. This study aims to investigate the levels that affect intercultural awareness among aspiring pre-service teachers participating in an international teaching practicum (ITP). The design used a qualitative multiple-case study. Interviews with eight aspiring English pre-service teachers from Indonesia were conducted to collect data. The results show that the majority of participants agreed that during an international teaching practicum program, they gained the ability to compare and mediate cultural differences and similarities. Indonesian pre-service teachers being investigated had good intercultural awareness. The findings suggest important practical implications for providing students with sufficient references to assist pre-service teachers in enhancing and developing their intercultural teaching abilities.

Keywords: Intercultural Awareness (ICA), Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), International Teaching Practicum, Pre-service Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Promoting cultural understanding is one of the English language education objectives (Aljohani, 2016). Understanding cultural aspects is related to the ability to speak foreign languages. People all over the world need international connections based on English. It is used to communicate with individuals from other cultures. As a result, people have to learn English, which serves as the world language for all modes of communication (Rao, 2019). It is essential to understand the cultural aspects of English, especially when talking with individuals of other ethnicities and origins. The ability to understand the culture of the target language becomes a factor in the effectiveness of learning a foreign language in a meaningful way. In line with Liddicoat and Scarino (2013), learning to speak another or a foreign language entails knowing how the culture reacts to language. Language and culture are therefore linked (Gulbinskienė & Lasauskienė, 2014).

Teaching an international language entails not only the linguistic but also the cultural aspects of the language. Intercultural competence has become a critical component of a language learner's communication competence (ICC), and language learning would be incomplete without it (Ahmed et al., 2019). As a result, learning the language without first comprehending its cultural components may result in misunderstanding or misinterpretation (Saharani, 2015). Therefore, people must comprehend intercultural information as part of their intercultural competence. Besides, people know how to apply it appropriately, so it may not create serious problems that lead to communication failure.

A lack of skill in intercultural communication will result in discord, misunderstanding, and even communication conflicts, such as culture shock and language barriers. These are common problems when people lack intercultural awareness (Khoiriyah, 2018; Xia, 2020). Language proficiency, knowledge of customs, and cultural awareness are all necessary for effective communication with native speakers. To prevent discord, miscommunication, and even confrontations in communication, EFL students should possess this intercultural competency and be attentive (Tambunan et al., 2021). A lack of intercultural communication skills will almost invariably lead to discord, misunderstanding, and even conflict in conversation. They will convey their perceptions and values through communication. To avoid discord, misunderstandings, and even conflicts, EFL students should have intercultural awareness in their communication.

In global education, English is essential for mediating cross-cultural ideas. Thus, culture must not be ignored when teaching EFL and English to speakers of other languages (Tambunan et al., 2021). As a result, prospective English teachers are expected to be able to understand intercultural awareness (Idris, 2021). As prospective teachers, pre-service teachers who have already completed

an overseas teaching practicum are well-equipped to begin their careers as teachers. They have had intercultural experiences, which will help them deal with problems in the classroom. Before graduation, they should get some teaching experience.

Teaching practicum is an important part of teacher education programs (Mena et al., 2017). As part of their teacher preparation, it is required for all pre-service teachers (Yunus et al., 2010). Numerous educational institutions around the world offer pre-service teacher programs, including those in Malaysia (Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2017), Uganda (Bunoti, 2011), and the US, Canada, and Russia (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2009) and others. Kabilan (2013) mentioned five benefits of overseas teaching practicum; Communication confidence, teaching confidence and skills, interpersonal skills, new world ideas of education and culture, and adjusting to new world culture are among the topics covered.

Ideally, the pre-service teachers who have already participated in overseas teaching practicum are well prepared to become teachers. They have an intercultural experience that will assist them in tackling any challenges that may arise in the classroom. However, not all pre-service teachers understand intercultural awareness. Based on the studies done in several nations, numerous teachers have not reached the desired levels of intercultural awareness. Therefore, the intercultural competence of pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers should be developed.

In recent years, various research studies have been carried out on overseas teaching practicum. Studies have been conducted in many countries, but many teachers have not achieved the expected levels of intercultural awareness. Hence, it is vital to systematically increase the intercultural competencies of pre-service teachers (Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, 2006). Thus, Çelik (2021) backs up this assertion about the dearth of intercultural awareness abilities among classroom teachers. Another study by Tural and Cubukcu (2021) explored whether not having a good intercultural teacher may make communication less effective. Moreover, the number of researchers investigating this topic is still limited (Hendra et al., 2019).

Similarly, Kabilan et al. (2017) researched overseas teaching experiences in Bangladesh. They emphasize the value of international teaching practicum programs for pre-service teachers in Bangladesh. Since it can give aspiring teachers another venue to gain beneficial professional development experiences, they would be better equipped for the demanding educational environment. However, throughout their international teaching practicum, the same foreign situations stated previously can become a source of contention for the pre-service teachers. As a result of the pupils' continued inability to speak or comprehend English, Khoiriyah (2018) found that the majority of

Indonesian pre-service teachers encountered language barriers and cultural shocks in Thailand schools.

Concerning the issue above, this research focuses on Indonesian pre-service teachers' intercultural awareness during international teaching practicum to fill the gap from the previous studies about overseas teaching practicum. This point also differentiates this research from previous research because they did not reveal Indonesian pre-service teachers' levels of intercultural awareness in different cultures.

METHODS

This research uses a multiple-case case study methodology and a qualitative research approach. This case-study research employs multiple cases to obtain more precise data. Therefore, this study has several cases: Indonesian pre-service teachers in Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines. As a result, it is done to get more detailed data. Thus the description of the research results is clearer and more detailed.

The subject of this research was Indonesian pre-service teachers from various levels who took part in a teaching practicum in Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines in 2019. The total number of participants was eight Indonesian pre-service teachers who taught in various grades. The participants were chosen since they were the last participants for the program's international teaching practicum in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic, making them the most recent participants overall. The participants chosen for this research would provide accurate and sufficient information regarding intercultural awareness throughout the overseas teaching practicum.

Furthermore, the participants were expected to reveal their teaching practicum experiences and intercultural experiences during the international teaching practicum. There are eight Indonesian pre-service teachers, six of whom would be female and two of whom would be male, representing several different levels in the investigated area. The requirements for participants should be in line with the following established study objectives;

1. Participants gained a better understanding of intercultural awareness during their overseas teaching practicum.
2. Participants participated in the overseas teaching program in Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines.
3. Participants were willing to participate in the interview. They agreed to engage in the research based on an invitation sent to the eight pre-service teachers.

Additionally, for privacy reasons, the participants in this research would be identified as the first pre-service teacher (P1), the second pre-service teacher (P2), the third pre-service teacher (P3), the fourth pre-service teacher (P4), the fifth pre-service teacher (P5), the sixth pre-service teacher (P6), the seventh pre-service teacher (P7), and the eighth pre-service teacher (P8). They were chosen because they fulfilled the previous requirements, such as being on their overseas teaching practicum program at various levels and countries.

In collecting the data, interviews and document analysis were used as instruments. The researcher took some steps to collect data; the researcher contacted eight participants via WA contact to inquire about their written consent forms. Additionally, the researcher asked about the participant's availability. Furthermore, the participant created an interview schedule to get more detailed information. The interview was performed face-to-face with 1 participant and via Zoom meeting with 7 participants due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes, and all interviewees were conducted in Indonesian and zoom/video recorded.

The second instrument used was document analysis. In document analysis, the researcher reviewed the documents about English pre-service teachers during an international teaching practicum as part of the document analysis process. During their international teaching practicum, they write a blog about their activities, experiences, and things they do there. Therefore, the researcher analyzed a study blog diary from participants. Qualitative researchers usually use at least two resources through different data sources and methods to seek convergence and verification.

This research used the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2013) to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is one method for analyzing data to detect themes or patterns in the data gathered by researchers. Seven phases are required for this technique: transcription, reading and familiarisation, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes, and completing the analysis. The example's subsequent sections offer examples of how the researcher might take part in each step of the theme analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings demonstrated that English pre-service teachers experience three levels of intercultural awareness. The data used is from the Intercultural Awareness Framework from Baker (2009), which includes levels of intercultural awareness among Indonesian pre-service teachers.

Findings

Basic Cultural Awareness

The English pre-service teachers can interpret and make sense of the words with accent issues. They discover that the various accents used in English require them to be cautious while deciphering the message. Therefore, miscommunication and misunderstanding may happen if people cannot understand the meaning. Pre-service teachers' statements backed it up. The data are shown below.

“A universal language is English. The accent used when speaking English is not altered when English is taught in a country where it is not the second language. For instance, when the correct pronunciation is milk (/milk/), they pronounce milk (/miu/). Milk (/milk/) is fairly difficult to pronounce for them” (P1, Thailand).

“First, language barriers. We must be very attentive in our instruction and cultural adaptation. Second, the pronunciation of the English accent. For instance, they pronounce “communication” with /komunikesiong/ even though the correct pronunciation is “/kə,mju:.ni'kei.fən/.” The colonial era in the Philippines had an impact on the English dialects, which explains why” (P2, Philippines).

“Additionally, the accent is different because the accent in Vietnam is more distinctive. Unfortunately, the pronunciation and accent are better in Indonesia” (P4, Vietnam).

Additionally, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior all impact basic cultural awareness. For instance, students and teachers are perplexed about why a pre-service teacher wears a headscarf. Similar to the pre-service teachers' case, they claimed that these cultural disparities sparked interest in the hijab. They consequently frequently receive inquiries regarding their appearance, particularly the hijab. Thai students and teachers also questioned P5 about the hijab. She claimed that by respecting the P5 prayer in a school setting, the Thai people demonstrated their acceptance of this distinction. She explained,

“When some of the teachers and friends inquired about the hijab, we also discussed our various religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds. They respect our prayers because they recognize this distinction” (P5, Thailand).

Other statements are from pre-service teachers in the Philippines and Vietnam. They mentioned,

“Racism is more about the hijab than it is about skin tone. They are becoming more interested in and enthusiastic about our hijab. Is it hot to wear a hijab or not? the student questioned” (P2, Philippines).

“Some of my female friends were questioned about wearing large clothing and the hijab. According to my friend, some people perceive harmony by observing skin tone. Therefore, when Vietnamese people search for an English teacher, they look for two things: first, if the instructor speaks English as their mother tongue, and second, whether they are native speakers or not. If the teacher is black, they will reject them even though they are a native speaker. My friend had this experience, but only a few Vietnamese people are like this” (P8, Vietnam).

Advanced Cultural Awareness

The researcher found that pre-service teachers believed that every person has their perspective and different point of view about their own culture and other cultures. Pre-service teachers should be able to compare existing principles at this level. Every culture has its rules, and some taboo things should not be discussed or done. They know that it is important to know the taboo things of other cultures to avoid misunderstandings and rudeness in communication. For an example of P1, she clarified,

“Ever there are taboo things like lesbians, gays, and plastic surgery that are usually different from those in Indonesia. There was an incident a male student was in the girl's toilet. After being reprimanded, this male student said, “I was also a girl” (P1, April 13th, 2022, Thailand).

This kind of thing is normal in Thailand, but P1 felt uncomfortable. Unfortunately, she had to tolerate the situation that happened there. She added,

“We as pre-service teachers feel speechless that from their age at least, they know gender is a mistake. We just understand that Thailand is like this, especially since we are a minority in this country. We are from different languages, so we need to be careful to adapt to their culture as well” (P1, April 13th, 2022, Thailand).

The same as experienced by P2 and P6, they can compare and mediate in different principles, such as sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is unfamiliar and unacceptable in Indonesia. Based on the interview, P2 said that, unlike Indonesia, the Philippines accepts and tolerates LGBT behavior. They also explained that the accompanying buddies were gay, and we, as a minority, accepted this unfamiliar but normal thing in the Philippines. She explained,

“I have already found the difference in principle, for example, gay. So, we are facilitated by a friend as someone who helps us or asks about the Philippines. He is a boy, and he is gay. The response of friends who are quite accepting of the culture in the Philippines is like that” (P2, April 17th, 2022, Philippines).

“There was an incident where two of the others were gay. At first, we were still in shock, but the acculturation of the culture was quite fast, so we were more accepting and adapting. Even though we have different principles, we cannot immediately reject them” (P6, April 25th, 2022, Thailand)

The researcher found that pre-service teachers could compare and mediate other cultures. At this level 2, advanced cultural awareness should be able to combine the ability to use cultural generalizations to make predictions about possible areas of misunderstanding and miscommunication. The pre-service teachers must also be aware of cultures as emerging, fluid, dynamic, and multi-voiced at this level. This result demonstrated their high level of advanced cultural understanding.

Similar to what occurred in pre-service teacher 3, there are other different principles in Vietnam, including those related to appetite, religion, and welcoming visitors. The study discovered that P3 is capable of mediating and comparing several principles. She outlined the peculiar customs and practices not practiced in Indonesia, such as how to greet visitors. She recognizes the diversity of various civilizations and accepts it. According to her,

“A different guiding concept can emphasize how religion interprets God. A Vietnamese buddy has some questions about welcoming visitors, eating, and religion. In addition, there is the Vietnamese tradition of spilling wine or liquor to welcome guests. We then made it clear that, by our religion, we were prohibited from doing so, and they were unaffected by our refusal.” (P3, Vietnam).

Further, it can compare and mediate on various principles, such as sexual orientation, as demonstrated by pre-service teacher 6. Sexual orientation is unfamiliar and unacceptable in Indonesia. Based on the interview, P6 said that,

“Two of the others were gay in a specific incident. At first, we were still in shock, but because we were quickly assimilated into society, we were more accepting and adaptable. We cannot immediately dismiss our principles just because they differ from ours” (P6, Thailand).

The following finding focuses on cultural adaptations that pre-service teachers must negotiate and mediate, specifically differences in cuisine that do not suit Indonesian tastes. In addition, pre-service teachers also said that it was difficult to find halal food there. Since it must be pork-free and produced according to Islamic principles, she preferred to cook her food instead of buying halal food. For pre-service teachers, food is also a delicate issue; in response to pre-service teacher 1's comment on the Philippines, she said,

“Food tastes differently here, which is inappropriate for Indonesians. Therefore, rather than having to search for and purchase food, my friends and I prefer to cook it.” (P1, Thailand).

P2 stated that it is difficult to get halal meals in the Philippines when it comes to cuisine. Even about halal food, there are various distinctions even though the Philippines is still in Southeast Asia. In addition to the difficulty of finding halal food, food in the Philippines is also expensive. Due to finding Halal food difficult, P2 chooses to cook his food. She stated,

“We find it difficult to find halal food, so we prefer to cook in the dorm. Besides that, rice in the Philippines is also expensive, so we buy low-quality rice” (P2, Philippines).

P4 also evidences the above findings on her blog; she revealed that Vietnamese people are highly tolerant. Hence, when we first explained that we do not eat pork and alcohol, they cooked three types of chicken, potatoes, and mustard greens. She explained,

The last thing about food and friendships that I like at my Homestay is the high tolerance. When we first came and said we don't eat pork, they cooked three kinds of chicken, potatoes, and mustard greens for us. Then, we eat together at the same table. The next day, when we were walking outside, we felt hungry and wanted to eat at a food stall or restaurant, but a Vietnamese friend suggested that we go home and cook for ourselves because all restaurants contain pork. "Pigs and dogs are Vietnamese people's favorite food," said one Vietnamese friend (P4, Blog, 2019).

Intercultural Awareness

Further, intercultural awareness is the last. At this level, it refers to pre-service teachers' capacity for intercultural communication through mediation and negotiation between distinct ethnic groups. Pre-service teachers should be aware that understanding cultural aspects and being aware of cultural influences are necessary for intercultural communication. The data are shown below.

“Intercultural awareness is the understanding that there are numerous cultures worldwide. Between one culture and another, there are parallels and discrepancies. When there are differences, we as students or even people, in general, can be more tolerant of them” (P4, Vietnam).

“We as humans need to be tolerant of various cultures and comprehend each other's ways of life. This is known as intercultural awareness” (P1, Thailand).

The following studies show that other things pre-service teachers do to adapt to the target cultures include imparting cultural information, reading about culture, and participating in current

cultural rituals. They thought that learning through observation and sharing could improve intercultural sensitivity.

P8 also talked to friends in Vietnam about the cultures. He clarified that he was inquiring about the Vietnamese New Year's celebration, Halloween, etc., and the country's birthday. He responded,

"I frequently talk to Vietnamese people about Vietnamese traditions, such as the festivities of the Chinese New Year. Next, I inquired about Vietnam's birthday customs and whether they were similar to Indonesia's regarding egg-throwing and other customs. Vietnamese people typically throw parties to commemorate birthdays. In addition, they also observe Chinese cultural celebrations, Halloween, and other holidays" (P8, Vietnam).

Providing cultural knowledge, reading about culture, and observing existing cultural traditions are things that pre-service teachers do to adapt to the target cultures. They believed that sharing and observing can increase intercultural awareness. Besides, these are done to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation.

P1 found that students in Thailand are required to learn the culture, for example, in traditional dance classes. In Thailand, traditional dance class is a compulsory or special subject. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Thai people are thick with their culture and develop the distinctive culture that exists there. P1 explained,

"Yes, when we observe in a class with traditional dance subjects. They are required to learn traditional dance, and traditional dance is a compulsory subject in Thailand" (P1, April 13th, 2022, Thailand).

P3 stated that there was a lot of sharing and observing culture. Like the others, P3 also shared and observed culture and found different traditions in welcoming guests. She stated,

"As I said before, the Vietnamese tradition of welcoming guests is to pour wine or alcohol. Then, we explained that in our religion we were not allowed to, nor did they feel disappointed because we refused" (P3, April 24th, 2022, Vietnam).

Furthermore, in Indonesia, asking about religion, age, and occupation is common. It is different from the opinion of P4 in Vietnam. She explained that asking about religion, work, etc., is sensitive in Vietnam. Even they will cut off their friendship if they do not accept it. She mentioned,

"It is my chat with a fellow teacher. In Indonesia, asking about your religion and what your job is is common, but in Vietnam, asking what your religion is and what your job is sensitive. They will cut off their friendship if they do not accept it because it is sensitive in there" (P4, April 17th, 2022, Vietnam).

P8 also shared about the cultures with friends in Vietnam. He explained that he was asking about events, such as Chinese New Year celebrations, Halloween, etc., and the birthday celebration in Vietnam. He answered,

“I often share with Vietnamese people about customs in Vietnam, such as events in Vietnam, such as Chinese New Year celebrations. Then, I also asked about birthday celebrations in Vietnam, whether there is a culture of throwing eggs and so on, but it differs from Indonesia. When celebrating birthdays, Vietnamese people usually make parties. In addition, Vietnam has a very complex culture because they celebrate Chinese cultural events, Halloween, and so on” (P8, 24th April 2022, Vietnam).

Furthermore, pre-service teachers also share and observe in the educational field. They see and absorb the culture in terms of teaching, especially how to teach in the target culture and what to do since teaching in another country will differ from teaching in Indonesia. When asked about cultural differences in an overseas teaching practicum, P1 also agreed that understanding English is necessary to understand their cultural background. She said,

“It is nice that the way we teach in other countries is not necessarily right, and it is not always wrong either. We also have to understand the culture first before teaching” (P1, April 13th, 2022, Thailand).

When asked whether P3 has had any new experiences teaching English in a different culture. She answered,

“For the cultural aspect, this is not a change but an addition of knowledge and more insight that we need to introduce to Indonesian children.Yes, of course, by adding insight into knowledge, teaching methods are more fun. I get game references and additional teaching materials references. In Indonesia, package books are usually published, while in Vietnam, they are published by Cambridge. Therefore, the pursuit of English can be more natural. I also saw that there were 3 books, namely material books, exercise books and notebooks”(P3, April 24th, 2022, Vietnam).

Besides, many advantages that pre-service teacher 1 gets during their overseas teaching practice, such as can understand the culture and target culture in Thailand. She has developed her intercultural awareness by observing and sharing culture. She added,

“By studying other cultures, we understand that it is not only Indonesia that has cultural diversity, but Thailand is also the same” (P1, April 13th, 2022, Thailand).

Similarly experienced by other pre-service teachers, they can understand the culture and target culture in Vietnam. They have developed his intercultural awareness by observing and sharing culture. as demonstrated by the interview responses below,

“This is a very big contribution. Besides the experience we get, we have more value. We can speak international languages, know the curriculum or deficiencies in Vietnam for us to bring to Indonesia, and then correct the shortcomings” (P4, April 17th, 2022, Vietnam).

“In my current job, many people are foreign; we are no longer surprised by the different accents. Like the word "maybe" or "if possible," rarely use the word. So, because of this teaching practice in Thailand made me more accepting. In addition, when we are aware of intercultural, we will eliminate the nature of judgment against culture” (P6, 25th April 2022, Thailand)

“Yes, this teaching practicum in the Philippines helped me in mastering classes, time management, providing materials such as making lesson plans, etc.” (P7, 24th April 2022, Philippines).

Providing cultural knowledge, reading about culture, and observing existing cultural traditions are things that P4 also does. She explains on his blog how they cook pork, the Vietnamese staple food, and the unique customs that Vietnamese people do. She mentioned,

“Various types of food are available at the Homestay. Friends from Vietnam often cook pork by boiling it, adding spices, and chopped vegetables. Vietnamese people are mostly vegetarian. So, almost every day, they eat greens such as mustard greens, kale, and broccoli. Something unique is they boil the mustard greens and separate the sauce. After the rice and vegetables are finished, they don't drink water but drink the boiled water of the mustard greens” (P4, Blog, 2019).

Discussion

The first objective is to identify the level of intercultural awareness of English pre-service teachers. The second objective is to describe the factors that affect the intercultural awareness of English pre-service teachers proposed by Baker (2009). This section discusses the researcher's theoretical theory, which is based on the study's findings and is justified in light of theoretical insight. Especially the findings discussed are related to relevant theories regarding intercultural awareness.

Regarding the three levels of intercultural awareness, first, level 1 is basic cultural awareness. Pre-service teachers could interpret and make sense of the words with accent issues at this level. They mentioned that the slightly different English pronunciation causes a slight miscommunication among

pre-service teachers. According to Baker (2011), when teaching English, it is necessary to consider the communicative contexts of native speakers. Hence, they were also trying to rectify their pronunciation according to English pronunciation rules. For example, in the Philippines, their second language is English but they also use Tagalog as their mother tongue. As a result, the colonial era influenced their English accent. This finding aligns with Kabilan et al. (2017), who discovered that Indonesian pre-service teachers completing the ITP in Penang, Malaysia, had some issues with English accents because English in Malaysia is ESL, whereas English in Indonesia is EFL. ITP pre-service teachers in Malaysia have a distinctive and difficult experience.

Furthermore, pre-service teachers were aware of others and their cultures. This supported Baker's (2011) assumption that he could articulate his cultural perspective. It refers to basic cultural awareness in the first level of his model. Even though some did not provide thorough explanations, they were good at explaining Indonesian culture. They pointed out that in their target countries, many different cultures, lifestyles, religions, languages, clothes, traditions, etc., are different from our own cultures, such as the hijab and the clothes. As Syifaa et al. (2021) stated, it will help with decision-making, motivation, and ways of thinking from a different cultural perspective. Those proved that the participants were aware of others and their cultures. As a result, pre-service teachers must cultivate cultural awareness. These findings link with Baker's (2009) framework, the points above revealed that the participants had the first level, basic cultural awareness. It is an understanding of how one's own culture and that of others affect communication.

The next findings showed that pre-service teachers could compare existing principles in level 2, advanced cultural awareness. They believed that every person has their perspective and different point of view about their own culture and other cultures. They can compare existing different principles, such as sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is unfamiliar and unacceptable in Indonesia.

Based on the data presented above, different from Indonesian cultures, LGBT is tolerated in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand, even in environmental schools. Several male students look like ladies, and teachers do not complain or remark. These findings are unrelated to those of Haber & Getz (2011) since, on their public campuses; some LGBT students are not welcomed in higher education. Gimelstein (2012), as referenced by Bryant & Soria (2015), described the experiences of a lesbian student who, while studying abroad in Russia, experienced discrimination from her professor because of her sexual orientation. This finding diverges from other previous research since teachers did not acknowledge or treat certain LGBT pupils differently.

Meanwhile, in dealing with different principles in Vietnam, pre-service teachers can compare existing principles. They explained some unfamiliar things in Indonesia, such as how to welcome

guests. Highly different from Indonesian cultures, Vietnam people usually welcome guests using alcoholic drinks. This is contrary to the religion adopted by pre-service teachers; they refuse to drink alcohol because it is forbidden in their religion, Muslims. Similar findings from İter's (2016) research, that participants in international programs had a strong understanding of a range of cultures and beliefs, had learned to be open to other people's points of view, and had improved their critical thinking skills supported the conclusion. All of these things helped the learners overcome the challenge. They developed a tolerance for difference, sensed change, development, and maturity, and their English improved. They also made progress in their intercultural communication.

Furthermore, the pre-service teachers can adapt to the cuisine taste differences. Food is also a complex thing for pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers must negotiate and mediate to deal with cuisine taste differences in the target country. Even the pre-service teachers also said being difficult to find halal food there since it must be pork-free and produced according to Islamic principles. Therefore, they preferred to cook her food instead of buying halal food. According to Syifaa et al. (2021), this research found that food is one of the difficult concerns due to substantially different from pre-service teachers' countries. For instance, in some cultures, it is acceptable to eat with one's fingers, whereas convention dictates implementation in others, the differences in time eating habits, and the ingredients of cuisine.

As Baker (2009) stated, those findings demonstrated that the participants had good advanced cultural awareness. A comprehension of cultures as one among many social settings or groupings and the fluid, dynamic, and relative nature of any cultural characterization or understanding constitute advanced cultural awareness. At this level, participants should also be able to contrast and mediate between certain cultural frames of reference.

The following research revealed that pre-service teachers were aware of how crucial to have good intercultural awareness. They understand multiple voices or perspectives within the meaning of ICA in level 3; intercultural awareness. Pre-service teachers demonstrated their views and perspectives on the essence of intercultural awareness. They agree that it is essential to promote tolerance and reduce communication failure. They believed that understanding cultural background influences intercultural awareness in teaching and learning languages. Therefore, good pre-service teachers can communicate with other people from distinct cultures without misunderstandings and misinterpretations in intercultural communication. According to Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), the goal of language instruction's intercultural component is to create intercultural communicators who can deal with complexity and multiple identities without adopting stereotypical viewpoints from viewing others through a single identity. Cheng et al. (2012) performed in-depth

interviews with five Taiwanese EFL teachers to know if their improved understanding of ICC affected the pedagogical approaches they self-reported using. According to Sercu (2006), EFL teachers concurred that intercultural awareness would lead to a more complex understanding, intercultural experiences, and openness to different languages and cultures.

Furthermore, pre-service teachers adapt to the target country in various ways, such as providing cultural knowledge, reading about culture, and observing existing cultural traditions. They agree that observing and sharing with their buddies, friends, and teachers can increase intercultural awareness. Hence, they comprehend information about the culture there, what they often do, and what is reasonable to do or not. Then, when they have problems at school, they can share too. According to Hobson et al. (2009), mentors often lack the necessary time, expertise, and preparation for guiding pre-service teachers. They outlined the components of effective mentoring as including time and emotional assistance for giving pre-service teachers criticism and a certain level of autonomy. Therefore, these are done to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation.

CONCLUSION

The pre-service English teachers in this study demonstrated strong intercultural awareness. They know typical cultural variations, such as the capacity to understand and comprehend words in accents and a consciousness of their own and other cultures. They were also able to integrate skills like the capacity to compare existing diverse principles and adapt to culinary taste variations with the ability to apply cultural generalizations to produce forecasts of potential areas of misunderstanding and miscommunication. Additionally, they know the importance of cultures in intercultural communication, including the capacity to communicate and understand the culture of ICA and knowledge of many voices or perspectives within the context of ICA.

The research has several limitations. This research only focuses on intercultural awareness. As a result, future researchers can explore ICC students. Consequently, the subject matter of this research is limited. Additionally, the additional researcher can employ a mixed research strategy, which includes an interview, some observation work, a portfolio, and a questionnaire, to get better insights into intercultural awareness.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S. T. S., Qasem, B. T. A., & Pawar, D. S. V. (2019). Integrating culture into EFL teaching: A study of Yemen EFL teachers' perceptions and actual practices. Higher Education Authority

UGC Approved List of Journals Serial Number, 19(4), 333–348.
www.languageinindia.comISSN

Aljohani. (2016). The Goals of Language Teaching. *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*, 7(3), 218–240. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315883113-14>

Baker, W. (2009). Intercultural awareness and intercultural communication through English: an investigation of Thai English language users in higher education. *Social Sciences*, 365.

Baker, W. (2011). Intercultural awareness: Modelling an understanding of cultures in intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 11(3), 197–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2011.577779>

Braun and Clark. (2013). Thematic Coding and Analysis. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n451>

Bryant, K. M., & Soria, K. M. (2015). College Students' Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Participation in Study Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 25(1), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.36366/frontiers.v25i1.347>

Bunoti, S. (2011). The Quality of Higher Education in Developing Countries Needs Professional Support. *22nd International Conference on Higher Education*, 4(2), 1–10.

Çelik*, S. (2021). Culture and language Instruction: Does Turkey's EFL curriculum do enough to support intercultural awareness? *13(3)*, 3443–3463.

Cheng, M. M. H., Tang, S. Y. F., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2012). Practicalising theoretical knowledge in student teachers' professional learning in initial teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(6), 781–790. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.02.008>

Gulbinskienė, D., & Lasauskienė, R. (2014). Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of EFL Students at University Level. In *Žmogus Ir Žodis* (Vol. 16, Issue 3, pp. 150–159). <https://doi.org/10.15823/zz.2014.020>

Haber, P., & Getz, C. (2011). Developing Intercultural Competence in Future Student Affairs Professionals through a Graduate Student Global Study Course to Doha, Qatar. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 14(4), 463–486. <https://doi.org/10.15365/joce.1404072013>

Hendra, R., Mukminin, A., Tersta, F. W., Priyanto, & Nurhuda. (2019). An international teaching practicum: Pre-service student teacher exchange in Southeast Asia (SEA teacher)'s cultural and teaching experiences. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 8(10), 190–196.

- Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009). Mentoring beginning teachers: What we know and what we don't. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(1), 207–216. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2008.09.001>
- Idris, M. M. (2021). The Proposed Elements of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) For Indonesian EFL English Teachers. *SAGA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 65–72. <https://doi.org/10.21460/saga.2020.21.43>
- İlter, B. G. (2016). How do Mobility Programs Increase Foreign University Students' Intercultural Awareness? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232(April), 569–574. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.078>
- Kabilan, M. K. (2013). A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 36, 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.013>
- Kabilan, M. K., Hussin, H., Zul-Qarna, N., Abdullah, A. C., Ismai, H. N., & Khan, M. A. (2017). International teaching practicum in Bangladesh: An investigation of tesol pre-service teachers' professional development experiences. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction, Special issue*, 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli.2017.7800>
- Khoiriyah, I. (2018). Intercultural Competence of the Sea-Teacher in Dealing With Intercultural Communication Challenges: a Diary Study. <https://dspace.uui.ac.id/handle/123456789/11012>
- Kirkwood-Tucker, T. F. (2009). Visions in global education: The globalization of curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education and schools: Perspectives from Canada, Russia, and the United States. In *Visions in global education: The globalization of curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education and schools: Perspectives from Canada, Russia, and the United States*.
- Larzén-Östermark. (n.d.). The Intercultural Dimension in EFL-Teaching: A Study of Conceptions Among Finland-Swedish Comprehensive School Teachers. <https://doi.org/52:5, 527-547, DOI: 10.1080/00313830802346405>
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning. In *Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118482070>
- Mena, J., Hennissen, P., & Loughran, J. (2017). Developing pre-service teachers' professional knowledge of teaching: The influence of mentoring. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66(August), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.03.024>

- Saharani. (2015). Exploring Intercultural Awareness and its Implementation in Teaching Practice. Three Visits to America, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139060295.002>
- Sercu, L. (2006). The foreign language and intercultural competence teacher: the acquisition of a new professional identity. *Intercultural Education*, 17(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980500502321>
- Srinivas Rao, P. (2019). The Role of English as a Global Language. *Research Journal of English (RJOE)*, 4(January), 65–79. <https://www.rjoe.org.in/vol4iss1.html>
- Syifaa, V., Nazhafah, N., & Muslim, A. B. (2021). Indonesian Pre-Service Teachers' Intercultural Awareness in SEA Teacher Project. *595(Icollite)*, 695–701.
- Tambunan, A. R. S., Lubis, F. K., Andayani, W., & Sari, W. S. (2021). Intercultural Communicative Competence Levels of Indonesian EFL Students: A Preliminary Study in a Higher Education Context. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, 7(2), 134. <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v7i2.2870>
- Tural, P., & Cubukcu, F. (2021). Raising intercultural awareness through short stories in EFL classes. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 43(1), 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.35923/jes.2021.1.02>
- Xia, Z. (2020). A Preliminary Study of Culture Shock and Adaptation Tactics for Overseas Chinese Students —from the Perspective of “American Dreams in China.” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 10(3), 336. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1003.11>
- Yunus, M. M., Hashim, H., Ishak, N. M., & Mahamod, Z. (2010). Understanding TESL pre-service teacher teaching experiences and challenges via post-practicum reflection forms. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 722–728. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.224>