

The Implementation of Intercultural Communicative Competence-based Learning in Senior High School Context

Nuriah Fadliah Husain

nuriahfadliahh@gmail.com

Universitas Negeri Makassar

Haryanto Atmowardoyo*

haryanto@unm.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Makassar

*corresponding author

Nurdin Noni

nurdinnoni@unm.ac.id

Universitas Negeri Makassar

Abstract

This research studies about the implementation of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)-based learning in senior high school context. This research aims to investigate the way the teacher implements ICC-based learning in senior high school context, to know the students' perception towards the implementation of ICC-based learning and to reveal the challenges faced by the teacher in implementing ICC-based learning in the classroom. Using qualitative method, the researcher found the two main research findings. The first, researcher found that ICC-based learning in the classroom was implemented through teaching activities that involved all elements of ICC. The last, the result shows that there are two big challenges in the implementation of ICC-based learning. Those are the teacher's cleverness and commitment to find a cultural material for ELT classroom and the students' readiness and motivation to accept the intercultural lesson.

Keywords: ICC, Implementation, Perception.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English involving culture is incredibly important since English is a worldwide language. This indicates that its users are aware of the way language is applied in multiple circumstances and by groups of people from potentially quite distinct cultural environments. Therefore, it is expected for the student when they have the opportunity to meet foreigners, they are more able to interact with minimal misunderstanding and fully respect them by having cultural knowledge. According to Byram's (2007) perspective on culture, it regards to a personal and worldwide view, we can recognize identities of an individual, identities in society, and identities based on culture (such as being a part of a particular ethnicity, a nation or minority community). Therefore, it is important to include cultural knowledge into the curriculum.

In an English classroom, cultural teaching is not only discussing how learners develop knowledge about another culture but also learners come to understand themselves in relation to some other culture (Lysiuchenko, Sydorenko, Oleksiienko, Lysenko, & Hulych, 2021). As a result, "intercultural" is given more attention nowadays. Knowing about another culture is only one part of becoming interculturally literate. It entails studying how a person's background affects views of oneself, of the outside world, as well as our interactions with individuals. Zhu Hua (2014) noted language teaching and learning is often now perceived as an inevitably intercultural experience in which language learners learn about other cultures and peoples. Engaging intercultural into the teaching activities can build students' intercultural communicative competence which is essential skill besides linguistic skill.

Byram (1997) initially proposed the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), a look to incorporate two elements: communication and intercultural skills. According to his study in 1997, Byram defined intercultural communicative competence as the capacity to communicate accurately as well as effectively in a foreign language among individuals from various cultural backgrounds. A more extensive variant of communicative language training is intercultural communicative competency, according to Byram (1997). The mode of Intercultural Communicative Competence was created by Byram (1997) and consists of five interconnected parts. Those are attitude, knowledge, skills to interpret and relate, skills to discover and interact and critical cultural awareness. ICC allows individuals to establish new ties, create connections, and form associations with others who are not like them. It has the potential to form unity in the midst of variety. As a result, the integration of ICC teaching in ELT should be bolstered. Therefore, in this research integration of ICC into classroom activities is namely ICC-based learning. ICC-based learning refers to teacher's technique to apply activity which covers the elements of ICC (attitude, knowledge, skill in interpreting and relating, skill discovery and interaction as well as critical culture awareness) into English learning process in the classroom.

Although the exploration of intercultural communication has been studied, recent years it has been noticed that there is increasing interest in it, despite the fact that its presence in the world of education is still quite low. In addition, indeed it still needs exploration and incorporation in the classroom (Smakova & Paulsrud, 2020), (Fitriyah, Munir, & Retnaningdyah, 2019), (Wello, 2017), (Irwandi, 2017)). It means, the very low condition of ICC incorporation in the classroom might be caused by the challenges that teachers face.

Challenge is as a result; several studies have been conducted to explore the various strategies of improving the ICC of ELT learners. Bickley et al.'s (2014) study looked into ways senior English as a Second Language educators in Canada understand and impart ICC ideas. The scholars discovered through an online survey indicated the participants consider involve ICC ideas in their lessons. Nevertheless, ICC has not been sufficiently established as well as lectured, much as the earlier research. In light of this, researchers proposed that ICC be included in teacher preparation programs so that teachers will have the understanding as well as skills necessary for developing ICC-based practices and instructional materials. Ghanem (2017) also explored, using qualitative research, whether graduate-level language teachers at university levels in the United States understood and participated in the teaching of ICC. The study revealed that the participants "where not as familiar with IC as they were with cultural awareness and the factual knowledge of culture" hence the difficulty of including and teaching ICC in their foreign classes (Ghanem, 2017). The same results were reached by Chau and Truong (2019) in the research they

carried out, which found that learning experiences related to imparting knowledge about different cultures were incorporated less often compared to activities aimed at promoting learners' intercultural attitudes. Although exercises which promote actual or projected cross-cultural contact among learners are seldom excluded from classroom instruction, there have been relatively few studies aiming at examining the methods used by teachers on implementing ICC-based learning and teachers' problems regarding to the implementation of ICC-based learning in senior high school setting, in contrary to the most of ICC research which concentrated on how it evolved over ELT students. Therefore, this study aims to explore how teacher implements ICC-based learning in the ELT classroom and to reveal the challenges faced by the teacher in implementing ICC-based learning in senior high school context.

METHOD

Research Design

This research applies a qualitative method. The objective of a qualitative research design is to explain the findings in more depth using longer sentences. According to Mills & Gay (2019), a qualitative approach is utilized to look into the reason as well as the process of decision making rather than just the where, what, and when. It is an approach to research used in a wide range of educational fields. It seeks to get a comprehensive grasp of how people behave.

Research Subject

The subject of this research are an English teacher and eight students in the 11th grade in a senior high school in Bone. This research was conducted at SMA Islam Athirah Bone. It is located on Sungai Musi Street in Bone, South Sulawesi Province. This research used purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling in this study selected participants who provided reliable information, are contemplative and conscientious, can successfully interact with the researcher, and feel at ease with the researcher.

Research Instrument

The researcher applied the observation checklist and lists of question interview with audio recorder to assist the researcher to get the data. The observation checklist was based on the theory of Byram's ICC model and was used to explore the implementation of ICC-based learning. Interview was designed to reveal the teacher's challenges. The interview applied was semi-structured interview with open-ended questions.

Technique of Data Analysis

In addition, the procedure of analyzing the data was processed using the interactive model of data analysis designed by Miles Huberman and Saldana (2014). In the first, data were collected. After that, the process was data condensation where the collected data was chosen, focused, simplified and transformed into a set of interview transcripts and some field notes. Then the chosen data were presented in a simple form without doing diminishment of the contents. After displaying the data, it was drawing conclusion.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study consist of two main questions, those are the implementation of ICC-based learning in the ELT classroom and the challenge in implementing ICC-based learning. Therefore, the findings are presented as follows

The implementation of ICC-based learning

To observe the implementation of ICC-based learning, the researcher used the lens of Byram's ICC model. Those are the element of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), knowledge (*savoirs*), critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*), attitudes (*savoir être*), and skills of the discovery and interactions (*savoir apprendre/faire*). From all those elements in ICC, the researcher found that the ICC is still less implemented in skill discovery and interaction. The activities in the English Language Teaching in the classroom did not fully support the skill of discovery and interaction. The lack of implementation in this element was surprisingly acknowledged and assessed unnecessary by the teacher. On the other side, the elements of attitude, knowledge, skill in interpreting and relating and critical culture awareness are well-implemented.

a. Skill in discovery and interaction

Discovery and interaction is defined as the acquirement ability of person to obtain new cultural knowledge and practices then operate them in the real interaction (Byram, 1997). In the observation's result, the researcher found that in the skill of discovery and interaction element teacher only develop this skill in the brainstorm activity. Before teacher gave a text about American eating habit, the teacher showed a picture of statistic of the growing number of obesity in America. Teacher asked the students to give description (what happened in America, what causes the obesity in America). In this activity, it went interactive where the students responded the teacher's questions and the teacher gave the feedback. Also, another discovery skill is when the students were gaining knowledge through small group project when the students looked for further information in some media in order to discuss it, exchange information with other friends.

Looking at the result of observation above, the researcher knows that giving visual material about a culture of a country to the student and then asking their explanation can recall their existed cultural knowledge and help them to find a phenomenon occurred in a country. Obviously, picture is to help students to find culture by themselves where it can build the discovery skill. In addition, the task given by the teacher to discover the cultural knowledge through reading, and discussing is helpful to improve discovery skill. However, it is not sufficient to fulfil the students' skill in discovery and interaction. There must be a real interaction or practice where the thing is not only as theoretical knowledge but also how they bring their intercultural knowledge into practice. In this case, the researcher did not found any activities that embrace opportunity to have a real interaction with people from different country or culture.

b. Attitude

Attitude is defined as respectful manner and openness with others' beliefs, habit or behaviour (Byram 1997). In the classroom observation result, the aspect of attitude was identified when teacher asked students to identify and voice their opinion about document or event which has

elements of culture and when teacher explains the similarities and the differences of Japan and Indonesia.

It was promoted in the first, second and the third meeting. The second meeting was the teacher gave them brief introduction and brainstorm to the similarities and differences between Japanese and Indonesian culture. It was interactive brainstorm where the teacher asked the students about what they know about Japanese and Indonesian based on the education, transportation, and entertainment. Occasionally, the teacher explained a brief similarities and differences. The following activity is teacher divided them into five groups including four until five students. They were asked to explain or give their perspectives about dissimilarities and differences about Japan and Indonesia from their thought. Teacher gave different theme for each group, those are entertainment, education, transportation, cleanliness and manner. With a short explanation from the teacher, it was expected to give students portrait and stimulate their idea for the given topic. In the discussion session, each student spoke their mind in turn about what they have read or listen or experience.

This meeting shows some activities demonstrated intercultural communicative competence elements such as when the teacher introduced some viewpoints of Indonesian and Japanese culture. It continues to students voice their thought and feelings towards the differences in Indonesian and Japanese culture. All these activity was helping the students to have intercultural attitudes.

c. Knowledge

In the observation result, the teacher provided additional material which was a text containing an old-fashioned eating habit committed by American volunteer under the research of Tuff University in Boston. The text was presciently read by the teacher. The teacher explained introduction to the topic. Then, the teacher gave time for students to read and comprehend the meaning. The students were allowed to use any translation tool to ease them.

The use of additional material here such as text was very useful to equip the students bunch of cultural knowledge. In this case, offering students with a text containing American old-fashioned eating habit meant that the students were automatically getting acquainted to the culture of America. In addition, the text mentioned some of identities such as Boston, Tuff University, and University of Wisconsin which is a state in America. As a result, it is a medium to have critical understanding towards description of cultures and it is a bridge to have intercultural knowledge.

d. Skill in interpreting and relating

Interpreting and relating involves the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own. Based on the observation result, this skill was developed by the teacher in the first meeting. The teacher spread out a text for each student which was about American eating habit and their perspective of diet. The teacher asked the students to interpret the text that is given by the teacher. The students were asked individually to have deep understanding the meaning of the text so that they were allowed to use internet translation tool or ask the teacher about the vocabularies. . Occasionally, the teacher assisted them to find appropriate meaning of the unknown vocabularies or to get idea. Then one by one was enquired to convey the result of their interpretation towards the text in

front of their friends. The teacher instructed them to deliver in Bahasa first then the interpretation would be delivered in English. In the end, the teacher explained more detail interpretation of the text with some additional information.

The activity that showed teacher asked students to interpret the cultural event from a text was identified as developing skill of interpreting and skill of relating was constructed by the teacher when asked the students to relate it to the Japanese eating habit. Therefore, the establishment of students' skill of interpreting and relating was included among these activities.

e. Critical Culture Awareness

According to Byram's (1997), critical culture awareness is referred to the deep comprehension of others' belief, life style, manner and norms. Based on the result of observation, this aspect was involved in discussion. The students were in a small group discussion. Their tasks were the teacher asked the students to explore the values, believes and perspectives related to life style both Japan and Indonesia. They could seek for the data from their group member. They discussed without any texts, naturally had a discussion to obtain the data from their friends' existed knowledge about that culture. Furthermore, the students were asked to compare the things among Japanese and Indonesian culture from any aspects until the time was over. Hence, the teacher gave a task the students to add up their discussion material by searching further information on internet or a book about related topic for the next learning lesson.

In the next day, each group was pleased to present the result of their discussion after they were given time to think and deliver their arguments. They told about Japanese and also Indonesian. Mostly students focused on explaining how Japanese and Indonesian culture in general and what affect them to do that and the impact of that culture. Also, they discussed about what problems usually occur in the society. They delivered some points.

Based on the observation result above, presenting and discussing can increase their critical minds towards awareness of intercultural among society. When students delivered their analysis of a culture towards their friends and others gave their comment and questions, this was the moment for students to evaluate and strengthen their knowledge about related culture. Therefore, they have more tolerance and respectful to the distinguish culture. In practical side, they can be more adaptive and sociable to another people or nation which has different cultural background. However, this activity does not bring them enough to explore how their language makes them act differently.

Teacher's challenges in implementing ICC-based learning

The researcher has completed the interview with the teacher (F). As the English teacher who is teaching the eleventh grade in SMA Athirah Bone. This discusses about the challenges faced by the teacher. The researcher only took one researcher as the object of this research. The challenges in implementing ICC-based learning in the EFL classroom, the researcher found three main categories, those are difficulty of choosing material that can enhance students' intercultural communicative competence, teacher unwillingness and attitudes towards teaching ICC-based learning and students' readiness to receive intercultural material.

The researcher had conducted the interview with the teacher (F) and found some challenges that appears in the teaching practice. The researcher adapted the theory of Bergh (2016) to classify the challenges.

a. Difficulty of choosing material that can enhance students' ICC

Extract 1

“Sejauh ini tantangannya itu tidak terlalu besar karena kurikulum yang sekarang yang diterapkan sekarang itu kan dia masih berbasis teks nah sementara Teks itu luas jadi paling tantangannya adalah pintar-pintarnya guru untuk mencari konten budaya untuk diintegrasikan ke materi yang akan dibawakan.”

(So far the challenge is not too big because the current curriculum that is applied now is still text-based, now while the text is broad, so the most challenge is the cleverness of teachers to find cultural content to integrate into the material to be presented)

(Interview with F)

Based on the interview above, the teacher acknowledged that the teacher has problem in finding cultural content for their teaching in the classroom. The teacher is demanded to be smart to expose the appropriate culture to integrate into the teaching practice. So “cleverness of teachers” is believed as the most challenge in implementing ICC.

b. The teacher unwillingness and attitudes towards teaching ICC

Extract 2

“dari sekolah sendiri sih alhamdulillah tidak terlalu banyak tantangan karena di sekolah Alhamdulillah fasilitasnya sangat memadai dari segi sarana dan prasarana dari sekolah paling tantangannya dari gurunya sendiri sih ..komitmen mereka mencari materi budaya sesuai dengan teks yang dibawakan pada saat itu”

(From the school itself, Alhamdulillah, there are not too many challenges because in the school, Alhamdulillah, the facilities are very adequate in terms of facilities and infrastructure from the school, the most challenge is from the teachers themselves, their commitment to find cultural materials in accordance with the text presented at that time.)

(Interview with F)

Based on the statement by F above, it discloses that the commitment to find and bring the cultural materials into teaching practice is also the big challenge as F uttered “the most challenge is from the teachers themselves, their commitment...”. Seeking for the cultural knowledge which is effective for the students' ICC should be continuously carried out.

Another finding was disclosed about the challenge of the implementation of ICC. It is the teaching method on how deliver cultural knowledge with fun and interesting way.

Extract 3

“Kalau dari siswa sendiri sepertinya agak berat karena Ini kebanyakan unsur-unsur budaya itu teks reading nah ketika metode yang seperti itu agak membosankan untuk siswa jadinya penyerapannya agak kurang”

(From the students themselves it seems a bit heavy because these are mostly cultural elements that are reading texts. When such a method is a bit boring for students, so the absorption is somewhat less)

(Interview with F)

From the extract 24 above, the researcher can sum up that the method in teaching English with cultural approach should be carried out with various method. If it is continuously done with same method, it causes boringness and less understanding for the students.

DISCUSSIONS

In the ELT classroom, the implementation of ICC-based learning should embrace all the elements which can be covered into various activities that can be conducted in teaching and learning activity. Referring to the findings discussed previously, in outline the teacher implemented ICC model in his classroom activity through various ways for instance giving task to explore cultures and discuss culture. In the same vein, Jata (2015) in his study asserted that the way the teacher incorporates ICC in the classroom is engaging the students to seek for the other cultures and enquiring students to discuss or reflect what they have read or experienced. Nevertheless, the researcher found the drawback of the implementation of ICC. One element of ICC, skill discovery and interaction are not well-implemented. In other words, the teacher applied the activities which are not sufficient to support all the element in ICC. This is also claimed by Bickley et., al (2014) who found in his research that ICC is not adequately developed and taught. The lack of implementation of the skill in the discovery and interaction was also discovered by Chau and Truong (2019) who concluded in their study that the real or stimulated intercultural interaction was rarely integrated by the teachers into their classroom activities. Therefore, the implementation of ICC-based learning in the classroom still needs concern by the teacher.

It was revealed from the interview that teacher have trouble in finding intercultural material regarding to the concept of ICC. The appropriate and sufficient cultural knowledge are not the only thing should be considered, yet the method and the way teacher incorporate ICC in the teaching and learning activity. In addition, the creativity and commitment to teach ICC are believed as the most challenge. This finding is supported by the result study of Bergh (2016) which explicitly mentioned that one of the categories of challenges for the teacher is the difficulty of choosing material that can build the students' ICC. The source material to gain intercultural knowledge is extremely important yet risky. In other words, it is not easy to find or bring appropriate cultural material which is suitable for students. Some sensitivity content should be properly considered. Meanwhile, the finding result that supports this research is discovered as well by Zhao (2016) that the teachers remain using traditional method or one method constantly. Consequently, the class was boring.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that the implementation of ICC-based learning in the classroom was actualized into some activities. The researcher found that teacher demonstrated all element of ICC (attitude, knowledge, skill in interpreting and relating, skill in discovery and interaction and critical culture awareness) in all teaching activity. Specifically, in skill of discovery and interaction element, it is lack of implementation in the ELT classroom, so the teacher still needs some activities to support these skills. Besides, the researcher found that the challenges in implementation of ICC-based learning are the teacher's cleverness and commitment to implement ICC-based learning in the class and the students' readiness and motivation to receive the cultural knowledge during the learning process.

Drawn from the conclusion above, implications of this research can be of two orientations. First, the elements of ICC which comprise skill in discovery and interaction should be operationally designed as assistance for the teachers to implement it into their English teaching classroom. It will enrich students' experience in having intercultural communication and will

prepare students to be more able to communicate globally. Second, more variety of intercultural activities and technique need to be incorporated into teaching activity in order to help the students easier to absorb the intercultural content. Beside the intercultural material itself, the way of teachers to bring intercultural material into teaching activity is also crucial for students' intercultural communication acquirement. As this research focuses on the implementation of ICC-based learning for further study, the researcher suggests to explores the effectiveness of the implementation of ICC-based learning. In other words, future studies could be conducted to investigate whether or not the implementation of ICC can actually improve students' ICC.

REFERENCES

- Bergh, H. (2016). *The Difficulties of Teaching Intercultural Competence in the EFL Classroom. International Mergers.*
- Bickley, C. & Rossiter, M.J. & Abbott, M.L.. (2014). Intercultural communicative competence: Beliefs and practices of adult english as a second language instructors. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research.* 60. 135-160.
- Bryam, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence.* UK: Clevedon.
- Byram, M., & Risager, K. (1999). *Language teachers, politics and cultures.* Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Chau, T. H. H., & Truong, V. (2019). The integration of intercultural education into teaching English: What Vietnamese teachers do and say. *International Journal of Instruction, 12*(1), 441-456. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12129a>
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA Pearson.
- Fantini, A. E., & Tirmizi, A. (2006). *Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence.* Retrieved from http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/worldlearning_publications/1
- Fitriyah, U., Munir, A., & Retnaningdyah, P. (2019). Intercultural communicative competence in ELT:Lecturers' perception and practice. *IJET (Indonesian Journal of English Teaching), 8*(1), 62-71. <https://doi.org/10.15642/ijet2.2019.8.1.62-71>
- Ghanem, C. M. (2017). Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence: The Perspective of Foreign Language Graduate Student Instructors. *The International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 11,* 9.
- Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). An Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory of Strangers' Intercultural Adjustment. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 419–457). Sage Publications Ltd
- Irwandi, I. (2017). Integrating intercultural communication competence in teaching oral communication skill. *Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang, 5,* 246-252

- Lysiuchenko, O., Sydorenko, Y., Oleksiienko, L., Lysenko, T., & Hulych, M. (2021). Intercultural communicative competence in the development of students' linguistic skills. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S4), 1202–1226.
<https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5nS4.1741>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2018). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2019). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (Twelfth edition). NY, NY: Pearson.
- Munandar, M. I., & Ulwiyah, I. (2012). Intercultural approaches to the cultural content of Indonesia's high school ELT textbooks. *Cross-cultural Communication*, 8(5), 67-73.
- Qualitative Data Analysis A Methods Sourcebook (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman etc.) (z-lib.org).pdf*. (n.d.).
- Smakova, K., & Paulsrud, B. (2020). Intercultural Communicative Competence in English Language Teaching in Kazakhstan. *ERIC*, 30(Educational Research).
- Weda, S & Atmowardoyo, H & Rahman, F. (2021). Linguistic aspects in intercultural communication (IC) practices at a higher education institution in Indonesia. *XLinguae*. 14. 10.18355/XL.2021.14.02.06.
- Wello, M. B. (2017). *Intercultural communication at higher education context: portraits and practices*. 1(2).
- Zhu, H. (2014). *Exploring Intercultural Communication: Language in Action*. London: Routledge.