

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter delineates seven fundamental areas, involving the background of the study, research objective, research question, significance of the study, the scope of the study, clarification of terms, and an overview of the paper organization presented at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

In an era marked by unprecedented international interactions and technological advancements, cross-cultural communication has gained significant attention across multiple disciplines, including foreign language education. Since the late 20th century, foreign language teaching has evolved from a primary focus on linguistic skills to encompass broader communicative competence, including intercultural competence (Tolosa et al., 2018; Dervin, 2016). The forces of globalization, technological innovations, and the dissolution of national borders have redefined traditional language teaching objectives, highlighting the need for intercultural communication skills to navigate a globally interconnected society (Mostafaei Alaei & Nosrati, 2018).

Intercultural competence is crucial in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education as it fosters effective communication and collaboration across diverse cultural contexts, helping to prevent cultural misunderstandings and promote mutual respect (Deardorff, 2006). As English serves as a global lingua franca, EFL learners must develop intercultural competence alongside language proficiency to engage meaningfully with diverse cultures (Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2003). Scholars emphasize that foreign language teaching should enhance both linguistic and intercultural skills to prepare students for successful cross-cultural interactions (Byram, 1997; Chen, 2010; Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013; Sercu, 2005).

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Effective intercultural teaching integrates these competencies into the curriculum through strategies such as using authentic cultural materials, discussing cultural norms and values, and fostering an inclusive classroom environment that promotes empathy and open-mindedness (Sercu, 2005; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This approach not only enhances critical thinking and cultural awareness but also prepares students to thrive in a globalized world (Baker, 2015; Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013).

Globally, studies on intercultural teaching have revealed various challenges. In China, Ding (2013) and Gu (2016) identified obstacles such as untrained teachers and poorly designed curricula. Osman (2015) advocated for curriculum integration of intercultural competence in Saudi Arabia, while Vo (2017) found limited application of ICC-based approaches in Vietnam due to constraints and limited instructor knowledge. Similar issues were noted in Germany (Vieluf & Gobel, 2019), Italy (Agostinetto & Bugno, 2020), and the Netherlands (Roiha & Sommier, 2021), each highlighting gaps between theory and practice and the need for improved teacher training.

In Indonesia, a nation renowned for its cultural diversity, the implementation of intercultural teaching in EFL education presents unique challenges. The complexity of Indonesia's cultural landscape, with its 707 individual living languages, highlights significant linguistic and cultural diversity (Simons & Fennig, 2017). However, many indigenous and heritage languages struggle alongside the national language, Indonesian, raising concerns over language endangerment and calls for multilingual and multicultural education (Anderbeck, 2015; Hamied, 2012; Raihani, 2017; Zein, 2018).

Recent studies in Indonesia reveal that teacher education institutions often provide minimal preparation for intercultural competence (Widiati & Hayati, 2019). Pre-service teachers may understand ICC elements but infrequently implement them in practice due to constraints such as restricted time and curriculum limitations (Nindya,

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Widiati & El Khoiri, 2023). This situation is compounded by limited professional development opportunities and inadequate representation of cultural diversity in educational materials (Fitriyah, 2020; Ditasari & Prasetya, 2023; Kirkpatrick, 2012).

This study focuses on Lampung, a region characterized by its rich multicultural fabric, dominated by Javanese, Lampungese, Minangkabau, and Balinese communities. The complexity of Lampung's cultural landscape provides a unique context for examining intercultural teaching practices. By employing Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) framework, the study uses a novel methodological approach, combining surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to provide a comprehensive view of secondary school's perspectives and practices of intercultural teaching. Applying Liddicoat's principles of intercultural teaching and Borghetti's model, the research offers valuable insights into how these frameworks are implemented and highlights specific challenges and strategies for effective intercultural teaching in Lampung's diverse educational context.

This study aims to address the lack of research on intercultural teaching practices in Indonesian secondary schools. By examining the specific context of Indonesian classrooms, specifically the context of Lampung's secondary school classrooms, the study provides practical examples of intercultural language teaching in EFL secondary school settings. These teaching practices offer valuable perspectives for developing instructional programs for English language teachers, ultimately elevating their professional standing in intercultural teaching.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study examines intercultural teaching perspectives and practices in Lampung's diverse secondary schools, which include Javanese, Lampungese, Minangkabau, and Balinese communities. Using Byram's ICC framework and a combination of surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, this study explores secondary school teachers' perspectives and practices of intercultural teaching. The

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research aims to identify how intercultural teaching is conceptualized and implemented in secondary school context.

1.3 Research Questions

The problems explored in the study are formulated in the research questions as follows.

1. How do the teachers conceptualize intercultural teaching in EFL context?
2. How do the teachers implement intercultural teaching in their EFL classrooms?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant from two perspectives. Theoretically, the results of the study are expected to enrich the literature on intercultural teaching, specifically to contribute to the theoretical basis of a constructive paradigm on teachers' understandings of intercultural teaching and its impact on teachers' teaching practices. This study clarified the significance of the intercultural competence of both teachers and learners in addressing intercultural issues in the Indonesian secondary school context. This study shed light on clarifying the needs, demands, and restrictions of intercultural teaching in foreign language learning. Practically, the results of the study provide practical guidance for teachers and researchers to practice the teaching of EFL incorporating intercultural aspects. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of policy that emphasize the significance of both linguistic and intercultural aspects in Indonesian EFL teaching and learning.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study explored teachers' perspectives of intercultural teaching from their voices. This study observed how they perceive intercultural teaching as a concept and how they incorporated it into their teaching practices in classrooms.

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1.6 Clarification of Terms

Terms defined in this study are specified in intercultural teaching in EFL context, teachers' perspectives, and teachers' practices.

Intercultural Teaching in EFL Context

Intercultural teaching focuses on awareness and skills rather than knowledge-based teaching which emphasizes information about the target language culture and attracts learners' attention to compare and contrast both the target language culture and their own culture resulting in many cultural outcomes (Deardoff, 2006). Intercultural approaches to language teaching and learning prioritize the development of cultural understanding and the ability to use cultural knowledge to assist communication with the development of language competence and linguistic awareness as the main objectives for language learning (Liddicoat, 2004).

Intercultural teaching in this study refers to classroom activities in which teachers engage the students to examine, compare, and reflect on language and culture presented through the classroom learning activities to acquire knowledge of both their own and other cultures in EFL context.

Acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) involves the process of learning English in a country where it is not the primary language. The main objective of EFL instruction is to improve students' language abilities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The instructional strategies used in EFL classrooms have the goal of enhancing students' English proficiency, allowing them to understand and communicate effectively in various real-life situations outside of their native language environment (Crystal, 2003; Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

The primary goal of EFL instruction is to equip learners with the necessary language skills needed to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world. Understanding language and culture is essential for effective communication. Through

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a deep understanding of language and culture, EFL teaching and learning aim to empower learners with the necessary skills to navigate international settings, including academic institutions, professional workplaces, and travel experiences (Harmer, 2007; Byram, 1997).

Teachers' Perspectives

Conceptualization refers to the process of formulating theoretical frameworks that provide guidance for investigating educational phenomena. Kerlinger (1986) states that this process entails establishing clear definitions of educational concepts that may be systematically examined through empirical research. Conceptualization is a comprehensive term that refers to the procedure of formulating and refining concepts. Conceptualization, as described by Schwandt (2007), entails the development of well-defined, exact, and quantifiable concepts that can be examined or put into practice. It involves the process of conceptualizing and expressing ideas in order to develop a clear comprehension of a reality.

Perspectives are the personal attitudes, values, and beliefs that help teachers interpret and justify their decisions and actions in the classroom (Bennett, 1996; Posner, 1985; Rokeach, 1969). The individual's perspective shapes the lens through which teaching is conceptualized and interpreted. Teachers' perspectives shed light on the ways in which circumstances in schools and classrooms are perceived, evaluated, and acted upon by the teachers, depending on their individual backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences (Goodman in Bennet, 1996).

Teacher perspectives are influenced by personal views, practical knowledge, contextual influences, reflective practice, and cultural and social factors. Teachers' views and attitudes about teaching and learning, such as student capabilities, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum content, significantly influence their teaching

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methods (Pajares,1992). Their practical knowledge gained through their careers also influences their attitudes towards successful teaching practices and classroom management (Van Driel, Beijaard, and Verloop, 2001). The school environment, socio-economic issues, and administrative support also influence teachers' perspectives (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Reflective practice helps teachers understand their pedagogical practices and make informed decisions (Schön, 1992). Culturally relevant pedagogy aligns teachers' viewpoints with the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students, promoting an inclusive and productive learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Teacher perspectives in this study refer to teachers' personal attitudes, values, and beliefs which help them interpret and justify their classroom decisions and actions in their intercultural teaching. Teachers' perspectives in this study refer to their views or their conceptualization about intercultural teaching in EFL classrooms. Their utterances in responding to the questions addressed to them to conceptualize intercultural teaching are taken as their perspectives.

Teachers' Practices

Taking a cue from Alexander, Westbrook et al. (2013) define teaching practices as "the precise acts and conversations that take place during a class and that physically embody the approach and strategy". Teachers' practices in this study refer to the specific actions and discourse that take place within a lesson and that physically enact the intercultural teaching and strategy implementation in the EFL context (Watkins & Martimore, 1999; Alexander, 2001; Westbrook et al., 2013).

Teacher practice describes numerous activities, techniques, methods, and behaviors that teachers employ in the classroom to support learning, enhance student engagement and achievement, and promote overall student success. The pedagogical decisions that are made before, during, and after instructional activities are included in this set of decisions, reflecting both the art and science of teaching. Successful teacher

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practices encompass pedagogical content knowledge and competence, self-reflective methods, culturally sensitive teaching, constructivist approaches, instructional techniques and classroom administration, and technological incorporation.

Pedagogical content knowledge and competence is an essential element of successful teaching, as it combines pedagogy and topic knowledge to ensure that the subject matter is easily understood (Shulman, 1986). Reflective practice encompasses the process of introspection and analytical thought regarding instructional techniques and their influence on student learning outcomes (Schön, 1992). Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges and respects the cultural backgrounds of students, hence improving their level of involvement and academic performance (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The constructivist approaches, supported by Vygotsky and Piaget, perceive learning as an engaged and constructive process (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1970). Effective instructional strategies and classroom management techniques, such as establishing clear objectives, offering constructive feedback, and using cooperative learning methods, are crucial for establishing a learning-friendly environment (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001; and Evertson and Weinstein, 2006).

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

The present dissertation has been meticulously structured into a total of five distinct chapters. In the initial chapter, a comprehensive overview is provided regarding the contextual background of the study. This includes a thorough examination of the rationale behind conducting the research, as well as an exploration of the theoretical, practical, and pedagogical implications that the study aims to contribute to the field of intercultural teaching within the Indonesian EFL secondary school context. The research questions are established, the significance of the study is outlined, and the key terms are clarified.

The subsequent chapter delves into an extensive literature review that elucidates the theoretical foundations of the intercultural teaching concept and its corresponding

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pedagogical implementation. Chapter three is dedicated to the comprehensive examination and elucidation of the research methodology employed in this study. The primary focus of this chapter centers around the comprehensive elucidation of the research design, instrumentation, participants, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings followed by a comprehensive discussion of each identified outcome. Chapter five of the study encompasses the final section, which includes the conclusion, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

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