

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the general issue of the present study. It includes the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study, the significances of the study, clarification of the key terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of The Study

Geographical borders have become increasingly blurred due to globalization, where almost every country is connected. It includes an aspect of life that is social, cultural, economic, and educational. In the education field, globalization requires teachers to enhance greater understanding and awareness of other cultures, better transnational collaboration, reduce discrimination and racism, increasing the spread of technology and innovation, and higher standards of living across the globe (Lee, 2006). Cross-cultural understanding (CCU) refers to the essential ability to recognize, interpret and react to people and situations open to misunderstanding due to cultural differences (Niles, 1999). Teachers have to understand and respect the cultural diversity view. In this case, the teachers must have a good cultural understanding to understand students' differences.

Furthermore, English teaching, which aims to connect language and culture, requires teachers to teach students how to use the English language appropriately, such as using appropriate forms of speech in proper contexts (Dilg, 2003). Yet, most teachers still lack CCU because they do not have experience interacting with students from different backgrounds. As a result, teachers only focus on linguistic knowledge such as grammar. As a result, they must teach the learners about other aspects of language, such as culturally specific words that do not exist in their mother tongue. It will be pretty challenging for students with

minimal CCU background to recognize the words. Cross-cultural understanding (CCU) is the fundamental capacity to identify, comprehend, and respond to individuals and circumstances susceptible to misinterpretation due to cultural differences. The other aspect, for example, rules of style and speaking, refusing something, and students must comprehend culture to make them able to communicate with people from different cultures properly (Corbett, 2003).

By fostering cross-cultural understanding, teachers can set the goal of the English language not only linguistic features such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary but how the students can use English to communicate with people from different backgrounds. It includes recognizing other cultures that cannot be separated by language (Brown, 1994). Further, CCU can affect how teachers create and set the purpose of English teaching and classroom in the classroom. The teacher must know about educational aims and contexts, students, learning and evaluation, classroom management principles and strategies, and curriculum to design the teaching.

Teachers' ability to understand the case is general pedagogical knowledge (GPK). According to Konig (2011), General pedagogical knowledge is teachers' basic knowledge of teaching methods or instructional strategies; knowledge of learning environments; knowledge of classroom assessment; structure (lesson planning, learning objectives); and evaluation. It means teachers need to know related aspects of teaching to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly to help students map their ideas, relate one theory to another, and re-direct their thinking to create powerful learning. There are three main aspects of GPK. Those are learners' background, classroom management, and learning curriculum, in this case, English subject.

There are some ways to develop cross-cultural understanding and general pedagogical knowledge. One of them is international teaching practicum (ITP).

It is one of the teaching preparedness services offered by the education aims to prepare for teaching both locally and internationally, the necessity of developing teachers' international knowledge and skills (Zhao, 2009). ITP promoted by SEAMEO is Southeast Asian Teacher (SEA Teacher). The program allows teachers from ASEAN countries to teach throughout Southeast Asia. Since 2014, SEA Teachers has served one of the seven priority areas of 'Revitalizing Teacher Education' to improve the quality of education in Southeast Asia. The purpose of the SEA teachers program, is students are expected to have multicultural teaching experience and foster cross-cultural understanding. As a result, they can see cultural diversity in a broad perspective. According the goal of ITP, Teachers' experience abroad will bring learning experiences to improve their teaching, but research shows that these expectations are frequently not met. Several research claimed that ITP improve teachers' cross cultural understanding and teaching method, but some stated that ITP did not give big impact toward teachers' skill.

Previous research showed that international internships for pre-service teachers positively fostered cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, Cushner and Mahon (2002) studied the impact of international teaching internships on 75 American students who joined the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST) program. It showed that a student who teaches English has good cross-cultural understanding and is open-minded toward the differences in terms of habit and attitude, even if some cultural practices from the host country contrast with their culture.

Furthermore, Santoro, Drajadi, and Sarosa (2019) investigated Indonesian pre-service teachers who had a month of international teaching practice in Australia and Thailand. The pre-service teachers were discovered to have developed intercultural awareness. Both pre-service teachers had gained fundamental cultural competence. They could express their cultural perspectives

on various topics, such as how students from their respective cultures learn in an ELT classroom. Furthermore, they could extend their view through comparisons with other cultures. They also found common ground despite differences in lingua cultures and understood the possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.

Meanwhile, Czura (2018) compared teachers who did and did not participate in an international internship in Poland. The results show that, despite some minor differences in cross-cultural understanding between them. It demonstrated that their cross-cultural understanding was not enhanced by their international experience. Regardless of the amount of time spent abroad, the participants appeared to lack the practical skills required to develop this competence in the classroom. It can be said that to develop their cross-cultural understanding, they need a longer time in international teaching internships.

Previous research has revealed that there are still open questions about whether ITP can play a role in shaping pre-service teachers' CCU and GPK. This study, therefore, attempted to address the issue by investigating how SEA teachers' experiences contribute to the development of cross-cultural understanding and general pedagogical knowledge. By employing the framework of Abbe & Halpin (2009), this study explores the effect of ITP on the elements of CCU, namely knowledge, attitude, and skill. The framework of GPK (Konig, 2011) is mainly concerned with learners and learning, classroom management, and the general curriculum and instruction of the school in the host country.

1.2 Research Questions

Concerning the background and thesis statement, there are two research questions formulated in this study.

1. How do pre-service English teachers' ITP experiences foster their cross-cultural understanding?

2. What are the effects of ITP on their general pedagogical knowledge?

1.3 Objectives of The Research

Based on the questions above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To investigate the impacts of ITP in terms of cross-cultural understanding.
2. To explore the effect of ITP on their general pedagogical knowledge.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is hopefully useful for both theoretically and practically:

1. Theoretically

The result of the study is expected to support the theory of experience teaching abroad will give a good impact on cross cultural understanding and improving their teaching practice.

2. Practically

- a. The result of the study can be used as a reference for lecturers and teachers in evaluating the way of teaching English as international language.
- b. The result of the study is expected to be used as guidance for further researchers who want to conduct the research related to SEA teachers' experience in cultivating their cross cultural understanding and general pedagogical knowledge.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study investigates pre-service English teachers' internship exchange from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand under SEAMEO, WHICH cooperating with schools and universities in Southeast Asia countries, exploring the outcome of pre-service English teachers toward their cross-cultural understanding. This research was limited to only Pre-Service teachers who joined this program in the eight batches. The batch

was chosen considering the most recent one, so the participants in this research may provide the most updated information.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms used in this research are defined as follows:

a. Cross-Cultural understanding

Cross-cultural Understanding (CCU) is concerned with comparing different cultures. In this case CCU refers to the basic ability of pre-service teachers to recognize, interpret and correctly react to people, incidences or situations that are open to misunderstanding due to cultural differences (Abbe & Halpin, 2009)

b. General Pedagogical Knowledge

General pedagogical knowledge refers to knowledge about teaching and learning that is not topic-specific, such as learning theory, curriculum, classroom management, and lesson plan (Blömeke & Delaney 2014). In this study general pedagogical knowledge refers to how pre-service teachers foster their knowledge of teaching and how they create effective teaching in the host country.

c. International Teaching Practicum

ITP is an international teaching practice where pre-service teachers can practice outside their home country. ITP is seen as an opportunity for potential teachers to improve their worldviews and increase their career development (Kabilan, 2013).

1.7 Thesis Organization

The organization of the study is presented in five chapters.

- a. Chapter one shows the background of the study, research question, objective of the research, significance of the study, the scope of the

study, definition in terms, and the organization of the proposal's chapter.

- b. Chapter two reviews the information of SEA teachers program and the literature related, also includes the issue of pre-service English teachers, the definition, concept, and framework of cross cultural understanding.
- c. Chapter three discusses the method that will be used in the research. It includes the design, site, participants, data collection technique, and data analysis.
- d. Chapter Four illustrates and analyzes the data collected to provide an answer to the research questions.
- e. Chapter Five summarizes the findings, specifies how these answer the research questions, points out the study's main limitations and provides suggestions for further research.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the introduction of the research. It includes a background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, and the significance and definition in terms. The following chapter reviews the relevant literature of the study involving the concept SEA teachers program, including the aim and the goal of its program and how their experience as pre-service teachers cultivate their cross-cultural understanding and its effect on their teaching practice.