

Teachers' Perspectives on the Integration of Culture and EFL

Tryanti Abdulrahman^{1*}

Novi Rusnarty Usu²

Zulkifli Tanipu²

¹*As-Syafi'iyah Islamic University, Jakarta, Indonesia*

²*State University of Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia*

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This study is aimed to investigate teachers' opinion and their attitudes toward the integration of culture and English language education. More specifically, this study explores how and to what extent these opinions and attitudes are reflected in their classroom applications. Data were collected from 31 teachers of English Department at one of universities in Indonesia using questionnaire, interview, and observation. Findings revealed that teachers were willing to support the language and cultural objectives, but they had conflicts when having to prioritize language teaching or cultural teaching. Teachers informed that limited class time, curriculum requirements, lack of cultural issues in the textbooks, and their lack of cultural knowledge were the main constraints for the integration of cultural teaching into EFL. This study shows the importance of integrating culture & intercultural dimension into EFL instruction in order to help facilitate both language learning and effective communication.

Keywords: culture, intercultural competence, English education, and foreign language

Studi ini meneliti pendapat guru-guru dan sikap mereka terhadap penggabungan budaya dan pembelajaran bahasa. Lebih jelasnya, studi ini melihat bagaimana dan seberapa besar pendapat dan sikap ini tercermin dalam pelaksanaannya di kelas. Data dikumpulkan dari 31 dosen di jurusan bahasa Inggris di salah satu universitas di Indonesia dengan menggunakan questionnaire, wawancara, dan observasi. Temuan studi ini menunjukkan bahwa guru-guru memiliki semangat untuk mendukung tujuan pembelajaran bahasa dan budaya, tetapi mereka menemukan masalah ketika harus memprioritaskan pengajaran bahasa atau budaya. Masalah tersebut adalah terbatasnya waktu di kelas, tuntutan kurikulum, kurangnya isu budaya dalam buku teks, dan kurangnya pengetahuan mereka akan pengetahuan budaya. Studi ini menunjukkan pentingnya integrasi dimensi budaya dan antar-budaya ke dalam kelas bahasa asing untuk membantu siswa meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa dan komunikasi efektif.

* Corresponding author. Email: tryanti.ar@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The emerging trend of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) education in recent years is a movement from a focus on language components such as vocabulary and grammar to a focus on the development of intercultural communicative competence such as the ability to communicate in the target language in real-life situations. The main objective of language learning is no longer defined firmly in terms of the acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language. Instead, teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competences (Sercu, 2006). Therefore, introducing an intercultural perspective into the EFL context has become vital.

Soon, Indonesians must be ready to be a part of ASEAN Community 2015 and ASEAN Free Trade Area in which everyone has to use English as an intermediary language among countries that have different cultures. As an international language, English has a vital role to open the relation with global community. To confront the situation above, English teachers need to increase students' language skills and cultural awareness (Sun, 2013; Tan, 2016; Wiseman & Koster, 1993). Indonesian global participation will depend on students' abilities to interact with the world community both inside and outside the country. For that reason, learning a foreign language is not only learning how to communicate, but also discovering "how much flexibility the target language allows learners to manipulate grammatical forms, sounds, and meanings, and to reflect upon, or even ignore, socially accepted norms at work both in their own or the target culture, thus requiring some sort of inter-cultural awareness" (Council of Europe, 2001).

International and intercultural communication will always lead us to encounter factors of cultural differences. Common differences usually faced in every language are intonation, appropriate topic of conversation, expressions, and speech act functions such as apologies, suggestions, complaints, or refusal. Therefore, incorporating cultural matters into EFL is obviously essential since language and culture are inseparable, as Brown (1994) emphasizes that "... a language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language. The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p. 164). Similarly, Byram (2008) highlights that language teaching is culture teaching.

What is Culture?

Moran (2001) defines culture as "the great achievement of people as reflected in their history, social institutions, and works of art, architecture, music and literature" (p. 4), while Valdes (as cited in Baker, 2003) state that "every language lesson is about something and that something is cultural." Trinovitch (1980) explains culture as follows:

An all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and technical behavior of human beings with their verbal and nonverbal systems of expressive behavior starting from birth, and this 'all-inclusive system' is acquired as the native culture. This process, which can be referred to as "socialization", prepares the individual for the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society in which he lives. (p. 550)

Synthesizing the abovementioned definitions, it can be concluded that culture is a system and a context that rule a group of people to think, feel, behave, and connect one to another. Culture is shared and learned by people in the same group and can be transferred and adapted by another group of people. In relation to EFL, it can be implied that when learning English, a student participates to some extent in the culture of the native speakers of the language being learned.

Intercultural Competence

UNESCO (2013) defines intercultural competence as “having adequate relevant knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures” (p.16). Byram (cited in Holmes, 2009) emphasizes that one way to divide intercultural competences into separate skills is to distinguish between knowledge of the culture, skills of interpreting/relating, skills of discovery/interaction, attitudes of curiosity/openness, and critical cultural awareness. Similarly, Meyer (1991) states that intercultural competence is the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes, and expectations of representative of foreign cultures. Moreover, Byram and Morgan (1994) state that those who understand more than one social identity and national culture and who are capable of engaging in interaction with people from various cultural context are called intercultural speakers. From these definitions, it can be inferred that intercultural competence is the ability to communicate successfully with people of other group or culture. This ability involves emotional competence and cultural sensitivity as basic skills that need to be obtained or developed.

Intercultural dimensions in language teaching.

Recently, EFL has seen a growing frequency of references to the cultural dimension. There has been a development in the purposes and emphases of EFL, from linguistic and communicative competence to intercultural competence. As proposed by Byram (1997), intercultural competence not only requires the development of language proficiency as stated in communicative competence but also emphasizes an equally important ability of intercultural understanding, interpreting, and mediating. Corbett (2003) argues that teaching intercultural competence is intended to equip students with the strategies to observe and make sense of the target culture and help them acquire cultural skills which allow them to view different cultures from a perspective of informed understanding in order to achieve effective and appropriate intercultural communication

It is believed that language teachers should be adequately familiar with the cultures associated with the foreign language they teach and the connections they have with these cultures. Numerous researchers suggest that teachers’ intercultural competence is vital to teach a demographically changing population of students particularly in foreign language classroom. For example, Gobel and Helmke (2010) in a study of the importance of teachers’

intercultural experience and the usefulness of precise instructional directives found that more highly intercultural experienced teachers are more likely to include cultural awareness, cultural meaning, understanding and intercultural issue into classrooms activity. Teachers' intercultural experience can encourage teachers to make more intense intercultural contacts with their students.

According to Byram (2008), the components of intercultural competence are knowledge, skills, and attitudes, supplemented by values that are part of one's multiple social identities. The model of intercultural competence consists of: 1) attitudes and values which form the foundation of intercultural competence, 2) knowledge which means not primarily the knowledge of particular objective culture but rather subjective culture which gives the direct insight into the worldview, functioning, process and practices of difference cultural groups and intercultural interaction, and 3) skills of interpreting and relating or the ability to interpret events from another culture to explain and relate them to events from one culture, skills of discovery and interaction.

Integrating culture in EFL may be vital and compulsory. This insight has led foreign language research to develop an interest in cultural awareness and intercultural competence. Currently, the idea of teaching culture is nothing new to EFL teachers. Cultural elements have practically been included even from the early phase of EFL teaching. However, a number of areas need to be investigated in order to further develop our understanding of culture in the EFL context.

One of fundamental areas that needs to be dealt with is related to teachers' perspectives of the importance of culture that will hopefully provide insight to whether or not culture must be taught in the EFL classroom. As the first step of integrating culture into language learning, it is crucial to examine what teachers believe, think, and do in the EFL classroom. Investigating what teachers bring to the classroom in terms of culture is essential to find what kind of training or in-service programs are needed to prepare future teachers to increase culturally sensitive, responsive, and inter-culturally competent learners. There is a need to examine culture, intercultural competence, and culture teaching in EFL. This study, therefore, deals with this issue by posing three research questions: (1) How do English teachers perceive English language education? (2) To what extent do English teachers support cultural objectives in teaching, including the objective to promote cultural understanding and the acquisition of intercultural competence? and (3) Are teachers' perspectives coherent with their teaching practice?

METHODS

Thirty one EFL teachers of English Department at one of universities in Indonesia participated in this study. These teachers were between 28-58 years old with 3-25 years of teaching experience. Questionnaire designed to profile English teachers' current professional self-concept and point of views regarding the integration of culture and EFL was adopted. Observation also conducted to see how teachers implemented cultural teaching into EFL, and in-depth interview was done to explore teachers' perspectives. Questionnaire asked two teachers' perspectives regarding the objectives of foreign language education and cultural content, language and culture, and resources. Likert-type scale was adopted. A four-point scale (very important (VI) = 4, slightly

important (SI) = 3, important (I) = 2, not important (NI) = 1) was used for the first point, while a five-point scale (strongly agree (SA) = 5, agree (A) = 4, neutral (N) = 3, disagree (D) = 2, strongly disagree (SD) = 1).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed that EFL teachers defined the objectives for language teaching mainly in terms of linguistic competence since the highest percentage was in the option of very important and somewhat important. The main concern for teachers was to encourage students to learn English, which could be linked to teachers' perspective of the level of motivation to learn. Teachers were also concerned with promoting the acquisition of English proficiency through skills in order to use English for practical purposes, which supported the importance of linguistic objectives, as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: Teachers' perspectives regarding the objectives of foreign language education

No	Questions	1 NI	2 SI	3 I	4 VI
Linguistic dimension					
1	Foster students' interest in English language learning.	0 %	%	20%	80 %
2	Help students to acquire listening and speaking skills.	0 %	0 %	20 %	80 %
3	Help students to acquire reading and writing skills.	0 %	0 %	47 %	67 %
4	Foster students' self-learning ability for English language learning.	0 %	0 %	33 %	66 %
Cultural dimension					
5	Promote students' understanding of foreign cultures.	0 %	13%	27 %	60 %
6	Help students to develop an ability to communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds	0 %	20 %	0 %	80 %
7	Promote students' interest in foreign cultures.	0 %	7 %	27 %	66 %
8	Promote students' understanding of Indonesian culture.	7 %	13 %	20 %	60 %

In terms of cultural dimension, results revealed that teachers gave priority to the teaching aspects related to helping students develop an ability to communicate with people from other cultural background than to promote students understanding of and interest in foreign cultures. Moreover, the majority of teachers stated that promoting students' understanding of Indonesian culture was important and very important. Surprisingly, 7% of the teachers assumed that Indonesian culture was not important to learn. From the result above, it can be concluded that the participating teachers believed that linguistic dimension was more important than cultural dimension. Most teachers thought that language proficiency had a major role in achieving effective communication rather than cultural dimension.

Based on the open ended question and interview asking about teachers' demographic data, educational background, and their everyday language teaching experience, results

revealed that the participating teachers demonstrated average intercultural competence. Among the dimensions of intercultural competence the teachers had, the highest level was attitudes and the lowest level was knowledge. Teachers who taught such courses as Cross Cultural Understanding, Drama, and Linguistics showed higher intercultural competence than those who taught skill courses. In addition, those who had overseas experience showed higher level of the knowledge dimension of intercultural competence compared to those who had not been abroad.

Furthermore, the teachers who thought that promoting students' interest in foreign cultures were important was those who often touched upon topics related to English and Indonesia cultures and often applied intercultural competence in their teaching. A positive correlation was found between how frequently teachers engaged in intercultural competence teaching and how they perceived cultural teaching in EFL communications. Based on the interview, the majority of teachers was supportive of teaching English cultures in their class and believed that cultures of other countries should be touched upon as well. It is interesting to note that, instead of presenting an objective and realistic image of the culture and society of English speaking countries, most participating teachers believed that they had to present a positive image of their culture. The results indicated that teachers have positive attitude toward the integration of English language and its cultures. Most teachers agreed with the inclusion of both English and Indonesian cultures in their teaching in order to help students understand the differences between the two cultures and act properly in particular situation or cultural context.

On the other hand, there was a small number of teachers who perceived that promoting students' understanding of foreign culture was somewhat important. In the follow-up interviews, they explained that completing the teaching materials for English language proficiency was more important than explaining about culture. The practical constraints for not including more issues relating to English cultures were time limitation for each session and lack of teacher's knowledge to link the material with foreign cultures.

It is also interesting to note that though Indonesian cultures and English speaking countries' cultures were compared and discussed frequently by more than half of the participating teachers, they were mainly approached from the Indonesian cultural perspective. This is shown by 80% of the teachers who reported that they included Indonesian culture in their classroom. 7% the teachers did not often engage students to discuss how their own values and beliefs influenced the way they perceived other cultures and vice versa. Teachers who stated that promoting students' understanding of Indonesian culture was somewhat important and not important explained that cultural teaching practice was not an important component or a regular focus in their classes. This was consistently reflected by the low frequency of touching upon cultural topics, applying intercultural competence teaching, and applying instructional activities.

Another interesting finding in this study was that teachers' educational degree had an impact on their intercultural competence and beliefs about cultural teaching. Teachers who had a Master's or a doctoral degree in linguistics, woman study, multicultural education, and American studies were found to have a higher intercultural competence. This group of teachers also considered cultural teaching was important. During the interviews, for instance, a female teacher told a story that happened when studying in Australia, and a male teacher shared his

experience regarding cultural adaption in Japan. In terms of teachers' perspectives on cultural content, language and culture and resources. The following table presents the results:

Table 2: Teachers' perspective on culture content, language and culture, and resources.

No	Questions	5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 D	1 SD
Cultural Content						
1	It is important for EFL Lecturer to include aspects of the target language's culture as part of their classroom teaching in any subjects	26,7 %	53 %	6,7 %	0 %	13 %
2	Lecturer needs to include cultural information about our native country or English language culture in the classroom in any subjects	33%	33 %	20 %	6,7 %	7 %
3	Lecturer must include cultural content which concern with covert culture, e.g. values, beliefs, and attitudes	40 %	33 %	13 %	7 %	7 %
4	Lecturer must include cultural content which concern with factual/overt culture, e.g. food, music, people, housing in classroom teaching	20 %	47 %	20 %	7 %	7 %
Language and Culture						
5	Lecturer teaches cultural aspects of language where English differs from Indonesian, e.g. greetings, shake-hands, use of first/last names, giving/responding to compliments	40 %	40 %	6,7 %	0 %	13 %
6	Lecturer provides contrastive cultural examples for students For example, 'In Indonesian you say "Senang bertemu anda" where in English we say "Nice to meet you" in introductions.	33 %	47 %	6,7 %	7 %	6 %
Published Materials and Online Resources						
	Lecturer must use English textbook in class	13%%	67 %%	13%%	7 %	0 %
	Lecturer must use textbooks for any subjects that include cultural information	0% %	67 %	27 %	7 %	0 %
	Having had the learning sources (English culture) available online and in the library could have aided my teaching	27 % %	75 %	0 %	7 %	13 %
	Generally, EFL Textbooks that we used in classroom have cultural content	0%	60 %	33 %	7 %	0 %

The data revealed that the majority of teachers perceived cultural teaching objectives from a truly intercultural perspective, and the vast majority of teachers thought the importance

of including aspects of target language culture (TLC) as part of their classroom teaching in any subjects. As a follow up questions in the interview session, some teachers expressed their opinion, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

“I think including culture content in teaching language especially English is important.

“Yes, in every course, unintentionally I always talk about and think the culture to Indonesia. For example, the culture concept of time between western vs eastern, other academic cultures. I strongly believe my students not only enjoy to learn that but it give.

“In some courses, cultural information will be important, for example: speaking subject, when we have to explain about greetings, we need to compare about English greetings and Indonesian greetings”

During the interviews, participants were asked about types of cultural teaching objectives they personally set for their classes and their cultural teaching goals. It appeared that teachers demonstrated a somewhat different set of beliefs and core assumptions regarding cultural teaching objectives. Very few teachers defined their teaching objective from a multi-faceted intercultural perspective, though most of them mentioned, to varying degrees, some aspects of intercultural competence teaching. The data clearly showed that the majority of teachers agreed with the importance to include aspect of TLC as part of their classroom teaching in any subjects. This number was consistent with the interview result in which most teachers incorporated culture in their classroom with different amount of content and time.

Based on the data, teachers' cultural teaching objectives were analyzed, grouped and discussed by the following themes: the knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and skills dimension of intercultural competence, following the intercultural dimension in language teaching theory by Byram (2008)

Knowledge Dimension

The main cultural teaching objective is to foster students' knowledge about and understanding of the target cultures (Byram, 2008). However, the knowledge and skills of own cultures are also important to learn foreign cultures. For instance, one of female teachers pointed out the two objectives in this regard and explained why they were important. First, cultural teaching is to promote students' understanding of differences between Eastern cultures particularly Indonesia and Western cultures. Second, to inform students the reason why, for example, American, British, and Australian people talk more straightforwardly while Indonesians tend to give long background information before stating the main point. This might be due to different patterns of organizing and presenting ideas. Therefore, the knowledge of own culture is a must for teachers before they introduce foreign cultures to students as cultural teaching is viewed as promoting the acquisition of a body of knowledge both local and foreign cultures. For this reason, English teachers are expected to provide a general cultural background relating to the text, people's

values, and beliefs, and to develop an understanding of social interaction among people in the target cultures. Additionally, the data show that most teachers included cultural content which concern with factual culture such as food, music, people and housing in classroom teaching. Very often, teachers assigned a project for students to explore foreign food, music and tradition to provide students with the experience dealing with foreign cultures. From Table 2, it can be seen that EFL teachers most strongly supported the cultural content which concerns with covert culture such as beliefs and attitudes.

When the teachers were asked their opinion regarding language and culture, a number of teachers revealed a keen interest in promoting Indonesian culture and TL culture in the classroom in any subject. Conversely, the rest of teachers consider that including cultural information about Indonesian culture in EFL teaching is somewhat important. This percentage is quite interesting to explore in depth through interview since mastering local culture is also important to know and understand other cultures. In this dimension, teachers were also asked whether they teach cultural aspects of language where English differs from Indonesian, e.g. greetings, shake-hands, use of first/last names, giving/responding to compliments, etc. as part of their classes. Most teachers thought that they need to include cultural aspect of language, as can be seen in the excerpts below:

“Yes I do. For example in asking private question (age, salary) it is different culture between English and Indonesia.”

“Only in some subjects, for example in IC class we compare culture of Indonesia and western culture”

“Yes. In some course, it is needed to teach about cultural aspect of language.”

“Yes. If the material about the culture, I always explain about the difference between Indonesia and English culture”

“Yes. Especially when we do the CCU teaching (CCU Course) for example, about kissing western vs. eastern misconception often occur derived from miscommunication and misinterpretation”

“Yes, I taught my students about different way to respect people for ex. In Australia it is common one when we address older people by names not by tittle while in Indonesia it is impolite”

The statements above confirm that most teachers taught cultural aspects of language and the differences between Indonesian and foreign culture in a various degree of application. Some teachers applied cultural teaching only in a specific subject and the others applied it every time she taught and found topics related to cultural issues. Regarding the issue of knowledge dimension, teachers explained that students needed to be familiar with not only knowledge about certain culture but also knowledge of how group of people socialize, function and involve

in intercultural interaction. In cross cultural understanding subject, teachers frequently used intercultural videos on YouTube to show students examples of how a group of people from one country visits another country and interacts with local people. This means that teachers have promoted knowledge dimension to students in their teaching activity. This finding confirms the Byram's et al. (2002) theory of knowledge of social groups and their products & practices in one's own and in interlocutor's country.

Attitudes Dimension

In this study, attitudes dimension was represented from questionnaire and interview. One of the male teachers who had experience joining the youth exchange program also discussed his cultural teaching objectives in terms of affecting students' attitudes. He explained that his brief stay in Japan had opened his eyes to the culture and world. Therefore, he always motivates his students' interest and curiosity to study abroad and explore the foreign cultures and the unfamiliar in person. Similarly, another male teacher who experienced study in Australia for two years stated that in his speaking class he promoted students' interest in cultures through the process of learning, which would become an internal motivation for further exploring the cultures in the future beyond their language classes. In some cases, teachers felt they were being assisted in explaining about cultural differences when they taught a class with some former exchange students being there. These students helped other students understand the cultural issues by sharing their experience. This is an excellent strategy to acquire knowledge about another country. Since not all students have exposure to different culture, they benefit information from their classmates' experience, teachers' explanation supported with the use of technology in classroom.

Awareness Dimension

The focus of awareness dimension is on the process of cultural learning in which students talk about their attitudes and opinion. This phase requires teachers to share their psychological self-awareness and awareness of others (Byram et al., 2002). The authors go on to say that this does not imply that teachers should not take role as psychologists but they must try to attain basic principles of teaching once risk taking and emotions are involved. Through interview, the majority of teachers admit that often times they skipped the cultural part in classroom. This is a new thing for some teachers who conventionally focus on cognitive knowledge and skills. Regrettably, culture is often disregarded because the analysis phase of instructional design is one of the most commonly skipped phases. In line with this, Thomas, Mitchell, and Joseph (2002) remind us that "culture is so much a part of the construction of knowledge that it must underpin not only the analysis phase but all phases of the design process" (p. 41). This implies that teachers need to continue to familiarize themselves with the students' cultures throughout the enactment phase and even through the assessment phase.

On the other hand, there are some teachers like teachers of CCU and drama subjects who are more accustomed to cultural teaching. Group discussion and collaborative work among such teachers could be very helpful in order to realize both language and culture objective in

teaching. These kinds of teachers frequently discuss the knowledge and attitudes and intend to engage students through cultural teaching. Moreover, some teachers stated that they also provided students with the chances to extend their perspective. They commented that cultural teaching should be an approach to promote open-mindedness in worldwide outlook and perspective. It was expected that students would gradually develop a critical mind with open-minded thinking, hence encouraging divergent and international perspectives.

Skills Dimension

Skills are just as important as attitudes and knowledge, and teachers can concentrate as much on skills as upon knowledge (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). A few teachers mentioned the objective of cultural teaching from the skills dimension, yet not in a specific way. Teachers showed that cultural teaching should assist to develop students' intercultural communication skills and appropriate behaviors, as stated by a lecturer below:

“Students must have skills to communicate with foreigners particularly for English major students, I think, in their mind they should have a clear idea or standard to behave appropriately when dealing with foreigners.

Additionally, some teachers stated that their teaching approach was very various and mainly involved learning skills, vocabulary, analyzing sentences, and explaining grammar. Cultural teaching was not regularly included in their class. Language learning still dominates EFL instruction both in terms of time spent and content learned, though the focus has been changing from teaching the language as a mere linguistic code to the training of literacy skills, but in both cases cultural teaching is not emphasized. Teachers believed that it is important to acquire skills of finding out new knowledge and integrating it with what they already have. This confirms the theory of skills of discovery and interaction by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002). When the teachers were asked whether they include cultural content by planning or introduced it spontaneously, teachers have various answer:

“Sometimes it has planned before and sometimes it is introduced spontaneously. For example: If I have to teach the topic introduction (people) then I prepared the culture/ habit/ way how to introduce someone in western culture”

“Yes. It is planned, especially when we do the CCU teaching (CCU Course) for example, about kissing western vs. eastern misconception often occur derived from miscommunication and misinterpretation”

“It is planned, for example when I teach about sociolinguistic it cannot be avoided to also speak about culture. By planning, mutually I have planned what topic and subtopic need to be discussed in the classroom. I also asked the students to be engaged actively in the discussion which is planned before.”

“It is spontaneously, depend on the topic discussion for example when we discuss about literature we talk about society culture customs people behavior”

Cultural Teaching Resources

As cultural teaching need to be implemented in the English teaching, teaching resources both actual book and online resources have played a very important role in the course of teaching and learning. Therefore, there needs to be the availability of resources to introduce students to the cultures of different countries and regions to foster students’ cultural awareness and competence of intercultural communication. When asked whether they found any cultural aspects in the published texts that they used in teaching, most teachers reported that English textbooks used in their classroom generally had cultural contents. Most teachers reported that using available online resources and actual books in the library could help their teaching.

However, there were about 20% of the teachers who did not perceive the benefit of having the available resources. One of the reasons why teachers did not use the textbook was because the focus of most available textbooks was not culture. Teachers also admitted that there was only a few collections of books in the library, and sometimes most students still found difficulty to understand the content of textbooks, as stated below:

“It is not sufficient. Thus the use of online sources is really recommended for our students to improve their knowledge regard to culture and language learn”

“Some of English course need textbook that involves the understanding of cultural content, but it is not included in textbooks or not sufficiently provided there.”

Teachers indicated that the amount of time they usually spent to cultural teaching ranges from five to ten minutes per class session lasting between 30 to 40 minutes. This is consistent with the findings in survey data which suggest that cultural teaching practices, including both cultural topics and instructional activities, were not frequently addressed or applied in the language classroom. Teachers expressed different opinions toward how much time they should spend in cultural teaching. One of the female teachers who spent around five minutes in each meeting session believed that this was a sufficient amount of time for cultural teaching, as stated below:

“The inclusion of cultural teaching should aim to serve the teaching of our Drama class, for which the acquisition of culture is not a primary objective” and she further explained how she came to this understanding through her initial teaching experience.”

Constraints in Cultural Integration

The teachers reported some limitations about the integration of cultural teaching into EFL classes: limited class time, students’ interest and motivation, the final project, curriculum requirements, a lack of cultural issues in the textbooks, and teachers’ lack of cultural knowledge. In most

cases, these constraints occur to various degrees and impact teachers' decision on when and to what degree cultural teaching is carried out. Specifically, teachers stated they felt forced by the requirements of curriculum, which according to them is more linguistically oriented. The attention to grammatical points left no time for culture teaching. Some teachers mentioned the limited time they had and the materials she needed to cover. Another reason was due to a lack of appropriate material. The findings are also consistent with the questionnaire data showing that textbooks used by teachers did not include enough cultural information. They asked for additional materials and suggested activities specifically designed for teaching culture.

The survey data suggest that among the four dimensions of intercultural competence, teachers' cultural knowledge has the most impact on their cultural teaching practices. The interview data show that teachers who established wide-ranging cultural knowledge appeared to carry out more adequate cultural teaching from an intercultural perspective. Yet, some teachers also faced the problem of lack of preparation for teaching culture, of training regarding the culture of English language, and of how culture can be integrated into EFL and be effectively taught in the classroom. Similarly, Çelik (2005) illustrates that English language teachers with exceptional mastery of prescriptive rules (i.e., syntax) in the language still find a problem, let alone language learners at lower levels.

Most lectures showed a lack of confidence and stated that they had only limited contacts with the foreign culture. They reported that a lack of cultural knowledge influenced the integration of cultural teaching into EFL. It can be inferred that cultural teaching was challenging in two ways. First, it is difficult for teachers who do not have overseas experience or those who lack breadth of knowledge about the target cultures to integrate cultural teaching into language teaching, as they are not sensitive enough to find out cultural themes and issues emerging in the textbook and make connections between culture and language. Second, it is very challenging for teachers to cover both linguistic and cultural objectives within 180 minutes of classroom session in 16 meetings in one semester.

CONCLUSIONS

Today's multicultural world requires language learners to develop both their linguistic competences and their intercultural communicative competences to overcome both linguistic and cultural barriers they may encounter in interaction with people from other cultures. This study has critically analyzed teachers' perspectives on culture and English language teaching due to the importance of intercultural communicative competence in intercultural communication. The findings were generally consistent between the survey and interview data. The findings in the interviews indicated that most teachers considered cultural teaching as being important in EFL education. Teachers' perceived cultural teaching objectives not only reflect some aspects of intercultural dimensions but also include students' development as a whole person. Although cultural teaching is considered important, it is not a regular focus in the EFL classrooms. Teachers point out that limited class time, curriculum requirements, a lack of cultural issues in the textbooks, and teachers' lack of cultural knowledge, were the main constraints for the integration of cultural teaching into EFL classes.

It is interesting to consider our findings in the light of cultural teaching proposed by the Indonesian National Curriculum (KKNI). The implication of this research is that teachers are expected to incorporate culture in the EFL education. They also need to be involved in some training programs that establish their spirit and willingness to develop their exposure to other cultures and to boost their confidence to teach intercultural competence. Thus, teachers could be able to prepare students for life in today's multicultural society.

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