

# **Cultivating Local Culture Awareness by Using Inside-Outside Fishbowl to the Students of Tridinanti University Palembang**

**Ridha Ilma**

(ridhailma@univ-tridinanti.ac.id)

**Jenny Elvinna Manurung**

(Jenny.EM@univ-tridinanti.ac.id)

English Study Program, Tridinanti University Palembang

Local culture provides a sense of identity for rural communities and residents. This study aimed to describe the improvement of local culture awareness by applying inside-outside fishbowl to the students of Tridinanti University Palembang. Seventeen people of sixth semester students of English study program became the sample of the study. The researchers used a classroom action research as a method of study. This study consisted of two cycles; cycle I and cycle II. Test and observation were used to collect the data. Data calculation showed that there was a significant improvement on students' local culture awareness, the mean score in cycle I was 67.47 and the mean score in cycle II was 82.35. In other words, the local culture awareness was improved by using inside-outside fishbowl.

*Keywords: local culture awareness, inside-outside fishbowl*

*Budaya lokal memberikan pengertian identitas bagi masyarakat pedalaman maupun setempat. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peningkatan kesadaran berbudaya lokal dengan menerapkan Inside-Outside Fishbowl terhadap mahasiswa Universitas Tridinanti Palembang. Sampel studi ini menggunakan 17 orang mahasiswa semester enam prodi pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Tim Peneliti menggunakan penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) sebagai metode penelitian. Studi ini terdiri dari dua siklus; yaitu siklus I dan II. Dalam pengumpulan data, studi ini menggunakan tes dan observasi. Hasil penghitungan data menunjukkan bahwa adanya peningkatan yang signifikan terhadap kesadaran budaya lokal mahasiswa, nilai skor mean pada siklus I yaitu 67.47 dan pada siklus II yaitu 82.35. Dengan kata lain, kesadaran budaya lokal mahasiswa meningkat dengan menggunakan inside-outside fishbowl.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It has been widely known that learning a language cannot be separated by learning its culture. Culture can be defined as a process which is transmitted from generation to generation through learning is known as culture. It helps to shape and influence our perceptions and behaviors to communicate and response to other people (Sue & Sue, 2003). In order to communicate to other people from different countries, people need a language used and understood by many people; it is English as lingua franca as a means to hinder misunderstanding and some gaps occurs during the communication. One of the obstacles exists in the process of communication is cultural differences. Such kind of differences exist in every language such as the place of silence, tone of voice, appropriate topic of conversation, and expressions as speech act functions (e.g. apologies, suggestions, complains, refusals, etc.). Bearing the above point, it can be stated that a language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language (Cakir, 2006). In addition, cultural awareness becomes central when someone has to interact with people from other cultures. People see, interpret and evaluate things in a different ways. What is considered an appropriate behavior in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another one. Misunderstandings arise when someone uses his meanings to make sense of reality. Summarily, by exploring the elements of culture learning it raise students' awareness of cultural differences and improve their intercultural communicative competence (Frank, 2013).

According to Brown (1994, p. 170) culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language –the means for communication among members of a culture- is the most visible and available expression of that culture. And so a person's world view, self-identity, and systems of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another. In addition, cultural awareness defines as developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group. This usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values. Increasing cultural awareness means to see both the positive and negative aspects of cultural differences. Therefore, the role of cultural awareness become important aspect of ELT like teaching methods and approaches. It is noticed that teaching English as a Foreign language does not involve the knowledge of English structures, phonology and idiomatic expressions, but also features and characteristics of cultures (Tantri, 2013). There are two kinds of culture awareness, they include local and target culture awareness. However, the local culture awareness was the focus in this study. Since the writers intended the students to have a sense of identity for rural community and residence, in this case particularly Indonesia culture.

Interaction between students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be enhanced within university teaching. Increasing interaction among domestic students in teaching and learning contexts has a number of benefits, which include developing cognitive skills, effective communications skills and cultural awareness. Hence, the classroom discussion based on these considerations (elements of culture like the belief, values, customs, communication styles, etc.) can foster an atmosphere that encourages EFL students to think

about their own culture and make connection across culture while studying English. To create a sphere of interculturality in the classrooms, Inside-Outside Fishbowl is able to be used.

According to Elizabeth (2005), the fishbowl is a teaching strategy that helps students practice being contributors and listeners in a discussion. Fishbowl is a way to organize a medium-to large-group discussion that promotes student engagement and can be used to model small-group activities and discussions. Fishbowls have been used by group work specialists and in counseling. Fishbowl takes its name from the way seats are organized with an inner circle and outer circle. Typically, there are three or five seats in the inner circle with the remaining seats or desks forming a larger outer circle. Not all classroom arrangements allow for the creation of a distinct inner and outer circle, but seats or tables can be arranged in a similar pattern with a table or small group of chairs more or less in the middle of the room and other students facing this group (Furr & Barret, 2000).

As the investigation done by the writers in Tridianti University Palembang especially to the sixth semester of English study program, it was found that most of the students did not feel and think that they knew a lot about their local culture. They just knew a little information about their own culture and could not share a lot to their friends. They thought that it was not necessary for them to love their local culture and to broaden their horizon about it. Therefore, the writers tried to promote a teaching strategy namely "Inside-outside Fishbowl" to cultivate students' local culture awareness. Besides, the students' condition in Tridianti University of Palembang were not comfortable in speaking in front of the public forum. Only few students could able speak freely. Based on this consideration, the writers chose Inside-Outside Fishbowl in teaching learning process. Barkley, Cross & Major (2005, p. 224) stated that the use of this strategy in learning process could help the students which are less in talking to participate and share their ideas freely. The lecturer could partipate in the discussion if needed to stimulate the conversation or direct the discussion to topics. They also used Inside-Outside Fishbowl as one of collaborative learnings which gave a lot of benefits if it run very well. On all above descriptions, the writers were interested to investigate the application of Inside-outside Fishbowl to improve students' local culture awareness in Tridianti University Palembang.

## **METHODS**

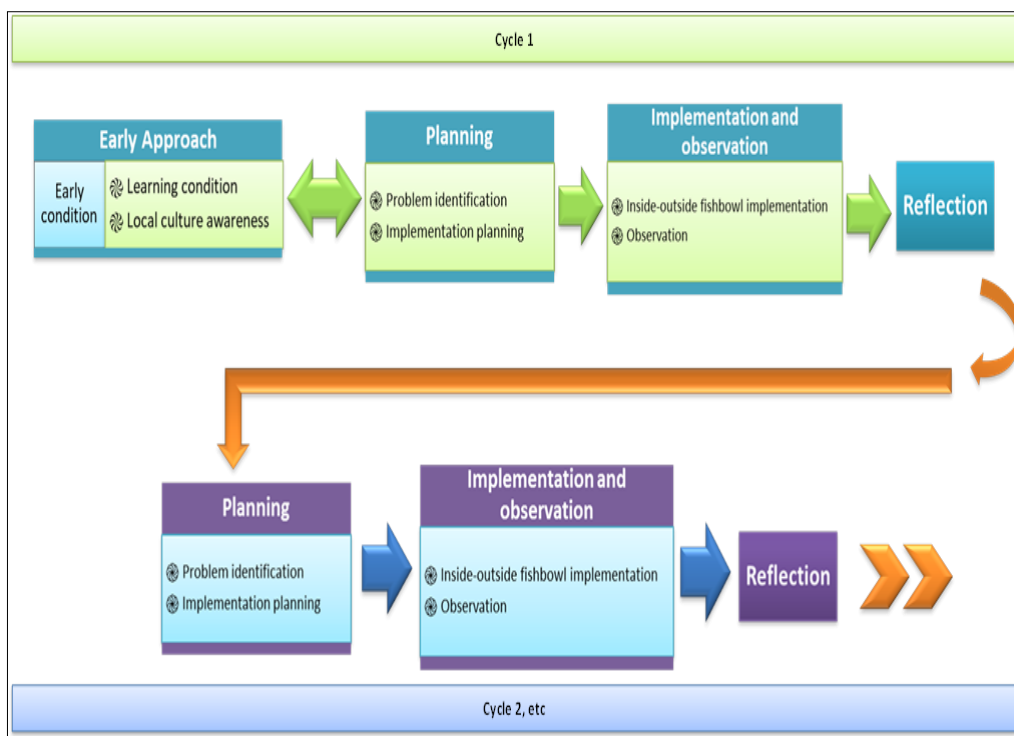
In this study, the writers applied classroom action research consisting of two cycles; cycle I and cycle II. Ismawati (2014) explained action reserach was collaborative action which needed critical reflection for practioners to analyze the problems and issues in the previous implementation. They were responsible towards the problems in order to solve it in team. Hine (2013) added taht through repeated cycles of planning, observing, and reflecting, individuals and groups engaged in action research can implement changes required for social improvement.

Principally, the study applied the action research involving four processes, they were early approach, planning, implementation and observation, and reflection. The writers prepared many things in order to conduct the research runs well. They were:

- a. In the beginning process, the writers created a researcher group consisting of the writers as lecturers. Then, there would be discussion among the writers, and students about many problems faced by them in the classroom, especially when the teaching and learning process was running.
- b. The writers gave some alternatives of solution as reparation. Finally, inside-outside fishbowl became the solution in order to overcome some problems in arising students' local culture awareness.
- c. Both writers prepared learning instruction by applying inside-outside fishbowl in syllabus and lesson plan. They also planned teaching media and learning materials.
- d. Both writers made instruments and observation sheet in order to observe the students' activities when the teaching and learning process was running.
- e. Both writers decided some tasks during the research.
- f. The writers explained observation procedures and data analysis to and determined the indicators of successful actions.

The following figure 1 was the cycles of this study:

Figure 1: The action research model



The setting of the study was in Tridinanty University Palembang. There were seventeen of sixth semester students of English study program of Tridinanti University became the sample of the study.

The writers used pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was given toward students before teaching learning processes. The post-test was given into students after teaching learning processes. Pre-test and post-test were used to know the differences of students' ability before and after the conduct of teaching learning processes. The writers used culture awareness rubric to score the tests.

In order to identify the activities done by the students in the teaching and learning process of this research, the writers used observation sheet. It was used to observe the students' activities in teaching and learning process directly. Observation would make the process more organized and controlled well.

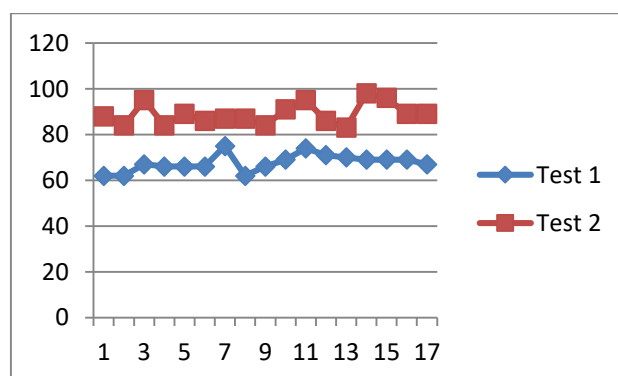
In determining the success of the study, there were two indicators used; (1) students' learning achievement, (2) teaching and learning process. Learning achievements in this study were students' local culture awareness gaining by the tests to check the students' comprehension. The standard of learning completeness was if the  $\geq 85\%$  of students got score  $\geq 71$ .

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

From the test done by the writers in each cycle, it was found that the students' cultural awareness in cycle II improved significantly. It could be seen from the words production by the students reached 12.58% of new words. The result of students' local culture awareness test was shown in this figure 2 below.

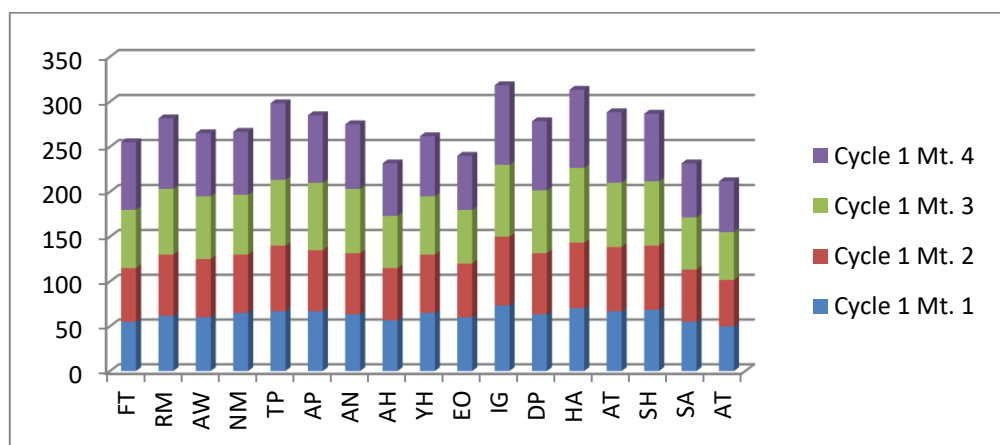
Figure 2: The results of local culture awareness test



Furthermore, based on the data analysis of cycle I (students' observation result), it could be concluded that the average score of test in activity in meeting I was 62.76, meeting II was

66.06, meeting III was 68.65 and meeting IV was 72.47. The data showed that the students on each meeting could learn to follow the instruction guidelines. On each meeting the average score increased significantly. The progress rose quite significant but it have been reached the target yet. The complete data can be seen from the chart below (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Students' observation result in cycle I



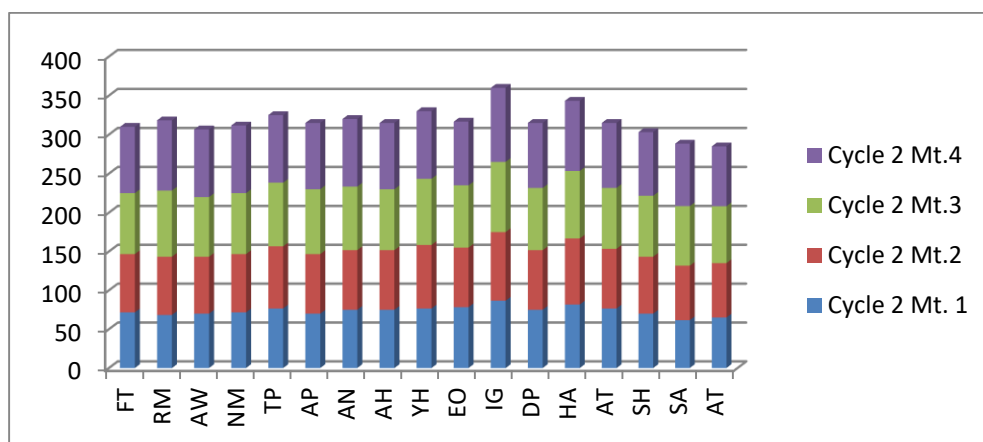
In other words, the activities which should be improved were the students followed all the guidelines in inside-outside fishbowl strategy and the students were having interaction each other when discuss on occurs.

There were many things which should be improved in the next cycle in order to enhance students speaking achievement and cultural awareness, they were:

- Cycle II was necessary to be implemented in order to enhance the students' cultural awareness concept. The material, media and teaching strategy were needed to be selected and prepared to gain the goals of teaching and learning process.
- The writers could create teaching and learning situation which was much more fun and enjoyable in order to attract the students' interest and participation.
- The average of the score in test I was 67.47 which was quite far below the standard of the completeness. So the writers should work harder in order to improve it.
- The topics of learning material would be the same, but the different media were given to be learned by the students. The use of media such as power point, video and varied pictures would be used to enhance the students' comprehension about the theme and instructions.

Next, the results of classroom observation in cycle II can be seen as follows.

Figure 3: The result of classroom observation in cycle II



From the result of observation in teaching and learning process, it was found that the students were able to share new information about culture. They were active to speak in inside fishbowl and the rest from the outside group competed to say something in inside group. The students could face strenuous problems in communicating like managing his fear, embarrassment. Moreover, they learned to listen to each other point of view and to respect each other ideas and thoughts. Working in pairs also reduces stress and embarrassment. If they gave a wrong answer, for example, they would not feel shy because the embarrassment was shared. In fact, it creates an enjoyable learning environment and increases motivation among learners. The students became more cooperative and able to communicate successfully.

The above figures described that the students enable to identify their local culture. They could answers given by the moderator. They were able to explain more about cultural things in detail. Then, the students enabled prove people in their surroundings to comprehend, proud, and love their own culture. Next, they also could promote their own local culture by giving comprehensive explanation about the topic discussed. They could converse and share their beliefs about cultural issues causing misconception among people.

Moreover, there were some findings which could be drawn from each meeting of each cycle, they were:

### ***Indonesian Gesture***

At that time, the students were enthusiast to share their ideas and tell their experiences related to “Indonesian Gestures” as the topic given by the moderator. There were four questions discussed at that time. First question was, “What do you think of Indonesian people especially Muslim and Hindu (men and woman) who do not touch each other?”. Therefore, most of the students agreed with that regulation because of the existing rules in those religions managed the different gender which was not able to touch each other. They said that how people appreciate each other. Next question, “How do you greet people who are older and younger

than you?” One of the students, explained that Elders are must be respected through performing *salim*, which is a revering handshake by touching the back of the hand to the forehead. For example, when shaking the hand with older persons, such as parents, grandparents and teachers, the younger people or students are expected to touch the back of the elder's palm with the tip of their nose or forehead, this reflects a special respect from the young to the old one. The third question, “What do you think of the importance of punctual for Indonesian people?” Most of the students told that it was very important to be punctual in every activity.

Despite of that statement, there were few of them shared their experience about “rubber time”, that they used to be late to come to some events or when they had appointment with someone. The last question, “Do you have any experience of misleading when you behave to other people in Indonesia?”. Misleading or miscommunication was a usual case occurred in daily life. One of the students shared her experience of misleading when she met someone whom she did not know before. She talked to that person loudly, telling about an event. That person thought that she was angry, and he got offended. Meanwhile, she thought that it was alright. This occurrence gave her a lesson to know about the background of her interlocutor.

### ***Indonesian Wedding Ceremonies and Customs***

In discussion process at the second meeting, the students were given five questions, they were: first, “What is your reaction if you are not invited by your best friend’s wedding party?” Most of the students explained that they felt OK if they were not invited by their best friends as it might be happened because their friends did not intend to invite many people. Another student felt that he was upset not being invited at that time; he thought that his friend did not like him anymore. Next question, “How do you describe your region’s wedding ceremony?” This question gave a lot of answers as the students came from different regions in Sumatera. One student who came from Palembang told some cultural terms existing in his culture, like “choose candidate (*milih calon*)”, “approach (*madik*)”, “engange (*tunangan*)”, “deliberation (*berasan*)”, “decision (*mutuske kato*)”, “delivering wedding necessity (*nganterke belanjo*)”, “preparation before wedding ceremony (*betangas, bebedak, bepacar*)”, “wedding ceremony (*akad nikah*)”, “mungguh”.

The third question was “What is your opinion about the wedding tradition of Padangness (a bride should buy her groom)?” Most of them answered that they did not agree with that custom. It was based on the economic condition of the couple. If the bride had much money, they could marry the man. If not, the wedding could not occur. Then, the fourth question, “Can you describe the Chinese ethnic wedding ceremony?” One of the students shared her experience when she attended a wedding ceremony of her friend who had Chinese ethnic. She was served by a varied of food and she could see a “barongsai” dance as the entertainment. The last, “What is your opinion of Mhar (a special pride given to a bride from a



groom)?" The male students told that they would give "Mhar" to his groom as much as he could as it was his pride. On the other hand, from Moslem regulation, the best "Mhar" was the least one which did not burden the groom.

### ***Indonesian Cuisine***

In the third meeting, the moderator served five questions. First question, "What kinds of staple food do Indonesian people eat and how they eat?. Most of the students answered there were three staple foods in Indonesia; they were rice, wheat, and sago. Most of them ate rice as they came from west Indonesia. In villages, they told that some people ate by using their right hand and put one of their feet on the chair as they thought that it would make them more comfortable while eating. In addition, the second question, "What do you know about kinds of food in west Indonesia and what are the flavor characteristics are most dominant?". All of the students answered the questions by telling about "*pempek, model, tekwan, martabak, ragit, bugro, and lakso*" from Palembang, "*rendang*" from Padang, and other food from other areas. The characteristics of flavor were salty and spicy.

The third question, "What do you know about kinds of food in central Indonesia and what are the flavor characteristics are most dominant?". Most of them told about "*gado-gado, sate, gudeg, and bakso*" which were food from central Indonesia and their dominant flavor was sweet. The fourth question, "What do you know about kinds of food in east Indonesia and what are the flavor characteristics are most dominant?". All of the students answer "*bubur manado, papeda, and rica-rica*" were the food with salty and spicy taste. The last question, "Do other cultures give significant effect to Indonesian food (flavor)?. All of them said yes, because Arabic, Indian, and Chinese were other ethnics lived in Indonesia so it would also affect its food with variation of taste.

### ***Indonesian Traditional Values***

In the fourth meeting, the students were given four questions to discuss. Firstly, "What is your opinion about Indonesian Motto "Unity in Diversity"?. One of the students explained about the importance of being united even there would be a lot of differences. Along with this strong unity and conformity to society's rules, honor and respect from individual form the basis of Indonesian culture. Secondly, "How do you describe the term "Loss of Face" in Indonesia?". Some of the students argued that "loss of face" was avoiding the cause of shame "*malu*", creating social embarrassment-to others and themselves. Another way to avoid "loss of face" by communicating indirectly to others, which means they did not always mean what they said. Thirdly, "Tell me about your experience when you visit your friend or relation house in Indonesia? One of the students said that Indonesians are known for their generosity, and it is an honor to be invited into their home. Try to accept all the offered hospitality, as a rejection may be taken personally. On arriving at your host's home, always remove your shoes at the

door, and it is also respectful to bring a small gift. Indonesians never show the soles of their feet, or allow their feet to point towards another person. It is also a sign of respect when sitting to keep both your feet on the floor and adopt a straight posture. The last, “What do you think of the term “*Jam Karet*” in Indonesia?”. Most of them did not agree about this customs as it would not create a discipline habit. There would changes on other’s mindset about how to appreciate time.

### **Discussion**

From the above findings, the writers could acquire some points related to the students’ comprehension about a number of concepts of culture diversity, they are:

#### ***Culture communication***

It was determined through the transmission of common understanding through the use of symbol. In other words, unless a common understanding results from the transmission of the symbol (verbal and nonverbal) there was no communication. In the class, the students had perceived that both verbal and nonverbal symbol could affect two-way interaction. The lack of understanding enabled to make the students underestimate someone. Therefore, the students were able to construct good understanding by avoiding bias. It was a tendency to move towards what was similar to oneself and away from what was different. Looking for what confirms one’s belief and ignoring the importance of one’s contradict belief.

#### ***Cultural trait***

At the end of learning process, the students discerned that everyone has cultural trait. It is an individual item in a culture, such as a particular belief, tool or practice. Then, the students had learned how to be grateful of his own cultural trait and thought that being differences was adequate. For example: Palembang people used to eat with their right hand without using any spoon and fork, they also lifted their feet up proudly. Another thing was people who came from Palembang originally used to speak loudly; they accustomed to produce loud voice talking to both older and younger people. This culture sometimes would create miscommunication among people from different cultural background. They thought those customs were discourteous. They would believe that Palembang people were rude with those of habitual actions.

#### ***Culture shock and discrimination***

The students also acquire knowledge about cultural shock and discrimination. Cultural shock referred to disturbed feeling that often arise when one had contact with an unfamiliar culture. Meanwhile, discrimination was policies and practices that harm a group and its members. In learning process, the students could get more simplifications about how to decode cultural shocks and avoid bigotries. For incase, when a host served food to his guest, he or she ate all

of the food as he or she thought that it was not courteous to not to take all the food, but in fact the host felt surprised to see the empty plate. For culture discrimination, people who were from different region sometimes felt discriminated with the people from his or her surroundings. He or she would feel friendless as thinking that he or she was different. Surrounding people sometimes forgot the need of his or her existence. In short, the students were able to understand the cultural diversity of a country. Appreciating the differences and raising their sympathy and empathy with their surroundings was very necessary.

In the implementation of cycle II, all of the students tended to be active in following all the instructions given by moderator. They were attentive and prompt with the topic discussed they were enthusiast following activities in the classroom, and they got more confidences to stay in front of the class. Besides, the students' cultural awareness also could be improved by the implementation of inside-outside fishbowl.

## CONCLUSIONS

Lecturers and learners were supported by using Inside-Outside Fishbowl (IOF) in EFL classrooms in many different ways. In addition, it has a positive influence on both of them. For the students, IOF application in the classroom has helped them to manage and their thoughts. So, they were able to start to identify their learning style and to gain a sense of responsibility for themselves. Then, this strategy also helped lecturers as they had gained a positive attitude to cultivate students' awareness in promoting their local culture.

By improving students' interaction in teaching and learning process in the classroom, it would give a lot of advantages including developing cognitive skills, effective communications skills and cultural awareness. Consequently, classroom discussion based on these considerations (elements of culture like the belief, values, customs, communication styles, etc.) enabled to encourage an atmosphere that stimulate EFL students to think about their own culture and make connection across culture while learning English.

## REFERENCES

- Barkley, E.E., Cross, K.P., & Major, C.H. (2005). *Collaborative learning techniques*. San Fransisco: Josey Bass.
- Brown, H.D. (2000). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Cakir, I. (2006). Developing cultural awareness in foreign language teaching. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 7(3), 154-161.
- Elizabeth, R. (2005). *Learning our vocabulary words while playing fish bowl*. Retrieved from [www.bio.indiana.edu](http://www.bio.indiana.edu). Accessed on April 25, 2016.
- Frank, J. (2013). Raising cultural awareness in the English language classroom. *English teaching forum*, 4, 2-11.
- Furr, S. R., & Barret, B. (2000). *Teaching group counseling skills: Problems and solutions*. Counselor Education and Supervision.

- Hine, G.S. (2013) The importance of action research in teacher education programs. *Issues in Educational Research*, 23(2).
- Ismawati, E. (2016). *Metode penelitian: Pendidikan bahasa dan sastra*. Ombak: Yogyakarta.
- Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. (2003). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (4th Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Tantri, NG. (2013). English as a global language phenomeon and the need of cultural conceptualizations awareness in Indonesian ELT. *IJ-ELTS*, 1(1), 37-49.