



# Promoting Indonesian university students' critical intercultural awareness in tertiary EAL classrooms: The use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks



Reni Kusumaningputri <sup>a</sup>, Handoyo Puji Widodo <sup>b, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Jember, Jl. Kalimantan 37 Kampus Bumi Tegal Boto, Postal Code 159, Jember, East Java 68121, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> English Language Center (ELC), Shantou University, 243 Daxue Road, Shantou, Guangdong 515063, China

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 15 January 2017

Received in revised form 1 October 2017

Accepted 11 October 2017

### Keywords:

Classroom-based study

Digital photographs

Intercultural awareness

Intercultural communicative competence

Intercultural tasks

## ABSTRACT

Anchored in Byram's (1997) intercultural theory, this article makes a case for critical intercultural awareness, which involves critical understanding, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of sociocultural realities. Given the importance of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language teaching (ELT), this article reports a classroom-based study investigating the use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks to promote students' critical intercultural awareness in the tertiary ELT context. Sixty six English literature majors volunteered to participate in the study. In this study, data were garnered from students' work artifacts, classroom observations, in-class discussion notes, and field notes. Drawing on qualitative content analysis, findings show that digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks help the students enhance their critical awareness of cultural realities portrayed in the photographs they navigated online. This study suggests that using both intercultural tasks and digital photographs as culturally-laden learning resources has the potential to promote students' ICC in English language classrooms.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the discourses of cultural, economic, and educational globalization and internationalization have shaped changing roles of English as an additional language (Galloway, 2017; Widodo, Wood, & Gupta, 2017), an international language (Renandya & Widodo, 2016), a global language (Leitner, Hashim, & Wolf, 2016), and a lingua franca (Fang, 2017). These differing roles of English have resulted from an increasing number of users of English from non-English speaking countries (e.g., China, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Turkey). Additionally, despite being criticized as the language of linguistic imperialism, English has gained its popularity in foreign/additional language education for many years; it has been a required school subject in formal educational curricula from primary to tertiary education (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017). It is also predicted that out of 6,000 languages today, English will remain the most dominant language by 2115 (Wang, Smyth, & Cheng, 2017). This suggests that the English language evidently takes a powerful

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [reni.fib@unej.ac.id](mailto:reni.fib@unej.ac.id) (R. Kusumaningputri), [handoyow@stu.edu.cn](mailto:handoyow@stu.edu.cn) (H.P. Widodo).

URL: <http://www.unej.ac.id>, <http://elc.stu.edu.cn/>

role in both Anglophone and non-Anglophone contexts. With this in mind, the use of the English language should go beyond the Anglophone/native speakerism norm because users and learners of English come from different linguistic and cultural (lingua-culture) backgrounds. A recent study by Choi (2016) suggests providing a space for both users and learners of English from non-Anglophone countries to “negotiate the ideology of native speakerism and position themselves in relation to the power-laden construction of ‘non-native’ speakers as inherently deficient” (p. 73).

In the educational landscape, scholars in the area of pedagogy of English as an international language (EIL), English as a global language (EGL), and English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Choi, 2016; Galloway, 2017; Liu & Fang, 2017) have questioned whether the ultimate goal of English language education should be geared to attain native-like linguistic competence and native speaker-imposed cultural competence. This critical examination is based on the fact that the number of users and learners of English from non-English speaking countries (e.g., China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan) exceeds that of those from English-speaking countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, the UK, the USA) (Galloway, 2017). This indicates the role of English as a language of intercultural communication among users of English from different countries whose native/primary language is not English. Because the learning of English has a lot to do with both linguistic and cultural dimensions of the language, English language (hereafter as EL) teachers should include cultural components in their curriculum materials (e.g., a syllabus and a textbook) and pedagogical tasks. It is widely agreed that both language and culture are mutually intertwined because the use of language is socially tied to the context of situation (e.g., daily conversation, personal chats, professional and academic settings) and the context of culture (e.g., ideas/perspectives/values, social practices, and artifacts). In other words, both situation and culture shape how people actually use language in different communicative settings (Halliday, 1978). The use of English in linguistically and culturally diverse settings is no exception.

In today's English pedagogy in multicultural and multilingual contexts, intercultural communicative competence (hereafter, ICC) is one of the most important ELT goals at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education (e.g., Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Liu & Fang, 2017; Porto, 2017). For this reason, many language teachers (Chao, 2013; Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Polisca, 2011; Ribeiro, 2016; Tanghe, 2016) have made various attempts (e.g., visual text, digital stories, foreign films) to equip students with ICC while providing them with language competence. For example, Kiss and Weninger (2017) examined the use of visual text—a cultural photograph in the EFL classroom to mediate students' cultural meaning making ( $n = 147$  students aged 14–21). They found that two groups of secondary schools students based in Hungary (Hungarians) and Singapore (ethnic groups: Chinese, Singaporean, Malay, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese, Nepali, Filipino, and Korean) interpreted the photograph portraying the Indian holy festival differently. They concluded that the students created cultural meanings based on their prior knowledge and experience as well as cultural access. Another four-year study by Tanghe (2016) in a Korean tertiary EFL context investigated how a racial discrimination simulation activity could promote a critical racial awareness of 55 student teachers of different ethnic backgrounds—Korean, White or Caucasian, Chinese, and Filipino. Because the participants perceived Korean as an ethnically homogenous country, they reported a strong disconnect between race and Korea and classrooms in Korea. This finding suggests that there should be language programs which prepare learners to talk about race and diversity in classrooms and confront racism in current educational contexts.

In the same vein, Ware (2013) studied to which extent a 15-week English-language online cultural exchange project situated in the USA ( $n = 15$ , Latino and African American) and Spain ( $n = 51$ , Spanish) enhanced students' ICC. 102 students (12–13 years old) participated in this project as part of their language arts classes. They engaged in the skills of discovery and interaction. Following intercultural conversations over 15 weeks, adolescent student participants displayed a range of interactional features (e.g., display of alignment, emoticons and tags, question posting). They also reported successful partnerships. The implication of study findings suggests critical engagement with cultural literacy in today's digital world. This engagement allows students to build and enhance their ICC through different digital platforms, such as the Internet.

Despite a myriad of previous studies investigating intercultural learning and ICC in Anglophone and non-Anglophone educational contexts (Ribeiro, 2016), there is a call for investigating pedagogical tasks that help students enhance their ICC based on actual English as an additional language (EAL) classrooms (Baker, 2015; Kiss & Weninger, 2017). In this digital area, there should be more classroom-based research that examines students' engagement in intercultural tasks along with cultural artifacts, such as digital photographs (Kiss & Weninger, 2017; Tanghe, 2016). To extend this scholarship, the present classroom-based study looks at in what ways digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks enhance students' critical intercultural awareness as part of ICC.

This article begins by conceptualizing ICC. It moves on to chronicle the roles of digital photographs as cultural resources. The remaining sections of the article present methodological positioning, findings, and discussion. In the concluding section, this article presents contributions of the study, practical and empirical implications for interculturally-oriented English instruction, and limitations of the study along with directions for future studies investigating ICC in EAL contexts.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Conceptualizing ICC in ELF/EAL classrooms

The notion of ICC is an expansion of communicative competence proposed by Dell Hymes (1972). At the outset, in the area of language pedagogy, ICC was introduced to complement the concept of communicative language teaching (CLT) in which communicative competence (CC) is framed beyond native speakerism because of the role of English as a global lingua franca (Baker, 2016; Gu, 2015). In other words, anchored in the ELF perspective, CC embraces non-native/non-Anglophone speakers'

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6849397>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6849397>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)