PROMOTING PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHER'S AWARENESS ON INTERCULTURALLY-SENSITIVE TEACHING MATERIALS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract: The new era of global flows opens more chances for people to interact with others from a different cultures. Globalization offers a new lens to examine intercultural sensitive (IS) language tasks in designing teaching material. However, this study's design of intercultural sensitivity in the Indonesian-Thai context focuses on teachers' perceptions and is still under-researched. Thus, this study investigates teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials. This study uses autobiographical narrative inquiry. The data analysis uses Bennett's (1993) framework of IS, which involves the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) in five stages to communicate across cultures in the Indonesian-Thai context. The data garnered autobiographical data from narrative inquiry in the form of short stories and lesson plans. The results capture that the teaching materials enhance IS as language pedagogy in ELT. The study suggests discovering teachers' understanding and viewing of IS in teaching English language materials at primary levels.

Keywords: Awareness; Indonesian-Thai context; intercultural sensitive; primary English teacher; narrative inquiry

1. Introduction

In recent years, increased globalization has led to an emphasis in particular focused on language teaching material, that is influencing the English roles changing in society (Galloway, 2017a, 2017b; Widodo, Wood, & Gupta, 2017; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). Intercultural sensitive (IS) is gaining researchers' attention in English language teaching (ELT) materials. Many researchers argue that language teachers should consider IS and ICC in the field of education (Mostafaeialaei & Nosrati, 2018; Lallana & Salamanca, 2020; Lee, Curtis & Curran, 2018). For instance, Mostafaeialaei & Nosrati (2018) explored how the role of EFL teachers must have skills to develop intercultural sensitivity (IS) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The correlational analysis results showed significant correlations between IS and ICC components except the association among the respecting different cultures in the ICC of knowledge dimension and the interaction satisfaction aspects

of IS. Consequently, teaching foreign languages has shifted from linguistic to communicative competence focusing on intercultural communication. Thus, learners of languages can successfully interact across cultures (Chan, Bhatt, Nagami, & Walker, 2015).

English is becoming increasingly popular among non-English speakers, which has led to English taking on different roles (e.g., China, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, and Turkey). Although English has been criticized as an imperial language for many years, it has gained popularity as a language for foreign/additional language education and as a required subject in primary, secondary, and tertiary school curricula (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2017). Thus, English plays an important role both in Anglophone and non-Anglophone contexts. Since English speakers and learners have a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (linguistic-cultural), it is necessary to think beyond Anglophone/native speakerism when using the English language. Drawing on Choi (2016) argued that users and learners of English from non-Anglophone countries should have the space to *"negotiate the ideology of native speakerism and position themselves concerning the power-laden construction of 'non-native' speakers as inherently inferior"*

With the growth of English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2014; Seidlhofer, 2011), emphasis on how to teach this international language and how people of different cultures use it interculturally-sensitive has been placed (Baker, 2012, 2015). Nowadays, A lingua franca has been established in English based on intercultural sensitive contexts by an increasing number of non-native speakers, making the question of whether teaching cultures in ELT classrooms should be based exclusively on Anglophone cultures pertinent today (Baker, 2015; Canagarajah, 2005; Wen, 2016). In line with Alsamani (2014) argued that providing learners with exposure to foreign cultures in order to expand the cultural knowledge and comprehend the differences between their native cultures and their target cultures. In addition, cultural exposure that the language instruction must provide learners with opportunities to become interculturally aware and to understand both the target culture and their own cultures (Fenner's, 2000) suggestion. The plethora of previous studies mentioned intercultural competence, knowledge, and awareness as essential factors describing learners' intercultural experiences (e.g., Georgiou, 2011; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Larzén, 2005; Pitkowska, 2015).

Consequently, this study investigates teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials in Southern Thailand devoted entirely to various grades of students. This study also explores issues relating to educational performativity culture and balancing linguistic diversity training with other essential concerns in teacher education based on intercultural sensitivity (IS). Learning how teachers develop intercultural materials provides a critical engagement with cultural literacy today.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing of Intercultural Sensitive in ELT

Intercultural competence refers to intercultural sensitivity. In contrast, intercultural competence requires intercultural sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman, 2003). Therefore, intercultural competence demonstrates intercultural sensitivity and knowledge (Bennett, 1993; Peng, Rangsipaht, & Thaipakee, 2005). Communication that involves intercultural communication in communicative language teaching (CLT) is a communicative competence (CC) that native speakers has formed outside as ELF (Baker, 2016). The importance of ICC in curriculum documents, teaching materials, and assessments was widely recognized worldwide (Baker, 2015). Drawing on Altshuler (2003, p. 388) *intercultural sensitivity* is defined as *"attitudes that predict cultural competence and successful intercultural interactions"*. Anchored Chen and Starosta (2004) emphasize that intercultural sensitivity fosters a pluralistic cultural identity, respects cultural differences, and expands multiculturalism.

Teaching communicative language (CLT) is formed outside of considering the importance of English as a lingua franca among native speakers; therefore, curriculum documents, teaching materials, and assessments have been considered intercultural communicative competencies in the field of education (Baker, 2015, 2016; Gue, 2015). Cultural sensitivity or the ability to deal with cultural diversity and overcome ethnocentric worldviews (Bennett, 1993) named Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) that is how community learn to communicate across cultures as a hypothesis. IS embraces the following five components by Bennett (1993):

"Stage 1 (change from Denial to Defense): The individual develops an understanding of cultural differences"

"Stage 2 (change from Defense to Minimization): Negative evaluations are distorted, and the individual is aware of cultural commonalities"

"Stage 3 (change from Minimization to Acceptance): The individual recognizes the importance of cultural diversity"

"Stage 4 (change from Acceptance to Adaptation): A desire to learn about different civilizations exists"

"Stage 5 (change from Adaptation to Integration): Cultures should be respected and empathized with"

Through intercultural sensitive stages, the citizens comprehend cultural differences by accepting their importance, adapting their perspective to incorporate them, or integrating them into a definition of their identity (Bennett, 2004, p. 153). In the developmental process, intercultural sensitivity has been viewed as an activator for transforming ethnocentrism into ethnorelativism (Hammer & Bennett, 2004). Any attempt to increase intercultural sensitivity will assist people in realizing and understanding the significance of cultural differences.

2.2 Primary School in Indonesia and Thailand

A recent curriculum change in Indonesia has converted the English language from a local content subject to an extracurricular subject. Under the new Curriculum 2013, the subject of English is taught school hours outside and not a part of the final exam of schools (Sahiruddin, 2013). Nevertheless, teacher qualification requirements are not affected by this change in status. This regulation showed in the Minister of National Education Republic of Indonesia Decree No. 16/2007 on Teachers' Academic Qualification and Competence and in the Chapter 29, No. 20/2005 of The Government Law of Republic Indonesia on Education National Standard (Department of Pendidikan Nasional, 2006, 2007).

In contrast to secondary level English, a compulsory subject supported by enhanced teacher preparation and materials, English at the elementary level is currently an extracurricular activity. A strong foundation for English was required at this level to meet globalization's demands, so English was included in the primary school timetable in 1993. In Indonesia, early English instruction has been viewed by some as a failure. Thus, it expects to contribute to students' overall language competence. Primary school English lessons should improve the quality of input students receive in secondary schools.

Thailand is commonly considered a homogenous country regarding ethnicity and linguistics, with the notion that Thai people speak the Thai language. Nevertheless, ethnicity and language vary significantly with the predominance of Chinese, Malay, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and the Karen, Lahus, and Lissus as indigenous tribes, who live with the Thais. In addition, about 70 minority languages and dialects in Thailand, as though Chinese, Malay, Mon, Khmer, and Lao. Thai national identity and standard Thai unity is one of the important symbols of uses in administration, education, and media. Thai language variants including "Northern Thai (e.g., Kham Muang) and Southern Thai (e.g., Pak Tai)" has carried out as divergence on their superiority and dominance. Another foreign languages, such as Malay, Chinese, and Vietnamese, are considered foreign.

In contrast to Buddhists majority, the Thai Malay community, particularly in the southern part of the country, faces a different situation. It is considered a linguistic expression of Islamic religion and an essential representation of identity to speak Malay or Patani Malay (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). The replacement of Malay with standard Thai posed difficulties for assimilation into Thai society and was perceived as a threat to cultural and religious identity. In addition, there has been an outbreak of violent conflict in several Malay-speaking southern provinces due to a separatist movement.

In 2010, Thailand introduced a draft National Language Policy which encourages bilingual and multilingual education for people whose mother tongue is not Thai and those from other countries seeking employment in Thailand (Fry, 2013). In other languages besides Thai, "mother tongue" education is affected by this change. For instance, a Patani English-Malay-Thai trilingual education program in the south of Thailand has been operating successfully since 2008 (Baker & Jarunthawatchai, 2017). The English-Malay-Indonesian language has been granted special status in Southern Thailand expressly against assumed monolingualism and multilingualism. It has been widely accepted for decades that English is the most influential

language to communicate and express on outside world as though academic, political, economic, and cultural levels (Baker, 2012; Rappa & Wee, 2006).

Multilingualism (e.g., using a mother tongue, regional or national language, and a foreign language) as an instructional medium is referred to as multilingual education (Cummins, 2007; Genesee, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarthy, 2007; Parba, 2018). Anchored Busch (2011) said that in the education system, various language models are used during the teaching-learning process and can involve two or more languages depending on the position of the language needed in society (i.e., bilingual and multilingual models, respectively) with the goal of (1) learning the dominant language; (2) learning a 'high-prestige' foreign language (primarily English); (3) supporting the learning of the minority language; and (4) encouraging the learning of all languages used in the community (dominant, minority, and foreign). Consequently, multilingual schools can adopt various forms in their goals, needs, and resources based on interculturally-sensitive (Garcia, 2008).

2.3 Previous Studies on Interculturally-Sensitive Teaching Materials

In this section, many previous studies portrayed intercultural EFL teachers in Indonesia (Gandana, 2014; Marana, 2014; Siregar, 2016). For instance, Gandana (2014) examined how EFL lecturers' professional identities, classroom discourses, and practices interact with their beliefs and understandings of English, culture, interculturality, and pedagogy. The findings emphasized the institution's role in forming lecturers' "enacted professionalism." The other previous study investigated how EFL teacher educators think about their job regarding language, identity, and culture (Manara, 2014). The study illustrates the complex, dynamic interaction of professional learning and intercultural identity creation when local educators' struggle for voice 'among dominating western discourses of ELT professionalism.

In the same vein, the study that examined pedagogic attitudes and Indonesian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers practices is regarding culture and interculturality in high-school using a multiple case study (Munandar & Newton, 2021). The data were collected from field notes, participant observations, in-depth interviews with the teachers, stimulated recall (SR) interviews, and written narrative frames completed by the teachers. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on intercultural and cultural pedagogy. The findings showed that teachers exercised agency in engaging with the interculturality and culture complexities, students' requirements of learning and limitations, and contextual education policies and hegemonic language constraints on Indonesia.

Despite of myriad designing ELT materials in interculturally-sensitive language pedagogy contexts by English teachers (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2021; Safa & Tofighi, 2021; Tirnaz & Narafshan, 2018). For instance, a previous study evaluated whether utilizing of intercultural TV advertising may improve intercultural sensitivity and positively influence the classroom atmosphere in the setting of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Iran (Tirnaz & Narafshan, 2018). This study acquired for six-month observed that controlling group on ICS skill in the experimental group outperformed scores, indicating intercultural TV advertising practice. The result showed that while the students delved to accept, appreciate diversity, support

classmates and collaborate with in the different perspectives, advertisements positively impacted the classroom atmosphere and created a flexible workplace.

Consequently, the study investigates teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials. This study's design of intercultural sensitivity in the Indonesian-Thai context focuses on teachers' perceptions and is still under-researched. Few studies focus on the conditions for developing teaching materials based on IS language pedagogy by teachers in the classroom (except Tirnaz & Narafshan, 2018).

3. Methodology

The study aims to investigate teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials. This study uses narrative inquiry (e.g., in the form of a short story).

3.1 Research question

RQ 1: What are the English teachers' perceptions about English teaching based on a language's intercultural sensitive pedagogy? **(Data Source: Narrative Frame (e.g. short story); Method: Qualitative)**

3.2 Setting: South Thailand

The study was conducted at a primary school in Southern Thailand whose intercultural competence of English curriculum promotes autonomy and critical thinking skills. The researcher was placed in one of the primary school in Thailand which is under the supervision of a university in Southern Thailand.

3.3 Participant

This autobiographical study explores pre-service teachers' teaching practice in the International Teaching Practicum (ITP) program conducted by researchers in the 2018-2019 academic year. The researcher is one of the representatives of the English Education Program from a university in Surakarta to participate in the ITP program. Researchers will tell and explore her own experiences during the program because I have experience teaching and interacting other citizens from different cultural backgrounds, especially in international exchange students and teachers who work and study at the university.

3.4 Data collection/instruments

The data garnered autobiographical data from narrative inquiry in the form of short stories and lesson plans. Narrative data based on autobiographical in the form of short stories will be collected through stories of autobiographical experiences and classroom observations to find out the condition of teaching English in the intercultural curriculum context. In designing ELT

materials, I was involved as an English teacher in the classroom. To do this study, the researcher uses an analytical technique, namely critical thematic analysis (in the form of short stories) by Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik (2014), through a self-reflection template.

3.5 Data analysis

The study aims to investigate teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials. The data analysis procedure consists of (1) capturing the conditions of implementing and developing interculturally language pedagogy-based curriculum tasks in schools and (2) narrating the data using heuristics for the content and context of systematic thematic analysis (e.g., short stories) or what is talking about (e.g., implementing a pedagogical intercultural sensitivities curriculum from my own experiences with developing and designing ELT materials); (3) exploring teachers' perception (myself) using designing ELT material in Indonesian-Thai context based on IS to find out the pattern of intercultural learning which reflected in teaching activities.

4. Finding and Discussion

The researcher selected to answer the RQs in the three main themes around conceiving the influence of intercultural sensitivity on culture and the perceptions in ELT materials contained intercultural sensitivity. This study is an autobiographical narrative. I participated in this study as the teacher who used intercultural sensitivity in ELT materials based on the Indonesia-Thailand context. The data collection was taken from the experience of researchers during ITP in the form of short stories through a self-reflection template (Barkhuizen, Benson, and Chik, 2014).

Finding 1: teachers' perceptions of intercultural sensitive in ELT materials

The teacher was teaching classes in English subjects at a primary school in Southern Thailand by using multilingual languages such as Indonesian, English, and Malay (sometimes). Implementing this teaching system will be more exciting, and students will be more enthusiastic about learning the subjects. The students will get new insights about languages other than their mother tongue, namely, Thai. The teacher evaluated her understanding of intercultural sensitivity in Indonesia-Thailand contexts to understand the perceived effects of ELT materials contained interculturally sensitive. The teacher recounted that:

> *"Every day, I teach using Indonesian, Malay (sometimes), and English. I use Indonesian, English, and Malay (sometimes) when teaching English in a class by embracing and introducing Indonesian culture to Thai students."*

The statement regarding the interculturally-sensitive ELT materials that the teacher uses for teaching English subjects in terms of using languages from other countries is three

languages (Indonesia-English-Malay/sometimes). The teacher reported her daily experiences and positive results in multilingual classroom teaching (Indonesia-English-Malay). By doing this teaching, students will understand the material presented and appreciate their language skills in communicating using multilingualism slowly. With the introduction of this culture, the students can learn intercultural sensitivity in English subjects through languages based on the Indonesia-Thailand context. Following the stages contained in the intercultural sensitivity theory, this includes stages 1 and 5, where students develop an understanding of cultural differences and the teacher considers the culture introduced to students to be a culture that must be respected. Drawing on Griva & Chostelidou (2012), teachers' positive attitude towards language policies used in primary schools is a solid communicative tool for competence in speaking one or more languages. The critical thing is patterns that are not contrary to the language policies used in the country. Thus, the teachers and students can feel the application of multilingual education in their classrooms well.

In this study, the teacher stated that it was necessary to enforce the intercultural sensitive held by primary school teachers as the best solution; thus, they could find out how the teaching presentation was given by embracing the culture of Thai and other countries. The teacher said,

"When I teach using ELT materials containing intercultural sensitivity, it is one of the prospects for the modern learning process. In particular, I think that intercultural sensitive is very suitable for knowing cultures, especially languages and society, that will be useful to support the ease of life because indirectly, I teach international languages to students and introduce other cultures, especially Indonesian culture, with all its diversity which will be very useful in the future and also the more cultures that we learn, the more information we can absorb"

Primary school teachers realize the importance of using intercultural sensitivity in the current education system because students will gain new insights and learn about diverse cultures from other countries during the learning process. In line with those, the teacher is actively involved in helping students become aware of using intercultural sensitivity in teaching materials and can utilize linguistic knowledge (De Angelis, 2011; Jakisch, 2014; Otwinowska, 2014). The teacher believes that she will bring students to support their future life by mastering multilingual skills (English, Indonesia, Thai, Malay) and becoming more sensitive to other cultures. It includes stage 3, which explains that individuals recognize the importance of respecting and building a sense of tolerance for cultural diversity in their own country and other countries (Bennett, 2004).

Finding 2: teaching skills in using bilingual/trilingual languages

The teacher is confident to teach using multilingual languages in the classroom. The teacher put it:

"I am always confident in teaching English subjects using English and Indonesia translated because I have mastered the language along with the material I teach. Nevertheless, some students do not understand English. Hence, they ask for additional explanations using Malay, so I will give additional explanations using Malay to these students in order to help students understand what is studying in class".

The teacher stated that she had mastered various languages, such as Indonesia-English-Malay, in the learning process. Meanwhile, sometimes students do not understand what is explained by the teacher. The teacher will explain again using Malay to ensure that students understand the learning material well. In line with teachers' belief that intercultural sensitivity in ELT materials can provide benefits for their language and cultures in teaching and learning, this is not in line with their students who state that multilingual learning makes them not understand the material well. However, they understand when the teacher explains by giving examples with digital photographs that have cultural elements of Indonesian-Thailand. This context seems appropriate and supports the conclusion of some researchers that awareness is needed for intercultural sensitivity in ELT materials to become an important asset (Bennett, 1993, 2004; De Angelis, 2011).

Teachers' cultural awareness knowledge is central to conceiving their decision-making in the classroom atmosphere. The teacher said,

"So, I need to get as much experience as possible to teach based on intercultural sensitive based on my subjects of English, for example, by participating in a training program for teachers to improve my teaching skills in designing ELT materials by incorporating some cultural elements. I believe that this training will provide me with many benefits, such as: gaining insight into how multilingualism should be in terms of languages, insight from the experiences of others teaching using designing intercultural sensitive and creativity using photographs in the teaching and learning process".

When the teachers teach English subjects using designing ELT material based on intercultural sensitivity, it can escalate creativity for teaching by participating in training programs or teaching from the experiences of others who have a different culture. In line with previous research, which states that learning experiences and opportunities in pre-service training programs and in-service teacher training need to be held to show cultural awareness about the benefits and support (Haim et al., 2020; Rother et al., 2021). This program allows teachers to escalate their creativity in the classroom by studying different cultures. In this case, the teacher believes students desire to learn about different civilizations/cultures (Bennett, 1993, 2014).

Finding 3: teacher's experience at primary school using IS in ELT materials

The teachers experience obstacles and benefits during the learning process, as well as the Thai government's policy for the use of learning materials which has intercultural sensitive. As the teacher put it,

> *"In my opinion, I have problems while teaching using multilingual (Indonesia-English-Malay) where students have difficulty expressing something, and they are more fluent using the Thai language. Thai teachers have different understandings of using intercultural sensitive in their ELT materials when they teach international and regular classes. I suggest that the policy of using intercultural sensitive materials in Thailand can be implemented in other schools because it is beneficial for students and their teachers to become more familiar with cultural awareness and master international languages".*

Based on the teacher's experience when she was teaching by using designing intercultural sensitive materials and the importance of applying intercultural awareness materials in Thailand to improve the quality of education in this modern era. Drawing on Bennett (1993) argued that citizens could develop an understanding of cultural differences originating from Indonesia and other countries, and they can distort cultural similarities between their home country and other countries and respect other cultures through intercultural sensitive-based learning.

Consequently, designing intercultural sensitive materials at primary schools in Southern Thailand needs to be implemented as a more attractive teaching system. The students also learn about intercultural awareness materials based on language or other cultures in Indonesia-Thailand. It is associated with the teacher's positive attitude towards teaching practice in the classroom using multilingualism, while students' lack of experience in learning various languages (Indonesia, English, and Malay) in English is one of the teacher's concerns. To reduce teacher concerns, teachers must join training programs so the teaching system can do well. The education system in Southern Thailand has not been implemented evenly; therefore, the government needs to make a policy in this country by applying intercultural sensitive-based learning. The presence of visual media (e.g., pictures) and sound will have a positive impact on students remembering things well.

5. Conclusion

The study investigates teachers' perception of IS pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) for promoting primary English teachers' merged into their practice of teaching materials. Teachers' perceptions and awareness of IS have been described in this study. Culture should be viewed from a poststructuralist perspective and dynamic concepts. In addition, the results suggest that a fathom of the language and culture relationship viewed as inextricable traditionally, Anglophone cultures demystify needs to be revised and recognized exclusively as a means of communicating cultural values in ELT. Today's globalized world demands the

integration of cross-cultural issues through English material development and pedagogical practice (Wen, 2016).

By incorporating IS into teaching materials from a more critical perspective, cultural instruction an ethnocentric perspective is not required; the results study supported an inclusive view of culture that identifies similarities and differences. This study will contribute to increasing stakeholders' perceptions and awareness of intercultural sensitivity in teaching materials to reconstruct the bonding between language and culture, particularly in ELT, and the amalgamation between local and global communities. In English language education, the study's findings provide a catalyst for teachers, learners, and educators to take a critical perspective on the complexity and fluidity of cultural views in IS. This present study implies that it is necessary to conduct in-depth research with sufficient time support; thus, the ideology of the teacher's language and the experience of the teacher's teaching practice can balance.

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