

A Study of English Intercultural Learning Experience of Thai Tertiary English Majors*

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Abstract

This study examined the English intercultural learning experience of 63 fourth-year Thai tertiary English majors through the students' evaluation form, which included the Likert scale questionnaire, checklists, and open-ended questions. The questionnaire's findings showed that the English majors evaluated gaining an English intercultural learning experience to a moderate amount. Then, the checklists' findings informed that they mostly noticed learning cultures when the teachers used online media, shared experiences or viewpoints, and offered them to discuss cultural issues in the classroom. Finally, the open-ended questions' results stressed that the participants required more opportunities to communicate in English, be familiar with varieties of English, and learn their native English teacher's culture. Although they experienced learning target and foreign countries' cultures from a Thai English language teacher to a large amount, they felt inferior to those countries and noticed the lack of promoting home cultural value in the classroom. The findings suggested that teachers should monitor themselves to ensure that they inspire students to be proud of their identity and nation before valuing others. Otherwise, students may be unable to express appreciation of their national identity to the world and lack a prerequisite qualification of the global-ready graduates—desirable national citizenship.

Keywords: English intercultural learning experience, Intercultural competence, English language learning, Global-ready graduates, English Majors

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INTRODUCTION

In order to accept differences among all humankind, “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”, the quote from Martin Luther King, Junior. We are obligated to learn to maintain relationships to address the problems that run into us as humanity. Intercultural learning seems to be one of the best ways that fulfills this obligation. As intercultural learning focuses on preparing global-ready graduates for the 21st Century, learners will be trained to realize how culture affects language usage, the way they look at others, and by what means people from other cultures may interpret them (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). This awareness requires experience in examining their prejudices against differences and having a positive attitude about cultural issues to cultivate intercultural competence (IC). Then, IC facilitates global-ready graduates who negotiate meaning effectively and act appropriately in intercultural realms (McRae, Ramji, Lu, & Lesperance, 2016).

Considering English language teaching (ELT) in Thailand, English intercultural learning is an implicit requirement embedded in the national standards for higher education. For instance, learners must have “desirable characteristics of the Thai people as both citizens of the country and member of the world community” (OHEC, 2010, p 18). Another is, by the year 2036 learners must have critical thinking and lifelong learning skills that fit the 21st Century, have good culture realization, appreciate the value of Thai identity, respect the community, nation, and the royal family (Office of National Education Council, 2016). These requirements call for active actions and strategies from higher education institutions to provide learners with an English intercultural learning experience. Such experience will enable them to appreciate taking roles of national, regional, and global citizenry.

Concerning the aforementioned Thailand national requirements, how can we agree that Thai tertiary English majors sufficiently experience English intercultural learning that develops their IC. Since several studies of Thai scholars such as Laopongharn and Sercombe (2009); Rajani Na Ayuthaya and Sithitikul (2016); Wannaruk (2008) confirmed that Thai tertiary English majors had a low level of IC and English speaking proficiency. These may have been caused by teachers failed to take account of IC in ELT and struggling to an absolute monopoly for successful communication—the NS model. Accordingly, learners lack experience using knowledge, attitudes, and skills to support interaction with diverse English users. Finally, they tend to frustrate and decline to use English (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011).

With these critical conditions, it is significant to examine Thai tertiary English majors’ English intercultural learning experience to discover the problems that may hinder their IC development. The findings may direct the implementation of English intercultural teaching that effectively prepares students to become global-ready graduates for the 21st Century.

Aims and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the level of English intercultural learning experience of the fourth-year English majors before going out for a professional practicum, components of English intercultural learning the students found in their classroom, and their constructive comments for English intercultural Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills learning. The two research questions (RQ) elicited the findings of this study:

RQ1: How much do the fourth-year tertiary English majors gain English intercultural learning experience from their English courses?

RQ2: In what way do the fourth-year tertiary English majors experience English intercultural learning from their English courses?

Literature Review

Intercultural learning and IC

Intercultural learning is the mechanism of growing to comprehend the differences between home culture and other cultures through IC (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). Several intercultural mavens such as Bennett (1986); Byram (1997); Deardorff (2012), and others designate IC for language learning as learners' abilities to use knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand the home culture, interpret other cultures, compare and relate those cultures to their own, and communicate with people of any cultures effectively and appropriately. In detail, attitudes are the beginning of progress that later expedite knowledge and skills necessary for IC development (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2012). Good attitudes construct curiosity to learn other cultures, readiness to step out of one's safety boundary, appreciation of the home culture, and awareness of others (Baker, 2009; Bennett, 1993).

Next is knowledge, which reminds learners that differences among all humankind come from the values, culture, beliefs, and norms of their homeland. Once learners understand this basis, they tend not to judge the rest of the world from their home backgrounds (Deardorff, 2012; Kramsch, 2006).

For skills, learners must practice comparing, analyzing, interpreting, relating other cultural perspectives to their own, and communicating in intercultural situations to understand others from the world's views. These practices can diminish their ethnocentric view and overcome prejudice against others by accepting, respecting, and adapting (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 1997; Deardorff 2012).

Framework for implementing English intercultural teaching

Jantadej (2019) developed a framework to guide Thai English language teachers in implementing English intercultural teaching to develop students' IC that covers both the teaching and assessment on Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills. They are Sociolinguistic teaching and assessment, Cultural self-knowledge teaching and assessment, Specific cultural knowledge teaching and assessment, Universal cultural knowledge teaching and assessment, Global events knowledge teaching and assessment, Openness attitude teaching and assessment, Respect attitude teaching and assessment, Withholding-judgment attitude teaching and assessment, Comparing & Analyzing skill teaching and assessment, Communicating skill teaching and assessment, and Behavior skill teaching and assessment. Jantadej also recommends this framework for other countries that have similar ELT contexts.

Learning tasks for developing IC

Intercultural scholars recommend the following learning tasks to foster learners' IC.

The first one is communicative tasks. This kind of task allows learners to compare, differentiate, analyze, or interpret between cultures within one. All the communicative tasks focus on stimulating the use of meaningful language under the real speaking basis, which meets the process of developing IC (Bilash, 2011; Cotter, 2016).

The second one is reflection tasks, which allow learners to see similarities and differences of home culture to the one in the text. One example is an Action Log. It reflects English writing ability and critical thinking in expressing feelings, comments, comparison, and understanding of cultural content or tasks learners have learned and done in class (Corbett, 2007). It also yields productive feedback to the teachers on how hard or efficient each lesson was. Another is Reformulation which improves learners' listening and speaking skills and evaluates their cultural understanding of the text by retelling things they just learned or reviewing things they have missed with a partner (Cullen & Sato, 2000).

The third one is role-playing. It is a fruitful task which aids learners to join in various social situations. Performing role-plays could broaden learners' worldviews in interpreting others' language and behavior that gradually lead them to become effective communicators (Dorathy & Mahalakshmi 2011). These qualities are necessary for IC development.

The fourth one is discussion tasks, which encourage learners to talk about objectives or hidden meanings of the text with peers. It helps them tolerate and respect their interlocutors' viewpoints, and be confident to join an intercultural conversation. Dorathy and Mahalakshmi (2011) suggested two skillful discussion tasks: Noticing and Prediction. Noticing can use when learners watch a scenario. Then, teachers ask them to 'notice' focal issues and compare them with their home culture. For Prediction, while teachers are telling a story, they may pause at a certain point. Then, ask learners to predict what will happen next. It will trigger their critical thinking and intense desire to know if their prediction is correct.

Cultural information resources

English language teachers should bring cultural information from various sources to the classroom to reflect different angles, feelings, messages, and interpretations to learners. Regarding this, Cullen and Sato (2000) proposed some crucial sources of cultural information such as video, TV, readings, Internet, stories, learners experience, songs, newspapers, interviews, guest speakers, anecdotes, souvenirs, photographs, surveys, or literature. Additionally, Khosrowjerdi, Sundqvist, and Byström (2019) included Blogs, online social media discussions, search engine news, online news services, TV shows, personal discussions, email exchanges, and newspapers (including online versions) as of current cultural information resources of their respondents.

In all likelihood, a proper English intercultural teaching framework, skillful design learning tasks, and effective sources of cultural information are parts of things teachers can do to create learners' intercultural learning experience that broadens their worldviews and sharpens their communication, reflection, comparison, and discussion skills.

Related studies to students' intercultural learning experience

In the USA, Klein (2004) reported that students experienced learning cultural facts separately from linguistic learning, which was an ineffective method to enhance students' IC.

In Korea, Jon (2009) uncovered that Korean students experienced learning cultural differences and intercultural worldviews from communicating with international students.

In China, Newton and Shearn (2010) found that though cultural awareness had been one of the ELT objectives in China since 2006, students inadequately gained experience in intercultural learning and mainly learned cultural facts.

In Vietnam, Ho Si Thang Kiet (2011) showed that students merely experienced intercultural learning in English classrooms from comparing their culture to the target culture.

In Thailand, Jantadej (2019) unveiled that secondary school students had a low intercultural learning experience, especially on attitudes and skills. Besides, Kawsa-ard (2018); Wichien and Aksornjarung (2011) disclosed that famous EFL textbooks in Thailand offered students a small number of tasks to experience intercultural learning in comparing, expressing respect and value, and relating similarities and differences of others to Thai.

In sum, learners' intercultural learning experience remains in a peripheral status as long as they lack sufficient instructions and learning materials that actively advocate their IC.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework framed the research instrument for evaluating participants' English intercultural learning experience in three main categories. The first category covered 11 components (five components of Knowledge, three components of Attitudes, and three components of Skills) that create students' English intercultural learning experience (synthesized from Jantadej, 2019). In detail, the Knowledge learning carried 1) Sociolinguistics 2) Cultural self-knowledge 3) Specific cultural knowledge 4) Universal cultural knowledge, and 5) Global events knowledge. The Attitudes learning included 6) Openness 7) Respect, and 8) Withholding-judgment. The Skills learning encompassed 9) Comparing & Analyzing 10) Communicating, and 11) Behavior.

The second category was the sources of classroom cultural information that promote participants' English intercultural learning (Cullen & Sato, 2000; Khosrowjerdi et al. 2020), such as textbooks, teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions, readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs, online resources, and others.

The third category was the 20 learning tasks for developing IC classified by four main tasks—communicative, reflection, role-playing, and discussion tasks (Bilash, 2011; Cullen & Sato, 2000; Dorathy & Mahalakshmi; 2011). Communicative tasks included (Task 1) practice using the language in each situation, and (Task 2) an interview. Reflection involved (Task 3) write an action log, (Task 4) reformulate a story, (Task 5) express opinions, (Task 6) practice exercises, (Task 7) express viewpoints on learning cultural differences, (Task 8) summarize a degree of acceptance towards other cultures, (Task 9) compare & analyze perspectives or values of any particular cultures to Thai, and (Task 10) share students' experiences.

Role-playing tasks contained (Task 11) perform a role-play, a simulation, or a debate on a given social situation. Discussion tasks were comprised of (Task 12) analyze the use of language, (Task 13) provide a 'noticing' to a given material, (Task 14) provide a 'prediction' to a given material, (Task 15) interpret values, viewpoints, and objectives of interlocutors, (Task 16) discuss perspectives or values, (Task 17) discuss the advantages of learning different cultures, (Task 18) specify misunderstanding aspects between Thai and other cultures, (Task 19) identify areas of similarities and differences between cultures, and (Task 20) analyze a problem of communication in each social event.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were the 63 fourth-year English majors enrolled in one university in the northern province of Thailand. They were selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Data Collection

In September 2020, a consent form was distributed to the English majors. Only ones who agreed to participate in the study gave informed consent and were guaranteed to keep their identity confidentially. After receiving informed consent from the participants (N=63), a set of the English Intercultural Learning Experience: Students' Evaluation Form was distributed to them. Before making an evaluation, the researcher explained directions, statements, and questions in the evaluation form to the participants to ensure their understanding. Finally, 63 completed students' evaluation forms were returned to the researcher. The form was comprised of two parts. Part I contained four columns.

Column#1 was an 11-statement that described each English intercultural learning component. Column#2 was a four-point Likert scale for evaluating the 11 statements in column#1, which focused on the degree of English intercultural learning experience the participants gained from the English courses, ranging from a Large amount of experience (4), a Moderate amount of experience (3), a Small amount of experience (2), and No experience (1). Column#3 was the checklists of cultural information

the teachers used in the classroom. Column#4 was the checklists of 20 learning tasks that promoted students' English intercultural learning experience.

Part II contained three open-ended questions that elicited participants' comments on English intercultural Knowledge learning (question 1), Attitudes learning (question 2), and Skills learning (question 3) from the English courses they learned.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the four-point Likert scale and Checklists were analyzed using descriptive statistics to give a general impression of the answer patterns. Subsequently, the qualitative data from an open-ended part were analyzed by the content analysis to reaffirm the quantitative results, followed by findings and discussion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RQ 1: How much do the fourth-year tertiary English majors gain English intercultural learning experience from their English courses?

The evaluation scores from 63 fourth-year tertiary English majors were classified into four categories using Arithmetic Means—a Large amount of experience (M = 3.26-4.00), a Moderate amount of experience (M = 2.51-3.25), a Small amount of experience (M = 1.76-2.50), and No experience (M = 1.00-1.75). The results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' English intercultural learning experience

English Intercultural Learning Experience	LE	ME	SE	NE	M	(n)
I: Knowledge						
1. Learn the use of English in social situations	28	32	2	1	3.38	63
2. Learn surface and deep culture of Thailand	0	7	26	30	1.63	63
3. Learn surface and deep culture of one particular country	18	43	1	1	3.25	63
4. Learn general practices, values, beliefs, or phenomena that similar to all culture	30	30	2	1	3.41	63
5. Learn current global impact news	0	6	32	25	1.70	63
Scores Interpretation: A Moderate amount of Knowledge learning experience					2.68	
II: Attitudes						
6. Learn to open mind to cultural differences	28	31	3	1	3.37	63
7. Learn to respect Thai and other cultures	0	29	32	2	2.43	63
8. Learn not to criticize or judge any cultures	0	7	23	33	1.59	63
Scores Interpretation: A Small amount of Attitudes learning experience					2.46	
III: Skills						
9. Practice comparing and analyzing similarities and differences between cultures	22	38	2	1	3.30	63
10. Practice speaking English in different social situations	36	24	1	2	3.49	63
11. Practice social acting through a role-playing	2	28	20	13	2.30	63
Scores Interpretation: A Moderate amount of Skills learning experience					3.03	
Overall Interpretation: A Moderate amount of English intercultural learning experience					2.72	

Note: LE = a Large amount of experience; ME = a Moderate amount of experience; SE = a Small amount of experience; NE = No experience; M = Mean; n = Total number of responses

The overall findings in Table 1 showed that the participants experienced a moderate amount of English intercultural learning from their English courses of the last semester. The areas that they gained a large amount of experience covered Sociolinguistics (item 1, M=3.38), Universal cultural

knowledge (item 4, $M=3.41$), Openness (item 6, $M=3.37$), Comparing & Analyzing (item 9, $M=3.30$), and Communicating (item 10, $M=3.49$).

These results were likely to cause by the English courses they learned were relevant to public speaking and contemporary literature that aimed to promote skills in speaking and interpreting social practices or conventions that are universally understood. Also, one teacher was a native speaker while another one was a Thai who had long been living and studying in an English-speaking country. Therefore, these two teachers could provide actual forms of the language used in several social situations to their students as they were more familiar with the mobility of the language. Accordingly, they tended to fully aware of promoting Universal cultural knowledge, Comparing & Analyzing, and Communicating skills to their students.

Part of the findings was similar to Bhudharuksa (2011). Bhudharuksa found that most Thai English language teachers reflected that they frequently addressed daily life language and social situations when teaching culture. Likewise, Jantadej and Charubusp (2018) disclosed that Grades 7 and 8 Thai English language teachers provided the knowledge of the language used in different social situations, and communicative teaching to the greatest extent in their classrooms. These findings resembled the study of Sercu (2004) that the use of language, daily routine, new generation's culture, future careers, way of life, and education were largely mentioned in the classroom by foreign language teachers.

Moving back to the results of this present study, Specific cultural knowledge (item 3, $M=3.25$) was the only area that the participants had a moderate amount of learning experience. Then the areas that they gained a small amount of experience were Respect attitude (item 7, $M=2.43$) and Behavior skill (item 11, $M=2.30$). At last, the areas that the participants had no experience at all were Cultural self-knowledge (item 2, $M=1.63$), Global events knowledge (item 5, $M=1.70$), and Withholding-judgment attitude (item 8, $M=1.59$).

Part of the findings on the least and lacked teachers' support on cultural attitudes corresponded to Sercu (2006). Sercu discovered that foreign language teachers in seven countries disdained reinforcing cultural attitudes in their classroom as they presumed that students were inspired to learn other cultures by consuming massive kinds of media and had good attitudes towards the culture they learned. In the same vein, Jantadej (2019) revealed that the teacher participants in her study provided attitudes endorsement to the lowest extent, and none of the evidence concerning withholding home culture judgments found in their classroom. Apart from this, Hu and Gao (1997) emphasized the teachers misled their students into cultural judgment that caused stereotyping towards some particular cultures.

Whether teachers mislead or leave out attitudes cultivation, learners would find hardship in expressing respect and value or withholding-judgment towards their own and other cultures. Therefore, this finding suggested that attitudes reinforcement should intensely cultivate while giving learners an English intercultural learning experience.

Nonetheless, the students lacked cultural self-knowledge learning experience in this present study did not conform to Thumvichit (2018). Thumvichit reported that teacher respondents promoted students' local culture appreciation by integrating teaching materials that encouraged them to express their own culture in English. About this, Jantadej (2019) argued that her teacher participants perceived that they emphasized their students to proud of Thai identity before admiring the others, but very few of them mentioned Thai culture and promoted self-identity to their students in the actual classroom. One of the participants neither stated nor compared any cultures to Thai. Based upon the teachers' ignorance in that case can be inferred that what teachers perceived was not what they all performed in their actual teaching context. Resulting, those teachers failed to cultivate students with the appreciation of home culture.

The last absent area of the participants' learning experience was the Global events knowledge (item 5). Perhaps, teachers assumed that students were previously aware of global crises or events; they did not mention it in the classroom. However, we cannot deny that the 21st Century learners must alert on perceiving the world around them, offering condolences to sufferers, preparing for the impacts, and finding out the solutions. Consequently, Jantadej (2019) recommends English language teachers bring some global issues to discuss in the classroom to sharpen students' critical thinking and promote their global consciousness.

In short, this part's findings implied that the teachers took for granted the students' home culture, cultural attitudes reinforcement, and global impact discussion in their teaching.

The following part demonstrates sources of classroom cultural information and learning tasks the teachers used to promote students' English intercultural learning experience.

Table 2: Students' English intercultural learning experience sorted by sources of classroom cultural information and learning tasks

English Intercultural Learning	Sources of Classroom Cultural Information	Learning Tasks
I: <u>Knowledge</u> 1. Sociolinguistics (M= 3.38) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Large amount of experience	44.4% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 31.7% from readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs 22.4% from online resources 1.5% not mentioned	71.4% Task 12. identify and analyze the use of language 50.8% Task 15. interpret & evaluate values, viewpoints, and objectives of interlocutors 34.9% Task 16. discuss the perspective or values 1.5% No task
2. Cultural self-knowledge (M= 1.63) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No experience	5.6% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 5.6% from online resources 88.8% not mentioned	100% No task
3. Specific cultural knowledge (M= 3.25) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Moderate amount of experienced	63.4% from textbook 31.7% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 4.9% from online resources	85.7% Task 4. reformulate a story 92% Task 5. express opinions and viewpoints 12.6% Task 10. share students own experiences 26.9% No task
4. Universal cultural knowledge (M= 3.41) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Large amount of experience	47.6% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 23.8% from readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs 23.9% from online resources 4.7% not mentioned	12.7% Task 10. share students own experiences 15.8% Task 14. provide a prediction to a given material 88.8% Task 15. interpret & evaluate values, viewpoints, and objectives of interlocutors 80.9% Task 16. discuss the perspective or values 26.9% Task 18. specify misunderstanding aspects between Thai and other cultures 76.2% Task 19. identify areas of similarities and differences between cultures 4.7% No task
5. Global events (M= 1.70) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No experience	10% from textbook 90% not mentioned	100% No task

<p>II: Attitudes 6. Openness (M= 3.37) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Large amount of experience</p>	<p>3.3% from textbook 49.2% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 41.2% from readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs 6.3% not mentioned</p>	<p>19% Task 13. provide a 'noticing' to a given material 38.1% Task 14. provide a prediction to a given material 11.1% Task 15. interpret & evaluate values, viewpoints, and objectives of interlocutors 96.8% Task 16. discuss the perspectives, values 19% Task 18. specify misunderstanding aspects between Thai and other cultures 69.8% Task 19. identify areas of similarities and differences between cultures 93.6% Task 20. identify and analyze a problem of communication in each social event</p>
<p>7. Respect (M= 2.43) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Small amount of experience</p>	<p>14.2 % from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 17.7% from readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs 14.2% from online resources 53.9% not mentioned</p>	<p>100% No task</p>
<p>8. Withholding-judgment (M= 1.59) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No experience</p>	<p>11.2% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 88.8% not mentioned</p>	<p>100% No task</p>
<p>III: Skills 9. Comparing & Analyzing (M= 3.30) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Large amount of experience</p>	<p>95.2% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 4.8% from online resources</p>	<p>42.8% Task 7. express positive opinions and viewpoints towards learning cultural differences 4.7% Task 8. summarize a degree of acceptance towards other cultures 93.6% Task 9. compare & analyze perspective or values between Thais and any particular cultures 9.5% Task 10. share students own experiences 90.5% Task 16. discuss the perspective or values 6.3% Task 17. discuss the reasons or advantages of learning different cultures</p>
		<p>92% Task 18. specify misunderstanding aspects between Thai and other cultures 98.4% Task 19. identify areas of similarities and differences between cultures 55.5% Task 20. identify and analyze a problem of communication in each social event</p>

10. Communicating (M= 3.49) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Large amount of experience	47.6% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 4.8% from readings, literature, anecdotes, photographs 47.6% from online resources	68.2% Task 1. practice using the language in each situation 96.8% Task 5. express opinions and viewpoints 73% Task 9. compare & analyze perspective or values between Thais and any particular cultures 22.2% Task10. share students own experiences 65% Task16. discuss the perspective or values
		17.5% Task20. identify and analyze a problem of communication in each social event
11. Behavior (M= 2.30) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a Small amount of experience	25.4% from the teacher's experiences/viewpoints or instructions 74.6% not mentioned	100% No task

Note: Communicative tasks include (Tasks 1- 2), Reflection tasks include (Tasks 3-10),

Role-playing tasks include (Task 11), and Discussion tasks include (Tasks 12- 20)

Overall results in column#1 are taken from Table 1. Comparing five areas of English intercultural learning that the participants gained a large amount of experience in column#1 to column#2 found that teachers' own experience, viewpoints, and classroom instructions were used as classroom cultural information for 44.4% to promote participants' Sociolinguistics (item 1). They were used for 47.6% to promote participants' Universal cultural knowledge (item 4), 49.2% to promote Openness attitude (item 6), 95.2% to promote Comparing & analyzing skills (item 9), and 47.6% to promote Communicating skill (item 10). Also, online resources were used as classroom cultural information for 47.6% to promote participants' Communicating skills (item 10).

Nevertheless, the participants perceived that the teachers rarely used textbooks, readings, literature, anecdotes, and photographs as sources of classroom cultural information to provide them English intercultural learning experience.

As to the learning tasks in column#3, though the participants recognized doing all the nine tasks under discussion tasks in the classroom, only five of them could raise participants' experience to a large amount on four areas of intercultural learning. In detail, 71.4% of the participants perceived learning Sociolinguistics (item 1) through (Task 12) identifying and analyzing the language used from the given materials. 88.8% perceived learning Universal cultural knowledge (item 4) through (Task 15) interpreting & evaluating values, viewpoints, and objectives of interlocutors. 96.8% and 93.6% of them perceived learning Openness attitude (item 6) through (Task 16) discussing the perspectives or values in the given situations, and (Task 20) identifying and analyzing a problem of communication in each social event. 98.4% perceived learning Comparing & analyzing skill (item 9) through (Task19) identifying areas of similarities and differences between cultures.

In addition, among six tasks under reflection tasks the participants had done in the class, Communicating skill (item 10) was only one area they gained a large amount of experience. To elaborate, 96.8% of them perceived that they practiced (Task 5) expressing opinions and viewpoints toward intercultural issues in the classroom.

However, it was noticed that (Task 2) an interview was the only task under communicative tasks that the teachers abandoned in their classrooms. As well as (Task 3) an action log, it was disappeared from the reflection tasks. Moreover, the role-playing was another type of task that participants had never performed in class at all.

RQ2: In what way do the fourth-year tertiary English majors experience English intercultural learning from their English courses?

The student participants wrote down their suggestions and comments on the English intercultural Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills learning from the English courses in Part II of the English Intercultural Learning: Students' Evaluation Form.

About the Knowledge learning, 55.5% of the participants desired to see the significance of Thai culture from the literature course rather than admiring other cultures. Based on their desire, it can be concluded that the students realized the fade of Cultural self-knowledge (item2) in their classroom. For example:

"I wished to hear and appreciate more of Thai culture in the literature class because the teacher told me a lot about other cultures."

"I wished the teacher looked at Thai culture and mentioned it more in the literature class."

Another was the Global events knowledge (item 5) which participants rated no experience learning at all. However, it turned out that they paid the least attention to this area as well. Only 7.9% of them desired to learn more about global news to perceive global impacts on cultural differences. For example:

"I wish the teachers talked about the current global impacts that involved cultural differences."

For the Attitudes learning, most participants (63.4%) noticed the missing of the Withholding-judgment attitude (item 8) from the literature course. They stated that the teacher represented the Thai culture in a way that inferior to other cultures. Some of them were frustrated and wanted to see the positive side of Thai culture. It was likely to be the reason the participants rated not experienced the Withholding-judgment attitude at all in the evaluation form. Some of their comments are as follows:

"I was frustrated by the way the Thai teacher thought that other cultures were better than Thai culture."

"I disagreed with the Thai teacher's opinion when she gave negative comments on Thai culture and made us felt like other cultures were okay except Thai culture."

"The teacher herself should have taught students to have good cultural attitudes, especially to our culture."

"The teacher should have readjusted students' and her perspectives before teaching and learning cultures."

Also, 55.5% of the participants focused on the lack of Respect attitude (item 7) cultivation in the literature course. These are some examples of their comments:

"The teacher sounded sarcastic every time she talked about Thai culture or stories."

"I wished the teacher encouraged students to respect Thai culture. Not making a joke or mentioned ridiculous stories of the Thai."

"I wish the Thai teacher had more respect for her own culture, not just for other cultures or the target culture."

As to Skills learning, although the participants gained a large amount of experience in both Comparing & Analyzing (item 9) and Communicating (item 10) skills from the English courses, they remained to ask for more classroom tasks in these two areas.

46% raised their requests on Comparing & Analyzing skill as these following examples:

“I wished to practice more on comparing my own culture to my native English teacher’s culture.”

“I wished the teachers assigned more tasks to analyze about cultural aspects and lifestyles of other countries.”

“The teachers should have added more current case studies of cultural differences.”

“I wished the teachers gave me more cases of cultural similarities and analyzed conflicts or advantages of differences between cultures.”

Then, 52.3% gave comments on the Communicating skill. Here are some examples:

“I need more conversational practice to share opinions in class.”

“The Thai teacher is good at English but did not always speak English in class, so we had less chance to develop our listening and speaking.”

“Teachers should explain more cross-cultural communication strategies and let us practice using those strategies inside and outside the classroom.”

“I wished the teachers let us listen, be familiar, and communicate with different accents of English users.”

Surprisingly, in the evaluation form, the participants rated a small amount of experience in performing Behavior skill (item 11). Nevertheless, only 23.8% of them raised their requirement on this aspect in the open-ended section as these following examples:

“I wanted to practice social manners with role-plays or simulations.”

“Using role-playing could make students have more understanding on the social actions.”

“The teachers should let us practice acting through role-plays or simulations to be familiar with the proper manner in an international context.”

The overview results in this open-ended section supported their rating scale scores. The participants mostly commented on the missing of Cultural self-knowledge, Withholding-judgment, and Respect towards Thai culture. These hindrances could impact the students’ misconception that learning other cultures is more important than knowing oneself. Later on, they may decline to conceive a sense of pride to express their national heritage to others and fail to achieve desirable characteristics of national citizens.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary, the English majors in this study evaluated themselves experiencing English intercultural learning to a moderate amount. The qualitative results were in accord with the quantitative results. The participants experienced learning Sociolinguistics, Universal cultural knowledge, and Openness attitude to a large amount when the teachers shared their experiences and viewpoints as cultural information and assigned discussion tasks in the classroom. However, they desired to see the significance of home culture, especially from the Thai English language teacher as

they noticed the absence of fostering respect, a sense of pride, and withholding judgment towards their home culture in the classroom. It was interesting that although the participants experienced Comparing & Analyzing, and Communicating skills to a large amount, they requested to learn more of these skills. They ultimately emphasized that they had insufficient performing role-playing tasks that offered them to practice listening and speaking English and familiarizing them with proper social behaviors in international communication.

In conclusion, the English intercultural learning experience of Thai learners remains indistinct status. Overlooking intercultural learning experience, which embedded in the life skills and learning skills, learners tend to lack IC, which effectively helps them become global-ready graduates and progress in careers in the 21st Century. English language teachers are the influencers who can inspire learners to aware of intercultural learning's advantages and train them to make use of intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills to fulfill their livelihoods.

Implications for Teaching and Research

Providing learners with an English intercultural learning experience should proceed in no time. However, massive numbers of teachers remain uncertain about how to pass on this experience to learners. First, the teachers can facilitate learners to aware of sociolinguistics and cultural differences among their home country and others. The requirement is that the teachers should eliminate their own and learners' cultural prejudice against home culture. Learners must value their own culture before being willing to learn about others. Then, cultivate learners to tolerate discrepancies between cultures through attitude-reinforcing tasks. Such tasks can be reflective writing, action logs, attitude expressions, discussions, or critical incidents that allow learners to compare and analyze similarities and differences between cultures from the world's perspectives to withhold their judgment and eliminate bias. The communicative and behavior skills can corporately use with comparing and analyzing skills in tasks like role plays, debates, interviews, or simulations. These tasks offer learners opportunities to perform appropriate social etiquettes as well as expressing meaningful English. A recurrent practice of the entire process, in the long run, facilitates learners to perceive, interpret, communicate, and relate information and messages to their own culture. In eventually, they know how to establish and retain the relationship among the world citizens. The researcher recommends future research to investigate the burdens of English intercultural teaching and learning in other levels to pinpoint the solutions and develop an English intercultural curriculum that meets the global need—globalization.

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