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# Material Adaptation and Implementation to Enhance Intercultural Knowledge and Translation Skills of Non-English Major College Students in China

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## Abstract

Intercultural knowledge is vital in learning and using foreign languages effectively. This study was designed to develop the materials to enhance intercultural knowledge of non-English major college students in China and then, explore their effectiveness. The mixed methodology which combines qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis was utilized to analyze the data from questionnaires, translation competency of the students, and in-depth interviews on students' reflections towards the adapted materials. There were 98 students participating in this study in the academic year 2019 to 2020. After the new intercultural teaching material development and implementation, apparently the students' intercultural knowledge had been increased significantly based on the comparison of the questionnaires. The students' performance on translation competency was at a high level and their perceptions from the in-depth interviews revealed positive attitudes. On this basis, this study suggests the way to adapt and implement teaching materials effectively to enrich the students' intercultural knowledge and strengthen their language ability.

**Keywords:** intercultural knowledge, material adaptation, implementation, translation skill

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## Introduction

With rapid globalization, a new era marked by the themes of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit has arisen. With such significant momentum, the recognition of the need for an intercultural education has been growing Across the globe, travel, business, and international education are interculturally connected. In order to communicate effectively in foreign languages, learners must know the target language and its culture.

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the cooperation proposal of building the "New Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" respectively in order to build a community of interests, a community of destiny, and a community of responsibility featuring political mutual trust. All these interests should be developed based on intercultural tolerance. Additionally, the new national policy also brings new demands and challenges to foreign language education in China. The implantation of intercultural education is seemingly imminent and irresistible.

However, (Wilberschied, 2015) indicates that intercultural competence is not stress or can even be ignored during the foreign language teaching process. Moreover, the researcher found that most previous studies on intercultural competence overly focused on interracial interactions and aimed at exploring some effective methods to reduce such racial conflicts (Parsons, 2010; Sakurauchi, 2014) In addition, most Chinese researchers mainly focused on the exploration of curricular models' design, teaching strategies implementation, perceptions both of language teachers and students, personalities of students, and intercultural levels (Zhou, 2011)

(Coombe, Hossein, & Hassan, 2020) posited that language learning is a transdisciplinary educational process which involves linguistic learning and the different language exploring (Peters, 2015) However, under the requirements of the existing material design, English teaching

periods are too short to cover intercultural cultivation (Hong, 2018) In this regard, adding intercultural dimension to English teaching is to add a wider understanding of the target language and promotes the development of communication skills.

(Vallejo, 2018) states that textbook is one of the main mediators which is implemented for language learning. Moreover, based on the preliminary study on textbook evaluation, the researcher has found similar obstacles when implementing intercultural teaching in the classroom

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by using the existing textbook. Therefore, in order to improve this phenomenon, this research aims to develop an intercultural teaching model to enhance intercultural knowledge of the non-English major students at an Independent College.

In addition to the impact of the appropriateness of textbooks on intercultural competence development, many authoritative scholars confirm that translation competency is considered as the mix of linguistic and cultural practice which facilitates intercultural communication between individuals or groups who do not share the same language. Therefore, translation competency can assume that language learning and intercultural learning are closely related (Marković & Lazarević, 2020). Consequently, this study also aims to explore and prove that intercultural knowledge enhancement can contribute to the improvement of intercultural knowledge, and linguistic competency, especially the effects on the students' translation skill.

### Objectives

The objectives of this study are to develop intercultural teaching materials and explore the effectiveness on:

1. The students' intercultural knowledge.
2. The students' translation competency.
3. The students' satisfaction level with the new intercultural teaching materials.

### Methodology

Based on the research objectives, a mixed methodology approach which combined qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis was utilized to investigate and prove the effectiveness of the adapted intercultural teaching materials. The implementation of the adapted intercultural teaching model was administrated with 98 non-English major college students for 16 weeks together with a variety of research instruments i.e., CQS questionnaire, the adapted intercultural teaching materials, the translation tasks, and the in-depth interview in the second semester of academic year 2019-2020.

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## Participants

The participants of this research included 98 students who undertook the College English course in the second semester of academic year 2019-2020 at Oxbridge College of Kunming University Science and Technology, China. They were not English majors however; English was learned as a compulsory course. The participants were 80 males and 18 females with ages ranging from 19-20 years old. They were native speakers of Chinese.

## Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)

The researcher adapted the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) presented by (Ang, 2007) as one of the questionnaires of this study to compare the progress change of the students' intercultural knowledge before and after the implementation of the adapted intercultural teaching material implementation. It consists of 15 items referring to four dimensions as follows: Question 1-3: Metacognition category; Question 4-10: Cognition category; Question 11: Behavior category; Question 12-15: Motivation category. All items are closed questions by which the participants were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale with the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76.

There were 2 translation tasks designed in the adapted intercultural teaching materials: 1) a brief Chinese introduction about The Great Wall; 2) a short Chinese passage about Chinese traditional wedding customs. The students were required to translate two short Chinese passages into English, and the context was related to the different cultures between China and other countries.

## The In-depth Interview

After teaching the adapted intercultural materials, the in-depth interview was conducted to explore the students' satisfaction on their intercultural knowledge learning.

The research instruments mentioned above were employed to find the answers for the research objectives. The data were analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative methods with the results shown in the next section.



## Results

Based on the findings derived from the research objectives of this study, the conclusions were drawn in three components, i.e., the results of CQS questionnaire, the students' translation competency, and students' satisfaction.

### 1. The effects of the implementation of intercultural teaching materials on the students' intercultural knowledge

1.1 The Findings of the Students' Meta-cognition category increased from "Sometimes" ( $M=2.79$ ) to "Often" ( $M=3.93$ ).

Moreover, the students' Meta-cognition on their cultural knowledge after learning the adapted intercultural teaching materials has increased in every item, illustrated by t-test showing a statistical significance in their perception level before and after the adapted teaching material implementation. The t-value of this category revealed that the significant value was 0.000 which was smaller than the 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 1** Comparison of students' Meta-cognition between the pre-survey and the post-survey ( $N=98$ )

No.	Strategy (Meta-cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test t sig.(2-tailed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
1	I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interactin g with	2.8	0.73	Some times	3.97	0.87	Often	- 10.36 0	

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No.	A.CQ- Strategy (Meta- cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test t sig.(2- tailed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
	people with different cultural backgrounds.								
1	I adjust my cultural knowledge as I								
2	interact with people from a different culture.	2.58	0.73	Rarely	3.84	0.89	Often	-10.79 0	
3	I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I	3	0.89	Some times	3.97	0.95	Often	-7.55 0	

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No.	A.CQ- Strategy (Meta- cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test t sig.(2- tailed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
	interact with people from different cultures.								
	Grand Mean	2.79	0.78	Some times	3.93	0.9	Often	-9.57 0	

### 1.2 The Findings of the Students' Cognition Category

For the Cognition Category, among these seven items, the highest mean after learning was on the diet of some different cultures ( $M=3.96$ ,  $SD=0.85$ ). While the lowest part was on how to start a small conversation ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ). It can be seen that every item has increased significantly after learning with the increase of grand mean from 2.72 (Sometimes) to 3.70 (Often). Moreover, the students' gained higher knowledge on cognition category particularly on famous landmarks and wedding of other cultures with high t-value at -8.64 and 7.90 respectively.

From Table 2, the students' Cognition after the new intercultural teaching model learning, illustrated by t-test, was significantly different from that before the new teaching model implementation. The t-value of this category revealed that the significant value was 0.000 which was smaller than the 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 2** Comparison of students' Cognition between the pre-survey and the post-survey (N=98)

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No.	B.CQ- Knowledge (Cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test sig.( 2- tail ed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
4	I know the customs of the holidays or special days of other cultures.	2.94	0.96	Sometimes	3.85	0.95	Often	-6.83 0	
5	I know the wedding customs of some different cultures.	2.57	0.81	Rarely	3.7	1.04	Often	-7.9 0	
6	I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in some different cultures.	2.63	0.79	Sometimes	3.47	1.03	Often	-6.59 0	
7	I know the dietary	2.93	0.92	Sometimes	3.96	0.85	Often	-7.87 0	

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No.	B.CQ- Knowledge (Cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test sig.( 2- tail ed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
	habits of some different cultures.								
8	I know how to start a small conversation in some different cultures.	2.45	0.79	Rarely	3.38	1.02	Someti- mes	-6.67 0	
9	I know some famous landmarks of other counties.	2.83	1.05	Someti- mes	3.95	0.9	Often	-8.64 0	
10	I know the difference in family ties of some different cultures.	2.71	0.95	Someti- mes	3.62	0.96	Often	-6.42 0	

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No.	B.CQ- Knowledge (Cognition Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test sig.( 2- tail ed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
	Grand Mean	2.72	0.9	Someti- mes	3.7	0.96	Often	-7.4 0	

### 1.3 The Findings of the Students' Behavior Category

For the Behavior Category, the pre-survey showed that the mean of the target students' Behavior was 2.88 meaning that the students' Behavior on cultural communication was regarded as 'Sometimes'. After the implementation of the adapted intercultural teaching materials, the students perceived both body language and oral intercultural communication improvement with the mean of 3.44 meaning that their behavior on intercultural communication was regarded as 'Often' showing significant difference.

**Table 3.** Comparison of students' Behavior between the pre-survey and the post- survey (N=98)

No.	C.CQ-Behavior (Behavior Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test sig.(2- tailed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Inter- pre- ta- tion	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
11	I can change both my verbal behavior and non-verbal behavior when making an	2.88	0.98	Som- es	3.44	1.02	Often	-4.36 0	

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No.	C.CQ-Behavior (Behavior Category)	Cultural Intelligence				t-test		
		before learning		after learning		Interpre- tation	t	sig.(2- tailed)
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
intercultural communication.								
Grand Mean		2.88	0.98	3.44	1.02	Often	-4.36	0
Som es								

#### 1.4 The Results of the Students' Motivation

The survey of Motivation Category revealed an impressive result with the increase of grand mean from 2.22 to 3.50 or from 'Rarely' to 'Often'. Among these 4 items, the highest mean was on the part that the participants enjoy having chances to stay in different cultures ( $M=3.64$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ). While the part on the lack of social confidence on intercultural communication was ranked the lowest ( $M=3.35$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ). It shows that a longer cultivation period on the students' intercultural communicative competence should be provided in order to enhance the practical competence.

The target students' motivation on the awareness of the different cultures after the adapted intercultural teaching material learning, illustrated by t-test, was significantly different, improving from 'Rarely' to 'Often'.

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**Table 4** Comparison of students' Motivation between the pre-survey and the post-survey (N=98)

No.	D.CQ- Motivation (Motivation Category)	Cultural Intelligence						t-test t sig.(2- tailed)	
		before learning			after learning				
		Mean	S.D.	Inter- pretati- on	Mean	S.D.	Interpre- tation		
12	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	2.38	0.81	Rarely	3.62	1.1	Often	-8.76 0	
13	I am confident that I can socialize with local people in a different culture.	1.99	0.91	Rarely	3.4	0.98	Sometimes	- 11.3 8 0	
14	I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.	2.08	0.96	Rarely	3.35	1.02	Sometimes	-9.49 0	

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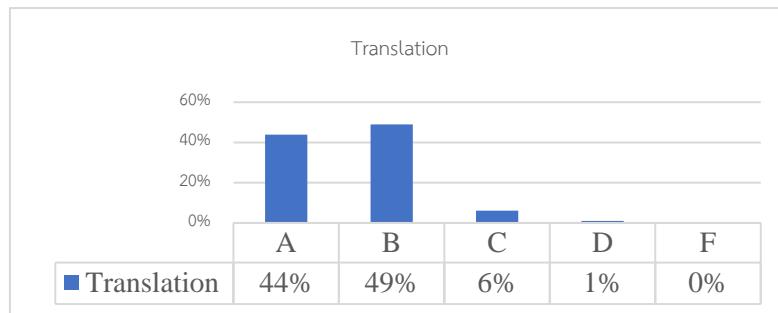


15	I enjoy having chances to stay in different cultures.	2.43	1.08	Rarely	3.64	1.23	Often	-7.45	0
	Grand Mean	2.22	0.94	Rarely	3.5	1.08	Often	- 9.27	0

## 2. Students' Translation Competency

As mentioned above, translation skill is regarded as one of the essential measures to assess individual's language competence. Especially, it has a significant impact on intercultural learning since the cultural comparison activity can be applied based on various translation tasks implementation. Thus, the researcher designed two translation tasks in the intercultural teaching materials. The topics of these two passages are related to Chinese traditional cultures. Through the translation practice, the students can be aware both of their own cultures and its differences between other cultures. The researcher believes that such a cultural comparison activity can be beneficial to intercultural awareness cultivation and its competence development. With strong intercultural awareness and competence, the willingness to communicate by using the intercultural knowledge could be promoted. The students' performance on the translation tasks can be seen in Figure 1.

From Figure 1, the students' performance on translation tasks resulted in impressive results which exceeded expectations with an average score of 77.94%. Most of the students achieved B Level (70%-79%) with 49%, 44% of the students belonged to A Level (80%-100%). However, a few students (6%) got C Level (60%-69%). And the D level of the translation tasks was only 1%. To be more specific, the highest score of the translation tasks was above 90%, and the lowest score was above 50%. In short, most students' translation performance obtained the range of 70%-89% or high satisfaction.



**Figure 1** Distribution of Translation Tasks (N=98)

### 3. The students' satisfaction on the new intercultural teaching materials

The analysis of the in-depth interview can provide further information about how students acquired the relevant intercultural knowledge by learning with the new intercultural teaching materials. The content analysis criteria were adapted according to the categories of Cultural Intelligence Scale Questionnaire: 1) Meta-cognition with 3 sub-groups: Conscious, Adjust, and Check; 2) Cognition with 3 sub-groups: Knowledge, Obtain and Rules; 3) Motivation with 3 sub-groups: Enjoy, Confidence, and Value; 4) Behavior with 2 sub-groups: Know and Implement. Table 7 shows the frequencies and percentages of the students' satisfaction on the new teaching materials derived from the interview of 10 students randomly selected from each group after learning.

**Table 5** Frequencies and Percentages of the Students' Satisfaction on the Implementation of the New Intercultural Teaching Model

Category	Sub-Category	Sample	Frequency	Percentage	Total	
					Frequency	Percentage
Meta-cognition	Conscious	10	34	15.38%		
	Adjust	10	7	3.17%	58	25.11%
	Check	10	17	7.36%		
Cognition	knowledge	10	18	8.14%		
	Obtain	10	22	9.95%	44	19.05%
	Rules	10	4	1.81%		
Motivation	Enjoy	10	18	8.14%		
	Confidence	10	27	12.22%	87	39.66%
	Value	10	42	19.00%		
Behavior	Know	10	22	9.95%		
	Implement	10	20	9.05%	42	18.18%
		Total		231	100%	

From Table 5, the total frequency of the key words defined in the taxonomy criteria was 231 times. To be more specific, the most frequent description was the Motivation Category of the new intercultural teaching material implementation with the highest frequency of 87 times or 39.66%. The second frequent description was Meta-cognition Category with the frequency of 58 times or 25.11%. The next two categories with high frequencies and percentage including the Cognition Category with the frequency of 44 times or 19.05%, and the Behavior Category with the frequency of 42 times or 18.18% respectively. The results of the in-depth interview showed that the new intercultural teaching materials were quite highly satisfied by the target students since they can effectively support their increased intercultural knowledge.

In addition to the presentation by data, the statements from the students' interview also confirm the effectiveness of the new intercultural teaching material implementation. The order of the interpretation analysis was from the high frequency to the low frequency.

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### 3.1 Motivation Category

Most of the students reported that the new teaching materials were beneficial to their intercultural knowledge. “The new intercultural teaching materials are very useful in the era of globalization. After learning the new intercultural teaching materials, I think my intercultural knowledge has been increased since there are many colorful topics related the different cultures given in the teaching materials” (Student A). Moreover, the new intercultural teaching materials are more interesting than the existing teaching model as recognized by the students: “I think the new intercultural teaching materials are terrific” (Student B). “I think the new intercultural teaching materials are novelty and interesting” (Student C). After learning with the new intercultural teaching materials, many students stated that they felt more confident when they interacted in the intercultural communicative situation: “I feel more confidence on intercultural communication than ever” (Student J). “The intercultural social confidence has been increased for sure” (Student I).

### 3.2 Meta-cognition Category

Table 5 vividly reveals that the students’ intercultural meta-cognition has been fostered as shown in high frequency and percentage (58, 25.11%). Most of the students stated that they could notice the differences in cultures when interacting with individuals from the different cultural backgrounds: “It also helps us to understand the different cultures around the world” (Student A). “Through the learning of the new model, I realized some cultural awareness existing in our intercultural communication process” (Student J).

### 3.3 Cognition Category

As shown in Table 5, the students’ cognition had the frequency of 44 times or the percentage of 19.05%. “Through the implementation of the new intercultural teaching materials, we are able to be aware of the different cultures. Meanwhile, our own cultural knowledge has been emphasized as well” (Student C).

### 3.4 Behavior Category

The students focused more on behaviors on intercultural issues and this was reported at a high frequency and percentage (42, 18.18%). “Based on the more and more understandings,



we are more willing to make a conversation to others by using English" (Student D). "After the learning this new model, I am willing to communicate with others by using English" (Student J).

### Discussion

Implementation of intercultural materials in the classroom can enhance students' intercultural knowledge as can be seen from the increase in intercultural awareness and improvements in translation skill. According to the findings of pre-survey and post-survey, the students' intercultural knowledge and their translation competency have been significantly improved based on the four perspectives of Cultural Intelligence Scale (Ang, 2007) Moreover, the students' interview reported high confidence, high interest, and high understanding in intercultural knowledge. This can be explained by the implementation of intercultural materials and the instructional approach.

The design and implementation concept could be a valuable template to enhance intercultural learning of the new teaching materials which can support and motivate students to comprehend the texts. This is supported by the students' interviews showing that they were able to: 1) realize, understand, respect, and accept different cultures; 2) implement different cultures; 3) expand intercultural awareness; 4) improve their eagerness to use English in intercultural communication; and 5) solve issues within the intercultural situation appropriately and smoothly. The results also showed that teaching objectives of the new teaching material instruction were successfully achieved which is in line with the studies by (Peters, 2015; Rehman & Umar, 2019; Coombe, Hossein, & Hassan, 2020) advocated that intercultural knowledge learning should be integrated in the language learning process in order to facilitate the cultivation of intercultural competence of the target language.

In addition to the increase of students' intercultural knowledge, their translation competency also has been promoted while learning with the adapted teaching materials. The verdict can be proved according to the findings illustrated above. (Bagheridoust & Mahabad, 2017) indicated that culture is one of the most vital element of its language that should be translated due to different cultures have different characteristics. In other words, some concepts and items are bound to a specific culture and country and do not exist in any other. (Marković & Lazarević,

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2020) asserted that translation skills could be one of the valid criteria to assess students' intercultural competence since to keep the translation result authentic and appropriate, students are required to interpret cultural issues of the target language in a correct way so that the misunderstandings or inappropriate translation could be avoided (Gambier & Van Doorslaer, 2010) Based on the relationship between intercultural knowledge and translation skills mentioned above, the findings of this research also revealed that the students' translation competency have been enhanced with the expanding of their intercultural knowledge.

### **Suggestions for Intercultural Material Adaptation and Implementation**

Recently, (Charunsri, 2019) indicated that users' (teachers and students) existing knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, competencies, interests, and experiences should be considered when adapting a new textbook. In particular, Big C and small c (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1998) were integrated into the Modified Cultural Teaching Model as the essential basis for the adaptation of the new intercultural teaching materials. In addition to these classic theories to support, there is some recent research on intercultural teaching model development as an auxiliary resource for the new intercultural teaching model adaptation (Dagbaeva, Samoshkina, & Tzybenova, 2020; Evtyugina, Zhumanova, Grishina, Kondurina, & Sturikova, 2020; Frolikova, 2020) The framework of the material adaptation consists of modified Big C and Small C culture together with the intercultural competence model.

The adapted intercultural teaching materials contain 7 units, and each unit is divided into 4 sections to teach: i.e. 1) Let's Get Ready (pre-class) students are required to finish all tasks in this section before they attend the class; 2) Let's Read (pre-class) the students can grasp the intercultural knowledge while their learning motivation on intercultural issues can be built; 3) Let's Do It (in-class & after-class) the students can implement the intercultural knowledge they have learned to solve the problem in the given cultural situations; 4) Let's Quiz (in-class) in order to evaluate the learning outcomes of each unit, there are five multiple-choice questions prepared in each unit. Through the colorful intercultural topics, the students are encouraged to be aware of their own cultures and the different cultures.

### **Conclusion**

ແນ່ນຄວາມເປັນວັນ ປຸດທະນົມຄວາມຮູ້ ຍັດມັນຄຸນອຮຽມໃຫເຫັນ ເມື່ອຄົງແຫ່ງການເຫັນຮູ້ຕຸກ



In short, this study focuses on the proposition that intercultural knowledge is one of the crucial competences for language learning. In addition to this objective, the effective and active teaching strategy for translation competency development was found to be successful. Cultivating individual's intercultural knowledge has profound and significant influence on the language acquisition process. The findings of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can prove that the students' intercultural knowledge can be enhanced through developing and implementing new intercultural teaching materials. Meanwhile, translation skills can be practiced and improved by expanding intercultural knowledge as well. This provides more insights into the components that can affect the development of intercultural competency in further EFL settings. The more intercultural knowledge, the greater language learning motivation and the better performances on each language skill. The statement can be confirmed by the findings of this study and other previous studies in this field. However, there is a need for research that investigates the possibility of raising cultural awareness through other forms of intercultural teaching with more depth on other skills and more authentic communication. With the rapid globalization in science, technology, business, communication, and education, there is rising demand for intercultural knowledge particularly in EFL teaching and learning.

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