



Developing Intercultural Awareness in ELT: Students' Attitudes toward their Intercultural Learning Experience

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| Intercultural awareness | <i>This study aimed at investigating students' attitudes toward their intercultural learning experience to develop intercultural awareness in an English language classroom. The participants were a group of 31 students at tertiary level. They registered for an elective English course, the objective of which was to prepare students for job application, job interview and working effectively in multicultural contexts. A set of teaching and learning materials intended to develop intercultural awareness was especially designed and integrated into the existing English course. A survey questionnaire, reflective writing, self-assessment forms, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. The results showed that the participants had highly positive attitudes toward their intercultural learning experience in various aspects, but still were hesitant with the overall ideas of an incorporation of intercultural components into an English course.</i> |
| Intercultural communication | |
| English language teaching | |
| Intercultural speaker | |

INTRODUCTION

As a number of non-native English users are greatly increasing nowadays, an important question to answer in English Language Teaching (ELT) is whether the nature of current English classrooms can effectively equip the 21st century learners with a sufficiency of language ability and intercultural ability for intercultural communication. While intercultural competence has been widely recognized as an important part of learners' education, Young and Sachdev (2011) proposed that an English classroom is actually the best place to develop intercultural competence. As a matter of fact, many teachers of English recognize the importance of developing intercultural competence and have been trying to integrate cultural aspects into their English instruction. However, when it comes to real practice, there are problems. These intercultural aspects are unlikely to be appropriately incorporated into English language classrooms.

Take Thailand's English classrooms as a case in point. In Thailand, English is regarded as a high-status foreign language widely taught (Wongsothorn, Hiranburana, & Chinnawongs, 2003).

There is a misconception of the ultimate goal of ELT which has a focus on using a native speaker as a model. Although the mastery of English like a native English speaker is believed to be an ideal goal for a learner to achieve, this might not actually be a necessary goal in the current situation. Having a native-like mastery of the language does not guarantee success in intercultural encounters in which groups from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds are involved. An efficient English user is expected not only to possess language ability but also to carry on with a more intercultural perspective which involves appropriate attitudes, empathy, and understanding of their interlocutors. In addition, there is a misunderstanding of cultural aspects which should be taught in ELT classrooms. Using a native English speaker as a model can trigger a misunderstanding of the cultural aspects that should be taught in class. Teachers mostly tend to put an emphasis on addressing cultural content at a superficial level including traditional customs, food, clothes and iconic features and most seriously as national cultures. This is unlikely to achieve a goal to prepare learners for a multilingual and multicultural situation.

Therefore, this research was conducted to find out whether intercultural skills could be harmoniously integrated along with teaching language skills with an intercultural approach (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2010; Barrett et al., 2013) in ELT in Thailand. Accordingly, a set of intercultural teaching-learning materials was designed as an integral part, and it was incorporated to an English course. The teaching-learning intercultural course component was called the intercultural awareness 18-hour teaching-learning materials (the ICA-18). To investigate what the participants felt when learning to develop intercultural awareness and to explore the extent to which the ICA-18 teaching-learning materials can effectively be employed to develop students' intercultural awareness, the research surveyed the students' attitudes toward their learning experience as well as their overall attitudes toward the importance of developing intercultural awareness in an English language classroom. The research questions were as follows:

- (1) What are the participants' attitudes toward their learning as a result of studying the 18-hours teaching-learning materials (the ICA-18) which were especially designed for the study?
- (2) What are the participants' attitudes toward an overall idea of developing intercultural awareness in English language classrooms?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship between language and culture

A separable relationship between language and culture is widely perceived by a number of scholars (Agar, 1995; Halliday, 1979; Moran, 2011). They describe language as a product of culture (Moran, 2011) and designated the function of language as a primary symbolic tool of cultural transmission and interaction (Halliday, 1979). Obviously, language and culture are closely related in many aspects; however, their connection is not always viewed as an inseparable link. Some scholars like Bhaktin(1986), Kramsch (1993) and Risager (2007), believe in the possibility of their being separate units. From this perspective, a language is not necessarily

attached to a target culture but is possibly dependent on the users of a language who tend to create their own cultural meanings in their communicative process. Risager (2005) proposes that the relationship between language and culture can be both separable and inseparable phenomena depending on how people view this relationship.

Language and culture can also be viewed as a separate relationship when the notion of 'third place' of Kramsch (1993) comes into play. She rejects the idea that there is a 'target culture' to which a language should be linked, but instead any user of language has an opportunity to create their cultural space in which communicative practices are freed from the norms of both the first language (L1) and the first culture (C1), and the second language (L2) and the second culture (C2), opening up new perspectives on languages and cultures. The ability of good language users is to construct their own culture no matter whom they communicate with and to use language in multicultural contexts. She also suggests the idea that culture can be an emergent feature of communication rather than an established given. (Kramsch, 1993, as cited in Baker, 2009, p.44).

The way in which teachers of English view the relationship of language culture, whether inseparable or separable, can lead to implications for English language teaching. Different views of language and culture connection can substantially contribute to the differences in reestablishing teaching objectives, developing teaching materials, and designing assessment of students' English proficiency. Therefore, teachers and learners should gain more insights into the use of English in intercultural communication in this century so that they will be able to make appropriate decisions about the teaching and learning of English.

Cultural awareness and intercultural awareness

Cultural awareness is a means of conceptualizing many of the skills and understandings necessary for all instances of intercultural communication (Baker, 2009). Cultural awareness is defined by Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) as "sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language use and communication" (as cited in Baker, 2009, p.72). It also involves the ability to compare cultures and discover points of similarity and difference which can lead to an ability to decenter and relativise our cultural viewpoints. Cultural awareness can be accurately raised with the right understanding about what culture actually is.

A learner of English involved in intercultural communication is required to gain insights from the definitions of culture and understands clearly that "cultures are not synonymous with countries" (Jandt, 2013, p.6). Yet, culture should be viewed as a general concept in which culture-general components can be applied to any and all cultures (Kohls & Knight, 1994, as cited in Moran, 2001). This viewpoint is widely accepted in intercultural education and training which is aimed to build up people's intercultural awareness. However, this understanding of culture alone is not sufficient for global communication where a large variety of people are involved in intercultural encounters. Appropriate attitudes and intercultural skills constituting intercultural awareness are required by a user of English in order to be a successful intercultural communicator.

Intercultural awareness (ICA) is considered by Chen and Starosta (1996), as the cognitive dimension of intercultural communication competence which refers to the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behavior that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment. Nevertheless, the term 'intercultural awareness' in this research study, the researcher adopted the following definition defined by Baker (2011) and it refers to an ability which involves not only the knowledge part of intercultural competence but also the dimensions dealing with attitude and skills needed for intercultural communication.

“...Intercultural awareness is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication.” (p.202)

As a matter of fact, there is a variety of different related terms used to signify the intercultural ability. Among these are Intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997), Intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1986), Intercultural awareness (Baker, 2009), Global competence (Hunter, White and Godbey, 2006) or Symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2006). Despite differences in the terms used, the models of these competences share some common features. They mainly place importance on similar components like knowledge, attitudes and skills which are qualities required by a person to effectively handle intercultural encounters.

Development of intercultural competence in English language classroom

A number of scholars agree with the idea that language ability alone does not fully support students to effectively be taking part in the global communication. (Byram, 1997; Baker, 2011; Canagarajah, 2013). Moeller and Nugent (2014) state, “When language skills and intercultural competence become linked in a language classroom, students become optimally prepared for participation in a global world (p.2).” Besides emphasizing linguistic knowledge and language skills, teachers should therefore also focus on raising students' cultural awareness and develop students' intercultural awareness to ensure that they can effectively handle intercultural communicative acts.

The frameworks concerning the development of intercultural competence in English language classrooms adopted for the design of teaching materials used in this research study are a combination of Byram's (1997) comprehensive model of intercultural communicative competence and Baker's (2009, 2011) model of intercultural awareness. In Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (Appendix 1), there are five main focal points: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. In Baker's model of intercultural awareness (Appendix 2), there are three levels. Level 1, basic cultural awareness (CA), involves aspects of CA which are related to an understanding of cultures at a very general level. Level 2 concerning more complex understanding of cultures and cultural frames of reference moving from essentialist positions. Level 3, intercultural awareness (ICA), moves beyond viewing cultures as bounded entities. At this level the focus is on an understanding of the nature of intercultural communication in which English is considered being used as a lingua franca (Baker, 2011).

There are a few differences between these two models. First, they refer to the ability to handle intercultural communication with different terms. Byram uses 'intercultural communicative competence' with the purpose of combining Hymes' (1972) communicative competence with his intercultural competence. Baker (2015) uses 'intercultural awareness' and justifies that "ICA attempts to avoid problematic associations with the term competence in utilizing the more loosely defined and holistic term awareness" (Baker, 2015, p.20). Another difference between these two models are the attempts of Baker's model "to move away from essentialist nation-based correlations of language and culture and a focus of the fluid, complex, and emergent nature of the relationship in intercultural communication through ELF" (Baker, 2015, p.20). On the other hand, in Byram's model, there is still a target culture to relate to because intercultural dimension is also integrated to other language courses that there is an existence of cultural aspects of that target culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research participants

The participants in this study were a group of 31 students at tertiary level whose majors were tourism, Eastern languages, and psychology. They took the *English for Employment* course in Semester 1/ 2018.

Research context

The "*English for Employment*" course was chosen, and its objectives were originally to prepare students for job application and job interview and it consisted of 45 hours. For the newly-designed course, the researcher kept the two existing objectives and added the third objective which was to prepare students for working in multicultural contexts. Therefore the ICA-18 teaching-learning materials were implemented to serve this objective while the in-house text book called "*English for Employment*" written by Anantapol, 2009 was still used to serve the two original objectives. The constructions of the old course and the new course were illustrated in Appendix 3.

Research treatment

The intercultural awareness teaching-learning materials or the ICA-18 was designed to ensure that students in the "*English for Employment*" course could acquire essential cultural and intercultural understanding and gain opportunities of developing intercultural skills at a certain level. The contents of the ICA-18 consisted of two main parts: Cultural awareness and Intercultural awareness (Baker, 2011) and the details of these components are shown in Appendix 4.

Research instruments

There are three main types of instruments consisting of attitude survey questionnaire, and reflective writing and pre /post self-assessment forms to answer the research questions.

1. The survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire on attitudes was comprised of four main sections as shown in Appendix 5. The question items included the Likert-type scale to discover the students' feelings toward their learning and the overall ideas of the incorporation of an ICA component into the English language classroom and open-ended questions to obtain more opinions and attitudes about each element of the ICA-18 teaching materials.

2. Reflective writing

Reflective writing was one of the teaching-learning tools in this English course. The participants were asked to write 4 reflections on their learning experiences through the 4 modules of the ICA-18 teaching and learning materials. They could reflect on what they had learned in class. They generally identified and described what they liked, what they did not like and their feelings while learning in this course. However, they could skip any reflection or any parts of reflection if they did not feel comfortable to write. They were encouraged to write in English; however, if they thought that they could express their ideas better in Thai for some topics, they were allowed to do so.

3. Pre and post self-assessment forms

The pre and post self-assessment forms were employed as a learning tool of the *English for Employment* course. The purpose was to encourage students to self-evaluate the extent of intercultural aspects to which they had known and understood before they started the course and the extent to which they finally gained after they finished the course.

The pre and post forms were the same, and the statements used in the self-assessment were taken from the objectives of each module that the participants had studied in this course. In this self-assessment forms, the participants were asked to rate the extent of agreement and disagreement about their ability concerning intercultural aspects before and after they started to learn this course. The details of the self-assessment form are illustrated in appendix 6

4. Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis; therefore, there were five interviews each of which included 3-5 participants. The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to tackle the details of some aspects which might be left unanswered in the questionnaire or which needed more clarification.

RESULTS

Results of Research Question # 1: *What are the participants' attitudes toward their learning as a result of studying the 18-hour teaching-learning materials (the ICA-18) which are especially designed for the study?*

The results obtained to address this research questions were categorized into two main topics: the participants' attitudes toward what they have acquired (1.1), their attitudes toward the ICA-18 teaching-learning materials (1.2), and their attitudes toward their progress in developing intercultural awareness (1.3).

1. Attitudes towards what the participants have acquired

This part presents the participants' attitudes toward the three main aspects: the cultural knowledge they have gained, the new perceptions and attitudes they have perceived, and skills they have practiced. In addition, the participants' feelings and satisfaction concerning overall components of the teaching-learning materials were also illustrated.

1.1. Cultural knowledge

In their reflective writing, the students described various types of cultural knowledge that they have learned, including cultural topics like cultural definition, cultural identity, cultural dimension, differences among people from different cultures and some intercultural concepts like non-verbal communication. They described what they gained and how they can make use of it in the future as follows:

Student comment 1

"... (It) helps me understand **cultural differences** among people from different countries and individual differences of people of different cultures."

Student comment 2

"There are so many things that help me develop my intercultural awareness and **cultural dimensions** studied in this module which help us to understand others."

Student comment 3

"I have learned to express myself in **non-verbal communication** in different cultures, and learned to be open-minded to others."

Student comment 4

"**Big C and Small C (definitions of culture)** are very helpful in daily life and help me develop my intercultural awareness."

From the examples, the participants demonstrated what they had learnt and they were convinced this cultural knowledge would help them to develop their understanding about culture and intercultural communication. This type of cultural knowledge is corresponded with the cognitive dimension that both Byram (1997) and Baker (2009, 2011) state as one of the necessary aspects in their intercultural communicative competence and intercultural models respectively. This finding shows that the participants have gained beyond superficial cultural knowledge and this is a significant starting point for them to develop their intercultural awareness.

1.2. New perceptions and attitudes

Besides gaining cultural knowledge, after having studied how to develop intercultural awareness for 18 hours in this course, the participants also expressed their opinions on different cultural situations as follows:

Student comment 5

"I have realized that a regular and usual thing that we usually do in order to succeed in something might not be the only way to do things, so **we should not turn down other people's ways of thinking.**"

Student comment 6

"...This lesson taught me that before judging someone, I have to learn his/her culture first. **Don't judge someone as good or bad by using only my own attitude or opinion.**"

Student comment 7

"I have learned that people of each group have their own group culture, and it makes me understand better about cultural differences. I am aware that **to look at things from other people's perspectives is important, not only by looking from own perspectives.**"

Student comment 8

"In learning differences among cultures, **there is no right or wrong, good or bad.** We just have to realize these differences, and then we can be more aware of how to do things."

These student comments show that the participants have adopted different viewpoints from what they used to believe. These changes in their attitudes can contribute to developing right attitudes toward cultural circumstances. It is not always necessary for a person to show their positive attitudes toward cultural differences. Byram (1997) would say having right attitudes does not equate expressing positive attitudes, but they should be the attitudes which are not influenced by personal or cultural bias or prejudice.

1.3. Practice of skills needed for intercultural communication

In their reflective writing, the participants mentioned the skills they had opportunities to practice in the classroom activities and they also stated how they could make use of these skills.

Student comment 9

"I have learned **how to analyze various situations** in order to understand cultural differences."

Student comment 10

"I learned **how to adapt to other cultures** when I want to communicate with people from a different culture."

Student comment 11

"I have learned **to recognize differences** between people and their culture and to understand them."



Student comment 12

"I have learned to be more aware of intercultural communication by **using appropriate tone of voice, spoken language, and body language.**"

The results above have illustrated a variety of skills the participants experienced in their classroom. Some skills mentioned are analyzing cultural situations, using appropriate verbal and non-verbal language with others, adapting oneself when necessary, and being aware of cultural differences.

In addition, the results gained from the reflective writing can be supported by the data obtained from Section 2 of the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the participants were required to state the level of their agreement or disagreement on the extent to which the course activities of this study can help them to gain cultural knowledge, to have appropriate attitudes, and to practice the skills needed. The descriptors of the rating scales are 1 for *disagree* (ไม่เห็นด้วย), 2 for *slightly agree* (เห็นด้วยเล็กน้อย), 3 for *moderately agree* (เห็นด้วยปานกลาง), and 4 for *mostly agree* (เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง) and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Students' attitudes towards the course activities

| Activities for discussions: | | Mean | SD |
|---|--|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | To raise my awareness on cultural conditioning. | 3.32 | .748 |
| 2 | To increase my cultural self-awareness. | 3.45 | .568 |
| 3 | To help me understand my own culturally-conditioned identity. | 3.39 | .667 |
| 4 | To help form my understanding about the layers of culture. | 3.61 | .615 |
| 5 | To enable me to recognize the power of diversity and appreciate that there is more than one valid way to accomplish something. | 3.48 | .626 |
| 6 | To provide me with the opportunities to experience different types of communication. | 3.35 | .709 |
| Intercultural learning tasks / activities: | | Mean | SD |
| 7 | To enhance my understanding toward intercultural dimensions. | 3.35 | .608 |
| 8 | To encourage me to be aware of cultural differences and to be cautious about stereotypes. | 3.74 | .514 |
| 9 | To encourage me to apply intercultural awareness and skills in applying for a job. | 3.52 | .724 |

Table 1 shows the extent to which the course activities concerning discussion activities and intercultural learning tasks could help students develop their intercultural awareness. They mostly agreed that the course activities provided them with cultural knowledge about the layers of culture (#4: 3.61) and cultural differences and stereotypes (#8: 3.74). In addition, they were convinced that they could apply the knowledge and skills needed for intercultural awareness which they had learned from this course for their jobs in the future (#9:3.52)

In conclusion, most of the participants had positive attitudes towards what they had acquired

from studying the ICA-18. They thought that some of the cultural topics were new to them, so these topics were interesting and useful for their future careers. They also mentioned a variety of perceptions or ideas that signified that they had learned something new that influenced their existing world view in a certain way. Finally, they described a number of classroom tasks and activities that provided them with opportunities to practice skills needed for intercultural communication.

Nevertheless, based on the models of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1977), a few important dimensions are missing from the components of the ICA-18. The participants greatly demonstrated the development of right attitudes including curiosity, openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief and gained cultural knowledge concerning ones of different social groups with different identities. However, skills of discovery and interaction which refer to an ability to acquire new knowledge and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction are not sufficiently provided in this set of teaching materials. It would have been more beneficial if the participants had had opportunities to have actual intercultural interaction in order to practice skills of discovery and interaction in real practice.

2. Attitudes towards the ICA-18 teaching-learning materials

2.1 Satisfaction with intercultural course components

In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction for each component of the ICA-18 materials which aims at developing student cultural and intercultural awareness. The descriptors of the rating scales are 1 for dissatisfied (ไม่พอใจ), 2 for slightly satisfied (พอใจเล็กน้อย), 3 for moderately satisfied (พอใจปานกลาง), and 4 for mostly satisfied (พอใจมาก), and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Students' satisfaction with intercultural course components

| No. | Students' satisfaction with intercultural course components | Mean | SD |
|-----|--|------|------|
| 1 | Course topics e.g. definitions of cultures, cultural dimensions, non-verbal communication, etc. | 3.42 | .620 |
| 2 | Classroom activities for discussions e.g. Identity Tag Game, Four analogies, Go Bananas!, Three Chairs, etc. | 3.58 | .620 |
| 3 | Reflective writing e.g. module on reflective writing | 2.94 | .727 |
| 4 | Intercultural learning tasks e.g. Cultural presentation, Me and My Future, etc. | 3.23 | .669 |
| 5 | The time for doing activities and practice intercultural skills (a total of 18 hours per course) | 3.16 | .735 |
| 6 | The overall organization of the course e.g. a combination of all components including activities, and reading texts, etc. | 3.35 | .661 |



Table 2 shows the extent to which the participants were satisfied with the course components of the ICA-18 during which they had learnt to develop their intercultural awareness. They thought that the course topics (#1) and discussion activities (#2) were satisfying at 3.42 and 3.58, relatively. However, they seemed to be least satisfied with the reflective writing (#3) at the level of 2.94.

The data about reflective writing was also obtained from another part of the questionnaire directly concerning reflective writing. In that part, the participants were asked to state the level of their agreement or disagreement on a scale of 4 points concerning the extent to which they think reflective writing can help them in their learning and developing intercultural awareness. The descriptors of the rating scales are 1 for disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วย), 2 for slightly agree (เห็นด้วยเล็กน้อย), 3 moderately agree (เห็นด้วยปานกลาง) and 4 mostly agree (เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง) and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Students' attitudes towards course activities

| Reflective writing (RW): | | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------|--|------|------|
| 1 | RW offers me opportunities to regularly reflect on my learning process. | 2.87 | .763 |
| 2 | RW allows me time to relate my intercultural experience with what I have learned in class. | 2.87 | .763 |
| 3 | RW encourages me to be more involved in planning my intercultural learning. | 2.84 | .820 |

Table 3 shows that the participants seemed to agree lesser than a moderate level on the objectives of using the reflective writing in this study. They agree at a level of 2.87 for items # 1 and 2, and only of 2.84 for item #3. This might explain one of the reasons why they expressed their overall satisfaction with the reflective writing at the lowest level of all the components.

The problems concerning the implementation might have been a result of having no proper training on how to do the reflective writing. Although the teacher provided a form guiding the students what to write, she had not emphasized much about a person's developing process of intercultural awareness. Therefore, the participants were not much satisfied with this course component. As a matter of fact most scholars in the field of intercultural communication including Byram (1997) and Baker (2009, 2011) put an emphasis on reflection process as a necessary factor to develop critical cultural awareness skills and skills of relating and discovery about other people's culture.

2.2. What the participants liked and disliked about the teaching-learning materials

In addition to scale-rating of the question items, the participants also stated in overall terms what they liked and what they disliked about the course components of the ICA-18 materials in the questionnaire. The following are some examples which have been categorized

into what they liked and what they disliked.

What the participants like:

Student comment 13

"I enjoyed doing many of the activities. I **like active learning** like this because it enables me to relate what the teacher teaches to my own experience."

Student comment 14

"**I like the method that the teacher used.** Brainstorming can enable us to exchange our ideas and our understanding. And when the teacher gives us a briefing at the end of the lesson it helps us to understand better."

Student comment 15

"**I enjoy searching for information from the internet.** I had the chance to really do it and see it for myself, not just reading about differences in an article." (The researcher: "This refers to an activity in comparing websites culturally").

Student comment 16

"**I like it when my classmates express their own ideas.** I like activities which replace a typical lecture that requires me to take notes. I like the teacher's explanations which are clear and easy to understand."

What the participants dislike:

Student comment 17

"The time for doing activities **was not sufficient.**"

Student comment 18

"**I would like the teacher to use video clips** as parts of the teaching materials to illustrate intercultural communication."

Student comment 19

"I think the course is **related too much to theory and too much time is spent on this.**"

Student comment 20

"It helps me understand how to live with people of different cultures and prepares me for working in the future. It is good to have real practice with classmates, but **I would also like to have a real conversation with a foreigner in class.**"

In conclusion, most participants were satisfied with the course content and classroom activities which provided them with opportunities to widen their perspectives by discussing and exchanging ideas with their other classmates, especially teaching methods that enhanced their learning. However, there are three main problems that they mentioned that might need to be changed or adjusted. Firstly, the time allotted for each activity should be sufficient for the students to learn and digest the information they have acquired in class. Another complaint concerned a lack of varied and authentic teaching-learning materials. Finally, they mentioned a need for them to have real intercultural face-to-face encounters with a foreigner or a person from a different cultural and linguistic background to experience authentic intercultural



situations and to practice how to deal with intercultural communication in an authentic situation.

3. Attitudes toward the progress in intercultural awareness development

Self-assessment forms were the main tool which was used to obtain the information concerning the participants' attitudes towards their intercultural ability. The participants did a pre self-assessment at the beginning of the semester, and after studying the course they did a post self-assessment which was the same as the pre self-assessment. In the self-assessment form, the participants were asked to rate the extent of their agreement or disagreement on a scale of 5 points. There descriptors were 1 for *strongly disagree* (ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง), 2 for *disagree* (ไม่เห็นด้วย), 3 for *neither agree nor disagree* (ไม่แน่ใจ), 4 for *agree* (เห็นด้วย), and 4 for *strongly agree* (เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง). The results of pre and post self-assessment are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
The results of the participants' pre and post self-assessment

| | Statements | Pre-test | Post-test | Mean Difference (SD) | t | p |
|---|---|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | | | |
| Module 1: Definitions and types of cultures | | | | | | |
| 1 | I can describe what culture is in different aspects. | 3.34 (.614) | 4.00 (.598) | -.65517 (.72091) | -4.894 | .000 |
| 2 | I can classify different types of cultures and subcultures. | 3.31 (.761) | 3.66 (.721) | -.34483 (1.07822) | -1.722 | .096 |
| 3 | I am aware of the importance of the complexity of culture. | 4.38 (.677) | 4.72 (.455) | -.34483 (.68589) | -2.774 | .010 |
| 4 | I can analyze my own culturally-conditioned identity. | 3.90 (.489) | 4.45 (.572) | -.55172 (.68589) | -4.332 | .000 |
| 5 | I can produce a fact sheet explaining an appropriate intercultural approach for a particular culture. | 3.07 (.799) | 4.10 (.618) | -1.03448 1.05162 | -5.297 | .000 |
| | Average Mean of Module 1 | 3.60 (.407) | 4.19 (.389) | -.58621 (.51805) | -6.094 | .000 |
| Module 2: Cultural diversity and cultural dimensions | | | | | | |
| 6 | I can explain and evaluate the different frameworks of cultural dimensions. | 2.66 (.897) | 3.83 (.658) | -1.17241 (1.10418) | -5.718 | .000 |
| 7 | I can explore my own culture based on cultural dimensions. | 2.79 (.940) | 3.86 (.581) | -1.06897 (1.06674) | -5.396 | .000 |
| 8 | I can recognize differences in intercultural communication. | 3.62 (.942) | 4.31 (.541) | -.68966 (1.13715) | -3.266 | .003 |
| 9 | I can analyze differences in intercultural communication. | 3.69 (.930) | 4.31 (.471) | -.62069 (1.11528) | -2.997 | .006 |
| 10 | I can reflect on my own intercultural communication | 3.24 (.951) | 4.28 (.591) | -1.03448 1.20957 | -4.606 | .000 |

| | Statements | Pre-test | Post-test | Mean Difference | t | p |
|--|--|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| | | Mean (SD) | Mean (SD) | (SD) | | |
| Module 2: Cultural diversity and cultural dimensions | | | | | | |
| | Average Mean of Module 2 | 3.20 (.818) | 4.12 (.442) | -.91724 (.97324) | -5.075 | .000 |
| Module 3: Definitions and importance of intercultural awareness | | | | | | |
| 11 | I can explain a culture's influence on my own worldview. | 3.76 (.577) | 4.28 (.591) | -.51724 (.82897) | -3.360 | .002 |
| 12 | I can recognize the importance of intercultural awareness for intercultural communication. | 4.14 (.743) | 4.59 (.568) | -.44828 (.90972) | -2.654 | .013 |
| 13 | I can identify barriers to intercultural communication. | 3.76 (.739) | 4.48 (.634) | -.72414 (.99630) | -3.914 | .001 |
| 14 | I can evaluate cross-cultural situations objectively and I can make cultural assumptions effectively. | 3.17 (.805) | 4.07 (.651) | -.89655 (1.14470) | -4.218 | .000 |
| 15 | I can accept a diversity of methods for doing things which are different from my way of doing things. | 4.10 (.618) | 4.55 (.632) | -.44828 (.82748) | -2.917 | .007 |
| | Average Mean of Module 3 | 3.79 (.434) | 4.39 (.467) | -.82759 (.67130) | -6.639 | .000 |
| Module 4: Components to develop intercultural awareness | | | | | | |
| 16 | I can describe important elements that can help develop intercultural awareness (ICA). | 2.79 (1.013) | 3.97 (.731) | -1.17241 (1.19729) | -5.273 | .000 |
| 17 | I can analyze my experience of encountering difficulties in intercultural communication and provide better alternatives to the situations. | 3.24 (.872) | 4.21 (.559) | -.96552 (1.17967) | -4.408 | .000 |
| 18 | I can recognize the importance of non-verbal communication in intercultural communication. | 4.03 (.731) | 4.52 (.634) | -.48276 (.94946) | -2.738 | .011 |
| 19 | I can identify different aspects of non-verbal communication and communication styles that might cause misunderstandings in intercultural communication. | 3.07 (.923) | 4.38 (.677) | -1.31034 (1.03866) | -6.794 | .000 |
| 20 | I can construct a set of strategies a person can use to cope with differences in intercultural communication. | 2.90 (.860) | 4.10 (.673) | -1.20690 (1.11417) | -5.833 | .000 |
| | Average Mean of Module 4 | 3.21 (.710) | 4.23 (.524) | -1.02759 -6.223 | -6.223 | .000 |
| | Average Mean of All Modules | 3.45 (.487) | 4.23 (.397) | -.57931 -4.834 | -4.834 | .000 |

The difference of means of all items, except item # 2, are statically significant at the $p < 0.5$ level. The results show that the participants' level of ability after studying the course is much higher than the ability prior to taking the course in almost all. However, there is no significant difference in item #2 at the $p < 0.5$ level. The participants indicated that they had already been able to classify different types of cultures and subcultures before they studied this course with the mean of (3.31) and after taking the course they demonstrated their ability with the mean of 3.66 which has no significant difference at the $p < 0.5$ level (sig. = .096).

In terms of the module aspects, the difference of means of each module are also statistically different at the $p < 0.5$ level (sig. = .000). The results obtained reveal the participants' positive views on their progress of developing intercultural awareness. There is a great difference between their beliefs in what they can do before studying and what they can do after studying this course. The total mean of the pre self-assessment is 3.45 and the one of the post self-assessment is 4.23, so the two means are significantly different at the $p < 0.5$ level (sig. 0.00). The participants expressed greater confidence in their intercultural ability in every module of the course content, especially Module 2, which focuses on raising cultural awareness and Module 4 which emphasizes developing intercultural awareness.

According to the three levels of Baker's (2009, 2011) model of intercultural awareness, the participants demonstrated their confidence in their intercultural ability between the first level (basic cultural awareness) and the second level of advance cultural awareness. At the basic cultural awareness level, the participants gained better understanding about culture definitions which were beyond the superficial levels when they particularly pointed out that they could recognize their own culturally-influenced identities and behaviors. In addition, they show their better worldview when they started to be able to accept more cultural differences and a diversity of methods for doing things which are different from their way of doing things. In general, the participants have shown their positive attitudes toward their ability after they were involved in the process of developing intercultural awareness in the English language classroom.

Results of Research Question #2: *What are the participants' attitudes toward the overall idea of developing intercultural awareness in English language classrooms?*

Attitudes towards the development of intercultural awareness

The data to identify the participants' attitudes towards the importance of developing intercultural awareness were taken from the questionnaire. Students were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements concerning the importance and necessity of developing intercultural awareness in the English language classroom. The participants expressed their agreement and disagreement on a scale of 4 points. The descriptors of the rating scales are 1 for disagree (ไม่เห็นด้วย), 2 for slightly agree (เห็นด้วยเล็กน้อย), 3 moderately agree (เห็นด้วยเล็กปานกลาง) and 4 mostly agree (เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง), and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Students' attitudes towards the development of intercultural awareness

| No. | Students' attitudes towards the development of intercultural awareness | Mean | SD |
|-----|---|-------------|------|
| 1 | Intercultural ability is as important as language ability. | 3.39 | .667 |
| 2 | Intercultural ability is more important than language ability. | 2.52 | .926 |
| 3 | It is necessary to incorporate ICA development in English language classrooms. | 3.48 | .570 |
| 4 | It is unnecessary to incorporate ICA development in English classrooms because students can find opportunities for intercultural encounters in daily life. | 1.32 | .541 |
| 5 | The incorporation of ICA development can motivate students to learn English while doing intercultural activities. | 3.10 | .597 |
| 6 | The incorporation of ICA development can demotivate students from learning English because it might make them nervous and stressed while doing intercultural activities | 1.77 | .956 |
| 7 | Practicing ICA skills helps students to improve language skills. | 3.00 | .894 |
| 8 | Practicing ICA skills wastes time which could be used for practicing language skills in class. | 1.39 | .803 |
| 9 | Developing ICA skills can be taught along with language skills in English courses. | 3.55 | .810 |
| 10 | Developing ICA should be a separate course from normal English courses. | 2.23 | .990 |

Table 5 shows that the participants mostly agree with Statements 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 which express positive views on the incorporation of intercultural aspects in English language classrooms. As expected, they disagreed and only slightly agree with Statements 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 which are counter-questions and express rather negative views on the development of intercultural awareness. The participants mostly agree that intercultural awareness is important (3.39) and developing intercultural awareness is necessary (3.48). The participants also expressed their opinions in the open-ended question part of the questionnaire. Their comments provide more details as to why they supported an integration of the development of intercultural awareness as follows:

Student comment 21

"It (intercultural awareness) is necessary and important in studying English in order to understand concepts, know how to express ourselves, and have the ability to communicate with people from different cultures appropriately."

Student comment 22

"It is good fun to learn. It is something that we should be aware of because communication is not only about understanding a language but also understanding other people's thoughts as well."

Student comment 23

"(I) think it is good to integrate culture in studying English because it provides some students who have never had direct experience in communicating with foreigners



with an opportunity to learn about intercultural communication."

Although the participants seem to agree on the importance and necessity of developing intercultural awareness, the mean scores for Statement 5 in Table 5 (*The incorporation of ICA development can motivate students to learn English while doing intercultural activities*) and Statement 7 (*Practicing ICA skills helps students to improve language skills*), which are 3.10 and 3.00, respectively, are obviously lower than the other three statements (1, 3, and 9). This raises an important issue that the development of intercultural awareness might not reinforce students' learning the language. This notion was supported by the participants' opinions taken from the data obtained from the interview as follows:

Student comment 24

"I think practicing intercultural awareness skills **wastes class time. It should be separate** from an English course and if anybody is interested in cultural content, he or she can enroll on such a course." (The interview)

Student comment 25

"It should be separate from this course because this course is English for employment. **Why do we have to learn about culture?** It does not correspond with the name of the course, and **it wastes time we could spend on the study of English.**" (The interview)

From the comments 24 and 25, it is clearly seen that some students, despite recognizing the importance of intercultural awareness development, did not agree with an integration of intercultural dimension into their English course. Some of the reasons might be the fact that they already mentioned that they thought the course was sometimes too theory-oriented; it took too much of their class time to practice language skills.

Nevertheless, a number of students were convinced that intercultural aspects can be included into English language classroom as expressed in Statement 9 (Developing ICA skills can be taught along with language skills in English course) with the highest mean score of 3.55. The participants supported this notion with their following comments.

Student comment 26

"It lessens time for studying English skills in class, **but it should be included in this course as this course** is "English for Employment" **which concerns how to apply for a job and how to work with others.**" (The Interview)

Student comment 27

"It should be included in this course because it is about job application and working, and because **we are unlikely to apply for a job only at a British company.**" (The Interview)

In conclusion, the participants generally recognize the importance and usefulness of cultural and intercultural awareness in their daily lives and in their future careers. In addition, most of them also agree that this development should be part of an English language course that can be taught along with English language skills. Nevertheless, some of the participants

voice their concern that the process of developing intercultural awareness might impede the development of language skills; therefore, they recommend the course should be separate from an English language course.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of the participants' overall positive attitudes

From the data obtained, the participants explicitly expressed positive attitudes towards their experience of intercultural learning. One of the factors contributing to this result might be the novelty of the course content since it was different from what they had studied in other English courses. Baker (2011) has pointed out that generally cultures mostly presented in English textbooks are too specific and too superficial concerning with cultural topics like food, clothes, festivals, etc. Such cultural topics cannot help raise students to a level in which they can use their knowledge and skills to successfully handle intercultural communication. What the participants in this study learned from this course was obviously different and new to them, so they were satisfied and recognized its usefulness.

Besides the content of the course, classroom activities and intercultural tasks were also mostly described as important parts of their changes in perceptions. The participants liked doing intercultural activities, especially discussion-based activities which could effectively encourage them to think critically about something that they had never thought about before. Their perspectives on many aspects of communication through the use of English language were therefore broadened. From what they had experienced and discussed in this course, they were convinced that there were also other factors which could contribute to the effectiveness of English communication rather than just language ability. The data obtained in this study were quite similar to those of Candel-Mora's study (2015) which used students' self-assessment essays to investigate their attitudes and the results showed that they recognized that knowledge of the language alone was not a guarantee of success in an intercultural environment.

In addition, acquiring new perspectives, the participants learned and practiced skills needed for intercultural communication through these classroom activities. These classroom activities and intercultural tasks not only enhanced their cultural knowledge and perspectives, but also promoted the development of their critical thinking skills, which Byram (1997) identified as one of the factors he believed were needed for developing intercultural communicative competence. In addition, the data obtained from this study were quite similar to those obtained by Snodin (2015) who integrated cultural aspects into EFL teaching in a university in Thailand. In both studies, the participants had opportunities to practice skills needed for developing critical cultural awareness and the results showed they had obtained cultural knowledge and skills through their courses. Most importantly, they came to a point where they were fully aware of various cultural conditions. However, the differences between this study and hers are the use of more authentic materials. Snodin's study used more authentic materials including magazine articles, TV programs and films to promote the students' involvement in discussions and reflections, so that they could enhance their understanding about cultural dimensions and

develop their awareness of intercultural communication. With the use of authentic materials, the participants tend to be more motivated to become involved in the discussion and they can relate more easily to a given situation in their own cultural background. It is therefore suggested that any classroom which would aim at developing intercultural awareness should make use of more authentic materials.

Finally, the results of the participants' pre and post self-assessment on their intercultural competence illustrated there was a progress in their development of intercultural awareness. They obtained a higher mean score in their post self-assessment (4.23) than in their pre-self-assessment (3.45). As a matter of fact, self-assessment was also considered one of the course tools used in order to encourage students to review the extent to which they have achieved the learning objectives of being able to deal with an intercultural interaction. Thus, an increase in the participants' scores generally signals the participants' positive attitudes toward their learning.

Discussion of the participants' overall negative attitudes

Despite the fact that the participants seemed to like most of the course components that helped them develop intercultural awareness, some of them have pointed out a few drawbacks that hindered their learning. First, they mentioned that the course was too theory-oriented. In this study, the classroom was actually intended to develop intercultural awareness while students were studying the English language at the same time. According to Byram (1997), there are two types of intercultural communication classroom. One is when a course develops knowledge and analytical skills, but it does not intend to develop the learners' intercultural competence. The other type is a course of language learning in which the development of intercultural competence focuses on learning to be a good intercultural communicator. In the latter type, it may not be necessary to have knowledge of intercultural communication theory, which is similar to not having knowledge of grammar but still being able to use a language correctly.

In this study it seems that the course tried to combine both types within a limited period of 18 hours' class time. Accordingly, the course required the participants to perform an excessive amount of classroom activities and to gain a great number of cultural concepts and theories. Instead of participating in an authentic intercultural encounter, the participants had to spend most of their class time acquiring an understanding of a variety of concepts, some of which might actually not be necessary. It is therefore essential to make the purposes of the course clear cut. If intercultural aspects are merely an incorporated part of a course, the goal might be to either develop students' intercultural competence or develop knowledge and analytical skills. If a combination of both these purposes is necessary, then more class time should be allocated to the course.

One of the recommendations is therefore to re-set the goal of intercultural learning. To incorporate intercultural aspects into the English language course more effectively, the intercultural course components should be redesigned. It is not possible to teach or reinforce the developmental process of intercultural awareness for all at once. This signifies that in a set curriculum provided for students in any field of study, intercultural aspects can gradually

and systematically be designed and integrated into each English language course that students have to take throughout their set curriculum. For example, in the researcher's institutional context, every student would take 3 or 4 English courses as compulsory courses; therefore, intercultural dimension which can promote students' ability for each level of Baker's model of intercultural awareness can be incorporated into each English course.

The purpose of the intercultural course component should be clearly established for each individual English course. In addition, if the purpose is to develop student's intercultural competence, it should provide teaching and learning materials, classroom activities, and intercultural tasks which focus on reinforcing cultural critical thinking skills and English language skills at the same time. Accordingly, it might not be necessary for this particular course to learn about cultural and intercultural knowledge and concepts straightforwardly. In this classroom, they could gain opportunities to grasp the concepts on their own terms while participating in classroom activities. The time spent on presenting theories and concepts should be reduced, and the use of the English language as a medium should be increased while students are doing cultural activities. On the other hand, if any one particular English classroom sets a goal to develop knowledge and analytical skills and does not intend to develop the learners' intercultural competence, the teacher can allot as much time in providing explanations of the cultural and intercultural concepts so that they can achieve the goal of the better understanding.

The majority of the participants were fully aware of the importance of intercultural awareness development; however, the integration of intercultural aspects into an English language classroom was still questionable for some participants. They voiced their concerns that studying intercultural aspects used up valuable time which could be spent practicing language skills in the English language classroom. Therefore, they thought that the intercultural component should be a separate course for students interested in developing their intercultural competence. The participants complained about the nature of the course as being too theory-oriented, and the teacher's taking much time to explain cultural and intercultural concepts. This might explain why they thought studying intercultural aspects clearly lessened the class time for their language development, and they were hesitant in agreeing with the idea of integrating intercultural aspects into their English language classroom.

Another drawback mentioned is that there was also a lack of authentic intercultural encounters with persons from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As this course covered a great number of cultural and intercultural topics within 18 hours of class time, it would be extremely difficult to set up intercultural encounters with native speakers in the time available. As a matter of fact, there should be a trial of classroom activities and course assignments which allows students to engage in real intercultural encounters through face-to-face communication, via email communication, or social network communication in order for the participants to learn how to really deal with authentic situations, reflect on them, and evaluate their intercultural competence in an intercultural communicative act.

The recommendation is to redesign the teaching and learning materials which include components that are authentic and useful for the students to use in real life. As clearly seen from the comments on the ICA-18 course, discussion-based activities were mainly used, but

other forms of intercultural activities were not employed. It is recommended that the course should provide other forms of teaching-learning materials using portfolio, role play simulation, or web-based intercultural encounters. In addition more authentic audio and visual materials, such as texts from newspapers, magazines, advertisement, or films should also be included. In doing so, students have more opportunities to be exposed to real life social and cultural situations when they are in the process of intercultural learning in an English language classroom.

CONCLUSION

To prepare students for success in a global interconnected world (Moeller & Nugent, 2014), development of intercultural awareness or intercultural competence must play an important role in ELT. Using English in the 21st century is perceived quite differently from how it was viewed in the last century. Nowadays, the use of English can be compared to a singing contest, a place where the judges will not look for the one who can sing beautifully and exactly like an original artist, but instead they are looking for the one that can sing the same song beautifully in their own style (Phongsirikul, 2015). Some might ask for a reason why one's own style should be taken into account. One's own style can refer to the way to successfully communicate in English while also taking in the role of an intercultural speaker who is aware of their own and other people's identities. From this point of view, learners of English are no longer confined to the expectation of being like a native-speaker of English, but rather to be an intercultural speaker who possesses the ability to master both the language and intercultural skills effectively to cope with any type of communication in multicultural and multicultural settings.

This research study was an attempt to investigate what students would think and feel about intercultural learning when they studied an integral intercultural dimension in their English language classroom. The implications concern the development of teaching- learning materials which can help develop students' intercultural awareness that really suits the needs of the users of English at present. In addition, the results obtained can also contribute to the preparation of teachers who will be involved in intercultural learning because the teachers definitely need to possess more cultural knowledge, to have right attitudes toward the goal of teaching and learning, to be prepared for being a language facilitator and cultural mediator in ELT of the 21st century.

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APPENDIX 1

Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence model

The components of the model of intercultural communicative competence consists of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness and the explanations are illustrated as follows:

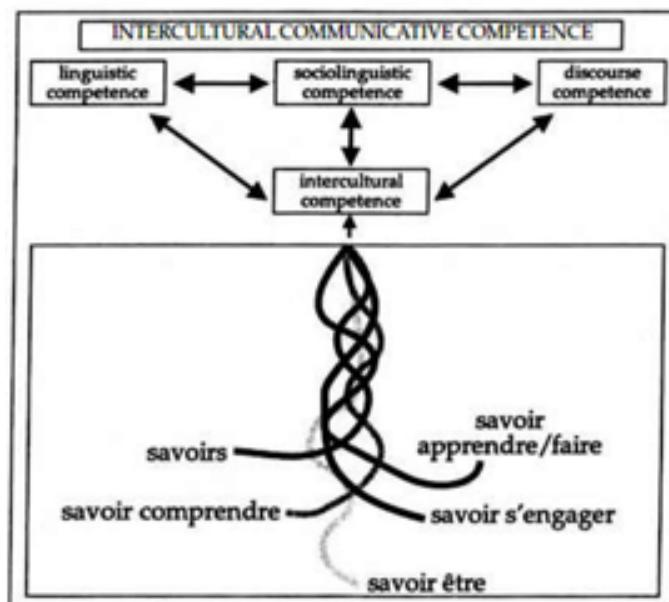
Attitudes refer curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own

Knowledge refer to knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction

Skills of interpreting and relating refer to an ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents for one's own

Skills of discovery and interaction refers to an ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Critical cultural awareness refers to an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries
 (Byram, 1997, p.xx-xx)





APPENDIX 2

Baker's (2011) intercultural awareness model

Level 1: basic cultural awareness

An awareness of:

1. culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values;
2. the role culture and context play in any interpretation of meaning;
3. our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to articulate this;
4. others' culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs and the ability to compare this with our own culturally induced behaviour, values, and beliefs.

Level 2: advanced cultural awareness

An awareness of:

5. the relative nature of cultural norms;
6. cultural understanding as provisional and open to revision;
7. multiple voices or perspectives within any cultural grouping;
8. individuals as members of many social groupings including cultural ones;
9. common ground between specific cultures as well as an awareness of possibilities for mismatch and miscommunication between specific cultures.

Level 3: intercultural awareness

An awareness of:

10. culturally based frames of reference, forms, and communicative practices as being related both to specific cultures and also as emergent and hybrid in intercultural communication;
11. initial interaction in intercultural communication as possibly based on cultural stereotypes or generalizations but an ability to move beyond these through;
12. a capacity to negotiate and mediate between different emergent socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference based on the above understanding of culture in intercultural communication.

APPENDIX 3

The constructions of the original course and the newly-designed course

Table 1
The constructions of the original course and the newly-designed course

| Section | Content | Teaching Material |
|---|--|--|
| Section 1: Preparation for job applications | Part 1: Self-evaluation Part 2: Documents for job application preparation Part 3: Job interview practice and Simulation | <i>'English for Employment'</i> (Anantapol, 2009) (27 hours) |
| Section 2: Skill development for working in a multicultural context | Part 4: Understanding cultural aspects Part 5: Developing intercultural awareness for working in a multicultural workplace | The <i>ICA-18</i> teaching materials (18 hours) |

Section 1 (Preparation for job applications) is not a pre-requisite component of Section 2 (Skill development for working in a multicultural context), so they can be taught alongside one another as shown in Table 2. Accordingly, when doing any assigned projects, students are expected to incorporate intercultural understanding gained from studying Section 2 using the ICA-18 teaching and learning materials to be part of their work projects in Section 1.

The overall period of the whole course is 45 hours (15 weeks), and the class time is 3 hours a week. The teaching of the compulsory course content (Parts 1-3) lasts for 27 hours while the teaching of the ICA- 18 (Parts4-5) is for 18 hours. The contents of the two sections are generally taught alongside each other throughout the semester as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Course time and course content

| Week | 1.5 hours | 1.5 hours |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| 1 2 3 | Part 1: Self-evaluation (9 hours) | |
| 4 5 6 7 8 9 | Part 2: Document preparation for job applications (9 hours) | Part 4: Understanding cultural aspects (9 hours) |



| Week | 1.5 hours | 1.5 hours |
|------|---|-----------|
| 10 | | |
| 11 | Part 3: Job interview simulation (9 hours) | |
| 12 | | |
| 13 | | |
| 14 | | |
| 15 | | |

APPENDIX 4

The content of the ICA-18

The content of the ICA-18

| Topic | Module |
|--|--|
| Part 4: Understanding cultural aspects for raising cultural awareness (9 hours) | Module 1: Definitions and types of cultures Module 2: Cultural diversity and dimensions |
| Part 5: Developing intercultural awareness for working in a multicultural workplace (9 hours) | Module 3: Definitions and importance of intercultural awareness Module 4: Components to develop intercultural awareness |

Each module takes 4.5 hours, so all the four modules would take for a period of 18 hours. It consists of a variety of classroom activities including lectures, discussions, games, assigned tasks, reflective writing, etc. The followings are detailed description of each component of the ICA-18.

- The classroom activities** of the ICA-18 are both newly-designed to achieve the learning goals and adopted and adapted from various resource books including *Intercultural language activities* by Corbett (2003) and *Building cultural competence* by Berardo and Deardorff (2012) and other materials which can help promote the development of intercultural awareness.
- The reading texts** assigned as teaching and learning materials for the input are taken from *Intercultural business communication* by Gibson, (2010), *Intercultural communication: A survival guide for non-native English speakers* by Ross, (2015).
- The reflective writing task** is an ongoing learning process which aims at providing learners with opportunities to explore their learning process of developing intercultural skills and to analyze what they have experienced. The participants need to reflect on what they have learned in class. They can share their experiences, beliefs, and opinions towards the topics discussed or the activities done in the classroom. They write four reflections in English or in Thai for the four modules of the ICA-18.

APPENDIX 5

Survey of students' attitudes toward development of intercultural awareness in the English language classroom

Research: The questionnaire is a part of the research study "*Developing Intercultural Awareness in English language Classrooms*" which is being conducted by Mrs. Marissa Phongsirikul, a PhD candidate of English Language Study Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University.

Objectives: The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the students' attitudes toward their learning as a result of studying through the 18-hour teaching and learning materials (*the ICA-18*) and also their attitudes toward the overall idea of the incorporation of intercultural awareness development in the English language classroom.

Questionnaire Parts: There are 4 sections as follows:

- Section 1** collects the general information of the participants
- Section 2** focuses on students' learning and achievement as a result of studying intercultural dimension through the *ICA-18*
- Section 3** investigates the attitudes on the overall idea of developing ICA in the English language classrooms.
- Section 4** collects the overall suggestions and comments from students' perspectives


Section 1: General Information

Directions: Please answer the questions concerning your personal, educational, and intercultural communication background by filling in the information on the line provided or putting a check mark in the box.

1. What are your major, faculty and year of study?

Year of study: 2nd year 3rd year 4th year Others: _____

Faculty: _____ Major: _____

2. How long have you been studying English?

Since kindergarten Since grade 1

Since grade 3 Since grade 5

Others (Please specify)

3. Have you ever studied any English course which also involves intercultural learning?

Yes No

4. Have you ever been abroad? Yes No

For what purposes: _____

For how long: _____

5. Do you like working or associating with foreigners? Yes No

6. Do you enjoy having cross-cultural communication Yes No
with people from other cultures?

7. Have you ever experienced misunderstandings while Yes No
having an intercultural interaction with a foreigner?

8. Have you got any foreign friends, relatives, Yes No
acquaintance both in person and through social media and email?

9. How often do you associate with them, communicate with them, or contact them?
(Please specify : _____)

10. What kind of job do you expect to do or what are your dream jobs?

Job 1: _____ Why: _____

Job 2: _____ Why: _____

Job 3: _____ Why: _____

Section 2:
Students' attitudes towards their learning as a result of studying through The ICA-18
2.1 Classroom activities

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following classroom activities could help you develop intercultural awareness?

| Item # | Choose one of the followings: 1 = Disagree 2 = Slightly agree 3 = Moderately agree 4 = Mostly agree | Disagree | Slightly agree | Moderately agree | Mostly agree |
|---|---|----------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Activities for discussions: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | raise my awareness on cultural conditioning. | | | | |
| 2 | increase my cultural self-awareness. | | | | |
| 3 | help me understand my own culturally-conditioned identities. | | | | |
| 4 | help form my understanding about the layers of culture. | | | | |
| 5 | enable me to recognize the power of diversity and appreciate that there is more than one valid way to accomplish something. | | | | |
| 6 | provide me the opportunities to experience different types of communication. | | | | |
| Reflective writing: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | offers me opportunities to regularly reflect my learning process. | | | | |
| 8 | allows me time to relate my intercultural experience with. | | | | |
| | what I have learned in class. | | | | |
| 9 | encourages me to be more involved in planning my intercultural learning. | | | | |
| Intercultural learning tasks / activities: | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | enhance my understandings toward intercultural dimensions. | | | | |
| 11 | encourage me to be aware of cultural differences and to be cautious with stereotypes. | | | | |
| 12 | encourage me to apply intercultural awareness knowledge and skills in applying for a job. | | | | |



2.1 Components of The ICA – 18

Question: To what extent are you satisfied with the following components of the ICA-18

| # | Choose one of the following: | Not satisfied at all | Slightly satisfied | Moderately satisfied | Highly satisfied | For any item where you answer #1 (Not satisfied), please state the reasons why the activities did not facilitate your intercultural learning. |
|---|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | Course topics e.g. definitions of cultures, cultural dimensions, non-verbal communication, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| 2 | Classroom activities for discussions e.g. Identity Tag Game, Four analogies, Go Bananas!, Three Chairs, etc. | | | | | |
| 3 | Reflective journal e.g. module reflective writing | | | | | |
| 4 | Intercultural learning tasks e.g. Cultural presentation, Me and My Future, etc. | | | | | |
| 5 | The time for doing activities and practice intercultural skills (a total of 18 hours per course) | | | | | |
| 6 | The overall organization of the course e.g. a combination of all components including activities, and reading texts, etc. | | | | | |

Section 3:**Attitudes toward the incorporation of Intercultural Awareness (ICA) into the English language classroom****2.1 Attitudes towards features of classroom interaction in English classrooms with the incorporation of ICA**

Directions 1: Specify the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by checking one of the following numbers:

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | = | Disagree |
| 2 | = | Slightly agree |
| 3 | = | Moderately agree |
| 4 | = | Mostly agree |

| The classroom with the incorporation of ICA can... | 1 Disagree | 2 Slightly agree | 3 Moderately agree | 4 Mostly agree |
|---|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. create a positive classroom atmosphere which helps facilitate learning. | | | | |
| 2. effectively provide collaborative learning activities for students to practice socializing skills such as politeness, respect for others, and empathy toward others. | | | | |
| 3. provide students opportunities to use the language with purposes. | | | | |
| 4. provide students a place to develop interactional skills within the safety of the classroom situation. | | | | |
| 5. vary different patterns of classroom interaction especially pair work and group work which reinforce the value system of choice, freedom, and equality. | | | | |
| In the classroom with the incorporation of ICA,..... | 1 Disagree | 2 Slightly agree | 3 Moderately agree | 4 Mostly agree |
| 6. Students are encouraged to be a researcher and discoverer of cultural knowledge. | | | | |
| 7. The teacher is a facilitator guiding the learning process rather than a person who transfers knowledge. | | | | |
| 8. Students have to be autonomous learners who plan their own learning process. | | | | |
| 9. The teacher needs to maximize interaction in the classroom rather than lecturing. | | | | |
| 10. Student learning is learner-centered, engaging, interactive, participatory, and cooperative. | | | | |



Directions 2: Identify the extent to which you like or dislike an English classroom with the incorporation of ICA development

A. How do you like or dislike an English classroom with the incorporation of intercultural awareness development?

- I don't like it.
- I slightly like it.
- I moderately like it.
- I mostly like it.

B. Give reasons for your answer in A: _____

3.2 Attitudes towards the importance of developing intercultural awareness in English classrooms

Directions 1: Specify to the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by checking one of the following numbers:

| | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | = | Disagree |
| 2 | = | Slightly agree |
| 3 | = | Moderately agree |
| 4 | = | Mostly agree |

| Statements | 1 Disagree | 2 Slightly agree | 3 Moderately agree | 4 Mostly agree |
|--|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Intercultural ability is as important as language ability. | | | | |
| 2. Intercultural ability is more important than language ability. | | | | |
| 3. It is necessary to incorporate ICA development in English classrooms. | | | | |
| 4. It is unnecessary to incorporate ICA development in English classrooms because students can find opportunities for intercultural encounters in daily life. | | | | |
| 5. The incorporation of ICA development can motivate students to learn English while doing intercultural activities. | | | | |
| 6. The incorporation of ICA development can demotivate students to learn English because it might make them nervous and stressed while doing intercultural activities | | | | |
| 7. Practicing ICA skills helps students to improve language skills. | | | | |

| Statements | 1 Disagree | 2 Slightly agree | 3 Moderately agree | 4 Mostly agree |
|---|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 8. Practicing ICA skills wastes time for practicing language skills in class. | | | | |
| 9. Developing ICA skills can be taught along with language skills in English classrooms. | | | | |
| 10. Developing ICA should be a separate course from normal English courses. | | | | |

3.3 Attitudes towards cultural and intercultural topics to be included in English language classrooms

Directions: Rate how useful do you think the following topics are to help facilitate your intercultural awareness development.

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| 1 | = | Not useful |
| 2 | = | Slightly useful |
| 3 | = | Moderately useful |
| 4 | = | Very useful |

| | 1 Not useful | 2 Slightly useful | 3 Moderately useful | 4 Very useful |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Module 1: Definitions and types of cultures | | | | |
| 1. Definitions of cultures | | | | |
| 2. Types of cultures | | | | |
| 3. Cultural identities | | | | |
| 4. Analogy of culture | | | | |
| Module 2: Cultural diversity and cultural dimensions | | | | |
| 5. Cultural dimensions | | | | |
| 6. Cross-cultural communication differences | | | | |
| 7. Different approaches to analyzing culture | | | | |
| Module 3: Definitions and importance of intercultural awareness | | | | |
| 8. Culture's influence on people's worldview | | | | |
| 9. Importance of Intercultural awareness | | | | |
| 10. Barriers to intercultural communication | | | | |
| 11. Cultural assumptions | | | | |
| Module 4: Components to develop intercultural awareness | | | | |
| 12. Intercultural awareness skills | | | | |
| 13. non-verbal communication | | | | |
| 14. Strategies for dealing with culture shock | | | | |
| 15. Cultural stereotypes | | | | |



Section 4: Overall opinions and suggestions

1. What do you like and what do you dislike when learning through the use of the ICA-18 teaching and learning materials?

Please identify what you like and what you don't like and state the reason why.

What I like:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What I don't like:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of the ICA-18 teaching and learning materials?

3. What do you think about the overall idea of incorporation of the ICA development in English classrooms?

APPENDIX 6

Self- assessment form

Before learning After learning

In 01355303 using a set of 18-hour teaching and learning materials
to develop intercultural awareness

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Directions: Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

| # | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|--|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| | Definitions and types of cultures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | I can describe what culture is in different aspects. | | | | | |
| 2 | I can classify different types of culture and subculture. | | | | | |
| 3 | I am aware of the importance of the complexity of culture. | | | | | |
| 4 | I can analyze my own culturally-conditioned identities. | | | | | |
| 5 | I can produce a fact sheet explaining one culture with appropriate intercultural approach. | | | | | |
| | Cultural diversity and cultural dimensions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | I can explain and evaluate different frameworks of cultural dimensions. | | | | | |
| 7 | I can explore my own culture based on cultural dimensions. | | | | | |
| 8 | I can recognize differences in intercultural communication. | | | | | |
| 9 | I can analyze differences in intercultural communication experience. | | | | | |
| 10 | I can reflect on my own intercultural communication | | | | | |
| | Definitions and importance of intercultural awareness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | I can explain culture's influence on my own worldview. | | | | | |

| # | | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|----|---|-------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|----------------|
| | Definitions and importance of intercultural awareness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I can recognize the importance of intercultural awareness to intercultural communication. | | | | | |
| 13 | I can identify barriers to intercultural communication. | | | | | |
| 14 | I can evaluate cross-cultural situations objectively to effectively make any cultural assumptions. | | | | | |
| 15 | I can accept the diversity of methods of doing things which are different from my ways of doing things. | | | | | |
| | Components to develop intercultural awareness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | I can describe important elements that can help develop intercultural awareness (ICA). | | | | | |
| 17 | I can analyze my experience of encountering difficulties in intercultural communication and provide better alternatives to the situations | | | | | |
| 18 | I can recognize the importance of non-verbal communication in intercultural communication | | | | | |
| 19 | I can identify different aspects of non-verbal communication and communication styles that might cause misunderstandings in intercultural communication | | | | | |
| 20 | I can construct a set of strategies a person can use to cope with differences in intercultural communication. | | | | | |