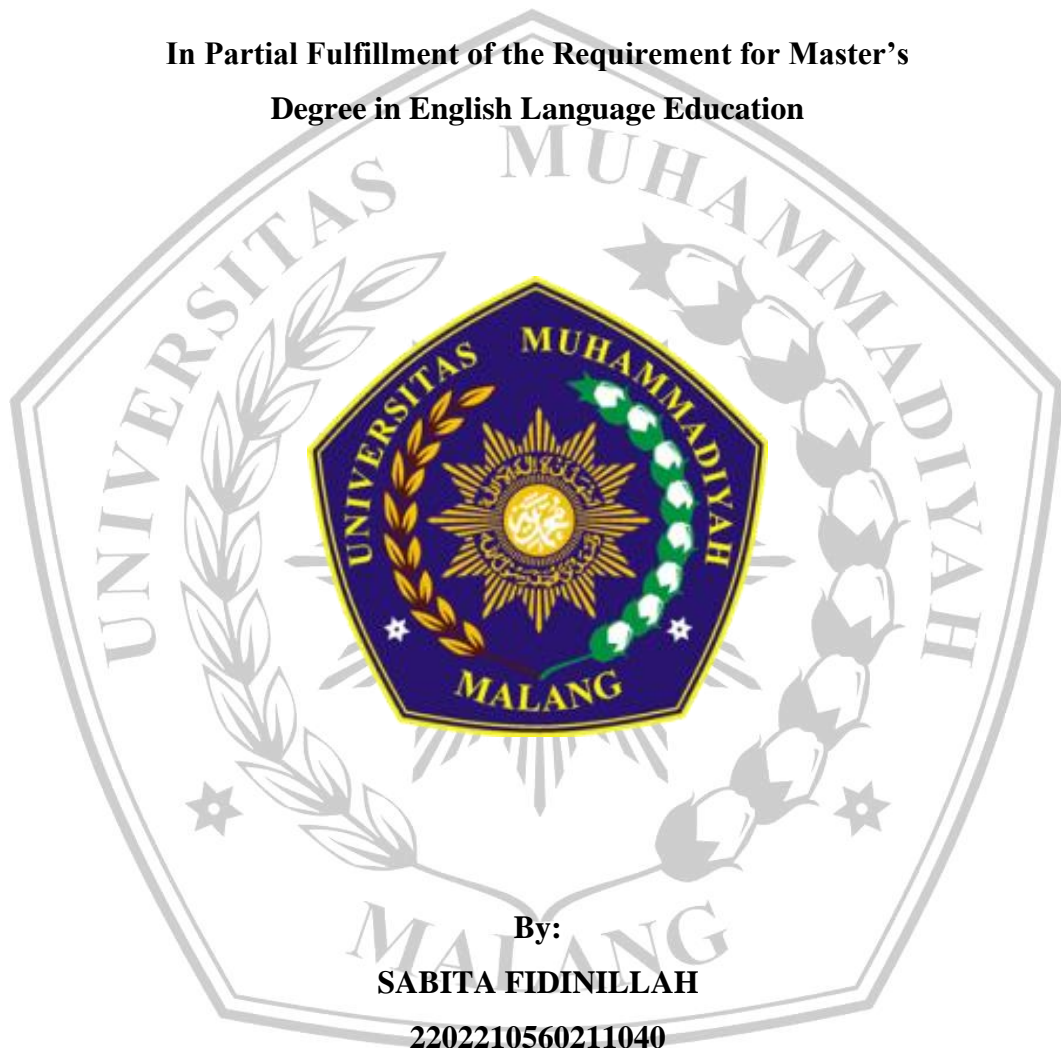


**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN EFL CLASSROOM AT SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOLS IN BATUSANGKAR, WEST SUMATERA**

THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Master's
Degree in English Language Education**



**By:
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2024

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL
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HIGH SCHOOLS IN BATUSANGKAR, WEST SUMATERA**

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Finally, the researcher hopes this study becomes a valuable reference for readers or anyone who wants to do similar study in the future.

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**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN EFL CLASSROOM AT SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOLS IN BATUSANGKAR, WEST SUMATERA**

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century is marked by the development of science, information, and communication in all disciplines. Indirectly, this development demands practical communication abilities. This concept has caused a significant paradigm shift from developing linguistic competence to incorporating intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Therefore, teachers are essential in promoting ICC in the EFL classroom. This study investigates the teachers' perception and how EFL teachers implement ICC in EFL classrooms. It employed a descriptive qualitative design. Three English teachers from Senior High Schools in Batusangkar, West Sumatera, were recruited to participate in this study. The semi-structured interview and classroom observation findings showed that teachers' perceptions of ICC were positive. All teachers have implemented four practices to promote ICC. Sharing personal experiences and comparing and contrasting cultures are the most common practices teachers use. The findings of this study will be of interest to anyone who wants to know how EFL teachers view intercultural competence and how their views impact on their teaching.

Keywords: *Intercultural communicative competence(ICC), teachers' perception, ICC implementation*

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ABSTRAK

Abad ke-21 ditandai dengan perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan, informasi, dan komunikasi di segala bidang. Secara tidak langsung, perkembangan ini menuntut kemampuan komunikasi yang praktis. Konsep ini telah menyebabkan pergeseran paradigma yang signifikan dari pengembangan kompetensi linguistik menjadi kompetensi komunikatif antar budaya (ICC). Oleh karena itu, guru sangat penting dalam mempromosikan ICC di kelas EFL. Penelitian ini menyelidiki persepsi guru dan bagaimana guru EFL menerapkan ICC di kelas EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif. Tiga guru bahasa Inggris dari Sekolah Menengah Atas di Batusangkar, Sumatera Barat, direkrut untuk berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Hasil wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi kelas menunjukkan bahwa persepsi guru terhadap ICC positif. Semua guru telah menerapkan empat praktik untuk mempromosikan ICC. Berbagi pengalaman pribadi dan membandingkan serta membedakan budaya adalah praktik yang paling umum dilakukan guru. Temuan penelitian ini akan menarik bagi siapa saja yang ingin mengetahui bagaimana guru EFL memandang kompetensi antar budaya dan bagaimana pandangan mereka berdampak pada pengajaran mereka.

Keywords: *Intercultural communicative competence(ICC), teachers' perception, ICC implementation*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

The 21st century is marked by the development of science, information, and communication in all disciplines. Indirectly, this development demands practical communication abilities. However, limited knowledge and understanding of culture and customs make communication between countries unsuccessful (Minh et al., 2019). As a result, teaching foreign languages in English must build intercultural communication skills to communicate effectively and appropriately (Tambunan et al., 2021; Álvarez, 2020). This concept has caused a significant paradigm shift from developing linguistic competence to incorporating intercultural communicative competence (henceforth, ICC) (Abdullah & Lulita, 2018). Therefore, ICC is necessary to be developed by people nowadays.

In numerous countries, particularly in non-English speaking nations such as Pakistan, Thailand, and China, English language teaching goals have been modified to emphasize ICC in response to global needs (Abdullah & Lulita, 2018; Kusumaningputri & Puji, 2018). ICC enables people to communicate effectively despite their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the implementation of culture in teaching allows students to see and participate in language learning activities while developing a sense of difference (Kavakli, 2021). Likewise, Fajriyah et al. (2020) revealed that learners learning English without understanding the culture will face significant difficulties. Therefore, culture and language have an interrelated relationship because communicating requires knowledge of the language and knowing the culture.

Despite its conceptual importance in today's context, implementing ICC in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Indonesia still needs improvement. The majority of students had a low level of ICC due to their limited experience and understanding of effectively interacting and socializing with others from diverse cultural backgrounds (Tambunan et al., 2021). In line with this, Permatasari & Andriyanti (2021) conducted preliminary classroom observation and interviews, demonstrating that students had a low level of ICC because they need

more chances to practice and are unaware of the significance of intercultural awareness in achieving effective global communication. Consequently, they need more practice in productive skills to maintain good intercultural communication.

On the other hand, to successfully integrate and deal with global demands, EFL teachers are urged to comprehend the essence of language and culture to highlight their competence in classroom practice (Fajriyah et al., 2020). Nevertheless, there exists a gap between the English teachers' perceptions of the purpose of ICC and their current practices in the classroom. It can be interpreted that teachers need to be fully aware of what ICC is and how to teach it effectively in order to avoid problems arising from their lack of awareness of cultural aspects in the language classroom (Idris & Widyantoro, 2019). Additionally, Nindya et al. (2022) stated that the pre-service teachers feel that they understood the elements of ICC very well. However, the lack of ICC preparation made the teachers insufficiently trained to teach ICC. Idris & Widyantoro (2019) suggested that Indonesian EFL teachers should have related to ICC's elements and found that attitudes are essential in teaching ICC. Specifically, teachers should focus on giving empathy, respect, and tolerance towards diverse cultures.

Consequently, teachers who do not possess these attitudes may encounter difficulties in properly teaching ICC. Considering there is a gap between English teachers' perception of the purposes of ICC and their current practices in the classroom. Therefore, it is crucial to consider EFL teachers' perceptions of ICC and how teachers implemented ICC when teaching English as a foreign language since the final goal of foreign language education is shifting from emphasizing communicative competence to ICC.

Numerous of the study tried to investigate teachers and student-teachers understanding, beliefs, and practices towards ICC. A study by Nindya et al. (2022) investigated Indonesian EFL students-teachers' understanding of ICC and their practice in integrating ICC. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. The results showed that students-teachers have a positive understanding of ICC elements. However, practicing to develop students' ICC is not commonly used during the

teaching practicum program. On the contrary, Hasanah & Gunawan (2020) conducted a study investigating the teachers' understanding and beliefs about ICC. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis are conducted to collect the data. The findings revealed that teachers have relatively minimal knowledge about the concept of ICC. On the other hand, both teachers believe that language is essentially limited by culture. Practically, though, few elements of culture are shown, and most of the knowledge imparted in the realm of culture is static.

Furthermore, research on ICC is increasingly being carried out in various countries by involving teachers and students as study participants. Minh et al. (2019) investigated senior EFL student teachers' perceptions and practices of ICC. The result from the questionnaires showed that EFL student-teachers had positive perceptions of ICC. Furthermore, the results of this study revealed that the participants demonstrated a willingness to incorporate ICC into their teaching performances. The data also indicated that a significant number of participants prioritized "ways of socializing" when incorporating cultural topics into their English teaching. Another study by Banjongjit & Boonmoh (2018) used semi-structured interviews investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of English workplace Communication at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) in Thailand towards promoting ICC in EFL classes. The result shows that most teachers perceive ICC as effectively interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds and demonstrating a good understanding of cultural variety. In addition, two teachers believed that ICC involves the ability to interact with individuals from diverse nations and individuals from various social categories, including gender, age, and socioeconomic standing. Practically, most of the teachers in the study had yet to use many of the practices suggested by experts.

After reviewing several empirical studies, it is clear that most of them used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather data. Only one study used document analysis. Meanwhile, this study used semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to collect data. Further, as can be seen, the similar result showed that the teachers have a good understanding of ICC effectively in the EFL

classroom; however, they still need to practice ICC effectively in the EFL classroom. Therefore, conducting the study to explore the ICC's best practices is essential. This study has benefits for other English teachers or readers. It can be a source for them to learn how to practice ICC's elements in their English classroom. Furthermore, Hasanah & Gunawan (2020) suggested future research on ICC teachers at various levels of education to reflect their perceptions of cultural teaching through language education. Hence, this present study aims to fill this gap by investigating the teachers' perception and how EFL teachers implement ICC in EFL classrooms in Senior High Schools in Batusangkar, West Sumatera.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. What are the EFL teachers' perceptions towards ICC in the EFL classroom?
2. How do EFL teachers implement ICC when teaching in EFL classroom?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses theories that support the understanding of the problem formulated in the research background. The review is presented in three subheadings. The first part discusses intercultural communicative competence. The second part discusses the concept of perceptions. The last part explains the teaching strategies teachers apply in ICC.

2.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence

Numerous articles have extensively defined and discussed the term IC. According to (Byram et al., 2002), IC refers to the ability to understand and interact effectively with others from different cultures and who possess diverse identities, utilizing intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Barrett (2018) also pinpointed IC is the set of beliefs, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and understanding that people need to understand and appreciate those who are viewed as culturally distinct from oneself; it involves effectively and appropriately interacting and talking with them and developing positive and productive connections. It is a valuable asset and an essential skill in an increasingly globalized world where

people from different cultures and countries with diverse values, views, and experiences can interact. Thus, IC is a larger concept than tolerance or respect.

Communicative competence is a comprehensive phase encompassing all communication skills and talents. Idris & Widyantoro (2019) communicative competence refers to the ability to use and produce language correctly and effectively in interaction, as well as being able to pay attention to and understand the content and context of the interaction so that this allows individuals to avoid not reacting inappropriately by not violating its rules and norms to achieve the goal of harmonious conversation. Additionally, Tarvin (2014) asserts that communicative competence refers to the capacity to effectively and fluently use language or communicate in a culturally appropriate manner to understand and carry out social duties. Communicative competence is communication context, and the individuals participating in it have an impact on communicative competence, which is dynamic, relative, and context-specific. It is also critical to realize that social and cultural knowledge are just as vital to communicative competence as linguistic proficiency.

Thus, ICC refer to communicating effectively and appropriately in different cultural circumstances. ICC has been widely acknowledged as a core element of today's foreign language education. According to Fajriyah et al. (2020), ICC becomes a crucial component of language education when using practical and communicative concepts when teaching English. The most exhaustive and influential definition of ICC is that of Byram et al. (1997): the ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, to understand and interpret their behavior and communication patterns, and to write and interpret spoken and written texts to achieve successful intercultural communication. Banjongjit & Boonmoh (2018) considered ICC as a notion that often deals with the ability to acknowledge and comprehend one's own cultural identities as well as that of others, to have a positive outlook on differences, and to engage in a way that promotes positive connections with individuals from different cultural origins. Some researchers defined ICC as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in various

cultural contexts (Petosi & Karras,2020; Idris & Widyantoro, 2019; Tran & Duong, 2018).

Concerning the role of ICC in language education, Tran & Duong (2018) emphasizes that the objective of ICC is to prepare students for suitable and efficient communication with persons from various areas or nations who have diverse cultural backgrounds. In order to become an intercultural speaker, Byram et al.(2002), states that an individual needs to possess the following five components of ICC:

- a. Intercultural Attitudes (*savoir être*): This factor refers to the ability to be open-minded and curious about other cultures and respect other cultures and ways of life.
- b. Knowledge (*saviors*): This factor refers to the knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of others, including their beliefs, values, customs, and history. Knowledge about culture is obtained from socializing.
- c. Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): This factor is crucial because ICC requires attitudes and comparing skills. It refers to the ability to interpret and relate to people from other cultures, including understanding their perspectives and communicating effectively with them.
- d. Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): This factor refers to acquiring new knowledge about culture and cultural practices by interacting with people of other cultures and utilizing knowledge, attitudes, and skills under real-time communication and interaction constraints.
- e. Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): This factor refers to the capacity to assess—critically and in light of specified standards—the perspectives, ways of doing things, and end products of one's own and other cultures and nations. This element's goal is to make learners' values explicit and conscious in any evaluations of others.

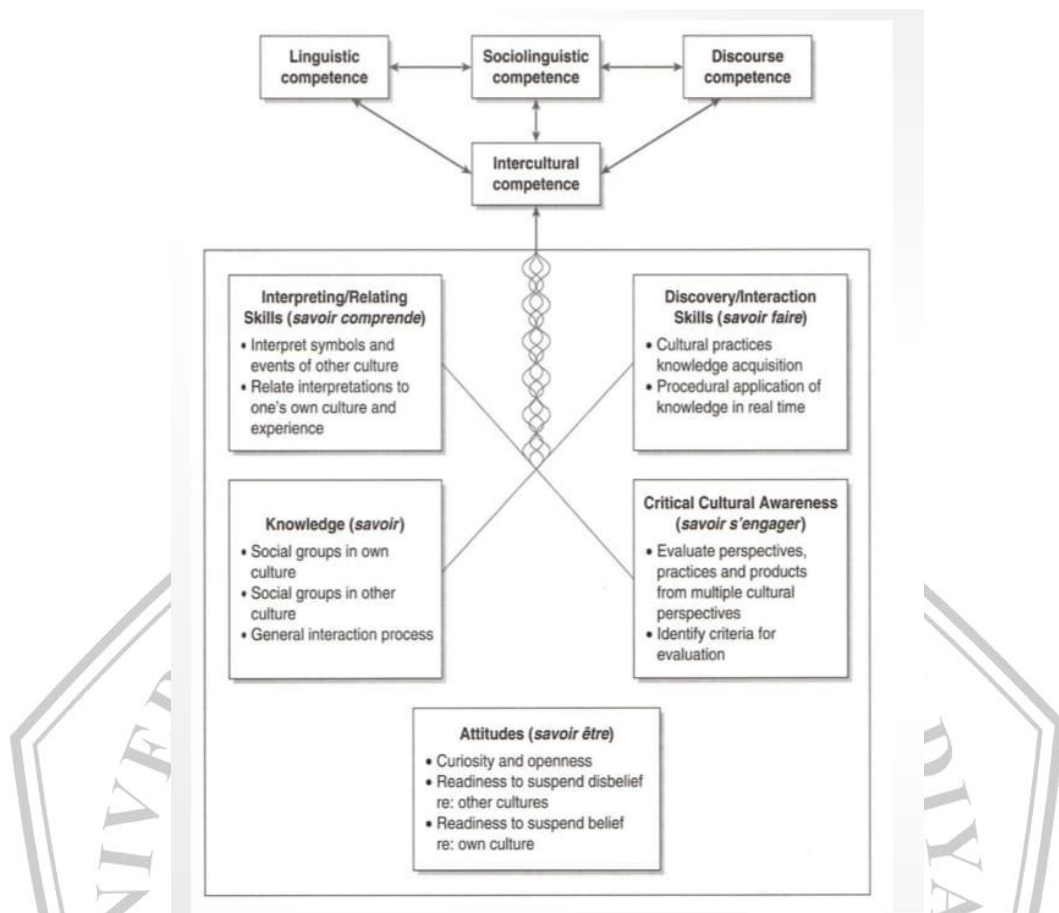


Figure 2.1. Adopted from Byram's Model of ICC (Byram,2002)

Meanwhile, Deardorff (2004) proposed the ICC model as follows:

- a. **Attitudes:** Positive attitudes such as openness, curiosity, and respect towards other cultures are essential for effective intercultural communication. These attitudes include being willing to learn, tolerant of ambiguity, and open to new experiences.
- b. **Knowledge:** People need to have sufficient knowledge of other participants' cultures, including self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, and deep cultural knowledge. This knowledge helps in understanding other people's perspectives and behaviors.
- c. **Skills:** ICC requires various skills such as listening, observing, interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and relating. These skills enable individuals to

effectively communicate across cultures and navigate different communication styles.

- d. Internal Outcome: The internal outcome of ICC includes adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, and empathy. These outcomes reflect the individual's ability to adjust to new cultural environments and communicate effectively.
- e. External Outcome: The external outcome of ICC is the ability to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in various cultural contexts to achieve one's goals. This outcome is influenced by the individual's attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

ICC is a crucial skill for all English language learners to master because it enables effective and appropriate interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds. However, due to limited opportunities for students to engage with individuals from many cultural backgrounds and foster genuine intercultural communication, EFL teachers perceive the task of developing ICC as challenging or unattainable. One study investigated the effectiveness of an intercultural communicative language teaching (ICLT) model in an EFL context and found that students' intercultural competence improved by making them more aware of how to use English in speaking with people from other cultures. (Lee et al., 2023).

The diverse cultural backgrounds of students and the incorporation of their native cultures into the English classroom are undeniable realities that must be acknowledged and embraced (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022). Therefore, EFL teachers must fully comprehend each component of ICC in order to adopt intercultural teaching in EFL instruction. EFL teachers have a vital role in growing students' communicative skills as well as their intercultural knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness, allowing them to cultivate their own and others' cultures (Álvarez, 2020). So, EFL teachers should be familiar with how to deal with and understand different cultures in order to help their students do the same.

In addition, studies on teachers' attitudes and behaviors regarding intercultural instruction have shown that, despite their strong convictions, teachers' implementation of ICC in EFL instruction and adherence to best

practices in the classroom were inconsistent (Permatasari & Andriyanti, 2021; Smakova & Paulsrud, 2020; Tambunan et al., 2021; Yue, 2019). Furthermore, some studies suggest that EFL teachers may need more knowledge and skills to effectively integrate ICC into their language teaching (Mede & Gunes, 2019; Smakova & Paulsrud, 2020; Zhao, 2023). Therefore, teachers' understanding of ICC is crucial in developing their prospective students' ICC. Teachers who clearly understand ICC can better accomplish the objectives of intercultural learning.

Considering there is a gap between English teachers' perceptions of the purpose of ICC and their current practices in the classroom, Batunan et al. (2023) recommends the use of telecollaboration to help the teachers. Telecollaboration is the practice that brings together language learners in different parts of the world by utilizing the application of online communication to develop language skills and intercultural competence (O'Dowd, 2012). The use of telecollaboration is effective in fostering the teachers' positive attitude and understanding toward ICC (Batunan et al., 2023; Üzümlü et al., 2020). In addition, Álvarez (2020) tried to investigate the use of study groups as a teacher's professional development. Teachers can use study groups to support each other in the construction of a more informed view of ICC. It also potentially fosters teachers' awareness toward the importance of ICC to be transferred to students as preparation to face 21st-century challenges. However, teachers are still constrained in interpreting ICC practices in the EFL classroom because they have not been trained at the institution.

Conceptual Framework

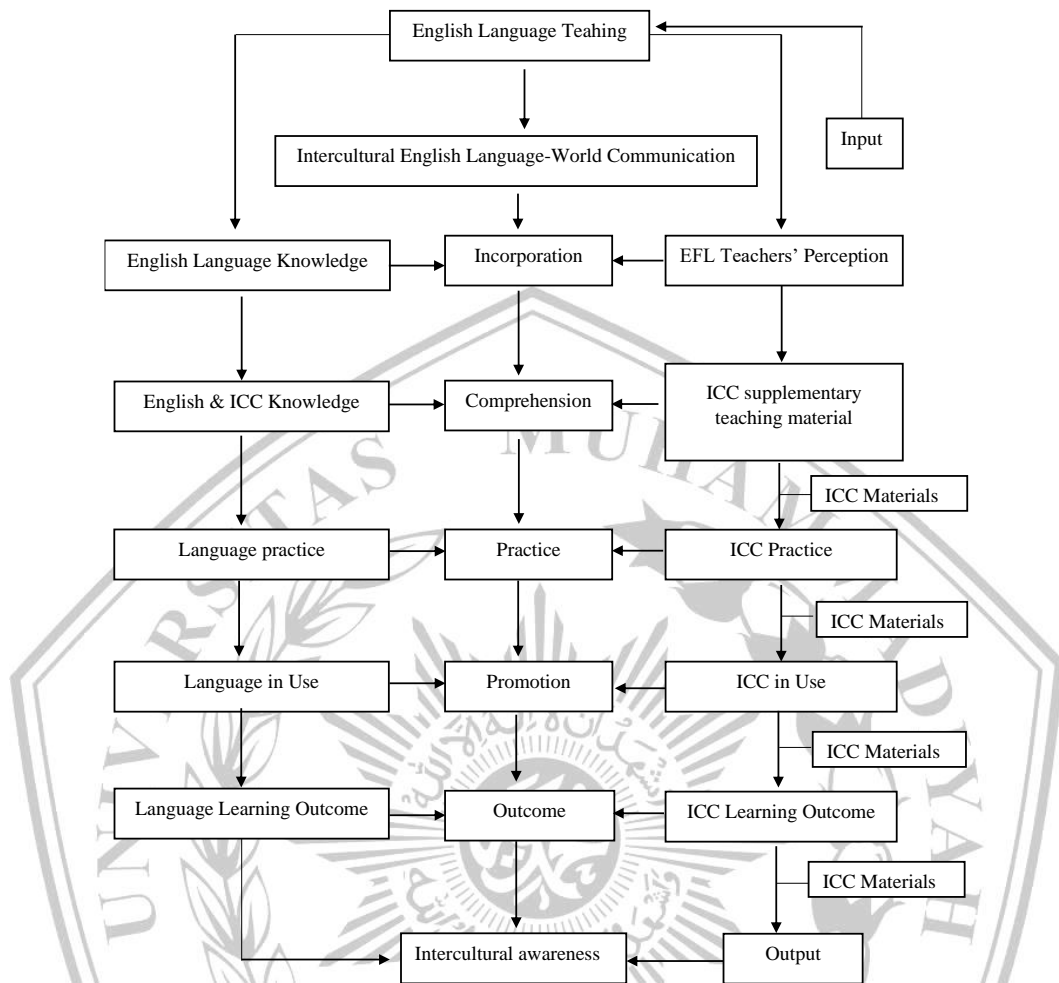


Figure 2.2. ICC Concepts in Action

2.2 Perception

This section consists of a review of literature related to the concept of perception. This section aims to provide an overview of the current understanding of the perception process, types of perception and teacher perception.

2.2.1 Perception Process

The perception process begins when individuals employ their senses to initiate the stimulating process known as sensation. Through the use of their sensory organs, individuals are able to perceive and differentiate between different inputs. These inputs are then assessed and assigned significance, allowing individuals to comprehend their surroundings (Qiong, 2017).

According to Qiong (2017) the perception process consists of three stages:

1. Selection

Selection is the first step in the perception process. It refers to the act of using our senses to filter and process external stimuli. The strength and nature of these stimuli can vary significantly, and not all sensory data is processed in the same way. The brain eliminates redundant or irrelevant stimuli while selecting and filtering pertinent information.

2. Organization

The second step in the perception process is organization, which comes after information selection using sensory input. Based on specific principles, the collected sensory data is arranged and grouped together. Someone can structure and provide broad knowledge coherence by organizing it.

3. Interpretation

The last step is tries to interpret these patterns by giving them descriptions. The brain gives meaning to the organized sensory data at this phase. How one interprets what they view is greatly influenced by their context, cultural background, and prior experiences. Additionally, at this stage, the information must be integrated with prior knowledge and memories.

2.2.2 Aspects of Perception

According to Walgito (2003) perception contains three aspects, namely affective, conative and the cognitive aspect:

1. Cognitive Aspect

This aspect pertains to mental processes related to thinking and understanding. It encompasses how individuals perceive and interpret information. This aspect is specifically related to how individuals view their attitude towards the object.

2. Affective Aspect

This aspect refers to the psychological aspect and the emotional state of persons towards certain items and all aspects related to assessing positive and negative aspects based on one's emotional characteristics. It involves the emotional responses that influence how individuals perceive and react to various situations.

3. Conative Aspect

The conative aspect is a component that pertains to the inclination to take action towards the target of one's attitude. This component measures the magnitude of an individual's attitude, indicating the extent to which someone is inclined to act or behave in a certain way towards the target of their attitude.

2.2.3 Types of Perception

Perception is divided into two according to Irwanto (2017) which are:

1. Positive Perceptions

Positive perception is the positive assessment of something around them by people. If someone has a good view in this scenario, they will accept and support the perceived thing. Positive perception refers to the perception of something favorably or optimistically. Thus, people with positive perceptions focus on the potential for good outcomes. Additionally, someone with a positive perception will attract a lot of positive things into their life, and they will generally be happy and make the most of their lives.

2. Negative Perceptions

Negative perception refers to perceiving and presenting information in a manner that is either negative or unrelated to the thing being evaluated. A negative interpretation leads people to notice unpleasant aspects of their surroundings. This can be interpreted as the idea that negative perception refers to an individual's evaluation of information or the source of perception in a negative manner. The negative perception

emerges due to discontentment with the object, lack of knowledge, and the absence of the apparent encounter.

2.2.4 Teachers' Perceptions

Teacher perceptions refer to teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about various aspects of their profession, including their roles, responsibilities, teaching practices, and the learning environment (Hung & Li, 2017). Teachers' background knowledge, life experiences, personal beliefs, and attitudes toward teaching all influence these perceptions. Furthermore, how teachers are perceived can impact how they engage with students, how they teach, and how effective they are overall. Ilmi & Wuli Fitriati (2020) also stated that teachers play an important role and hence require a solid knowledge base and awareness to manage the classroom efficiently. This foundation enables them to create engaging lessons, manage the classroom, adapt to changing circumstances, and foster a positive learning environment. Additionally, the quality of a teacher can be discerned through their awareness of their actions and their willingness to impart this awareness to their students (Gurney, 2007). By fostering knowledge and awareness, teachers can establish a more efficient and supportive educational milieu that facilitates their pupils' intellectual and personal development.

In order for reflection practice to be effective, it is crucial to understand and share teachers' perceptions about them during classroom learning. By realizing that how people see and interact with practice is affected by their perception, teachers can help build positive perceptions from the start of the activity and ensure that the practice is built on clear instructions and theoretical background. Teachers who have good perceptions will lead to good planning and will execute a good teaching practices as well (Ilmi & Wuli Fitriati, 2020). In addition, Xu (2012) revealed perceptions as the opinions individuals hold regarding the appropriateness of their actions or practices. The perception leads them to choose certain practices done in the classroom. Therefore, understanding this basic concept of perception helps us to see how teachers perceive their classroom practice. So, this study aims to

find out how teachers perceive the implementation of ICC in EFL classrooms and how they implement ICC in EFL classrooms.

2.3 Teacher Strategies in Promoting ICC

There are some strategies and ideas for developing ICC in a real foreign language classroom situation.:

1. Role Play

Role-play is a teaching strategy in EFL classrooms to increase students' intercultural competence. Reid (2015) stated that role-play is appropriate for individuals of all language proficiency levels and age groups. Role-play can make students learn about the environment and get involved directly to build genuine conversational encounters in various settings and social roles in the classroom. Banjongjit & Boonmoh (2018) also revealed that role-play is the best way to improve students' ICC. It is consistent with Byram et al. (2002) recommendations that role-playing and simulation might be helpful activities to promote comparative analysis in a language class.

According to Permatasari & Andriyanti (2021) engaging in role play provides students with exposure to diverse cultural situations, enabling them to cultivate a more profound comprehension of distinct cultures and their subtleties. Students are urged to take on a role and fully explore it when role-playing. Role-play also encourages students to think critically about cultural differences and how to negotiate them. Role-play allows them to practice their communication skills in a safe and controlled setting. Additionally, Waluyo (2019) stated that in the classroom, theme-based role-play allows teachers to encourage oral language creation and establish genuine conversational encounters in various social contexts and roles. Moreover, role-play is a well-known practice in developing student ICC and can be applied to different levels, and is easy to implement in class (Sabilah, 2019). Therefore, it might be better to include more role-

playing in interactions of real intercultural situations in the context of EFL classrooms.

2. Comparing and Contrasting Cultural Differences

In this strategy, EFL learners are advised to seek out cultural parallels and differences between the target culture and their own culture in respect to various cultural subjects. By evaluating the similarities and contrasts between other cultures, can pupils' cultural sensitivity and multicultural awareness be developed (Gerfanova & Mikhailova, 2018). In order to stimulate the students' sense organs for them to understand further the topic, they can collect a piece of cultural collection information refers to gathering and accumulating data, knowledge, or materials pertaining to a specific culture or multiple cultures (Zhou, 2018). Furthermore, this strategy uses what students already know, believe, and value to help them learn more about other cultures and accept them as they are. This builds the foundation for effective conversation across cultures (Byram et al., 2002; Chaouche, 2016).

3. Cultural Informant

According to (Zhou, 2018), an exchange visit is one of the most effective strategies to enhance understanding of differences in values, beliefs, practices, and attitudes and encourage openness and tolerance towards different cultures. In addition, Abduh & Rosmaladewi (2018) revealed that two important strategies to promote intercultural competence are intercultural, and language engagement through in-country programs, intercultural engagement through overseas immersion in-country programs. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2023) also stated that participating in intercultural exchange or study abroad programs can enhance learners' self-efficacy and confidence in applying communication skills with the target language in real-life intercultural settings.

So, by incorporating cultural information, EFL classrooms can effectively develop intercultural communicative competence among learners, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in diverse cultural contexts. If the trip (or student exchange program) is well planned and executed, it can provide students with firsthand knowledge of many aspects of foreign cultures.

4. Engage Students to Look Inwards in Small Groups

This strategy entails providing a safe environment for students to discuss their cultural backgrounds and experiences. It enables students to recognize and comprehend their own cultural biases and assumptions, which is critical for building intercultural competence. The students' creativity is enhanced via preparation and presentation, allowing them to take the initiative in acquiring new knowledge and understanding, empowering them to become active participants in their learning (Zhou, 2018). For example, English teachers can divide students into groups and give different themes to each group, instructing them to learn about different aspects of Western culture by surfing the internet

III. METHOD

This chapter consists of research design, research subject, instruments of the research, data collection method, technique of data analysis and trustworthiness.

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. According to Yin (2018), the goal of descriptive qualitative research is to explain a phenomenon in depth in its real-world setting. By applying a descriptive qualitative design, the researcher tries to describe or portray EFL teachers' perceptions of ICC and how EFL teachers implemented ICC in EFL classrooms in Batusangkar, West Sumatera.

3.2 Research Setting and Subject

This study uses purposive sampling to collect the data. Purposive sampling is typically modest in size; its value and credibility are questioned based on its logic and purpose (Shaheen et al., 2018). As a result, the research's need and aim determine the number of participants.

Three teachers were chosen based on criteria determined by the researcher, who provided criteria for adapting and aligning with the research aims. The first criterion was teachers currently employed in Batusangkar, West Sumatra. Second, the teachers had implemented ICC in their English language acquisition in the EFL classrooms. Third, the teacher graduated from English language education program

The researcher selected three participants through purposive sampling from ten English teachers in three Senior High Schools in Batusangkar, West Sumatra. Based on the criteria, the three teachers selected as participants were teachers who taught English at SMAN 3 Batusangkar, West Sumatra. So, the study was conducted in SMAN 3 Batusangkar, located in Baringin, Lima Kaum, Tanah Datar district, West Sumatra. In addition, all participants agreed and obtained permission from their school principal to take part in this research and participants because they had experiences that could be shared as research data. Apart from that, the participants were also willing to be observed by the researcher during class observations. The following table explains the demographic information of the participants.

Table 3.2
Participants Demographic Information

| Name | Gender | Age (years) | Teaching Experience (years) | Experience Abroad | Date of Interview |
|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| AP | M | 49 | 24 | Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, United States | 24/04/2024 |
| RM | F | 35 | 11 | Malaysia | 26/03/2024 |
| MJ | M | 59 | 36 | Australia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia | 24/04/2024 |

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

In this research, the researcher employed interview and observation for collecting the data.

3.3.1 Interview

Interviews are a face-to-face data collection method where the researcher prepares an interview guide with questions and only captures responses from one research participant at a time (Creswell, 2018). This study uses semi-structured interviews to collect the data because it can bring more in-depth responses from the participants. The interview session was divided into three parts. The first part concerned information on teachers' demographics. The second part concerns teachers' perceptions of ICC and the last part concerns how EFL teachers implement ICC in EFL classrooms.

Interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participants. Open-ended interview questions were created based on research questions. In constructing the interview, the researcher adapting the instruments from (Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018). The researcher recorded the teacher's answers and recorded using a mobile phone during the interview. Next, the researcher chose a semi-structured interview because the researcher could ask follow-up questions to explore detailed answers.

3.3.2 Classroom Observation

The last technique used to collect the data is classroom observation. A qualitative research technique called classroom observation is utilized to thoroughly grasp a classroom's educational practices and dynamics. In this observation, non-participant observation was used to obtain results without directly involving activities. The researcher was sitting on the sideline and observed, documented, and also took a note about how the teacher implemented ICC and the interaction with the students during teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom. Field notes are used as the primary means to gather the data in the observation the data completely by observing the behavior or activity of the respondent of the study. Additionally, to support the credibility of the data collected through this technique, observations were documented with permission from the participants. The use of

classroom observations in qualitative descriptive research designs can help understand the learning process in the classroom.

The researcher observed three meetings because the researcher tried to find out more practices that were implemented in promoting ICC but it turned out that teachers did not always incorporate culture or ICC into learning in the EFL classroom. Teachers incorporate ICC into learning when it is strongly related to culture. Thus, the observation field notes were conducted for three meetings per teacher and the researcher conducted nine observations in three different classes.

The following table presents the detailed information about the classroom observations.

Table 3.1
Schedule of Classroom Observation

| Observation | Class | Date of Observation |
|-------------|--------|---------------------|
| AP/1 | X.E.5 | 24/04/2024 |
| AP/2 | X.E.5 | 08/05/2024 |
| AP/3 | X.E.5 | 15/05/2024 |
| RM/1 | XI.F.5 | 23/04/2024 |
| RM/2 | XI.F.5 | 30/04/2024 |
| RM/3 | XI.F.5 | 07/05/2024 |
| MJ/1 | XI.E.2 | 26/04/2024 |
| MJ/2 | XI.E.2 | 03/05/2024 |
| MJ/3 | XI.E.2 | 17/05/2024 |

3.4 Data Analysis

After conducting interviews with teachers, and conducting classroom observations, the next step to complete this research is data analysis. Analyzing the data is crucial to a research study since the outcome is the basis for the study's overall research. The interview and classroom observation data were analyzed by thematic analysis. This study is suitable for thematic analysis because it seeks to produce comprehensive descriptive statements that capture a holistic understanding

of the data and address the research questions of the study. Lester et al. (2020) suggested seven phases when completing a thematic analysis:

- a. Preparing and organizing the data for analysis: The researcher collected all interview data files and observation field note into a single folder, and gave structured naming to facilitate the development of the data corpus.
- b. Transcribing the recorded interview material into verbatim transcripts to create a precise and faithful record of the interview.
- c. Familiarization: The researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts to obtain a data corpus, then reading the notes of the classroom observations.
- d. Gathering the data: This process involves gathering and analyzing data to establish its overall significance. The result of this step is mapping the participant's information and the whole transcription data.
- e. Coding the data: The researcher classified the data by categorizing the text and subsequently identifying the categories with terms. The code was developed and modified through the coding process to answer the research questions.
- f. Theme search: In this step, the researcher began to shift their attention from looking for codes to looking for themes. The researcher aligns the theme with the conceptual or analytic objectives of the research and therefore designed as an answer to the main research question or focus of the study.
- g. Drawing conclusion: The researcher obtained clear information then drawing the conclusion. The analysis data is concluded to support the findings and discussion.

3.5 Trustworthiness

In this research, the researcher is required to check the data's trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of the data in this study was determined using credibility criteria. The data was checked through the completeness obtained from interviews and classroom observations. Credibility served as a substitute for internal validity and was established in the correct sense. To establish the credibility

of the data, the researcher used triangulation techniques that allowed the researcher to obtain multiple views from various sources.

Triangulation aims to show that diverse data sources or inquiry methodologies provide substantially the same conclusion, but the objective is to put such consistency to the test (Patton, 1999). Moreover, Patton (1999) also revealed four types of triangulations. Those were data triangulation, methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, and theory triangulation. This research used triangulation data sources, which entails comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information obtained at various times and through various techniques within qualitative methodologies. In this research, the researcher compared field notes and interview results.

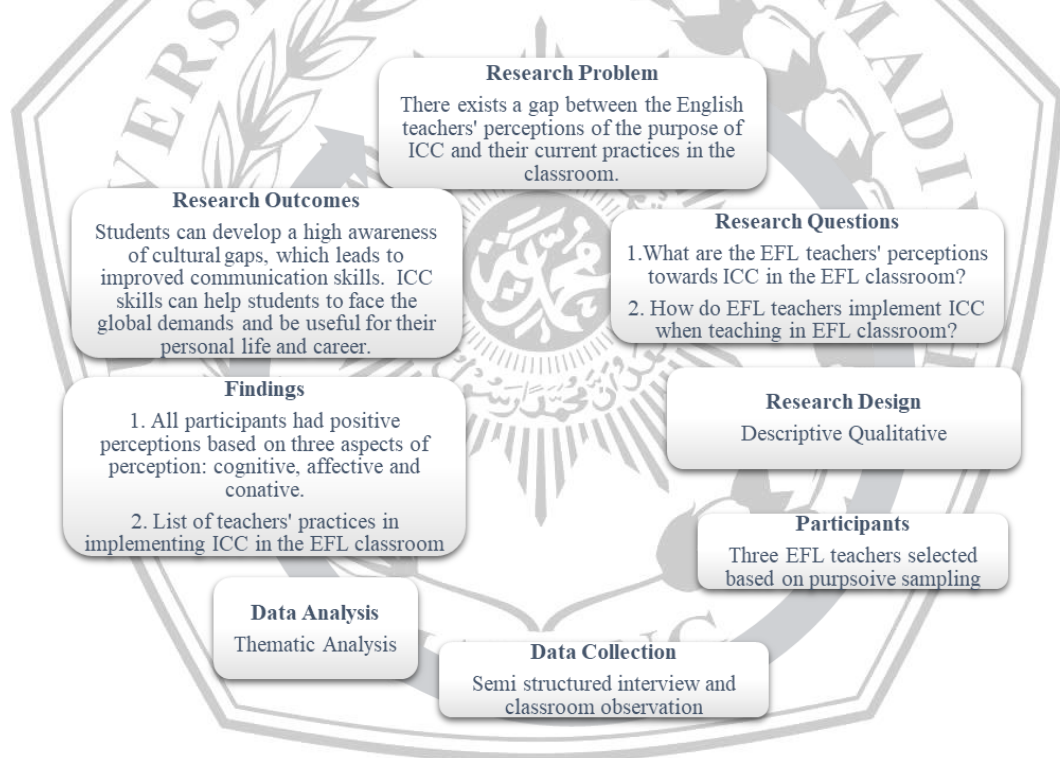


Figure 3. Flowchart of Research Activities

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The findings are presented sequentially and arranged based on their relevance to the research question. This section presents the findings from the data collected to answer the research questions through the following points: teachers' perceptions towards ICC in the EFL classrooms and how they implementing ICC in their teaching instruction in the classroom. This data was collected from three English teachers who had participated in taking the time to answer each question in the interview and observation sessions. To make easier for researcher to display the data coding was conducted for each teacher as follows:

Table 4. Teacher List

| No | Pseudonym | Explanation |
|----|-----------|-------------|
| 1 | AP | Teacher 1 |
| 2 | RM | Teacher 2 |
| 3 | MJ | Teacher 3 |

4.1 Teachers' Perceptions towards ICC

In exploring the multifaceted nature of perception, it is important to consider the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects that collectively shape our understanding and interaction with the world. These three aspects offer a comprehensive framework for analyzing how individuals perceive and respond to their environment, thereby delivering valuable insights into human behavior and decision-making processes. To find out teachers' perceptions of ICC, teachers were asked several questions, and the research findings covered three aspects:

4.1.1 Cognitive Aspect

The cognitive aspect of perception refers to the mental processes involved in understanding and interpreting sensory information. This aspect is crucial in shaping how people perceive and respond to stimuli. The first questions were preceded by teachers' views on the relationship between

culture and language to engage teachers in the aspect. In response to this question, the teachers almost gave similar responses. The teachers emphasized that the relationship between language and culture is complex and interconnected. It is frequently described as symbiotic, with language and culture developing alongside and influencing each other. As mentioned in the excerpts below:

I think, culture and language are closely related and influence each other. Language is crucial in cultural understanding, particularly for those seeking to learn about culture. (AP/01)

I think language and culture are interrelated, because culture is applied through language and language also produce culture. (MJ/01)

Based on the statement above, they agree that language and culture have a relationship and are bound to each other. This relationship can be seen in how language acts as a source of culture while language is a cultural practice. Further, RM stated in her interview that language is more than just a tool of communication:

In my opinion language and culture have a close relationship. Language is more than just a tool of communication; it also reflects the culture and values of a particular civilization. (RM/ 01)

Based on the RM's statement implies that learning a language is learning its culture because culture enriches language classes to reinforce language learning. So, learning a language is knowing its culture. The two are inseparable; language serves culture and reflects its values.

Furthermore, teaching English as a foreign language requires special attention, especially when implementing the intercultural approach. This approach is related to the ultimate goal of foreign language education, which is shifting from communicative competence towards ICC. Petosi & Karras (2020) also emphasized that foreign language learning initially focused mainly on the language part, but when interactive language teaching emerged, the focus changed to ICC. Considering this fact, it is important to examine how teachers define ICC because teachers play an important role

in promoting ICC to students in the EFL classroom. Teachers with a strong understanding of ICC will model good student behavior. Therefore, for the second question teachers were asked to define ICC.

One of the teachers, AP considered that ICC is almost the same as cross-cultural understanding (CCU), which consists of related concepts but has different meanings. CCU comes to AP's mind because it is one of the things about culture. CCU is one of the subjects taught in college. He said that:

When I was in college, I learned about Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU), which is probably related to the concept of ICC. So, I understand a little, but I have not explored it properly. I think people who learn a language must also learn culture to avoid misunderstandings. Hence, English teachers should learn about understanding cultures. It is essential to match language with culture. (AP/02)

CCU and ICC are related but address two different contexts. CCU emphasizes the importance of understanding and adapting to cultural differences in communication. At the same time, ICC emphasizes the skills and competencies needed to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, ICC and CCU are related but different concepts in different intercultural communication contexts.

Meanwhile, RM elucidates,

ICC is an understanding of the use of language. It is how we understand other people's culture and politeness in language. It involves a set of abilities and attitudes that enable us to communicate effectively and engage with others from different backgrounds. (RM/03)

RM's statement shows that ICC emphasizes not only the knowledge aspect but also how to behave, and it reminds people to pay attention to politeness and manners when communicating and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. AP continued that ICC must be carried out to prevent intercultural communication misunderstandings. AP addresses interculturality by explaining to students that some inappropriate questions should not be asked to native speakers for the first time. AP

explained that people with ICC skills can adjust to culture and language well. It can be seen in the following interview data:

ICC is the ability to use a language by considering its cultural background. By possessing ICC skills, we can improve our ability to communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, we adjust our language to their culture to avoid misunderstandings.

He also gave examples of privacy questions that should not be asked of foreigners.

For example, in many cultures, asking about the number of children or family details can be considered a personal or private matter. By familiarizing ourselves with their culture, we can avoid inquiring about their privacy or personal matters. Thus, I believe individuals with ICC skills adeptly employ a specific language by adapting to the cultural context. (AP/03)

According to the AP, sensitivity to cultural differences is essential when interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. In some cultures, some questions may be considered intrusive or inappropriate, especially if you do not know the person well. Different cultures have varying norms and expectations regarding personal boundaries and privacy. Understanding and respecting cultural differences can help build trust and positive relationships, making interactions more meaningful and effective. Therefore, with ICC we can communicate more effectively.

In addition, MJ also clarified his understanding of ICC:

Culture exists because of habit. Communicative is how we socialize or communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. So, ICC is the ability to understand cultural knowledge and behaviours and cultural differences between countries. In short, teachers not only teach the material but also incorporate positive cultures into their teaching. (MJ/03)

Based on the statements from the teachers above, it can be highlighted that the teachers have a good understanding of the concept of ICC. The high understanding of ICC elements perceived by teachers in this study can be attributed to the data on the teachers' background information. The research data shows that all teachers had overseas travel experience, so they have been exposed to seeing first-hand people from other cultures

living their daily lives, as well as communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds. In addition, a good understanding of ICC concept seems to be very important in determining how they perceive the role of ICC in the EFL classroom. This is followed up by Sercu (2006) teachers who deeply understand the culture associated with the language they teach are more likely to encourage their students to develop intercultural competence actively.

4.1.2 Affective Aspect

In exploring teachers' perceptions of ICC implementation in EFL classrooms, the affective aspect plays an important role, as it relates to the emotional dimensions, beliefs and attitudes that influence the learning and teaching experience. In the affective aspect, all teachers perceived that ICC is very important to be implemented in the EFL classroom. In addition, ICC can be beneficial for students both for their career and personal life. As can be seen from the responses of the following teachers:

In my opinion, ICC is not only important for students but it is mandatory for every EFL students to learn about ICC. Additionally, teachers can better prepare their students for international relations and cultivate a positive attitude toward individuals from diverse cultures. (AP/05)

Furthermore, RM said that ICC is not only needed by EFL students but also by many different kinds of people and contexts.

If we discuss this issue, it is essential for anyone who goes abroad to understand the ICC. It does not have to be explicitly pegged for English students; it is valuable for a wide range of individuals and contexts. (RM/05)

In the meantime, MJ elucidated that ICC makes language more beautiful and meaningful.

Implementing ICC in the EFL classroom is very important. ICC makes language attractive and meaningful. If students understand culture, their communication and language skills will be smooth and exciting, as language is a gateway to the world. In addition, the

concept of ICC is comprehensive as it refers to the habitual nature of culture within a particular group of individuals. Although not explicitly stated in the curriculum, it is crucial to provide implicit explanations. (MJ/05)

In accordance with the aforementioned statement, ICC actually does not directly make language more beautiful or meaningful, but it can help people appreciate and understand language better by encouraging cultural contextualization, linguistic diversity, and clear communication with different cultural backgrounds. By integrating ICC, teachers create a learning environment where students not only acquire linguistic skills but also develop a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity, leading to more meaningful and enriching interactions. This approach fosters a sense of empathy and global awareness, making language learning a more vibrant and impactful experience.

Thus, based on the transcriptions above, all three teachers are familiar with the concept of ICC. They explained that ICC is important and even mandatory for EFL students. In this study, the teachers also realize that learning a language should be combined with cultural knowledge to help students speak appropriately, avoid taboos, and interact with individuals from other cultures. Thus, based on the data the teachers showed a positive attitude towards implementing ICC in the EFL classroom. A positive attitude will positively impact students and teachers when implementing ICC in the classroom.

4.1.3 Conative Aspect

The last aspect that shaped teacher perceptions is the conative aspect. The last aspect that shaped teacher perceptions is the conative aspect. This aspect of teachers' perceptions of ICC encompasses teachers' motivation, willingness, and effort, which influence how teachers understand and implement ICC in their teaching practices. This aspect is crucial as it shapes the effectiveness of teaching strategies aimed at fostering ICC among

students. Understanding how teachers view their motivation and readiness to foster intercultural communication can provide valuable insights into the development of more inclusive and effective teaching strategies.

The interview results disclosed that all teachers perceived ICC as a skill needed by students and important to implement in the EFL classroom. Based on interviews, all teachers have incorporated ICC into language learning. The following transcript illustrated this point.

Yes, I have promoted ICC in EFL classrooms, and I think that all English teachers have done the same. The English language differs from our native language, thereby leading to variations in communication. Therefore, as an English teacher, I think we must promote ICC in EFL classrooms even though it is not very clear. (AP/06)

Furthermore, RM emphasized that ICC skills equip students for the problems they may face in academic and social settings in different nations. Students can benefit from ICC by being more equipped to face and capitalize on opportunities and challenges in international studies, making it a great asset in their academic and professional development.

Promoting ICC in EFL classrooms may be more straightforward. In the future, we will bring and deliver students with high prospects and achievements because many students plan to continue their studies abroad. (RM/06)

The interview shows that the teacher has implemented ICC in the EFL classroom. Teachers show commitment to integrating diverse cultures into learning, introducing students to various cultural and linguistic backgrounds through suitable teaching materials because not all materials can promote ICC. In addition, teachers actively engage students in interactive activities that promote intercultural interaction. The details of how teachers implement ICC in the EFL classroom were explained in the second research question.

The conative aspect measures the magnitude of an individual's attitude, indicating the extent to which someone is inclined to act or behave in a certain way towards the target of their attitude. When the teachers asked, "How do you stay informed about the ICC to better your students' intercultural learning?" they replied:

I already have experience abroad, and for about ten years, I have also taught students about culture at UIN Batusangkar. In addition, I like to use the Internet and social media to get information about culture. (AP/08)

I was once a tour guide for a cultural event in Malaysia. In addition, I often communicate and discuss with my friends from India and Pakistan through social media networks. (RM/08)

I was once awarded the Guru Berprestasi, which gave me the opportunity to visit Australia. While in Australia, I participated in learning activities, interacted with people, and communicated with them. (MJ/08)

In accordance with the statement mentioned above, every teacher has their way of being updated on current cultural issues; some utilize the internet, communicate with other people through social media and interact with foreigners. As a dynamic and multifaceted field, ICC encompasses the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural contexts. To ensure students develop these competencies, teachers must continuously update their understanding of ICC through various sources. In addition, based on the interview surprisingly all the teachers also have experience abroad and interact with people who have different languages and cultures. Teachers who have a thorough knowledge of ICC can design classrooms that enhance intercultural understanding and prepare students for an increasingly technologically connected world.

In summary, the findings of this study show the teachers have a positive perception of the implementation of ICC in the classroom; this is considered in three aspects of perception, namely cognitive, affective, and conative. The three aspects show that all participants fulfill these three

aspects. Furthermore, in shaping positive perceptions, teachers should understand five components of ICC based on Byram et al. (2002): intercultural attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery, and critical cultural awareness. The findings show that all participants have understood these five components.

The teachers' perceptions significantly impact how languages are taught and learned, and students' language skills will improve. Therefore, a positive perception of the importance of understanding the basic concepts of ICC and promoting it in the classroom is essential to encourage teachers who teach EFL classes because ICC is very beneficial for students in their professional careers and personal lives.

4.2 How to Implement ICC into EFL Classroom

The last part of the findings answers the second research question. Implementing ICC into teaching is related to what teachers say about what they did with cultural content, how they accommodated cultural learning, and what kind of activities they did with cultural content. Although these teachers pointed out the close relationship between language and culture, their practices in incorporating culture into the classroom varied greatly, as summarized in Table 4.2

Table 4.2
Teachers' Practices about ICC

| No. | ICC Practices | AP | RM | MJ |
|-----|--|----|----|----|
| 1 | Sharing teachers' personal experience | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Comparing and contrasting cultural differences | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Instilling good habit | | | ✓ |
| 4 | Doing role-play | | | ✓ |

The detailed explanations of each category were described as follows:

a. Sharing Personal Experience

Based on the table above, all participants promoted ICC by sharing personal experiences. Participants with overseas experience will have a good knowledge of ICC because they have seen first-hand how the culture of people abroad helps them understand how language and culture are interrelated in real-life situations. Sharing personal experiences is more interesting and can build an emotional connection with students, increasing their interest and motivation to learn. During the observation in RM's class, it was seen that students were excited and enthusiastic to ask RM about his experience in Malaysia. RM stated during the interview the students gave feedback on her overseas experiences. RM's statement was proven during the observation in RM's class; it was seen that the students were excited and enthusiastic to ask RM about her experiences in Malaysia.

I shared my experience in Malaysia, and they gained new knowledge. Then, they asked me a few questions, and at this moment, I immediately incorporated ICC into the students and then explained the impact and benefits of adjusting and using the language like the local people. (RM/09)

Based on the classroom observation data, RM explained to students the importance of using an itinerary while travelling abroad. An itinerary is crucial for navigating and getting around in a foreign country. Therefore, we must possess ICC skills since we will engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds and languages.

Based on the data observation, AP also shared his experience traveling abroad. In practice, AP told students about misunderstandings; based on his experience, AP asked for help to take pictures of himself at tourist attractions without asking for the word "please" but the person didn't seem welcoming or friendly towards him. This situation highlights the importance of ICC in understanding and navigating different cultural norms. In some cultures, asking for help might be straightforward, while in others, it might be customary to use specific polite phrases or gestures to ensure the request is well-received. By sharing his experience, AP illustrated how ICC involves not only recognizing and respecting cultural differences but also being adaptable and empathetic in communication.

Hence, adapting to language and culture while interacting with individuals from other origins is crucial. AP conveys that developing intercultural communicative competence is more than just acquiring linguistic skills; it also involves comprehending and valuing cultural subtleties. The concept revolves around possessing being open-minded, adaptable, and empathetic.

Meanwhile, MJ shared an experience with his students about his Australian friends to illustrate the importance of ICC. He explained that Australians value punctuality and see being on time as a sign of respect and commitment. MJ recounted a situation where he had an appointment with an Australian friend but arrived late. His friend was visibly upset, having waited for him, which made MJ realize the cultural importance placed on punctuality.

Overall, sharing teachers' personal experiences as part of the activities to promote ICC helped students and motivated them to learn about the culture. However, teachers should also consider that sharing experiences should match the learning topic. In addition, teachers should involve students in this activity to develop their ICC.

b. Comparing and Contrasting Cultural Differences

Another practice that all participants engaged in was comparing and contrasting cultural differences. Teachers can explicitly explain the difference between Indonesian and foreign cultures. AP narrated his teaching practices as follows.

Sometimes, I tell my students explicitly about different cultures because many students have no idea about different cultures. For example, when teaching communicative skills on congratulation and complement learning. At the time of learning I will give examples that Americans tend to be more direct and expressive in giving compliments. There will be immediate congratulations such as "you are amazing" or others. This is different from the culture in Indonesia because Indonesians tend to praise simply and sincerely, and they prefer to give compliments that are not too exaggerated and tend to humble themselves when receiving compliments, for example, by saying, "Thank you, this is thanks to the help of many people". (AP/11)

It can be seen that ICC can be promoted to students depending on the learning material being taught. AP explicitly explained to the students how

Indonesian culture differs from American culture in praising someone. American culture tends to be more expressive and straightforward, unlike Indonesia, which has a more indirect culture. The difference in praise culture can lead to misunderstandings because people outside Indonesia may think Indonesians do not give sincere compliments. Byram et al. (2002) stated that the essence of this practice is to prompt learners to compare a topic in a familiar environment with examples from a new context. Therefore, students can better understand how to communicate more effectively in intercultural situations by comparing cultures.

Meanwhile, MJ also gives the example of comparing and contrasting cultural differences:

Because Americans prefer to speak to the point and the culture in Indonesia, such a communication style will offend someone. Therefore, Americans who come to Indonesia must understand ICC and the other way around. (MJ/11)

RM also clarified how she comparing and contrast the culture as in the following statement:

Usually introducing the culture to students during conversations, then giving examples of how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate. For example, in Thailand, there is the word 'khap' and the word kha used for politeness. In other countries, certain politeness is used to respect elders. For the application, I train students' speaking skills with conversations and later give a listening part so that they understand firsthand how people out there communicate. (RM/12)

On the other hand, based on observation, RM also compares and contrasts cultural differences in implementing ICC but is slightly different from the activities carried out by AP. She assigns students to conduct research, discuss, and present in groups.

This activity involved students and teachers discussing the cultural differences in each country and a country's "culture shock" if travelling abroad. They discuss analytical exposition texts; in this activity, students are asked to work in groups, and each group chooses one country from several given country options. Students discuss in groups to discuss the culture and politeness if they were to visit the country and research the stories about 'culture shock. The students also compare

the culture of their own country with foreign countries and how to culture and communicate in that country. After completing the discussion, it was presented in front of the class and discussed with RM and other students. (See Appendix 3)

The data above show that RM has taken the teaching of culture to the next level. Her activities include knowledge inquiry, focusing on the first savoir, where students seek to understand and gain knowledge about different cultures. Additionally, she incorporates comparing, contrasting, and connecting cultural aspects, which not only builds cultural knowledge but also helps students draw meaningful connections between their own culture and others. Moreover, RM engages students in critiquing and synthesizing cultural information through writing, indicating the development of critical cultural awareness. This practice encourages students to analyze cultural differences critically and to reflect on their implications. Lastly, RM fosters the formation of values such as being open-minded and curious about outside cultures, reflecting positive intercultural attitudes. By encouraging these attitudes, RM helps students cultivate an appreciation for cultural diversity and a willingness to engage with different cultural perspectives. Through these varied and integrated activities, RM not only enhances students' language proficiency but also equips them with the essential skills and attitudes necessary for effective intercultural communication.

c. Instilling Good Habit

Instilling good habits is one of the practices implemented by teachers in promoting ICC. By integrating these positive habits into teaching practices, teachers can successfully develop ICC and improve students' proficiency in cross-cultural communication. Implementing instilling good habits in promoting ICC in EFL classrooms, considering that Indonesians are famous for their friendliness and politeness. Thus, it is important to always remind students to always pay attention to politeness and good communication manners. MJ also emphasized in his interview:

There are so many cultures in developed countries that we can use, including in learning English such as England, America, and Australia, which are also developed countries. I adopt their culture; for example, I can

use or imitate that country's culture, such as praising student work as very good or excellent and many other compliments. Moreover, I also give non-verbal praise to students by giving them a thumbs up or a high five to praise the results of their work. In addition, I always make it a habit to greet students first so they can be comfortable and enjoy learning with me. (MJ/13)

During classroom observations, MJ always instils good habits during learning activities. For every student who actively questions and answers, MJ always praises them by giving hand signals or saying them directly. MJ also gives non-verbal praise to students by giving thumbs up or high fives to praise their work. Students who complete their assignments are also given praise. In addition, MJ reminds his students to always instil mutual respect and behave politely.

MJ also narrated his experience while following the learning process in Australia. With this experience, MJ learned and adapted some teaching practices in Australia. Therefore, instilling good habits is one of the practices MJ implements to promote ICC in the EFL classroom. It can be seen from the classroom observation and he also said in the interview:

I have traveled to Australia to visit a school there. In this activity I saw how the learning process was and what topics were taught, and I took this experience as an inspiration. (MJ/13)

The statement implies that good habits will also form a good culture. Culture is formed because of habits; adopting cultures from outside can increase student motivation in the classroom and make students feel valued. This habit can increase students' awareness of cultural differences and help them develop the ability to adapt to various communication styles. In addition, the culture of teachers using the target language to praise students can give them practical experience of how praise is expressed in other cultural contexts.

d. Role-Play

Role play was the last practice implemented by the participants in promoting ICC in the EFL classroom. Role-play can make students learn about the environment and get involved directly to build genuine conversational encounters

in various settings and social roles in the classroom. MJ narrated her teaching praxis as follow:

Many practices can be applied to promote ICC; for example, in procedure text, children will act as waiters how politeness, and then maybe there are buyers, they will show the culture. Yes, they will a role-play, and they perform not rigidly because they have learned the culture, and when they perform, and change their body language. (MJ/14)

Based on the data above, the teacher incorporates ICC into teaching text procedures. In practice, the teacher has indirectly introduced foreign cultures to students. In practice, they play a role and are directly involved so that students will adjust their communication and body language to the culture of origin of the food being played. Thus, in this case, students learn about specific procedures and deepen their understanding of how culture affects how we communicate and interact. Role-play helps them develop invaluable intercultural communication skills in an increasingly globalized world.

Based on the previous studies, Role-play is the most effective way to promote ICC. Meanwhile, in this study, only one teacher used role-play to promote ICC to students. Based on the data above, the teachers mainly promoted ICC by sharing personal experiences and contrast and comparing and contrasting cultural differences because all teachers implemented it into teaching.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' perceptions of ICC were positive. All participants agreed that ICC must be implemented for students because this is a basic ability that students must possess. This is in line with previous research (Muliani et al., 2022; Minh et al., 2019; Banjongjit & Boonmoh, 2018; Estaji & Rahimi, 2018). In addition, all teachers also have a basic knowledge of ICC, which they define as a way of understanding other people's cultures and manners in language. It involves a set of abilities and attitudes that allow us to communicate effectively and appropriately engage with others from different backgrounds. ICC helps a person to be able to adjust how to interact with people who have different cultural backgrounds, if they do not have ICC skills, it will result

in misunderstanding. The main ideas behind this meaning of ICC are pretty much the same as those given by (Byram et al., 2002).

The ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds is becoming an invaluable skill. Based on the findings, all teachers have elements of ICC that build an ICC speaker, as theorized in Byram's ICC. This finding is in line with suggestions from previous research Susilo et al., (2019); Idris & Widyanoro (2019); Akpınar & Unaldi (2014) suggested teachers to acquire ICC because it is needed to meet the demands of the times and let future generations communicate more easily with people of different cultures, even ICC becomes teachers' "professionalism" in foreign language teaching. Teachers who are responsible for teaching ICC require additional information, attitudes, abilities, and skills to effectively support their teaching practice (Sercu, 2006). Therefore, teachers need to promote ICC to students in English language teaching.

Furthermore, the teachers emphasized the students' local culture and Western and other foreign cultures. To develop students' ICC, Byram (2002) asserts that EFL teachers should provide activities that allow students to explore their own culture (Indonesian), the culture of the target language, and the cultures of other non-English-speaking countries. Based on the data obtained from interviews and classroom observations, sharing personal experiences and comparing and contrasting the differences in cultures are the practices used by all teachers in promoting ICC because all teachers implement them in foreign language teaching. The teachers' demographic data shows that all teachers had overseas experience before participating in this study. Therefore, all teachers have introduced a variety of cultures.

According to Zhang (2017) conducted a study and the research shows that EFL teachers who have overseas experience have better cultural knowledge than those who have not had overseas experience. This finding proves that international experience can influence teachers' ICC skills, because they have been directly exposed to foreign cultures. In addition, they also adapt to an environment that has a different background from their original culture, thus they can communicate

effectively with foreigner. Furthermore, Patching-bunch & Jessica (2015) also revealed that international experience can have a long effect on intercultural knowledge because it lets people bring new ideas into their everyday lives. This mixing can make people more empathetic, tolerant, and help them understand the world better.

In order to enhance students' cultural competence, teachers have implemented several activities aimed at fostering students' exploration of their own culture as well as the culture associated with the target language (Khoirunnisa, 2022). Based on the data obtained from interviews and classroom observations, there are four practices that have been implemented by all teachers in promoting ICC. Role-play is one of a teaching practice in EFL classrooms to increase students' intercultural competence. In this study, role play was also one of the practices used by teachers in promoting ICC, but only one teacher has implemented. This result contrasts with the findings from Banjongjit & Boonmoh, (2018) study which states that role-play is the best way to improve students' ICC. It is consistent with Byram et al. (2002) recommendation that role-playing and simulation might be helpful activities to promote comparative analysis in a language class.

However, when asked further about how they implement ICC into their teaching, all participants agreed that not every meeting they promote ICC into teaching. Given that not all learning materials actually address cultural content, promoting ICC to students depends on the learning materials. Sercu (2006) asserted that while teachers often demonstrate cultural awareness in their English instruction, they seldom include cultural elements into their teaching methodologies. Since in practice, not all learning materials are appropriate for cultural topics. Therefore, teachers' skills and knowledge about ICC must be well mastered in order to help students understand ICC.

Nevertheless, according to the teachers in this study, with the implementation of ICC, it is expected that learners can develop a high awareness of cultural gaps, which leads to improved communication skills. And teachers hope

that by recognizing these ICC skills can help students to face the global demands and be useful for their personal life and career.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the perceptions and practices of intercultural communication competence in English language teaching by EFL teachers through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. ICC is an important aspect of effective communication that involves understanding and navigating cultural differences to achieve successful interactions. This study seeks to explore the teachers' perceptions on the implementation of ICC in their teaching practices and how they implement ICC to promote ICC in their students. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the role of ICC in enhancing intercultural communication and improving the overall effectiveness of English language teaching.

Based on the findings discussed above, this study reached several conclusions. First, all English teachers believe positively in integrating cultural and intercultural language teaching. Moreover, they view culture as very important for language learning, as language and culture have a symbiotic relationship. Integrating culture into English language teaching in the classroom can increase students' interest and engagement in learning the target language, in this case, English. It is also very beneficial for students in their careers and personal lives.

Additionally, although the teachers expressed positive attitudes towards the implementation of ICC in the classroom, they had different practices. Furthermore, when asked how they implement ICC into their teaching, all participants agreed that not every meeting promotes ICC in teaching. Not all learning materials address cultural content, so promoting ICC to students depends on the learning materials. Sharing personal experiences and comparing and contrast culture was a practice used by all teachers to implement ICC in the EFL classroom. Thus, the data reported in this study supports the assumption that teachers' positive perceptions in defining and implementing ICC can help students face the increasingly advanced development of globalization.

The findings of this study will be of interest to anyone who wants to know how EFL teachers view intercultural competence and how their views impact on their teaching. This study also can be the source for the readers to gain information about how to practice intercultural communicative competence elements in their English classroom. Future research needs to explore within multiple settings and broader population so that it can extend this finding by providing more comprehensive evidence to bolster the findings.

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Appendix 1

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

| Categories | Sub-Categories | Questions | Code | Participants | | |
|------------|----------------|--|------|--|---|--|
| | | | | AP | RM | MJ |
| Cognitive | Knowledge | What is the relationship between culture and language from your understanding? | 01 | I think, culture and language are closely related and influence each other. Language is crucial in cultural understanding, particularly for those seeking to learn about culture. | In my opinion language and culture have a close relationship. Language is more than just a tool of communication; it also reflects the culture and values of a particular civilization. | I think language and culture are interrelated, because culture is applied through language and language also produce culture. |
| | | Are you familiar with the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)? | 02 | When I was in college, I learned about Cross-Cultural Understanding (CCU), which is probably related to the concept of ICC. So, I understand a little, but I have not explored it properly. I think people who learn a language must also learn culture to avoid misunderstandings. Hence, English teachers should learn about understanding cultures. It is essential to match language with culture. | Yes, the teachers in this school should be familiar with the ICC because the target children are extraordinary. Furthermore, if we discuss the ICC in the context of English, it will automatically relate to foreign countries. As a result, the students must be aware of and exposed to the cultures of other countries. | Yes, I am familiar with the term Intercultural communicative competence because I like reading books, newspapers, and other media. |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--|----|---|--|--|
| | | What is ICC from your understanding? | 03 | The ability to use a language by considering its cultural background. By possessing ICC skills, we can improve our ability to communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, we adjust our language to their culture to avoid misunderstandings. For example, in many cultures, asking about the number of children or family details can be considered a personal or private matter. By familiarizing ourselves with their culture, we can avoid inquiring about their privacy or personal matters. Thus, I believe individuals with ICC skills adeptly employ a specific language by adapting to the cultural context. | ICC is an understanding of the use of language. It is how we understand other people's culture and politeness in language. It involves a set of abilities and attitudes that enable us to communicate effectively and engage with others from different backgrounds. | Culture exists because of habit. Communicative is how we socialize or communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. So, ICC is the ability to understand cultural knowledge and behaviours and cultural differences between countries. In short, teachers not only teach the material but also incorporate positive cultures into their teaching. |
| Affective | Attitudes | Do you think that ICC is important for the EFL classroom? Why? | 04 | In my opinion, ICC is not only important for students but it is mandatory for every EFL students to learn about ICC. | If we discuss this issue, it is essential for anyone who goes abroad to understand the ICC. It does not have to be explicitly pegged for | ICC plays an important role for students and is a basic competence for those learning a language. |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------------|--|----|--|---|--|
| | | | | | English students; it is valuable for a wide range of individuals and contexts. | A high-quality school has a rich culture. |
| | | What are teachers' beliefs about teaching towards ICC in the EFL classrooms? | 05 | Implementing ICC in EFL classrooms would be very beneficial for students. Besides learning the language, we also have to learn the culture, as they are interrelated. Additionally, teachers can better prepare their students for international relations and cultivate a positive attitude toward individuals from diverse cultures. | I believe incorporating ICC into EFL classrooms will significantly enhance students' ability to adapt to other cultures. These skills will be very beneficial for students who decide to continue their studies abroad. | Implementing ICC in the EFL classroom is very important. ICC makes language attractive and meaningful. If students understand culture, their communication and language skills will be smooth and exciting, as language is a gateway to the world. In addition, the concept of ICC is comprehensive as it refers to the habitual nature of culture within a particular group of individuals. Although not explicitly stated in the curriculum, it is crucial to provide implicit explanations. |
| Conative | Tendency of Action | Did you have a chance to promote ICC in your class? | 06 | Yes, I have promoted ICC in EFL classrooms, and I think that all English teachers have done the same. The English language differs from our native language, thereby leading to variations in | Promoting ICC in EFL classrooms may be more straightforward. In the future, we will bring and deliver students with high prospects and achievements because many students plan | Several teachers have implicitly integrated cultural aspects into the classroom by opening classroom routines. Nevertheless, teachers do not realize that this behaviour is a cultural |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|----|---|---|--|
| | | | | communication. Therefore, as an English teacher, I think we must promote ICC in EFL classrooms even though it is not very clear. | to continue their studies abroad. | characteristic, as it has become a habit in the classroom routine. |
| | | How do you implement ICC into your teaching practice? | 07 | Sometimes, I tell my students explicitly about different cultures because many students have no idea about different cultures. I also occasionally tell the students about my experiences abroad. By telling students about my experiences, I hope to help them adjust to other people's cultures when traveling or study abroad. | I usually introduce culture to students during conversations and then give examples of how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate. I play students audio recordings of native speakers to familiarize them with the correct pronunciation. In addition, I share my experience in Malaysia, and they gain new knowledge through the question-and-answer session. | Many practices can be implemented to promote ICC; for example, in a procedure text, students act as waiters and customers. Students practice role-playing, focusing on depicting cultural practices and clear communication. Students perform a role-play, showcasing the preparation and serving of a meal while highlighting cultural norms and attitudes. |
| | | How do you stay informed about the ICC to better your students' intercultural learning? | 08 | I already have experience abroad, and for about ten years, I have also taught students about culture at UIN Batusangkar. In addition, I like to use the Internet and social media to get information about culture. | I was once a tour guide for a cultural event in Malaysia. In addition, I often communicate and discuss with my friends in India and Pakistan through social media networks. | I was once awarded the Guru Berprestasi, which gave me the opportunity to visit Australia. While in Australia, I participated in learning activities, interacted with people, and communicated with them. |

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE

Observation 1

Date : 23 April 2024

Teacher : RM

Class : XI.F.5

The researcher came to school and observed class XI.F.5 at 13.15, according to the schedule and agreement with the teacher. In the classroom, the researcher sat at the back and wrote the teacher's words during the English learning process, taking some photo documentation of classroom activities.

When the researcher was in the classroom, the teacher prepared the students to follow the learning process by inviting them to start the activity with prayer and checking their attendance. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduces the students to the exposition text. The teacher conveys the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved. Then, the teacher and students discuss what an exposition text is and how to write an exposition text. The teacher explained to the students what are the generic structures of exposition texts, and she explained that exposition texts are generally divided into analytical exposition and hortatory exposition. While explaining the exposition text, the teacher asks students to write a summary of the exposition text. After summarizing, the teacher gives examples of analytical exposition and hortatory exposition texts. With the guidance of the teacher, students read the text and look for the content, social function, and generic structure, as well as the language features in the text. The teacher gives some questions to the students to help them reflect on the learning activities they have done. After that, the teacher assigns learners to find examples of exposition texts as homework. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks one of the students to conclude what has been learned from the material. Finally, the teacher ends the lesson and gives greetings to the students.

During the learning process, the first teacher tends to speak English and mix it with Indonesian to make it easier for students to understand. Students generally understand the vocabulary spoken by the teacher during the learning process in class and most students also try to respond to the teacher in English.

Observation 2

Date : 30 April 2024

Teacher : RM

Class : XI.F.5

When the researcher was in the classroom, the teacher prepared the students to follow the learning process by inviting them to start the activity with prayer and checking their attendance. Before starting the lesson, the teacher makes sure that all students are quiet and ready to receive the lesson. The teacher reviews the previous material, then gives students a brainstorm before learning to attract their attention. The teacher collected the homework, and each student was asked to present it individually in front of the class. However, while their classmates were performing, many students were not focused and even laughed at their friends who were performing. Many students were talking and sleepy, making it difficult for the teacher to control the students in the class. After all the students had performed, the teacher divided the students into 4 groups and gave them the task of choosing one country and analyzing how the culture, habits, ways of communicating and manners in that country. There are four countries selected:

Group 1: India

Group 3: Japan

Group 2: Thailand

Group 4: Arab Saudi

Students are allowed to use cell phones and laptops to find detailed information related to the country. As the learning time has ended, the teacher asks students to continue their group work at home. The teacher ended the class and greeted the students.

Observation 3

Date : 7 May 2024

Teacher : RM

Class : XI.F.5

When the researcher was in the classroom, the teacher prepared the students to follow the learning process by inviting them to start the activity with prayer and checking their attendance. Before starting the lesson, the teacher makes sure that all students are quiet and ready to receive the lesson. Students present their group work in front of the class in turn. For every group that performs, the teacher asks about the task that has been done. During the learning process, the teacher also shared her experience of traveling in Malaysia. At that time, the teacher said that it was important to make an itinerary to make it easier for us to travel. When riding public transportation, we will interact with people around us, so it is important to adjust the culture and language when traveling abroad. Otherwise, we will be ignored and have trouble traveling. After completing the discussion and all groups performed, the teacher reviewed the material and ended the lesson by greeting the students.

OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE

Date : 24 April 2024 – 15 May 2024

Teacher : AP

Class : X.E.5

The researcher came to school and observed class X.E.5 at 11.50, according to the schedule and agreement with the teacher. In the classroom, the researcher sat at the back and wrote the teacher's words during the English learning process, taking some photo documentation of classroom activities. During the observation in class X.E.5, the learning process was only carried out for one hour, which was 45 minutes. It was due to the fact that students will prepare for the art performance event that will be performed before the final semester exam. When the researcher was in the classroom, the teacher prepared the students to follow the learning process by inviting them to start the activity with prayer and checking their attendance. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduces the students to the report text. The teacher conveys the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved. Then, the teacher and students discuss what a report text is and how to write a report text. The teacher explained to the students what are the generic structures of report texts. While explaining the report text, the teacher asks students to write a summary of the report text. During the learning process, the teacher uses PPT, which is displayed with a projector screen in front of the class.

In the next observation in X.5.E, the teacher taught the students about report text material in general. During the learning process AP seemed to incorporate ICC in EFL class explicitly and implicitly. In this meeting, AP focused more on developing linguistic competence with Report text material. In the learning process, the teacher was focusing on the English Camp activities that would be held at the end of May. Students work in groups and discuss the preparation for the English Camp activity. English camp is a routine activity conducted by AP which is carried out every semester. In the English camp activity, students will perform alternately.

The third observation was conducted on May 15, 2024. In this activity students did "Ulangan Harian" so there was no learning activity.

OBSERVATION FIELD NOTE

Date : 26 April 2024 – 17 May 2024

Teacher : MJ

Class : XI.E.2

The researcher came to school and observed class XI.E.2, according to the schedule and agreement with the teacher. In the classroom, the researcher sat at the back and wrote the teacher's words during the English learning process, taking some photo documentation of classroom activities.

When the researcher was in the classroom, the teacher prepared the students to follow the learning process by inviting them to start the activity with prayer and checking their attendance. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduces the students to the hortatory exposition text. The teacher conveys the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved. Then, the teacher and students discuss what a hortatory exposition text is and how to write a hortatory text. The teacher explained to the students what are the generic structures of report texts. While explaining the hortatory exposition text, the teacher asks students to write a summary of the hortatory text.

Next, the teacher gives an example of Hortatory exposition text to students. In this activity students are divided into 4 students per group. In the learning process the teacher gives an example of Hortatory exposition text to students. In this activity students are divided into 4 students per group. After that students are asked to find out what the essence of the text is, generic structure of the text. After that students and teachers discuss together about the Hortatory text. The title of the text discussed is Watch your Kids While Watching TV. In this activity, it appears that the teacher uses authentic materials to introduce hortatory exposition text to students.

On the last meeting in class observation in XI.E.2. In this meeting the teacher started the lesson by explaining the importance to adjust our language and culture with the people from different culture. Next, the teacher assigns students to write a hortatory text and at the end of the lesson, it was collected by the teacher. In this activity, students worked in an orderly manner; any confused students were allowed to ask the teacher. In this activity, the researcher and teacher sat behind and saw the students' activities in working on the text.



Appendix 3

