

Original Research

Lecturer Attitudes on Cross-Cultural Practices in EFL Online Teaching

Andi Nurhirmah, Anugerah Febrina Syam, Sumrah AP

Universitas Muhammadiyah Bulukumba, Bulukumba, Indonesia

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Abstract

Most studies on the link between cross-cultural values and language teaching conducted in online settings almost always draw on students' perspectives, yet few focus on how the attitudes of higher education lecturers in the conduct of this program. Therefore, this study aims to investigate EFL lecturers' attitudes toward cross-cultural practices during EFL online teaching. A qualitative approach with observation and semi-structured interviews via face-to-face and online meetings is used to collect the data in this research. Using purposive sampling, this study employs four EFL lecturers from Muhammadiyah university as selected participants based on their experiences in teaching cultural-integrated classes at both offline and online schemes. The study discovered that EFL lecturers understand cross-cultural practices in EFL online teaching to be associated with personality traits, language roles, and understanding of local culture as a way to incorporate cross-cultural knowledge into their teaching. To foster effective interaction in the class, lecturers focus on conveying opinions and maintaining communication by understanding with whom to speak, where to speak, and ways to speak. These essences and fundamental attributes influence cross-cultural practices in EFL online teaching. The study reveals that cultural differences, incorrect expressions such as a lack of appropriate word choices, and a mismatch of verbal and nonverbal language can cause cross-cultural teaching barriers. Furthermore, the need to create an authentic environment, increase intercultural knowledge, and eliminate cultural stereotypes is to be addressed as cross-cultural teaching strategies in an EFL online teaching context.

Corresponding Author: Syam, anugerahfebrinasyam@umbulukumba.ac.id

1. Introduction

The essential responsibility of the English as a foreign language (EFL) lecturer in online language teaching is not only to focus on language as a complex unit during the online teaching process but also to place students in the correct position and comprehend what should be supplied to the students (Garrett, Miller & Gilbert, 2021; Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). The lecturers' roles in guaranteeing the continuity of the learning process and the optimization of the integration of cross-cultural practices during online classes potentially face numerous challenges due to student characteristics, the contribution of the teaching strategy, the learning environment, and the lecturers themselves.

Regarding the challenges of the learning environment, the first problem that has arisen with online learning in the continuity of the learning process that integrates with the cross-cultural practices since the COVID-19 outbreak was the inability to involve cultural integration into the knowledge transfer process caused by the absence of a good interaction process between lecturers and students, especially among the students themselves during online classes. Furthermore, this problem creates the impression that the class is stiff and runs in one direction where the focus during the learning process is that students passively receive

information from the lecturer (Jeffery & Bauer, 2020). Besides that, the class becomes inflexible and the cultural integration that should appear as an important aspect of language learning and communication practices becomes blurred and not implemented. Highlighting interaction and communication in the process of EFL teaching and learning in offline classes is certain, therefore incorporating these components into online learning presents a major challenge (Huang et al., 2021; Giyoto et al., 2022; Alam et al., 2022). Ensuring the existence of communication practices will bring students closer to practising communicative competence.

Apart from the issue of interaction in the classroom which results in a lack of cultural integration during language learning on online platforms, the problem that arises next is the impotence to translate cultural concepts in language learning. Students experience difficulties in including the intended scope of cross-cultural knowledge in language learning through online platforms (Kefalaki et al., 2021). Students' struggle to see the importance of a balance between literal and cultural elements in language learning encourages lecturers to focus more on approaches that support students to better understand the vitality of literacy and cultural competencies in EFL teaching during online classes. Practising cross-cultural in teaching English is believed to strongly reduce problems that may appear due to a lack of understanding of the language's complexity so that they could succeed in the meaning-making of the English translation of some sentences and other aspects related to it (Auerbach, 2021; Taşdemir & Gürbüz, 2021; Fois, 2020). In short, an understanding of culture and society's behaviour regarding the target language is required by English learners, because culture, society, and language relate to one another.

An issue that is no less important is when it comes to the practice of dominating the use of foreign country aspects rather than home country aspects which are implemented in the teaching and learning process. Students will tend to assume that learning the target language is synonymous with only learning the target culture as well. This resulted in students having difficulties practising the target language in their everyday life. Teaching the target language also needs to be accompanied by not only the target culture but also the home culture (Celik & Yildiz, 2019). Therefore, the knowledge of a specific thing or expression from both cultural backgrounds is also required to avoid one perspective representation in EFL classes (Brisset, Gill & Gannon, 2021; Winch, 2020; Piccardo & North, 2019). The need to investigate the home culture and target culture's national identities regarding history, geography, and social structures to understand some language terms related to the target culture and the source culture because the goal is to generate interculturally competent language speakers. Reconsidering the approaches to teaching language that integrates with culture in the classroom will be able to facilitate the students to comprehend the meaning of words and sentences and minimise misunderstandings whether in written or spoken form (Munezane, 2021; Zhang & Su, 2021; Hoff, 2020). Cross-cultural practices in teaching a foreign language emphasised the need for students to not only practice language structures, pronunciation, and vocabulary to acquire native-like speakers but also to perform communicative competence.

Another challenge that frequently occurs in cross-cultural practices in EFL teaching and learning is stressing the knowledge component over the competence and attitude components during online lessons. Lecturers seem to prioritise aspects of knowledge transfer during online learning and ignore how learning practices and exercises involve attitude and skill components, especially those related to student involvement in class. Meanwhile, the goal of language study has evolved from communicative knowledge to cross-cultural understanding as a result of modern online platforms connecting with many people from various cultures (Bakhov, 2021; Chung, 2019; Pudikova, 2019). In the model of cross-cultural understanding, EFL lecturers are expected to guide students through the process of obtaining the contact of attitudes, knowledge, and abilities linked to communicative competence when using a foreign language (Rivera-Vargas, Anderson & Cano, 2021; Thompson, 2018; Song, 2019). On the one hand, the series of contact include alterations in attitudes, beliefs, identity, and values become the attributes that are not displayed in the cross-cultural practices in EFL online classes. On the other hand, foreign language students need time and place to practice interpreting and associated skills (Piniel & Albert, 2018; Oxford & Gkonou, 2018). The communicative skills engage students to comprehend and explain the roots of cultural issues and lead them to practice cross-cultural understanding to mediate appropriately to prevent misinterpretations occurring in their society. Furthermore, exploration and interaction abilities enable cross-cultural speakers to identify connections and contrasts between their home cultures and those of other cultures, resulting in effective communication and the building of meaningful engagement (Bosley, 2020; Shadiev, Sun & Huang, 2019). An effective cross-cultural speaker looks for opportunities to meet people from different cultures and share information through interaction in a foreign language.

Dealing with the involvement of knowledge, skill, and attitude in the implementation of cross-cultural practices in EFL online classes, it is undeniable that the lack of students' cross-cultural experience contributes to hindering the learning process and results in a discrepancy between their cross-cultural knowledge and other components (skills and attitudes in culture). This contribution relates closely to the series of cross-cultural contact which is commonly viewed as an unpleasant process and needs the modification of beliefs, notions, and attitudes (Barrett, 2020; Benattabou, 2020; Pacheco, 2020). The way students communicate and interact during online learning characterises their inability to express appropriate attitudes and communicative skills such as the unpreparedness to interact in online classes, the inability to view oneself from the outside, the inability to see the world through the eyes of others, the inability to cope with uncertainty, and the ability to consciously use cultural learning skills.

To tackle those issues related to cross-cultural practices in teaching EFL online learning, many types of research had been conducted dealing with several areas. For example, Aksenova et al. (2021) explored the challenges of cross-cultural communications in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study questioned the possible misunderstanding that occurred in cross-cultural online communication from the perspective of students. Using a similar approach, another research comes from Abduh et al. (2021) who investigated the voices of EFL students on multicultural values in an Indonesian Islamic university. The study focuses on investigating the absence of university students' views on multicultural values. In addition, Syam et al. (2020) analysed the development of EFL students' understanding and beliefs in intercultural communicative competence in the university context. The focus of their study is to explore the development of intercultural communicative competence viewed from students' perspectives. Furthermore, Katsantonis (2019) in his study examined the students' position to develop cross-cultural understanding from cross-cultural learning projects. This study once again prioritised the viewpoints of students in dealing with cross-cultural understanding in performing projects for online classes. At last, Makhmudov (2020) studied the dimension of culture that contribute to the importance of cultural understanding for English foreign learners' communicative competence. This study explored the role of culture viewed from the form of interaction by students that impacted their intercultural communicative competence in EFL classrooms.

Despite these previous studies, there is still limited research that emphasises lecturers' perspectives on how they portray the attitudes during the practices of cross-cultural understanding in EFL online teaching. Moreover, this research aims to fill a vacuum left by previous studies that concentrated most on exploring students' views and performances of engagement in cross-cultural classes. Considering the lecturer's viewpoint on how to implement cultural-integrated teaching in EFL classes makes a difference in seeing the extent to which cross-cultural practices are employed during online learning. Therefore, the focus of this research is to investigate EFL lecturers' attitudes toward cross-cultural practices in EFL online teaching. The research question underpinning this investigation is "How are the attitudes of lecturers on cross-cultural practices in the EFL online teaching?"

2. Literature Review

2.1 The role of lecturers and students on cross-cultural practices in EFL classroom

The role of EFL lecturers in the practices of cross-cultural teaching is to help learners through the process of learning competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to communicative competence when using a foreign language in the model of cross-cultural understanding. Lecturers assist students through exercises that consider and, transform their views about others. The student's purpose on the other hand is to begin by challenging their preconceived notions before embarking on a process of discovery about the other, to become more eager to seek out and connect with others to develop a mutual relationship. Certain knowledge must be obtained as students continue to analyse various cultures (Thompson et al., 2018; Parkhouse & Massaro, 2019; Kalimullina et al., 2021). The foreign language educator must devote time to investigating the home culture and target culture's national identities concerning history, geography, and social structures. After students have spent time discovering the similarities and differences between their culture and that of the target culture, the lecturer must design activities that will educate them to create relationships with people from various backgrounds and languages.

A lecturer naturally is an incarnation of culture. Any lecturer is consequently expected to be educated about societal values, which he/she then conveys to students in classroom and even outside of the classroom. Lecturer represents the mature society, the level to which he/she is cultured correlates with the ability to affect the students (Samosa, 2021; Mukhin, 2020; Machynska & Boiko, 2019). It is vital to highlight that in

a classroom setting, the students also learn informally and implicitly. A positive role model will have a favourable influence on the youngster. Positive manner refers to the ideals of the society in which the lecturer and student are members.

The attitude of society toward the lecturer determines how he or she transmits culture. In this situation, two factors are critical: First, the lecturer's professionalism; second, fashioning the young. On the one hand, lecturer professionalism embeds the concept of authority. The lecturer instils a culture of obedience and veneration for authorities, not only professional but also other valid authorities. On the other hand, fashioning the young displays society's functional role of determining the direction in which society believes the route of young individuals (Mittelbach & McGill, 2019). Facilitating students in handling and overcoming various cultural challenges.

2.2 The characteristics of cross-cultural practices in the context of online language education

Cross-cultural practice is linked to communicative practices in a foreign language in the context of online language education. The goal of language study has evolved from communicative knowledge to cross-cultural understanding as a result of modern online platforms connecting with many people from various cultures (Wu, 2022; Bakhov et al., 2021; Pudikova, 2019). One technique for systematically conceptualising and researching the information, attitudes, and behaviour related to successful cross-cultural communication has been identified as cross-cultural knowledge. It indicates that students must improve their cross-cultural awareness to be successful in cultural communication. It introduces new prerequisites for foreign language courses (teaching and learning).

Cross-cultural understanding necessitates that students acquire relevant information and skills about the target language and culture, as well as cultural awareness and that they are reflective and transferable across languages and cultures. Recent models have identified two dimensions of cross-cultural understanding: culture-specific (target culture knowledge and abilities) and culture-general information and skills (more generalizable in nature and transferrable across cultures (Smaoui, 2021; Brunow & Newman, 2020)). The nature of cultural adjustment and learning, the impact of culture on communication and interaction between individuals or groups, and the function of emotions in cross-cultural, cross-linguistic interactions are all examples of culture-general knowledge. Culture-general skills refer to characteristics such as the ability to demonstrate respect for cultural interests, tolerance and patience in cross-cultural scenarios, emotional regulation, and emotional resilience. Cross-cultural competency necessitates the development of a perspective on two cultures (their own and that of the target language) as well as a position in which they may arbitrate between these two.

3. Method

3.1 Research design

The study is compatible with a qualitative method, among others, in that it explores the effects of a specific program or set in the context of higher education. A qualitative technique is considered suitable as a description of the main objective of the research, which is to explore the attitudes of EFL lecturers on cross-cultural practices in an EFL online teaching program.

3.2 Research participants

To explore the integration of cross-cultural understanding in EFL online classes in higher education, four lecturers with nine to twenty years of cultural-integrated teaching experience participated in this study. The participants are selected purposively based on their experiences in teaching cultural-integrated courses in offline and online schemes (see the demography of research participants in Table 1). Data is collected by spotlighting lecturers' attitudes on the practices of cross-cultural understanding in online teaching environments at the higher education level.

Table 1. The Demography of Research Participants

| Lecturer | Teaching length (years) | | Educational degree | Teaching field |
|------------|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------|---|
| | Offline | Online | | |
| Lecturer 1 | 7 | 2 | Doctor | Cross-Cultural Understanding, Coursepreneurship |
| Lecturer 2 | 9 | 2 | Doctor | Public Speaking, Intercultural Communication |
| Lecturer 3 | 10 | 2 | Doctor | Cross-Cultural Understanding, ESP |
| Lecturer 4 | 18 | 2 | Doctor | Cross-Cultural Understanding, Academic Writing |

3.3 Research instruments and procedures

The study concentrates on the observation and semi-structured interviews which were aimed at spotlighting lecturers' attitudes based on their teaching practices in EFL online classes. Considering the time of health protocol, the mode of interviews formed to be blended via face-to-face and online meetings. The observation focuses on the practice of online teaching implemented by the lecturers. On the other hand, the interview contains two fieldwork stages: First, the interview goal was outlined to the participants. In this stage, the purpose of the interview stage was familiarised at the beginning of the meeting and was occasionally reinforced during the interview when participants wanted to intensify the meaning of the interview subject being asked. This stage involves the introductions of the topic, perception agreement of interview attributes, and time allotment. Additionally, this stage includes a set of profiling questions such as cultural-integrated teaching experiences and course expertise related to cross-cultural practices. Secondly, the subject of the interview was asked participants in the form of open-ended questions. In this stage, the researcher followed up on the answer of the participants in-depth to explore the subject being asked. The interview subjects are presented in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. The interview questions

| No | Interview Questions |
|----|---|
| 1 | What do you understand by 'culture teaching' in EFL online teaching context? |
| 2 | How is your teaching time distributed over 'language teaching' and 'culture teaching' in an online setting? |
| 3 | What cultural elements can impact effective communication based on your experience in an online class? |
| 4 | What aspects do you consider key to effective communication in an online class? |
| 5 | What can be the origin of misunderstandings between individuals from different cultures during online learning interaction? |
| 6 | What countries, cultures, and peoples do you usually associate with English in your online classes? What do you mean? |
| 7 | What cultural aspects do you usually address in your online classes? When/how often do you do it? |
| 8 | How do you prepare your students to communicate in multicultural contexts? |
| 9 | What role does the student's own culture have when learning a foreign language in an online class? |

The data collection then employs thematic analysis using an inductive approach by allowing the data to determine the themes related to the practices of the cross-cultural issue in an online teaching context. The technique of data analysis comprises four steps: (1) Coding, the researcher highlighted the data based on the participants, the interview date, and the duration in minutes; (2) Generating themes, the researcher narrowed

down the codes and created themes; (3) Reviewing themes, the researcher compared the themes with the transcript; (4) Defining themes, the researcher generated the final list of themes from the interview.

4. Results

The result indicates the lecturers' attitudes on cross-cultural practices in EFL online teaching contexts. It focuses on the exploration of how lecturers believe and sense when dealing with cross-cultural teaching activities enacted during EFL online classes. Concerning the focus, the results carried out how the lecturers encounter the problems of cross-cultural practices in EFL online classes such as the loss of cultural integration, the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts, the imbalance of cultural contents, and the inflexibilities of teaching culture. Furthermore, here also presents in what way the lecturers cope with three cross-cultural components: knowledge, skill, and attitude in EFL online classes.

4.1 Knowledge of personality traits, language roles, and local culture to encounter the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts in EFL online classes

In the lecturers' attitude of how they understand the culture and deal with it in encountering the lack of translating cultural concepts in EFL online classes, different results are found according to the character of each lecturer. In the practice, lecturers seemed to have different knowledge when dealing with cultural understanding based on each lecturer's life experience and characteristics. These differences cover personality traits, language roles, and local culture.

The lecturer's attitude starts with a tendency to see cultural interactions from one side. Such a tendency associates events with what has been acknowledged and felt by oneself. This is closely tied to events that have been experienced and self-belief which results from being aware of the consequences., Lecturer 1 stated:

"I am a sensitive person and I couldn't hate someone for a long time. It also happens to my students. I never get very angry in front of them, but it's also my weakness. Students perceive me as a good person and think I will be okay with everything. I think it's something I can deal with culture in the university."

Lecturer 1, 04/14/2022, 03:13

This portrait shows that the attitude to encounter the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts in language learning depends on how students will perceive certain behaviour performed by the lecturer in the class. This portrait of personality seemed inflexible but it is acceptable to display such behaviour in online classes because it represents the expectation of the lecturer to address appropriate cultural concepts that occur in the teaching and learning process. Showing appropriate personality characteristics attributed to the class is expected to lead to students' further behaviour.

Dealing with different cultural knowledge experienced in an online class, Lecturer 2 believed that every language represents specific culture.

"I learn from the subject that every language represents specific culture. In my class, I emphasised to my students that you have to know your position because I am your lecturer. I mean when outside we can talk freely, but it's different when we are in class."

Lecturer 2, 4/16/2022, 02:54

The lecturer believed that to translate cultural concepts into online practices, the lecturer and students should use language accordingly based on the role that they possess. There are different positions existing between lecturers and students in interaction. Moreover, they indicated that language should be performed based on the context where the interaction happens. It means that even though the interaction involves the same persons but when those persons interact in two different settings, in and outside the classroom, it can result in a different form of interaction. Understanding the cultural concept is not comprised of traits or individual characteristics, but rather, a characteristic of the association between individuals.

Considering the connection of local culture in order to encounter the lack of translating cultural concepts, two lecturers had similar claims on this:

“I always compare with the general culture and their own culture, Because I think we cannot leave students’ culture because it’s their habit including how they interact, how they communicate each other. I think it will be very influential to the process of our online teaching and learning.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 05:44

“I know that culture affects language. The way I teach will depend on the context. touching the dominant culture in which we teach has a serious impact on our teaching and interactions with students.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 02:30

This attitude implies that the lecturer-student interaction comes from the interpretation of common and their own culture. Furthermore, the lecturers think that the role of students’ local culture contributes significantly to communicating and interacting in online classes. The way that the students express their ability to speak in such a polite manner reflects their habit of local culture. This type of habit impacts classroom interaction since students’ local culture underscored respect and politeness in communication with others.

4.2 Cultural identification, behaviour, and experience as the approaches to tackle the loss of cultural integration in EFL online classes

When it comes to preventing the loss of cultural integration in EFL online classes, three different results are found based on the attitudes of the lecturers in the class. These results cover cultural identification, cultural behaviour, and cultural experience.

The lecturer identified that culture and language are inseparably linked components. This identification indicates that teaching culture is like teaching students real life. About this, Lecturer 4 expressed:

“Cultural teaching in an online class is interesting because it is about the students’ real life and almost every day, every time, we found things concerning culture. So, the way students use language is very influenced by their own culture, such as when they are speaking, interacting, and communicating with others. Recognize students’ culture in language teaching cannot be separated.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 04:50

The above point further associated cultural identification as an aspect that is related to online classroom interaction and communication as long as it involves speaking. The lecturer emphasizes that teaching culture happens on every occasion and is influenced by identifying students’ own culture. This identification includes the way the students speak and communicate with others in the online class interaction. Involving students in online class activities is not limited to positioning them to communicate like native speakers but allowing them to highlight their cultural identity in speaking is a way to integrate culture into language learning.

Another result regarding an approach to tackle the loss of cultural integration in EFL online classes stressed the behaviour aspect. This component seemed to be identical to in-class orientation. Lecturer 1 declared:

”From the beginning, I will tell my students about the attitude component. I felt comfortable when I apply this. I think all lecturers did this but in a different way.”

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 08:32

In Indonesian higher education, attitude or behaviour becomes one important component that is used to assess and evaluate students’ performance in the classroom. This may lead the lecturers to take the attitude component into account when dealing with cultural integration in teaching an EFL class. Teaching language does not refer to fully linguistic forms since language is also identic with performance that allows students to use certain behaviour to create comfort in the online class.

On another occasion, Lecturer 3 specified what the behaviour component means in teaching EFL class.

“Sometimes I applied this. I will ask the students if you teach, you should apply to dos and dons. I think it’s cultural teaching about attitude.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 09:21

Behaviour is an aspect that contains what can and cannot be done in the class during the teaching and learning process. This ‘dos and dons’ approach teaches students cultural integration to prepare them to interact with people from other cultural backgrounds.

The prioritising of cross-cultural experience becomes an important aspect of cultural integration existence in EFL online classes. Corresponding to this, Lecturer 2 revealed:

“Sometimes I cannot talk too much about an unfamiliar culture. It’s better if we teach culture if we have some experiences from it. It will be different if we have some experiences than if we do not.”

Lecturer 2, 5/16/2022, 04:28

This attitude emphasises that the best way of teaching cross-culture in EFL classes depends on how competent the lecturer is. This is to suggest that cultural integration can be applied to those who have experience with the culture. Inadequate knowledge of different cultures stems from those who have no experience communicating with other cultural representatives and are hesitant to integrate with different cultures. Dealing with cultural integration will be more effective when the lecturers have certain experiences with cross-cultural activities.

4.3 The essence of skill component in EFL online classes: how to convey opinions and how to maintain communication

Corresponding with the essence of skill that impacts cross-cultural practices, the result detected two elements that tend to be considered in EFL online classes. These issues encompass how to convey opinions and how to maintain communication which is closely related to the ability of students to handle communication.

First, dealing with how to convey opinions is taken into account, Lecturer 2 pointed out:

“Sometimes in the forum when I think that my opinion will not have an impact then I will keep silent. Aspects that I consider is the way I deliver message and opinions. In informal settings, there are no significant obstacles I think when we communicate with close friends.”

Lecturer 2, 4/16/2022, 06:48

It is viewed that the ability to deliver messages and opinions sometimes becomes an obstacle, especially when dealing with a formal forum. This affected the students to be quieter rather than express ideas. Students use this behaviour not because they lack ideas but because they placed a heavier weight toward the contribution of their opinions rather than the number of ideas that they convey. This type of skill contributes to the smoothness of teaching and learning in an online scheme. Students in online class conversations may be seen as unmotivated whereas the skill of deft interaction they convey has a good impact on the class interaction.

Second, the essence of the skill component on how to maintain communication as stated by Lecturer 1.

“I like to communicate with others but sometimes I feel not secure. I am afraid I cannot make my partner enjoy our communication. I love to maintain communication.”

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 12:47

The importance of maintaining communication in online classes seems to be a vital skill viewed by the lecturer. This skill can be seen in the tendency to respect others. This tendency resulted in appreciation from others and impacted enjoyable communication. This tendency is identified as cultural awareness in EFL online classes.

4.4 The attributes of attitude in EFL online classes: understand whom you speak with, where you speak at, and way you speak

Due to the attributes of attitude which are related to cross-cultural practices in EFL online classes, the result discovered an understanding of whom you speak with, where you speak, and ways you choose to speak. These attributes are closely related to the attitude that will impact communication in online class.

In relation to an understanding with whom you speak and where you speak, Lecturer 2 stated.

“When I treat people, I have to know their characters. For example, when I want to communicate with different persons, I have to understand those person’s characters first and the situations when and where I communicate with another person.”

Lecturer 2, 4/16/2022, 09:14

It is very concerning that the students who understand the person with whom they speak and the context where they speak are considered essential in cross-cultural practices. Following the notion of understanding with whom you speak, Lecturer 1 added:

“I have to know my partner. If I do this, she will like it or not. We have to know with whom we speak.”

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 16:12

If students understand with whom they speak including the identification of the characters, then the students can be more aware to speak or use communication styles that they apply when interacting in an EFL online class. Cross-cultural practices in class interaction can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another.

After realising the others’ background and communication setting, determining how students choose to use a certain communication style becomes easier. Whether using more casual language or more formal language. This issue was stated by Lecturer 3 below.

“The way they communicate. I mean when you need to speak loudly and when you speak slowly. Make sure you know who your communication partner is. If he or she is older than you then you have to be polite because politeness is still number 1. As a teacher, you have to be a model. A teacher is known for their attitude and their performance.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 13:57

This is of course an important thing in communication and has an impact on the occurrence of cross-cultural practices. In supporting this statement, Lecturer 4 acknowledged:

“I think we cannot forget about politeness. In the real context, some students forget about politeness when they are speaking, when they are treating their friends so I think we have to grow the politeness.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 06:17

It cannot be denied that the lecturers are very noticeable in contextual understanding in online classroom interaction. From their viewpoints, it seems that students identified as cross-cultural communicators when they can identify a person, place, and way during the communication and interaction in the class. Formality is connected to the concept of politeness, hence they both enable respectable and effective communication. Communicative situations that are direct and informal are often perceived as impolite.

4.5 The barrier of knowledge in EFL online classes: cultural differences, inaccurate expressions, and mismatch of verbal and non-verbal language

With regards to what causes misunderstanding in an EFL online class, the result comprised cultural differences, inaccurate expressions including lack of appropriate word choices, and mismatch of verbal and non-verbal language.

Dealing with barriers in interactions caused by cultural differences among students, Lecturer 1 pointed out:

“Different culture. Especially, if we don’t know the context and with whom we speak. Is it appropriate or not?”

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 23:33

This type of barrier occurs when students come from different cultural backgrounds. Following this statement, Lecturer 2 added:

“If we visit one place and we do not know the culture of that place.”

Lecturer 2, 4/16/2022, 24:02

Inadequate knowledge of cultural differences may result in the inability to understand the context and with whom we speak. The inability to cope with cultural differences between lecturers and students or among students in online classes could be a significant factor causing misunderstanding in classroom interactions.

Second, when dealing with barriers in cross-cultural practices as a result of inaccurate expressions on the part of the speaker or the receiver's unintentional misinterpretation of an utterance as stated by Lecturer 3.

“If we don’t know the background. If you speak with Javanese, I think you cannot speak loudly. If you speak with Americans or in our case Makassarese, it means you have to speak louder. It can also happen when you choose certain words, different words different meanings.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 20:29

Inaccurate expressions, including a lack of appropriate word choices, occur frequently when the illocutionary force of an utterance, such as a request, is ignored, resulting in speaker intent and hearer interpretation not matching. In an online context, however, such a disparity in meaning-making between speaker and hearer may harm the learning experience.

Third, when dealing with barriers as a result of a mismatch of verbal and non-verbal language, Lecturer 4 denoted:

“I think we have to understand language, the first is verbal then non-verbal. The verbal language should be supported by nonverbal language, I mean their gesture and their body language. Sometimes they speak but we don’t understand what they mean. So, I think it can make miscommunication between students and lecturer.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 19:45

In the context of online class interaction, while the function of verbal communication is mainly to transmit information, non-verbal communication occurred to express attitudes and emotions based on the received information on the attitude towards the person with whom to communicate. This indicates the way students display their gestures in the form of following attention or involving in conversation in online forum applications such as Zoom to send meaningful messages to the whole class experiences.

4.6 The elaboration of foreign and home country aspects: types of cultural contents

Following the lecturers’ attitude in elaborating on foreign and home culture aspects, the result noticed three cultural contents. These contents cover the content of big C, the content of little c, and the concept of third place.

On the one hand, when dealing with the lecturers’ attitude in introducing the content of big C culture to their students in the class. Lecturer 1 lead to point out:

“I always introduce western, European, and other cultures.”

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 28:50

The content embedded into the national identity of the country that gives meaning and value is identified as big C culture. The content of big C culture emphasised more on exploring the concept and characteristics of the educated middle-class country including the study of literature. In this content, the focus is to teach about the history, arts, and symbols of the respective country whether it relates to foreign or home country.

On the other hand, Lecturer 3 revealed the content of little c culture when reflecting on the cultural content to elaborate foreign and home countries:

“Because I teach ESP, it concerns with how to communicate with our business partner, how to negotiate. So first of all, I try to correct their performance. The way they behave. Sometimes I said when you deal with people from Java, you have to speak slowly, you have to try to find their interests, what dos and dons. Usually, I prioritise dons, what we are not supposed to do, offer, and speak. In every meeting. Because I have a short time in every meeting, I have to put it into communication skills.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 23:42

The cultural content that focuses mainly on everyday life, social interaction, and communication including behaviour, beliefs, values, eating, dwelling, and talking habits is identified as little c culture. This content emphasises more on introducing culture as a way of life. The lecturer takes material from foreign country as well as home country by considering the meaning and values that represent each culture.

Apart from other contents, when dealing with incorporating cultural content in elaborating foreign and home country aspects, the lecturer brings the concept of third place. Related to this, Lecturer 4 emphasised:

“It’s more about communication and their attitude. Every meeting I always motivate them to know other cultures not only foreigners but they have to learn the real culture of others so we can compare one culture to another culture I think it’s good learning in the classroom when we can combine many cultures in the classroom.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 22:12

The intersection of multiple native and target cultures as the major task of exploring the content in class activities is identified as ‘third place’. In the class activity, the lecturer engaged students in seeking multiple perspectives in understanding the cultural aspect of many countries whether they are conscious of it or not. From this point, it can be identified that third place is a neutral state which allows students to reflect on the target language culture and also on their own.

4.7 Creating an authentic environment, raising intercultural knowledge, and dealing with cultural stereotypes as strategies to overcome the inflexibilities of teaching culture in EFL online classes

Concerning the strategies to overcome the inflexibilities of teaching culture in EFL online classes, the lecturers’ attitude considers creating an authentic environment, raising intercultural knowledge, and dealing with cultural stereotypes.

First, when dealing with creating an authentic environment, Lecturer 4 stated:

“Sometimes I invite my students to see other cultures besides their culture including local cultures and Indonesian cultures. Indonesia, it is consisting of many cultures. We can visit the real culture to see the real situation in their place, in that place. So, they have to practice in the real context.”

Lecturer 4, 4/6/2022, 26:15

EFL online classes can increase students’ interest, motivation, and curiosity for cultural learning by creating an authentic environment such as providing individual tasks to visit the nearest interesting places that have strong cultural identities. For example, projecting an activity for students by observing a cultural image of one region (for example Kajang in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, Indonesia which is also known as ‘Black Tribes’). Students can also bring authentic materials about family life in the target culture or English eating and drinking habits to share with the entire class. These activities will make the class more engaging, and students will be more motivated to learn about the culture.

Second, when dealing with raising cultural knowledge, Lecturer 3 commented:

“I have a class with multicultural students. They come from Kalimantan, Papua, Jambi. I ever asked them to speak in their mother tongue and not to feel ashamed of local culture by describing theirs.”

Lecturer 3, 4/9/2022, 31:17

Learner-centeredness is critical in practising cross-culture. This practice allows students to portray their cultural awareness of the cultural differences occurred among students in the class. The students will raise their intercultural knowledge by treating culture, not as an abstract concept but rather the emphasis to place

the students' own community in the class. This strategy will impact the students to be more knowledgeable on the environment surrounding them.

Third, when dealing with cultural stereotypes, two lecturers stated:

"Maybe when I mention some examples about western cultures compared to local culture. That is when I prepare my students for cultural knowledge. You have to know the culture, you have to know with whom you speak. Are they comfortable or not with you? We have to prepare our knowledge before meeting with new people."

Lecturer 1, 4/14/2022, 39:22

"I usually inform my students if you want to be accepted in a community, you learn their culture, you appreciate other cultures."

Lecturer 2, 4/16/2022, 35:15

Students can engage in various tasks of cultural exploration by dealing with the identification of any cultural stereotypes that exist around the world. Students, for example, can use posters/pictures to present their ideas about British people or any other nation. EFL lecturers can integrate a variety of effective and practical techniques focusing on making culture teaching enjoyable experiences for both lecturers and students in EFL online classrooms to achieve the learning program. A variety of tasks which identify stereotypes in culture contribute to guiding students to practise cross-culture in a better way in an EFL online class.

5. Discussion

This study unveils seven categories to be associated with lecturers' attitudes in encountering the challenges of practising cross-cultural teaching in EFL online classes such as the loss of cultural integration, the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts, the imbalance of cultural contents, the inflexibilities of teaching culture, and the intersection of cultural components. The seven categories cover cross-cultural teaching knowledge, cross-cultural teaching approach, cross-cultural teaching essence, cross-cultural teaching attribute, cross-cultural teaching barrier, cross-cultural teaching content, and cross-cultural teaching strategy. The visualization of these categories can be seen in Figure 1.

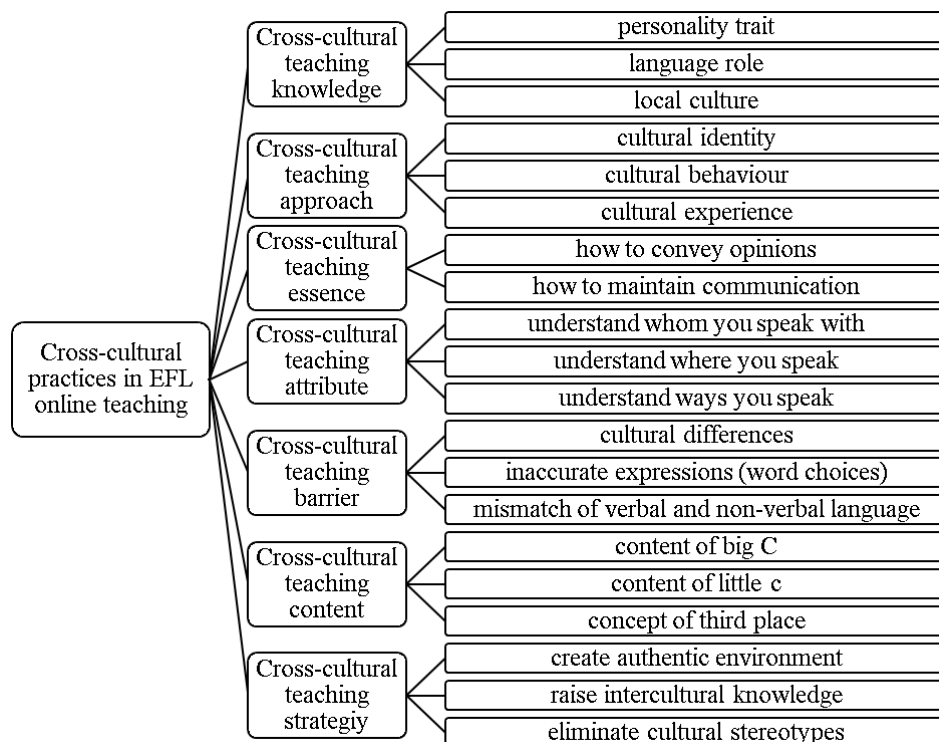


Figure 1. Cross-Cultural Practices in EFL Online Teaching

The first category covers the knowledge of personality traits, language roles, and local culture to encounter the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts in EFL online classes. This category is identified as cross-cultural teaching knowledge. Personality trait plays a significant role in cross-cultural teaching knowledge where the lecturer performed certain behaviour which represents the expectation of the lecturer to address appropriate cultural concepts that occur in the teaching and learning process to lead to students' further behaviour. Cross-cultural teaching knowledge also concerns how to use language accordingly based on the role that the lecturer and students possess. Moreover, it is indicated that language use should be performed based on the interaction's context which means that even though the interaction involves the same persons but when those persons interact in two different settings, in and outside the classroom, it can result in a different form of interaction. A different way to tackle the lack of adequate translation of cultural concepts is the role of local culture. The role of students' local culture contributes significantly to communicating and interacting in an EFL online class. The lecturer-student interaction comes from the interpretation of general and their own culture (Mendzheritskaya & Hansen, 2019; Joseph & De Silva, 2022). Furthermore, incorporating local wisdom in the learning model has a positive impact on the students' problem-solving and communication skills (Fadli, 2020). The knowledge involves cultural integration through self-reflection, language exploration, and the influence of local culture into the knowledge transfer process creating a good process of interaction between lecturers and students, as well as between students during online classes.

When it comes to handling the loss of cultural integration in EFL online classes, the study revealed cultural identification, behaviour, and experience as cross-cultural teaching approaches. This second category portrays cultural identification and language as inextricably linked components. Teaching culture is similar to teaching students in real life. Besides, the cross-cultural teaching approach emphasises the importance of behaviour. Behaviour becomes an important factor in assessing and evaluating students' performance in the classroom. Inadequate knowledge of different cultures stems from those who have never communicated with other cultural representatives and are hesitant to integrate with others (Wagner, 2021; Valsiner, 2019; Sobkowiak, 2019). This may lead lecturers to consider the behaviour component when dealing with English teaching. The cross-cultural teaching approach implies the best way to teach culture in foreign language classes is determined by the lecturer's level of expertise. This is to imply that cultural teaching can be applied to those who have prior knowledge of the culture. The breadth of understanding about identity and cultural behaviour supported by various cross-cultural experiences is contributing factor in ensuring the existence of cultural integration in EFL online classes.

The third category encompasses how to convey opinions and how to maintain communication as the essence of skill component in EFL online classes. This category is identified as the cross-cultural teaching essence. It is believed that the ability to deliver messages and opinions can impede at times, particularly when dealing with a formal interaction. This identified the ability to choose silence over expressing ideas. People engage in this behaviour not because they lack ideas, but because they believe their ideas will not be useful to the forum. This kind of ability lowers motivation. Interactants in various conversations may be perceived as incompetent because they lack the motivation to perform competently, knowledge of competent lines of action in the context in question, or communication skills to carry off a deft interaction. Respect for others demonstrates the ability to maintain communication. This tendency elicited praise from others and had an impact on enjoyable communication (Burke & Larmar, 2021; Schlögl & Jones, 2020; Tanis, 2020). Practising on how to convey opinions and maintain communication more effectively when it is merged with students' awareness of cross-cultural concepts in EFL online learning.

The fourth category discusses the attributes of attitude in EFL online classes which consist of understanding whom you speak with, where you speak, and way you speak. This category is identified as the cross-cultural teaching attribute. Understanding with whom you speak, including one's character, makes it easier to choose what speaking or communication styles students use when speaking with others in the class. Knowing the background of the communication partner makes deciding how to use a particular communication style easier whether we use informal language or formal language (Van Ruler, 2018; Rapanta et al., 2020). It is impossible to deny that lecturers pay close attention to contextual understanding in classroom interactions. Students are identified as effective communicators when they can identify a person, place, and way during class communication and interaction. Concerning this, Fitriyani & Andriyanti (2020) stated that formality is linked to the concept of politeness which allows for respectable and effective communication. Students who apply interaction methods that can recognise the interlocutor, the context of

speaking, and the manner of speaking constitute an important sample in combining knowledge, skills, and attitudes as fundamental traits in integrating cross-cultural practices into EFL classes.

The fifth category covers cultural differences, inaccurate expressions, and mismatch of verbal and non-verbal language as the barriers of knowledge in EFL online classes. An inadequate understanding of cultural differences may result in an inability to comprehend the context and the people with whom students communicate. The inability of lecturers and students to cope with cultural differences could be a significant factor causing misunderstanding in online classroom interactions. Inaccurate expressions, such as a lack of appropriate word choices, occur frequently when the illocutionary force of an utterance, such as a request, is ignored, resulting in a mismatch between speaker intent and hearer interpretation. However, in an instructional setting, such a disparity in meaning-making between the speaker and hearer may be detrimental to the learning experience (Aldemir, Borge & Soto, 2020; Bloommaert, 2019; Kim et al., 2021). Furthermore, the inability to use non-verbal communication to express attitudes and emotions based on the received information on the attitude towards the person with whom to communicate indicates the cross-cultural teaching barrier. Lack of cultural differences knowledge, inaccurate expressions, and mismatch of verbal and non-verbal language impacted to the challenges of cross-cultural practices in EFL online teaching.

The sixth category relates to the content of big C culture, the content of little c culture, and the concept of third place as the cross-cultural teaching content in EFL online teaching. Big C culture is the reflection of literature and art studies taught in educational institutions. If we teach about history, literature, arts, and community alongside the target language, the language will be embedded in the reassuring continuity of a national community, which gives it meaning and value. Cross-cultural teaching practices have resulted in a significant shift in the concept of culture, with culture being adopted as a way of life (Shadiey, Wang & Huang, 2021; Pacheco, 2020). This little c culture is primarily concerned with everyday life, social interaction, and communication, as well as behavior, beliefs, values, eating, dwelling, and talking habits. The intersection of multiple native and target cultures as the primary task of language learners is to define for themselves what this 'third place' that they are seeking will look like, whether they are aware of it or not. Third place is a neutral state that allows learners to reflect on both the target language culture and their own (Pinzón, 2020).

The last category concerns strategies applied to overcome the inflexibilities of teaching culture in EFL online classes which covers creating an authentic environment, raising intercultural knowledge, and eliminating cultural stereotypes. This category is identified as the cross-cultural teaching strategy. By creating an authentic environment, such as visiting places with strong cultural identities, EFL classes can increase students' interest, motivation, and curiosity for cultural learning. Lecturers can also bring authentic materials to allow students to share with the class about family life that relates to cultural habits. Lessons will be more engaging as a result of various cross-cultural learning activities, and students will be more motivated to learn about the target culture (Jensen, 2019; Derakhshan et al., 2022). The importance of learner-centeredness in developing intercultural competence cannot be overstated. This principle ensures that the learner's own culture is not treated as an abstract concept, but rather that the learner's involvement in it is emphasised. Students can participate in cultural exploration tasks such as dealing with cultural stereotypes to identify any cultural stereotypes that exist around the world. To achieve the learning program, EFL lecturers can integrate a variety of effective and practical techniques focusing on making culture teaching enjoyable experiences for both lecturers and students in EFL online classrooms.

Seeing how cross-cultural practices have a big impact on EFL teaching especially when it is associated with the nature of the online system, one of the limitations of this study is the tendency to look at how the teaching process is carried out from the lecturer's point of view, although it is clear that the online context cannot be just seen from the perspective of the university only but also in other contexts, such as the perspective of family and community. Besides that, the limitation of the methodology concerning the number of participants involved in the study is taken into account. The further study relates to the investigation of multiple backgrounds of the lecturers who participated as the research subject should be more highlighted. The more various nations of origin represented as participants, the deeper the study of cross-cultural practices in EFL online classes will become. Therefore, the continuation of this study is expected to explore more on the perspectives of families and communities on cross-cultural practices during online language learning.

6. Conclusion

This study presents perceptive notions of EFL lecturers' attitudes toward cross-cultural practices during EFL online teaching. They scrutinised cross-cultural teaching knowledge, cross-cultural teaching approach, cross-cultural teaching essence, cross-cultural teaching attribute, cross-cultural teaching barrier, cross-cultural teaching content, and cross-cultural teaching plan as ways to portray cross-cultural practices in their teaching. The result also demonstrates that the cross-cultural practices carried out in EFL online classrooms contributed a lot to profiling students with intercultural features. This contribution could result from the way the students display the ability to convey opinions and maintain communication, identify persons and context within class interaction, and highlight cultural differences and accurate language expressions. This unveils the main subject of the study as the beneficial outcome of preparing higher education graduates who are capable of overcoming intercultural communication barriers, active in contributing to the multicultural community, and skillful in handling global challenges.

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