



Teachers' Practices in Promoting Cross Cultural Values through English Language Teaching

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026 - 01- 07	<i>This study investigates how English teachers promote cross cultural values by examining the strategies they use, their understanding of cross-cultural concepts, and the challenges they encounter. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were gathered through interviews and classroom observations. The findings show that teachers integrate cross cultural values mainly through comparative discussions, the use of authentic cultural materials, and reflective tasks that guide students to recognize cultural similarities and differences. Although teachers acknowledge the importance of cross-cultural awareness, their conceptual understanding is still limited and varies based on professional experience and training. The study also identifies several challenges, including the lack of culturally rich resources, limited institutional support, and concerns about addressing culturally sensitive issues in the classroom. Overall, the results highlight that teachers contribute meaningfully to cross cultural learning but require stronger pedagogical support and more structured guidance to integrate these values effectively in English language teaching.</i>
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1. Introduction

The growing complexity of global interaction has made English language classrooms an essential space for developing learners' intercultural awareness. Scholars argue that language and culture cannot be separated, since every act of communication reflects underlying cultural values and worldviews. As Suryani et al., (2020) states, language constitutes a vital part of culture because it is shaped by the lived experiences of its speakers and reflects their patterns of thought, social behaviors, communication practices, and the environment in which their community exists. In Indonesian classrooms, teachers are increasingly expected to integrate cultural perspectives into English instruction to help learners communicate appropriately across cultural boundaries. However, many teachers still struggle to articulate what cross cultural values truly represent and how these values can be meaningfully incorporated into their everyday teaching practices. This condition creates a practical and theoretical challenge that merits deeper investigation.

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of promoting cross cultural competence as part of English language teaching. Trisha et al., (2025) highlights that integration of culture in language teaching not only accelerates language learning but also enhances learners' cognitive development, shapes their attitudes toward languages, and strengthens their cultural self-perception. It is supported by Rojas (2024) and Bagea (2023) found that engaging students in classroom activities rooted in culture helps them understand the behaviors and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Karlık (2023) emphasizes that although the role of culture in language learning is often overlooked, it is a crucial component that enriches the learning experience and leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the target language.

Several empirical studies conducted show promising efforts yet reveal significant room for improvement. Oberley in As et al., (2024) found that teachers were unable to integrate cultural elements effectively or model cultural values in ways that offer students a comprehensive learning perspective, largely due to their limited understanding of the need for cultural integration and the difficulties they faced in delivering culture-based instruction. This finding is supported by Ngoc & Hanh Phuc (2023) asserted that many school-based English teachers remain hesitant to incorporate cultural knowledge into their teaching, largely due to limited understanding of the target culture, insufficient vocabulary to explain cultural concepts, and the time pressure imposed by tight instructional schedules.

Likewise, Wardani et al., (2022) noted that teachers struggle to integrate culture into instruction, particularly because they find it challenging to fully grasp cultural concepts and translate them into effective thematic learning activities. Another study conducted by Basnet (2024) revealed that teachers often do not receive sufficient preparation or support to integrate cultural diversity into their instruction, which includes limited cultural awareness, inadequate access to

relevant materials, and a lack of training in multicultural pedagogy. These findings illustrate that teachers' attempts are present but not yet well-supported pedagogically.

Other studies have explored challenges that teachers face when integrating cross cultural elements. Maqsood et al., (2024) observed that without exposure to authentic materials such as literature, films, or culturally grounded conversations, learners miss the opportunity to develop insight into cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and contextually appropriate language use. Furthermore, classroom constraints such as time allocation and large class size often reduce opportunities for meaningful intercultural discussion. These findings suggest that although efforts exist, teachers still encounter structural and pedagogical barriers that restrict their ability to cultivate cross cultural values effectively. Collectively, previous studies show progress in acknowledging the role of culture in language teaching while also revealing persistent limitations in teachers' conceptual understanding and instructional practices.

Despite these contributions, there remains a clear gap between the ideals of intercultural language teaching and what teachers are currently able to practice. Existing studies have not sufficiently examined how teachers understand cross cultural values conceptually and how this understanding influences the strategies they choose. Moreover, limited attention has been given to teachers' lived experiences in navigating challenges when integrating these values into English lessons. This gap indicates the need for a more detailed exploration of teachers' practices, their conceptual awareness, and the constraints shaping their classroom implementation.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to answer three main questions: the strategies teachers use when integrating cross cultural values, their understanding of these values, and the challenges they encounter during implementation. The objectives are to analyze teachers' strategies, assess their conceptual understanding, and identify the obstacles that hinder effective integration in the classroom. The novelty of this study lies in its simultaneous focus on practice, cognition, and contextual barriers, providing a more holistic understanding of how teachers promote cross cultural values in English language teaching. This contribution is expected to enrich the discourse on intercultural pedagogy and guide future improvements in teacher development programs.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how English teachers integrate cross cultural values into their classroom practices. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe real classroom phenomena in depth and capture teachers' understanding and experiences in a natural setting. The focus of the study was to obtain detailed accounts of teachers' instructional strategies, their conceptual awareness of cross cultural values, and the challenges

The participants of this study were English teachers from several secondary schools who were selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was used because the selected teachers were actively involved in English language instruction and were considered capable of providing relevant insights into cross cultural teaching practices. The number of participants was determined based on the need for data saturation, ensuring that all emerging themes were sufficiently represented.

Data were collected through semi structured interviews and classroom observations. The interview guide was developed based on the research objectives and included questions that explored teachers' strategies, their understanding of cross cultural values, and the difficulties they encounter in classroom practice. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how teachers translated their stated strategies into actual teaching behavior. Observation notes focused on learning activities, use of materials, teacher student interactions, and cultural content presented during lessons.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This procedure involved reading the data repeatedly to identify significant patterns and coding the information into categories related to strategies, conceptual understanding, and challenges. The codes were then refined and grouped into overarching themes that represented the findings of the study. To enhance credibility, the researcher conducted member checking by allowing participants to review the interpretations. Through this analytical process, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive and trustworthy description of how teachers promote cross cultural values in English language teaching.

3. Result and Discussion

The analysis of data gathered from interviews and classroom observations generated several key findings related to the strategies teachers use, the depth of their understanding of cross cultural values, and the challenges they encounter when implementing these values in English language teaching. These findings are presented in the following subsections to provide a clearer and more organized description of the results.

Teachers' Strategies for Integrating Cross Cultural Values

The findings show that teachers employ a range of instructional practices to introduce and reinforce cross cultural values in English lessons. Comparative classroom discussions emerge as the most frequently used strategy, where teachers encourage students to reflect on differences and similarities between Indonesian culture and cultural practices commonly associated with English speaking communities. These discussions often take place during reading and speaking activities, allowing students to engage with cultural content while practicing language skills.

Teachers also make use of authentic materials such as short videos, online articles, stories, and visual images. These materials are selected because they offer real examples of cultural behavior that cannot be captured through textbooks alone. In several observed lessons, teachers paused video clips to highlight gestures, expressions, or social norms that carry cultural meaning. This approach helps students recognize that language forms are closely connected to cultural expectations.

Another strategy involves reflective tasks, where students write short responses or share personal stories related to cultural topics presented in the lesson. These activities encourage students to internalize cross cultural values by linking them to their own experiences. Some teachers also integrate simple role play activities that simulate interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Together, these practices show that teachers attempt to promote cultural understanding through accessible and interactive techniques.

Teachers' Understanding of Cross-Cultural Values

The data reveal considerable variation in teachers' conceptual understanding of cross cultural values. Most teachers agree that cultural awareness is important, yet their interpretations differ. Some teachers view cross cultural values primarily as knowledge about customs, celebrations, and daily habits in English speaking societies. For these teachers, cultural teaching focuses mainly on factual information.

Other teachers interpret cross cultural values in terms of respectful attitudes, such as openness, tolerance, and willingness to appreciate differences. They believe that teaching cross cultural values means guiding students to adopt positive dispositions when interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds. Only a smaller number of teachers demonstrate a more holistic understanding. These teachers describe cross cultural values as a combination of knowledge, attitudes, and communicative skills that enable effective and respectful intercultural interaction.

The variation in understanding is influenced by differences in teacher training, exposure to multicultural learning environments, and access to professional development. Teachers with prior experience in intercultural programs tend to articulate a more complete view, while those without such exposure often rely on intuitive or limited interpretations.

Challenges in Implementing Cross Cultural Values

Several challenges hinder teachers from fully integrating cross cultural values into their lessons. A major obstacle is the lack of culturally rich and contextually appropriate teaching materials. Many teachers rely heavily on textbooks, which often present cultural content in a superficial or stereotypical way. As a result, teachers struggle to provide deeper insights or diverse cultural perspectives.

Time constraints also emerge as a consistent barrier. Teachers often feel pressured to complete curriculum targets, which limits opportunities for extended discussions about cultural topics. Activities that require deeper reflection or comparative analysis are sometimes shortened or omitted entirely due to tight schedules.

Another challenge involves teachers' hesitation to address culturally sensitive issues, especially when discussing topics that might contrast with local beliefs or social norms. Some teachers fear misinterpretation or conflict, leading them to avoid themes they consider controversial. This hesitation reduces the depth of cultural exploration and restricts students from gaining a more comprehensive understanding of cross cultural values.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers' efforts to promote cross cultural values in English language teaching are shaped by a combination of instructional choices, conceptual understandings, and contextual constraints. The strategies identified in the classroom, particularly comparative discussions, the use of authentic materials, and reflective tasks, show that teachers attempt to bridge linguistic content with cultural understanding in ways that are practical and accessible for students.

This aligns with the view of Liu (2022) who argues that integrating real life cultural themes and intercultural activities, such as double translation, situational comparison, and role play, supports the development of learners' intercultural competence, broadens their cultural understanding, encourages positive attitudes toward diverse cultures, strengthens their ability to compare cultural perspectives, and enhances their critical cultural awareness. The teachers in this study apply this principle implicitly through structured comparisons and interactive tasks, which encourage students to understand cultural differences beyond superficial features. It is also in line with Muhammad et al., (2024) found that strengthening intercultural communicative competence is crucial in foreign language education because it significantly shapes students' ability to learn and interact within multicultural settings.

The frequent use of authentic materials also reflects established recommendations in intercultural pedagogy. According to Hariri & Aris (2023) and Dja'far (2023) the material should be firmly connected to students' real-life contexts, making the use of authentic materials essential for meaningful and contextual learning because their familiarity enhances students' engagement and understanding. Similarly, Hossain (2024) noted that educators must thoughtfully curate authentic materials that reflect learners' cultural backgrounds, thereby strengthening the connection between classroom content and students' lived experiences. The observed practices, such as pausing video clips to highlight gestures or social norms, are consistent with this idea and illustrate how teachers

use multimodal resources to bring cultural content to life. Another findings was reported by Prayudha S (2023) who asserted that an English teacher should also be able to embed local cultural values in learning by integrating authentic materials from students' own cultural environment, enabling them to understand the English content more easily.

However, the discussion also reveals that teachers' conceptual understanding of cross cultural values varies widely. While some teachers focus on factual cultural knowledge, others emphasize attitudes such as respect and openness. Only a few articulate a more comprehensive view that integrates knowledge, attitudes, and intercultural communication skills.

This variation reflects the broader issue highlighted by Suharni et al., (2025) who notes that teachers develop intercultural competence by using interactive approaches, integrating cultural topics, and applying authentic resources to expose students to diverse perspectives, yet challenges remain due to students' limited prior knowledge, low engagement, and the linguistic and cultural complexity involved.

The findings of this study support earlier reports by Natasya & Kembaren (2025) that culture in ELT is shaped by teachers' exposure to multicultural environments and culturally focused professional development, yet they still face challenges such as students' diverse attitudes and learning habits, variations in language proficiency, curriculum rigidity, and limited resources or institutional support.

The challenges identified in this study provide further insight into why cultural integration is not always carried out effectively. The lack of culturally rich materials limits teachers' ability to move beyond the surface level presentation of cultural facts. This mirrors concerns raised by Taqdir (2025) who argues that cultural stereotypes are often reinforced when textbook visuals are dominated by target cultures, while local cultures are exoticized and presented through static, traditional imagery. Teachers' reliance on such materials therefore restricts their attempts to introduce more diverse or nuanced cultural perspectives.

Time constraints also play a crucial role. The pressure to complete curriculum targets reduces opportunities for deeper cultural exploration, a challenge commonly reported in Indonesian EFL classrooms. According to Jon et al., (2021) teachers struggle to optimize language learning because students' diverse backgrounds affect their acquisition and overall English proficiency, and an assessment system focused heavily on linguistic accuracy further limits holistic learning. This structural issue reinforces the patterns observed in the present study, where cultural activities that require reflection or extended discussion are often shortened or omitted.

Another important challenge concerns teachers' hesitation to address sensitive cultural issues. Cultural topics are frequently intertwined with beliefs and values, which may differ from local norms. As Karousiou et al., (2025) notes that

teachers were largely unprepared to address controversial issues in class due to limited resources, insufficient training, lack of guidance, time constraints, and overloaded curricula, and their confidence in tackling such topics was closely tied to how comfortable they felt within their school environment and the support available to them. This study shows that similar concerns are present in the local context, where teachers tend to avoid controversial themes to prevent misunderstanding or conflict.

Overall, the discussion suggests that teachers recognize the importance of integrating cross cultural values but continue to face conceptual, pedagogical, and structural barriers that limit their implementation. The findings reinforce the need for more comprehensive teacher training programs that emphasize intercultural competence, as well as the development of supportive curricular materials that present culture in richer and more inclusive ways. This study contributes to the growing literature by highlighting how teachers interpret and enact cross cultural integration in Indonesian classrooms, offering insights into both the progress made and the gaps that remain.

5. Conclusion

This study explored how teachers promote cross cultural values through English language teaching by examining their instructional practices, their interpretations of cross cultural values, and the challenges that influence their implementation. The findings show that teachers make meaningful efforts through comparative discussions, authentic materials, and reflective tasks that allow students to connect language learning with cultural insight. The variation in teachers' conceptual understanding, which ranges from factual cultural knowledge to a more comprehensive view involving attitudes and intercultural communication skills, indicates that teachers' approaches are shaped by different levels of training and exposure to multicultural contexts.

The study also reveals several constraints that hinder the consistent integration of cross cultural values. Limited access to culturally rich materials, restricted instructional time, and teachers' hesitancy to address sensitive cultural themes reduce opportunities for deeper cultural engagement in the classroom. These findings should be interpreted with caution because the research was conducted within a single institutional context and involved a limited number of participants. The scope of the data therefore restricts the generalizability of the conclusions.

Based on these insights, teacher education programs are encouraged to provide more focused support on intercultural competence so that teachers can develop a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of cross cultural integration. Schools and curriculum developers are also advised to provide culturally diverse resources that can enrich classroom instruction. Future studies may involve larger and more diverse samples or explore students' perspectives to

complement teachers' views, offering a more complete picture of intercultural learning within English language education.

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