

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study, including the background, statement of research questions, purpose, scope of the research, significance, classification with related terms, and state-of-the-art.

1.1 Background of the Study

Globalization impacts human life in both positive and negative ways. It makes goods and services flow across boundaries, spreading knowledge and technology, improving health, and promoting tolerance and understanding through cultural exchange and diversity, such as the positive effects (Samimi & Jenatabadi, 2014). However, the United Nations reports for 2020 reveal a significant increase in inequality, including income disparities within countries (World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World, 2020). It also accelerates the raising of concerns about the homogenization of cultures and the loss of cultural identity (Samimi & Jenatabadi, 2014).

The UN has indeed anticipated a wide range of global challenges by creating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which consists of 17 goals (SDGs). The SDGs will be promoted through an education program called Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which, by 2030, aims to ensure that all learners gain the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, as outlined in SDG Target 4.7. This includes education for sustainable development, sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, **global citizenship**, and appreciation of **cultural diversity** and its role in sustainable development (*Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap*, 2020).

In 2013, UNESCO stated the critical need for education to manage global challenges that require responses and collective action at both the global and local levels, which is known as Global Citizenship Education (GCE). GCE is any educational effort that aims to encourage the acquisition of skills, values, attitudes, and behaviours that empower learners to assume roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, and secure world (Holst et al., 2024). It was recommended that GCE be

integrated into curricula and that education managers and educators be trained to start teaching this concept (Sarabhai, 2013). GCE nurtures three core dimensions of learning: *a). Cognitive*: This involves acquiring knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking about *global issues*, as well as the *interconnectedness* and *interdependence* of different countries and populations. *b). Socio-emotional*: Develop a sense of belonging to humanity, *sharing values, empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity*. *c). Behavioural*: act responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a peaceful and sustainable world.

As pointed out above, living in the global era requires interacting with diverse cultures, making intercultural competence essential. Today, the internet, mobile phones, and rapid transportation have further enhanced these interactions, causing a profound cultural transformation and a seismic shift in behaviours and dreams (Kim & Bhawuk, 2008).

Language is a component of cultural products, making the study of cultures an integral part of learning a language. This is in line with one of the aims of English as a lingua franca: to connect people from different cultural backgrounds. Since linguistic and cultural diversity is inherent in many societies around the world (Piccardo & Galante, n.d.). Interculturalism in English language teaching (ELT) is expected to create individuals who can interact with people from different cultures and maintain positive attitudes in modern society (Özkan, 2022). There is evidence that the importance of ICC in ELT has increased due to the rise of intercultural communication and the English language's role as a global lingua franca (VO, 2017).

Given the frequent interchangeability of the intercultural term with other terminologies like multiculturalism, it's crucial to distinguish between these two concepts. Multicultural values are derived from pluralistic ideology, which recognizes cultural differences among people of various ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds (B Setyono, 2019). Multicultural education focuses on creating learning environments that promote tolerance and respect for diverse cultures, removing prejudices, and recognizing the richness of human differences (Cirik, 2008); (B Setyono, 2019). It is called multicultural communication when people from different cultural backgrounds, with different

ways of communicating, are present, but there is no influencing or adapting process from one to the other. On the other hand, intercultural communication signifies the presence of a culture-making process, as individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds engage in daily interactions, resulting in understandings, adjustments, negotiations, and explorations, leading to dynamic and transformative communication. The aim of learning multiculturalism in education is to build tolerance awareness, while in *interculturalism*, its goal is to *facilitate dialogue, exchange, and mutual understanding between people from different backgrounds* (Sarmiento, 2014). This concept is similar to Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) by Byram (1997), which unites communicative competence (CC) and Intercultural Competence (CC). There are five key components in ICC: a) *intercultural attitudes*, which involve curiosity, openness, and a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures while critically examining one's own beliefs. b) *Intercultural knowledge* includes understanding social groups, cultural products, practices, and interaction processes. c) *Skills of interpreting* and relating refer to the ability to identify and explain cultural perspectives, mediate between cultures, and function effectively in new cultural contexts. d) *Skills of discovering and interacting* involve acquiring new cultural knowledge and practices and applying these skills in real-time communication. Finally, e) *Critical cultural awareness* refers to the ability to critically evaluate the perspectives and practices of both one's own and other cultures (VO, 2017).

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), as a global reference for English language teaching and learning curricula, also puts intercultural as an important aspect of learning a language. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers advocates using the CEFR as a tool for coherent, transparent, and effective plurilingual education to promote intercultural dialogue, democratic citizenship, and social cohesion (Council of Europe, 2018). Since CEFR is also used as a reference for designing English Language Teaching and Learning (ELTL) curricula in Indonesia, interculturality is also an important aspect of it. In fact, the main goal of learning English, as stated in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, is to create student competence to communicate and interact with global citizens from different cultural backgrounds. By doing so, they will have a greater

opportunity to interact, gain knowledge, and learn various skills and human behaviours needed to live in diverse cultures. It also states that the first two of the four main goals of learning English are (1) to improve communication skills in English using spoken, written, visual, and audiovisual texts and (2) to improve intercultural skills so that students can understand and value Indonesian and foreign cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Those two curriculum objectives directly lead to Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

Research on ICC has been done around the world from elementary to tertiary education. It is shown that not all of the ICC practices have been successfully achieved. Research on ICC in book materials has been extensive. The goal of intercultural learning in English language learning (ELL) in Kosovo is to prepare students for global citizenship, but inadequate authentic materials often overlook this vision, making it difficult to bring the cultures alive in the classroom (Gashi, 2021). This study also shows that learning about and comparing other cultures develops cultural understanding and deeper connections with one's own and others. It indicates that if ICC is implemented properly, the ICC learning objectives can be achieved. Research conducted in Vietnam reveals a problem that extends beyond the material content. ELF learners believe integrating diverse cultures into ELT practice can enhance cultural understanding and intercultural competence. They emphasize studying home culture alongside mainstream cultural diversity. However, teachers lack the preparedness and knowledge to meet learners' needs and act as change agents, making lessons boring and demotivating. In the era of technology, students struggle to accept teachers' lag in cultural inquiry (Chinh, 2013). This case confirms that teachers are also an important part of learning success, similar to the Kosovo case.

English as a lingua franca is used not only by native speakers with other non-native English speakers but also by non-native speakers with other non-native English speakers (Fang & Baker, 2017). For English foreign language learners, the majority of the users are non-native English speakers. Research findings in Thailand indicate that the cultural aspects of ELT are imbalanced and inappropriate due to the misallocation of cultural representations and learners' lack of acknowledgment of the sociocultural background depicted. The textbooks that are

used by public primary schools where Cambodians, Laotians, Myanmarese, and Thais learn only present the cultures of the Native English country and Thailand (Nomniam, 2021). From this case, it can be understood that incorporating surrounding cultures (such as students' cultures) is important because they interact with each other. That is why research on cultural learning has shifted from a dominant focus on teaching the cultures of English-speaking countries to a broader variety of cultural challenges for English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries (YJ Lin, 2018).

In Indonesia, research on ICC ranges from materials, ICC effectiveness, learning models, strategies to enhance IC competence, and others. A review of multicultural content in four 12th graders' English textbooks published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (MONEC) revealed that there were four major multicultural elements: (1) respect for cultures of different ethnic and religious groups; (2) respect for cultures of indigenous people; (3) conflict avoidance and peace with all forms of life and nature; and (4) appreciation of creative cultural products (Widodo, 2019). Previous studies on intercultural content in textbooks for twelfth-grade students published by three comparatively large publishers reveal that the texts *do not fairly portray cultural diversity in an international setting*. The cultures that *predominate are those of English-speaking nations and Indonesia*. The textbook presents *intercultural interaction in fragmented, constrained, and superficial ways*. It was suggested that *textbook publishers and authors provide more information about global culture and demonstrate deep intercultural interaction*, and teachers need to be *more creative by adding supplementary cultural material to patch up the shortcomings of the textbook* (Putra et al., 2020). This finding was confirmed by Agustina and Kencana (2023), who compared two textbooks, global and local, determined by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. The findings indicate that the global textbook offers greater emphasis on target culture, whereas the local textbook predominantly focuses on source culture and neglects international cultures. The global textbook addresses social and environmental issues, whereas the local textbook emphasizes religion, humanities, art, and personal themes. Both textbooks lack adequate intercultural communicative competence, leading to

imbalanced cultural representations that affect students' intercultural competence. It is also suggested to provide students with sufficient references to the target, source, and international cultures to promote their intercultural competence (Noni Agustina, 2023).

In higher education, research on ICC shows positive results in enhancing students' understanding and competence in ICC. A study involving numerous university students found that utilizing literature books to enhance intercultural competence significantly motivated them to investigate deeper into intercultural communication. Applying various techniques exposed students to a broader range of languages and cultures, thereby fostering the development of their ICC (Thayyib, 2023). Other similar studies also yielded positive results. Watching an American hero movie and then discussing it could develop their ICC and find common ground between their own culture and American culture (Anugerahwati & Trya Dewanti, 2022). It is also proven that using both intercultural tasks and digital photographs as culturally-laden learning resources has the potential to promote students' ICC in English language classrooms (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018).

One of the most crucial components of the teaching and learning process is the teacher, who should not only possess ICC competence but also be provided with learning materials, system assessment, and others that foster ICC. Researchers have found that EFL teachers in a certain area of East Java have high levels of both ICC and IS. There is a strong link between the two, suggesting that higher ICC levels are linked to higher intercultural sensitivity levels, both of which help people from different cultures interact effectively. The research suggests that Indonesian EFL teachers should apply culturally responsive teaching, introduce intercultural teaching and English varieties, and adopt a postmodern perspective in English teaching (Y. Hapsari et al., 2022). It suggests that even if they possess a high enough ICC level, they may not have fully mastered the ICC in the classroom. Widiati and Hayati's research (2022) confirms the indication of a shift toward social harmony through ELF in ICC courses. A consensus among five of ten anonymous institutions demonstrates the inseparable link between language and culture in language education. Despite this, Western (especially American) cultures

dominate, though five institutions emphasize diversity, multiculturalism, and cultural differences. This reflects the traditional EFL ideology in Indonesian teacher education, even though there is evidence of a shift toward social harmony through the use of ELF in ICC courses, as mentioned above. The challenge is to prepare *teacher candidates to design ICC activities using ELF*. The authors advocate for an ASEAN-oriented curriculum that emphasizes multilingualism, regional and local cultures, and the integration of linguistic and cultural competence in pre-service teacher education (How Well Prepared Are Indonesian Pre-Service Teachers to Develop Their Future Students' Intercultural Communicative Competence, 2019).

The results of ICC research in higher education, including pre-service teachers, show increased understanding, interest, and competence in intercultural communication. Despite the lack of clear indications of comprehensive ICC implementation at this level, efforts to integrate ICC through discussions about cultures and values in literature books, films, and photographs, for instance, have sparked interactive discussions among students, thereby advancing ICC's effectiveness. On the other hand, studies conducted on ICC in high schools and among pre-service teachers recommend providing more suitable ICC learning materials in textbooks. This demonstrates that ICC remains inadequately incorporated even in teaching materials at the school level. As stated above, ICC is more than just knowledge about multiculturalism; it is about having the ability or skill to interact and to adapt to multicultural backgrounds, as also mandated in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. It can be concluded that there is an urgent need to design and develop a more comprehensive ICC in senior high school learning. Designing high school students' intercultural communicative competence is also important to prepare them for higher education interactions, as they usually have a more diverse cultural background. This learning program, as suggested by some previous research above, is intended as an additional supplementary cultural program to patch up the shortcomings of the textbook.

This supplementary learning program will solely concentrate on the topic of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), but it should encompass all the components of ICC, including *intercultural attitude*, *intercultural knowledge*,

interpreting skills, discovering and interacting skills, and critical cultural awareness. Since the nature of the skills covered, reading material alone is insufficient to accomplish the task. The program should cover an effective learning plan consisting of the learning objectives, materials, learning instructions, assessment, and reflection. It will be more beneficial and effective if the learning program can be used by both students and teachers independently and easily accessed. The learning system that meets these needs is a Digital Module, also called an E-module. A learning module is a competency-based tool that outlines what learners will know or be able to do. It includes learning outcomes, activities to achieve these outcomes, evaluation procedures, and resources tailored to learner needs (Richard, 1990). But nowadays, Arief et al. (2014) state that modules have evolved from printed modules to a multimedia medium (Liu Aiju, 2024), called digital or e-modules. Triyono (2021) defines an electronic module (e-module) as a systematic collection of non-printed digital learning materials. The benefits of e-modules include their practical, long-lasting, and cost-effective manufacturing over standard print modules (Fausih & Danang, 2015).

The explanation above concludes that a gap still exists in incorporating ICC into English learning materials in the classroom. It is crucial to design a supplementary ICC English learning program, especially in an E-module format, so it is easily accessed either individually by the learners or teacher or both. Accordingly, this study intends to design an Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)-infused electronic English learning module. The proposed e-module is designed for tenth-grade students to further develop their ICC competence and to serve as preparation for broader social interactions in a global society.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a. To what extent is intercultural communicative competence infused into English learning books for tenth graders?
- b. What is the procedure for infusing intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders?

- c. What is the design of infusing intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders?
- d. How are the readability and validity of infusing intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the research questions, the research purposes are formulated as follows:

- a. To analyse the extent of intercultural communicative competence infused into English learning books for tenth graders.
- b. To describe the procedure for infusing intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders.
- c. To design the infusion of intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders.
- d. To review the readability and validity of infusing intercultural communicative competence into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The scope of the research focuses on and is limited to infusing ICC into an electronic English language module for tenth-grade students. The e-module was designed using Byram's ICC indicators as the foundation, formulated with the *Kurikulum* Merdeka for tenth-graders and the CEFR communicative competence, plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire at the B1 level. The e-module designed includes learning objectives, materials, instructions, tasks, and assessments.

The e-module prototype is provided in PDF and flipbook formats. The flipbook format is more user-friendly and interesting, but it is not designed with a more sophisticated interactive learning module, such as learning with gaming or something similar.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The results of this study offer contributions. First, in terms of theoretical significance, it can serve as guidance for further research, especially for educators interested in infusing intercultural communicative competence into the English curriculum as recommended by UNESCO to prepare learners living in a global

society. Second, in practical significance, this research can be used as supplementary material to support teachers in incorporating intercultural communicative competence into classroom practices.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

The technical terminologies that are found throughout this study are operationally defined as follows:

Multiculturalism: is derived from the concept of pluralistic ideology, which recognizes the existence of cultural differences among people of various ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds (Sugianto & Ulfah, 2020).

Interculturalism: indicates the existence of a culture-making process since people who interact from different cultural backgrounds in daily life make some understandings, adjustments, negotiations, and explorations; accordingly, there is dynamic transformative communication (Sarmiento, 2014).

Communicative Competence: the ability to use language effectively and appropriately across contexts. It is structured into three interrelated dimensions, each with descriptors spanning all proficiency levels (Council of Europe, 2018).

Intercultural Competence: a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interactions in various cultural contexts (YJ Lin, 2018).

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC): the relationship between linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence. This shows that the person is not ready to completely abandon objectives and guidelines from the communicative approach of foreign language teaching but rather expands it and adds an intercultural perspective (Byram, 2020).

1.7 State of the Art

This research focuses on infusing ICC into an electronic English learning module for tenth graders. As previously elaborated, prior research findings suggest that there are insufficient supports for implementing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) at the high school level. This includes textbooks that do not fairly portray cultural diversity in an international setting, cultural content that presents intercultural interaction in fragmented, constrained, and superficial ways,

and a lack of adequate ICC elements, resulting in imbalanced cultural representations that negatively impact students' intercultural competence. Therefore, this research aims to identify a gap in the existing English learning books. To conclude, the novelty of this research is infusing ICC indicators into an electronic English-learning module, specifically for tenth-grade students.

