

# INDONESIAN EFL TEACHERS' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY EFL CLASSROOM

*(Konseptualisasi yang Dimiliki Guru Bahasa Inggris Indonesia  
Terkait dengan Kultur dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing  
pada Abad XXI)*

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## **Abstract**

In dealing with the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL pedagogy where interculturality and multiculturalism are promoted to be the crucial aspects of EFL learning, this study is oriented towards investigating Indonesian EFL teachers' conceptualization of culture in EFL classroom. The conceptualization in this sense is emphasized on their knowledge construction underlying their teaching principles. This study was conducted qualitatively by engaging three Indonesian EFL teachers selected purposively. The data of this study were garnered from open-ended questionnaires and interview. Regarding the teachers' conceptualization, this study revealed that culture referred to the way of living becoming the framework of language use since language *per se* referred to a social semiotic, and the framework of learning going on inter and intra-individually. In EFL learning, culture was viewed from its interculturality. Interculturality was supported although two teachers stayed in native-speakerism specifically for linguistic competence. This study is meaningful since it serves a set of contributive knowledge *vis-a-vis* culture in EFL learning for EFL teachers and curriculum developers. However, this study is still delimited on cultural conception. Further studies are expected to work on the practice of cultural conception to deal with the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL learning in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** culture, interculturality, multiculturalism, language learning, 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL education

## **Abstrak**

Berkaitan dengan pendidikan bahasa Inggris pada abad ke-21 ini ketika interkulturalitas dan multikulturalitas diangkat sebagai aspek penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi konseptualisasi yang dimiliki oleh para guru bahasa Inggris Indonesia tentang kultur dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Istilah konseptualisasi ditekankan pada kerangka pengetahuan yang dimiliki guru dan yang direalisasikan ke dalam prinsip-prinsip mengajar mereka. Penelitian ini dilakukan secara kualitatif dengan melibatkan tiga orang guru yang dipilih berdasarkan kriteria khusus. Data dalam penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara. Terkait konseptualisasi yang dimiliki oleh guru, terungkap bahwa definisi kultur dirujuk sebagai cara hidup yang menjadi kerangka penggunaan bahasa karena bahasa itu sendiri dikonsepsikan sebagai semiotika sosial dan kultur yang dirujuk sebagai kerangka belajar yang konsepnya terjadi pada dimensi inter dan intra-individual. Dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris itu sendiri kultur ditinjau dari sudut interkulturalitasnya. Cara pandang interkulturalitas ini pada dasarnya

*disepakati oleh para guru, namun dua orang guru tetap memegang prinsip native-speakerism khusus untuk area kompetensi linguistik. Penelitian ini bermanfaat karena berkontribusi menyajikan sejumlah pengetahuan tentang peran kultur dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris kepada para guru bahasa Inggris dan pengembang kurikulum di Indonesia. Bagaimanapun juga penelitian ini masih terbatas pada konseptualisasi kultur. Penelitian lanjut sangat diharapkan untuk mengkaji ranah praktik atau realisasi dari konsep kultur demi mampu menjalankan dengan baik pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di Indonesia pada abad ke-21 ini.*

**Kata Kunci:** kultur, interkulturalitas, multikulturalitas, pembelajaran bahasa, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris abad 21

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the nature of today's generation has been growing a lot. Technology has become a part of their lives. Nowadays' students live their lives this way. Their closeness to technology for instance internet makes them deal with extensive communication, and by nature their level of communication takes place across culture. Through social media, they communicate with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and this situation generates the sensitivity of the fact that they are actually multicultural as human beings. To deal with this natural condition, there is an implication in that today's students need a couple of relevant competences for intercultural communication so that they can maintain a successful communication which lies within a multicultural encounter without having to end up the continuity of communication with stereotype conflicts or perspective differences (Byram, et al., 1997).

Pertinent to the case of multiculturalism, it aligns with what is encountered in Indonesia in that the state of multiculturalism *per se* even becomes the nature of Indonesian people. There are around 250 million citizens whose origins are derived from various cultural backgrounds living in Indonesia (Sukyadi, 2015). The communication which takes place in Indonesia is also in fact intercultural for either the communication going on through the use of Indonesian language, the

national one, or that occurring through the utilization of English language, the international one. Hamied (2012) argues that the use of Indonesian as a national language happens analogically with that of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, whereby Indonesian language is used interculturally by Indonesian people with their cultural differences, and the same thing goes on when they use English as an International language.

The sense of interculturality and multiculturalism had by today's students basically triggers that their education should go along with their nature to fulfill their needs. The same case happens with respect to their foreign language learning such as English education in Indonesia (Renandya, 2009). Thus, as the reflection, the EFL teachers in Indonesia must critically conceptualize the issue *vis-a-vis* culture existing as one of the important elements in EFL learning so that this conceptualization can have a meaningful impact on their teaching programs as those which facilitate students to capably deal with intercultural English communication. Accordingly, this study is focused on investigating Indonesian EFL teachers' conceptualization of culture in EFL learning as to deal with the nature of 21<sup>st</sup> century students.

There are a couple of substantial points to be extensively taken into account by the EFL teachers when conceptualizing the element of culture in EFL learning. They are comprised of how culture is defined; how it

relates to language use; how it relates to language learning; how it is viewed in foreign language learning; and how interculturality is dealt with in communication.

### **The Definition of culture**

Actually, there are various definitions of culture as proposed by several experts working on the construction of cultural theories. Culture is defined as the patterns or blueprints of behavior brought from a familial circle which represent how people live, sensitize their status matter, and help them understand what others expect to them. This patterned behavior is also linguistically and non-linguistically constructed through socialization (Peck, 1998). In another view, Kramersch (1995) defines that culture refers to the product of self and other perceptions.

Other than the basis of behavior to view culture, culture is also defined in the perspective of discourse. Kramersch (1995) also emphasizes that culture depicts the membership of a discourse community which has the same social space, history, and imaginings. In addition, a more complex view of culture can be seen from Liddicoat et al. (2003); Scarino & Liddicoat (2009) in which it is viewed as a framework of how people live, communicate, and share meanings. This framework also covers a complex system of concept, attitude, value, belief, convention, behavior, practice, ritual, lifestyle, artifacts, and institution.

### **The Relationship between Culture and Language**

In order to understand the relationship between culture and language, it is of importance to understand in prior how language by nature is defined. There is a change of language definition if viewed from the nature of language in use. An old definition stresses that language refers to the systemized but arbitrary codes used for

communication. However, such definition is not incorrect, but it is still insufficient to define language under the context of its use in communication (Liddicoat et al., 2003). In reality, language in use not only refers to codes but also plays a role as a social semiotic used by people to express, come up, and interpret meanings in communication, and to sustain the social and interpersonal relationship (Halliday, 2009; Kramersch, 2013; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009).

By relying on the above comprehensive definition of language emphasized on codes and social semiotics, there can be described the relationship between culture and language. First, although the codes are arbitrary, these arbitrary codes work within the convention of a particular social group. It means that one social group with its working convention may use these arbitrary codes differently from the convention had by other social groups (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). Once there is a convention in using these codes, it is clear that language is used within the cultural framework agreed by a group that shares the same culture. Second, as language is seen as a social semiotic for expressing, creating and interpreting meanings, it is really obvious that the use of language is cultural. The process of expressing, creating and interpreting meanings happens on the basis of people's culture, their way of living, which they bring from their familial and social group. In short, culture fundamentally has a strong effect on the interaction people commit (Elmes, 2013). The thoughts or perceptions people have in communication indicate their cultural values (Wardhaugh, 2006). From this, it is also seen a clear line that language mediates cultural interaction (Assemi, Saleh, Asayeshh, & Janfaza, 2012). To simply state about the relationship between culture and language, it can be said that once language is

used in communication, it always lies within the cultural framework.

### **The Relationship between Culture and Learning**

To comprehend how culture relates to learning, it is very important to initiate the account as regards the notion of learning so that there is a clear line to view the stream of relatedness. If looked back to its theories, the concept of learning grows from behaviorism with its classical and operant conditioning to describe that the process of learning takes place in the framework of stimulus, response, and reinforcement. However, a lot of criticisms argue that behaviorism theory is not adequate to explain the nature of learning process. Then, cognitivist theory emerges with its comprehensive account of learning concerning with the mental process in that learning occurs when new information is absorbed, reorganized and reconstructed within the existing mind concept that someone has. In this sense, new knowledge learned by someone will be reconstructed within the framework of his previous existing knowledge so that he can come up with his new conception.

Furthermore, viewing the power of cognitivist theory, this theory actually only emphasizes that learning is intrapersonal. It is still not sufficiently comprehensive to represent the nature of learning. Accordingly, there comes up another popular learning theory so-called socioculturalism (Vygotsky, 1978). In this gaze, learning is defined as a social event initiated from interactions between an individual with the environment. The interactions committed by someone will furnish him with some input of knowledge which is later on mentally processed in mind to generate a new conception. This is the most logical and comprehensive account of learning since it stresses the interpersonal

and intrapersonal dimension engaged as long as learning takes place.

Following the concept brought by Vygotsky (1978), Liddicoat et al. (2003) propose the notion of learning and its relation to culture. It is that learning refers to the process of constructing knowledge and making meanings going on through both intra-individual and inter-individual dimension. The first dimension indicates the processes of reorganizing, reconstructing, and interpreting information in that these processes are carried out mentally with the engagement of previously related knowledge. The second dimension refers to the condition in which knowledge construction is also conditioned and mediated on the basis of social context. The sense of social context here represents cultural, historical, and institutional settings. When viewed from the most comprehensive and logical notions of learning as proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Liddicoat (2003), it is clear that learning also takes place under the cultural convention which is later on processed mentally.

### **The View of Culture in Foreign Language Learning**

In the specific issue as regards the cultural element in foreign language learning, such as English in Indonesia, it can be seen from how the issue of culture is placed and made functional in the circle of EFL as in line with the notions reviewed by Kramsch (2013) in association with how culture is theoretically viewed and constructed. In her review, she presents two popular perspectives namely modernist and post-modernist. In modernist perspective, culture is viewed from two concepts, humanistic and pragmatic. The former calls culture with the term big C in that culture is the products of literacy found in schools, or it refers to common knowledge of literature and arts. The later, the pragmatic concept exists along with the

emergence of communicative competence issue in language learning. Culture is then called by the term little c in that it is viewed as the ways native speakers have in behaving, eating, talking, dwelling, and dealing with their customs, beliefs and values.

By virtue of the unrealistic goal of learning the second or foreign language in accordance with the modernist paradigm, there follows a post-modernist perspective of discerning culture in tandem with the emergence of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Here, culture is viewed as discourse and identity. As discourse, culture represents a social semiotic construction. During interaction, culture is dynamic, constructed, and reconstructed. Between two persons who are interacting, the culture (the framework of how people live their lives, see also Scarino & Liddicoat (2009)) which they bring will be integrated using their awareness to construct their third culture, the one which is in accord with the interrelatedness of home cultures from both. The other view is stressed on culture as identity. It means that even though the two persons who are interacting are trying to find their third culture, they still have critical awareness of their own home culture so that they still maintain their identities respectively.

The view of culture in foreign or second language learning as portrayed by Kramsch (2013) above matches the nature of today's students who are intercultural in their communication and multicultural as human beings. That view of culture can be considered the most relevant conception in dealing with the 21<sup>st</sup> century education. Implicitly, if grounded to the concept of foreign or second language learning, such as EFL education in Indonesia, the teaching principles should be intercultural to meet the students' nature.

### **Interculturality in Language Learning**

Interculturality depicts a condition of the encounter between two or more people from different cultural backgrounds and otherness (Dervin, Gajardo, & Lavanchy, 2011). Therefore, if linked to the context of communication, interculturality refers to the communication or interaction committed by two or more speakers who are originally derived from different cultures including values, practice, perspectives, the way of living, and thoughts. During interaction, these people will be fluctuating in using their own and other cultural sources to maintain their communication. They will then innovate and adapt their cultural concept to others' (Young & Sercombe, 2010).

In the context of language learning, the foundation of interculturality is actually not to assist students to master perfect linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, but it is to facilitate students to be intercultural speakers who are able to maintain the communication with people from different cultures and to avoid stereotype conflicts without having to totally change their own identities (Hua, 2014). Referring back to the essence of interculturality in language learning, in line with the aforementioned stream postulated by Hua (2014), there has been proposed a pack of competences so-called intercultural communicative competence by Byram et al. (1997). This set of competences is actually an innovation made after reviewing the previous one namely communicative competence.

For intercultural communicative competence, Byram et al. (1997) propose several prominent elements which students have to master in order that they can communicate interculturally. Those elements refer to linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence. Especially for intercultural competence, there are five sub-competences that underlie

interculturality. They refer to: 1) *Savoir être* involving attitudes of curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and beliefs about one's own, 2) *Savoirs* including knowledge of social groups and their products as well as practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction, 3) *Savoir comprendre* encompassing the skills of interpreting and relating or an ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own, 4) *Savoir apprendre/faire* (skills of discovery and interaction) referring to an ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction, and 5) *Savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) representing an ability to evaluate critically and based on explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

The intercultural communicative competence is considered to be the most convenient goal of teaching and learning a foreign or second language, such as English in Indonesia, rather than targeting students to capably speak the learned language like the native speakers. It is because ICC supports students to be intercultural speakers who still hold their own home culture and identity although they are communicating with people from other cultures and identities. They do not need to totally change their cultures and identities as ones the native speakers of the learnt language have. What students need to do in dealing with intercultural communication in the perspective of intercultural communicative competence is to find the third culture that matches their own and other cultures without changing their identities but being capable of

maintaining the communication and solving the stereotype conflicts during communication.

## METHOD

This study focused on qualitatively investigating Indonesian EFL teachers' conceptualization of culture in EFL learning as to deal with the nature of today's students and the stream of the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL education in Indonesia. This study engaged three purposively and carefully selected Indonesian EFL teachers who had various teaching experiences, and they were in the progress of completing their graduate study at English education major. As related to their teaching experiences and academic competence or efficacy at English education major, they were considered appropriate to be the participants of this study since they were sufficiently familiar with this study issue in order to share the required information in this study. The data of this study were garnered from distributing open-ended questionnaires to the teachers, and interview was further conducted to probe and pursue the related and relevant data for reaching the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data as well as for reducing the bias. The data obtained in this study were then analyzed through exerting Miles, Huberman, & Saldana's (2014) interactive model of analysis which consisted of data collection, data condensation, data displays, and drawing or verifying conclusion

## DISCUSSION

In this study, the conceptualization of culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL learning was viewed from a range of aspects which were shared by the three Indonesian EFL teachers involved in this study. Those aspects extend to how culture is defined; how language is

defined; how culture relates to language; how the learning concept is as well as its relatedness to culture; how culture is viewed in EFL learning; and how interculturality is discerned in EFL learning.

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How Language is Defined**

From the questionnaire and interview data, the three teachers conceptualized the same notion of culture in that culture referred to the way of living had by people including their beliefs, knowledge, values, norms, verbal and non-verbal behavior, and convention. In addition, the teachers also proposed that culture could also obviously be represented in the form of discourse found in English communication.

The notion of culture conceptualized by the three teachers in this finding is in line with that found in the existing literature such as the pieces of literature produced by Byram et al. (1997); Kramsch (2013); Liddicoat et al. (2003); Scarino & Liddicoat (2009).

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How Language is Defined**

The three teachers also proposed the same concept of language in that it was defined as a social tool used to produce, convey, and interpret meanings in communication. The symbols found in language were indeed arbitrary but highly cultural since they were used within a particular convention of intelligibility had by a group of people. On the other hand, such convention might not be prevailing to other groups.

This conceptualization basically aligns with the fundamental notion of language as proposed by Halliday (2009).

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How Culture Relates to Language**

Concerning with the relationship between culture and language, there was some information conceptualized by the teachers. According to teacher 1:

*"Language is always used on the basis of culture because the production, conveyance, and interpretation of meanings by a language user occur on the basis of his cultural value. In addition, the convention of using a language also refers to the framework of culture prevailing to a group of people".*

The key point which was emphasized in this concept was that culture lied to be the framework anytime language was used. Furthermore, in line with the previous conception, teacher 2 mentioned: *"the reality of culture is shown by using language, and language becomes the symbol of culture"*. From the data obtained, additional relevant information was found in that both teacher 2 and teacher 3 shared the other information that language in use mediated culture, and it mediated people to convey their perception and interpretation. Both perception and interpretation *per se* were made on the basis of culture.

In association with their conceptions, the three teachers perceived that it was needed to always integrate culture anytime EFL learning is undertaken.

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How the Learning Concept is as well as Its Relatedness to Culture**

From the obtained data, it could be summarized that the three teachers proposed their conception with respect to learning which stated that learning was the process of constructing knowledge based on social contexts. This knowledge construction was then mentally processed. Inasmuch as the social contexts prevailing in the learning process were cultural, automatically learning also happened within the circle of culture.

The concept of learning in this sense fundamentally emerges in accord with the theory of socioculturalism as postulated by Vygotsky (1978) and also followed by Scarino & Liddicoat (2009). Anchored in this theory, It can be seen from the emphasis whereby learning occurs in two dimensions, inter-individual and intra-individual processes. Inter-individually, learning takes place from interacting with environment such as materials, people, teachers, and etc. Subsequently, from interaction, the learned information will be constructed and reconstructed intra-individually or within the students' minds with reorganizing their previously related knowledge towards the new learned information so that they can come up with novel conceptions.

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How Culture is Viewed in EFL Learning**

In viewing culture in the context of EFL learning, the three teachers shared similar conception stressed on the thought that culture should be initially incorporated since the beginning either being made for the learning materials or constructed in the communication system. For instance, teacher 1 exemplified:

*"In learning English, we can administer the class to be like this example. Students are given an English text telling about a learning convention had by Japanese students. After reading the text, students are demanded to tell the text content, to compare Japanese students' learning convention from their own learning convention, and to explore their related opinions."*

Another example was provided by teacher 2. She said:

*"In K13 curriculum as implemented nowadays, it is so obvious that culture is integrated into learning materials. There are several characters and behaviors portrayed in the students' books*

*facilitated by the government. In this case these characters represent the variety of cultures from the way of either communicating or behaving. Other than incorporating culture into the learning materials, culture also works on the communicative dimension. With the instances indicating a variety of cultures people have, students are needed to understand the differences and communicatively describe those differences."*

The instances of culture integrated on the dimensions of learning materials and communication system as exemplified by teacher 1 and teacher 2 actually come up almost in line with the notion of culture as knowledge and discourse as explained by Scarino & Liddicoat (2009). For incorporating culture into the learning materials, it is noticeable that the displayed instances have been appropriately conceptualized.

However, for the dimension of communication system there is found some incomplete understanding if anchored in how culture in the existing literature is viewed. The view of culture in learning English as a second or foreign language in the literature is directed to the encounter and communication with people from different cultures so that the essential sense of cultural view is emphasized on the intercultural encounter (Byram et al., 1997). As exemplified by these teachers, the view of culture in communication system looks incomplete in that the view only takes the examples of intercultural knowledge, where the students are asked for understanding, comparing, and explaining their own and other cultures. However, this skill has not been sufficient for maintaining interculturality in communication because students also need more skills like developing intercultural attitude, the skill of



relating and interpreting, and the critical awareness in facing different cultures.

Furthermore, teacher 1 and teacher 2 have the same additional argument emphasized on that despite being intercultural in the learning materials and communication system, the target of learning English especially for linguistic competence should be on the basis of English native speakers' competence. Although this target is impossible to completely be achieved by students, at least students can eventually use English like the native speakers.

On the other hand, teacher 3 shared a different conception about the view in connection with native-speakerism vs. non-native-speakerism. He explained:

*"Targeting students to be capable of using English as good as English native speakers' linguistic competence is not a kind of target which students should have. This goal is not obvious since the second or foreign language speakers cannot use English exactly like the native speakers. Mastering the total English native speakers' competences will lead students to change their identities in communication as well."*

To be discerned, the conceptualization as proposed by teacher 1 and teacher 2 centralizes on the issue (in spite of being intercultural in communication system, students' English linguistic competence should be targeted on the native speakers' competence) referring to modernist paradigm or essentialist perspective in viewing culture. This conception actually goes contrarily in one point with their previous ideas about the importance and the relatedness of culture in language use in that language is always used within the cultural framework. Although such conception is only delimited on one area, linguistic competence, it is still not an achievable target. Students who are foreign or second language speakers in fact can

never use English like native speakers (Seidlhofer, 2001).

Another essence which should be considered is that if students' English linguistic competence at some point should be targeted on that of the native speakers, the next problem will lead to be questioning which native speakers that can be the proper models of learning English. Even within one English speaking country such as America, there are so many accents used by the native speakers. Then, which accent will be the proper model? Subsequently, within one English language community, every individual has his/her own idiolect. Hence, which idiolect can be the appropriate model? Such criticisms have also ever been questioned by Byram et al. (1997) so that they eventually underlie a notion stating that native-speakerism is not proper to be the target of learning English even merely for linguistic competence.

What should be ideally promoted to be the target of learning English are the principles and competences of being intercultural English speakers or users. Something unique but important to be considered about native-speakerism versus intercultural speakers as the target of learning English is that if the competence of English native speakers which is assigned to be the goal of learning English (where in fact students will never be able to achieve it), it means that the English learning process will never be able to be said successful. In this finding, it is noticeable that teacher 3 has shared his conception which represents the sense of being English intercultural speakers as the target of EFL learning.

### **EFL Teachers' Conceptualization of How Interculturality is Discerned in EFL Learning**

Regarding the issue of interculturality in EFL learning, the three teachers shared the same conception that interculturality was

important since it could maintain students' own home culture and identities as Indonesians. The interaction stimulated in EFL learning should integrate the discourse of the students' culture and other learned cultures. This approach of EFL learning also met the nature of today's students as the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation in that they dealt with extensive communication through social media in their days. They met a lot of people from different cultures and communicated with them in social media.

Furthermore, Teacher 1 added:

*"Guiding students to be able to behave interculturally in communication is also of importance to avoid stereotype conflict during English communication."*

The conception of interculturality in English learning as proposed by the three teachers is almost totally in line with how interculturality is viewed in the existing literature. However, rather than teacher 3 who has conceptualized the entire notion of interculturality, teacher 1 and teacher 2 still keep their stance that although the system and the process of English communication in learning need to be intercultural, the English linguistic competence which should be targeted is still on the basis of English native speakers' competence. It is different from teacher 3 in which he conceptualizes that even the English linguistic competence that students should be targeted on should not be anchored in the English native speakers' competence since this standpoint will be contrary to the notion of interculturality. Such standpoint will also not be achievable. Teacher 3 stays in the total and pure intercultural stance of EFL learning whereby what students should achieve is not to linguistically be like English native speakers but obviously be English intercultural speakers who master the intercultural principles or competences in using English.

As to discuss further, in the real practice of EFL learning in the classroom, if

the notion of interculturality is seriously addressed and dealt with, the existent nature of interculturality in fact has even paved the way for designing an interesting, qualified, and meaningful learning which encourages the acquisition of students' intercultural competence. For instance, it is such the study conducted by Kusumaningputri & Widodo (2018) on promoting Indonesian university students' critical intercultural awareness in tertiary EAL classrooms through the use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks. In their study, they made avail themselves of the importance of interculturality in EFL learning which was inevitable *in situ* by supporting an EFL learning process which was targeted on the mastery of intercultural communicative competence. In their study, they also made use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks to trigger students to enhance their intercultural communicative competence. As a short portrayal of their study, they engaged 66 tertiary English students majoring at mostly English literature who enrolled in a critical reading course at one of the universities in east Java as their study participants. Their study was conducted qualitatively, and the participants were assigned a range of tasks such as collecting from the internet some culture-based photos depicting the people's ways of living from Anglophone/non-Anglophone countries as well as from Indonesia as the discussion resources; assigning the participants to seek a variety of differences between the culture-based selected photos of foreign people and those of Indonesian people; and tasking the participants to explore their critical cultural awareness and intercultural competence through answering a number of leading questions formulated to trigger students' culture-related views *vis-a-vis* the selected photos. In brief, their study resulted in a portrayal of EFL learning which was very

interesting whereby the students (the participants) seemed to really experience the process of widening their cultural views, through the communication mediated by English language, towards various cultural phenomena that were different from their own cultural values. The participants were allowed to practice how to discern a cultural phenomenon from others or outsiders' perspectives, and they were also led to practically maintain their own cultural identities beyond dealing with the broad-minded views pertinent to a variety of cultural differences.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century of EFL education, whereby this era does justice to the growing nature of English language which is not merely the language or its native speakers instead of the world language whose users are the world people derived from a wide range of diverse cultures, the status and the view of English language as well as the representing cultures beyond the English users *per se* have shaped into one language (English) and multiple cultures (the cultures of the English users originally derived from inner, outer, and expanding circle countries). Thus, the continuum of one language along with multiple cultures becomes the ideal depiction as well as the basis in undertaking EFL learning. This continuum paves the way for creating and reaching meaningful EFL learning. Appertaining to the issue of meaningful EFL learning, a study conducted by some Indonesian EFL researchers, Morganna, Sumardi, & Tarjana (2018), on the major issue delving into two different paradigms of EFL learning orienting to the portrayals of culture in Indonesian EFL learning paradigms, has revealed, depicted, and supported the essence of one language alongside multiple cultures as the appropriate continuum of EFL learning in Indonesia.

As the implication, a set of meaningful knowledge can be learned from the present

study in which the ways the EFL teachers conceptualize culture in the context of English use and EFL learning will potentially determine the quality and meaningfulness of EFL learning they provide to students. Since a language is always cultural, a practice of EFL learning can be considered qualified and meaningful if it addresses the culture-related views of English use within the notion of English as the world language, or in the other term, English as the world lingua franca as the present stance of English language which does justice to the aforementioned continuum, *one language alongside multiple cultures*, and which is admitted by the world citizens in this 21<sup>st</sup> century

## CONCLUSION

In overall elements utilized to dig the conceptualization of culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL learning from Indonesian EFL teachers' thoughts, it can be concluded that culture refers to the way of living had by people including their beliefs, knowledge, values, norms, verbal and non-verbal behavior, and convention. In communication, culture is represented as the discourse. Culture is the framework of language use since language is defined as a social semiotic to create, convey, and interpret meanings in that these processes occur in accordance with the speakers' culture. Culture also underlines the learning process since learning, the knowledge construction, takes place inter-individually and then is processed intra-individually. The inter-individual process is centralized on the interaction with environment students commit, and the intra-individual one is centralized on reorganizing new information to the existing mind concept students have. These processes are entirely cultural. In EFL learning, the view of culture is focused on the communication or the encounter of

people from different cultures so that culture is viewed from the issue of interculturality. Concerning with interculturality, there is one teacher who conceptualizes the complete notion of interculturality which is in line with the existing literature. However, other teachers share the importance and needs of interculturality in EFL learning but make an exception to the linguistic competence in that they argue that in learning English students' linguistic competence should be on the basis of English native speakers'. Such exception goes out of the existing literature for the discussion of interculturality in foreign language learning.

In overall, this study is only delimited on the teachers' conceptualization regarding culture in EFL learning. Further studies are expected and recommended to be carried out in the realm of how cultural conceptualization in EFL learning can be more applicable and practical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century EFL classrooms in Indonesia.

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