DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN INFORMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: PHOTOVOICE-BASED COLLABORATIVE-REFLECTION TASKS

MENGEMBANGKAN KOMPETENSI KOMUNIKASI LINTAS BUDAYA MAHASISWA DI LINGKUNGAN BELAJAR INFORMAL: TUGAS REFLEKSI KOLABORASI BERBASIS PHOTOVOICE

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Abstract

Although much research on the use of photovoice for learning purposes in a higher education context has been well-documented for decades, literature rarely indicate that photovoice has been used as a learning tool to develop intercultural communicative competence particularly in an informal learning environment. To fill this void, this paper reports how photovoice-mediated collaborative-reflection tasks help university students engaged in intercultural learning and develop their intercultural communicative competence. This narrative case study revealed that intercultural communicative competence was detected between the groups (A & B): attitude of curiosity and openness, knowledge of self and other, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. However, critical cultural awareness and attitude of curiosity and openness appeared frequently within both groups. The implication of this study informs the need for applying photovoice-based collaborative reflection in order to develop students' intercultural communicative competence in informal learning environment.

Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence, photovoice, collaborative reflection

Abstrak

Meskipun banyak penelitian tentang penggunaan photovoice untuk tujuan pembelajaran dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi telah didokumentasikan dengan baik selama beberapa dekade, literatur jarang menunjukkan bahwa photovoice telah digunakan sebagai alat pembelajaran untuk

mengembangkan kompetensi komunikatif antar budaya khususnya dalam lingkungan belajar informal. Untuk mengisi kekosongan ini, karya ilmiah ini melaporkan bagaimana tugas refleksi kolaboratif yang dimediasi photovoice membantu mahasiswa terlibat dalam pembelajaran antar budaya dan mengembangkan kompetensi komunikatif antar budaya mereka. Studi kasus naratif ini mengungkapkan bahwa kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya terdeteksi diantara kelompok (A & B): sikap ingin tahu dan keterbukaan, pengetahuan tentang diri dan orang lain, keterampilan menafsirkan dan menghubungkan, keterampilan menemukan dan berinteraksi, dan kesadaran budaya kritis. Namun, kesadaran budaya kritis dan sikap ingin tahu dan keterbukaan paling banyak muncul dalam kedua kelompok. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menginformasikan perlunya menerapkan refleksi kolaboratif berbasis photovoice untuk mengembangkan kompetensi komunikatif antar budaya mahasiswa dalam lingkungan belajar informal. Rekomendasi untuk penelitian di masa depan memerlukan studi yang lebih naturalistik dan tujuan yang lebih spesifik dari kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya.

Kata kunci: Kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya, photovoice, refleksi kolaboratif

Introduction

Informal learning tends to be uniquely personal to each learner, adjusting to each learner's personal reality, encouragement, past knowledge, curiosity, beliefs, and funds of knowledge (Behrendt & Matchmes, 2016). Additionally, Braund and Reiss (2006) identified four pivotal aspects unique to learning at informal venues: emotional reactions, unforgettable moments, access to uncommon materials, and a challenge to formal learning norms. In intercultural learning context, informal learning such as field trip would allow students to record micro and macro sociocultural realities (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). In this respect, the learners are likely to experience positive or negative interculturality. Alred, Byram & Fleming (2003) argue that in an educational context both formal and informal, intercultural experience can be both stress-free and frustrating. It can be stress-free if individuals are open to the world of others, but it can be frustrating if individuals are challenged with customary modes of perception, thought and feeling (Alred, Byram & Fleming, 2003).

A study conducted by Murtiningsih (2016) found that Indonesian students' layers of signification on South Korean culture are not in harmony as a result of cultural shocks with the ways in which South Korean students maintain their own distinctive values. Further, she states that Indonesian students pursuing degrees in South Korea encountered cultural shock since their relations are instilled with negative prejudices and stereotypes and a mindless attitude. To cope with this difficult situation, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is required. ICC involves multicultural knowledge, linguistic competence, communicative competence, personal attitudes, self-awareness, and knowing others' values and norms (Baker, 2016). Kusumaningputri & Widodo (2018) views that intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills, which scaffold students to navigate, examine, connect, scrutinize, and evaluate cultural realities portrayed

through social practices and artifacts from multiple standpoints are centre of ICC. With this in mind, ICC requires students to be able to reflect on occurring socio-cultural phenomena. Hagar (2015) argues that reflective knowledge embraces learning about and contemplating cultural differences and similarities. In line with this idea, Kramsch (1993) noted that teachers and learners are impossible to obtain the wanted or desired knowledge of underlying cultural aspects that affect communication without the reflective component. Two studies conducted by Menard-Warwick (2008, 2009) on teaching EFL with native and non-native teachers of English both domestically and abroad found experiences shared by teachers serves as modeling for students and promotes reflection leading to metacognitive awareness of cultural beliefs, although they took place through different approaches. Findings also informed that student's reflection encourage the improvement of interculturality and assists them to get ready for interaction with other cultural groups.

To equip students with ICC, photovoice-based collaborative-reflection task is a powerful tool to utilize. Turk, Fapohunda, & Zoucha (2015) acknowledge that photovoice empower participant to be displayed within his or her cultural context and can be used to investigate cultural beliefs in an intercultural environment. For example, Rania, Migliorini, Rebora & Cardiani (2014) employed photovoice technique to increase critical dialogue concerning intercultural integration and identified that students showed positive attitudes, addressed an openness towards others and feelings of equality. Turk, Fapohunda, & Zoucha (2015) used photovoice to investigate the impact of cultural beliefs on eating and physical activity of Nigerian immigrants in the United States. The study found that photovoice as an effective methodology for making a sense of their experiences in a deeper fashion. Bromfield & Desyillas (2017) explored personal values, social work values, and value conflicts or tensions through photovoice to increase female Muslim's self-awareness. The study revealed that students were able to thoughtfully and meaningfully link between intersecting identities and issues around power in the context of their families, culture, and social work profession.

Informed by this empirical evidence, this study aims to investigate how photovoice-mediated collaborative-reflection tasks as intercultural learning platform can develop university students' intercultural communicative competence in the context of informal learning.

Research Methods

A qualitative approach was used in this study to examine naturally-occurring phenomena situated in the field trip. A case study design was employed to investigate how photovoice-based collaborative-reflection task is used to record their intercultural experience during field trip to develop their intercultural competence. Prior to the study, the students took intercultural communication course and conducted intercultural communication project

through digital photography with various cultural topics such as social interaction, family life, cultural events between eastern and western country. They have got basic knowledge in the field of intercultural communication through visual methodology. For this reason, there is a call for investigating intercultural learning to develop their intercultural communicative competence in the context informal learning called field trip.

A field trip is the university-based curriculums conducted in informal setting in which students study or even conduct mini research in real environment to explore knowledge about particular topic related to their study program. In this respect, the students were required to explore culture in several cultural-based destinations. The students had to demonstrate their ability to function efficiently within their own as well as other cultures and engaged in meaningful and successful interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds through their own language (Byram, 1997). 19 students (17 females and 2 males ranging from 20 to 22 years old) participated in this study. They were divided into four groups (A, B, C, D) to reflect collaboratively on assigned cultural topics.

In this study, photovoice was used as a learning platform to mediate collaborative reflection. At the outset, photovoice methodology was introduced by discussing basic techniques of photography and ethical aspects of photovoice. In the second step, students had two days for photo session. In this respect, each group took photo they consider best represent the topic. Each group was asked to select three pictures they considered most interesting and meaningful. They engaged in discussion to interpret and make a sense on those selected photos. Next, each group began to reflect on the selected photos to promote deeper and more critical dialogues. For this reason, they were guided using "SHOWeD" analysis (Wang, Yi, Tao, Carovano 1998) which comprises five questions: What do you see here? What's really Happening here? How does this relate to our lives? Why does this problem or this strength exist? What can we Do about this?. Finally, each group publicizes their findings in seminar attended by their friends and faculty members.

In this photovoice-based collaborative reflection tasks, three photos taken from two groups (A: 2 photos and B: 1 photo) were selected because these two groups met deadline in completing the project required by faculty. In addition, their photovoices were selected by taking into account structures of the photovoice, the collaborative reflection on intercultural learning experiences; and the originality of photovoice. Data of the study gained from groups' reflective journal. To analyze the data, the reflective journals were color-coded based on five categories of voice: knowledge of self and other, attitudes of openness and curiosity, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. The lexical items such as phrases and clauses representing five categories were italicized and typed in bold or coded to

indicate the frequent patterns of the emerging themes and were vividly recounted.

Results and Discussion

Finding 1: The Development of Group's Attitude, Knowledge, and Critical Cultural Awareness
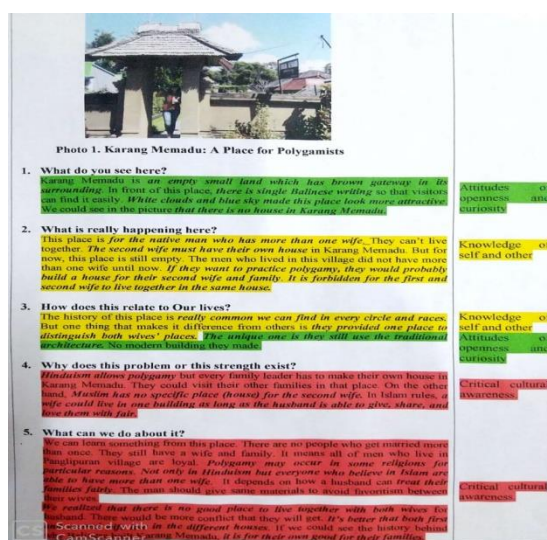

Figure 1. Group's (A) Photovoice at Karang Memadu

Grounded in this photovoice, the group showed their attitudes towards this place. The group was impressed by the uniqueness of this place because they still keep traditionally-oriented buildings. Additionally, through observation process they were able to describe this place. Observing activity indicated their curiosity regarding the place and informed their readiness to learn new things from this place. Deardorff (2009) identified attitude as the fundamental aspects in any model of Intercultural Competence. In addition, Hagar (2018) views attitudes are the foundational competency which include curiosity and discovery, openness, and respect.

This picture also portrayed group's knowledge regarding specific social groups, products and practices as well as the process of interaction. The group know what native men have to do if they practice polygamy such as building a house for his second wife in Karang Memadu as because the first and second wife are not allowed to live together in the same house. This specific knowledge was gained during interview with community leader. Hagar (2018) argues that the next competency after attitude is the knowledge of specific cultural values, beliefs, norms and practices which serves as the foundational competency.

This photovoice also informs how critical cultural awareness is shaped during the collaborative reflection. Informed by religion perspective, the group was able to evaluate the social practice of polygamy. They discussed the issue of polygamy in Hinduism and Islam context that polygamy is allowed but with some

requirements. One of the requirements in Hindu particularly in Panglipuran is a husband must make a house in Karang Memadu. The group viewed that the practice is quite different in Islam where the second wife is not required to stay in the different house as long as the husband can act fairly. The groups never think before that polygamy existed in Hinduism. Suryani (2016) stated that polygamy is allowed in Hinduism (Krensa Brahmacari) for several reasons: the wife was not able to give birth, the wife had serious illness, and the wife gave permission. Additionally, they never think that there is a particular place for those who have more than one wife (polygamy). In this respect, intercultural communication competence emphasizes the changing of personal belief about the environment through making sense of the distinct characteristics of one's own and others' cultures (Triandis, 1977). This cognitive process of intercultural communicative competence provides an opportunity for the individual to develop an awareness of cultural dynamics and to discern multiple identities in order to maintain a state of multicultural coexistence (Chen, 1996).

Finding 2: The Development of Attitude, Skills of Interpreting and Relating, and Critical Cultural Awareness


Figure 2. Group's Photovoice at Panglipuran Village

As seen in this photovoice, the group showed positive attitudes toward this place. They were impressed with the natural aspect and traditional art. They were also interested with the people who still use traditional materials such as bamboo for their house. This evidence informs that the group was curious to learn new things from this place. In this respect, Bennett (2009) defines curiosity as a sense of wonder. Another positive attitude the group exhibit was that people in Panglipuran are really easy to talk with and children bow when they meet older people. For this reason, the group (as teacher candidate) informs the values (respect other, not saying taboo words to other) need to be taught to their students later. Openness is also expressed by the group that keeping environment clean is wise and good behavior to apply in their village although it is still uncommon. In this respect, Deardorff (2009) states that attitude entails respect (valuing other cultures), openness (withholding judgement) and discovery (tolerating ambiguity).

This photovoice also displayed group's critical cultural awareness as the group was able to identify and interpret the values embedded in the target culture (Byram, 1997). In this respect, the group considered that difference does not indicate negative things. They view that difference is unique or positive. The group are also more aware on the importance of keeping environment clean and learning the values of their own village. Based on their perspective, keeping environment clean not only make the place more interesting but also keep environment health and safety.

The group also showed their skill of interpreting and relating this place with other. As seen in this photovoice, the group rarely finds extremely clean and fresh places as well as traditional buildings outside this place. Indirectly, the groups also inform that keeping the places always clean is part of their religion. The group compared this cultural issue (cleanness) in Islam where cleanliness is part of faith. Jamil (2009) states that cleanliness and purity are principles which play pivotal role in Islamic Teachings.

Finding 3: The Development of Knowledge of self and other, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness
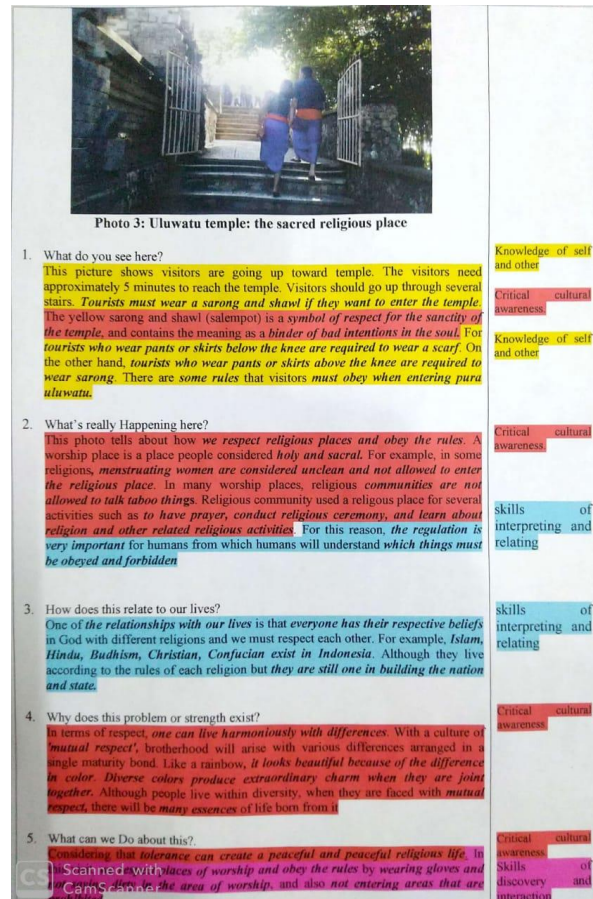
Figure 3. Group's Photovoice about Uluwatu Temple

Drawing on photovoice 3, group (B) show their intercultural knowledge regarding specific social group and their practices in Uluwatu. They inform that visitors must wear a sarong and shawl if they want to enter the temple. Visitors who wear pants or skirts below the knee are required to wear a scarf and for those who wear pants or skirts above the knee, they are required to wear sarong. The knowledge of this social group and practices gained by multiple ways (observation and information from tour guide) informed the important role of cultural knowledge to build intercultural competent. Lussier (2007) argued that intercultural knowledge is a fundamental element required for intercultural skills and attitudes. Cultural knowledge [. . .] provides an important kind of information upon which the behavior of people from the other culture can be understood (i.e., accurately interpreted and predicted)" (Wiseman, Hammer, & Nishida, 1989, p. 351).

Critical cultural awareness was expressed by the group as they were able to identify the values embedded in the clothes (sarong and shawl) as they are symbols of respect for the sanctity of the temple which contains the meaning as

a binder of bad attentions in the soul. In this respect, they are aware to obey the rules required to enter Uluwate temple. They argue that a worship place is a place people considered holy and sacred. For this reason, they compare that in some religions, for menstruating women are not allowed to enter religious places such as in Islam and also visitors are forbidden to talk taboo things. Guterman, Metha, Gibbs (2007) argued that deep-seated cultural codes prevent menstruating women from entering religious places, handling or reading holy texts, participating in religious or auspicious gatherings or assuming positions of authority in religious institutions. The group view that people can live harmoniously within diversity. The group view that diversity is positive rather than negative. They use metaphor of a rainbow which looks beautiful because of the difference in color. The diverse colors can produce extraordinary charm when they unite. In other word, a mutual respect can create the essences of life. For example, tolerance can create a peaceful and peaceful religious life. Banban (2018) argues that 'harmony is the feelings of cultural tolerance and cultural sharing, which include different faith system and cultural traditions, and peacefully coexisting in the same social space (p.1)'. In this respect, the ability to identify and interpret this value shows students' critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

The group was able to exhibit skills of interpreting and relating. Grounded from the students' lived experience in the target culture, they argue that regulation is very important to understand which things must be obeyed and forbidden. They connect this reality with their life that every people have their own beliefs in God and respecting each other is a must. They give examples how Islam, Hindu, Budhism, Christian, Confucian exist in Indonesia. Although they live according to the rules of each religion but they are still one in building the nation and state. In this case, the group did not centralize themselves as they were able to respect otherness. In this respect, Hoff (2014) argues that decentralizing of the self, the border between self and other is likely breaking rules, allowing mutual respect and understanding to be flourished.

The skills of discovery and interaction was also detected in the group because the group gained new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the group was to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (Byram, 1997). Informed by group's site visit, observation and information from the tour guide, the group had knowledge regarding the rules in Uluwatu temple and they used this knowledge to respect and obey the rules in real-time interaction. They wore shawl, did not say taboo words, and did not enter restricted area during site visit.

Conclusion

This paper has given evidence the potential of photovoice as a learning platform to develop university students' intercultural communicative competence in the context of informal learning. For this reason, teachers are

suggested to promote students-centered learning such as collaborative reflection which is able to gain deeper understanding about socio-cultural phenomena occurred in their own residence or other residence. Additionally, teachers can utilize photovoice-mediated collaborative reflection to promote critical thinking as a passport for critical intercultural awareness. Teachers are expected to optimize students' learning on a field trip as it provides students a myriad of opportunities for intercultural learning. Future researchers are recommended to conduct more naturalistic study and focus on one aspect of intercultural communicative competence to deeply understand how students' ICC is shaped in an informal learning environment.

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