On Becoming Cultural-Insiders/Old-timers of the Mainstream English Cultures: Lessons from Southern Taiwanese EFL Pre-service Teachers

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Abstract

The increasing diversity in today's classrooms in the global world mandates pre-service teachers to be well prepared to effectively teach their future students with different backgrounds. One key element to successful diversity education for many teachers is being able to relate to their culturally and linguistically diverse students. The purpose of the study is to examine EFL pre-service teachers' cultural competence in order to identify effective strategies which they used to become cultural insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures in an EFL context. A mixed methods research approach was used to explore this topic of inquiry. Seven graduate students, enrolled at Methods of Teaching English in an EFL course in Southern Taiwan agreed to answer two mixed data collection instruments. The first instrument, the Cultural Competence Inventory (CCI), was designed to predict participants' cultural competence stages. The second instrument, the Interview Protocol for Cultural Competence (IPCC), assisted the researchers in underpinning the different intercultural learning strategies that participants used to move from lower cultural competence stage to the higher one(s) and what kinds of challenges they faced to become old-timers of mainstream English cultures. Findings suggested that participants were still at the second stage of cultural competence of Ekiaka & Reeves's (2010) cultural competence scale which included six levels. Further mixed data analysis revealed not only the different strategies participants are currently using to overcome the dark side of the cultural responsiveness stage, but also the importance of English media as a pivotal intercultural learning tool aimed at strengthening their developmental process of intercultural sensitivity. Practical recommendations for creating culturally responsiveness classrooms in an EFL context are concluded.

Keywords: cultural-insiders, mainstream English culture, cultural competence, English language media, cultural responsiveness

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1. Introduction

In the English language teaching (ELT) profession in the United States of America, non-native English speaking teachers have taught alongside native English speaking teachers for many years. However, the commonly accepted view deeply embedded in many educational institutions and language pedagogy has been that non-native English speaking teachers are second in knowledge and performance to native speaking teachers (Canagarajah, 1999).

The authority of native English speaking teachers is accepted as the norm in the United States and other English speaking countries (Canagarajah, 1999) regardless of their cultural responsiveness and competence development. According to Banks (2008) and Haberman (1996), the lack of responsiveness skills means that those teachers will not be able to effectively foster culturally responsive teaching practices in their respective classrooms.

Although the majority of English language teachers worldwide are non-native English- speakers, no research was conducted on these teachers until recently. After the pioneering work of Medgyes (1992, 1994) and Phillipson (1992), regarding non-native English speaking teachers' status and claims of credibility within the ELT profession, nearly a decade elapsed before more research emerged on the issues relating to non-native English-speaking teachers. Braine (1999) and Llurda's (2005) books on non-native educators in ELT appear to have encouraged a number of scholars to research this issue, with topics ranging from teachers' perceptions of their own identity to students' views and aspects of teacher education.

It is not difficult for an informed reader of ESL/EFL (English as a second language/English as a foreign language) teacher education literature to detect the recent research emphasizing non-native English-speaking teachers.

Most studies have focused on the professional English language teachers' attributes, keeping an absolute silence on the developmental process of becoming culturally competent non-native English teachers. In reality, becoming culturally competent non-native English teachers is a long and arduous intercultural learning process that starts at younger ages.

In fact, the majority of non-native English teachers are bilingual/multilingual individuals or become bilinguals by the end of their professional training. Most of them learned English as their second, third or fourth languages in EFL contexts while others went through the same process in ESL contexts. To succeed in their current positions, they should become old-timers of mainstream cultures since they cannot teach what they do not know (Howard, 2006).

The absence of a substantive-level cultural competence framework on non-native English teachers in EFL settings may be intrinsically related to the use of short-range cultural competence developmental models for non-native English-speaking teachers in teacher education. In consequence, many conventional EFL teacher education programs do not rely on proven cultural competence framework in their quest for preparing culturally competent EFL teachers who might be considered as cultural insiders of mainstream English cultures.

One alternative or complementary remedy to short-range cultural competence development consists of exploring non-native English-speaking teachers' intercultural learning experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this research consisted of exploring the process that EFL pre-service teachers in Taiwan have experienced to become cultural insiders/old-timers of the mainstream English cultures in the era of global interdependence through the examination of the following research questions: What is cultural competence as perceived by EFL pre-service teachers?

A concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design was used. This study involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compared the two databases to determine if there were convergence, differences, or combination. Quantitative data were collected from seven EFL pre-service teachers, enrolled at a Southern Taiwan University teacher education program, using the Cultural Competence Inventory Questionnaire aimed at predicting participants' cultural competence development. Qualitative data was collected from the sample using the narrative approach (Ginsburg's approach).

It explored participants' processes, contexts, conditions and strategies of progressively moving from the periphery toward the center of their target cultures (English) while strengthening their heritage culture old-timer status in Southern Taiwan.

In this research, cultural competence is defined as the capacity to function effectively (culturally and cognitively) in applied settings among diverse populations (Adams, 1995).

Certainly, the answers to our research questions evoke professional awareness, spark interest, stimulate thoughts, and disseminate information, knowledge and skills needed to prepare culturally competent EFL teachers regardless of the challenges they faced in EFL settings. To help our readers understand the structure of this research, in the next section, we are going to provide a theoretical overview of cultural competence before offering a brief description of research subjects and methods. The presentation of research findings, conclusions and implications/recommendations will immediately follow.

2. Review of Literature

Cultural competence is currently a crucial topic in teacher education given classroom innovation and diversity around the world. In ELT, the majority of teachers are non-native English-speaking teachers. However, EFL teacher educators are facing the daunting task of preparing future teachers to be effective with diverse students. The discussion below provides a broader overview of the notion of cultural competence.

2.1 Definitions of Cultural Competence

Research in cultural competence (Campinha-Bacote, 2003) suggests that only a few individuals on the earth were born with cultural competence; the rest of human beings should put considerable effort into developing it. This means each individual should assess his/her own biases and prejudices, develop cross-cultural skills, search for role models, and spend much quality time interacting with people from culturally different backgrounds who share a passion for cultural competence development.

The term multicultural competence surfaced first in mental health education after the publication of the psychologists Ivey & Pedersen (1993), and ten years before the cultural competence construct became popular.

Therefore, most definitions of cultural competence shared by teacher educators come from the healthcare industry.

Giving the lack of a solid cultural competence theoretical framework in the teacher education field, the researchers of this study are going to refer to the nursing education frame to broaden our readers' notion of cultural competence development in teacher education.

In fact, a review of research literature on cultural competence can be confusing. To clear some conceptual misunderstandings, we are going to distinguish the construct of cultural competence from other related concepts. The idea of more effective cross-cultural capabilities is captured in many terms which are similar to cultural competence. Cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity convey the idea of improving cross-cultural capacity, but they differ from each other.

Cultural knowledge refers to some level of familiarization with selected general and specific cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems, and behaviors of members of another ethnic group (Adams, 1995). It is a process of discovering sound educational grounding concerning the worldview of the clients' culture (Campinha-Bacote, 1999). This knowledge might be achieved on one hand through literature review of life ways, folkways, worldview, religious beliefs, communication/linguistic patterns, cultural proximity and boundaries, child-rearing and child-bearing, interpersonal relationships, visible and invisible values, nutritional practices, traditions and customs, pop culture, family dynamics, etc., for another through direct and indirect cultural encounters with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Stated differently, cultural knowledge can be defined as the process of gathering general and specific information about other cultural groups in order to plan how to approach them, to establish trust and to anticipate some boundaries when interacting systematically with people from different cultural backgrounds and information that the outsider might consider important when meeting people from other ethnic groups for the first time (Adams, 1995)

Cultural awareness consists of developing broader and deeper understanding of another ethnic group. This usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values. Awareness and sensitivity also refer to the qualities of openness and flexibility that people develop in relation to others.

Cultural awareness must be supplemented with cultural knowledge (Adams, 1995). It is an intentional, cognitive learning process in which the outsider becomes appreciative and sensitive to the values, beliefs, practices, life ways, and problem-solving strategies of clients' cultures (Campinha-Bacote, 1999). Cultural sensitivity refers to the process of knowing that cultural differences and similarities exist, without assigning values, i.e. better or worse, right or wrong, to those cultural differences (Adams, 1995).

The aforementioned conceptual clarification is very important for our readers to be aware of the conceptual divergence not only in teacher education but also in health care. In nursing education research, most authors agree that cultural competence refers to an ongoing process in which the healthcare professional continuously strives to achieve the ability and availability to effectively work within the cultural context of clients. It consists of acquiring the cultural knowledge, understanding, and awareness and developing the required cultural skills, behaviors and desire which will allow healthcare providers to offer acceptable service. Enhancement of cultural competence involves a permanent effort of accepting and respecting differences and not letting individual beliefs have an undue influence on those whose worldviews are different from ours. It includes having culture-specific as well as general cultural information about clients (Campinha-Bacote, 2003, Purnell, 2000) and developing a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a cultural desire system or agency that will enable professionals to succeed working and living in a variety of cross-cultural settings.

Operationally defined, cultural competence development is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate settings to produce better outcomes. Certainly, without the development of cultural desire system or agency, the cultural competence developmental process will provoke only superficial consciousness changes, but not deep ones. Cultural desire can be understood as pivotal motivational and spiritual sources that lead professionals to be engaged in ongoing cultural competence formation. Campinha-Bacote (2003) agreed that cultural desire conveys true meaning to cultural competence development. It enables people to adjust to others in diverse settings. To convey true cultural desire, words and actions must be congruent with true feelings.

From the aforementioned conceptual frame, the researchers understand that cultural competence enhancement is a developmental process that involves in an extended period. Both individuals and organizations are at various levels of cultural knowledge, sensitivity, awareness and skills continuum. It is a logical outcome of positive socio-cultural exchanges within a diverse society or organizations at different levels. Certainly, it yields to the development of a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together as cultural desire agency system which enables professionals who are constantly interacting with people from diverse cultural background to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Enhancement of cultural competence requires that individuals and organizations have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable them to adapt to people from other cultural groups.

The above postulates can be applied to any individual deeply involved in diversity exchanges within a pluralistic society. In the United States, recently schools have been involved in increasing diversity exchanges, which mandate teachers, principals and staff to focus on competence enhancement to ensure racially and culturally integrated school-communities.

In the teacher education field, cultural competence enhancement has been considered the first prerequisite of culturally responsive teaching for diverse classrooms. Banks, (1998) and Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002) view teacher's cultural competence enhancement as the process of becoming a cultural insider and old-timer of diverse students' cultures. It implies that teachers should move from their general or specific cultural knowledge of classrooms and cultural periphery to pass as like-native or native of their targeted culture(s). Becoming a committed cultural insider means acquiring a cultural desire agency system through cultural literature, pop culture, unconscious intercultural exchanges, and conscious participation as an apprentice in a community of practice. So far, we might argue that cultural competence is intrinsically related to emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Teachers with high emotional intelligence are most helpful in classrooms since their beliefs and behaviors are guided by an ethic of care (Noddings, 1999).

Recent models of apprenticeship and cultural skills acquisition (Lantolf, 1999; Lave & Wenger; 1991; Wenger, 1998) suggest that becoming a committed cultural insider is a conscious and unconscious learning process.

Learning takes place in tacit and indirect ways, as an individual becomes a member of a community of practice, moving from the position of outsider to one of insider. Simply put, becoming a committed cultural insider cannot be fully achieved through formal and decontextualized cultural learning in classrooms, laboratories and surface intercultural learning activities, such as field trips, field experiences, etc. According to Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), participants should recognize their legitimate peripheral participations within the communities of practice. In fact, legitimate peripheral participations provide a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers. In this process, apprentices become gradually skilled until they finally become competent masters and full members.

In other words, learning becomes a subordinate aspect of a process of participation as the apprentice evolves towards becoming a full insider member. This includes the creation of new identities which cannot be achieved, argued by Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), if the acquisition of cultural skills as an informal tacit learning is taken out of its natural social context and cultivated in schools or laboratories as decontextualized mental skills or operations.

Moreover, taking into account the historical state of interethnic relations and giving the subtractive nature of many structured ESL programs in the United States, becoming a committed cultural insider and old-timer of another ethnic group might look like being a member of a counter-cultural group where achievement of the insiderness status is negotiated and earned through sacrifices or committed actions. These might include: the achievement of expressive life styles as markers of identity and belonging; advocacy for community's core values-based system; development of aesthetic and emotional communion aspects of belonging in a community; definition of alternative reality construction or legitimation with new values that are worth living for; strict internal loyalty/solidarity and discipline as a way of life and the acceptation of the community leadership into the new reality (Hundeide, 2003).

From Bank's (1998) insiderness assumptions and Lave & Wenger (1991) & Wenger's (1998) community of practice perspective, learning English as a second language is the natural gateway for English Language learners to become committed cultural insiders and old-timers. As Campano (2007) stated, non-native English-speaking students' route of developing their bilingual-bicultural competences from their current oppressive ecological systems (Ogbu, 1987) is quite complex, and it involves plenty of internal and external identity affirmation challenges.

Of course, K-12 or college English language learners' developmental processes of becoming cultural insiders differs from that of monolingual students or bilingual students who studied English in ESL or EFL contexts. According to Cunningham-Anderson & Anderson (2004), bilingual students who learned English in an ESL context had a unique chance to acquire both languages and cultures in a way that is not possible for those who meet their second language and culture later in life as adults. As bilinguals, they have the opportunities to access the richness of two cultures and become linguistically and culturally competent professionals, with the better of the two worlds. They are especially favored and privileged. However, as agreed by Cunningham-Anderson & Anderson (2004), the presence of two languages may well give them some troubles at all levels of language and culture learning and may yield to frustration and failed communication in the first and second language.

From Ogbu's (1987) notion of ecological systems, we might infer that bilingual-bicultural non-native English-speaking learners from families who do not speak English at home have to face the challenges of being considered different. In the United States, for example, talking a language other than English in public places will attract attention, and the risk of being stereotyped is high. Through years of internal and external struggles, non-native English- speaking students learn how to cope with both languages and cultures. However, they might feel the lack of facility in their first language and culture while they are progressing in their second language and culture learning.

From this framework, we can make a case that the ultimate goal of cultural competence enhancement consists of becoming a committed cultural insider and old-timer. For some English language learners in an ESL context, becoming a committed cultural insider and old-timer means developing a cultural desire to fit into both cultures. This is one of the pivotal motivational and spiritual sources for K-12 English language learners. They are motivated to learn appropriate behavior of their second culture while reinforcing their original identity (Cummins, 1986). They want to fit in and be like everybody else, particularly when they are with their friends. They are willing to learn new patterns of mainstream culture in order to earn societal approval. To do so, they should make huge efforts to move from the periphery of their second culture to become old-timers (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002).

Research in bicultural competence enhancement (Corson, 1993; Cummins, 1986, 1989; Ferdman, 1990; May, 2007) pointed out that achieving cultural competence in both cultures is a long venture involving knowledge of social behaviors, traditions, customs, religions, beliefs, food and drink, hospitality, dressing codes, communication styles, gender roles, etc. Claims have been sometimes made by some bilingualism-biculturalism skeptics (Grosjean, 1984; Saville-Troike, 1982); it is quite rare to find a fully balanced bilingual-bicultural person highlighting the dominance of one language and culture over another. Based on recent research in multicultural settings (Cummins, 1986; Cunningham-Anderson & Anderson, 2004; Grosjean, 1984; May, 2007), we would contend that bilingual-bicultural learners'/teachers' cultural desire to fit into both cultures as natives plays an important role in their developmental processes in the ESL context. The cultural desire of fitting into both cultures motivates them to work on the congruity of their words and actions with their true inner feelings.

One of the basic criteria indicating English language learners' bicultural competence achievements consists of assessing their native-like feeling in both cultures and their linguistic fluencies in both languages at the beginning of their adulthood. In other words, achieving cultural competence in both cultures means being able to feel and pass as natives of more than one culture or country, therefore demonstrating that they have a common background and shared experiences with natives. This is what being a native of a particular culture is all about (Cunningham-Anderson & Anderson, 2004).

In our daily practices, we have been lucky to interact with many non-native English- speaking teachers who grew up with two languages in an ESL context. In fact, most bilingual- bicultural learners wish to feel and behave as insiders in their first and second cultures. It is not easy to achieve this upper level of intercultural learning from the bottom. In an ESL context, second language and culture learning success depends on students' capacity to overcome not only structural racism and discrimination, but also the assimilative educational philosophy (Banks, 2008; Howard, 2006, Koppelman, 2008; Nieto & Bode, 2011; Spring, 2007; Valli, 1995) deeply embedded in our society and the majority of school districts.

Research evidence in bilingual learners and intercultural communication (Cummins, 1989; Kim, 2001; May, 2007) suggests that K-12 bilingual learners or non-native English- speaking learners who grew up with two languages and cultures are more likely to complete their bilingual-bicultural competence enhancement by the end of their high school years. Consequently, they are more likely to reach language proficiency in both languages (Cunningham-Anderson & Anderson, 2004; Lindholm & Aclan, 1991) and be academically successful learners within predominantly white educational institutions. This conclusion is strongly supported by Corson (1993, 1998), Cummins (1986, 1989, 1996), and Ferdman (1990) when they argued that widespread school failure does not occur in minority groups that are positively oriented toward both their own and the dominant culture, that do not perceive themselves as inferiors to the dominant group, and that are not alienated from their own cultural values.

As we stated above, the road of ELT students to be cultural insiders and old-timers in the United States and worldwide is not easy. It comprises several sociocultural and cognitive developmental stages from childhood to adulthood. Without any doubt, it goes beyond implicit and explicit structured ELL programs' cultural competence developmental models. In the next segment, we will explore some cultural competence models widely used in many teacher education programs in the United States.

2.2 Models of Cultural Competence Development in Teacher Education Programs

A review of research literature on models of cultural competence in teacher education programs (Colombo, 2007; Gallavan, 1998; Gay, 2002; Hill-Jackson, 2007; Howard, 2006; Ladson – Billings, 2000; Noel, 2008; Sleeter, 2001; Van Hook, 2000; Wiggins, 2007) suggests an apparent lack of a genuine framework for non-native English-speaking pre-service teachers' cultural competence development. Given the aforementioned theoretical shortage, we are invited to explore some applied cultural competence frames in other professional areas such as nursing education.

In nursing education two cultural competence models have been widely used: the volcano and Purnell models. The volcano model (Campinha-Bacote, 1991) represents symbolically the process of cultural competence development.

When cultural desire erupts, it gives forth the desire to enter into the process of becoming culturally competent by genuinely seeking cultural encounters, being involved in an ongoing intercultural learning, conducting culturally sensitive assessments and being humble to the process of cultural awareness. Given the complexities of ethnicity and culture, the Purnell model (Purnell, 2000) for cultural competence and its accompanying organizing framework provides a systematic and comprehensive format for assessing important variables as values, beliefs, life ways, practices of diverse individuals, families, groups, etc. It was originally designed as an assessment tool for nurses to determine if they are consciously competent, unconsciously incompetent, consciously incompetent or unconsciously competent to work clinically under diverse settings. Both models are complementary in nursing education.

In the ESL teaching field, it is widely known that English language learners have low academic performance in schools. The cultural gap between English language learners and the majority of ESL teachers in the United Stated is growing every day (Banks, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2004). The culture of the majority of ESL teachers contrasts with the culture of the ESL students population. This realization, from Noddings' (1999) ethic of caring, is important because what teachers say, perceive, believe, and think can support or impact students. Beliefs influence how teachers may teach and how they understand students' cultural competence development. This disconnect and cultural dissonance negatively impact English language learners' academic performance.

To reduce English language learners' and other minorities' low academic performance, Banks (1998) asks teacher educators to identify pre-service teachers who are able to acquire knowledge, skills and perspectives needed to become insiders within the communities they teach. Correspondingly, other scholars argue that native English-speaking pre-service teachers have the necessary cultural knowledge (Hill-Jackson, 2007; Howard, 2006), but they lack culturally responsive competence (Gallavan, 1998).

To increase native English-speaking pre-service teachers' cultural competence, teacher education programs are prompting a variety of formal diversity courses and field experiences.

A review of literature on preparing teachers for diverse classrooms (Banks; 1998; Colombo, 2007; Gallavan, 1998; Gay, 2002; Hill-Jackson, 2007; Howard, 2006; Ladson – Billings, 2000; Noel, 2008; Sleeter, 2001; Van Hook, 2000; Wiggins, 2007) shows that several models of pre-service teachers' cultural competence development have been proposed. An analysis of these models demonstrates that emerging research on preparing native English speaking pre-service teachers to be culturally responsive teachers for diverse students is raising the pedagogical issue of how to enable white pre-service teachers to become culturally competent responsive teachers and able to interact with and teach students from cultures different from their own.

As a result, a number of teacher educators have proposed programs that will prepare students for working with diverse populations. Many programs include: early and restructured field experiences, tutoring and mentoring, ethnic literature analysis (free reading and journal), self-esteem examination through autobiography, situated critical pedagogies, returning to the classroom of the experts, anti-racist teacher education, cultural simulation and games, pop culture analysis, immersion experience, etc. (Colombo, 2007; Hill-Jackson, 2007; Ladson- Billings, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Wiggins, 2007).

To move forward, we have analyzed four different models of cultural competence. The models are conceptualization based on multiple theories and research from racial/cultural identity, anthropology, intercultural communication, ethnic and curriculum studies. The chart and discussion below connects Hill-Jackson's three-dimensional stages of native English-speaking pre-service students' cultural competence shift to Helms' (1994) racial ego identity stages, Bennett's (1986, 1993) Intercultural sensitivity enhancement stages and Banks' (2008) levels of multicultural curriculum integration (see Table 1).

Table 1: Relationship between Hill-Jackson, Helms, Bennett and Banks levels of Cultural Competences

Stages	Hill - Jackson	Helms	Bennett	Banks
1	Unconscious	Contact level	Ethnocentric orientation	Contribution and additive curricula
2	Responsive	Disintegration and re-integration	Denial, defense, isolation, separation, minimization, surface acceptance	Additive and transformation methods
3	Critical consciousness	Pseudo-independence	Ethno relativism orientation, adaptation – integration marginal	Social action

Hill-Jackson's (2007) research on multicultural perspectives among native English-speaking (white) pre-service teachers identifies three stages of cultural competence shifting: the unconscious stage; the responsive stage and the critical consciousness stage. These stages are also known as cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and the cultural sensitivity levels (Adams, 1995). The stages are the very first multicultural exchanges adventure steps experienced by many encapsulated monocultural (Banks, 2008) pre-service teachers.

3. Methodology

The participants were seven EFL pre-service teachers from a university of science & technology in Southern Taiwan. Two participants were male, while five were female. A concurrent triangulation mixed methods research design was used. That is, quantitative data was collected using a self-administered survey instrument that was developed by the primary author of this paper (Ekiaka Nzai, 2009). A copy of the survey is included in Appendix. The survey instrument attempted to measure participants' perceptions of their cultural competence. Concurrently, qualitative data was collected from those pre-service teachers' biographical narratives and interviews. The aim of the interview was to explore participants' process, contexts, conditions and strategies of progressively moving from the periphery toward the center of their target cultures (English) while strengthening their heritage culture old-timer status. Data gathered from survey instrument was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 package.

Quantitative results were reviewed, along with patterns found in the qualitative analysis for emergent themes.

4. Findings

The findings are summarized and addressed in three themes, which are cultural responsiveness stage, challenges and strategies in order to answer the research question of this study. The first theme was identified based on survey results while the second and third themes were identified based on interview data.

4.1 Cultural Responsiveness Stage

Survey results suggested that participants were still at the second stage of cultural competence (cultural responsiveness stage) that was defined by Ekiaka & Reeves' (2010) six-level cultural competence scale (stage 1: unconscious stage; stage 2: responsive stage; stage 3: critical consciousness stage; stage 4: functional fitness stage; stage 5: psychological health; stage 6: intercultural identity stage). Ekiaka & Reeves' blue print for cultural competence development for non-native English speaking students is depicted in the Figure 1.
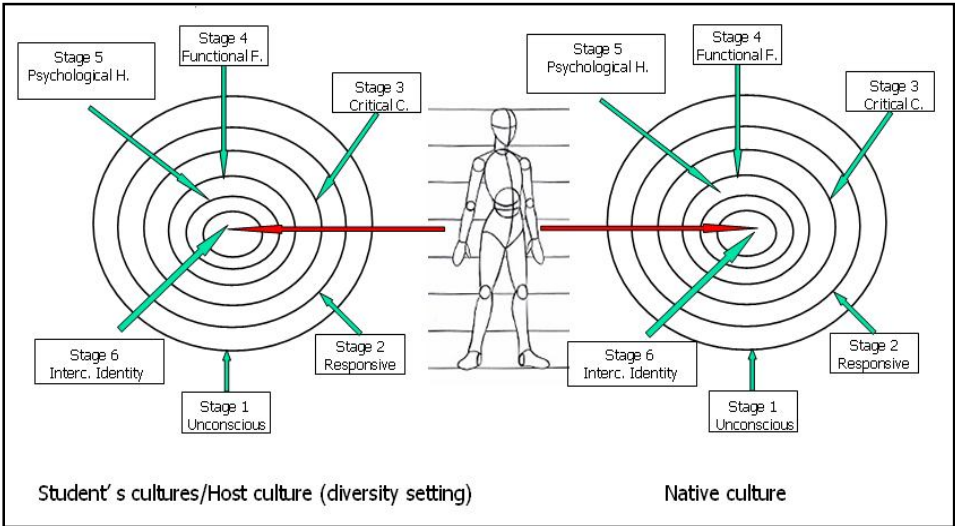
Figure 1. Ekiaka & Reeves' Blue Print for Cultural Competence Development for Non-Native English Speaking Students
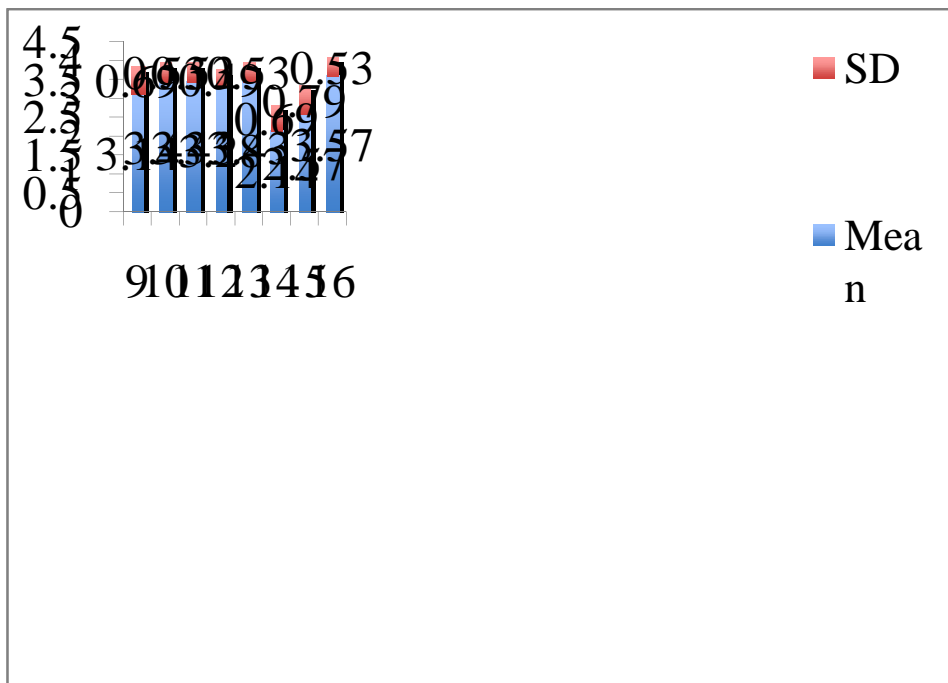
Figure 2. Mean and SD of Participants at the Cultural Responsiveness Stage

Figure 2 shows the mean and standard deviation (SD) of seven participants at the second stage of cultural competence (cultural responsiveness stage). Specifically, items 9 – 16 on the survey describe the cultural responsiveness stage. Most EFL pre-service teachers strongly agreed or agreed that becoming truly bilingual-bicultural will increase innovation productivity and is enriching their life (item 16, *M*=3.57, *SD*=.53), they are interested in daily experiences of a variety of social groups within their society and not only their own culture (item 10, *M*=3.43, *SD*=.53), becoming a cultural insider of mainstream English cultures is important for a future EFL teacher (item 11, *M*=3.43, *SD*=.53), they are excited to learn abut other people from culturally different background from mainstream English cultures (item 13, *M*=3.43, *SD*=.53), they are curious when interacting with people from a variety of ethnic groups of mainstream English cultures (item 12, *M*=3.28, *SD*=.49), and they are interested in other minority group form mainstream English speaking cultures' experiences of daily life, particularly those things not usually presented to outsiders through media (item 9, *M*=3.14, *SD*=.69). In addition, items 14 and 15 were negatively worded questions.

Participants agreed or disagreed that they do not experience mixed feelings, emotional confusion and/or inferiority complex when interacting with dominant groups from mainstream English cultures (item 15, *M*=2.57, *SD*=.79) and when interacting with others from mainstream English speaking cultures, they do not operate in terms of native English speakers and non-native English speakers (item 14, *M*=2.14, *SD*=.69).

4.2 Challenges

From face-to-face interviews participants discovered the top three challenges for becoming cultural insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures:

There was a lack of exposure to resources and environments of mainstream English cultures in Taiwan, resulting in having difficulties enhancing participants' depth of knowledge related to the target cultures. Simply textbook learning is finite, which cannot help them navigate the real world of the target cultures.

In addition, participants highlighted that one main challenge to cultural insiders was the impossibility of speaking native-like English, which made them feel like that they were the outsiders of mainstream English cultures. As noted by RP#2 during the interview:

I think that racial problems are one of the challenges. I went to the United States for a year. I sometimes feel that some people do not want to speak with you or pretend that they do not understand when your English is not good. At this time, I feel that I am an outsider or I am a foreigner in here.

The other challenge, as RP#3 pointed out, was that having basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) instead of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are a common challenge in ensuring her successful integration of mainstream English cultures. Her respondent remarked, "I believe that language barriers are a real challenge. I have the language ability for day-to-day conversation, but having academic or deep conversation is difficult for me due to academic vocabulary or slang."

4.3 Strategies

In view of the above challenges, interviewees identified three practical strategies which they used to become cultural insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures in an EFL context.

Having international experiences: All participants reported that they had international experiences such as traveling or studying abroad. Participants suggested that visiting the target lands in person helped them view things differently, have a more first-hand understanding of or gain new perspective on the mainstream English cultures, and master English cultural background knowledge. RP#1 expressed:

I went to England for nine months, and I found that there were stark differences in the perceptions and habits of greetings between people of Taiwan and England. A hug is a very common greeting in England; whereas it was recognized as peculiar behavior in Taiwan. When I came back to Taiwan, I hugged good friends regardless of male or female when we met. But other people may think that my behavior was too open. Those differences became a gap between cultural insiders and outsiders or caused me a hard time maintaining cultural insiders of my own.

Forming continuous and lasting connections: Forming connections and friendships with native English speakers provided participants with a perfect opportunity to practice and improve their foreign language, especially when they were in an EFL context. RP#2 explained "When I am in Taiwan, I make an effort to maintain my friendships with my host family or chat with my friends who were native English speakers from the states to practice my English. I also watch HBO or CNN to construct and refine knowledge of mainstream English cultures."

RP#4 also agreed that interacting with native English speakers in an EFL context helped her experience American cultures and see how Americans view their world. However, she further explained that individuals whom she interacted were not representative of the views of all Americans and mainstream culture and values rather it was just one of many regions, subcultures or generalizations. In addition, there is no precise definition for American culture because it is a diverse nation.

Using media and technology: Through the aid of media and technology, participants were able to see day-to-day life of and gain a nuance understanding of the mainstream English cultures, resulted in changing the outlook on the target culture. RP#3 emphasized the advantages of using media and the Internet for deep American cultural immersion.

Besides textbooks, I liked to watch TV, movies and drama to learn American culture. In Taiwan, media programs often targeted American cultures. Watching BBC is the only avenue to learn England culture.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

Survey results suggested that participants were still at the second stage of cultural competence (cultural responsiveness stage). Participants saw the advantages of becoming bilingual-cultural, were interested in community engagement and social interaction with diverse cultural groups, were aware of the importance of becoming cultural insiders of mainstream English cultures required for pre-service EFL teachers, and sought knowledge about diversity of mainstream English cultures from difference sources.

Many researchers (Hue & Kennedy, 2012; Su, 2011; Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, & Swain-Bradway, 2011) suggest that there is a need for teachers to develop intercultural sensitivity, increase cultural self-awareness about, and promote responsiveness to cultural and linguistic diversity because contemporary classrooms consist of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds. For example, Spinthourakis, Karatzia-Stavlioti, & Roussakis (2009) stated that intercultural sensitivity plays a critical role in preservice teachers' ability to deal with complex circumstances of today's education, "which is increasingly impacted and influenced by multiculturalism" (p.274). Later, Vincent et al. (2011) emphasized that "Becoming aware of one's own culture can increase one's understanding of the cultural relativity of the verbal and nonverbal behavior of others" (p.222), which is a key to create culturally responsive classrooms.

It is intriguing to find that participants in this study were not adequately knowledgeable about and confident with cultural differences (stage 3: critical consciousness stage), did not function effectively within mainstream English cultures and achieve native-like language proficiency in English (stage 4: functional fitness stage), were not able to cope with difficult situations when living in diverse cultures (stage 5: psychological health), and did not consider themselves as bicultural/multicultural or insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures (stage 6: intercultural identity stage).

In addition, participants related a lack of exposure to resources and environments of mainstream English cultures in an EFL context, nearly impossibility of becoming native-like English speakers as well as having BICS and stated that as the top three challenges in becoming cultural insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures.

To palliate the above problems or challenges, participants identified three practical strategies that they used to become cultural insiders/old-timers of mainstream English cultures in an EFL context: experience first-hand mainstream English cultures through having international experiences and forming continuous and lasting connections as well as experience second-hand mainstream English cultures through the use of media and technology.

Researchers (Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand, 2011; Soureshjani, 2011; Zhao, 2010) suggest that cultural background knowledge and mastery of language skills are strongly interrelated because culture and language are interwoven. As shown by Bakhtiarvand & Adinevand (2011), teaching English with target and international target culture materials enhanced EFL students' listening comprehension. Thus, in an EFL context, teachers should teach English, and simultaneously teach its culture.

6. Recommendations

In the light of survey and interview findings, the researchers formulated some recommendations in an effort to create culturally responsiveness classrooms in an EFL context.

First, in order for university EFL students to remain cultural insiders of the target cultures in an EFL context, systematic and intensive exposure to the mainstream English cultures is a key. RP#1 admitted:

Having a slow-paced life is one of the norms of English culture. When I was there, I already assimilated to their life, which I really enjoyed it. When I came back to Taiwan, in the beginning I still slowed down my life. However, as time progressed, I forgot to slow down because we lived a fast-paced life in Taiwan.

Second, intercultural training in university courses may lead to a desirable increase of intercultural sensitivity for future teachers. Yuen & Grossman (2009) highlighted the importance of effective intercultural education as the followings:

To shift student teachers from the Minimization stage towards acceptance of cultural differences and an integrated worldview orientation, intercultural teacher education programs need to introduce a more sophisticated cognitive framework to help students examine their own culture and explain it to others. In particular, attention should be given to preparing teachers for understanding cultural differences, ensuring access to appropriate information and creating the necessary space for reflection on the styles of upbringing, lifestyles, norms and values of different ethnic groups. (p.362)

Thirdly, one participant highlighted the need for special considerations to be taken into account when EFL teachers select course textbooks. The recommendation is similar to the experiences of Zhao (2010). That is, in EFL contexts, the majority of textbooks in the education market is grammar-centered with a great quantity of drill-and-practices and pays little attention to cultural context. Therefore, when it comes to choosing textbooks for EFL students, teachers should take cultural elements into account for the sake of fostering cross-cultural awareness. Finally, EFL teachers should help students develop western thinking patterns. Zhao (2010) explain that EFL students often unconsciously apply Chinese thinking patterns, resulted in having difficulties in English comprehension and communication. Thus, "English teachers have the responsibility to train our Chinese students to make reasonable and logical thinking at the English culture background through the patters of English thinking so that they'll acquire the ability to communicate in English" (Zhao, 2010, p.103).

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Appendix

Cultural Competences Inventory (Cci)

Date:
Gender:
Major:

Instructions: please respond to the following statements. Be really honest when reacting to each item. I encourage you to answer all items. However, if you think that you are not a bilingual- bicultural or multilingual - multicultural person or you are not on your road toward the enhancement of your bilingualism-biculturalism competences, please do not answer items 41 to 48. The questionnaire' scale is described below:

Strongly agree = 4   Agree = 3   Disagree = 2   Strongly disagree= 1

1. I am unaware of how physical, ethnic, cultural and racial features influence my judgments of other people.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

2. I do not pay attention to cultural and ethnic differences.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

3. I feel uncomfortable when I am around people who are culturally and racially different from me. I do not feel safe visiting them at their home.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

4. I am unaware of multiple realities of other ethnic and racial groups' experiences

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

5. I feel uncomfortable when my brother(s), sister(s), son(s), daughter(s), other relative(s) and friends are socializing with people from different racial, cultural and ethnic groups.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

6. So far, I am not familiar with cultural characteristics, history, visible and invisible values, belief systems and behaviors of other mainstream English cultures (For example, Americans, British, Australians).

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

7. I think that the world operates in certain ways and that I have no real impact on changing it through my awareness or participation in cultural diversity.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

8. I am not free of prejudice and stereotype towards dominant groups of mainstream English cultures
.
Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

9. I am interested in other minority group from mainstream English speaking cultures' experiences of daily life, particularly those things not usually presented to outsiders through media

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

10. I am also interested in the daily experiences of a variety of social groups within our society and not only my own culture.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

11. Becoming a cultural insider of mainstream English Cultures is important for a future EFL teacher

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

12. I am curious when interacting with people from a variety of ethnic groups of mainstream English cultures

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

13. I am excited to learn about other people from culturally different background from mainstream English cultures

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

14. When interacting with others from mainstream English speaking cultures, I don't operate in terms of native-English-speakers and non-native English speakers.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

15. I do not experience mixed feelings, emotional confusion and/or inferiority complex when interacting with dominant groups from mainstream English cultures.

 Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

16. I believe that becoming truly bilingual-bicultural will increase innovation, productivity and is enriching my life.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

17. I love and enjoy meeting people from different cultural background"

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

18. I know how to contact people from different cultural backgrounds and to engage in conversation and maintain a conversation with them

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

19. I understand how hegemonic privilege, ethnocentrism and gender oppression impacts not only human and interethnic relationships, but also diverse students' academic achievement

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

20. I know how to effectively respond to individuals who make prejudice/racial comments or display racist/discriminatory attitudes.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

21. I know how to resolve misunderstandings that arise from people's lack of awareness to the viewpoint of another culture.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

22. I am willing to examine the world and often do so by investigating it according to my living reality.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

23. I am confident and inquisitive to pursue important thinking and discussions while discovering newer socio-cultural foundations of understanding of myself and other ethnic groups from mainstream English cultures.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

24. I think, feel and believe that I can fit culturally and cognitively into another ethnic group from mainstream English cultures and be perceived as an insider and old-timer.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

25.I know how to discover information, visible and invisible core values and new cultural aspects of other ethnic groups from mainstream English cultures.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

26. I can work effectively on a cross - cultural team including people from mainstream cultures with any inferiority complex or ethnocentric attitudes

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

27. I have realized that I can understand other cultures by seeing things from a different point of view; therefore I can learn to construct and see the world through different eyes, through other ethnic group lenses from mainstream English cultures

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

28.I like/want/love to fit culturally and cognitively into multiple cultures (my native(s) and other culture(s) of the mainstream English cultures and be perceived as native, insider/old-timer or like-member. I want to be actively involve in social exchanges as native of mainstream English cultures

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

29.I can function in any mainstream English culture and professionally be competitive while reaffirming my heritage culture roots

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

30.I am capable of carrying out everyday life activities smoothly and feeling comfortable while working and living in a mainstream English culture without support of my heritage culture network

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

31. I have achieved the required cultural competences (***) to understand some mainstream English cultures' communication and value-based systems

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

32. I have achieved the required linguistic fluency and proficiency in English to be professionally competitive in a global word as EFL teacher

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

33. I used to make appropriated cognitive, affective and behavioral adjustments to specific situations to creatively and effectively appreciate the notion of "beauty" from some mainstream English cultures' perspective.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

34. I do not experience a negative self-image, low self-esteem and morale, social isolation, dissatisfaction with our society and a sense of being helpless when working and living within an ethnically dominant English speaking culture.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

35. I am able to cope with a range of reactions if I have to live in a different culture (euphoria, homesickness, cultural shock physical and mental discomfort, etc.) in order to overcome my own cultural encapsulation to make people from other cultures feel comfortable and happy in my presence.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

36. I am able to take on, to see the world and to respond to another individual from that person's cultural perspective.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

37. I seek out and maintain a lasting friendship relationship with people from mainstream English cultures

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

38. I would date a partner from a different race, culture or ethnic group

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

39. If I have a chance to get marry (again) or to choose my significant other (boyfriend, girlfriend, wife or husband), I would choose him/her from my own ethnic/racial group

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

40. I always seek out culturally competent models to learn from other ethnic groups in order to increase my cultural competences (***)

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

41. I consider myself as a bicultural or multi-cultural person (at least), an insider and old-timer of two or more cultures.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

42. I consider myself as a bi-lingual or multi-lingual (at least) person

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

43. As a bi-cultural person, I have developed a clear self-definition and definition of others from different cultural background that help me to connect to the humanity without being restricted by category of social grouping.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

44. As a bi-cultural person, I consider myself as a cultural border-jumper and see others on the basis of individual uniqueness rather than social stereotypes.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

45. As a bi-cultural person, I have developed a new consciousness of the universality of the human nature. I am committed to advocate core values of my primary and secondary reference groups.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

46. As a bi-cultural person, I feel a greater passion and compassion toward others who are from different cultural background, and locate the points of consensus and complementariness beyond the points of apparent differences.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

47. As a bilingual-bicultural person, I have discovered the new dimension of the beauty and I am appreciative to the notion of beauty from several ethnic/racial groups from mainstream English cultures.

Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree

48. As a bilingual - bicultural person, I am deeply rooted in both cultures without any kind of alienation. I am able to feel and pass as native of at least one mainstream English culture; therefore I have demonstrated having a common background and shared experiences (historical, socio-cultural, political, religious and aesthetic) with natives

 Strongly agree   Agree   disagree   strongly disagree
Note:
(***) Cultural competences: capacity to function effectively (culturally and cognitively) in applied settings among diverse populations.