



USING PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TO DEVELOP EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

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Abstract

This article reports an on-going research project dealing with intercultural issue that has conducted in the department of English education in a private university. In the framework of case study, this study attempts to describe how students were involved and shared their insights of intercultural learning in the classroom. Forty EFL pre-service teachers were recruited and involved in the current study. The data were drawn from the classroom observation. From the categorized data, critical incidents were captured and interpreted. The findings show the students' sense of intercultural awareness developed. It concludes this problem-based learning provides authentic and meaningful learning as the students were engaged in real-lives related projects of intercultural exchanges.

Keywords: *Intercultural awareness, intercultural exchange, problem-based learning*

Sari

Artikel ini merupakan sebagian laporan dari riset tentang kompetensi lintas budaya yang dilaksanakan di sebuah perguruan tinggi swasta di Cirebon-Indonesia. Dalam kerangka studi kasus, riset ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana mahasiswa calon guru terlibat dalam diskusi kasus lintas budaya yang diberikan di dalam kelas. Empat puluh mahasiswa calon guru bahasa Inggris direkrut dan terlibat dalam riset. Semua partisipan telah melalui dan memberikan persetujuan mereka untuk secara sukarela terlibat dalam proyek riset ini. Semua data dikumpulkan dari hasil observasi kelas dan hasilnya diinterpretasikan dari setiap critical incident yang muncul. Hasil riset menjelaskan bahwa kemampuan komunikasi lintas budaya mahasiswa semakin terbangun. Hasil ini berkesimpulan bahwa problem-based learning merupakan pembelajaran yang penuh kebermaknaan dan pembelajaran yang otentik yang membuat mahasiswa terlibat dalam



proyek-proyek yang menyentuh kehidupan langsung terkait dengan interaksi lintas budaya.

Kata kunci: *Kompetensi lintas budaya, pertukaran nilai budaya, problem-based learning*

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This study

Critical pedagogy has been an interesting issue in research for the last two decades (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2018). With this respect, teaching for critical thinking is challenging either teachers or students. In a response to this, problem-based learning (PBL) is considered as an effective learning strategy (Aslan, 2021). The studies show learning engagement that significantly contributes to students' learning outcomes (Tran, Admiraal, & Saab, 2020). Even though a number of studies have claimed effectiveness of PBL in promoting students' critical thinking, in fact, rarely do they describe how PBL enables activating students' creativities for being critical. Thus, this study aims as elaborating how PBL engages students in collaborative and critical points of view.

Methods

This study was conducted in an English education of a private university in West Java, Indonesia. Two classes running a project of intercultural communication were observed. With this respect, intercultural problem-based projects were introduced and discussed. The students were directed to enjoy cultural sensitive YouTube. All online videos were related to workplace contexts. The learning scenarios were (1) when the students completed watching videos, they were reporting the events, (2) discussing the cultural related issue arising in there, and (3) finding some solution to overcoming such misunderstanding appeared. In these ways, students were involved and participated not only in learning different workplace-related cultural events but also how to find some alternatives as solution and anticipation to happen. All critical incidents garnered from the observation were recorded and interpreted based on Byram (2012)' learner intercultural awareness.

Results and Discussion

In the first round of the activity which students directed to enjoy and make a report on the events of the video, the process presents students' comprehension of the workplace situation. The results show the students' intercultural awareness is getting developed I found out the students get involved in critical discussion in identifying utterances which are potential containing misunderstanding/ miscommunication issues during the the speech. Since the situated conversation (videos) were provided to the class by the teacher, she is responsible for making explanation of cultural dimensions ant their impacts on intercultural awareness and understanding. The class also discusses how such misunderstanding happens within the contexts of conversation in the workplaces.

It also shows that students' critical thinking against cultural issues is getting raised. In the framework of small group discussion, issues arose during the discussion are debated to conclude potential solution. When the students have no awareness about the issue at the first, they become more critical as they finally knew if the issue they debated is a kind of cultural point of view. Thus, in a group engagement has led to a conclusion that this way as an effective of learning (Phungsuk, Viriyavejakul, & Ratanaolarn, 2017) in order to promote critical cultural awareness.

At the final stage of the intercultural class, the students presented and discussed hot issues related to their findings of misunderstanding potentials during the workplace interaction. The findings reveal by doing so, the students learn how such cultural events differ from their local cultural events and pursue more understanding on them. The students show their motivation during group discussion has lead to an alert of being strong engagement within the group-collaborative project—identified as more meaningful way than individual learning (Aslan, 2021). The students' awareness and cross-cultural understanding successfully promote their horizon how to live better with their different cultural background around their citizenships.

Conclusion & recommendation

PBL as demonstrated in this study has suggested not only authentic but meaningful learning successfully implemented. The students' involvement either in critical discussion or English use as has shown how English is learned in contexts of varieties of worked based of cultures. The findings also reveal how the students were successfully engaged in real-lives related projects of intercultural exchanges. Thus, it recommends to look further how the interaction of PBL significantly earns an impact of intercultural awareness and English fluency.

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Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported.

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