

## **THE INTEGRATING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE INFUSED ENGLISH READING MATERIALS FOR 10TH-GRADE STUDENTS: A NEED ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract:** The educational sector is gaining significant interest in intercultural competency due to its potential to enhance students' global learning experiences and academic performance. In this study, a qualitative research being used is a needs analysis which aims investigate the existing learning materials of the needs of 10th-grade students in intercultural competence for English reading materials. The primary goal of this research is to analyze the English reading materials currently used by 10th-grade students and evaluate the extent to which they incorporate intercultural competence. In addition, the results of the need analysis show the gap between the current materials and intercultural competence. However, the result also found that students need teaching materials that contain intercultural values. These values are taken from international, national, and local cultures. Therefore, it indicates an urgency to integrate new English reading materials that promote intercultural materials to facilitate the needs of students.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Competence; English reading materials; need analysis

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### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a growing amount of literature that acknowledges the value of intercultural competency. However, comprehending context meaning without specialized cultural background information in the target language is an enormous task for EFL students (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). A lack of intercultural schemata caused the majority of reading comprehension issues since cultural competency and prior background knowledge play a vital role in a student's reading comprehension. (Yu and Van Maele 2018; Pritchard 1990; Liu 2015; Erten and Razi 2009; Alptekin 2006). Thus, integrating intercultural competence in English reading material for 10th grade students is required to overcome these obstacles.

The educational sector has recently indicated a great interest in intercultural competency due to its ability to allow students to explore the world through learning experiences while also increasing their academic achievement. Khataee & Dowlatabadi (2023) pioneered research on intercultural competence and found that incorporating cultural elements into language teaching can enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension and intercultural communication skills.

In another research, Lama (2020) conducted research that discovered the possibilities of learning English for the development of intercultural competence and to distinguish successful teaching methods for the development of this competence in higher education also to show that students need to acquire these competencies, so they can have the most effective communication with individuals from the cultures of English-speaking countries.

However, there are aspect that still needing, for instance, by the previous studies intercultural competence in English Language Teaching has been extensively studied. Unfortunately, less attention has been paid to the integrating intercultural competencies in reading skills for 10th grade students. Despite these early observation, the integration of intercultural competency through English Language Learning has remained unfocus to each skills in language learning

Byram (1997) defined intercultural competence (ICC) as "the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries in a foreign language". According to Byram (1997), ICC necessitates intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes in addition to language competence. Unfortunately, less attention has been paid to the intercultural competence-based English reading resources for 10th grade students. This research aims to contribute to the literature on intercultural competency in language education by analyzing existing English material for 10th grade students.

Incorporating intercultural competency into English reading materials can considerably help students understand and improve their overall learning experience. As a result, the goal of this study was to investigate the existing English reading materials used by 10th grade students and analyze the extent to which they consist of intercultural competency. The results of this investigation are projected to make an important impact to the production of English reading materials that respond to the needs of 10th grade students by adding intercultural competency into English reading material.

## METHOD

The present study employs needs analysis to investigate the existing learning materials of the needs of 10th-grade students in intercultural competence for English reading materials. According to Mehmet (2015), needs analysis is a crucial step in the research process before creating and assessing the lessons, materials, and syllabus. This study adopted the needs analysis to capture the gap between the existing English reading materials and the descriptors of intercultural competence. The result of the data will be the base for developing the learning materials. Further description of research design will be described in table 1.

**Table 1. Overview of the research design**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Research Question | 1. To what extent do the existing reading materials integrate with intercultural competence? |
| Data              | The existing of intercultural competence indicators  |
| Data Sources      | Textbook of 10 <sup>th</sup> grade   |
| Instruments       | Table checklist of humane education indicators   |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Analytical Concept | Michael Byram's (1997) components of intercultural competence<br>1. Knowledge (savoirs)<br>2. Skills (savoir comprendre)<br>3. Attitudes (savoir être)  |
| Data collection    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do a library search on intercultural competence theories, and reading learning materials.</li> <li>Collect 10th-grade English textbook</li> <li>Collect and identify recent curriculum</li> <li>Collect CEFR level for reading level B1</li> </ul> |

Moreover, Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence, this model based on five savoirs, is a crucial tool for foreign language didactics. It emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successful communication with diverse cultural backgrounds. Table 2 below presents Byram's (1997) factors of intercultural communication. In identifying whether intercultural competence has been integrated into existing materials or not, the researcher provided the table of indicators related with intercultural competence that will describe the result of the study. Table 3 shows descriptors that have been modified from (Velasquez, 2022).

**Table 2. Byram's Factors of Intercultural Communication**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <b>Skills</b><br>interpret and relate ( <i>savoir comprendre</i> )                              |  |
| <b>Knowledge</b><br>of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal ( <i>savoirs</i> ) | <b>Education</b><br>Political education critical cultural awareness ( <i>savoirs' engager</i> ) | <b>Attitudes</b><br>relativizing self valuing other ( <i>savoir être</i> ) |
|   | <b>Skills</b><br>Discover and/or interact ( <i>savoir apprendre/faire</i> )                     |  |

By looking at the Byram factor of intercultural competence, the researcher has identified the descriptor which was edited by Velasquez, 2022. Table 3 will show the descriptor of

intercultural competence to lead the analysis of the textbook being used by 10th-grade students in reading skills.

**Table 3 Descriptor of Intercultural Competence**

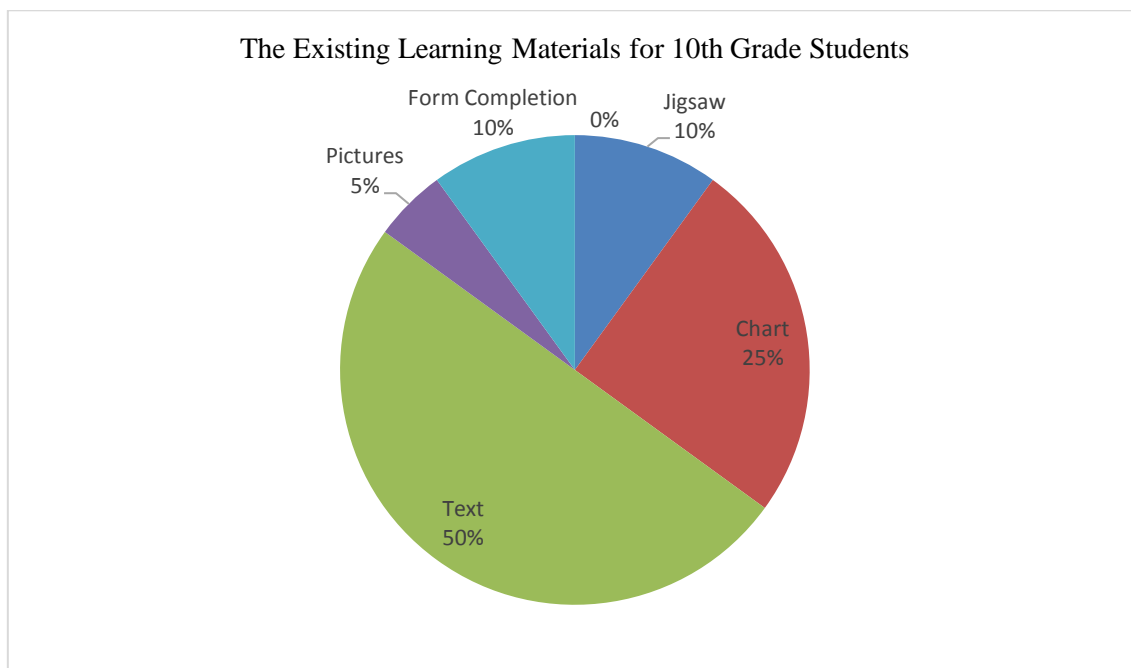
| Analytical concept   | Description   | Code |
|--|---|------|
| Knowledge (savoirs)<br><b>Historical background</b> (Byram, 1997)                          | This concept involves the knowledge of historical events (Velasquez, 2022)  | K1   |
| Knowledge (savoirs)<br><b>Awareness of cultural differences/similarities</b> (Byram, 1997) | This concept embraces knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country (Byram, 1997,p.35). | KA1  |
| Skills (savoir comprendre) of <b>relating</b> (Byram, 1997).                               | Byram (1997) defines this concept as the ability to relate documents or events from one's own (p. 52).  | S1   |
| Attitudes (savoir être) of <b>curiosity</b> (Byram, 1997)                                  | According to Byram (1997), these are attitudes "of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours" (p. 34).   | A1   |

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Through a needs analysis, this study aimed to gain insights into the development of intercultural competence-infused English reading materials for 10th-grade students. This section presents the research findings, including an analysis of existing learning materials based on intercultural competence descriptors. In addition, the researchers have analyzed textbook of 10th-grade students. The data shown in the figure 1 displays that from 15 chapters in the book, there are 20 learning object materials for reading skills have been identified. The most frequently used in reading skill is text which take 50% among the others. The second

position is chart (25%) followed by form completion and jigsaw which take 10% each materials. The last position is a picture (5%).

**Figure 1 The Existing Learning Materials for 10th Grade Students**



Meanwhile, Based on the analysis of the textbook used in the 10th-grade that applying K13 Curriculum, the researcher identified the intercultural competence indicators such as awareness of cultural differences/similarities (KA1) and historical background (KA1) in the topic. Therefore, this book mostly uses text to present the material for reading skills. Table 4 will show the topic of the text that incorporates intercultural competence in the textbook.

**Table 4 The Findings of the Result**

| Sources                         | Code | Topic   |
|---------------------------------|------|---|
| Textbook 10 <sup>th</sup> grade | KA1  | <b>Chapter 1 ‘Talking about self’</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Text 1 ‘An email from Hannah’</li> <li>- Text 2 ‘A letter from Saidah’ An email</li> </ul> |

|  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
|  | K1 | <p><b>Chapter 4 ‘Which One is Your Best Getaway?’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descriptive text ‘Taj Mahal’</li> <li>- Descriptive text ‘Tanjung Puting National Park’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chapter 5 ‘Let’s Visit Niagara Fall’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descriptive text ‘Visiting Niagara Falls’</li> </ul> <p>Chapter 9 ‘The Battle of Surabaya’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descriptive text ‘The Battle of Surabaya’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chapter 10 ‘B.J. Habibie’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descriptive text ‘B.J. Habibie’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chapter 11 ‘Cut Nyak Dhien’</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Descriptive text ‘Chut Nyak Dhien’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chapter 12 ‘Issumboshi’</b></p> |
|--|----|---|

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Narrative text 'Issumboshi'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chapter 13 'Malin Kundang'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Narrative text 'The Legend of Malin Kundang'</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|

This research focuses on the analysis of existing learning materials in an English reading course for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Based on the analysis of existing documents, it can be concluded that the English reading materials available for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are still inadequate. Textbook used in the English reading skills for 10th-grade students have the potential to incorporate more intercultural competence such as, historical background, awareness of cultural differences/similarities, relating, and curiosity.

Meanwhile, the textbook do not explicitly focus on intercultural competence, it offers a range of exercises that challenge students to apply intercultural competence. However, it may be beneficial to incorporate more intercultural competence scenarios in the future to further enhance students' intercultural competence.

The data shows that the majority of the materials in the textbook focus on only historical background and awareness of cultural differences/similarities even then it is slightly added in the materials. This indicates that the textbook may not fully develop the intercultural competence of the students. Therefore, it is recommended that future materials development incorporate more exercises and added materials that promote intercultural competence. This can enhance the overall effectiveness of the textbook and better prepare students for real-life situations that require intercultural competence.

## CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this research is to analyze the English reading materials currently used by 10th-grade students and evaluate the extent to which they incorporate intercultural competence. The result of this study showed that, through the investigation of the need analysis of intercultural competence in English reading material, the content being used in reading material still needs to be improved. There is still a lack of touch of intercultural competence in the English reading materials. Although, this study has given insight to the teacher and book developer to incorporate more intercultural competence in the materials, we can not deny the limitation of this study.

Unfortunately, this study only explores a few book sources from library research. Exploring more books and sources might have different views. Also, this research did not put the point of view of teachers and students in the need for intercultural competence in English reading material. For future research may consider using observation and interviews for teachers and students to digging the needs of the students in incorporating intercultural competence in English reading materials.

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