Cultural Sensitivity in English Language Teaching: Understanding and Addressing Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

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Abstract— Cultural sensitivity is essential for promoting effective communication and developing inclusive learning environments in the context of English language teaching (ELT). For this reason, this paper aims to determine the teacher's cultural sensitivity in ELT, particularly in understanding and addressing linguistic and cultural barriers that learners may encounter. It investigates how cultural differences influence language learning experiences, impacting communication styles, perceptions of language proficiency, and classroom dynamics. Also, it identifies key linguistic barriers such as pronunciation variations and grammatical structures that reflect cultural nuances. The researchers employed a mixed-methods methodology in order to determine the cultural sensitivity of ESL teachers. Thematic analysis was applied to identify the impact of teachers' intercultural awareness on the students in the qualitative data, while content analysis was used to analyze observational data in search of signs of culturally responsive teaching methods. Additionally, the researchers examined instructors' multicultural self-awareness of students' ethnic origins and summarized survey results using quantitative data under descriptive statistics. Consequently, the results revealed that students frequently have trouble adjusting to new learning environments, which has an effect on their motivation and conduct. Problems with pronunciation and comprehension are frequent and are made worse by group dynamics and cultural variations. These difficulties cause discord in the classroom and prevent pupils from giving their academics their best. Ultimately, this abstract underscore the importance of integrating cultural sensitivity into ELT pedagogy as a means to enhance language learning outcomes, promote mutual respect among learners from diverse backgrounds, and cultivate global citizenship skills necessary for navigating a multicultural world.

Keywords— ELT, ESL, Cultural sensitivity, pronunciation, pragmatics, language structure.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In all parts of the world, English is considered a common language. Despite being a foreign language, its significance is global. Most of the world's population speaks, reads, and understands English (Popescu, 2020). Furthermore, according to Brown (2017), communicating internationally involves communicating interculturally as well. In other words, language is a part of culture, and culture is a part of a language. The two are intricately interwoven, so one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture. This idea was also expressed by Baylan and Huntley (2019), who mentioned that "language and culture cannot exist independently; each is the shadow of the other to such an extent that language meaning can frequently be obscured if there is no recognition of cultural rules."

Consequently, in the realm of teaching, a teacher who views culture as an integral part of a syllabus, as Craves (2016) emphasizes, might incorporate into the instructional materials the development of awareness of the role culture plays in human interaction, how to understand and interpret the cultural aspects of language, and the development of skills in behaving and responding in culturally appropriate ways, in addition to knowledge of the target culture. Teachers play a major role in cultivating cultural sensitivity. They must facilitate an environment where students can explore cultural differences without compromising their own identities. To support this idea, Seidlhofer (2015) stated that cultural sensitivity in language learning promotes respect and empathy towards speakers of English as a second or foreign language. In culturally diverse classrooms, acknowledging and valuing the cultural backgrounds of learners contributes to a positive and inclusive learning environment, fostering a sense of belonging among students from different cultural backgrounds. Beyond mere language acquisition, the objective is to establish an atmosphere in which each learner perceives their culture as an intrinsic component of the educational process.

Moreover, in today's language classrooms, cultural sensitivity is essential for effective teaching. Educators must understand and value the different cultures that students bring to our schools and classrooms to create inclusive learning environments. According to a study by the Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education (2020), cultural sensitivity is crucial as it enhances students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Al-Obaydi (2019) supports this by showing a positive correlation between students' cultural diversity and their cultural awareness in EFL contexts, suggesting that exposure to diverse cultures through language study can enhance cultural understanding and appreciation. Gebhard (2016) highlights the role of teachers in fostering an appreciation for different cultures, which can be beneficial in cross-cultural communication situations.

Pronunciation. According to Ali Khan (2019), pronouncing words correctly in a second language is an essential component of learning a language. It plays a substantial role in enhancing the communicative competence and performance of second language learners. One of the most delicate and challenging subjects taught in English language classes is pronunciation. It is a very sensitive and complicated aspect of the English language classroom. Age, the brain, aptitude, learner types, and objectives are examples of internal influences. Outer factors include first language interference, motivation, types of teachers and teaching methodologies, classroom environment, and institutional variables.

Furthermore, Morely (2015) stated that bad and incomprehensible pronunciation makes communication unpleasant and creates confusion for both speakers and listeners. It is obvious that poor pronunciation makes learners lose their self-assurance, and it also has a negative influence on their credibility and abilities. Kang & Ginther, (2018) mentioned that since the mid-1990s, tremendous growth in research about L2 pronunciation has gleaned a renewed focus on intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability.

On the other hand, proficiency in the language is also one of the country's strengths, which has helped drive the economy and even made the Philippines the top voice outsourcing destination in the world. Also, in the context of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), the influx of foreign learners of English is due to the relatively more affordable but quality ESL programs being offered locally. In addition, the teachers' accent makes the Philippines a popular alternative to Western countries (2020).

Pragmatics. Umiati (2020) concluded in his findings that both the lecturer's and students' native cultures interfere with the teaching and learning process. The implication of the findings underlines the importance of providing opportunities for non-native English students to use the target language in its pragmatic functions through the selection of learning materials and classroom activities that can enhance their cultural knowledge and awareness. At the same time, it is tenable for teachers to move away from the sole dependence on idealized native-speaker models of appropriateness, politeness, and formality in their pedagogical practice and instead incorporate a non-essentialist viewpoint into formal instruction. The common view of pragmatic learning as an approximation to native likeness is changing towards conceiving pragmatic ability as a tool to interact with people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the majority of whom are non-native speakers (NNSs) of English. While such a reality is widely acknowledged, few attempts have been made to teach pragmatic competence in EIL.

In the context of ESL, where English is used as a medium of communication among non-native speakers as well as between native and non-native speakers, researchers need to examine pragmatic competence based on how L2 learners can navigate communicative demands by using communication strategies skilfully while negotiating their identities.

Social and Cultural Norms. We explore how cultural differences in norm strength, defined as the degree of adherence to norms and punishment of norm deviance (Gelfand et al., 2015), emerge from the evolutionary process of cultural adaptation. While there are many different types of social norms, we focus on norms for organizing social interaction, which include both cooperation and coordination norms. We test the notion that cultures' exposure to societal threats is a mediating factor in differences in norm strength.

Language Structure. Globally, syntactic structures vary significantly across languages. For instance, Japanese and Korean use a subject-object-verb (SOV) order, contrasting with English's subject-verb-object (SVO) order. These structural differences require learners to adjust their cognitive frameworks for sentence construction in English. Research emphasizes the need for explicit syntactic instruction to facilitate this

transition, using techniques such as syntactic transfer and practice with varied sentence structures to aid learners (Galloway, 2017). In Filipino languages such as Tagalog, the typical word order differs from English. Tagalog often follows a verb-subject-object (VSO) order, while English predominantly uses a subject-verb-object (SVO) order. This syntactic difference can lead to confusion for Filipino learners of English as they adapt to the new structure for forming sentences.

Morphological differences also pose challenges. In languages like Turkish and Korean, words are formed by combining multiple morphemes, representing various grammatical functions. English, with its simpler morphological structure, relies more on word order and auxiliary verbs. Effective teaching strategies include explicit instruction on English morphology, focusing on verb conjugations, pluralizations, and other morphological rules to help learners understand and apply these structures correctly (Cook, 2016).

In addition, phonological variations significantly affect pronunciation and listening comprehension. Languages like Mandarin Chinese and Thai have tonal systems, differing from English's intonation patterns. These differences necessitate focused phonetic training and auditory discrimination exercises to help learners adapt to English phonology. Effective phonological instruction includes teaching phoneme-grapheme correspondences, rhyming, segmenting, and blending sounds, which are crucial for developing accurate pronunciation and listening skills (Dewey, 2015).

Significance of the Study

This research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge base on cultural and linguistic barriers in English language learning, shedding light on the challenges faced by students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The findings can inform the development of targeted interventions and instructional practices to better support English language learners and promote more inclusive and effective language learning environments.

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

ESL students come across great barriers as they learn the English language. These barriers are either linguistic factors or cultural factors. ESL learners have a culture that is very different from that of any native English-speaking country, as well as certain linguistic aspects based on their primary language. (Abba, T. S., Maina, U. A., & Nuhu, A., 2021). Different cultures,

accordingly, have different attitudes, traditions, and upbringings, and what might be perceived in one culture as an adequate personal space might be seen in another culture as another person's space. Cultural barriers, in this respect, affect the learning experience and the whole atmosphere of the class (Farabi, R., 2015). In addition, cultural barriers are considered those traditions that become hurdles in the path of understanding or teaching or learning completely different languages, among which body language, religious beliefs, etiquette, and social habits are noteworthy. (Amin, A., 2014)

On the other hand, linguistic barriers, as described by Gratis (2022), encompass linguistic limitations that lead to confusion or comprehension difficulties in communication. These barriers may arise from national and cultural differences in language, as well as issues like a lack of specialized knowledge or speech impairments. Gratis emphasizes that even when people use the same language, dialectical differences can alter syntax and meaning, creating challenges to understanding. (Reyes, J., Espinosa, R., San Juan, RN., 2024). Furthermore, Friedman draws attention to the intertwining of linguistic and cultural barriers, emphasizing how differing cultural perspectives on language can impede effective communication. (Reyes, J., Espinosa, R., San Juan, RN., 2024).

Each nation has its own culture, which affects the learning and teaching processes. Therefore, to function well in another culture, educators should seek to understand how difference is produced and eliminated within unequal relations of power because the more they know about cultural differences, the better they are at teaching and the more effective communication between teachers and students becomes. (Farabi, R., 2015). Subsequently, having different strategies, approaches, or practices can help aid this gap. Oftentimes, successful language learners must be willing to become gamblers in the game of language and attempt to produce and interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty. (Richard, J., and Renandya, W., 2008). One approach used is Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). This is a pedagogy that acknowledges and embraces students' cultures, languages, and experiences and relates them to classroom learning. This does not reduce racial, gender, or socioeconomic groups to monoliths; rather, it helps educators recognize the uniqueness of each student and the differences between groups that make communities—and their school systems — vibrant. (Online Programs at MC 2024 Mississippi College)

Moreover, state and national policy initiatives targeting multicultural education build on two assumptions: first, that pre-service teachers lack the multicultural awareness to function as culturally responsive educators, and second, that higher levels of multicultural awareness correspond with increased pedagogical proficiency.

Few studies have examined variation in multicultural awareness across pre-service candidates or the link between multicultural awareness and prospective teachers' measured competencies, (Cherng YS. and Davis, L., 2017).

Overall, teachers must be aware of their students' backgrounds and cultures. Cultural awareness is the first step to building a culturally responsive approach to teaching (Online Programs at MC 2024 Mississippi College).

Multicultural awareness is a very important element that should be included as one of the important aspects of an educator's competence. (Mohd Zaki Mohd Amin Dashima Abd. Wahab Nor 'Azah Abd. Aziz, December 2012)

Paradigm of the Study

The interrelationship of concepts in this study is illustrated by the relationship between independent variables, dependent variables, and moderating variables, as reflected in the paradigm of the study.

- The independent variables are composed of the Cultural and Linguistic Barriers.
- The independent variables are composed of the Teaching Practices (Use of Culturally Responsive Strategies).
- The moderating variables are composed of the ESL Teacher's' Multicultural Self-Awareness.
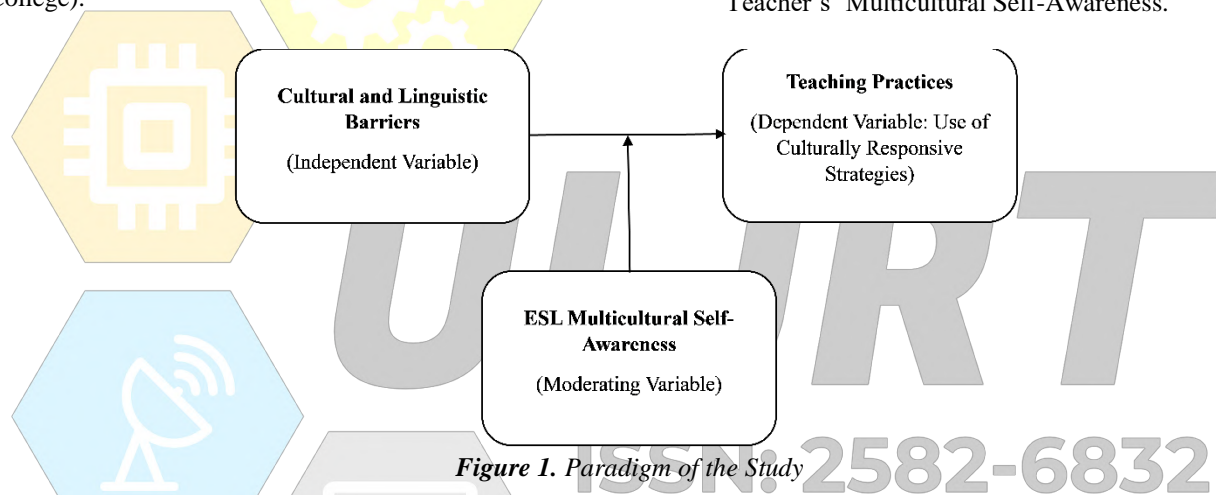

Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to know the teacher's cultural sensitivity in English language teaching.

Specifically, it sought;

1. To identify the most common cultural and linguistic barriers encountered by English language learners from diverse cultural backgrounds
2. To explain how the barriers influence students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English
3. To determine the ways how cultural and linguistic barriers impact students' English language proficiency and communication skills
4. To recognize how educators and instructional approaches address cultural and linguistic barriers in English language learning
5. To conclude on the effectiveness of different strategies in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers in English language education

CHAPTER II

Research Designs and Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, locale and population of the study, data gathering instruments, reliability and validity of the research instrument, data gathering procedure, treatment of data, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The researchers used a mixed-method design to understand the cultural sensitivity of ESL teachers in English language teaching. Qualitative data under thematic analysis was used to identify themes related to the impact of teachers' multicultural awareness on students' experiences, and content analysis was used to analyse observation data for evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices. The researchers also used quantitative data under descriptive statistics to summarize survey responses and examine teachers'

multicultural self-awareness of students' cultural backgrounds.

Locale and Population of the Study

The respondents to this study are composed of one hundred (100) ESL teachers working at Pines International Academy for quantitative analysis. Moreover, for the qualitative analysis, ten (10) ESL participants in the same academy. This rage allows for diverse perspectives while ensuring manageable data for in-depth analysis. These respondents offer comprehensive insights into their multicultural self-awareness and teaching practices. The selection of the participants was done through Purposive Sampling by Cresswell & Poth (2018). John Creswell and Cheryl Poth provide detailed guidelines on sample sizes for qualitative studies. They suggest that sample sizes for interviews typically range from 5 to 25 participants, depending on the depth of the inquiry.

Data Gathering Instruments

An interview guide was used to understand and address cultural sensitivity in English language teaching. Interviews provide rich qualitative data, clarify and contextualize findings, and enhance understanding through multiple methods. They offer flexibility, engage participants, explore unforeseen issues, and personalize data collection. By humanizing the data and fostering collaboration, interviews enrich research outcomes by combining qualitative and quantitative strengths. (Linked In, 2024).

A semi-structured interview was used to gather the data needed for this study. There are four (4) questions asked of the teachers. This is presented to the researcher's adviser and proposal committee, who evaluate the items.

Moreover, the researchers used a survey questionnaire to assess the ESL teacher's multicultural self-awareness, adapted from the "ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment (ESL-TMSAA)" by Dr. Martinez. This questionnaire is composed of twenty-one (21) closed-ended questions classified into three (3)

dimensions: Cognitive, Attitudinal/Affective, and Behavioral.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before the collection of data, the researchers first requested an endorsement letter from the dean of the graduate school. The researchers submitted the letter to the Human Resources Department of Pines International Academy for approval. Then, the researchers conducted the semi-structured interview as well as floated survey questionnaires with the respondents. The researchers minimized bias during data collection and maintained high standards when collecting data from the respondents. The names and personal information of the respondents were held in the strictest confidentiality and only used for the study.

Treatment of Data

Researchers used thematic analysis to identify themes related to the impact of teacher's multicultural awareness on students' experiences. Tools like Dovetail and Thematic can facilitate this process. For example, Dovetail collects scattered feedback from respondents, providing insights to build products that people love. It offers clear answers without relying on guesses or gut feelings, providing a new way to understand respondents and make data-driven decisions. The researchers also used content analysis to analyze observation data for evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Moreover, the gathered data in the survey on ESL Teachers' Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment were subjected to statistical data treatment to facilitate their analysis and interpretation.

The six-point numerical values, numerical limits, descriptive equivalents and symbols were used to determine the level of responses on the following:

Level of ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment on the Cognitive Dimension, Attitudinal/Affective Dimension, and Behavioral Dimension.

Numerical Values	Numerical Limits	Descriptive Equivalents & Symbols
6	5.15-6.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
5	4.32-5.14	Agree (A)
4	3.49-4.31	Slightly Agree (SA)
3	2.66-3.48	Slightly Disagree (SD)
2	1.83-2.65	Disagree (D)
1	1.00-1.82	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Ethical consideration

"Research ethics provides guidelines for the responsible conduct of research to ensure all research is conducted at a high ethical standard." (McKellar & Toth, 2005) The following ethical considerations are taken into consideration in the conduct of the study and in the creation of the consent form to be sent to the respondents:

Voluntary participation of the respondents. They will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they may refuse to participate without any prejudice. Respondents have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wish to do so. If they withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, their data will be returned to them or destroyed.

Privacy or anonymity of respondents. To protect the privacy of the respondents, the study will follow Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. This study will not reveal the identity of its respondents by using codes instead of the respondent's name in the gathering, analysis, and presentation of the data gathered. As well, their responses will not be linked to their identity. All the data collected will only be available to the members directly involved in the study.

The use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language shall not be used in the creation of interview guides, questionnaires, or focus group questions. The researchers must show respect for human dignity in their choice of questions to ask and when reporting and publishing research results. It is imperative for the study to do no harm to the respondents, both physically and psychologically.

Acknowledge references with the use of the APA referencing system. According to an article on the National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH, 2019) website, "Plagiarism is unacceptable and constitutes a serious breach of recognized norms of research ethics.'' This emphasizes the importance of citing sources properly and not using or presenting someone else's work as owned. Researchers had the obligation to provide accurate references and acknowledge other authors' works used in any part of the study.

Objectivity. Maintain the highest level of objectivity in discussion and analysis throughout the research. Gathering, analyzing, and interpreting the data must be free from the researcher's bias. It must not be influenced by what the researcher thinks is correct and must not be coerced to arrive at the conclusion that the researcher wants. The data gathered must be truthful and correct to come up with a reliable result.

CHAPTER III

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered to address the issues that are raised in the study.

Qualitative Findings and Analysis

From the data gathered from ESL teachers, the result are as follows:

Table 1. Barriers faced by students from diverse cultural background

Learning Environment and Learning Styles	8
Cultural Differences	5
Grammatical Structures	2

Table 1 shows that the learning environment and students' learning styles play a huge factor in learning the English language.

Accordingly, learners have a hard time adjusting to new environments, especially when involved in a group class, which affects their personality and behavior. Also, pronunciation and comprehension are the common aspects that contribute to such problems.

"...Being in an accommodation with other nationalities may cause also discomfort by someone with different way/s of living. An inflexible student may lose his/ her motivation to study knowing that she has to put up with an environment which annoys him/ her."

"...Personality and behavior are different that sometimes it creates conflict when they're in a group class at some point."

"…Learners are shocked to meet a large number of learners. They become shy when they meet someone better than them,"

"...Learners are used to certain style of studying in their country and when they study abroad they suddenly adjust to the style."

McCrae, (2001), as mentioned by Idrus, F., and Sohid, M. (2023), suggests that culture can shape personality. The environment they are exposed to and the way they are brought up are among the factors that can shape

personality. Therefore, learners of different backgrounds have various ways of dealing with and learning the English language based on their personalities. In addition, Ariastuti, MD, & Wahyudin, AY. (2022) concludes that there is an impact of the use of different learning styles on student academic performance.

Another barrier is cultural differences. Culture varies from each other, for this is a symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions. Hofstede, G. (1997). ESL/ EFL teachers witness the difference of each culture, their students possess.

"...Learners have difficulty in trusting their teachers since we are not native speakers."

"...Vietnamese students struggle in omitting their strong accent when speaking English."

"…Students with different backgrounds tend to have differences with the way they express themselves."

"…Due to culture differences, the students may feel the difficulty of being in harmony with other nationality especially in group class. Other students may find other's

behaviors or ideas distracting him/ her which can cause him/ her not to be very participative in class, thus losing the opportunity to speak and practice the common language."

In an ESL classroom, cultural differences can be a barrier to learning, engagement, and communication (Linquist, 2016). This cultural diversity leads to common problems such as stereotyping and inadequacies in the teaching and learning process (Idrus, F., & Sohid, M., 2023).

Self-esteem is one of the barriers that prevent learners from joining a culturally diverse classroom. They think that students from other cultures might be better than them because they have a general idea of the culture (Idrus, F., & Sohid, M., 2023).

Lastly, students from diverse cultural backgrounds are challenged to learn the grammar rules as well as their grammatical structures.

The problem of teaching speaking is complex. It is not only related to the learners' factor but also to the context outside. In the internal aspects, the problems that occur are related to native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego, and motivation and concern for good speaking. (Nuraini, K., 2016).

Table 2. Effects of Cultural Barriers on Students' Communication

Loss of Confidence and Enthusiasm	7
Causes of misunderstanding or miscommunication	4
Shifting to English from the Mother Tongue is a struggle	1

In this research, loss of confidence and enthusiasm in communicating are the results of having cultural barriers. Learners have a hard time expressing themselves due to their limited knowledge of the language.

"…misunderstanding is inevitable especially when individuals are not broad-minded and understanding towards others. This will cause a learner to lose interest in communication."

"…their language, words, gestures are different from others, that may cause conflict."

"…In some cultures, making mistakes in public or in front of authority is seen as shameful... fear of being judged or ridiculed, hindering their language development."

Self-esteem is one of the barriers that prevent learners from joining a culturally diverse classroom. Furthermore, Gultom, S., & Oktaviani, L. (2022) conclude that students' self-esteem did have an impact on their EPT score, i.e., the greater their self-esteem, the higher their EPT score.

Thus, a feeling of inferiority demotes confidence, which hinders their chance to fully develop their capabilities in the English language.

On the other hand, Khalid, F., & Almuslimi, A., 2020, concluded that EFL learners mispronounce certain phonemes that are mismatched with word orthography and consonant cluster. Moreover, vowels were mispronounced by students.

The strongest factors that contribute to this problem, according to their study, were learners' mother tongue interference, and other causative factors such as limited language exposure. The study recommends that teaching should focus more on pronunciation along with preparing suitable material.

Table 3. Supplementary techniques used by EFL/ESL teachers

Teaching style and approaches with the aid of a variety of materials and resources	8
Using gestures and hand movements	2
Teach cultural nuances and context	1

This article is an effort to make language learning become fun and an activity to look forward to if visual aids like clips, episodes, documentaries, and films are part of the language learning process. Visual aids demand complete attention.

It may also enhance the imagination of the students and that may lead to skills like critical thinking, debates, and Group Discussions. The data shows a different technique in bridging cross-cultural gaps.

"....Teachers use a variety of instructional materials and resources, including visuals, videos, and real life examples to help students make connections between their own experiences and the English languages."

"…The teachers teaching style and approach do play important role in creating a mood conducive for all students."

According to Shabiralyani et al., (2015), visual aids are important in education as they encourage students in the learning process, make the lesson understandable, raise interest in the subject presented, lead to permanent retention of materials learned, increase vocabulary, and provide direct experience to the students.

In addition, Raiyn (2016) has further argued that visual aids bring the real thing closer to the students, where the learning process becomes more natural and realistic, as well as easier for students to form mental images of abstract ideas.

Table 4. Strategies for overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers when teaching English.

Teachers' Self-Improvement	5
Identify learners' weaknesses and needs	4
Encouragement from the teacher	3

Most of the respondents believe that overcoming cultural barriers through self-improvement, identifying learner's needs, and receiving encouragement from the teacher plays a huge role in overcoming them. Teachers must therefore possess proficiency in cross-cultural dialogue before its implementation in a learning environment.

"…Continuously update your knowledge and skills in teaching English as a secondary language"

"...For me, I need to know first the weakness and needs of the student."

"…By encouraging the students to be open in sharing their opinions freely by using the English language"

As Blair notes, "simply inserting experiential activities into teaching without providing a consistent experiential pedagogical framework diminishes success for learners" (2016, p. 5).

Previous studies have demonstrated that teachers' personal experiences and institutional and socio-cultural contexts can both influence motivation to learn in professional learning activities (Gan, Nang, and Mu Citation 2018; Kwakman Citation 2003; Liu, Yuan, and Zhang Citation 2018).

QUANTITATIVE DATA FINDINGS

On the other hand, the gathered data in the survey on ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment were subjected to statistical data treatment to facilitate their analysis and interpretation.

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1	1.00-1.82	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 5. Level of ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment on the Cognitive Dimension N=100

Cognitive Dimension	Level of Awareness									
	SA	A	SA	SD	D	SD	TWP	WM	DE	R
	6	5	4	3	2	1				
1. Learning a second language also means learning the culture of the target language.	50	37	7	4	2	0	529	5.29	SA	2
2. It is the teacher's responsibility to become knowledgeable of the student's cultural backgrounds.	21	50	24	0	3	2	480	4.8	SA	4
3. By becoming familiar with my student's culture, I am contributing to creating a more engaging learning environment.	41	44	12	1	2	0	521	5.21	SA	3
4. I understand that my students may come from cultures where educational traditions are different.	66	31	3	0	0	0	563	5.63	SA	1
5. Conflicts are likely to occur when teachers and students come from different cultures.	18	34	21	13	12	2	427	4.27	SA	6
6. There is a risk of reinforcing stereotypes when talking about my student's cultural traditions in the classroom.	16	46	24	4	10	0	454	4.54	A	5
Average Weighted Mean								4.96	A	

In general, the cognitive level of ESL Teacher with multicultural self-awareness was found out that the respondents agree (4.96). This indicates that the ESL teachers of Pines International Academy agreed due to the facts that they integrated the multicultural awareness to their teaching training. In addition, self-awareness gives benefits to the teachers in their personal growth and development. However, many ESL teachers are not aware with cultural background with their students. The Philippines ESL Academy conducting a seminar to their teachers specifically about cultural sensitivity. In Pines International Academy initiates seminar and orientation to their teachers before the deployment.

This supports as cited in Bollin, A. (2007) analyzed how service-learning experience for teachers influenced their future teaching experiences. Bollin (2001) found that service learning can help prepare students that are planning to each in an ESL context to better understand their future students.

The researcher seek help to Wang (2011) idea on how the ESL teacher agreed in facing the conflict with cultural differences. One purpose of English teaching is to develop learners' awareness of cultural differences reflected in languages. The teacher must help learners to realize that thoughts and views of different nationalities and different types of societies about nature and human society are quite different. Therefore, it is of great importance to take for cultural background knowledge as one of the contents in the whole process of English teaching so as to help students to have a good command of necessary cultural background knowledge and to develop their comprehensive English ability.

Table 6. Level of ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment on the Attitudinal/Affective Dimension N=100

Attitudinal/Affective Dimension	Level of Awareness									
	SA	A	SA	SD	D	SD	TWP	WM	DE	R
	6	5	4	3	2	1				
7. My responsibility as an ESL instructor is to teach the language, not the culture.	45	29	10	8	8	0	495	4.95	A	3

8. Students who volunteer answer without raising their hands first denote a lack of respect towards their classmates and the teacher.	4	15	29	25	26	1	343	3.43	SD	7
9. My attitude in the classroom reflects my cultural values.	21	38	25	6	8	2	452	4.52	A	5
10. Students may not actively participate in classroom activities due to shyness.	28	52	16	2	2	0	502	5.02	A	2
11. I can make educated guesses regarding my students' learning styles based on my previous experience with the other students of the same nationality.	10	49	25	5	8	3	439	4.39	A	6
12. I enjoy interacting with students from different cultures.	57	31	10	1	0	1	541	5.41	SA	1
13. I avoid forming an impression of students from different cultures before getting to know them.	27	46	20	4	2	1	489	4.89	A	4
14. I often get discouraged when I teach culturally diverse group of learners.	0	10	17	13	39	21	256	2.56	D	9
15. My knowledge of a student's particular culture affects my expectations of his/her performance.	8	22	22	13	19	16	339	3.39	SD	8
Average Weighted Mean								4.28	SA	

Table 6 reveals the level of the ESL teacher's multicultural self-awareness assessment on the attitudinal/affective dimension. Clearly, based on the gathered data from 100 ESL teachers, the computed average weighted mean is 4.28, and the descriptive equivalent falls under slightly agree, wherein the numerical limits are from 3.49 to 4.31. It implies that the respondents' level of multicultural self-awareness towards attitudinal and affective is somewhat positive because they agree a little but not fully.

This confirmed the findings of Töre (2020), wherein teachers who teach a foreign language have more a positive attitude in total score and all sub-dimensions of multiculturalism than teachers who do not teach a foreign language. Teachers who have sufficient knowledge of foreign languages to deal with foreigners have a more positive multicultural attitude than the others do.

The concept is further supported by Seidlhofer (2015), who said that teaching students of another language to be sensitive to cultural differences fosters empathy and respect for those who use English as a second or foreign language.

According to him, recognizing and appreciating students' cultural backgrounds creates a positive and inclusive learning atmosphere in culturally diverse classrooms and helps students from various backgrounds feel like they belong.

Table 7. Level of ESL Teachers Multicultural Self-Awareness Assessment on the Behavioral Dimension N=100

Attitudinal/Affective Dimension	Level of Awareness									
	SA	A	SA	SD	D	SD	TWP	WM	DE	R
	6	5	4	3	2	1				
16. In my classroom I enforce a strict English-only policy.	33	48	8	10	1	0	502	5.02	A	4.5
17. I provide opportunities in the classroom for students to share their cultural values and traditions.	53	42	5	0	0	0	548	5.48	SA	1
18. I tend to be more patient with students who adhere to my cultural norms.	26	43	14	4	10	3	462	4.62	A	6
19. I make adaptations to my teaching practices to accommodate my student's different cultures.	51	45	4	0	0	0	547	5.47	SA	2
20. I take into account my students cultural background when providing feedback.	36	54	8	2	0	0	524	5.24	SA	3

21. I try to use materials (e.g.: textbooks, articles etc.) which reflect the cultural ideology of the language I teach.	29	48	21	0	2	0	502	5.02	A	4.5
Average Weighted Mean								5.14	A	

The assessment of ESL teachers' multicultural self-awareness often encompasses various dimensions, including behavioral aspects. When evaluating the behavioral dimension of ESL teacher's multicultural self-awareness, it typically involves assessing how teachers interact with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, how they adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate different cultures, and how they handle multicultural classroom dynamics.

It was found out that the respondents agreed (5.14) level of multicultural self-awareness assessment on the behavioral dimension. This indicates that the teachers of Pines International Academy agreed because they know that understanding and addressing linguistic and cultural barriers helps them in teaching their students better. Some teachers not strictly enforce English only policy inside the classroom since they give opportunities to students to share their cultural values and traditions in a way that where they feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.

The teachers adapt their teaching practices to accommodate their students' different cultures and take into accounts their cultural background when providing feedback to their students and its important in dispelling miscommunication as well as misinterpretation. And by doing so, learning to respect and appreciate their differences, teachers creating a meaningful and valuable relationships with their students.

On the other hand, the teachers also use materials such as textbooks to reflect the cultural ideology of the language they teach to enable students to meet the objectives set out in the curriculum standard. However, textbooks by themselves do not have an impact in the classroom; they can play a role only when being fully used by teachers and students (Fullan, 2000). Cronbach began calling for research on the use of textbooks as early as 1955 (Cronbach et al., 1955), and Rezat (2009) pointed out that the use of textbooks was always an important topic in educational research. Students should be the most important subject in using textbooks, the ultimate purpose of teachers' use is still for students' development, and ignoring students' use of textbooks may hinder the realization of the original purpose of

textbook design (Zeng & Cui, 2019). Therefore, the study of students' use of textbooks should not be ignored or marginalized but should be given more attention and research.

By assessing the behavioral dimension of ESL Teachers' multicultural self-awareness, educators can enhance their ability to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that support the academic and social-emotional needs of all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

This study examined the importance of cultural sensitivity in English Language Teaching (ELT), highlighting the challenges faced by ESL students from varied cultural backgrounds and the strategies teachers use to address these issues. Based on the findings, it was found that students often struggle with adapting to new learning settings, impacting their behaviour and motivation. Pronunciation and comprehension problems are common, worsened by cultural differences and group dynamics. These challenges disrupt classroom harmony and hinder students' full engagement in their studies.

Cultural differences present major barriers, especially in establishing trust between students and non-native English-speaking teachers. Students often feel uncomfortable and participate less in group activities, which diminishes their confidence and enthusiasm for communication. Frequent misunderstandings further complicate language learning. Additionally, mastering English grammar is difficult due to differences from students' native languages, affecting their learning outcomes.

Effective teaching methods, such as using diverse materials, gestures, and incorporating cultural contexts, help to mitigate some of these barriers. Approaches like teacher self-improvement, recognizing learner needs, and creating a supportive classroom environment positively impact these challenges. Culturally responsive teaching enhances students' learning by creating inclusive environments that respect and

integrate their cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging and improving language proficiency.

Recommendations

Enhanced Teacher Training:

Implement comprehensive training programs that focus on the use of culturally responsive teaching strategies for ESL teachers. This training should include practical strategies for integrating cultural awareness into teaching practices and addressing linguistic and cultural barriers effectively.

Diverse Teaching Materials:

Utilize a wide range of teaching materials and resources that reflect various cultural contexts and experiences. Incorporate visual aids, multimedia resources, and real-life examples to make learning more engaging and relatable for students from diverse backgrounds.

Pronunciation and Comprehension Support:

Develop specialized resources and training programs to improve students' pronunciation and comprehension skills. Include phonetic exercises, speech practice, and auditory discrimination activities in the curriculum to help students adapt to English phonology and syntax.

Supportive Learning Environment:

Establish support programs, such as orientation sessions and peer support groups, to help students adjust to new learning environments and styles. Promote an inclusive classroom culture by encouraging group activities and collaborative projects that facilitate cultural exchange and understanding.

Continuous Feedback Mechanisms:

Implement regular feedback systems to assess students' experiences and challenges related to cultural sensitivity. Use this feedback to make ongoing adjustments to teaching practices and curriculum content, ensuring they remain responsive to students' needs.

Curriculum Integration of Cultural Contexts:

Integrating cultural nuances and contexts into the curriculum through lesson plans that include cultural exploration and discussions on different communication styles. This approach will help students better understand and navigate intercultural interactions, enhancing their communication skills.

Encouragement and Rapport Building:

Focus on building strong rapport with students by understanding their cultural backgrounds and individual learning needs. Encouraging students by providing positive reinforcement and creating a supportive classroom atmosphere where they feel comfortable expressing themselves and participating actively.

By implementing these recommendations, ESL programs can foster more culturally sensitive and effective learning environments. This will not only enhance students' language acquisition but also improve their intercultural competence, preparing them for successful communication in diverse settings. Teachers' commitment to cultural sensitivity is essential in shaping positive and inclusive educational experiences for all learners.

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