

## **Teaching about Teaching about Culture: The Role of Culture in Second Language Teacher Education Programs**

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### **Abstract**

By teaching English, teachers are preparing students for encounters with people from different cultures. To do so effectively from the beginning of their careers, novice teachers need preparation to teach about culture in addition to teaching language. Teacher educators could more effectively support novice teachers' ability to teach about culture if they had a better understanding of the process of learning to teach about culture and beginning to do so during the early years of teaching. This qualitative case study of one teacher education program in Indonesia investigates novice teachers' learning about and practices for teaching about culture. Data sources include interviews and lesson observations with 20 teacher educators, and interviews, lesson observations, and journal entries from 20 novice teachers who recently graduated from the program. Findings indicate that teachers have few opportunities to learn about how to teach about culture, and that they address culture in their classrooms relatively infrequently. This study's implications reveal a need for teacher education programs to provide more concrete guidance about how to teach about culture. With stronger preparation in their teacher education programs, novice teachers might be better able to foster their students' ability to engage across difference.

**Keywords:** culture; intercultural competence; language learning; teacher learning; teacher practices

### **Introduction**

The emergence of English as a global language means that English is increasingly the medium of interaction for intercultural exchanges. By teaching English, teachers are preparing students for encounters with people from different cultures – both monolingual speakers of English and multilingual speakers from various backgrounds. Successful communication will require cultural proficiency in addition to language proficiency. Language classrooms, therefore, are almost always sites of cultural contact. Language teachers act as “cultural workers” (Giroux, 2005, p. 71), or “go-betweens” (Kramsch, 2004, p. 37) because they are asked to socialize students into new cultural and linguistic practices and

help them develop “intercultural, cognitive, social and affective connections” (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 476). Recent standards documents acknowledge this demand by recommending the teaching of intercultural communicative competence (i.e., Council of Europe, 2009; TESOL, 2006). Language teachers must not only teach language – they must also help students understand the nature of culture and culture’s impact on language, communication, and interaction (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

Without explicit preparation or guidance, teaching about culture could pose a major challenge to new teachers. Li (2016) notes “the academic world does not provide teachers with an operational paradigm of how to carry out culture teaching in the classroom. Thus, culture teaching has become an idiosyncratic practice characterized by the teacher’s own style” (p. 771). If second language teacher education programs offer little guidance about the teaching of culture, novice teachers (NTs) will be more likely to rely upon their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) and teach as they were taught themselves, using outdated modes of curriculum and pedagogy. Teacher educators could more effectively prepare NTs to teach about culture in their future classrooms if they had a better understanding of how novice language teachers learn to teach about culture and begin to do so during their initial years of service.

The study offers a perspective from a periphery context (Canagarajah, 1999) that has been underrepresented in the literature. It was conducted in Indonesia, a nation of 240 million people, 15,000 islands, and more than 300 native languages, which stretches 3,000 miles across the equator in Southeast Asia. This multilingual and multicultural environment provides a particularly interesting setting within which to examine novice teachers’ cultural learning and practices. While many education systems implicitly expect teachers to transmit cultural values (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), Indonesian education policy explicitly directs them to do so. Teachers are expected to transmit the nation’s cultural values as defined in the nation’s official philosophical foundation, the *Pancasila*, which include belief in one God, just and civilized society, a unified nation, democracy, and social justice (Bjork, 2005). More empirical evidence about teaching about culture in the Indonesian context would benefit teacher educators in other contexts where language teachers are expected to strengthen the local culture while also fostering students’ intercultural awareness.

The purpose of this ethnographic case study is to understand how novice Indonesian teachers of English learn to teach about culture and how that learning impacts their ability to teach about culture during their early career. The case focuses on the experiences of current students and recent graduates from one teacher education program at Central Java Islamic University (CJIU, a pseudonym). The study was guided by the following research questions: how do Indonesian teachers of English in this program learn about culture?; and, what practices do they use to teach about culture during their early years of teaching?

## Conceptual Framework

Culture is the central concept of this study. I draw primarily on sociological understandings of culture as the everyday practices, beliefs, and values within a particular group. I am also influenced by scholars that portray culture as a symbolic system (e.g., Geertz, 1973) that is integral to determinations of group membership (e.g., Lévi-Strauss, 1953). As I collected and analyzed data throughout this study, I strived to remain aware of my own perspective on

culture while also acknowledging the wide range of definitions and understandings of culture that might influence participants' understandings of culture. Popular conceptions of culture portray it as consisting of both deep and surface culture (e.g., Hall & Hall, 1990; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), or as consisting of formal, prestigious "Big C Culture" and hearthstone, everyday "little c culture" (Kramsch, 1995). Additionally, though the "native speaker" construct has been widely criticized by scholars in the field (e.g., Cook, 1999; Davies, 2003), I acknowledge that many language teachers and learners worldwide continue to emphasize the culture of nations where English is used as a first language (Holliday, 2009). I kept these varied perspectives in mind as I strived to understand participants' perspectives on this complex construct.

Culture impacts education in many ways. Regarding the field as a whole, teachers of all subjects are able to teach more effectively if they use methods and approaches that are appropriate for their students' cultural backgrounds. Kramsch (2004) notes that this idea has been developed in more detail in the United States, where the predominant buzzword has been "multicultural" rather than "intercultural" (which has been the characteristic focus of scholars and politicians in Europe). In the US, scholars working across differences of race and ethnicity have called for pedagogies that validate and build on learners' lived experiences; Gay (2000) refers to this type of teaching as "culturally responsive," while Ladson-Billings (2009) uses the term "culturally relevant." Scholars working with linguistically diverse students in the US have established the importance of portraying cultural difference as a strength rather than a deficit (Zentella, 2005), and have advocated for pedagogies that build on the "funds of knowledge" within students' communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). For teachers working with English language learners, it is especially important to possess intercultural communication skills and to understand the connection between language, culture, and identity (de Jong & Harper, 2005; López, 2016). In recent years, Paris (2012) has built on the work of these scholars to argue for the value and importance of *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, which "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism" (p. 93). While these scholars do not focus exclusively on language learning, their research contributes to the case for embracing pedagogies for language education that recognize, build upon, and sustain students' cultural backgrounds. In the remainder of this paper, I will follow Paris (2012) and Ladson-Billings (2014) by using the phrase *culturally sustaining pedagogy* to refer to educational practices that connect to and support students' own cultural resources, backgrounds, and prior knowledge.

Though culture is central to the field of education as a whole, it plays a special and important role within the field of language teaching. Atkinson (1999) notes, "except for *language, learning, and teaching*, there is no more important concept in the field of TESOL than *culture*" (p. 625). Because of the deep connection between language and culture, language teachers need not only employ *culturally sustaining pedagogy* to build upon their students' cultural backgrounds; they must also develop students' cultural awareness, in order to prepare them for encounters with people from different cultural backgrounds. Regarding the special role of culture within language education, this study is guided by the work of scholars on English as an International Language (EIL). Proficient EIL users need the ability to communicate with speakers from varied backgrounds, rather than near-native proficiency in one dialect (McKay, 2003). Similarly, rather than deep knowledge of a specific culture, language users need open-mindedness, respect, and the ability to respond adaptively during

interaction with speakers from varied cultural backgrounds (Kramersch, 1993, McKay, 2001). This perspective on culture aligns with perspectives that view culture as an essential part of language competence (Hymes, 1972). Language users' cultural proficiency contributes to their sociolinguistic competence (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980) and their sociocultural competence (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995). To support students' development of these competencies, language teachers must attend to culture in addition to language. In the remainder of this paper, I will use the phrase "teaching about culture" to describe teaching practices that increase students' cultural knowledge and awareness, develop their intercultural skills, and foster curiosity, tolerance, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds. Teaching about culture could include a focus on the concept of culture, explicit instruction about various cultures, both familiar and unfamiliar, or use of materials from a certain cultural context.

Culture, then, enters into language education in two ways. First, language teachers (like all teachers) must sustain students' own cultural backgrounds through culturally sustaining pedagogy. They must also teach about culture in order to help students develop intercultural awareness and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for successful encounters with people of different cultural backgrounds. This study therefore offers an opportunity to investigate the ways that teacher educators and novice teachers approach these two cultural demands.

## Literature Review

To better understand the experiences of novice Indonesian teachers of English, I will focus on two concepts: teacher learning, and teacher practices. Teacher learning, the process of gaining pedagogical knowledge and practical skill, happens in many places, including preservice teacher education programs (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005), the socialization process in schools (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), and professional development programs (Borko, 2004). Research on foreign and second language (L2) teacher learning about the teaching of culture has shown that many NTs feel inadequately prepared to address culture (Byram & Risager, 1999) and that culture often receives limited attention in L2 teaching methods courses (Byrd, 2007; Wilbur, 2007). Promising opportunities for L2 teacher learning about culture include: opportunities to interact with people of other cultures (Byram & Risager, 1999; Kohler, 2015); the incorporation of cultural contact and reflection within teacher education coursework (Diaz-Greenberg & Nevin, 2003; He, 2013); and participation in intensive and prolonged professional development programs (Kohler, 2015).

Teacher practices are the habitual actions and professional skills that teachers draw on during their teaching (Lampert, 2010), or, put more simply, "the things teachers actually do, the visible practices of teaching" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 6). Research on the practices L2 teachers use to teach about culture has shown that they often focus on the transmission of factual information (Byram & Risager, 1999), or on the differences between cultures (Menard-Warwick, 2009). Frequently cited practices include teacher-led discussions (Duff & Uchida, 1999; Menard-Warwick, 2009) and discussions of texts (Ryan, 1998).

The empirical research discussed above represents preliminary research into L2 teachers' learning, beliefs, and practices, but literature reviews by both Byram and Feng (2004) and Young, Sachdev & Seedhouse (2009) point to a need for increased empirical research on the

teaching of culture within L2 classrooms in diverse settings worldwide. Additionally, many studies of L2 teacher learning and practices related to culture have taken place in well-resourced settings: the western hemisphere, Western Europe, or East Asia. The field would benefit from a better understanding of the teaching of culture in periphery contexts – under-resourced geographical areas, particularly areas outside of North America and Western Europe (Canagarajah, 1999) – especially similar contexts where education policy includes an explicit focus on sustaining local cultural values. By focusing on cultural teaching approaches within a Muslim community in Java, Indonesia, this study aims to address an under-researched topic within an under-researched setting.

## Research Methodology

CJIU, the context of this study, was originally established as a teacher training college to prepare teachers of English, Arabic and Islamic education. It has expanded rapidly in recent years, and is a flourishing and well-run institution. Research activities and data collection took place on CJIU's campus and in primary, secondary, and community schools in the Central Java area. Participants included 20 faculty members and 20 recent graduates from CJIU's Department of English Education and Teacher Training.

To investigate the first research question (*How do Indonesian teachers of English in this program learn about culture?*), I reviewed materials, curriculum, and syllabi for English education courses related to teaching methods and the teaching of culture, and observed classes and interviewed the professors of those courses. I observed 33 class sessions taught by 20 teacher educators. As I observed classes, I took detailed field notes, focusing in particular on how the faculty member addressed culture and how students reacted. After each observation, I conducted a debriefing interview with the instructor. Interviews lasted between 4 and 51 minutes, with an average of 17.5 minutes. Interviews focused on participants' beliefs about the role of culture within English language instruction, and whether and how they address culture and the teaching of culture in their courses with future teachers. I also investigated the first research question by conducting 3 group interviews and 10 individual interviews with 20 NTs who graduated from CJIU during the previous four years. These interviews focused on participants' preparation, initial teaching experiences, and beliefs regarding the teaching of culture. These interviews lasted between 17 and 68 minutes, with an average of 34 minutes, and took place in August and September of 2017.

To investigate the second question (*What practices do Indonesian teachers of English use to teach about culture during their early years of teaching?*), I interviewed and observed 14 focal participants in their teaching settings. From among the 20 participants I interviewed initially, I used maximum variation sampling to select focal participants with varying school settings and characteristics. Focal NT participants are listed in Table 1. This type of purposeful sampling allowed me to develop a rich understanding of each individual's experience, as well as identify patterns between and among individuals with different backgrounds and school settings (Patton, 1990). I visited most NTs at their schools five times between September, 2017 and March, 2018; scheduling constraints with four of the NTs meant that I was only able to conduct three or four observations with those four participants. I observed a total of 64 lessons. As I observed, I took detailed field notes, focusing in particular on episodes when participants address culture. During post-observation interviews, I asked participants about their thinking and decision-making process during these episodes. I also

requested that participants keep a journal during the duration of the study, and journal entry prompts were provided three times per month.

**Table 1. Focal Novice Teacher Participants**

Pseudonym	Gender	School level	School Characteristics	School setting
Famy	F	Primary	Public, Religious	Rural
Aril	F	Primary	Public, Religious	Town
Muhay	F	Primary	Public, Non-Religious	Rural
Eka	F	Junior High	Private, Religious	Town
Latifah	F	Junior High	Public, Non-Religious	Town
Harto	M	Junior High	Private, Religious	Town
Lala	F	Senior High	Private, Religious	Town
Kandu	M	Senior High	Private, Vocational, Religious	Town
Rizqy	M	Senior High	Public, Religious	Rural
Okta	F	Senior High	Public, Vocational, Non-Religious	Town
Putri	F	Adult Vocational	Private, Vocational, Non-Religious	Town
Siti	F	Adult Vocational	Private, Vocational, Non-Religious	Town
Lily	F	Tertiary	Public, Religious	Town
Nita	F	Tertiary	Public, Religious	Town

Interviews were conducted in either Bahasa Indonesia, English, or a mix of both languages, based on participant preference. All interviews were audiorecorded, transcribed, and translated (if necessary). I conducted iterative and ongoing data analysis using Atlas.ti, a data management program, to apply codes to portions of the interview transcripts, observational field notes, and NT journal entries that reveal emerging concepts of interest. I used the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) to compare and compile these coded concepts and thereby identify important themes in the data.

## Findings

### Learning: Coursework

Course observations and a review of the syllabi of CJIU courses showed that the current Department of English Education and Teacher Training curriculum provided many opportunities to learn about culture. The discussion of course content below is organized by the focus of the course: about other cultures, about Indonesian culture, about the concept about culture, and about how to teach students from varied cultures. The courses that included a focus on culture are also listed in Table 2.

**Table 2. CJIU Courses Focused on Culture**

Course	Semester	Primary Cultural Focus
Language courses (reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, structure, translation; 22 courses total)	Semesters 1-4	Other cultures (per instructor preference)
Civics Education	Semester 2	Indonesian culture
Sociolinguistics	Semester 4	Concept of culture
Multicultural Education	Semester 4	Teaching students from varied cultures
<i>Pancasila</i>	Semester 5	Indonesian culture
Semantics & Pragmatics	Semester 6	Concept of culture
Cross-Cultural Understanding	Semester 6	Concept of culture

**Other cultures.** Students took a large number of language courses (including four semesters each of reading and writing, three semesters each of listening and speaking, and two semesters each of general English, vocabulary, structure, and translation), in which culture could be included as the instructor chose. I observed 10 general language courses at CJIU, and during these courses, I observed lecturers include information about other cultures. For instance, I observed a lecturer playing an American pop song in a listening class (Lily observation field notes, 11-13-2017), and another lecturer showing videos of intercultural encounters to stimulate discussion in speaking classes (Nita observation field notes, 10-4-2017).

**Indonesian culture.** Indonesian culture was the central focus of two courses: Civics Education (2nd semester), and *Pancasila* (5th semester). The civics course focused on helping students understand Indonesia’s national identity, the organization of the government, and their role in Indonesian society (Syllabus, Civics Education). In an early session of the course, I observed the lecturer play an inspirational video showing images of Indonesia’s cultural, geographical, and biological diversity, then lecture on how Indonesia’s great diversity provided a foundation for the nation’s identity (Lutfi observation field notes, 2-19-2018). The *Pancasila* course discussed the historical development and influence of the *Pancasila*, Indonesia’s national ideology (Syllabus, Pancasila). The course instructor explained that one of the goals of this course was to increase students’ nationalism and pride in their country and culture: “It is aimed to increase nationalism in the Indonesian society, one of which is done through a course on *Pancasila*. It aims to bring back future generations’ love of their country” (Dina interview, 9-29-2017; translated by the author). These two courses offered students the opportunity to learn about Indonesia’s history, civic organization, and national identity, particularly as symbolized by the *Pancasila*.

**The concept of culture.** The concept of culture, and its connection to language, was addressed in several courses. Sociolinguistics, a 4th semester course, included a focus on how culture and context influence language use (Syllabus, Sociolinguistics). I observed the instructor discussing the cultural meaning behind the statement “wait five minutes”: in the UK, the hearer might indeed expect to wait five minutes, but in India, the hearer had better prepare for a much longer wait (Risa observation field notes, 2-22-2018). Semantics &

Pragmatics, a 6th semester course, included a focus on how language use is influenced by the user's cultural and personal backgrounds (Syllabus, Semantics & Pragmatics). I observed the instructor of this course explaining that the field of pragmatics was about understanding language in context, particularly cultural context; he provided examples of linguistic misunderstandings that had come up because of cultural misinterpretation from his time studying in the UK and during interactions with people from other parts of Indonesia (Yudianto observation field notes, 2-20-2017).

The concept of culture was most clearly addressed in Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU), taught during the 6th semester, which focused on the benefits and possible conflicts associated with intercultural contact, verbal and non-verbal communication across cultures, and culturally based understandings of interpersonal relationships, religion, education, and work (Syllabus, Cross-cultural understanding). CCU Instructors frequently drew on examples from foreign cultures and other cultures within Indonesia to raise students' awareness of cultural concepts such as familial norms (Aldi observation field notes, 10-18-2017) and cultural values systems (Faiz observation field notes, 11-29-2017). The variation within cultures and the danger of stereotyping members of a given culture was a central theme of CCU classes. Mr. Faiz said he had strongly emphasized this topic because "stereotyping is the hindrance to cross cultural understanding. If you always think other as part of a group,... then we stop seeing them as who they really are. So, we have to start looking them as who they are" (Faiz interview, 12-06-2017). Mr. Faiz saw learning about cross-cultural understanding as a means of breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.

**Teaching students from varied cultures.** In Multicultural education (4th semester), students learned about how to teach students from differing backgrounds (Syllabus, Multicultural Education). I observed instructors discussing the importance of understanding people from different backgrounds, especially because it was likely that their future students would be from different regions within Indonesia (Rifqi observation field notes, 2-22-2018) and encouraging students to see diversity as strength rather than a weakness (Halima observation field notes, 2-27-2018). Ms. Halima emphasized the importance of adopting a strength-based approach to difference: "Now why is the multicultural education important for prospective teachers? It's so that they know that... all differences should be appreciated. A teacher should appreciate every skill and competence held by a student" (Halima interview, 2-27-2018; translated by the author).

**Teaching about culture: A missed opportunity.** CJIU students had the opportunity to develop their own cultural awareness through the courses described above. I observed few opportunities to learn about how to *teach* about culture, however. Mr. Faiz, who had taught CCU for many years, said that there was not space within the CCU course or within the CJIU curriculum to teach students how to teach about culture in the future:

Tabitha: Is there space and time in CCU for them to also talk about how to teach about culture to their own students? Once they become teachers?<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Mr. Faiz: Well, yeah, that is, uh, the one that I think I should have more space, uh, more time to do so, because, I focus more on the content of the cross-cultural understanding. Not on ways to teach that....

Tabitha: ...In the course sequence, do you think there's a course where students learn how to teach about culture?<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Mr. Faiz: No. That's, the, what's unfortunate, we do not have that. (Faiz Interview, 11-29-2017)

While CJIU's courses allowed students to develop a deeper understanding about other cultures, Indonesian cultures, the nature of culture, and the impact of students' cultures, it did not offer insights about how to teach about those topics in the future.

### *Learning: NT Participants' Recollections*

Though students had opportunities to learn about various cultural topics, they did not necessarily retain conscious awareness of those opportunities after completing their teacher education program. In fact, novice teacher participants almost exclusively focused on the CCU course when asked about how they had learned about culture. Nita's response was fairly typical: "I did a course in culture. Like, cross culture understanding... I got, like,... theoretical stuff about cross-cultural understanding" (Nita Interview, 9-25-2017). Participants said that this class had taught them how to analyze the food, attitudes, and education norms of other cultures. Numerous participants mentioned assignments for the course that required experiential learning, for instance by trying a new an ethnic cuisine. Eka, whose friend had left a sushi restaurant to vomit after eating raw fish, recalled this assignment as particularly challenging (Eka interview 9-25-2017).

Participants did not mention learning about culture in other courses besides CCU. They may simply have not recalled other opportunities to learn about culture, given that they had graduated one to four years previously. Participants may also not have realized how important it would be to know about culture. Rizqy, for instance, said, "About culture... when I studied there... I rarely thought about culture...I hadn't yet focused on culture" (Hadil Interview, 8-28-2017; translation by the author). Putri, in a journal entry, pointed out a weakness in her training: though she had learned about culture, she had not learned how to teach about the topic. She wrote, "I've learned about culture since I was in my early formal school, [but] I'm not sure if I've learned to teach my students about culture" (Putri, Journal 11). Though participants had had opportunities to learn about culture during their time at CJIU, their learning in their CCU class was most present in their memories. They recalled learning about the nature of culture, but did not recall learning about how to draw on their own cultural awareness in order to teach about culture in the future.

### **Practices**

The most commonly observed practice related to culture was making connections to students' lives and experiences. I observed teachers making explicit connections to students' lives in 42% (27 lessons) of the 64 lessons I observed. Teachers connected to students' own cultures in a variety of ways: asking about students' birthdays and Indonesian holidays to practice saying the date (Latifah observation, 9-23-2017); asking students to write discussion texts about topics of interest, including motorcycles, smoking, and indoor football (Rizqy Observation, 11-23-2017); and asking students to ask each other about their own likes, dislikes, and hobbies (Famy observation, 1-8-2018). Lily, a teacher at the university level,

explained her rationale for making connections to students' lives: "[its] easier to find the topic... because they, in real life, feel the experience... It's just more interesting" (Lily interview, 10-9-2017).

The next most commonly observed practice was to include a focus on other cultures and cultural practices from other contexts; I observed this practice in one quarter (16 lessons) of the 64 lessons. I observed more lessons addressing foreign cultures in higher levels with older students, than in lower levels with younger students. I did not observe any explicit teaching about foreign cultures at the primary level. At the junior high level, I observed a teacher discussing the differences between American and British phrases for telling time (Harto observation, 10-3-2017), I observed students reading foreign identity cards (Eka observation, 9-27-2017), and I observed a teacher showing students pictures of American people and challenging their stereotype that all Americans are white (Harto observation, 2-19-2018). At the senior high school level, I observed students delivering presentations about the similarities and differences between Thanksgiving and Ramadan (Okta observation, 12-2-2017), and I observed a teacher discussing the English proverb "The early bird gets the worm" (Rizqy observation, 1-24-2017). In an adult class, I observed students discussing the cultural differences encountered by the characters in a movie they had watched (Siti observation, 2-1-2017), and I observed students reading and discussing folk tales from Europe and from Indonesia (Putri observation, 2-12-2018). At the university level, I observed university students discussing when Indonesian and American people set off fireworks after listening to Katy Perry's song "Firework" (Lily observation, 11-12-2017) I observed a discussion about the cultural significance of various animals (Lily observation, 10-9-2017), and I observed a discussion about how to avoid "culture bump" experiences (Nita observation, 10-4-2017).

Of the 16 lessons that included a focus on other cultures, 8 were primarily focused on sharing cultural information, for instance about American holidays (Okta observation, 12-2-2017), ethnic diversity in America (Harto observation, 2-19-2018), or English proverbs (Rizqy observation, 1-24-2017). Three lessons focused on skills needed when interacting with people from a different culture: a junior high lesson focused on reading foreign ID cards (Eka observation, 9-27-2017), a senior high lesson on reading and responding to job announcements (Lala observation, 10-24-2017), and a university lesson focused on avoiding "culture bumps" in interactions with foreigners (Nita observation, 10-4-2017). Five lessons included activities that challenged cultural assumptions or encouraged students to examine their own attitudes towards culture; two were at a private vocational training school for adults, and both focused on discussing the moral value that could be gleaned from texts (Putri observation, 2-12-2018 and Siti observation, 2-1-2018). The remaining three lessons were at a university; two lessons included discussions about English proverbs and their similarities to Indonesian proverbs (Lily observation, 11-27-2017 and 2-27-2018) and one lesson included a discussion about what students would like to change within Indonesian culture (Nita observation, 3-7-2018). It is encouraging that participants were able to include culture within a quarter of their lessons. Nevertheless, in only two of these lessons were the primary objectives explicitly focused on learning about other cultures (Harto's junior high school lesson about ethnicities in America, and Nita's university lesson about avoiding culture bumps). In other lessons, culture was included in the lesson, but was not the main focus. Nita had warned me near the beginning of the project that I would probably find this situation; she said, "I don't think that language teacher[s] teach culture in a very profound and deep

manner... they just use small portions of learning and teaching activity to touch upon culture” (Nita interview, 9-25-2017). Her statement was a quite accurate portrayal of the situation I found in English classrooms.

## Implications

In many respects, CJIU’s Department of English Education and Teacher Training did an excellent job of raising NTs’ own cultural awareness. Students had the opportunity to learn about the concept of culture, the impact of culture on education, Indonesian culture, and foreign cultures. NTs who graduated several years previously especially highlighted the cultural knowledge gained in their Cross Cultural Understanding course. CJIU is encouraged to continue to offer coursework that leads students to think about culture, see examples of different cultures, and be willing to interact with people across cultural differences. Other language teacher education programs would be will advised to follow their example.

One area of weakness, however, is the preparation of NTs to teach about culture in the future. As discussed above, CJIU students had opportunities to build cultural awareness. They also had the ability to learn about the teaching of language and to build teaching skills, most notably through their 5th semester methods block, 6th semester microteaching, and 7th semester teaching internship. I saw little evidence, however, that NTs had an opportunity to learn about how to *teach about culture* in their future language classrooms. If teachers have the chance to develop their own cultural awareness, but do not learn about how to share or transfer that awareness to their future students, it is unlikely that they will be able to do so effectively. Shulman (1987) identified this mismatch between teachers’ own knowledge and the ability to enact that knowledge in the classroom as a distinction between “content knowledge” and “pedagogical content knowledge.” CJIU was effective in helping NTs to build their own “content knowledge” about culture, but did not offer opportunities to build “pedagogical content knowledge,” that is, the ability to convey that information to students. It is unlikely that this failing is limited to CJIU. Indeed, Byrd (2007) and Wilbur (2007) found that language teaching methods courses devoted little or no course time to the a teaching of culture. Further research is needed to investigate how preservice preparation programs could better prepare novice teachers to address culture in their future language classrooms.

Novice Indonesian teachers of English appear to address cultural issues relatively infrequently. Given the implications discussed above regarding NTs’ limited preparation to teach about culture, that they do so rarely is understandable. The most common practice was to contextualize lessons within students’ own culture, and to make references to their own experiences. By making connections with students’ lives, novice teachers make their classrooms more culturally sustaining places. This practice should be encouraged among novice teachers; the more that students see the use of the English language connecting to their own life, the more motivated they will be to use English.

At the same time, students would also benefit from increased exposure to cultural difference. Approximately 25% of the lessons I observed included activities focusing on other cultures, but only two explicitly focused on culture as a primary lesson objective. Culture was more likely to be included with higher-level students. When culture was addressed, the focus was typically on declarative knowledge about culture. Overall, culture was addressed rather superficially, which is to be expected if novice teachers do not receive preparation to teach

about cultural issues. Without an opportunity to learn about how to teach about culture, NTs will struggle to do so effectively. This deficiency is particularly pronounced in classrooms with younger students: primary and junior high classes. NTs would benefit from learning about how to teach about culture, including with younger learners, in their preservice teacher education programs. They would also benefit from seeing examples of effective teaching about culture, whether through video, workshops, classroom visits, or exchange programs. A number of publications offer high-quality examples and well-illustrated strategies for effective teaching about culture, including the classic (but no longer “new”), *New Ways in Teaching Culture* (Fantini, 1997). More recent publications include *Intercultural Language Teaching Activities* (Corbett, 2010), *Tips for Teaching Culture* (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2011) and *Teaching Intercultural Competence across the Age Range* (Wagner, Perugini & Byram, 2018).

## Conclusion

The findings of this study show that these Indonesian novice teachers of English are able to use *culturally sustaining pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2012) by drawing on students’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 1992) to make connections to students’ cultures within English instruction. If English teachers only make connections to students’ own cultures, however, they are missing an opportunity. To fully develop their intercultural awareness, students also need to encounter other cultures; language classes provide an ideal context for these encounters to happen. Though this teacher preparation program was able to develop NTs’ cultural awareness, novice teachers did not have the opportunity to learn how to teach about culture with their future students. More research is needed to determine if other second language teacher education programs share this deficiency. More research is also needed to determine how best to teach NTs appropriate methods and practices for teaching about culture. Without concerted efforts by second language teacher educators to prepare NTs to teach about culture in their classrooms, it is unlikely that NTs will feel able to do so effectively. If they do not feel confident to teach about culture, they will not help students’ develop the cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are necessary to engage with people different from themselves. An increased focus on how to teach about other cultures could help NTs more effectively build students’ tolerance, curiosity, and social awareness, thereby equipping those students to participate more fully as global citizens.

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