Exploring EFL Learners' Intercultural Sensitivity and Communication Apprehension

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the average level of intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension of EFL teaching assistants learners. In addition to propose the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension. In this study, the researchers selected and applied the mixed-method research paradigm. According to the findings of the research, intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension have some positive effects on the performance of EFL teaching assistants (TA). The correlation and recognition can be measurably important in the intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension for social contrasts in the temporary workplace with a high level. Proposing collaboration and adaptability in intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension with EFL teaching assistants (TA) in order to modify negative respect, enjoyment, and open-mindedness caused by cultural differences. This furthermore encompasses the ability to deal with the tension and anxiety that comes with situations characterized by cultural variances.

Keywords: EFL learners, intercultural sensitivity, communication apprehension

1. Introduction

Arguments among countries, landmasses, and sides of the equator happen regularly as a product of social inconsistencies, particular convictions, and broadcasting the truth would be erroneous. Since it's not really something awful inside one society, although it may be conviction, assurance, nor respect in another (Bhargava & Panicker, 2021; Malley, 2019; Zhang, 2015). In this age of social globalization, the world is interconnected. These variables have influenced every aspect of the world, including the financial, social, political, ecological, and specialized. Culture is another factor that has had an impact on the advancement of change. While organizations are confronted with a wide range of social distinctions and variations (Wang et al., 2017). Persons should research and find out how to apply what they know and have acquired to this certification. Correspondence is the most important tool for individuals to better understand one another. It is useful for adjusting to and reacting to changes, but also learning and comprehension. People should grasp intercultural communications before communicating anything. Either as reason, anyone should learn and adhere towards the evolution of character and culture through addition to identifying and survive within this culture. After you get acclimated to this one for a lengthy moment it becomes a behavior, similar social and natural molded habits emerge specific to the person. Persons generally have the following personalities that are embedded in them from conception, including such ethnicity, skin tone, Genes, and sexuality, besides other characteristics (Asante et al., 2016). Those are extended characters, and one more kind of character is one that is framed sometime down the road, perhaps as a piece of intentional or biological factors additionally including grown-up direction decision, severe shift, decision of tune and sports, and demeanor on different courses (McKenzie & Baldassar, 2016). Most can be obtained and drilled later, or they might work on over the long run.

Social contrasts can happen in an assortment of ways, including people who relocate abroad, either briefly or for all time, because of reasons like business, school, or wedding a pariah. An individual brought up in some sort of a culture, for instance, ought to be affected by that society and culture through the most regular method of guidance and keeping up with inside themselves as a standard for human direct.

For example, at one moment in time, individuals consider us as academics, but at another, guardians remember us all as instructors. Despite the fact that we're still in same area at the same time, each possess two different personalities

or perspectives and are constantly hunting for others who view us as we have seen ourselves (Li, 2015).

Thus, people should live in an assortment of societies, and their perspectives, convictions, and practices from what they have procured can't be pertinent to all civic establishments (Chen, 2010). As a response, people should track down a way to separate themselves from different gatherings to suit the principles and practices of the new friendly and social setting (Darwish, 2015; Jacobi, 2020). Before it was endured and ready to connect with different gatherings as an endurance adaption in the public arena (Croucher, 2013).

Learning versatile reactions or social assortment responsiveness permits us to all the more likely appreciate individual characters and personalities (Arcagok & Yılmaz, 2020). It might likewise convince or convince those with shut personalities to open down to be aware of different societies. It urges people in the public eye to all the more likely comprehend each other and coincide calmly despite contrast in the working environments (Arvantis et al., 2017; Driscoll, 2017; Maharaja, 2018; Yılmaz & Göçen, 2013). Taking into account problems including certain the levels of intercultural sensitivity of teaching assistants related to sexuality authenticity, maturity level, academic execution, and the number years have worked. How do teaching assistants see intercultural sensitivity include the points of view of communication apprehension among teaching assistants and the correlation among intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension. This study investigates the connection between intercultural awareness and correspondence nervousness, and subsequently the connection between social responsiveness and correspondence anxiety. The exploration of showing aides (TA) who act in global English speculations, instruction organizations, or English as second language schools hopes to zero in on the sorts of intercultural awareness and interchanges doubt of TA, yet additionally the issues and deterrents achieved by social responsiveness and correspondences alarm, or even the parts adding to change.

2. Literature Review

Human progress as an Ideology

The vernacular has a number different meanings, each of which addresses a different point of view (Griffin, 2006). Exhaustive significance is something that people have constructed through investigation to direct life or the way that persons in the local region go about their everyday lives in line with the Dharma Culture also has recognizable undertones such as traditions, practices, opinions, convictions, values, and concepts and includes artifacts that have been made by humans. There are a few implications available in terms of cultural execution. Barrett (2014) claims that culture is a factor might accept a significant structure except to be vulnerable to components but instead semi heritage, encompassing obvious elements like clothes including language, while also natural favored viewpoints, convictions, worth, acknowledgement, and so on. There are two types of societies (Chebankova & Dutkiewicz, 2021).

The Organization's Origins

The word hierarchical culture alludes to the mentalities, values, and convictions that everybody in an organization offers and that all adds to the association's unified corporate objectives. It likewise directs how everybody functions as per the corporate arrangement for progress (Dwayne, 2017). The expression "Authoritative Culture" alludes to the center of each association that ought to be focused on. A decent hierarchical culture ought to be fit to the Core Values or corporate qualities, including the objectives or vision along with the philosophy that is the association's significant objective (Beer, 2021; Heskett, 2021; Tedla, 2016). Here is a portion from Harvard University's depiction of the six significant parts of corporate culture, which are as per the following (Hofstede et al., 1990; Sheehan, 2015; Tedla, 2016): (1) *Vision*: A sound corporate culture should start with laying out the association's objective (mission) and finishing with the making of an organization personality. What do you need our organization to be? Or on the other hand, more explicitly, who takes every necessary step? (2) *Values* are the strengthening of corporate culture in order for it to be beneficial in accordance with the bearing of the association. Extraordinary guidelines aid in bringing all of the viewpoints and efforts of the agents altogether. (3) *Practices* contour hierarchical culture so that staff members could also sense it. Work manuals, for instance, contain moral rules. (4) *Employees* in a business: People might be a way for organizations to really focus on their staff. Or then again the way that organizations used to track down new faculty. Numerous people believe laborers to be the way of life of the firm. (5) *Narrative*: Telling a story and correspondence are basic parts of authoritative turn of events. For associations set a premium on developing a culture that is secured in its creators. Moreover spread out an association that will thrive from now on. (6) *Place*: The location of the alliance is inferred from doing it all the reason to the game plan. This will help elucidate our alliance's capabilities. A tech-centered connection, for example, as to equip their work places with a ton of cutting-edge IT gear to oblige workers with IT data, or a game plan company will make the work environment spectacular and wealthy.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Social insight was tied in with monitoring the presence of social contrasts and likenesses between individuals without giving those a worth - great or negative, better or more regrettable, scratched in stone (Hammer et al., 2003). It basically suggests that people perceived that individuals were not innately unique and that their lifestyle was no prevalent than that of another human advancement (Graf, 2004; Gudykunst & Kim, 2002). People ceaselessly experience conditions in which there was an overall and a discretionary culture in our ordinary schedules and workplaces (Adler, 2008). This is constantly an issue, especially in huge associations where agents were depended upon to recognize the dominating society.

Using the Theory of Intercultural Sensitivity Sequences to Understand What Would be Social Responsiveness

A seriously significant time-frame back, Milton encouraged a solid framework to understand the various successions of intercultural awareness (or as he alludes to it as "intercultural responsiveness") that a particular person could have knowledge into (Bennett, 2013:2017). This battles that as people turned out to be progressively better culturally delicate, better culturally, they evolve from having an ethnocentric perspective to having a global perspective heading to a more ethnorelative point of view (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). In a way that would appear to be typical to Bennett, "if all else fails, the more ethnocentric headings should be obvious as ways of managing keeping avoidance to socializing capability, whether by concealing the appearance, increasing safeguards against it, or limiting its relevance).

Ethnocentric Intercultural Sensitivity Segments

These will be the three successions have been as per the following: 1) Denial: Beings don't perceive social contrasts and communications at this grouping in terms of social sensitivity. They concur that their lifestyle was the case "real" initially, which they will regularly take an interest in homogeneous gatherings and generalization every other person (Wrench et al., 2006). 2) Defense: Now at a guarded arrangement of social responsiveness, individuals perceived a couple of contrasts, however consider others to be negative since they accept their lifestyle has been the most exceptional, the more noteworthy. 3) Minimization: Humans in this field degree of social awareness were uninformed that they had mirroring one's possess personal relationships qualities. The individuals who accepted that their own attributes were prevailing. Others accept that essentially being worried about friendly imbalances was adequate. These individuals accept everybody was basically something very similar since we were more equivalent than various and, accordingly, everybody has practically identical real, regular, mental, etc necessities. Individuals thought they were brilliant on the grounds that they see individuals as people, yet they were truly keeping society from affecting every individual's insight (Bennett & Castiglioni, 2004).

Ethnorelative Scenes of Intercultural Sensitivity

This same three are ethnorelative successions of intercultural responsiveness were: Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. 1) Acceptance: In this succession of intercultural responsiveness individuals had the option to move viewpoints to get that the equivalent "standard" conduct can have various implications in various societies (Bennett, 2013; 2017). People had the option to identify what one way of life is meant for their encounters. Some may not concur or even partake in the progressions that saw, however they have been interested to dive more deeply into another culture (Breninger & Kaltenbacher, 2020), 2) Adaptation: Individuals who were at this succession of intercultural responsiveness worked on their ability to speak with individuals from different societies (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). People might pass judgment on the lead of others by utilizing their casing of reference, and they can change their conduct to satisfy the guidelines of an alternate culture (Chen & Starosta, 2005), 3) Integration: Humans at this grouping of intercultural awareness had the option to rapidly move starting with one social edge of reference then onto the next. People acquired sympathy for individuals from different societies. The individuals who were similarly quiet in one culture or the other (Bennett, 2017).

Intercultural Communication Apprehension

Dread or disquiet related with veritable or expected contact with people from different establishments, especially extraordinary social or ethnic get-togethers, is implied as intercultural correspondence stress (Chen, 2010). As demonstrated by Sarwari & Wahab (2017), the deficit of data regarding each other during beginning encounters increases social chaos or confounding, which causes individuals to feel fretful or unfortunate. Because of the interest and novelty made by friendly differentiations, the degree of vulnerability in intercultural correspondence is particularly strong (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). In an intercultural situation, dread in an uncertain atmosphere frequently jeopardizes productive engagement (Urick et al., 2017). In both intracultural and international contexts, correspondence misgiving was seen as maybe the most grounded measure of the ability to communicate (Neuliep,

2012; Rahmani & Croucher, 2017). People who were more fearful were less likely to share information in intercultural collaborations and therefore less prepared to respond to another social setting (Breninger & Kaltenbacher, 2020; Neuliep, 2017; Tahir et al., 2017; Trisasanti et al., 2020:2021).

3. Research Methodology

Participants & Sample

The methodology of this investigation includes the population, participants, tools, data gathering methods, and information investigations tactic. Continuing to follow that, the researchers selected and used the mixed-method research paradigm. Participants in this study also include 60 EFL teaching assistants (TA) from five provinces in a small company in Thailand's northeastern region.

A total of 30 EFL teaching assistants (TA) from 27 females and three males contributors were chosen using the purposive sampling method with a minimum of six months in the position required, and all were voluntary data was an important criterion.

Instruments

1) The 24-item Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000), and the 24-item McCroskey's (1982) Communication Apprehension scale were used in this study to measure the two concepts. (Bhargava & Panicker, 2021; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Dong, 2018; Gudykunst & Kim, 2002; Moran et. al, 2007). The scale's alpha coefficient was .86 in the primary research and .94 in this study, and 2) Semi-structured interviews were guided by research aim and the questions to be asked. The researcher brought the questions used in the interview to consult with three experts in order to improve the questions to be complete and appropriate before use. After the group of three experts validated their content validity and *index of* item–objective congruence (IOC). Every question had an IOC higher than 0.50, and there were no suggestions for language improvements.

Data collection

The requirement to make it convenient for participants in the COVID19 setting informed the design of data gathering were as follows: 1) documentary research entails gathering and compiling documents, literature review, and related research in order to comprehend the definitions of Intercultural Sensitivity and Communication Apprehension. 2) Field data was collected by the researchers through an in-depth interview with a semi-structured interview with a non-sample group of five people. In the form of an informal interview, with permission to take notes and record audio via Zoom.

Data analysis

The researchers were using basic statistics to analyze quantitative data, and document analysis and content analysis to analyze qualitative data. Organizing data by linking the keyword indexes in the example together to describe, interpret, and draw conclusions using inductive reasoning methods, in addition to organizing information and then coding it. Then utilizing a computer program to assess the correlation coefficient of the samples.

4. Research Results

Thus according sexuality authenticity, the majority of the samples have been 27 females, properly accounted for 90 %, and three male, compensating for 10%. Since the most current maturity level, the critical age range of the examples was 25-34 years, with 15 persons reporting for 50%, followed by eight persons under 25 years of age accounting for 26.67%, four people between 35-44 years old representing 13.33%, and persons over 44 years of age accounting for 10%, completely differently. As per academic execution, most of the example bunch held a under graduate's certification, with 17 people representing 56.67%, and 13 graduated contributing for 43.33%. According to years of employment, the majority of the examples were 6-10 years of 11 people, representing 36.67%, followed by 1-5 years of seven people, representing 23.33%, and under one year of six people, representing 20%. The general estimation of Communication Apprehension at the agreed level had a normal of 3.42. When all things were considered, the two things with the highest mean were No. 2) and No. 4) of mean 3.93, followed by No. 8) of mean 3.87, and the lowest mean was No. 1) of mean 2.80. The estimation of Intercultural Sensitivity was at the agree level, with a normal of 3.75. Taking everything into account, it was discovered that the item with the most notable mean was No.16) the mean was 4.57, followed by No.1) the mean was 4.40 and No.13) the mean was 4.43, No. 7) was the statement with the lowest mean, and the mean was 2.83, respectively.

Table 1. The Correlation Intercultural Sensitivity VS. Communication Apprehension

| | The Dimension | | |
ISS CA	Pearson Correlation	*P-value*	Level
	0.729**	0.000	High

*** P<.01*

CA: Communication Apprehension

ISS: Intercultural Sensitivity

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between Intercultural Sensitivity and Communication Apprehension assessments was authentically critical in a similar heading at the .01 level.

Purposive sampling was done in qualitative research to choose the five EFL learners (TA) who took part in the study. The statistics from in-depth interviews reflecting EFL learners' adaptability to intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension in five main intercultural sensitivity factors are proffered below.

"Colleagues have been incredibly kind and helpful during my five-month stint as a TA. Respect for cultural diversity was very kind, celebrates cohabitation with diverse cultures, and is always willing to provide advice. Concerning our confidence in communicating with one another, I was first hesitant and unfamiliar with working together due to various languages and cultures, but as we worked together, I got more adaptive and creative while having fun engaging with one another. I appreciated it a lot since it allowed me to improve my language abilities at work. Finally, when colleagues connect with one another, they are particularly receptive to advice and work-related suggestions."

"Upon eight months as a TA, I got to know and bond with both Thai and foreign colleagues. There was a relationship with the pupils as well as a bond of engagement with one another. Compassion for one another grew as people learned about diverse cultures and acquired confidence in their relationships with one another as well as in their work with colleagues and pupils. I collaborated with my colleagues and students, and their interactions grew. I am really impressed with the attention to interaction with each other since the care and respect for each other with colleagues helps me work pleasantly."

"Because I've been working as a TA for nine years, I have a greater relationship with my coworkers than I do with students. I worked with foreigners, but I always had mutual respect and dignity because I was confident in the interactions that would have with my colleagues and our pupils. In terms of having pleasure in our interactions with one another, I had a lot of fun and joy at this event which I always cared for and concerned about my coworkers."

"For the eighth year in a row, I've been working as a TA since my coworkers here were more than just colleagues those who were like family. Everyone respects one another and was eager to learn about the cultures of others. I have the most confidence in communication, and we always have delight chatting and caring for each other."

"I've been working as a TA for two years, but it's a daily greeting for the engagement. Working with foreigners necessitates paying extra attention to culture. So I had to first learn about the culture of that country, accept the differences, and attempt to adapt as fast as possible. In terms of interpersonal confidence, I have no confidence in talking to coworkers who have not been acquainted and will not participate in conversation or much discussion outside of the particular topic. When it relates to the enjoyable part of engaging with one another, the majority of the talks were around students and teaching materials. As either a nutshell, there isn't much enjoyment because everyone has different roles. Meanwhile, when my colleague's attention was diverted, I would embrace them and inquire how they were doing. So how are you? and we shared some snacks and fruits."

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussion

The general information of the target group was studied in four areas: sexuality authenticity, maturity level, academic execution, and years of employment working in other provinces. Male and female studies have revealed an adaptation in new social cultures. When faced with a problem, TA can work in the same way by trying to see the problem in a positive way. Age all four age ranges were interpreted intercultural sensitivity, communication apprehension, and adaptability were the same, but the younger group adopted more quickly. Because they learn and socialize with their coworkers more quickly. It helps to adapt to new social groups during the period of working in the provinces because when individuals get used to it, individuals will be able to adapt to the culture in the new society in the end. Thai people's characteristics were considered, such as their lack of assertiveness and their willingness to express their honest

opinions. This made it difficult to understand the character of the foreigners, who frequently speak bluntly and express their opinions without regard for others, and the problem of assertiveness was a barrier to expressing their opinions at work. Due to unfamiliar working styles, this causes issues in the early stages of work.

Conclusion

Intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension in cultural behavior can explain the EFL Learners' overall intercultural adaptation. Intercultural sensitivity is a priority for EFL teaching assistants (TA) who work with foreigners. Although most people do not face many obstacles at work because they use English or their native language as the primary language and their coworkers are fluent in a foreign or English language. However, when intercultural sensitivities arise, being able to communicate in English, even if only a slight smidge, can be beneficial for interactions. Including various aids to reduce communication apprehension among colleagues who still have some restrictions on the use of a foreign language. Numerous research findings indicate that intercultural sensitivity, communication apprehension, or host language skills have a positive influence on adaptation in a new culture, either directly or indirectly (Froese, et al., 2012; Fukuda, 2015; Huang, 2013).

Recommendations

1. In terms of subculture challenges, learners' intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension vary by area of the world. As either a consequence, data should be collected in a variety of areas to have a better understanding.

2. Thorough investigations should be more quantitative in order to understand the extent to which elements impacting intercultural sensitivity and communication apprehension of foreigners working with Thais may be influenced. What criteria might indicate cross-cultural adaption of foreigners working with Thais?

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