



TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM CLASSES IN VIETNAM: TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract. The study explores Vietnamese EFL teachers' practices and beliefs about intercultural communicative competence (ICC) for tourism majors. Fifteen observations were conducted in their English for Tourism Purposes (ETP) classes at three institutes in Central Vietnam. The teachers were then interviewed in a semi-structured format to examine the beliefs underlying their ICC teaching practices. The findings showed that the teacher's practices focused on language skills and tourism-related knowledge. Their teaching of ICC was treated as a minor goal, but when they taught ICC, they emphasized the linguistic, cognitive and behavioural facets over others. Their practices were led by their beliefs in the importance of preparing students for their course assessment and future occupations. The study provides essential implications for ICC education in the tourism domain.

Keywords. Teachers' practices, beliefs, intercultural communicative competence, English for tourism.

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate appropriately in various cultural contexts is an indispensable condition that enables people to live together in the current era of globalization [16]. With exponential growth of hotel and hospitality industry, tourism has become a more and more culturally diverse business [17]. It is a fundamental precondition for tourism employees and tourism-majored students who will work in an intercultural environment to negotiate cultural differences for efficient communication [27]. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is considered to be a crucial competence to succeed in communication in international contexts [3]. ICC is described as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations" [9, pp. 247-248]. With good ICC, people from different cultural backgrounds can interact smoothly and avoid communication barriers that frequently originate from cultural misunderstandings. ICC also helps graduates of tourism majors confidently integrate and assert

themselves in a professional international environment with high salaries, good remuneration, and outstanding promotion potential [31]. Consequently, there is a fact that teaching English in general and teaching English for Tourism Purposes in particular requires not only teaching learners the ability to use the English language fluently but also helping them to obtain ICC. Furthermore, Byram [6] urges us to pay greater attention to the integrated function that instructors play as both linguistic and intercultural educators rather than only concentrating on the job of teaching language in English language instruction. As such is the importance of teaching and learning ICC, numerous studies on ICC have been implemented by many scholars [2, 17, 20, 32, etc.]. More and more educators have also called for more attention to the development of ICC for EFL learners [11, 23].

Although many studies related to ICC have been conducted in EFL teaching and learning contexts [2, 11, 19, 20, 22, 32], few explore teachers' ICC practices [25] and/or their beliefs [14], especially in the tourism industry [30]. To the best of our knowledge, there is scant research on teachers' practices of ICC and their beliefs in the tourism field at the tertiary level in the Vietnamese context. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the ETP teachers' practices of ICC and the beliefs underlying their teaching in Vietnamese tertiary settings with the hope of contributing to existing knowledge about ICC education in the tourism field.

2. Literature review

2.1 Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and Byram's model of ICC

ICC is considered to be a fundamental notion in language and intercultural communication [15]. It is known as "knowledge, motivation, and skills needed to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" [26, p. 208]. Noticeably, in the realm of foreign language education, Byram [5, pp. 48-73] defines ICC as the "individual's ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language by acting as a mediator between people of different cultural origins". According to Byram [5, 6], intercultural competence (IC) consists of five components: *Knowledge* (savoirs), *Skills of interpreting and relating* (savoir comprendre), *Skills of discovery and interaction* (savoir apprendre/faire), *Critical cultural awareness* (savoir s'engager), and *Attitudes* (savoir être). Byram [cited in 12, p. 65] explained that these five competences can be summarized into three groups: *affective* capacities/attitudes, i.e. sensitivity of the other "cultural identities, respect for otherness, tolerance for ambiguity and empathy", *behavioural* capacity, which means self-adjusting in order to talk/write appropriately in intercultural settings, and *cognitive* capacity comprising "knowledge, knowledge discovery, interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness". In the particular field of tourism, Yu et al. [29] recommend the IC of tour guides which includes

the three dimensions of Byram's ICC: affective, behavioural and cognitive. The affective dimension in the tourism field, according to Yu et al. [29, pp. 80-81] means tourism personnel need "to be empathetic, non-judgmental and sensitive" to tourists' needs. Meanwhile, the behavioural aspect refers to the staff's "communication skills and interpersonal interaction", which means their ability to interact with customers and handle intercultural situations properly. The cognitive component is defined as tourism staff's knowledge and understanding of their home countries' and tourists' cultures as well as the differences between the host's and guests' cultures.

Byram [6] also develops a comprehensive model of ICC to include linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and intercultural competences. In Byram's model of ICC, the linguistic competence means "the ability to apply the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language" [6, p. 60], while the sociolinguistic competence refers to the capability to understand and negotiate the right meanings with the interlocutor. Discourse competence is defined as being able to "use, discover and negotiate strategies" to produce and interpret texts which are in line with an interlocutor's cultural conventions or negotiate "intercultural texts for particular purposes" [6, p. 60]. The value of Byram's ICC model is undeniable. First of all, it is the most specific, well-articulated model [18]. Secondly, it is one of the influential models of teaching and assessing ICC in language education [22]. In other words, it is acknowledged as the cornerstone in the field [8]. For these reasons, Byram's ICC model was employed as a theoretical framework for the present study. It has been used in many studies on ICC in a wide range of EFL and discipline-specific contexts [21, 24].

2.2 Teaching ICC in ETP courses

Teaching ICC for ETP tourism students plays a vital role in the tourism undergraduates' future careers, as they are trained to work with foreign colleagues and tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Effective intercultural communication requires awareness of linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as cultural barriers [1]. Hence, teaching English for tourism majors demands not only equipping learners with the ability to use language fluently but also helping them to acquire ICC. Although there has not been any practical guide for teaching ICC specifically in the tourism field, general principles have been developed for teaching ICC in language courses. These principles emphasise language and culture integration, learners' engagement in real-life communication, a dynamic intercultural teaching approach and a focus on developing learners' ICC [18].

2.3 Related ICC studies

This part presents the research on teachers' practices and their beliefs in teaching ICC in general and specialized English classes respectively. For example, in a European context, Sercu [22] conducted a quantitative study via questionnaires with 424 secondary school teachers of English, German, French, and other languages from six European countries. The findings show that the teachers focused on the learners' acquisition of communicative competence in the foreign language. In an Asian context, the studies from China [25, 32] investigated both the teachers' perceptions and their teaching practices of culture and ICC. Both of the studies showed that the teachers perceived the significance of teaching culture/ICC in EFL classes; however, their practices showed an irregular emphasis on cultural/intercultural language teaching.

In a Vietnamese context, Ho [13] used a mixed-method research to investigate the cultural content in the curriculum for tertiary EFL programmes, the perceptions and classroom practices of fourteen EFL teachers, and the cultural learning of 200 EFL students. The findings indicated that culture and culture learning was not emphasized in the EFL courses. In the same context and investigating the teachers' beliefs and integration of culture in EFL classes to develop learners' intercultural competence, Nguyen [19] gathered data from interviews, classroom observations, field notes and teaching materials with the participation of 15 tertiary English teachers. The results showed that the participants aimed at restricted objectives in cultural teaching and focused on teaching cultural knowledge rather than intercultural skills and awareness. Focusing on the Business course, Ho and Ton [14] conducted a case study with six Business English teachers in a college in Vietnam to explore their perceptions and practices of ICC in Business English teaching. The research showed that the teachers prioritized language competence over ICC, and their ICC teaching concentrated on intercultural knowledge. In the tourism context, Y. Liu, J. Liu, and King [17] examined the perceptions of the faculty, students and experts related to ICC using 361 questionnaires collected from 13 universities and 21 hotels in China. The findings show that all interviewees perceived that more attention should be paid to language than behavioural and affective dimensions of ICC.

The prior studies reviewed here have focused on teachers' practices and/or perceptions in general EFL classes, except for two studies in the ESP domain [14, 17]. ICC teaching in ETP courses and teachers' beliefs are still limited. As ICC is a core competence to develop for tourism staff [3], understanding how teachers teach ICC for their tourism students and their underlying beliefs is important in planning ICC instruction for this group. This study thus investigated how Vietnamese EFL teachers addressed ICC in their ETP classes and what they believed guided their ICC teaching practices. The current study aims to answer these two

research questions:

- (i) How do Vietnamese EFL teachers address ICC in ETP classes?
- (ii) Why do they address ICC in these particular ways?

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

Ten teachers who taught ETP at one junior college and two universities in a city in central Vietnam which is popular with tourists voluntarily participated in this research. The teachers were selected purposefully based on three criteria: (i) teaching ETP courses for at least five years so that they had sufficient experience, (ii) being willing to be observed, and (iii) voluntarily participating in a subsequent interview. They were all female, aged from 30 to 46 with an M.A. degree in Applied Linguistics/TESOL except one with a doctoral degree. They had from five to 18 years of experience in teaching English for tourism majors.

3.2 Data collection

Firstly, classroom observations were used to examine the Vietnamese ETP teachers' practices of ICC in their English classrooms, as it helps gather "live data" from naturally occurring social situations [7, p. 396]. On the basis of the availability of classes for observation, five teachers were observed twice and the other five teachers were observed once as they taught in their normal classroom hours in May 2022. In total, there were fifteen classroom observations targeting teaching English for hotel and restaurant management, and English for tour guide and tour operation. Each classroom observation lasted about 50 minutes and was audio-recorded with the teachers' permission. In total, there were 12 hours five minutes of classroom observation made to ten teachers. To ensure reliability, every lesson was observed using a systematic observation scheme [adapted from 14]. Every lesson was observed using a structured observation plan based on the same standards to ensure reliability including teaching activities, teaching contents, teaching cultural/ICC activities, and field notes. All the notes were manually taken on the classroom observation scheme. Instead of concentrating only on the ICC teaching practices, all of the teaching activities were recorded chronologically in order to reduce the researcher's personal bias on the observed data. The data from the audio recordings was used as an additional source of data.

Secondly, interviews were additionally used to explore the Vietnamese ETP teachers' beliefs underlying their ICC teaching. The interview is "a useful tool to collect data" flexibly [7, p. 409]. The ten Vietnamese ETP teachers, whose classes were observed, voluntarily participated

in the interviews. The interviewees were asked why they taught ICC in the ways they did in the observed classes. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to facilitate participants' understanding and in a semi-structured format with a set of pre-prepared guiding questions to encourage the interviewees to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner [10]. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the teachers' permission. With their prior consent, the interviews were scheduled at a convenient time and place for each teacher, and were conducted individually in order to provide in-depth data.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 *Analysis of observation data*

Thematic analysis [4] was used to analyze classroom observation data. First, the field notes were coded in response to: the teaching contents, ICC dimensions, and the teachers' beliefs underlying their teaching practices of ICC. Finally, all of the notes were categorized for themes and subthemes as follows.

3.3.1.1 *Coding teaching contents*

The teaching contents were coded in terms of

- (i) English language skills: For example, listening skills: listening for details about money (Observation 8), reading skills: skimming texts about booking tours (Observation 6), etc.
- (ii) Specialized knowledge for tourism majors: teaching how to operate a tour (Observation 10), teaching how to take room reservations (Observation 8), etc.
- (iii) ICC: Byram's [6] model of ICC which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse competences and intercultural competence (IC) was used. IC was coded at the three levels: affective, behavioural and cognitive capacities.

3.3.1.2 *Coding teaching each ICC dimension*

Linguistic competence: Instances where the teachers taught how to apply the rules of a standard version of English language, which implies the norms of using vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, or intonation properly [6, p. 79], related to intercultural interaction with tourists were coded as "linguistic competence". An example was when Teacher 7 differentiated the norm of using the word "package" in daily conversation differently from its use in tour operation indicating the cost of all services in a tour (Observation 9), etc.

Sociolinguistic competence: Instances were when teachers taught the language use with suitable meaning in diverse social interactions with clients. An example is teaching how to greet guests with different marital status appropriately, i.e. tourism staff should use "Ms." with female tourists; "Mrs." should only be used when the guests used it first (Observation 3).

Discourse competence: Classroom practices focused on teaching the use, discovery or negotiation of meanings between the host and tourists. An illustration was teaching the use of the sentence “Welcome back” with returned guests appropriately (Observation 3).

IC

-Affective capacity: Classroom practices related to the affective dimension focus on teaching learners the appropriate attitudes in intercultural communication with customers. For example, in observation 8, students were taught to have polite and gentle attitudes with guests.

- Behavioural capacity: Instances included when students learned to solve unexpected intercultural situations (Observations 7, 10, etc.).

- Cognitive capacity: When the teachers’ lessons involved teaching knowledge and understanding of one’s own and others’ cultures. For example, teaching Vietnamese and other countries’ knowledge of history and festivals, was coded as cognitive (Observations 11, 12, etc.).

3.3.2 Analysis of interview data

Firstly, the interviews were transcribed entirely, and the accuracy of transcription was double checked by all of the interviewees and the interviewer before analysis. The data were then analyzed in the original language, i.e. Vietnamese, to retain the meanings intended by the interviewees. The interview transcripts were read multiple times to derive themes that emerged why the teachers taught their ICC lessons in the ways they did. The translations were checked carefully for accuracy by an English lecturer who majored in Interpretation and Translation. The interviewees were not identified, but coded as T1 (Teacher 1), T2 (Teacher 2), T3 (Teacher 3), etc.

The study questions of how the teachers developed ICC for their learners in ETP classes and why they addressed in specific methods were addressed by the data from the classroom observations and the interviews. Furthermore, two themes which were emerged from the triangulation and connection of the data from the above sources covered the teaching contents and the teaching of each ICC component.

3.4 Interrater reliability

In order to ensure the reliability of the data coding for all of the themes, interrater reliability was employed in this research. Two thirds of the data (10/15 observations) randomly selected was coded independently by two raters: the first was the main researcher, the first author of this article (rater 1) and the second was a Vietnamese EFL colleague (rater 2). The interrater reliability result was 85%, which shows satisfactory agreement since the acceptable level is at least 80% [28].

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Teachers' practices of teaching ICC in ETP classes

4.1.1 Teaching contents

In the observed ETP classes, the teaching contents covered teaching the English language skills, the tourism-related knowledge, and teaching to develop learners' ICC. The data from the classroom observation showed that the teachers focused on English language skills and specialized knowledge for future tourism-related careers in most of the teaching time of all 15 observed lessons. With reference to teaching four language skills, the teachers set aside the time in their classrooms to teach speaking skill more than to teach the listening, reading and writing skills with generally around half of the teaching time in 11 out of 15 ETP classes. The other three language skills appeared occasionally when students practiced listening for main ideas related to hotel bills (Observation 7) or specific details of conference booking (Observation 6), reading about the USA (Observation 13) and writing scientific reports (Observations 14 and 15), etc. Similarly, approximately three quarters of 725 minutes, the teaching time observed in ETP classes, focused on the tourism-related knowledge. For instance, in Observation 1, ETP teachers taught the specialized knowledge of positions and job duties in Food and Beverage Department. In Observation 6, the teacher presented professional steps when taking conference reservations.

Meanwhile, the observed teachers also employed activities to enhance learners' ICC in the 15 classroom observations. Nevertheless, among the total of around 12 hours of 15 observations, the teachers devoted roughly 70% of their teaching time to language skills and tourism-related knowledge. The time duration for all practices of teaching ICC in observed ETP lessons was about a third of the total 725 minutes. The activities to develop the students' ICC were conducted in an integrated way with the other teaching contents when ICC was incidentally found to be linked with or to support teaching four skills and specialized knowledge. Interestingly, this integration matches the first principle of intercultural teaching, integrating language and culture/interculturality in language teaching, suggested by Newton and Shearn [18]. However, the fact that ETP teachers did not consider ICC as important as language competence in the present research is congruent with findings from previous studies [20, 25]. This finding could be attributed to the teachers' beliefs in prioritising language teaching over ICC development.

4.1.2 Teaching each ICC dimension

Although the teaching time of ICC was not as much as the teaching time of language skills and tourism particularized knowledge in the observed ETP classes, the teaching practices of some ICC facets were more dominant than the others (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Frequency of Teaching Each ICC Dimension in Observed ETP Classes

As seen from Figure 1, the teachers' practices focused on linguistic competence (12 activities) more than both sociolinguistic and discourse competences with one activity each. Regarding the intercultural competence, the cognitive and behavioural dimensions were concentrated on to a similar amount with 13 and 12 activities respectively. There were only two activities related to affective facet. By reference to Byram [6], this study's findings show that the ETP teachers emphasized the cognitive capacity (*savoirs*) rather than attitudes (*savoir être*). This teaching technique, which provided students with a piece of intercultural knowledge without further explanation to help students understand and have appropriate attitudes with guests, may lead to the learners' misunderstanding, stereotype and prejudice.

4.2 Teachers' beliefs underlying their teaching practices

4.2.1 Preparation for future tourism occupations

A significant number (7/10) of the ETP teachers stated that they focused on tourism-related knowledge in ETP courses because this was the fundamental element needed to equip the learners for their future professions. Other teachers added that knowledge for tourism jobs served as the prerequisite for learners of this major so that they could fulfill the requirements at their workplaces.

4.2.2 Emphasis on English language proficiency

Five of the ten teachers reported that in their ETP classes, they prioritized the development of English language competence. These teachers believed that English proficiency was the foundation for effective communication in both learners' personal and professional lives. Moreover, T7 and T10 explained that although their students were studying ETP, they may work in other fields such as education or translation and interpretation due to objective

reasons, for instance, the recent Covid pandemic. Hence, teachers had to focus on developing learners' language capacity to help them undertake multiple careers.

4.2.3 *Assessment washback effect*

Five teachers stressed the assessment washback of ETP courses in their teaching practices. Firstly, they reported that their teaching focused on the tourism specialized knowledge because the ETP tests and final exams targeted tourism-related knowledge and particular English terminologies used for tourism majors. In addition, the teachers further reported they believed that ICC was not as significant as language skills or professional knowledge to meet the demands of tests and assessments. Although they addressed ICC in their lessons, it was merely an add-on. T10 clarified that most of the time in the English lessons, she concentrated on teaching language skills and tourism knowledge concerning the aims of assessments. During her teaching, if she caught some ideas about ICC, she would integrate them into the lessons (Interview 10).

4.2.4 *Reliance on course books*

While three reported their ICC practices were based on their own knowledge and experience, seven out of ten participants reported their dependence on ETP course books for teaching ICC. These seven teachers admitted that they had never been trained to develop learners' ICC, and had to rely their teaching on the materials' activities. On the other hand, the three teachers revealed the reasons for scant practices of sociolinguistic, discourse and affective dimensions, which must be taught in specific contexts of communication. In order to do this, educators ought to have their personal knowledge and experience, or participation in training programmes for ICC. Furthermore, the teachers also clarified the reasons for the frequent use of retained teaching activities in ETP classes. First, they believed that teaching in compliance with textbooks and curriculum was a requirement of their schools and departments to ensure the students' outcome standards (T2, T3, T5, T7, T8 and T10). This way of teaching also built up good study habits for learners, making them feel secure and study in an oriented way (T1 and T4). Lastly, teaching strictly by the coursebook was time-saving for educators (T6 and T9).

4.3 *Discussion of teachers' practices of ICC in ETP courses and their beliefs*

The study was set out to explore how the Vietnamese ETP teachers taught ICC in their classroom practices. The findings showed that ETP teachers' practices mainly focused on teaching English language skills and specialized knowledge to prepare students for their future jobs, while the teaching content of ICC arose briefly in an integrated way with the other teaching contents in ETP lessons. Interestingly, this integration matches the first principle of intercultural teaching suggested by Newton and Shearn [18]. Newton and Shearn [18, p. 63]

propose six principles for intercultural language teaching in which teachers should, first of all, integrate language and culture/interculturality from the beginning. However, the teachers' practices of teaching ICC in this study were conducted in a short period when the teachers found their teaching content related to a dimension of intercultural communicative competence. The third principle of intercultural language teaching, i.e. encouraging and developing an exploratory and reflective approach to culture and culture-in-language [18], was not applied frequently when ETP learners had little opportunity to actively explore or reflect on interculturality. This could be explained by the fact that the ETP teachers' practices of ICC mainly relied on the prescribed textbooks' contents and the teachers' own intercultural knowledge and experience.

Additionally, the fact that the ETP teachers did not consider teaching ICC as important as teaching language proficiency was also found in other research [19, 20]. This finding could be attributed to the teachers' perceptions of priority to language teaching over the integrated role as teachers of both linguistic and intercultural educators. Moreover, this was also due to the fact that, in the institutions under investigation, ICC was not adopted as a marking standard for ETP courses' formative assessments and final exams.

Notably, although ICC was not the major objective, the ETP classroom practices showed that the teachers attended to the linguistic, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of ICC when they addressed ICC in their lessons. First of all, teachers' practices targeted the *linguistic* dimension more than the *sociolinguistic* and *discourse* competences. This finding corresponds with some previous studies [14, 19] which show that teachers tended to teach linguistic aspect to improve their learners' communicative competence and ensure students' good exam results rather than the other ICC components. Similarly, Sercu et al. [22] found that teachers in many countries spent more time on linguistic competence in cultural/intercultural teaching. It is surprising that the sociolinguistic and discourse competences only featured slightly in the ETP teachers' practice. This was, in the teachers' belief, due to the fact that these ICC dimensions were neither mentioned in the ETP course books explicitly nor assessed in the tests and exams. This finding shows that the form of assessment has a significant impact on the teachers' in-class practices. This influence was considered as one of the obstacles of integrating culture/ICC in EFL classes from the teachers' viewpoint in Ho's [14] and Nguyen's [19] studies. Moreover, the research revealed that the instructors prepared their students for tests and cared about their performance on them. Upon connecting this to the research sites' curriculum and examining the programme outcomes, it becomes apparent that ICC is implicitly referenced in the following outcome standards such as appreciating other peoples' cultures and languages, and feeling part of the global community. ICC was not specified as one of the programme outcomes, hence it was not used as a marking standard for evaluation or assessment. Due to the assessment washback

effect, the ICC instructors' methods of instruction were less comprehensive than other subject areas like language skills or tourism-related information, which were frequently prerequisites for examinations and assessments.

Remarkably, it is worth noting that the ETP teachers in the present study focused on the *cognitive* and *behavioural* dimensions of the ICC more than the *affective* aspect, and this was guided by their belief in the importance of cultural knowledge and interpersonal communication skills in students' future tourism-related jobs. On the one hand, this might suggest teachers' classroom practice was to equip students with the knowledge and skills required of graduates when they are on the job. On the other hand, a pedagogical predominance on the cognitive and behavioural dimensions could be understandable as they were incorporated in the coursebook texts.

Importantly, the findings show that ETP teachers in this research concentrated on transmitting ICC knowledge, and they infrequently addressed the affective dimension. By reference to Byram [6], this study's findings show that the ETP teachers emphasized intercultural knowledge (*savoirs*) rather than attitudes (*savoir être*). For example, when teaching about the tipping habits for tourism staff, the teacher stated briefly the information that guests from this country hardly tipped, but tourists coming from that country often left "a big tip". This teaching technique, which provided students with a piece of intercultural knowledge without further explanation to help students understand and have appropriate attitudes toward guests, may lead to the learners' misunderstanding, stereotype, and prejudice.

Regarding the use of coursebook activities, it is noticeable that the teachers' ways of addressing ICC in their ETP classes were mainly based on the tasks and contents presented in the textbooks. In this study, the pre-determined textbooks used in the observed classes included no explicit intercultural contents of sociolinguistic, discourse, or affective dimensions, and a large number of activities are designed for developing English language, intercultural knowledge, and behaviours in the tourism realm. The fact that the teachers' teaching of culture/interculturality relied on the teaching materials' contents was also found in the findings of Ho [12, 13], and Nguyen [19]. This could be due to the teachers' belief in following the legally official teaching materials decided by the educational authorities.

5. Pedagogical implications and conclusion

The most significant results of this study are as follows. First, throughout their lessons, the ETP teachers concentrated on language proficiency and tourism-related expertise. Second, teaching ICC is viewed as a secondary goal, and when it was taught, instructors primarily concentrated on ICC components such as language, cognition, and behaviour. Third, they based

their instruction on their conviction that official teaching materials should be followed, and that it is critical to get students ready for both their future employment and the subject assessments.

The findings of the present study point to several important pedagogical recommendations for enhancing ICC for tourism majors. First, teachers should pay more attention to the aim of developing learners' ICC in English language teaching. As reported in this study's findings, the ETP teachers focused on English language skills and specialized knowledge for tourism majors in their teaching practices. Second, the findings of the present study have shown that the sociolinguistic, discourse and affective competences were not emphasized in the teachers' classroom practices, implying that teachers might not see those as important. This could be changed by training teachers to be aware of the value of these ICC dimensions as well as the necessity to teach all of the ICC components in teachers' professional development courses. Last but not least, the washback effect of the examination was reported to influence teachers' ICC practices. Therefore, it is crucial that the educational administrators should be aware of the importance of ICC and address it more explicitly in the curriculum including how it is evaluated. To that end, not only the teachers but also other stakeholders such as material developers, policymakers and curriculum designers should be involved to help learners become both linguistically and interculturally competent.

This study has several limitations that need discussing. First, the research involved only a small group of ten tertiary ETP teachers in a city in central Vietnam, thus the findings could not be generalized to other contexts. Future studies could employ a larger sample of participants to increase generalizability. Second, the present study investigated ICC practices from teachers' stance only, and the views of other stakeholders such as students, professional experts in the domain are unknown. Future research could aim at a more diverse range of related parties to obtain richer insights. Despite these shortcomings, the present study has provided useful insights into ETP teachers' ICC practices and beliefs underlying their ICC classroom teaching in Vietnamese ETP contexts.

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