



Teaching Cultures in English as International Language (EIL): A Political Model for Asia-Pacific Countries

Thi Thuy Le, University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi and **Shen Chen**, University of Newcastle, Australia ¹

In response to the new changes at all levels in the world globalisation, each nation in Asia-Pacific region shows its eagerness to build and develop sustainable education and to maintain harmony in relationships with different nations. As a realisation of macro level policies, foreign language education policy places its focus on the promotion of foreign languages teaching for intercultural communication and calls for a change in language teaching. However, there exists a gap between language policy and pedagogical practice in the context of Asia-Pacific countries. Focusing on the complex question of how best to teach cultures in EIL, this article proposes to answer a question of what should be the most appropriate approach to teaching cultures in English language education in the sociocultural context of Asia-Pacific countries in the light of existing models available. It attempts to resolve the problem of culture teaching in Asia-Pacific countries' English language education by describing the political model. Two main points will be made clear, including what components to be included in the model, and why the model can be considered an advanced model to suit this context.



In response to the new changes at all levels in the world globalisation, each nation in Asia-Pacific region shows its eagerness to build and develop sustainable education and to maintain harmony in relationships with different nations. As a realisation of macro level policies, foreign language education policy places its focus on the promotion of foreign languages teaching for intercultural communication and calls for a change in language teaching. However, there exists a gap between language policy and pedagogical practice in the context of Asia-Pacific countries. Main attention is paid to the linguistic aspect of language teaching. Culture still plays a subordinate role in language teaching and learning, and is only addressed for an understanding of a language point. In terms of pedagogy, teachers still cling to the traditional ways of dealing with culture in foreign language education.

Focusing on the complex question of how best to teach cultures in EIL, this article proposes to answer a question of what should be the most appropriate approach to teaching cultures in English language education in the sociocultural context of Asia-Pacific countries in the light of existing models available. It attempts to resolve the problem of culture teaching in Asia-Pacific countries' English language education by describing the political model. Two main points will be made clear, including what components to be included in the model, and why the model can be considered an advanced model to suit this context.

1. Response to sociocultural context of Asia-Pacific countries: A political model

1.1. Globalisation and EIL

Global context has influenced intercultural communication by enabling, shaping and constraining intercultural communication. Globalisation has increased interactions, exchanges, global intercultural, and transnational interdependence, which intensify intercultural misunderstanding, tension and conflict. The increased contact across cultural boundaries, greater cultural complexity, potential misunderstandings, and conflicts point to the need for intercultural teaching and learning.

The spread of English as EIL has led to a scholarly debate about whether the native-speaker model should be adopted in the English language classroom in the countries where English is learnt as second or foreign language. Researchers have questioned the suitability and efficacy



of the native-speaker (NS) model (Byram, 1997; Alptekin, 2002; Mackay, 2002, 2003; Nunn, 2007, 2011; Canagarajah, 2006; Alravez, 2007; Young & Wash, 2010). They argue that there are increasing numbers of non-native speakers (Graddol, 2006; Mackay, 2002) and the NS model fails to satisfy learners' needs in the new context.

English has become a dominant (foreign) language in many Asian countries thanks to its promise to bring the opportunities of job, social status, and international profile and competition. In other words, it has become an empowering language, among others. Language policies in Asian countries aim to promote English as a dominant and powerful language. These countries also make efforts to both internalise their higher education and promote their national cultural identity. English contributes dynamically to identity formation at all levels and in complex manners.

English has shifted from a language of 'the once colonizer' or 'the once enemy' to the language of practical purpose or neutral tool of international communication in times of globalisation. This trend has been widespread across Asia and Africa as claimed by Bianco (2003, p. 34). Many Asian governments consider the learning and use of English as crucial for economic progress, modernisation, and internationalisation. Particularly, in the integration process into the world economy, strengthening English competence would be important in convincing foreign investors that a local workforce will be available with which communication would not be a problem. English language skills continue to be an unquestionable asset for any citizen aiming to secure employment with ever-growing number of foreign companies operating in the country. In academic studies, the role of English has been seen as increasingly significant for enabling students to take undergraduate and graduate studies overseas. The teaching and learning English in Asia-Pacific countries mainly served practical purposes.

In the global context, English should be used as a mode for representing national thought and values. Through learning English, learners can understand and know how to preserve their national cultural identities, which are being challenged by globalisation and an invasion of Western values. It is necessary for English to serve the aim of enhancing and preserving national values. There should be a balance between a desire to communicate with the world and a will to preserve one's national cultural identity. It is essential to include the core identity



of a nation in language pedagogy, to maintain cultural independence, and to promote a national self-pride. It is time for language education to place emphasis on traditional values such as nationhood, patriotism and so on.

English language education needs to concern how to teach English for understanding the Self in relation with the Other and the reciprocal relationship between the Self and the Other in the universe. It is important to be aware that the final aim of English language education is not merely learning English language and cultures, but more importantly, leading to self-knowledge: the understanding of who I am/who we are in this world.

Over the years, the need to know cultures as well as languages of countries of significant importance for pragmatic purposes has concerned foreign language education. The examples can be seen in Australia where teaching European languages is shifted into teaching East Asian languages for a more understanding of East Asian countries, or in the United States (US) where teaching foreign language and culture is for political purposes such as national defense (Kramsch, 2005):

The real world problem is no longer how to understand the role of the USA in a world that speaks languages other than English, but how to create a cadre of language professionals that, with advanced knowledge of the language and the culture, are able to collect and interpret intelligence necessary for US national security (p. 556)

As culture is embedded in language, learning the language while resisting to its culture(s) is impossible.

1.2. Teaching of culture in EIL

The importance of integrating the study of culture into language teaching has been acknowledged by researchers. Bennett, Bennett and Allen claim that the person “who learns a language without learning a culture risks becoming a fluent fool” (2003, p. 237). As Krasner (1999) puts it, to become competent in the language requires learners to be linguistically competent and to be aware of socially appropriate behaviour in which the language is used.



Studying culture is a useful part of foreign language instruction because its benefits include increasing students' motivation and interest in the people, the target culture, and increasing understanding of their own culture. According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), culture teaching develops students' awareness of conventions of behaviour in situations in the target culture, increases awareness of cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language, and develops the ability to evaluate and refine generalisations about the target culture.

As language and culture are intricately interwoven, one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (Brown, 1994). Culture needs to be integrated into the teaching of all language skills so that learners can become linguistically and culturally competent users of English. Therefore, teaching English in the context of EIL requires significant changes in how to teach culture in English language education.

1.3. The need to develop a model for teaching culture in EIL

Though there were a lot of scholars and researchers attempting to create models for teaching culture, because of taking Western perspectives, these models reflect the development of intercultural communicative competence in Anglo cultures. The core concept of competence originated from Western cultures. Whatever it is conceptualised, competence is equated with understanding, relationship development, satisfaction, effectiveness, appropriateness or adaption, or skills, abilities, the definitions are associated with Western views, while Eastern perspectives place more emphasis on empathy, sensitivity and conformity.

When developing a model, we take all these models into consideration. There are both strong and weak points of each model. It can be concluded that there are no ready-made models that can be completely adopted by EIL educators. Therefore, all the good parts and illuminating ideas are taken into consideration for our creation of a political model to fit the situation of Asia-Pacific region.

1.4. The relational perspective

As Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) argue, in many contemporary models of intercultural communicative competence, the relational perspective is missing. Competence in the models is conceptualised as skills, knowledge or ability located within an individual even though interactants or interlocutors are present in the communication and interaction. This common feature derives from their Western origin. Understandably, in individualism culture, the individual plays the central role. However, because of this, the relevance of Western models when applied to non-native English contexts as well as the relevance of Western concepts of competence has been questioned.

Obviously, communication does not merely mean the exchange of ideas but rather, it means interaction, building, developing and maintaining the relationship between the participants. One individual only cannot make communication happen. To enter into a communication process, the individual is assumed to bring his/her 'already prepared' communicative competences. However, in real communication, the matter becomes more complicated when the individuals learn how to manage their own competences to achieve their communication success during their interaction and negotiation, how to use their competence to manage conflicts or arguments, and how to come to achieve a self-knowledge, to understand their partner and make himself/herself understood. When communication takes place, many processes of interaction happen. They can be interaction between components such as motivation, knowledge, skills, contexts, and outcomes, between the partners, between the individual and the universe, between sociocultural aspects and so on. Importantly, all of these components are relational during the communication process. To put it simply, different interactions lead to different relations, and therefore require different competences to manage the relations. The relevance of Western understanding of competence is raised when considering other circles of culture, which value peace and harmony in any relation in the universe, the relations between human beings or between human beings and the nature. Also, the issue raised is how we can seize equal power when communicating in a language in which we have less power than the native English speakers.



As a crucial part of foreign language education, foreign culture teaching in Asia-Pacific countries involves the country's power relations with the world, especially with the super powers and neighboring countries. In modern time, while the world seems to be shrinking and becomes interdependent, the establishing, maintaining and mastering the relationships with the outside world play as criteria for measuring a nation's power in the world. It is clear that the nature of international relations now experiences new transformations. In the world order, no matter how powerful it is, no country can dominate all other countries. The world has become multipolar, rather than the bipolar or tripolar as it used to be. The big powers may still play important roles or even decisive, but the last few decades have also seen the rise of small and middle-sized countries. Their strength can come from their economy, politics, military, science-technology, population, cultural heritage, natural resources and so on. They all decide the fate of the world (Phan Doan Nam, cited in Elliot, 2012).

Consisting of middle-sized countries, Asia-Pacific region has proved itself to be a proactive member in the world community. Each nation commits itself to the development and peaceful coexistence with supreme powers, neighbouring countries and other countries in the region for a region of peace, stability and cooperation. To amplify the voice in every aspect of the world situation and increase the profile, each nation needs to rely on its national strength and take full advantage of international support to achieve the nation's sustainable development. It is said that in the new context, the distinction between the enemy and friend has become blurred. The concept of political enemy or friend has almost out of date, which has been replaced by the concept of 'partner'. There exist now only long-term benefits, especially economic benefits in relationships; therefore, mastering power relations with partners is of vital importance.

The uncritical application of intercultural competence theories and models without considering the historical and political issues will produce systematic distortions of the world. An understanding of intercultural communication from historical, political and economic contexts, which masks the inequitable relations of power between individuals, groups, organisations and countries that often play a major role in intercultural relations, will help to develop an appropriate model in the context of Asia-Pacific countries.

This paper aims to create a political model as a solution to existing problems in foreign language education. The phrase *political model* is employed to represent the political related meanings. It encompasses all meanings such as model about politics, model for politics and model as politics. While model for politics places emphasis on the purpose model about politics and model as politics focus on the content and propose political characteristics. In the following section, a clarification is made about why some components such as intercultural awareness, national identity, intercultural citizenship, and moral issues should be included in the model.

2. The political model

2.1. Desired outcomes

(1) Personal and social transformation

It has been widely accepted that foreign language education, especially teaching EIL is political because of its political aims. The formulation of learning objectives, which are realised in frameworks, guidelines, and syllabus, is affected by macro-level in the form of national education policy and the nation's overarching sustainable development goals. Such learning objectives serve the development aims at two levels: individual and social, among which the former precedes the latter. These two levels are so interconnected that the rejection of either aspect affects the overall achievement of the society. The personal and social development tasks have been enabled and assigned by education in general and foreign language education in particular. Language classes are considered as a means to transform the learner. The learner finds his/her knowledge, skills and attitudes transformed. The standards are selected for particular pedagogical purposes in the hope of influencing the individual orientation to the others and the society. From this standpoint, foreign language education can be viewed as an organized and carefully structured mechanism through which individuals as social agents are encouraged to act towards particular social and political ends (Houghton, 2012, p. 183).

Although the personal/individual change and transformation results in social change and transformation, social transformation influences the transformation in the individual. In summary, the new context demands teaching EIL political missions: to change people's perspectives (their perceptions of themselves and others and the relationship to others and the



world) and their orientation to action, that is, their willingness to engage in striving for social transformation.

The model in this article is a theory-driven vision that has both specific and general political aspects. The specific dimension refers to the context of Asia-Pacific countries where the political, sociocultural and historical influences are manifested in the model, while the general dimension implies the shared elements of intercultural competence related concepts. It deals with political issues and serves political purposes.

Unlike Byram's model and other models which focus on the product by listing the goals of awareness or a variety of competencies as the desired end product of intercultural training or language education, our model is primarily process model, which considers intercultural learning a continual process during which humans are challenged continually to solve confronted conflicts and arguments. The process itself brings the individual internal changes by developing the ability to handle relationships, to solve conflicts, and to construe intercultural differences.

Acknowledging the ongoing process of intercultural communication does not mean a denial to assumed outcome of language education in particular. Through such ongoing process, the individual bring a set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways, defined as 'habitus' by Bourdieu (1991, cited in Shaules, 2007) or "unconscious cultural programming" (Hofstede, 1994) to specific contexts with the expected desired outcomes. The interaction is a process of their outcomes negotiated. According to Shaules (2007), because the habitus does not fully prepare for all specific contexts or "intercultural fields" (Bourdieu, 1991, cited in Shaules, 2007), cultural learning is necessary. As a result of successful cultural learning, *empathy* measures the level of how the individual adapts or modifies his/her values, expectations, and identities in a negotiated, relational and contextual communication process. We would support Shaules (2007)'s idea that relationship formation is a key role in language education and successful relationship should be considered both desired end product and driving force of intercultural learning, rather than a set of intercultural competences or capacities. The development of intercultural competence serves only the purpose of

maintaining and developing successful relationships, which are a measure of intercultural experience depth or successful cultural learning.

If accepting that intercultural communication is an interactive process, the formation and development of relationships is the outcome and measure of intercultural success, emphasis needs to be placed on “empathy”. Along with such values as respect and non-judgmental perspective, empathy is also universal regardless of its various expressions in different cultures (Olebe & Koester, 1989). Houghton’s argument is that *empathy*, in affective term, is confused with *sympathy*, because it involves experiencing the emotions of another; but in cognitive terms, it is also understood as perspective-taking due to its involvement of the ability to stand on other’s perspective to view the world. However, when defined in cognitive terms, *empathy* as perspective-taking carries a greater political meanings, because it involves considering social situations from different viewpoints and underpins an “action orientation” (Houghton, 2012), which is defined as the willingness to undertake some activity to contribute to the common good (Byram, 2009). More emphasis on action orientation means more attention to political acts that creates both personal and social transformation, through which, to change the world. As seen from the model, empathy is both intercultural capacity that is needed for communication and the desired attribute to be achieved within the individual. Gaining empathy means gaining the ability to stand on other’s perspective to view the world and positive attitudes such as the understanding, willingness and good acts. In other words, developing empathy can contribute to the transformation of the individual learner at all levels.

(2) Intercultural citizenship identity

In discussing intercultural competence models, the notion of intercultural citizenship cannot be missed, because as argued by Deardoff (2009), promoting intercultural competence is as of vital importance as promoting competences of intercultural citizenship. In European contexts, foreign language education is concerned about the concept of intercultural citizenship and considers it as an element of intercultural communicative competence. The idea of intercultural citizenship was developed by Byram (2008) in his attempts to further developing the notion of critical cultural awareness. Related to critical cultural awareness, intercultural citizenship is

gaining increasing attention as “a matter of political education” (Houghton, 2013, p. 48). Although Byram makes a great contribution to putting forward the concept of intercultural citizenship, its scope remains clinging to the national or particular communities, namely European countries or the US context (Deardorff, 2009), rather than international level. There is shared belief that the concept of citizenship manifests the role of an individual in the society, and has both personal and social dimensions, personhood and nationhood (Guilherme, 2002; Houghton, 2012). The global integration and participation of every country or nation is ignored, which is now a weakness of the educational system.

Adopting the transnational perspective, Risager’s portrays the intercultural speaker as a world citizen, which is considered as an individual state, the European citizen and in a more informal political sense-the world citizen. Risager’s model considers the knowledge and characteristics of a world citizen as the most important long-term goal for language teaching for general purposes (2007, p. 228). By focusing on the development of critical world citizens, Risager does not confine the position of individual to a closed membership in a country or a nation; rather, she raises the new roles of learners in a new context of the world becoming a global village.

Conceptualizing ‘the intercultural citizen’ and ‘the world citizen’, the issue of intercultural citizen identity and world citizen identity has been raised. Byram’s intercultural citizen is based on the language that is associated with communities it is spoken, so the concept of intercultural citizen and intercultural citizen identity are limited within the national and refer to only dual citizen and dual citizen identity, rather than the global identity. Seen from the transnational perspective, identity is understood by Risager as a complex and changeable entity where the national dimension is only one of many possible ones (2007, p. 235). Therefore, the transnational identity, rather than the national identity, needs to be focused.

The national identity defines the relation between the individual to the country and the nation, while employing the transnational identity locates the individual in the global context, relates the individual to the world community. The concept of transnational identity implies the flexibility and fluid nature of identity. The concept of intercultural citizenship can provide a

set of objectives that allow foreign language teachers to promote the intercultural citizen identity as well as political activity among learners. Accepting that the concept of citizenship implicitly places emphasis on social responsibility (Osler, 2000), it can be referred that the concept of intercultural citizenship implies the personal, social and global responsibility. The concept of citizenship implies both the educational and political function of English language education, that is, the transformation at both personal and social levels. In striving to be intercultural competent speakers, the clash and conflict between the individual's values and global values can be managed by possessing intercultural identity or transnational identity (Risager, 2007).

It is crucial for learners to possess the intercultural citizen identity with attributes and characteristics of a transnational citizen in the global context without ignoring their individual identity and national identity. The intercultural speaker himself is a national citizen and also a global citizen and vice versa. What matter most is his intercultural awareness and ability to transcend across cultures and contexts.

2.2. Intercultural awareness (ICA)

As the foundation of intercultural communicative competence (Byram et al, 2002), ICA has been given a lot of attention by numerous researchers coming from Western cultures. There are more Asian scholars who are interested in investigating and incorporating ICA into language teaching (e.g. Su, 2008). Due to its popularity in Western countries, ICA has been defined and understood from the perspectives of Western scholars with the emphasis of increasing the understanding of Western cultures. The lack of full understanding of ICA in other specific contexts, especially in Eastern or Asian cultures will hinder the mutual gain, reciprocity, and exchange between cultures. As a result, several scholars try to reconceptualise ICA (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Hovater, 2007; Byram, 1997; Villigas & Lucas, 2002). However, these efforts have been made in EFL (English as foreign language) contexts, restricting more appropriate understandings of ICA in broader contexts. In spite of this restriction, their contributions have been significant in providing single puzzles for the whole picture of ICA. There is a need to unfold this concept before any attempt to enhance it is made.

As Goodacre and Follers (1987) point out, “Successful intercultural communication comes to people who are alert and aware” (p. 7). There is a wide agreement on the importance of ICA on English language teaching and the necessity of developing ICA among learners (e.g. Zhu, 2011; Hovater, 2007; Acar, 2009; McKay, 2002; Vrbová, 2006; Zhou, 2007). For example, ICA helps learners broaden the mind, increase tolerance, and achieve cultural empathy and sensitivity (Tomlinson & Musuhara, 2004). It also develops in people an ability to monitor their ethnocentrism and respect towards cultural differences (Nixon & Bull, 2005). When there is little or no awareness of cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors; misunderstandings and difficulties are likely to arise. It consequently appears that ICA should be given enough attention by further attending to the necessity for both teachers and students to become aware of the existing different cultures.

There are many approaches to ICA, using terms such as ‘cultural awareness’, ‘cross-cultural awareness’, ‘intercultural awareness’, ‘critical cultural awareness’, or ‘heightened cultural awareness’. What makes ICA seem to remain ambiguous. Some try to define cultural awareness as sensitivity (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993), attitudes, skills, or cognitive ability (e.g. Hovater, 2007; Byram, 1997). Synonyms of cultural awareness are ‘culture sensitivity’ and ‘cultural responsiveness’ (Villigas & Lucas, 2002). These definitions are restricted to the target culture, usually American and British culture, not best suited to the teaching of culture in EIL.

ICA was then introduced by the Council of Europe as “knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation between the world of origin and the world of the target community” (2001, p. 103). In this definition, ‘cultural’ has been replaced by ‘intercultural’, both relating to skills and awareness of regional and social diversity of both cultures and how the culture appears from the perspective of the other culture. The development from cultural to intercultural shows a move away from a focus on the target culture towards a focus on an interrelationship between two cultures: one’s own and the other. Fenner (2008) also argues that developing ICA is an aspect of foreign language learning where learners must take charge of



their learning. He also adds that teachers are important when it comes to organising situations and mediating students' understanding of ICA (p. 280).

From Western scholars, it is very important to be aware of the Other's cultures and the Self's culture. The limitation here is Western scholars put more focus on Other's cultures, namely, native English cultures such as American and British culture in English language teaching. ICA needs to be reviewed for an in-depth understanding of the role of the Self and the Other in communication.

In globalisation context, once the issue of cultural identity is raised, the importance of including ICA cannot be missed. According to RongZhang and Steele (2012), on an individual and societal level, ICA and the desire to understand and maintain one's own cultural identity have been necessitated by globalisation process. ICA is important to achieve competence in intercultural relations.

Recently, the political situation in Asia-Pacific region, the conflicts between China and some South East Asian countries on sovereign problems such as the Philippines, Japan, and Vietnam have raised the issues of how to manage political and cultural tensions and conflicts. Historians have the same view that the harmony has resulted from awareness, sensitiveness and effective management of tensions. Managing cultural tensions effectively can bring the harmony to the region. The long history of Asian countries in general indicated a fact that there were potentially hidden wars and conflicts arising from cultural tensions. This situation calls for the integration of ICA into EIL curriculum which is assumed to facilitate negotiation and communication as well as the solving of political or cultural problems.

ICA should be defined in cognitive and affective terms. ICA involves affective or attitudinal aspects such as positive emotions, willingness, understanding, appreciation and respect for cultural differences. It is also necessary for ICA involves the ability to bring all the knowledge and understanding of one's knowledge, skills and attitudes, one's historical, sociocultural and political context in relation to the other's, the relations, namely power relation between the



individual and the individual, between the individual and the world, into communication and interaction.

2.3. Value education for promoting national identity

The sense of caring for and supporting each other and the sense of living in harmony with others as well as nature have been long the traditions of many Asian-Pacific people that are embedded in the national values, so morality remains a crucial component to be preserved and included in educational philosophies at all levels.

Morality education, value education or citizenship education are culturally different. However, these terms are used interchangeably in this paper. They all underpin the theoretical and political perspectives in conceptualizing the self/individual in society. Moral development involves the exposure and influences related to early childhood (Byram, 1989), so it has something to do with a process of creating social meanings and experience of a specific community into which they are born and brought up. Across societies, there exist differences between genders, ages and religion and so on in perceiving, orienting and framing moral issues and values. Moral development or value education is individual-centred. Each society has models to standard and frame desired values and characteristics that the individual should achieve through the interaction with the other and the environment. Therefore, it can be said that value education is a matter of defining the individual or the self in relation to other self and the environment. The relation can be emphasized in this society but might be neglected in the other and vice versa. Harmonious relationships may be valued by certain groups but may be deemphasized by other groups. The development of the self is personal, interpersonal and social process during which each individual can maintain, enhance, adjust and redefine their values, norms, principles and expectations.

Judging values of the Other's culture based on the Self's standards and values can result in prejudice. This often happens when one is exposed to a new culture and then makes judgments of other culture based on their own value-laden conceptual frameworks. In other words, their valuations are bound by their value system. Sometimes, they label the whole group a list of

characteristics and attributes without being aware of the individual characteristics. Prejudice and stereotyping might be typical but can be managed by including ICA in value or moral education. If an understanding of how perspectives and values are historically, socially, economically and politically constructed is promoted, and cultural differences are accepted, non-judgmental perspective and empathy can eliminate prejudice and stereotypes. As a result, such problems as conflicts, arguments and tensions are no longer remained.

2.4. Components of the model

(1) Knowledge domain

As one of the weaknesses in contemporary culture teaching models is a failure to recognize the interrelationship between language and culture, so it is common that culture teaching, focusing on knowledge aspect, is considered subordinate to language skills in many foreign language classes. This model aims to clear the ground by integrating language and culture into intercultural teaching and learning process. Creating processes for interaction between different cultures inside the classroom or out of classroom wall contexts provides ample opportunities to raise learners' awareness of the mutual relation between language and culture. The knowledge of language such as phonology, grammar, vocabulary is taught in an integrative way with cultural knowledge. In other words, the teaching of linguaculture (Risager, 2006) is seen at all levels and stages and enables learners to move from static approaches to learning isolated facts about culture to the ongoing process of individual transformation. Knowledge of language and culture, and the relationship between language and culture is of vital importance.

In addition, the comprehension of the Self/Other is manifested through different types of knowledge such as the knowledge and understanding of the context, the situation or the environment. The role of socio-cultural context in language education is emphasized by Kramersch (1993). We include the knowledge of history, politics and economy in our political model because they also contribute to the shape of the way people from each nation perceive and interact to the outside world.

In addition, an awareness of the relational nature of interaction, power relations between the Self as individual and nation as the Other, national identities, individual's needs, expectations, and motivation makes the model learner-centered and context-based. Besides, awareness needs to be raised about redefining the role of English in EIL education. Not only a neutral means of intercultural communication and a channel to bring the world to a country, English should be acknowledged as a tool to enrich and preserve the national identity and cultural values. It is also the channel that makes the world know about its cultural identity.

(2) Interaction skills

Besides language skills that make learners intelligible in communication, the abilities to establish, maintain, evaluate and adjust relationships are of vital importance. The political situation in Southern China Sea as a sensitive area and a conflicting area due to the rich natural resource of this area requires English language education to focus on how to manage the conflicts in this region. It is necessary to include the ability to handle and manage conflicts and tensions in the model.

(3) Psychological and attitudinal domain

The findings of a study conducted by Wu, Fan and Peng (2013, cited in Wang & Kulich, 2015) in China indicated that among six factors of intercultural communication (knowledge of Self, knowledge of Other, intercultural cognitive skills, intercultural communication skills, ICA, attitudes), knowledge of Other and intercultural communication skills were the most emphasized, followed by knowledge of Self and attitudes. Intercultural cognitive skills were weak and the weakest factor is ICA. This is also the case of many Asian's teaching practices that remain knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented. The psychological and attitudinal aspects are often given unequal attention.

Accepting the importance of relationship building, which is a "noted gap in the existing Western definitions of intercultural competence" (Deardorff, 2009, p. 265), means that role of attitudinal and psychological aspects in intercultural interaction and intercultural education

cannot be denied. The attitudes and emotions the interactants hold towards one another determine the success of the communication process. These aspects of intercultural competence are of vital importance when considered in Eastern cultural contexts. The collectivistic tendencies of Eastern perspectives are group-oriented attitudes, interpersonal sensitivity, thoughtful attitudes, shared emotions, and relationship building rather than the individual-oriented concepts or skill driven aspects. Those belonging to collectivist cultures generally “think of themselves as individuals with interlocking connections with others” (Ting-Toomey, 2009, p. 108). Relationship building is one of attributes that need to be considered, so more attention should be drawn to psychological and attitudinal aspects.

Although sensitivity might cause psychological problems such as over anxiety and misunderstanding due to misinterpretation of emotional cues (Wang & Kulich, 2015), sensitivity is effective for learners to interpret emotional cues from the interactants and this helps them perform well in interaction and communication. It is therefore necessary to include sensitivity in the intercultural competence model. Being open and sensitive to new cultures while being aware of national identity as a part in individual identity makes intercultural communication successful.

A summary of components to be included in the model is visualised in the following table:

Knowledge domain	Interaction skills	Psychological and attitudinal domain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linguaculture knowledge - Knowledge of the Self and Other (intercultural awareness) + Sociocultural, historical, political and economic contexts of the Self and Other + Power relations between the Self and Other + Knowledge of national identity/core identity, cultural values, moral values, group values, and universal values. + Learner’s psychological aspects (needs, motivation, interest, emotions) + English’s role in cultural enrichment and preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language skills - Ability to establish, maintain, evaluate, adjust relationships - Ability to handle and manage conflicts and tensions - Ability to empathize - Intercultural awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitivity - Empathy - Nationhood spirit - Intercultural awareness (positive emotions, willingness, understanding, acceptance, appreciation and respect for cultural differences) - Respect for moral values of both the Self and Other, group and universal values

Briefly described in words, this model focuses on the process and the development itself. As seen from the model, communication between learners from different cultures is a process of interaction at two levels: individual and national. This interaction process also occurs among different attributes at cognitive, affective and behavioral levels. These potential powers to communicate are brought into intercultural communication. Because the model emphasises the process, not the destination, these potential powers are labeled intercultural capacities, rather than intercultural competences as in native-English models. The dynamic nature of this model can be seen through the fact that some components such as ICA or sensitivity are both considered as intercultural capacities to enable the interaction and treated as desired outcomes of the process. In other words, they play the role as both product and process. The interaction itself is a process of intercultural teaching and learning, which helps an individual learner to come to and develop their awareness of the Self in relation with the Other. As a result of this process, the development happens at both individual and social levels.

3. Concluding remarks

The theories, models, conceptualisations and outcomes derive from Euro-centric countries (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), so they have a Western bias, ignoring the social-economic and psycho-cultural conditions of non-Western context (in this situation, Asia-Pacific countries). This article has described an attempt to resolve problems of culture teaching in Asia-Pacific countries by creating a suited model, which acknowledges the political context in which teaching foreign languages, in this case, teaching EIL, takes place. Acknowledging the flexible and dynamic nature of culture teaching, this model focuses on relevant components or dimensions that should be included in the teaching of cultures in EIL.

The contribution of the model is modest in such a way that it might fit the Asia-Pacific context. Given that most of Asia-Pacific countries are the colonised and Asian language policies are not clear about culture teaching issues, what the researchers have done can inspire them to develop their ideas of how to teach culture to maintain the national identity. Language educators who find their context similar may find this model a reference, or at least an inspiration. It is fair



enough to leave creativity and flexibility for language practitioners to develop and elaborate dimensions and domains of the model to fit their specific practices of culture teaching.

Authors' Biodata

Dr Thi Thuy Le teaches at the University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University of Hanoi, Vietnam. Her research interests lie in the areas such as intercultural communication, EFL teacher education, and curriculum development. She was awarded a degree of PhD at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her thesis was nominated for an excellent thesis prize by both examiners. Dr Le was selected for the Solidarity Award by the Conference Committee at the 18th World Congress of Applied Linguistics held in Rio de Janeiro in July 2017. She was one of the 14 award winners, and the only winner representing Australian universities.

Dr Shen Chen is currently an associate professor in School of Education at University of Newcastle, Australia. His contribution has been in the teaching and research of language and culture and second language teacher education. He was the recipient of the University Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1998 and 2012 as well as the Australian National Teaching Award in 2014. His established record as an excellent researcher has been demonstrated by 12 funded research projects with successful completion and 75 publications including 6 books with high quality as well as professional consultancy provided in Australia and abroad.

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ⁱ Author contacts

Email: thuyle_84@yahoo.com

Email: Shen.Chen@newcastle.edu.au