

# Empowering Intercultural Communicative Competence through Metacognitive Reading Strategy

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## Abstract

This study aims to propose using English reading strategies to enhance Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) for EFL learners. The study recruited college-level participants who were enrolled in a general English reading course (N=30) and administered the surveys with a Repeated Measures Design (RMD). In the survey, an intercultural sensitivity scale and metacognitive reading strategies inventory were conducted for comparison. During the instruction, participants were asked to use the R.I.D.E.R. (i.e. Read, Image, Describe, Evaluate, and Repeat) strategy for visualization of text, which is aimed at facilitating the use of metacognitive reading strategies. In the results, participants showed a statistically significant increase both in the intercultural sensitivity level and the use of metacognitive reading strategies after the practice of R.I.D.E.R. for one semester. Further analysis was appended to the results by the correlation and regression analysis, and proposed that participants benefit their development of intercultural sensitivity from the use of metacognitive reading strategies. Therefore, the study suggests that implementing metacognitive reading strategies facilitates college EFL readers to increase their cultural sensitivity, which empowers ICC through English reading

## Keywords

ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence), R.I.D.E.R. (Read Image Describe Evaluate Repeat), metacognitive reading strategy

## Introduction

There is abundant research about instructional materials to implement target culture in the EFL classroom. According to Sercu (2000) and Canagarajah (1993), due to the unavoidable environment in and out of the classroom, EFL learners have a relatively limited input of target culture compared with ESL learners, so the research proposed extended exposure to target culture through textbooks and target culture-based reading

texts assist EFL learners to acquire ICC. Galloway (1992) and Hardley (2001) also supported the critical role of target culture-based reading materials in language acquisition because of its convenience and facileness as an instructional material to provide abundant input. The present study then argues how to implement target culture readings in the classroom and suggests an explicit way of teaching culture, which facilitates learners to use reading strategies for ICC. According to Hong-Nam and Leavell (2011) and Kewon (2009), metacognitive reading process facilitates readers to develop text awareness and critical thinking skills of synthesis and analysis to develop a better understanding of texts. So, if students are encouraged to use metacognitive readings strategies while reading, it is believed to evoke learners' awareness of the target culture exposed in reading texts. Zhao and Alexander (2004) and Lee (2011) suggested enhancing self-awareness leads language learners to use appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication. So the study conducts the quasi-experiment of English reading instruction, prompting learners to utilize metacognitive reading strategies, and measures changes of intercultural sensitivity after using metacognitive reading strategies and examines the effect of metacognitive reading strategies on the development of ICC. The research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1) How does intercultural sensitivity increase through a college C2-based English reading class?
- 2) How do metacognitive reading strategies increase through a college C2-based English reading class?
- 3) What is the effect of using metacognitive reading strategies on the development of intercultural sensitivity?

## 1 Research Methods

### 1.1 Participants

In the study, 30 college EFL students were recruited

and asked to participate in the C2-based reading instruction, but for the data analysis, 27 to 29 participants' responses were reviewed due to the number of non-response students. They have various ages, majors in college, and levels of English competence.

## 1.2 Instructional Treatments

To investigate research question 1, the study required participants to complete an intercultural sensitivity test, which includes 24 items and five sub-categories which are Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Difference, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness (Chen & Starosta, 2000). For research question 2, the study administered a metacognitive reading strategy test, which has three sub-categories with a total of 30 items. The first category asks about Global Reading Strategies (GLBO), which is frequently used reading strategies in general. The second category is concerned with Problem-Solving Strategies (PROB), which asks the preferable strategies when learners face the difficulty of reading. The last category deals with Support Reading Strategies (SUP), which asks learners' use of mechanism to compensate reading (Kweon, 2009). The collected data with RMD were compared with the *t*-test with SPSS ver.15.0. For research questions 3, further analysis was progressed by correlation analysis and regression analysis with SPSS ver. 15.0, investigating the effect of the use of metacognitive reading strategies on the changes of intercultural sensitivity. In addition, to confirm test reliability, the internal consistency of two scales were analyzed and showed reliable results, indicating Cronbach's  $\alpha=.803$  in the intercultural sensitivity scale and Cronbach's  $\alpha=.829$  in the metacognitive reading strategies inventory.

## 2 Findings and Discussion

In the first finding of this study, participants reported they have developed their intercultural sensitivity to enjoy interacting with others from different cultures and have an open-mind to people from different cultures. Another increase in the intercultural sensitivity scale is that students respect the values of people from different cultures and ways of people from different cultures behave. During the instruction, the text visualization by conducting the R.I.D.E.R strategy provides learners an opportunity to grab the difference between C1 and C2 at ease because metacognitive reading strategies allows learners to increase self-awareness to find the difference and similarity, synthesis or analysis through reading

(Hamazah & Adullah, 2009; Iwaii, 2011; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2011). Also, a noticeable change is observed in learners' interaction attentiveness that they prefer to be very observant when interacting with people from different cultures. Therefore, the complicated process to acquire ICC is reflected in the response of participants in the category of interaction attentiveness. Lastly, in the comparison of ICC, there is no significant increase in items of the interaction confidence and enjoyment, and it is respected that the internal factors of participants make them stay at the ethnocentrism stage, which might be originated from a lack of language competence and the limited experience of communicating with people from other cultures.

In the second finding, participants' use of metacognitive reading strategies increased after the practice of the R.I.D.E.R. strategy. In the results, participants reported more use of metacognitive reading strategies overall, so implementing R.I.D.E.R. which is mainly focused on text visualization, one of metacognitive strategies in the inventory made an influence on the overall use of metacognitive reading strategies for college EFL learners. So it implies that for the participants in C2-based reading, the explicit instruction to use reading strategies is recommended.

In the third finding, the positive correlation of metacognitive reading strategies and intercultural sensitivity was reported, and the further analysis by regression analysis was conducted to find the effect of using metacognitive reading strategies on the development of intercultural sensitivity. So the study suggests that implementing instructional interruption for learners to use metacognitive reading strategies is effective to facilitate intercultural sensitivity, which empowers ICC. Therefore, development of intercultural sensitivity is the prior step becoming an intercultural communicator (Bennet, 1993; Byram, 1997) and the participants who showed the development of intercultural sensitivity by using metacognitive reading strategies are highly predicted to become fluent intercultural communicators.

## References

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