The Critical Study of Intercultural Linguistics and Cultural Intelligence on Ethnocentrism : The Paradigm

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Abstract

This research examined how ethnocentrism can contribute to the development of interculturality and cultural intelligence among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Thai higher education. The research aims to investigate the ethnocentric factors that drive intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence development: 1) identify aspects of ethnocentrism that encourage interculturalal linguistics and cultural intelligence, 2) analyze and determine the components of intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence within ethnocentric contexts, and 3) propose the effects of ethnocentrism on students' awareness of intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence. Using mixed methods, the study began with interviews of five intercultural communication experts, followed by data collection from 503 EFL students across six Rajabhat Universities using stratified sampling. Factor analysis revealed two components : cultural diversity navigation skills and intercultural experience-based learning, both showing strong reliability. Results indicated that ethnocentric awareness became more effective when taught through inclusive pedagogy aimed at developing empathy and intercultural competence. The study proposed a framework positioning ethnocentrism as a reflective tool for language education, offering implications for curriculum development and policy formulation.

Keywords: Cultural Intelligence, Ethnocentrism, Intercultural Linguistics, Paradigm

Introduction

Today's society shows rising cultural disruptions alongside historic intercultural interaction levels which create both positive and challenging aspects of cultural and linguistic diversity (Higgen & Mösko, 2020; Ramírez‑Verdugo & Márquez, 2022). Meaningful relationships between individuals from different backgrounds become possible when people learn to live and work without prejudice in multicultural settings (Ang & Inkpen, 2008; Lin, 2020). The benefits of cultural diversity enable the growth of intercultural communication but simultaneously heighten the risks of communication breakdowns and cultural conflicts. The standards of behavior emerge from cultural norms which determine how people think and feel and how they interact with others. A lack of norm adaptation results in lost possibilities yet participation in cross-cultural interactions strengthens both critical thinking abilities and social competencies and work effectiveness in multicultural settings (Lin, 2020). Cultural intelligence (CQ) stands as a crucial theoretical framework that explains how people succeed

in multicultural environments (Khan et al., 2020). Different aspects of food customs and etiquette practices and greeting customs and social systems demonstrate extensive cultural differences yet culture shock frequently occurs when people interact across cultural boundaries (Lee et al., 2018). The concept of CQ has received growing recognition in various fields such as cultural studies as well as business administration (Semenov, 2022) and education (Yunlu et al., 2017) and organizational development due to its wide applicability. CQ research demonstrates its relationship to language use and religion alongside lifestyle and ethnic awareness and cognitive styles and interpersonal behaviors (Arasaratnam, 2012) as well as its function in migrant community social transfer (Abdul Malek & Budhwar, 2013). CQ has gained increasing significance due to global changes and disruptions (Hancı-Azizoglu & Alawdat, 2021) and experts now position it equally important to emotional intelligence (EQ) and intelligence quotient (IQ) (Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Peterson, 2004). Different cultural understanding requires active participation to improve both cultural awareness and behavior adaptation in multicultural situations. These competencies play an essential role in educational settings to combat ethnocentrism while developing intercultural linguistics skills and improving cultural intelligence.

Research Objectives

This research investigates the ethnocentric factors that drive intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence development as well as their ethnocentric components and their effects on student understanding of intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence.

Literature Review

Research in intercultural linguistics investigates the formation of cultural identities between communities as it reveals social relationships and cultural conflicts between groups. The development of interculturalism reveals societal inequalities because it reveals structural inequalities even though nationalism creates social homogeneity through unified storytelling). Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions remain useful for intercultural competence development but require enhancement through ethnographic research. Inclusive societies benefit from a combination of multiple disciplines to build competence according to Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006). The awareness of cultural efficiency stems from being humble while it enables self-examination and openness to change but differs from standardized norms that define cultural competence (Lindsey et al., 2009; Lindsey et al., 2013). Language functions as a medium to display cultural beliefs (Risager, 2006) that creates conditions for intercultural dialogue. Such awareness strengthens empathy, adaptability, and engagement, while addressing stereotyping through structural reform and intercultural education. Alternatives to cultural fundamentalism stress context-based understanding, as seen in Holliday's (1999) concept of "small cultures" and Dervin's (2011) "liquid interculturality," both of which challenge essentialist perspectives and promote interpretive inclusivity. The identification of cultural norms both shared and distinct between groups represents a critical component for understanding (Hofstede, 2001) while simplistic approaches could potentially reinforce pre-existing stereotypes (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). The fundamental elements for effective intercultural engagement in educational and workplace settings consist of empathy and flexibility according to Deardorff (2006). Cultural fundamentalism exists as a rigid belief

system that creates stereotyping and intolerance while blocking social change (Gorski, 2008) and hinders the formation of unity and openness (Fuentes, 2022). Although Hofstede's framework delivers valuable understanding it becomes inflexible during application because this causes generalization; when used adaptively without essentialism it leads to peaceful global citizenship (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). Ethnographic approaches improve intercultural competence according to Du (2008) because they help develop empathy along with critical thinking skills when used with experiential learning approaches. The combination of intercultural linguistics with cultural intelligence (CQ) works to eliminate ethnocentrism (Earley & Ang, 2003) and supports global citizenship. As a cultural product language supports both identity maintenance and worldview expression while linguistic patterns disclose cultural standards which create intercultural understanding (Risager, 2006). Interactions between cultures enable learning to extend beyond the level of tolerance because CQ contains three core components: awareness, motivation, and behavioral adaptability (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008a; Adair et al., 2013). The educational path to overcome ethnocentrism (Bizumic, 2014) begins with education and continues through CQ development and self-reflection to create respectful global citizenship.
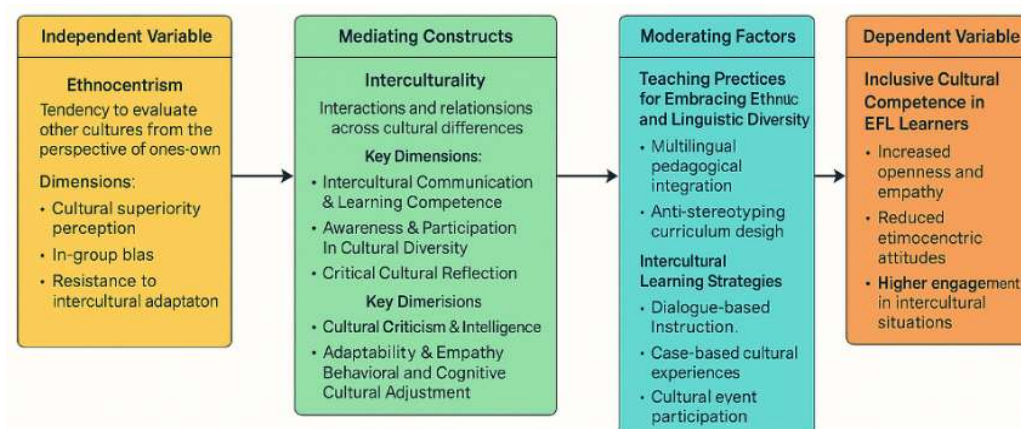
Research Framework

Figure 1 Research Framework

Methodology

    1. Research Design

        A mixed-methods study explored intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence within ethnocentrism. The research examined components of intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence, evaluated learning paradigms, and assessed role models' effectiveness. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used.

    2. Qualitative Phase

        Exploratory Design: Used to identify the meaning and components of Intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence.

1. Key Informants: A total of five qualified experts, representing diverse regions and academic disciplines, were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured format. This approach resulted in an Index of Item Objective Congruence of 1.00.

2. Instrument Development: Interview questions were informed by literature and validated by an advisory committee.

3. Data Analysis: The research combined a literature review with expert input using the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) for content validation. Semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data that were transcribed and thematically categorized to examine how Intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence influence ethnocentrism from expert perspectives.

3. Quantitative Phase

1. Population & Sampling: The research included 75,336 undergraduate students from the Rajabhat University in northeastern Thailand. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to validate Intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence within ethnocentrism. Based on Bentler and Chou (1987), CFA needs 5 - 20 participants per parameter. The study involved 503 third-year EFL students from six Rajabhat Universities selected through two-stage random sampling.

2. Instrument: A questionnaire using a 7-point Likert scale (7-Strongly Agree to 1-Strongly Disagree) was used to assess interculturality linguistic and cultural intelligence. Five experts evaluated the instrument and confirmed its content validity using an Item Objective Congruence (IOC) index of 1.00. A pilot study with 50 non-sampled students yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96.

3. Data Collection & Authorization: Permission was obtained from universities and relevant offices for data collection.

4. Analysis: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and secondary CFA were conducted to validate theoretical constructs (Bentler and Chou (1987).

Results

This study examined intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence within ethnocentrism by using EFA and CFA. The findings were presented across three sections aligned with the research objectives.

1. The Study of Indicators of Exploring Intercultural Linguistics and Cultural Intelligence.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified two core components among 14 significant indicators as follows.

1.1 Component 1 : Intercultural Communication and Learning Competence (eight indicators; eigenvalue = 7.989; variance explained = 53.26%). The specific indicators were detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Factor Loadings for Component 1 : Intercultural Communication and Learning Competence.

Indicator	Description	Loading
IC1	Intercultural linguistics in language education necessitates understanding and respecting the cultures of others.	0.854
IC2	Effective cross-cultural interactions require active engagement and valuing of different cultures.	0.769

Table 1 (Cont.)

Indicator	Description	Loading
IC3	Creating an environment that fosters intercultural linguistics in the classroom enhances learning from diverse cultures.	0.790
IC4	The study of a second language must be integrated with the understanding of its culture.	0.752
IC5	Intercultural linguistics involves the appropriate engagement with and understanding of various cultures.	0.806
IC6	Genre literacy and effective communication strategies are key to enhancing intercultural understanding.	0.692
IC7	Face-to-face interactions and informal conversations can significantly expand cross-cultural competencies.	0.583
IC8	Participation in cultural events fosters positive engagement with Intercultural linguistics and enhances cultural intelligence.	0.768

Table 1 showed eight indicators of intercultural communication and learning competence, with loadings from .583 to .854, strongest in cultural respect and weakest in informal interactions, and an acceptable model fit.
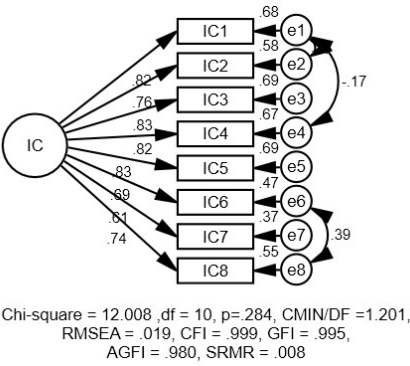

Chi-square = 12.008 ,df = 10, p=.284, CMIN/DF =1.201,
RMSEA = .019, CFI = .999, GFI = .995,
AGFI = .980, SRMR = .008

Figure 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Intercultural Communication and Learning

Table 2 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis – Component : Intercultural Communication and Learning Competence (IC).

Indicator	λ		t	R^2	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
IC1	0.82	1.00	-	0.68	0.918	0.783
IC2	0.76	0.92	22.963**	0.58		
IC3	0.83	1.00	22.007**	0.69		
IC4	0.82	0.95	20.498**	0.67		

Table 2 (Cont.)

Indicator	λ		t	R²	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
IC5	0.83	0.94	22.384**	0.69		
IC6	0.69	0.86	16.446**	0.47		
IC7	0.61	0.79	13.706**	0.37		
IC8	0.74	0.86	18.332**	0.55		

**p < .01

From Table 2, when examining convergent validity through the analysis of factor loadings, it was found that all component loadings were positive, ranging from 0.61 to 0.83, and were statistically significant at the .01 level.

1.2 Component 2: Cultural Criticism and Cultural Intelligence (six indicators; eigenvalue = 1.793; variance explained = 11.95%) The detailed indicators were presented in Table 3.

Table 3 The Factor Loadings for Component 2 : Cultural Criticism and Cultural Intelligence.

Indicator	Description	Loading
CR1	Western language teaching methods may not always align with the learning styles of students from other cultures.	0.768
CR2	Prioritizing the exclusive use of a foreign language in classrooms may devalue students' native languages and cultures.	0.792
CR3	Cultural intelligence plays a significant role in mitigating ethnocentrism and promoting inclusivity.	0.769
CR4	Collaborative efforts among educators can provide essential resources for understanding and addressing ethnocentrism.	0.711
CR5	Reflective practices on cultural biases are crucial for reducing ethnocentrism.	0.774
CR6	Engaging in critical discussions on ethnocentric attitudes can lead to greater intercultural understanding.	0.711

Table 3 showed cultural critique and intelligence indicators with loadings from .711 to .792, highest for native language devaluation and lowest for educator collaboration, with model fit shown in Figure 3.
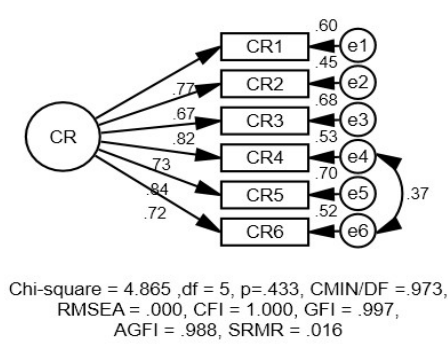
Chi-square = 4.865 ,df = 5, p=.433, CMIN/DF =.973,
RMSEA = .000, CFI = 1.000, GFI = .997,
AGFI = .988, SRMR = .016

Figure 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Cultural Criticism and Cultural Intelligence (CR).

Table 4 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis – Component : Cultural Criticism and Cultural Intelligence (CR).

Indicator	λ		t	R²	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
CR1	0.77	1.00	-	0.60		
CR2	0.67	1.21	14.846**	0.45		
CR3	0.82	1.06	18.784**	0.68		
CR4	0.73	0.83	16.774**	0.53		
CR5	0.84	1.11	18.684**	0.70		
CR6	0.72	0.87	16.726**	0.52	0.891	0.579

**p < .01

From Table 4, factor loadings showed positive values (0.67 - 0.84) and were significant at .01 level. CFA confirmed the model fit: CR = 0.918, AVE = 0.783 For IC, CR = 0.891, AVE = 0.579. All indicators showed significant factor loadings (p < .01) with a normal distribution.

2. The Study of Indicators of Ethnocentrism and Its Intersection with Intercultural Linguistics and Cultural Intelligence

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified two components from 11 valid indicators as follows.

2.1 Component 1 : Awareness and Participation in Cultural Diversity within the Context of Language Learning (eight indicators; eigenvalue = 8.535; variance explained = 56.90%). The specific indicators were detailed in Table 5.

Table 5 Factor Loadings for Component 1 : Awareness and Participation in Cultural Diversity within the Context of Language Learning.

Indicator	Description	Loading
AW1	Intercultural linguistics in language education requires understanding and respecting the cultures of others.	0.815

Table 5 (Cont.)

Indicator	Description	Loading
AW2	Actively engaging with and valuing different cultures is essential in cross-cultural interactions.	0.795
AW3	Fostering intercultural linguistics in the classroom involves creating an environment where students can learn from different cultures.	0.784
AW4	The understanding of a second language's culture must go hand in hand with language learning.	0.682
AW5	Intercultural linguistics involves understanding various cultures and engaging with them appropriately.	0.732
AW6	Recognizing the role of language in shaping cultural identity is essential for effective intercultural communication.	0.759
AW7	Interpersonal interactions that highlight ethnolinguistic variations strengthen cross-cultural appreciation and understanding.	0.718
AW8	Participation in linguistic and cultural exchange activities deepens awareness of how language influences intercultural linguistics and intelligence.	0.798

Table 5 showed eight indicators of cultural diversity awareness and participation, with loadings from .718 to .815, strongest in cultural understanding and weakest in ethnolinguistic interactions, with acceptable model fit (Figure 4).
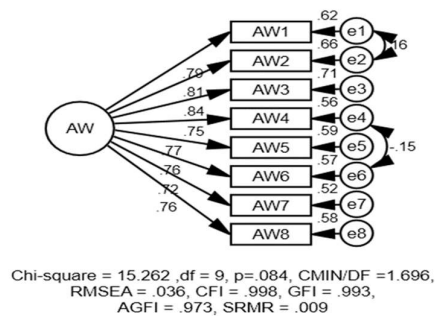

Chi-square = 15.262 ,df = 9, p=.084, CMIN/DF =1.696,
RMSEA = .036, CFI = .998, GFI = .993,
AGFI = .973, SRMR = .009

Figure 4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Awareness and Participation in Cultural Diversity within the Context of Language Learning (AW).

Table 6 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis for the Component: Awareness and Participation in Cultural Diversity within the Context of Language Learning (AW).

Indicator	λ		t	R²	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
AW1	0.79	1.00	-	0.62	0.924	0.688
AW2	0.81	1.05	22.066**	0.66		

Table 6 (Cont.)

Indicator	λ		t	R²	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
AW3	0.84	1.10	23.127**	0.71		
AW4	0.75	1.05	17.791**	0.56		
AW5	0.77	1.02	18.489**	0.59		
AW6	0.76	1.02	17.889**	0.57		
AW7	0.72	1.02	16.291**	0.52		
AW8	0.76	1.08	17.689**	0.58		

**p < .01

   From Table 6, the convergent validity was examined by analyzing the factor loadings. The results showed that the loadings for all observed variables were positive, ranging from 0.72 to 0.84, and all were statistically significant at the .01 level.
   2.2 Component 2 : Teaching Practices for Embracing Ethnic and Linguistics Diversity. (three indicators; eigenvalue = 1.360; variance explained = 9.07%). The detailed indicators were presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Factor Loadings for Component 2 : Teaching Practices for Embracing Ethnic and Linguistics Diversity.

Indicator	Description	Loading
TE1	Teaching methods that integrate ethnolinguistic diversity can better address students' cultural and linguistics needs.	0.774
TE2	Ignoring the interplay between native languages and foreign languages in the classroom risks reinforcing linguistics hierarchies.	0.886
TE3	Cultural intelligence enables individuals to navigate the complexities of ethnolinguistic differences in diverse environments.	0.693

   Table 7 showed three teaching practice indicators for ethnic and linguistic diversity, with loadings from .693 to .886, strongest in native-foreign language interplay risks and weakest in cultural intelligence for ethnolinguistic differences, with acceptable model fit (Figure 5).
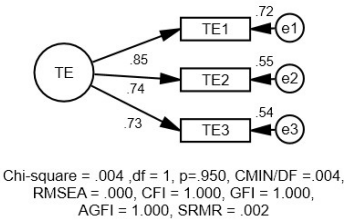

Chi-square = .004 ,df = 1, p=.950, CMIN/DF =.004,
RMSEA = .000, CFI = 1.000, GFI = 1.000,
AGFI = 1.000, SRMR = .002

Figure 5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Teaching Practices for Embracing Ethnic and Linguistics Diversity (TE)

Table 8 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis for the Component: Teaching Practices for Embracing Ethnic and Linguistics Diversity (TE)

Indicator	λ		t	R^2	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
TE1	0.77	1.00	-	0.60	0.819	0.602
TE2	0.67	1.21	14.846**	0.45		
TE3	0.72	0.87	16.726**	0.52		

**p < .01

Factor loadings from Table 8 were positive (0.67 - 0.77) and significant at .01 level, demonstrating convergent validity. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) supported construct validity: For AW, CR = 0.924, AVE = 0.688, For TE, CR = 0.819, AVE = 0.602. Goodness-of-fit indices confirmed the appropriateness of both models.

3. The Study of Indicators of Strategies for Harnessing Ethnocentrism for Positive Growth

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed two components among 13 valid indicators:

3.1 Component 1 : Promoting awareness and skills for living with cultural diversity (nine indicators; eigenvalue = 9.283; variance explained = 61.89%). The specific indicators were detailed in Table 9.

Table 9 Factor Loadings of Component 1: Promoting Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity.

Indicator	Description	Loading
PR1	Understanding and respecting the cultures of others is crucial in language education.	0.827
PR2	Effective cross-cultural interactions require active engagement with and valuing of diverse cultures.	0.752
PR3	Creating an environment that fosters intercultural linguistics enhances learning from different cultures.	0.800
PR4	Developing critical thinking skills can help students analyze their own biases.	0.641
PR5	Encouraging collaborative learning in the classroom fosters understanding and reduces bias.	0.748
PR6	Providing diverse resources for cultural learning broadens perspectives.	0.614
PR7	Creating spaces for in-depth discussions on biases strengthens awareness.	0.751
PR8	Teaching appropriate ways to adapt to different cultures reduces conflict.	0.645
PR9	Participating in community projects can enhance the understanding of cultural diversity.	0.830

Table 9 showed nine indicators for promoting awareness and cultural diversity skills, with loadings from .614 to .830 and an acceptable model fit (PR).
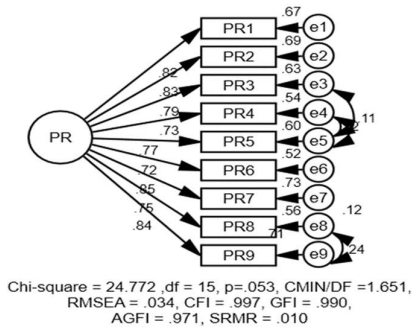

Chi-square = 24.772 ,df = 15, p=.053, CMIN/DF =1.651,
RMSEA = .034, CFI = .997, GFI = .990,
AGFI = .971, SRMR = .010

Figure 6 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Promoting Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity (PR)

Table 10 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis for the Component: Promoting Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity (PR).

Indicator	λ		t	R^2	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
PR1	0.82	1.00	-	0.67	0.938	0.806
PR2	0.83	1.02	22.266**	0.69		
PR3	0.79	1.00	24.299**	0.63		
PR4	0.73	0.97	19.200**	0.54		
PR5	0.77	1.03	20.383**	0.60		
PR6	0.72	0.96	18.826**	0.52		
PR7	0.85	1.13	20.917**	0.73		
PR8	0.75	1.00	19.386**	0.57		
PR9	0.84	1.14	22.214**	0.71		

**$p < .01

Factor loadings analysis showed all indicators for promoting awareness and skills for cultural diversity had significant positive values (0.72 - 0.85, p<.01).

3.2 Component 2 : Enhancing Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity (four indicators; eigenvalue = 1.135; variance explained = 7.57%). The detailed indicators were presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Factor Loadings for Component 1: Enhancing Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity

Indicator	Description	Loading
EN1	Using case studies from various cultures makes learning more relevant and interconnected.	0.779
EN2	Creating a safe space where learners feel comfortable sharing their opinions about culture helps alleviate the stress caused by ethnocentrism.	0.799
EN3	Emphasizing cross-cultural group work enhances collaboration skills.	0.865
EN4	Organizing cultural exchange activities bridges cultural gaps.	0.662

Table 11 showed four indicators for promoting learning experiences through intercultural interactions, with loadings from .662 to .865 and an acceptable model fit (EN).
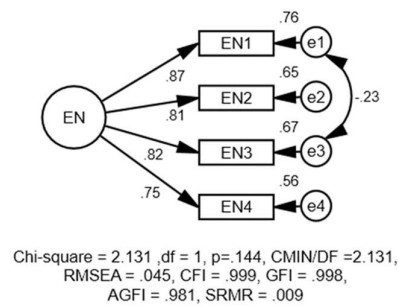

Chi-square = 2.131 ,df = 1, p=.144, CMIN/DF =2.131,
RMSEA = .045, CFI = .999, GFI = .998,
AGFI = .981, SRMR = .009

Figure 7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Enhancing Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity (EN)

Table 12 Results of Convergent Validity Analysis for the Component: Enhancing Awareness and Skills for Living with Cultural Diversity (EN)**.**

Indicator	λ		t	R^2	CR	AVE
	(Standardized)	(Unstandardized)				
EN1	0.87	1.00	-	0.76	0.885	0.658
EN2	0.81	0.92	19.391**	0.65		
EN3	0.82	1.09	20.427**	0.67		
EN4	0.75	0.79	18.059**	0.56		

**p < .01

Conclusion and Discussion

1. Conclusion

The results confirm that intercultural linguistics and cultural intelligence represent fundamental concepts that reduce ethnocentrism among EFL students in Thai higher education. The validated components, Intercultural Communication and Learning Competence, and Cultural

Criticism and Cultural Intelligence, showed strong reliability with high composite reliability (CR > 0.89) and average variance extracted (AVE > 0.57). Students with stronger competencies demonstrate reduced ethnocentric tendencies and increased participation in inclusive learning. Enhancing experiences and fostering empathy can be achieved through promoting interactions, between different cultures and utilizing reflective teaching methods as suggested by this research study, which offers valuable theoretical knowledge and actionable advice, for improving culturally sensitive education in various settings.

2. Discussion

The research investigates how intercultural understanding and cultural intelligence affect ethnocentric behavior in Thai students learning English as a foreign language. The research identified two essential components which are (1) Intercultural Communication and Learning Competence and (2) Cultural Criticism and Cultural Intelligence that enhance cultural adaptability (Deardorff, 2006; Byram, 1997). The CFA validation results demonstrated strong internal consistency and construct validity because CR exceeded 0.89 and AVE exceeded 0.57 suggesting these factors play a significant role in reducing ethnocentric attitudes (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008b). Expert interviews demonstrated reflective discussions and anti-stereotype strategies which develop cultural empathy according to cultural proficiency frameworks (Lindsey et al., 2009; Lindsey et al., 2013). The research supports Deardorff's (2006) and Ang and Van Dyne's (2008b) frameworks because critical cultural tasks lead learners to show adaptive behavior. Educational institutions must implement cultural exploration practices. Challenges persist in rural contexts with limited cultural exposure, where structural barriers can inhibit intercultural programmes (Risager, 2006). This study confirms the importance of intercultural linguistics in developing global-minded EFL learners by presenting a model for curriculum design and policy promoting inclusive learning.

Suggestions

Limitations or Further Research

This study is limited by its focus on Rajabhat University students, which may not reflect broader populations. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of intercultural training or examine differences across urban and rural institutions.

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