

Interculture-Based Metacognitive Instructional Model in Improving Writing Skills Viewed from EFL Learners' Language Awareness

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Abstract

English writing, particularly in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), is widely recognized as the most complex language skill, surpassing speaking, reading, and listening. It involves a multifaceted process of meaning-making. Linguistically, they must have a strong command of grammar, vocabulary, language usage, and mechanics. Additionally, cultural competence is essential, as prospective teachers need to understand how ideas are expressed in culturally appropriate ways in English. Lecturers play a crucial role in supporting prospective teachers by simplifying the writing process, providing suitable materials, and implementing appropriate instructional models. This study addresses these challenges by developing an intercultural-based metacognitive writing instructional model aimed at enhancing the writing skills with a specific focus on language awareness at the higher education level. The study employs a mixed-methods exploratory design. Key components of the model include defined learning goals, structured teaching steps, clearly outlined roles for teachers and students, optimal classroom settings, and appropriate language assessment techniques. Results indicate that the model effectively improves both writing skills and language awareness in EFL learners. Moreover, learners with higher language awareness demonstrated superior writing skills compared to those with lower language awareness.

Keywords: intercultural language learning, intercultural competences, metacognitive strategies, writing skills, language awareness

1. Introduction

The teaching of writing skills at higher education needs a special treatment to encourage prospective English teachers to practice writing. Writing is indeed considered the most difficult language skill to master. Prospective English teachers in EFL contexts may face various challenges that can hinder their progress in writing (Yundayani, 2018). Some studies have indicated that such factors as lack of language cognition (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020), grammatical and vocabulary acquisition (Zabihi, 2018), cultural understanding (Haerazi et al., 2018), writing experience (Ying, 2018), language deficiency (Haerazi & Kazemian, 2021), low motivation and creativity (Kazemian et al., 2021), and writing tasks (Cordeiro et al., 2018) may cause EFL prospective teachers still face difficulties in writing. In addition, nowadays writing is not merely an issue of correct grammar, but rather an issue where learners require an ability to understand English speakers' discourse and access to the process of knowledge production (Doyle et al., 2018).

Writing requires special skills in using language features to convey information via generated texts. Because of this, writing is frequently categorized as the most difficult and complex language skills at higher education. Teaching writing for learners at higher education applies such learning language approaches, methods, or strategy as integrative learning (Rafida, 2017), story maps (Rahmawati et al., 2018), collaborative writing technique (Nosratinia & Nikpanjeh, 2019), and ecological revision strategy (Mishima, 2019). These learning models are oriented to enhance pre-service teachers' writing skills at higher education. According to Abbas and Herdi (2018), learning-teaching writing always is focused on two aspects; the writing process and micro-macro skills of writing. The writing process refers to such activities as "drafting, revising, editing, and publishing" (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019), while the micro and macro skills of writing refer to the ability to employ "word diction, grammar, and writing mechanics including the use of spelling, punctuation, and capital letter" (Brown, 2003).

The most complicated process in writing involves several metacognitive and cognitive activities such as "brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, and publishing" (Rahimi & Katal, 2012). Metacognition is defined as an ability of how to regulate cognitive activities in learning process (Veenman et al., 2006). Metacognitive writing strategy in this study refers to a strategy how language learners regulate their cognition to compose phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Learners are asked in activities such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating (Sandi-Urena et al., 2011). The strategy helps learners set clear goals, develop effective strategies, and assess their progress towards those goals, which can help improve their writing skills (Weil et al., 2013). Helping learners develop their metacognitive skills is a central aim in the teaching of writing skills (Sampson et al., 2013). Therefore, this study is aimed at developing a metacognitive writing strategy to enhance prospective English teachers' writing skills at higher education.

Prospective teachers often face writing problems in their writing classes that involve metacognitive and cognitive aspects of writing. Writing requires the ability to compose new texts by telling or retelling information, which involves both formal aspects of writing and more complex composing skills (Pitenoe et al., 2017). It is in line with Aprianto et al. (2024) who argues that writing for language learners is “a continuum of activities that arrange from formal aspects of writing down to more complex act of composing”. To address these problems, the study proposes to develop the pre-service teachers' metacognitive skills, specifically in the areas of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their writing (Zepeda et al., 2015).

Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence in teaching language skills, including writing skills. Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact and communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (Byram, 2008; Álvarez-Valencia, 2014; Dervin & Gross, 2016). In the context of English as a foreign language, intercultural competence includes “knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness” (Haerazi et al., 2018; Liddicoat, 2008). Developing intercultural competences is crucial for pre-service teachers' writing skills, as it can help them avoid misunderstandings and conflicts that can arise when learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact (Binder et al., 2018; DeWitt & Chan, 2019; Tuncel & Paker, 2018).

The developed instructional model in this study aims to address the complex nature of teaching writing skills by incorporating metacognitive skills, intercultural competences, and language awareness. The model recognizes the importance of language awareness, which refers to the knowledge and sensitivity of language learning (Dubiner, 2018), teaching, and use (Scarvaglieri, 2017). In EFL contexts, language awareness plays a critical role in developing language skills (Alderson & Hudson, 2013), and it is not limited to the classroom but can be extended to engagement with language outside of it (Svalberg, 2016). This study is aimed at developing an intercultural-based metacognitive writing instructional model to improve pre-service teachers' writing skills viewed from language awareness at higher education. Therefore, the formulation of the research questions can be formulated as follows; What is the design of the intercultural-based metacognitive writing instructional model like in improving pre-service English teachers' writing skills viewed from language awareness at higher education? And What is the quality of the intercultural-based metacognitive writing instructional model like in improving prospective English teachers' writing skills viewed from language awareness at higher education?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods exploratory design, beginning with qualitative data collection and followed by quantitative analysis. According to Creswell (2018), integrating data from each phase allows researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Specifically, qualitative findings from the initial phase shape the subsequent quantitative measures, while quantitative data provide broader validation and contextual support for the qualitative insights. This integration may occur at various stages, including during data interpretation, enabling researchers to compare and contrast findings from each phase for more nuanced conclusions.

In the qualitative phase, data are collected through interviews, focus groups, and open-ended surveys, which provide in-depth, contextual insights into intercultural, metacognitive writing instruction. These methods enable the identification of key themes, patterns, and variables relevant to intercultural learning and metacognitive strategies. This phase is crucial, as it offers rich, nuanced data that help construct a grounded framework for exploring how intercultural contexts shape writing skills and instructional strategies.

Insights from the qualitative phase then inform the design of a quantitative study—in this case, a quasi-experimental design—to assess and measure the effectiveness of the instructional model identified. The quasi-experimental phase specifically tests the intercultural-based metacognitive instruction model, allowing researchers to validate its components and quantify its impact. This phase includes a structured assessment of pre-service English teachers' writing skills to determine the extent to which the model supports skill development. Ultimately, the mixed-methods approach provides a holistic examination of the intercultural, metacognitive writing model. It combines the depth of qualitative insights with the generalizability of quantitative measures, enabling a thorough exploration of how this instructional approach impacts the writing skills of pre-service English teachers.

2.2 Participants

This study involves 54 preservice English (PE) teachers, comprising 17 females and 37 males, with ages ranging between 23 and 24 years. Although the participants' demographic information included gender, the study did not differentiate or analyze them based on gender. Instead, participants were chosen through random sampling, specifically based on their proficiency in English, with a focus on their writing skills, and their awareness of language and linguistic principles. The sample size of 54 preservice English teachers was considered adequate for this mixed methods study because it allowed the researchers to obtain sufficient quantitative data while also enabling a more in depth qualitative exploration of participants' writing performance and language awareness. The selection aimed to include participants with varying levels of English writing ability and language sensitivity so that the findings would be relevant to similar groups of preservice English teachers. To collect the data, the study employed writing tests designed to measure participants' writing proficiency, metacognitive awareness, and sensitivity to language use. The writing instruments were developed based on the objectives of the study and relevant theoretical frameworks, then reviewed and validated by experts in English language teaching and writing assessment to ensure content appropriateness and clarity.

The participants' written work was scored using established assessment criteria focusing on key aspects such as organization, language

use, coherence, and intercultural awareness reflected in the texts. To strengthen the reliability of the scoring process, inter rater reliability was established through the involvement of more than one scorer, and scoring consistency was checked before the final results were confirmed. Before the study commenced, participants were provided with a comprehensive informed consent form that outlined the study's objectives, procedures, and any potential risks or benefits. This step ensured that participants were fully informed of their rights and responsibilities, allowing them to make an educated decision regarding their involvement. Additionally, the research proposal, including the design, ethical considerations, and participant consent procedures, underwent thorough review and approval by the institution's ethics committee. This review process safeguarded the participants' rights, privacy, and overall well being throughout the research process.

2.3 Research Instruments and Data Collection Technique

To design the interculture-based metacognitive learning model, researchers organized a series of group discussions, engaging a panel of experts to ensure the model's relevance and effectiveness for EFL writing classes. The expert panel included two TEFL specialists, one language curriculum development expert, two EFL materials development experts, and three EFL writing lecturers from three different universities. This diverse team was chosen to provide a broad range of perspectives and insights, enriching the design process with expertise in both theoretical and practical aspects of EFL education.

During these discussions, each expert was asked to share opinions and feedback on several critical elements of the learning model, including learning goals, instructional steps, teaching materials, roles of EFL writing lecturers, roles of EFL learners, classroom management strategies, and assessment activities. The feedback gathered from the experts was carefully noted and used to refine and improve the initial design of the learning model. These discussions were conducted multiple times to allow for iterative adjustments, ensuring that the model would be suitable for application in real-world EFL writing classrooms. To supplement the findings from the group discussions, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with the experts. These interviews further explored key components of the model, delving deeper into topics such as the intended learning outcomes, instructional strategies, lecturer and learner roles, classroom dynamics, and assessment methods. This process allowed researchers to clarify and refine each element of the model, ensuring alignment with both theoretical frameworks and practical classroom needs.

Once the model design was finalized, the researchers implemented it in an experimental study to evaluate its effectiveness. To assess the writing skills of the preservice English (PE) teachers, researchers administered a series of writing tests. Additionally, to measure the PE teachers' language awareness, a language awareness test developed by Hellenic American University was used. This test was chosen for its established validity and reliability, ensuring that the data collected would accurately reflect participants' language awareness levels. All research instruments, including the writing and language awareness tests, were rigorously evaluated for validity and reliability before being applied. This ensured that the measurements were consistent and accurately captured the intended variables, strengthening the study's overall reliability. Through this comprehensive process of expert consultation, iterative model design, and rigorous testing, the researchers developed a well-rounded and empirically supported interculture-based metacognitive learning model tailored to the needs of EFL writing instruction.

2.4 Data Analysis

The research data comprises both qualitative and quantitative components, each analyzed using distinct yet complementary approaches. For the qualitative data, the analysis follows the framework established by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018), which includes stages of data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Researchers first review the results from group discussions and interviews in depth, carefully examining responses related to interculture-based metacognitive learning. This initial analysis involves organizing the data into key themes, patterns, and codes that align with the qualitative research questions, enabling a structured approach to understanding participants' insights.

Following data condensation, the researchers move to data display, where these coded themes and patterns are visualized to reveal underlying relationships. Visualization techniques, such as charts or matrices, help map out patterns and relationships among variables, allowing for a clearer interpretation of causal relationships, prominent themes, and significant contrasts within the data. Through this display, researchers aim to connect emerging insights with the theoretical framework guiding the study and the initial research questions, ensuring the findings are coherent and grounded in theory. To strengthen the reliability of their conclusions, researchers perform verification at the end of the analysis. This involves rechecking data and revisiting earlier analysis stages to ensure that results are accurate and reflect the data comprehensively. Verification strategies include triangulating the qualitative data with other data sources, exploring alternative explanations to rule out bias, and conducting member checks by sharing preliminary findings with colleagues for feedback. This process ensures that the conclusions drawn are credible, thoroughly substantiated by the data, and free of overlooked insights.

In contrast, the quantitative data are analyzed using statistical methods, with support from SPSS software to ensure precision and accuracy in the calculations. The data regarding preservice English (PE) teachers' writing skills undergoes descriptive statistical analysis, which provides a summary of performance metrics across participants. In this phase, researchers gain an overview of central tendencies, such as means and standard deviations, to establish a baseline understanding of participants' writing abilities. Additionally, the data on PE teachers' language awareness is categorized into levels (very high, high, and low), allowing researchers to observe differences in language awareness and its potential correlation with writing performance.

To determine the efficacy of the intercultural-based metacognitive learning model on PE teachers' writing skills, researchers employ a t-test analysis. This statistical test assesses whether there is a significant difference in writing performance between participants exposed to the learning model and those who were not, providing evidence of the model's impact on writing skills. Furthermore, to examine the interaction effect between the learning model and varying levels of language awareness, a one way ANOVA test is conducted. This analysis reveals whether the effectiveness of the learning model is influenced by participants' language awareness, shedding light on the dynamics between language awareness and writing skill development under the metacognitive model.

Through this dual approach to data analysis, researchers obtain a comprehensive view of the data, with qualitative insights enriching the interpretation of statistical results. By combining rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods, the study ensures a holistic understanding of the impact of the intercultural-based metacognitive learning model on the writing skills and language awareness of preservice English teachers. This integrative approach enhances the validity of findings and allows for a nuanced discussion of the learning model's effectiveness in real-world educational settings.

3. Results

3.1 The Design of Interculture-Based Metacognitive Instructional Model

This study seeks to develop a comprehensive intercultural-based metacognitive instructional model specifically tailored to enhance the writing skills of PE teachers. The primary goal is to design an instructional framework that integrates both intercultural competence and metacognitive strategies, recognizing that language learning is deeply intertwined with cultural understanding and self-regulated thinking. By incorporating intercultural elements, the model aims to help learners not only improve their technical writing abilities but also foster a broader awareness of how language functions in diverse cultural contexts. Furthermore, the metacognitive aspect of the model encourages students to become more reflective and strategic in their approach to learning, promoting self-monitoring, planning, and evaluating their writing processes. Table 1 presents the component of the designed model.

Table 1. Interculture-based Metacognitive Instructional Model

Model Components	Learning Activities	Learning Focus
Learning goals	Students are directed to write a certain kind of genres such as descriptive, recount, narrative, exposition, explanation, procedural, and discussion texts.	Pedagogic & linguistic
Teaching steps	Noticing: Students are asked to notice their own cultures and the target cultures. Comparing: The aim of this stage is that students are able to compare the various aspects of the cultural objects being discussed on the basis on the observation that they have done in the noticing phase. Reflecting: The aim of this stage is that students are able to reflect their sense of experiences after they compare their own culture and the target culture that they have done in comparing stage. Constructing: The aim of this stage is that students are able to construct their ideas and knowledge of intercultural experiences that they have done in reflecting phase in written forms. Presenting: The aim of this stage is that students are able to present a resulted text in front of the class relating to the topic given.	Pedagogic, linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, personal, & social competences
Teaching materials	Cultural contents in the model are presented in texts, videos, and pictures. They are presented in various topics from traditional ceremonies to modern technological development such as wedding ceremonies, historical buildings, and myths.	
Teachers' roles	The writing lecturers play important roles as an assessor, feedback giver, facilitator, and information provider. These roles abridge lecturers to make students feel easy to write any kind of texts relating to the topics provided.	
Learners' roles	Learners' role determines the successful of the developed model. In this case, the model directed students what they should write and learn in the classes.	
Classroom management	The classroom management or classroom setting of the model in teaching writing skills is mostly an individual work, pair work, and group work.	
Assessment	The assessment of the students' achievement is purposed to know the level of students' writing skills after the model is applied in teaching writing class. The tests are focused on content, organization, vocabulary usage, language use, and mechanics.	

Table 1 illustrates that the primary learning goals of the intercultural-based metacognitive model emphasize developing students' metacognitive skills and enhancing their language awareness. This model aims to equip students to produce various written genres as final writing products, expanding beyond the traditional focus on specific text types like descriptive, recount, narrative, exposition, and procedural texts. Unlike conventional writing classes that often focus narrowly on genre, this instructional model integrates metacognitive strategies and intercultural themes. By incorporating elements of self-awareness and cultural understanding, the model encourages students to critically reflect on the writing process and use these insights to improve their ability to write diverse text types that engage with cultural contexts.

The model's teaching steps are carefully structured to include noticing, comparing, reflecting, constructing, and presenting. It incorporates cultural content through diverse media, such as texts, videos, and images, to support students' engagement with the intercultural themes. The selected materials cover a wide range of culturally relevant topics, from traditional ceremonies to modern developments, such as wedding customs, historic landmarks, and cultural myths. By engaging with this rich cultural content, students connect intercultural knowledge with their writing tasks, which allows them to expand their worldviews and integrate new perspectives into their compositions. This exposure to various cultural topics not only enhances their writing but also builds their ability to navigate different cultural contexts within their work.

In this model, EFL writing lecturers play vital roles, acting as assessors, feedback providers, facilitators, and information sources. Their support helps create a learning environment where students feel comfortable exploring diverse ideas and perspectives, especially as they work on culturally enriched writing assignments. Meanwhile, students themselves are active participants, engaging in structured tasks that promote intercultural reflection and encourage them to incorporate these reflections into their writing. Classroom management is structured to alternate between individual, pair, and group activities, fostering a collaborative atmosphere that supports these instructional goals. Assessment of students' progress is comprehensive, involving both formal tests and informal evaluations to measure their writing skills and intercultural awareness. This multifaceted approach to assessment captures students' abilities to apply cultural knowledge and reflective thinking in their writing, providing valuable feedback on their growth in both skill and cultural competence.

3.2 The Effect of Interculture-Based Metacognitive Instructional Model

The intercultural-based metacognitive writing instructional model is highly effective in improving EFL learners' writing skills because it combines cultural awareness with reflective learning, both of which are essential for developing nuanced and thoughtful writing. This model encourages learners to engage deeply with cultural topics, fostering an understanding of how cultural knowledge can enhance their writing by making it more relevant, insightful, and reflective of diverse perspectives. By comparing, reflecting on, and integrating intercultural insights into their writing, EFL learners develop not only their linguistic abilities but also their ability to think critically about the content they are writing. This reflective process, a core element of metacognitive learning, helps students to become more self-aware writers, leading to improved organization, coherence, and content in their written texts. The following Table 2 present the EFL PE teachers' language awareness and writing skills achievement.

Table 2. EFL Preservice English Teachers' Language Awareness and Writing Skills Achievement

Language Awareness	Tests	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Experimental Class	Pretest	27	15	65	80	72.30	.768	3.989
	Posttest	27	20	70	90	79.96	1.080	5.612
Control Class	Pretest	27	8	70	78	72.33	.523	2.717
	Posttest	27	16	70	86	76.70	1.001	5.202
Writing Skills	Test	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Experimental Class	Pretest	27	13	65	78	71.74	.754	3.918
	Posttest	27	20	70	90	83.63	.864	4.491
Control Class	Pretest	27	15	65	80	72.19	.744	3.863
	Posttest	27	16	70	86	77.41	.979	5.086

Table 2 illustrates the results of language awareness and writing skills tests for both the experimental and control classes, comparing pretest and posttest scores. Each class consisted of 27 participants. For language awareness, the experimental class began with pretest scores ranging from 65 to 80, averaging a mean of 72.30 (SD = 3.989). Following the instructional intervention, posttest scores improved significantly, with a broader range of 20 points, extending from 70 to 90, and a mean of 79.96 (SD = 5.612). This mean increase indicates a positive effect of the intervention on language awareness. In contrast, the control class showed a more modest improvement. Its pretest scores ranged from 70 to 78, with a mean of 72.33 (SD = 2.717), and the posttest scores increased slightly to a range of 70 to 86 with a mean of 76.70 (SD = 5.202). The control class's 4.37-point improvement, although present, was less pronounced than in the experimental group, suggesting that traditional teaching methods were less effective at enhancing language awareness than the intercultural-based metacognitive model.

For writing skills, the experimental class again demonstrated notable improvement. The pretest scores ranged from 65 to 78, with a mean of 71.74 (SD = 3.918). In the posttest, scores showed a considerable increase, with a range extending from 70 to 90 and a mean of 83.63 (SD = 4.491), reflecting an almost 12-point improvement. This substantial increase underscores the positive impact of the experimental intervention on writing skills. Conversely, the control class exhibited a more gradual improvement in writing skills, with pretest scores spanning from 65 to 80 and a mean of 72.19 (SD = 3.863). The posttest scores rose moderately, ranging from 70 to 86, representing an increase. This improvement, while evident, was less significant than in the experimental group, indicating that the control group's traditional teaching approach did not yield as substantial an impact on writing skills as the intercultural-based metacognitive model. Additionally, it is proven with the significant effect of t-test analysis. The following table 3 presents the results of t-test analysis.

Table 3. Results of T-test Analysis

Writing Skills		F	Sig.	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Writing Scores	Equal variances assumed	.681	.413	52	.000	6.222	1.306	3.602	8.842
	Equal variances not assumed			51.214	.000	6.222	1.306	3.601	8.843

Table 3 presents the results of an independent samples t-test, examining the differences in writing scores between two groups. The primary focus is on the Sig. (2-tailed) column, which provides the p-value for testing whether the mean difference in writing scores between the groups is statistically significant. Under the row, the significance level (Sig.) for Levene's test for equality of variances is 0.413, which is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This result suggests that we can assume equal variances between the groups for this analysis. With equal variances assumed, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, indicating a statistically significant difference in writing scores between the groups. A p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05) means we can reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is a significant difference in writing scores. When equal variances are not assumed, the Sig. (2-tailed) remains 0.000, confirming the statistical significance of the difference in writing scores. This robustness across both assumptions strengthens the finding that the groups differ significantly in writing performance. Dealing with the interaction between the instructional model and language awareness in affecting PE teachers' writing skills, Table 4 presents the results of ANOVA analysis. In this study, the third group was participants stratified by language awareness level.

Table 4. The Results of ANOVA Analysis

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	201.895	2	100.947	7.515	.003
Within Groups	322.402	24	13.433		
Total	524.296	26			

Table 4 showed the results of a one-way ANOVA test, examining whether there are statistically significant differences in scores between groups. The F value of 7.515 is the ratio of the between-groups mean square to the within-groups mean square (100.947 / 13.433). This F-value indicates the extent to which the variability between groups exceeds the variability within groups. A higher F-value generally suggests a greater difference between group means relative to the variance within the groups. Additionally, the Sig. value (or p-value) for the ANOVA is 0.003, which is less than the standard threshold of 0.05. This significant p-value indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in means between the groups. In other words, we reject the null hypothesis, concluding that at least one group mean differs significantly from the others. In summary, the ANOVA results suggest that there are significant differences between the groups' scores, with a strong statistical basis ($p = 0.003$).

4. Discussion

The intercultural-based metacognitive instructional model is developed to enhance pre-service English (PE) teachers' writing skills within the Indonesian higher education setting by integrating intercultural learning activities with metacognitive strategies. These elements foster the improvement of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' ability to express culturally appropriate English phrases and sentences. Through the use of intercultural knowledge, EFL learners are guided to better organize their written communication, enabling them to compose text that resonates with cultural sensitivity. This approach aligns with Haerazi's (2023) findings, which indicate that intercultural competencies encourage learners to reflect on how intercultural interactions enhance critical thinking and composition skills. Incorporating intercultural elements into writing instruction, such as cross-cultural exchanges, has been shown to improve both writing quality and intercultural sensitivity (Etri, 2022; Wu et al., 2023). Additionally, the metacognitive strategies within this model train EFL learners to analyze text structures and varied writing styles, thereby improving their analytical abilities, which, in turn, elevates their writing skills. This outcome supports Fan's (2018) findings that exposing learners to diverse text structures cultivates their analytical and writing competencies.

This instructional model is systematically designed around five key teaching stages: noticing, comparing, reflecting, constructing, and presenting. It was inspired by the ICC model developed by Byram (2008) and Liddicoat (2008). Each stage provides structured activities to support PE teachers in developing writing proficiency. The initial stage, the noticing phase, emphasizes engaging PE teachers in activities that simultaneously nurture metacognitive abilities and deepen cultural comprehension. This phase promotes awareness of both native and target cultures, helping PE teachers identify similarities and differences that serve as a foundation for cultural and linguistic understanding. Activities in this phase include reflective tasks where learners observe and analyze elements such as values, communication styles, and social norms (Haerazi et al., 2018; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). By comparing cultural nuances, PE teachers begin to understand the ways in which cultural context influences language use. This understanding goes beyond superficial distinctions to explore how language reflects deeper cultural ideologies in both native and English contexts.

These noticing activities are further complemented by exercises that develop PE teachers' metacognitive skills, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating their writing processes. At this stage, PE teachers are encouraged to pay close attention to grammatical accuracy, which is an essential aspect of language awareness during writing. For example, they might be tasked with writing sentences that encapsulate cultural themes from both their own culture and the target culture, thus fostering coherence in their writing from the outset. According to Kazemian et al. (2021), focused writing exercises that target sentence structure and paragraph coherence can aid EFL learners in emulating the expression of ideas in a new language. During this process, PE teachers reflect on their choices, considering why

certain cultural ideas were selected, how they are expressed linguistically, and the strategies used to convey them effectively. This reflective process nurtures metacognitive skills by encouraging PE teachers to critically evaluate their writing choices, the cultural messages they convey, and the influence of cultural context on their language use.

In addition to promoting metacognitive awareness, cultural comprehension is strategically used to develop language awareness among EFL learners, helping them recognize how cultural perspectives shape language and communication. Integrating intercultural and metacognitive elements in writing activities facilitates a more holistic approach to language learning. Wornyo and Klu (2018) highlights that EFL learners engaged in such a dual-focused approach learn not only to construct sentences and paragraphs but also to reflect on their writing processes and the cultural contexts of their work. This foundational skill set prepares learners for more advanced writing tasks, where they are expected to produce well-developed texts that demonstrate proficiency in both language and cultural understanding.

In the subsequent comparing phase, PE teachers transition from observing cultural similarities and differences to analyzing them in a more structured and critical manner. Building on the foundational comprehension developed in the noticing phase, learners now engage in deeper comparative analysis, examining various cultural practices and values in both native and target cultures. The primary objective here is to help PE teachers apply their cultural knowledge to produce more nuanced, culturally aware writing. By using comparative analysis to enrich supporting details in their paragraphs, learners enhance the coherence and depth of their writing. This phase tasks students with constructing paragraphs around provided topic sentences, which serve as a base for adding culturally relevant details (Haerazi et al., 2021; Wornyo & Klu, 2018). PE teachers are encouraged to use metacognitive skills such as planning their comparisons, monitoring the use of cultural examples, and evaluating how these examples support the main ideas.

Cultural comprehension remains central in the comparing phase, furthering students' language awareness and helping them notice subtle aspects of language use influenced by cultural context (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). PE teachers begin to recognize variations in communication styles, such as the preference for directness in one culture and indirect phrasing in another, which informs their writing and enables them to tailor their communication for diverse audiences. The insights from this comparative activity act as a bridge between cultural observation and active language production, preparing students for more complex writing tasks. By understanding the influence of culture on language, students produce richer, more contextually appropriate writing, setting the foundation for sophisticated, culturally informed texts.

After the comparing phase, PE teachers enter the reflecting stage, where they internalize the insights gained through cultural analysis. Reflection enables learners to assess their own cultural identity and perspectives and to explore how these have been influenced by encounters with the target culture. Reflective prompts and discussions guide PE teachers to articulate the ways in which cultural exchanges have reshaped or reinforced their beliefs and assumptions, encouraging a critical evaluation of their biases. This metacognitive engagement helps learners to think more critically about their writing, ultimately enhancing their ability to integrate cultural insights into their compositions (Kazemian et al., 2021; Pitenoe et al., 2017). In this phase, PE teachers draw upon reflective insights as content for their paragraphs, transforming abstract cultural comparisons into concrete examples that support their main ideas.

Following reflection, the construction phase invites PE teachers to actively translate these reflections into structured written forms. Here, learners synthesize the cultural insights from prior stages to create well-developed paragraphs. This phase shifts from internal reflection to outward expression, challenging PE teachers to organize their thoughts and convey their cultural understanding in clear, structured writing. Rather than merely recounting cultural observations, they are encouraged to critically integrate their reflections as supporting details that enhance their writing's thematic richness and coherence. Model paragraphs provided in instructional materials offer a guide, illustrating how to transform cultural reflections into well-structured written content (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019; Shin et al., 2011). Through analyzing these examples, PE teachers learn how to organize their writing effectively, maintaining both clarity and depth in their work.

Finally, the presenting phase represents the culmination of the intercultural-based metacognitive instructional model, as PE teachers move from constructing written pieces to presenting them in a collaborative setting. This stage provides an opportunity for PE teachers to showcase their improved intercultural knowledge and writing skills, demonstrating how they have integrated cultural perspectives into their texts. Presenting their work in groups encourages collaboration and collective engagement, allowing PE teachers to support one another while sharing their insights. It is in line with Abbas and Herdi (2018) who inform that the collaborative approach not only enhances cultural understanding but also strengthens PE teachers' confidence and communication skills, essential for delivering complex ideas effectively.

In this group setting, PE teachers articulate their understanding of cultural diversity and demonstrate their intercultural competence through active engagement with their peers. By presenting their texts and responding to peer questions and feedback, PE teachers reinforce their critical thinking and public speaking skills, which are integral to their development as effective communicators. This phase also encourages them to reflect on their learning, providing a valuable opportunity to engage with multiple perspectives and refine their own cultural insights further (Etri, 2022; Wornyo & Klu, 2018). Through these group interactions, PE teachers gain a nuanced understanding of diverse cultural viewpoints, enhancing the depth and relevance of their presentations and enriching their overall learning experience. The elaboration of all stages of the designed model can be illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. The Learning Activities of Interculture-Based Metacognitive Instructional Model

Phase	Learning Activities
Phase 1: Noticing	○ PE teachers identify preliminary similarities and differences between the two cultural contexts and discuss how these cultural features may influence language use and communication. ○ PE teachers engage in metacognitive activities by planning what cultural ideas they intend to write about, monitoring their understanding, and evaluating the relevance of the identified cultural information. ○ PE teachers analyze examples of sentences representing cultural themes and pay attention to grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and the relationship between language and cultural meaning. ○ PE teachers individually compose several culturally relevant sentences and select or formulate an appropriate topic sentence that will guide paragraph development in the following phases.
Phase 2: Comparing	○ PE teachers systematically compare cultural practices, values, communication patterns, or social norms identified during the noticing phase. ○ PE teachers organize similarities and differences using a comparison table, Venn diagram, graphic organizer, or guided questions. ○ PE teachers analyze how cultural differences influence language choices, for example differences in direct and indirect communication, expressions, vocabulary, and ways of conveying ideas. ○ PE teachers plan and monitor how cultural examples can be connected logically to the topic sentence. ○ PE teachers compose several comparative sentences containing relevant cultural examples and use these sentences as supporting details for paragraph development.
Phase 3: Reflecting	○ PE teachers reflect critically on the results of their intercultural comparison and examine how their own cultural identity, assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives influence their interpretation of the target culture. ○ PE teachers respond to reflective prompts such as: What have I learned from the two cultures?, Which assumptions have changed?, and How has this comparison influenced my understanding of the topic? ○ PE teachers discuss and appreciate cultural diversity while avoiding simplistic judgments about cultural differences. ○ PE teachers evaluate previously produced sentences and determine which cultural evidence most effectively supports their main idea. ○ Through activities such as guided reflection, sentence completion, paragraph sequencing, or jumbled-paragraph exercises, PE teachers transform their intercultural reflections into coherent reflective and supporting sentences that can be incorporated into a paragraph.
Phase 4: Constructing	○ PE teachers synthesize the topic sentence, comparative information, and reflective insights developed during the previous phases into a well-organized paragraph or text. ○ Students analyze model paragraphs to identify how a paragraph is organized through a topic sentence, supporting details, cultural examples, explanation, and concluding sentence. ○ Using a graphic organizer or writing outline, PE teachers arrange their ideas logically before producing the first complete draft. ○ PE teachers apply appropriate organization, coherence, cohesion, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and mechanics when developing their writing. ○ In small groups, PE teachers collaboratively discuss and elaborate their ideas, provide suggestions, and evaluate whether cultural reflections are appropriately integrated into the text. ○ At the end of the phase, students produce a complete and coherent written text demonstrating both writing competence and intercultural understanding.
Phase 5: Presenting	○ PE teachers present their completed intercultural text individually or collaboratively in front of the class. ○ PE teachers explain the cultural perspectives, comparisons, and reflections incorporated into their writing and describe how these perspectives influenced the development of their text. ○ Group members collaborate in organizing and communicating their ideas clearly during the presentation. ○ PE teachers respond to questions and engage in classroom discussion to deepen their understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural communication. ○ Other PE teachers/groups provide constructive feedback on the presented text based on organization, content, intercultural relevance, vocabulary, language use, grammar, and mechanics. ○ PE teachers reflect on the feedback received and identify aspects of their writing and intercultural understanding that may need further improvement.

Future research can explore additional strategies for enhancing pre-service English teachers' writing skills within intercultural and metacognitive frameworks. Studies might examine the impact of digital tools and online platforms that facilitate intercultural exchanges and collaboration among EFL learners from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, research could investigate personalized metacognitive strategies tailored to individual learners' cultural backgrounds and writing challenges, offering a more customized approach to writing instruction. Another potential area of research includes the use of immersive learning experiences, such as virtual reality environments that simulate cross-cultural settings, to further develop cultural awareness and language proficiency. Finally, longitudinal studies tracking EFL learners' progress over extended periods could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of intercultural-based metacognitive instructional models on writing proficiency and intercultural competence.

5. Conclusion

The intercultural-based metacognitive instructional model presents a structured and effective approach for enhancing pre-service English (PE) teachers' writing skills by integrating intercultural learning activities with metacognitive strategies. This model helps EFL learners develop cultural sensitivity and a more nuanced understanding of how language and culture intersect, equipping them to communicate in a way that is both linguistically accurate and culturally appropriate. By guiding learners through five structured phases— not only noticing, comparing, reflecting, constructing, and presenting but also fostering critical awareness of the cultural implications in language—the model aligns well with contemporary research findings that emphasize the importance of intercultural competencies in language learning. The combination of intercultural knowledge and metacognitive practices equips PE teachers with the skills to analyze text structures, understand diverse communication styles, and organize their thoughts coherently, thus building a foundation for producing well-developed written texts. Through structured activities at each phase, learners develop both technical writing skills and an appreciation for the cultural contexts that shape language, which are vital competencies in the field of English education.

Moreover, this model's emphasis on collaborative learning and reflection further enriches the educational experience, encouraging PE teachers to internalize and articulate their cultural insights. The final presenting phase is particularly significant, as it fosters a supportive, collaborative environment where learners can share their work, receive feedback, and engage in collective discussions that deepen their cultural understanding and communication abilities. This collaborative approach nurtures confidence in articulating complex ideas and enhances critical thinking skills essential for effective public speaking and engagement. As future research investigates new ways to optimize this instructional model, such as through digital platforms, personalized metacognitive strategies, or immersive virtual environments, educators will gain further tools for fostering writing proficiency and intercultural competence among EFL learners. These advancements hold promise for strengthening PE teachers' preparation for increasingly globalized and culturally diverse classrooms, enabling them to impart language skills that transcend mere grammatical accuracy and engage meaningfully with the complexities of cultural context.

6. Research Limitation

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study involved a relatively limited sample of 54 pre-service English teachers, with 27 participants in the experimental class and 27 in the control class, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations and different EFL educational contexts. Second, the study focused primarily on writing skills and language awareness within an Indonesian higher-education context; consequently, the effectiveness of the model in other educational levels, cultural settings, and language learning environment remains to be examined. Third, although gender information was collected, gender-related differences were not analyzed, limiting the extent to which possible demographic influences on writing development and language awareness could be explored. Finally, the study primarily examined the effects of the instructional model within the duration of the intervention and did not investigate the sustainability of learners' writing development, intercultural competence, and metacognitive skills over an extended period. Future studies should therefore involve larger and more diverse samples, examine additional learner characteristics, and employ longitudinal designs to investigate the long-term effectiveness of the model. This direction is consistent with the manuscript's recommendation for longitudinal investigation of writing proficiency and intercultural competence.

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Authors' contributions

Dr. HH was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, development of the intercultural-based metacognitive instructional model, research design, methodology, supervision, interpretation of the findings, and preparation of the initial manuscript draft. Dr. IMPU contributed to the implementation of the instructional model, participant coordination, data collection, quantitative data analysis, and preparation of the research results section. DR.II contributed to the literature review, qualitative data analysis, interpretation of the qualitative findings, and critical review and editing of the manuscript. All authors contributed to discussing the findings, revising the manuscript for intellectual content, and approving the final version for publication.

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