

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING ON CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN AMERICAN CULTURE CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This research examined university students' cultural understanding based on cultural activities that they had experienced. The data were gathered from 20 Indonesian university students who were attending American culture class through a questionnaire and ten learning logs. These students had experienced four different types of cultural activities. They were asked to share the experiences they have had regarding the cultural activities in the questionnaire and their gained knowledge related to each cultural activities in the learning log. The qualitative data were analyzed manually and classified into tables. The findings were used to explore student's understanding of the use of cultural activities in learning and understanding American culture. In conclusion, the students gain deeper understanding after experiencing the cultural activities regarding American culture. The cultural activities practiced in this research can be used and developed for other subjects to enhance teaching and learning process in the classroom, especially to increase students' comprehension of the particular subjects.

Keywords: cultural understanding, cultural activities, American culture, university students

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, teaching and learning situation in a classroom is focused on the teacher. In other words, teachers become the center of the classroom, especially for classes that deal with theories. The students are commonly the ones who listen to the teachers' explanation and take notes for important issues being discussed. Yuwono and Harbon (2010) have stated that English language teaching in Indonesia has not shown its success. They further explained that teacher is one of the various aspects that are needed to be fixed. Dardjowidjojo (2000) based on his research in Java island has found that English teachers in Indonesia depend a lot on textbooks and curriculum guidelines but often without having the full understanding of the philosophy behind those materials or methods (as cited in Yuwono and Harbon, 2010). However, as it is stated by Lambert and McCombs (2000) that students who are successful are the ones who get involved in their own studying, thinking, giving the thought for their studying, and be responsible for it (as cited in Lambert, 2014). Therefore, students should be given opportunities to get immersed in the learning process themselves. In other words, the students should be the center of the learning. By providing students with activities in class, they will have more opportunities to learn more.

As students learn a second or foreign language, they also need to learn the culture of that language besides studying the vocabulary and grammar of the target language. Learning another culture commonly deals with some explanations to read and understand regarding the cultural background of the language society. Traditionally, teachers will tend to explain the cultural background to their students, and the students will listen to their teachers and take notes. However, it is worthy to implement cultural activities in teaching culture to students. Students can become the center of learning the target culture by doing cultural activities. It is hoped that by experiencing the cultural activities, they are learning the culture at the same time as they get involved in those activities.

There are various teaching method and materials that can be used to maximize students' cultural learning as proposed by several researchers, such as the research conducted by Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996), Liaw and Johnson (2001), Bateman (2004), Lee (2012), Dewi (2012), Chao (2013), Rodriguez (2014), Truong and Tran (2014), and Maryani (2016). Only the research by Dewi (2012) and Maryani (2016) are conducted in Indonesia, whereas the rest are conducted abroad. Dewi's (2012) research is related to American pop culture, but Maryani's (2016) research is focused on advantages of experiencing culture to learn

and understand American culture. Based on her research, it is found that the participants learn the target culture more after experiencing it. As her data is only limited to students' questionnaire and three cultural activities, it is necessary to do reduplication research with the different methodology to discover more in-depth result. Therefore, this research will be significant in comprehending the usage of cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture.

The purpose of this research is to discover the university students' perceptions of cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture and the insight that the students perceive from experiencing the cultural activities related to learning and understanding American culture. The objective of this research is to discover the university students' perceptions of cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture and the insight that the students perceive from experiencing the cultural activities related to learning and understanding American culture. The research will provide information for any lecturers who teach culture for a better teaching and learning process that focuses on the use of cultural activities in the classroom.

Culture has been defined in various definitions. Halverson (1985) defines culture as, "Civilization, the great achievements of people as reflected in their history, social institutions, works of art, architecture, music, and literature...referred as "big C" culture." Culture is also viewed as the customs, traditions, or practices that people carry out as part of their everyday lives – "small c" culture" (as cited in Moran, 2001). Different from Halverson (1985), Lustig (1999) defines culture as, "Communication that focuses on the connection between one and another culture." According to Moran (2001) himself, culture is, "A dynamic, living phenomenon practiced daily by real people, together or alone, as they go about their shared way of life, living and creating their history or civilization". Muirhead (2009) further states that culture is, "A fluctuating embodiment of a group's products, practices, and perspectives" (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016). Somehow, Muirhead's (2009) definition of culture adds to Moran's (2001) definition of culture as Muirhead (2009) deals not only cultural products and practices but also cultural perspectives.

Cultural experience has also been defined in various definitions. The cultural experience is any encounter between learners and another way of life through direct involvement with people of the other culture or indirectly through learning materials in the language classroom (Moran, 2001). According to Moran (2001), there are four kinds of culture learning; "knowing about, knowing how, knowing why, and knowing oneself." Knowing about means gathering cultural information, knowing how means acquiring cultural practices, knowing why means developing an understanding of fundamental cultural perspectives, while knowing oneself means self-awareness. Learners need to understand themselves and their own culture as a means to comprehending, adapting to, or integrating into the culture (Moran, 2001). These four kinds of cultural learning are interrelated.

Related to teaching and learning the culture, there is a huge difference when learners are in the cultural context themselves and when they are far away from the context. As Moran (2001) states that a second language context, learning culture in the culture is significantly different from a foreign language context, learning culture from a distance; therefore, teachers should offer opportunities for

students to have the cultural experience in order to improve their cultural knowledge. Kukulska-Hulme (2010) and Lee (2009) further argue that cultural activities offer students the opportunities to experience the target culture in the real contexts which are useful both inside and outside the classroom (Dema & Moeller, 2012).

As Brown (2007) points out that language and culture cannot be separated (Dema & Moeller, 2012); therefore, in teaching a second language, teachers also need to address those learners with the culture of the target language. Hinkel (2014) further adds the connection between culture and the usage of language become the important point of teaching language skills effectively (Lessard-Clouston, 2016). Moreover, McKay (2002) states that learners need to think and ponder on the cultural information that they have learned so they could know the differences between the target and own culture.

There are different kinds of cultural activities that can be used in teaching culture, such as critical incidents, cultural assimilators, culturgrams, role-plays, cultural simulations, field experiences, ethnography, experiential activities, cross-cultural training techniques, values clarification, film, video, literature, realia, authentic materials, and many more (Moran, 2001). Moreover, according to Kukulska-Hulme (2010) and Lee (2009), cultural activities can be using social applications (e.g., Facebook) and blogging (e.g., Twitter); mobile internet access (browsing websites and reading news); use of multiple media (watching movies, listening to audio books, podcasts and vodcasts); location-based activities (using GPS to find a place); and user created content (making a film, creating a podcast) (as cited in Dema & Moeller, 2012).

In this era of modern technology, it is important to include technological activities in teaching culture, such as proposed by Moore (2006). He has said that technology gives opportunities for teachers to adapt any digital media to create appropriate cultural learning which can be accessed by students in the classroom (as cited in Dema & Moeller, 2012). Moreover, Gonzalez (2009) adds that technology promotes socially active language in multiple authentic contexts due to its accessibility, flexibility, connectivity speed and independence of methodological approach (as cited in Dema & Moeller, 2012).

Regarding teaching and learning culture, many researchers have conducted their research both in the second language and foreign language context. Since this research will be conducted with university students as the participants; therefore, related research that will be discussed are narrowed to those at the university level.

In second language context, there are three qualitative studies that are conducted. First is research by Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996). Their participants are 26 Spanish students at San Diego State University do an ethnographic interview and surveys regarding their cultural experiences. They find that the students' attitudes toward Spanish and culture learning and their listening abilities increase (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016). Second is research by Bateman (2004). He uses ethnographic interviews to 61 Spanish students at the University of Minnesota. The results show teachers' enhanced attitudes towards Spanish speakers and Hispanic cultures, greater competencies in communicating across cultures and awareness of culture's influence. The third is Lee (2012) that researched 16 American undergraduate Spanish students. The instruments used are personal blogs using ethnographic interviews, a questionnaire, and a survey. The results show that the

students' intercultural competence is improved (Lessard-Clouston, 2016).

In foreign language context, there are five qualitative studies that were conducted. Regarding the methodology, these researchers have used qualitative methods to know the result of applying cultural activities both in and outside the classroom in learning the target culture. Liaw and Johnson's (2001) and Liaw (2006)'s participants, who were Taiwanese university students, were paired with American students. These researchers used emails and written reports as the data source. The result was beneficial as the participants' knowledge and interest to the target culture developed (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016). In the research, Chao (2013) used diaries to complement the use of movies in teaching and learning foreign language culture for 52 English majors, whereas Truong and Tran (2014) used movies only for 16 Vietnamese EFL college students who were enrolled in English and culture class (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016). In the former study, it was found that the students' intercultural motivations, attitude, knowledge, and awareness were improved (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016), whereas, in the later study, it was found that students' intercultural knowledge were improved (Lessard-Clouston, 2016). The similar study was conducted by Gomez Rodriguez (2014). He used multicultural literature for his participants who were 23 EFL university students (as cited in Lessard-Clouston, 2016). The results showed that there was the improvement in the students' intercultural skills, knowledge, and attitudes towards the target culture (Lessard-Clouston, 2016).

In Indonesian context, there is two research conducted. First, Dewi's (2012) research which was her reflection upon her experience as a teacher, supervisor, and writer of her students' theses that took American films, songs, fictions, and comic books as data in English Departments in Indonesia. It can be concluded that "if research products in American Popular Culture in Indonesia can somehow help, the appealing yet appalling face of global connectivity may yield exciting challenges to help build our world anew: a world full of peace and equity" (Dewi, 2012). Second is Maryani's (2016) qualitative study. It focused on the university students' perception on the use of three cultural activities in class, such as interviewing Americans, guest lecturing, and potluck. She gathered the data by using questionnaire. It was found that these cultural activities were advantageous for the students. They understood American culture more after they have experienced and they felt enjoyed the experiences than just learning the culture from the textbook used.

As Maryani's (2016) research only based on three cultural activities and questionnaire, it cannot be seen how far the students have gained the cultural knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to do another reduplication study to discover the students' perception and enhancement regarding the understanding of the target culture through more various instruments, like the questionnaire and learning log, and different cultural activities.

METHODS

Qualitative method is used in this research in order to answer the research questions Tobin and Begley (2004) stated that qualitative method could be used to get in-depth information of the topic, which is university students' cultural understanding based on cultural activities practiced in American Culture class.

The research was conducted in American Culture class, English Department, in Maranatha Christian University, Bandung, Indonesia. The participants of this study were 20 students enrolled in this class from mid-June until mid-July 2016. This class was conducted in the short-term period. There were 12 meetings in total; six meetings before the mid-term test and six meetings before the final test. Each meeting lasted for 100 minutes. The students experienced four cultural activities, namely reading online articles, interviewing an American by email, having the potluck, and watching a volunteering video.

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students were asked to read online articles on various American topics related to American cultures, such as about volunteering, women's equality, rules for gun sales, and equal pay day. These topics suit the topics discussed in the textbook used in the class. Each pair was asked to read the available online article each week. After reading the article, they had to analyze the similarities and differences between the issues in the article and the textbook, also presented them in the class.

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students (in pairs) were asked to interview one American by email related to the assigned topic, such as politics, education, racial diversity, family, and leisure time. They were asked to prepare five to ten questions for the interview. In the first email, they introduced themselves to the American and informed about the details of the interview. In the second email, they sent the prepared questions to the American. They waited for about three days to one week for the reply. In the third and fourth email, they asked for clarification to unclear points in the interview result and thanked the interviewee for his or her willingness to be interviewed. Afterward, they were asked to compare and contrast the interview result and the issues in the textbook, also presented them in the class.

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students were asked to practice a potluck. They prepared the American food (appetizer, main course, dessert) in pairs, such as salad, cream soup, fried chicken, burger, and pudding. This potluck was conducted in the last meeting of the class. The students shared the food with each other while discussing what they have learned for the whole semester. Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students were asked to watch a video about American volunteering activity in the class. After watching the video, they were required to report on important points of the video and to compare it with Indonesian volunteering activity.

The data were collected from the students' questionnaire result and learning log. However, before collecting the data, the students were given information sheets regarding the study, consent forms, also the opportunity to ask any questions if there is something unclear for them. The participants' names were not mentioned to keep their anonymity both in presentation or publication of this study. The questionnaire was used to answer the first research question, which is the students' perceptions of the cultural activities that they have experienced. The interview questions were adapted from Maryani's (2016) research. Some of the questions are; (1) Does the discussion on recent condition in the United States help you to understand American Culture? Why? (2) Does interviewing American people help you to understand American Culture? Why?

(3) Does having potluck help you to understand American Culture? Why? The data from questionnaire and learning logs were analyzed qualitatively in order to find out the students' perception of the cultural activities used and the students' additional knowledge that they have gained after experiencing the cultural activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section provides the findings and its discussion. The findings are presented in the following tables, and they are followed by the discussion of the findings. Out of 20 participants in the research, there are only 17 of them who filled in the questionnaires. The students' perceptions of cultural activities practice in learning and understanding American culture can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Students' Perceptions of Reading Online Articles about American Cultures

Reading online article	Number of Students
Helpful	15
Not helpful	2

As can be seen in Table 1, out of 17 participants, 15 of them have said that reading online article helps them in learning and understanding the culture, but 2 of them have said that it is not helpful. Most of them admit that reading online article helps them to understand the recent condition of the United States, as it can be seen in the following excerpt: "I can know how the American condition recently; We can see and learn about the newest article that happened there; We can understand about the current situation in the US nowadays; I can learn something from people point of view and their understanding towards it. It enriches culture." However, those who have stated the online article is not helpful; one of them have said that he/she does not understand the article, as it can be seen in the following excerpt: "Not really, because sometimes I don't understand about the online articles." The other said that the article was not interesting, but adds to his/her knowledge: "It was good for knowledge but not really interesting."

Table 2 Students' Perceptions of Interviewing American People by Email

Interview	Number of Students
Helpful	13
Quite helpful	1
Not helpful	3

As can be seen in Table 2, out of 17 participants, 13 of them have stated that interviewing the American is helpful to learn and understand the culture, 1 of them has said it is quite helpful, but 3 of them have claimed that it is not helpful for them. Most of them have admitted that interviewing American people helps them to get accurate information about the recent condition of the United States from the American point of view, as well as to relate to them. It can be seen in the following excerpt: "We get the real resource and accurate news from them; They do know a lot of things about American exactly, and we can ask them some specific

of American culture; We could know the recent condition, and it is good to have a relation with the American; I can see their point of view and begin to understand it." Those who have said it is not helpful mentioned that they only get the opinion about American culture from one person, so the information is limited. It can be seen in the following excerpt: "We just know their opinion, not the fact; We only interview one person, so probably cannot be judged by one person only."

Table 3 Students' Perceptions of Having a Potluck

Watching a video	Number of Students
Helpful	16
Not helpful	1

Concerning students' perception of having a potluck, Table 3 indicates that out of 17 participants, 16 of them have stated that having a potluck is helpful to learn and understand the culture, but 1 of them has claimed it is not useful. Most of them have mentioned that having a potluck helps them to understand the culture of potluck, to feel closer with their friends, and to realize that they have the similar culture like American in terms of sharing food. It can be seen in the following excerpt: "We can experience what they feel in the potluck. I think most people will understand and remember if they have experienced it; It taught me to understand about the importance of togetherness...by having the potluck, it was the best way to build the close relationship with others; I discovered that potluck is like *botram* in Indonesia. Only what makes it is unique is that people share the food they brought and it can be any food. Also, it makes people become more close to one another; surprisingly, this is also happening in my town. For big occasion, we have the potluck (we called *makan-makan*). This is great to know that somehow my traditional event in Indonesia is similar to America." One of the students who has stated that potluck is not helpful to learn and understand American culture mentioned that the time is too short, as can be seen in the following excerpt: "The time is so short."

Table 4 Volunteering Activity Students' Perceptions of Watching a Video about American

Having potluck	Number of Students
Helpful	16
Not helpful	1

Table 4 presents volunteering activities students' perception of watching video about American, out of 17 participants, 16 of them have stated that watching a video is helpful to learn and understand the culture, but 1 of them has claimed it is not useful. Most of them have mentioned that watching a video helps them to understand about the culture and the way American people help others than just from the textbook. It can be seen in the following excerpt: "Seeing what they do is far better than just reading it on textbook; I am a visual learner, so I need some pictures or something which is visualized to learn materials; They are willing to help other people, and they are caring, warm people; They are very kind, and they do it all with heart; Besides glamorous lifestyle, we know that Americans also care about each other. They like, even love to help people. It

makes me want to go to America even more.” One student who has stated the activity is not helpful did not state the reason. He/she has just mentioned that it is not helpful for him/her.

Table 5 Students’ Perception of the More helpful Cultural Activities

Activity	Number of Students
Reading online article	16
Interview by email	1
Having potluck	4
Watching volunteering video	1
All of them	3

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students are asked to choose the activity that they think is more helpful for them to learn and understand American culture. As can be seen in Table 5, out of 17 participants, the most helpful cultural activity that is chosen by seven students is the online interview. They mention that they can get real information about America and its culture from the real American. It can be seen in the following excerpt: “We can ask anything that can make us aren’t curious again; I prefer this because of my American partner really good at storytelling his experience. So, it is very helpful; The online interview is more helpful for me because we get to know about America from the people who live there.” Among the participants, four of them chose having the potluck as the second more useful cultural activity because they can understand the culture by experiencing it. It can be seen in the following excerpt: “Potluck makes me understand more because I could see the proof. Since I am a visual learner, I learn more effectively by seeing or watching; Potluck, I am sort of person who has to see and prove it first whenever I get some information; Potluck, it is fun.”

Moreover, three participants have decided that all the cultural activities practiced are helpful for them. It can be seen in the following excerpt: “All of them were very helpful for me. I am interested in learning many new things; I think most of them help me to understand American culture, because of all of them related to each other.” Whereas, reading the online article and watching volunteering video are considered not so helpful activities for the participants. However, they still feel the usefulness of the activities, as can be seen in the following excerpt: “Even if we don’t experience directly, we can still experience through the video; These activities are more fun and interesting.”

The following tables show the students’ perceived knowledge based on each cultural activities that they have experienced. It is related to the chapter discussed in class, from reading online articles, interviewing an American by email, having the potluck, and watching an American volunteering video.

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students are asked to deliver a group presentation. Each group is assigned to analyze one chapter of the book and one online article with the similar topic. In each meeting, there are two groups that discussed the same chapter, but they have different pages of the chapter to discuss. The chapters of the textbook include the topics such as traditional American values, American religious heritage, frontier heritage, the heritage of

abundance, and American business. They have to summarize the parts of the chapter and make the comparison between the content of the chapter and the online article from an internet website.

The news article is related to the recent condition in the US. The students have to find similarities and differences between the online article and the content of the chapter. Each group delivers their presentation for about 10-15 minutes, and there is a Question and Answer session afterward. By doing student-centered activities, the students learn to develop reading skill, critical thinking skill, and presentation skill. It is expected that they would discover the important information related to American culture through the process of reading, analyzing, and presenting the materials.

From Table 6, it can be seen that from the online reading articles, students learn many things about American cultures itself. First is American women fight for women’s equality in a lot of aspects such as their earnings, their inheritance, equal rights to say, equal education, workplaces, public service, and equal pay for equal work (article 2). Second is in America in order to be a better person; they have to care about another human being by volunteering ourselves (article 3). The third is the government now abandons the people in the US to buy the weapon without permission and license. Fourth is the president notice more about gun selling in the US (article 4). Fifth is Indonesian can learn from American culture that it is a must to appreciate Indonesian own beloved products and not to use the product from another country because if Indonesian can appreciate their own product that means the love for the country. Sixth is Americans will buy the phone with the latest technology because they think it will help them to do their stuff. Therefore, Americans love having things new and different (article 5). Seventh is in America; there is still the gap between male and female worker about position and salary. Both of American and Indonesian women fight for their emancipation. Their business has the same motto to achieve their goals; work hard. People in America and Indonesia have a chance to run their small business and then it will develop into a larger company (article 6).

Regarding the cultural activities practiced in learning and understanding American culture, the students are also asked to conduct an email interview with an American and deliver a group presentation. Each group is assigned to analyze one chapter of the book and interview one American with some prepared questions related to the chapter. Every two group discuss the same chapter, but they have different American to interview. The chapters of the textbook include the topics such as government and politics in the US, ethnic and racial diversity, education in the US, how Americans spend their leisure time, and the American family. Each group prepares 5-10 questions related to the chapter, and the Americans answer the questions by email. The students have to find similarities and differences between the result of the interview and the content of the chapter. Each group delivers their presentation for about 10-15 minutes, and there is a Question and Answer session afterward. By doing these activities, the students will have an opportunity to discover various opinions and perspectives of the Americans related to the topics they learn.

Table 7, shows that from interviewing Americans by email, the students learn that, “American is Democratic and also Republican. President and Congress may come from different parties and hold on first Tuesday in November. And I think American has an easier way than Indonesian because

Table 6 Students' Perceived Knowledge based on Reading Online Articles

CHAPTER 2 Traditional American Values and Beliefs	TITLE OF ARTICLE: New US National Monument Honors Women's Equality Fight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia and American women fight for their right equality. In the article, American women fight for women's equality in a lot of aspect such as their earnings, their inheritance, equal rights to say, equal education, workplaces, public service, and equal pay for equal work. 	
CHAPTER 3 The American Religious Heritage	TITLE OF ARTICLE : An All-Volunteer Squad of Farmers is Turning Florida Lawns into Food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American and Indonesian have different system in farming. In America, they have an organization to manage their farm, that's why their system is more complete and make their farm developed. Moreover, America has department that taking care of garden, but Indonesia does not have it. There is an institution which helps/provides the citizen about gardening. In America in order to be a better person, we have to care about another human being by volunteering ourselves. 	
CHAPTER 4 The Frontier Heritage	TITLE OF ARTICLE : Obama Outlines New Rules for Gun Sales in the US
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In America, those who pass background check can own gun. The government now abandons the people in US to buy the weapon without permission and license. The president notices more about gun selling in US. Everyone can have a gun. 	
CHAPTER 5 The Heritage of Abundance	TITLE OF ARTICLE : Chinese Consumers Embrace New Balance's Made in USA Label
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We learn from American Culture that we have to appreciate our beloved products and not to use product from another country because if we appreciate our product that means we love our country. American products are everywhere in Indonesia (McD, KFC, Pizza Hut, etc.). Whereas, Indonesian products are not as popular as American's. We learn that American people defined materialism as positive thing, they work hard and they earn money to get what they want. Americans will buy phone with the latest technology because they think it will help them to do their stuffs. Therefore, Americans love having new things and different. 	
CHAPTER 6 The World of American Business	TITLE OF ARTICLE : On Equal Pay Day Why the Gender Gap Still Exists
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female workers in America get more salary than in Indonesia. In America, there is still gap between male and female worker about position and salary. Both of American and Indonesian women fight for their emancipation. American female and male workers still have a lot of gap in their salary. Female workers get lower salary than man, but actually it is the same, the different is on their work time. In Indonesia and in America are the same. Women are paid less than men in Indonesia, women are the same with US, they can do their job in office, or they start business in their home entrepreneur. Both of American and Indonesian business have same motto to achieve their goal. The motto is "work hard". People in America and Indonesia have a chance to run their small business and then it will develop into a larger companion. 	

the counting does not use a lot of numbers. American just takes the majority of the vote for the winner of the state. They do not divide into each percentage like Indonesian."

Related to ethnic and racial diversity, they learn that, "In America, there are a lot of immigrants rather than Indonesia. American people think that diversity makes their country larger and stronger. American history background also has a lot of mixture like Indonesian. There are a lot of mixed people in this time and less original origin people." Related to education, they learn that, "In America: extracurricular is very important especially sport, public school does not teach religion, American can graduate earlier if the person is working hard for that. America: they did not wear the uniform, the American education mostly more expensive than Indonesia, teachers in America encourage students to ask questions."

Related to leisure time, they learn that, "In America, the popular sports are football, basketball, and softball, but in Indonesia, the popular sports are soccer, badminton, and chess. In addition, the American citizen like fast food and junk food rather than Indonesians. What we learn about American culture is they like to do sport or physical activities better than Indonesian. It is because in America provide all sports facilities around the college and neighborhood."

Moreover, related to family, they learn that "In America, sometimes children run away and live on their own. In America, children can work as long as they fulfill the role. Most American children are leaving the house when they are 18 years old, but some of them choose to run away and leave on their own. American parents do not involve in their child's marriage. Yet Indonesian parents feel worried and get involved in their child's marriage."

As can be seen in Table 8, the participants have learned many things related to American people and one of the cultural activities, which is having the potluck. They feel the togetherness by sharing food and drink in the potluck. They understand that American potluck is actually similar to Indonesian culture, which is called botram. They also learn the diversity created in the potluck, which is the variety of food, drink, and stories shared among them.

Table 9, presents that the participants have learned many things related to American people, especially about volunteering. They have understood that American people are very humble, nice, caring, like helping others, warm, and kind. Related to the volunteering culture, the students have learned that American people, despite their young ages, they contribute to their community by helping others in need and they do it for humanity purpose.

Table 7 Students' Perceived Knowledge based on Interviewing Americans by Email

CHAPTER 7 Government and Politics in the US	INTERVIEWING AN AMERICAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American is democratic and also republican. President and congress may come from different parties and held on first Tuesday on November. And I think American has an easier way than Indonesian because the counting does not use lot of number. American just takes the majority of vote for the winner of the state. They do not divide into each percentage like Indonesian. What we learn about American culture are American citizen expected the new national government created by institution to pursue their individual goal. Then, when the government gave them welfare program, some Americans who have strong tradition of individualism & self-reliance refuse this program. 	
CHAPTER 8 Ethnic and Racial Diversity in the US	INTERVIEWING AN AMERICAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> America: it is about racial and ethnic diversity, American sometimes salad bowl, immigrants people in America are a lot. Both in America and Indonesia, there are many racial diversity. Not only for races (in Indonesia), there are many aspects like religion, culture, customs, and language. Different ethnic, different traditional law. There were a lot of history about this race issues (discrimination, African-American, Hispanic, etc.). Some Americans have racial historical background in his family. In America, there are a lot of immigrants rather than Indonesia. American people think that diversity make their country larger and stronger. American history background also have a lot of mixture like Indonesian. There is a lot of mixed people in this time and less original origin people. 	
CHAPTER 10 How Americans Spend Their Leisure Time	INTERVIEWING AN AMERICAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In America, the popular sports are football, basketball, and softball, but in Indonesia, the popular sports are soccer, badminton, and chess. In addition, American citizen like fast food and junk food rather than Indonesian. What we learn about American culture is they like to do sport or physical activities better than Indonesian. It is because in America provide all sports facilities around the college and neighborhood. Americans do sports a lot to give strengthen in their mind and emotion and also help to compete successfully in later life. Most of the Americans are obesity, so newspapers which contains about diet are best-seller. They are obesity because they like eating junk food because they think that junk food is found everywhere, taste is great, cheap, and they don't have time to cook. 	
CHAPTER 11 The American Family	INTERVIEWING AN AMERICAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In America, we learn that become children without parent's help is good because we can learn independently and survival from this life and solving the problem by ourselves. In America, sometimes children run away and live on their own. In America, children can work as long as they fulfill the role. Most American children are leaving house when they are 18, but some of them choose to run away and leave with their own. American parents do not involve in their children marriage. Yet Indonesian parents feel worried and get involved in their children marriage. 	

Table 8 Students' Perceived Knowledge based on Having Potluck

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It taught me to understand about the importance of togetherness. Sometimes, big things came from little things. Perhaps, other people think that it was an ordinary activity. But by having potluck, it was the best way to build close relationship with others. We can experience what they feel in potluck. I think most people will understand and remember if they have experienced it. I discovered that potluck is like botram in Indonesia. Only what makes it is unique is that people share the food they brought and it can be any food. Also, it makes people become closer to one another. We can know and accept the diversity. We can understand more about American food and drink. It is a unique event too and it's fun to know the culture and diversity there.

From the findings, it could be seen that the students are benefited from the cultural activities practiced in class. They have experienced at least four cultural activities in studying American culture, namely reading the online article, interviewing Americans by email, having the

potluck, and watching American volunteering video. These cultural activities are proven to help them understand the American culture more. This finding is in line with Moran's (2001) statement that students should get the opportunities to experience culture in order to improve their cultural knowledge. Furthermore, the findings are also in line with Kukulkska-Hulme's (2010) and Lee's (2009) statement that cultural activities are useful for students both in and outside the classroom (as cited in Dema & Moeller, 2012).

Table 9 Students' Perceived Knowledge based on Watching Volunteering Videos

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now I know that Americans are very humble and nice people. They are willing to help other people. Besides glamorous lifestyle, we know that Americans also care to each other. They like, even love to help people. It makes me want to go to America even more. They are willingly to help other people and they are caring, warm people. We can learn despite of their young ages, they are willing to help people. They are very kind, and they do it all with heart. The volunteer help people purely for humanity. It shows their contribution to the people and I think it's one of their habits.

As can be seen in Table 1 to 4, most students think that the cultural activities are useful for them. By reading the online article, they can understand the recent condition in America. By interviewing Americans, they can get real and reliable information about the American culture and its society. By having the potluck, they feel closer to another student and learn how American potluck is similar with Indonesian potluck. By watching the video about American volunteering, they learn that American people are nice in taking care of each other in need.

Related to the use of technology in cultural activities practiced by the students, it is found that technology has helped them in experiencing the culture. The students have used multiple media, such as reading the online article, watching American volunteering video, and also sending emails to the Americans. This finding is in line with Gonzalez's (2009) statement that the use of technology could promote language actively in the real contexts due to its being flexible and easy to be accessed. The fact that the students are far away from the country of the culture that they are learning about, technology has greatly helped them to connect with the Americans and also to find the latest news about America.

Compared to Maryani's (2016) research, this research is slightly different from the previous research due to the deeper and detailed findings caused by more various research instruments used. In the previous research, the data is collected only through the questionnaire which turned out that there are unclear or short answers. As this present research uses not the only questionnaire, but also learning log; therefore, the more in-depth result could be gained, especially related to the students' understanding of the American culture.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this research have three pedagogical implications. First, cultural activities are needed and important for students who are learning the culture, especially those who are far away from the target culture. By having cultural activities practiced, the students learn the target culture by experiencing it at the same time. As can be seen from the findings, among four cultural activities practiced, interviewing Americans and having potluck are the more helpful activities for the students to grasp the cultural knowledge. Second, teachers need to provide more cultural opportunities for students so that they could gain more knowledge and understanding of the target culture. Based on the findings, most students agreed that they are helped by those cultural activities. Third, the use of technology supports students in getting to know more the target culture. As can be seen from the findings, the students have perceived detailed information regarding each topic discussed from interviewing the Americans by email.

There are several difficulties encountered by the students which affected their understanding of the American culture. First, the different level of students' English skills that makes some of them have difficulties in understanding the online articles. Second is the limitation of time regarding the email interview and the students' presentation time. Some students are eager to interview the Americans more to clarify some unclear points in the interview result. However, they do not have enough time to send another email due to the deadline for doing the group presentation in class that reports the interview result and its analysis.

Having seen beneficial result from the students' opinions, it is recommended to provide students with cultural practices when they learn a target culture. As by experiencing the culture, the students will gain more cultural knowledge. However, it will be worthwhile to provide students with more cultural practices besides the four activities practiced by the participants in this research, such as cultural ceremonies (Halloween party, Thanksgiving, etc.), outdoor music concerts, and charity programs. The cultural practices should be conducted as similar as possible like the ones in the real setting; therefore, the students could feel and experience as the closest culture as possible. It is also necessary to encourage students to use the latest technology to connect with the target culture, such as using the video conference to interview people from the target culture.

However, there are at least two limitations of this research. First, the number of the participants that are involved are limited. Only 17 out of 20 students participated in the present study. If the number of participants are more, the findings will be more various. Second, the number of cultural activities used in the study are limited to four activities; reading article from online, doing interview to American by email, having potluck in class, and watching a video about American volunteering. The more cultural activities will result on the more insightful findings. Therefore, more participants and more various cultural activities should be applied in the future research in order to get deeper insights from the participants.

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