



## Creating the Space to Talk about Race and Racism in English Language Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the impacts of engaging in critical race discussion, after watching the movie *Hidden Figures* on pre-service English teachers' multicultural awareness. Data consisted of students' self-reflection papers and critical race talk in classrooms, and were analyzed using content analysis. Results indicate that movie watching was effective in providing pre-service English teachers with a space to discuss race and gender issues. Also, it was perceived as an effective strategy for promoting students' critical thinking and multicultural awareness in English class, resulting in attitudinal growth regarding openness to other cultures and different people in various situations. Finally, race talk based on the movie expanded the pre-service English teachers' knowledge about, and perspectives on, multiculturalism and diversity, which enabled development of classroom activities to raise students' cultural awareness in their future English language classes. This study supports the use of movies in teacher education programs as an accessible and enjoyable way to promote learners' intercultural competence and expand their perspectives on race and gender issues, the essence of critical pedagogy.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a society, public discussions about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity, and educators feel a sense of responsibility to bring these topics into their classrooms (Thomas, 2015). Nevertheless, because racism is a highly sensitive topic and discussions of race-related issues are not usually part of the school curriculum, teachers might feel hesitant to raise these topics in the classroom, where strong emotions can emerge (Bryan et al., 2012; Castagno, 2008; Sheared et al., 2010). Also teachers complain they do not have enough information or background to teach the topic properly in education settings.

In particular, Korean teachers, who have usually had little or no cultural education in their school years, may have considerable difficulties talking about race and gender issues. Moreover, very few English teachers have learned how to integrate topics of race and racism into their language teaching (I. Lee, 2009). Because of this lack of experience and background knowledge, race or gender talk in schools can be problematic and disconnected, leading to students' disengagement or confusion. Despite the importance of such subject matter, however, there is little research on how language teachers handle sensitive issues that arise in classroom discussions and constructive ways to deal with them.

One strategy for managing such topics is to show and discuss films that provide reliable depictions of salient issues to raise pre-service English teachers' awareness of multiculturalism and diversity and prepare for their future teaching by engaging students in critical race talk through analysis of what they have viewed. Such discussion can help them develop ideas and strategies for leading classroom conversations with their students about such topics as race and racism. Moreover, the use of film may enhance students' interest in integrating cultural education into English learning (Alexander et al., 2005). Furthermore, pre-service English teachers will benefit from doing the personal work of engaging in their own self-reflection on sensitive or uncomfortable topics, whether in the form of professional development, reading and reflection, conversations with colleagues and others, so they are aware of their own triggers and sensitivities and are willing not only to tolerate discomfort but also to be learners alongside their students.

In support of these pedagogical goals, the aim of this study was to investigate of how pre-service English teachers understand, reflect on, and respond to the race and gender issues portrayed in the target movie. *Hidden Figures* features the true story of three female African American mathematicians, Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson and Dorothy Vaughan, who worked as data analysts for NASA in the 1960s, and how they contributed behind the scenes to the technological advances that led to the first moon landing. The narrative illustrates how they and their contributions remained invisible because of double discrimination due to their gender and race. Indeed, many types of discrimination, individual, institutional, and structural, are portrayed in the movie.

The following questions were addressed in the study:

- a) How do the pre-service English teachers perceive and respond to the portrayal of race and gender issues in the movie *Hidden Figures* and react to the discrimination from the scenes?
- b) How does talking about race and gender discrimination in relation to the viewing the movie affect the participants' perceptions of multicultural education in language teaching?
- c) How do the preparation prior to viewing the film and subsequent activities affect their preparation for engaging their future students in conversations about race and racism as well as other forms of discrimination?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Critical Race Talk in the Classroom

Over the decades, discussions about race have remained problematic in school and society (Thomas, 2015; Thompson, 2005). While there has been research on race talk and

interaction in other fields such as psychology, sociology, and linguistics, the integration of such discussion into English education has not been sufficiently studied (Castagno, 2008; Sheared et al., 2010; Sue, 2013; Thomas, 2015), especially with regard to Asian contexts. Some scholars have explored reflecting teachers' experiences of discomfort in teaching racial issues and their perceptions of the appropriateness of talking about race in the classroom (Sosa, 2020; Vass, 2013).

Pollock (2004) examined specific school contexts in which teachers and students engaged in or avoided talking about race to determine patterns that emerged with regard to sensitive topics. She identified several dilemmas in such conversations and concluded that bringing them to the surface could lead to "honest, critically conscious discussion" (p. 218) might provide insight into how to move toward more inclusive classroom teaching.

Drawing on the research of educational anthropologist Pollock (2004), Thomas (2015) defined race talk dilemmas in the classroom as "moments in conversations about race that have the potential for conflict" (p. 155). Skerrett (2011) defined racial literacy as having "an understanding of the powerful and complex ways in which race influences the social, economic, political, and educational experiences of individuals and groups" (p. 314).

Thomas (2015) argued that "along with professional development on language, discourse, and technology, further research on the role of race in English classroom discourse is necessary" (p. 172). Despite their importance, there are objections to the handling of racial topics in the classroom due to the sensitivity of the issues and the unpreparedness of teachers or students. Race and racialization depend on context, and each student's and teacher's categorization can be different. For example, students may express their thoughts in an intolerant and offensive way (Juzwik et al., 2013). In some cases, race talk is even regarded as threatening participants' safety and comfort (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014). Therefore, foregrounding race talk during language instruction can be a complex endeavor for teachers (Thomas, 2015). Nevertheless, the impact of race is unavoidable regardless of teachers' or students' intentions to avoid conversations about it. To solve these dilemmas, Skerrett (2011) suggested three ways in which teachers approach talking about race as follows: apprehensive and authoritarian, incidental and ill-informed, or sustained and strategic.

### 2. Cultural Lessons in English Education Using Film

To encourage sustained and strategic talk about race, films can be engaging and provide vivid images that are easily remembered, especially when they trigger emotions, and carefully selected films can serve as a training guide for active learning exercises (Alexander et al., 2005; Self & Baldwin, 1990). The increasing importance of using movies to enhance second language teaching and learning has also been addressed by many scholars (Albiladi et al., 2018; Al Murshidi, 2020; Goctu, 2017; W. Kwon, 2014; Li

& Wang, 2015; Sari & Aminatun, 2021; Qiu, 2017).

Overall, the literature on the integration of movies into EFL/ESL instruction indicates that they are greatly effective in the language classroom in a number of ways. Eken (2003) found movies can be used to enhance English language students' critical thinking skills. According to Seferoğlu (2008), films provide authentic language input and a stimulating framework for classroom discussions. Khan (2015) reported that the "visuality" of movies provides an ideal visual context that can facilitate language learners' comprehension of the target language.

In addition to being a rich resource for language learning, movies can provide cultural content as a component of English instruction, as language is an integral part of culture, and English cannot be separated from the study of the cultures of English-speaking countries. Crozet and Lid-dicoat (1997) argued that learning English involves more than acquiring knowledge of the structure, phonetics and idiomatic expressions of the language; it also entails learning how to think as its native speakers do, which means that to reach near-native English proficiency, learners have to understand the values, social customs and habits of Westerners.

Byram (1997) suggested a simulation to promote cultural awareness in which learners are provided with documents from their own and another society and asked to analyze and compare them. Mallinger (2003) proposed that films, which capture insightful representations of particular cultures and their salient issues, provide windows to many cultural variables that students may not have personally experienced or considered. To exploit this potential, a film should be chosen that provides several clear examples of contrasting values between the learner's native and the target cultures and the behavioral manifestations that result. Films can bring students vicariously into the foreign society, triggering their thinking about cultural differences, their reflections on their own culture, and their development of cultural critical thinking.

Nevertheless, the instructional use of movies has been largely ignored in college English teaching in Korea, although many students who have mastered the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing often cannot communicate with native English speakers properly, due in part to insufficient knowledge about the cultural and social background of English speaking countries. Teaching English with video materials can help teachers tackle such problems because it combines English learning with the acquisition of social and cultural knowledge and supports students' cognitive development as they cultivate English ways of thinking.

In this way, films can be a powerful tool for teaching cultural awareness and cultivating students' intercultural literacy and intercultural critical thinking, but only in the context of effective instructional design. To provide targeted and effective teaching that incorporates cultural awareness into language learning, Liu (2020) advised that language teachers must carefully design teaching objectives, choose an appropriate film, mine it for meaningful

content, integrate its use with other teaching resources, and systematically implement each teaching step. Thus, for English lessons using film to achieve their pedagogical purposes, they should be preceded by a great deal of preparation and effort by the teacher. S. Lee and Y. Suh (2022) proposed that EFL students' critical literacy and thinking can be enhanced by watching Disney animation films that deal with themes of tolerance and acceptance. Such films could help prepare students for needed redirection of social attitudes toward embracing ethnic diversity and gender equality without the harshness of binary logic and racial essentialism.

Once instructional objectives have been determined, the first step is the selection of a movie that supports these objectives. Regarding this process, Wang (2015) suggested several selection strategies for English teachers: a) they should carefully review the content of the film so it is appropriate for their students, b) they should scrutinize the language in the film as a resource for teaching language skills, c) they should control the difficulty of the film's language and content to be commensurate with the students' actual levels of English proficiency, and d) they should keep in mind that simply showing the film to the students will in itself help them learn English language and culture.

As a film that reflects these factors, *Hidden Figures* was selected to raise the multicultural awareness and improve the critical thinking skills of pre-service English teachers in this course. By engaging in critical race talk when analyzing the movie, they were expected to learn about a fascinating episode in American history, the conflicts and struggles of Black women in their quest to achieve racial and gender parity in the workplace, and the implicit and contextualized meanings of key words and expressions in the scenes.

### III. METHOD

#### 1. Research Context

This research is a case study conducted during the Fall semester of 2021 at a four-year university in Korea specializing in preparing students to be English teachers. The participating pre-service English teachers were enrolled in a required course focused on acquiring cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries, raising multicultural awareness, and developing strategies for integrating multicultural issues, particularly race and gender-related topics, into English teaching and learning.

As an instructor of this course, I employed multiple ways to create an educational environment conducive to teaching and learning cultural material. Due to social distancing mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic, students attended the course synchronously via Zoom. To fulfill course requirements, each student selected and presented a topic on race and gender in class and wrote reviews of their classmates' presentations as well as reflections on course topics and materials, including the film *Hidden Fig-*

ures. As a culminating activity, the students collaboratively created a lesson featuring culturally relevant pedagogical practices and classroom activities related to what they had learned during the semester.

The participants in this study were 20 students out of 30 who were enrolled in the course. In order to focus on critical perspectives on racial and gender issues, I excluded data from those who did not actively present their opinions or whose reflections were not relevant to the topic from the analysis. The class met twice a week online for 1.5-hour lecture/discussion sessions conducted by the instructor/researcher. Six of the participants were males and fourteen were females. Four were international exchange students from diverse countries, including two from the U.S., one from Canada, and one from Denmark (Table 1). They ranged in age from 20 to 30 with an average of 24. Four participants were sophomores and the rest either juniors or seniors. All are identified by pseudonyms.

**TABLE 1**  
Demographic Backgrounds of the Participants

Gender			Nationality		
Male	Female	Total	Domestic	International	Total
6	14	20	16	4	20
30%	70%	100%	80%	20%	100%

Here I focus on their critical reflections on the race and gender issues depicted in *Hidden Figures*, which was shown in the middle of the semester, after which the pre-service teachers participated in an online group discussion and wrote papers in which they reflected on race and gender discrimination issues that they had been learning about and described how they would use their understandings as cultural contents in their future English teaching. Their reflections were guided by the following prompts: a) their pedagogical perspective on the effectiveness of using film to raise multicultural awareness as a goal language education, b) their self-reflection on fostering multicultural awareness through movie analysis and critical race talk, and c) their ideas for creating classroom activities that can be used in their secondary English classrooms.

## 2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

I used a variety of data collection techniques to investigate how the pre-service English teachers' understanding of race and gender issues were mediated through watching, discussing, and writing about the movie watching and writing of their narratives. I collected all of the students' writings during the course, including their personal reflections, posted discussion, responses to the discrimination depicted in *Hidden Figures*, and their review papers on race and gender issues. They were required to use English in all the written reflections and discussions as this course was part of the English-Medium Instruc-

tion (EMI) program. The participants' excerpts in the Findings sections are unedited to preserve data authenticity (Lingard, 2019). Using an inductive content analysis approach, I analyzed the collected data concurrently with data collection. This approach is useful for attaining direct information from the participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Because concurrent data collection and analysis enable the researcher to identify issues that arise and investigate those that warrant more attention, it has the advantage of accessing greater breadth and depth of understanding than post-collection data analysis (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

I carefully read the collected data several times to look for emerging themes. Next, I grouped the data into themes and provided supporting excerpts. Based on these themes and illustrative quotes, I wrote an interpretation of the data and applied my researcher's reflexivity to its finalization. Finally, I gave each interviewee my interpretation of his or her data along with my written notes, reflections, and revisions for member checking in order to establish data credibility.

To minimize bias in the findings and to increase the trustworthiness of my conclusions, I sought triangulation by using several sources of data, including students' conversations in class, their group discussions, and their individual reflections.

## IV. FINDINGS

Three themes emerged from the analysis: a) critical talk with movie analysis offered the pre-service English teachers opportunities to consider concepts of race and gender discrimination that they had had little previous opportunity to learn and talk about, b) the participants realized the importance of dealing with issues of discrimination in English learning, and their responsibilities for teaching such content to their students, and c) through this experience, they could use films to devise practical classroom activities and create a space in which students could learn about racial, gender, and other social issues in their language classrooms.

### 1. "If I had been in this situation, I would have accepted discrimination."

The first research question concerned the participants' general impressions of the whole movie. As they had been given lectures on the history, issues, and terminology of racism and sexism for several weeks before watching the movie, most students were familiar with the concepts represented in the movie and other media. Due to these earlier exposures to such content, the pre-service English teachers sympathized with the Black female characters' emotions related to their experiences with discrimination:

## Excerpt 1

*The discriminative aspects of this movie totally outraged me. [...] I sympathized with their feelings, blaming their supervisors who treat them cruelly and ignore their claims even though they are notably skilled. I was especially disheartened when Katherine was prohibited from entering the conference room when discrepancies in the spaceship's landing occurred. [...] Fortunately, how I felt gradually changed as the movie progressed further from emotions of anger to reassurance and victory.* (Jinchul, movie review)

## Excerpt 2

*Watching this movie, I could see how severe racism black women suffered because of their skin color and country of origin. In particular, I was very angry to see that toilets and things used were divided into black-only and white-only.* (Haesol, class discussion)

As represented by these excerpts, both male and female participants expressed their anger and sympathetic emotions when the Black women characters could not get equal treatment because of their skin color and gender. The participants identified the discrimination depicted in each scene and discussed the underlying meanings and messages the movie conveyed. In addition to their empathy for the main characters, who were being treated unfairly, pre-service English teachers admired their attitudes of resilience in the face of injustice and their courage to put what they believed was right into action.

## Excerpt 3

*If I were a black woman who are ignored by many people, I will just accept such discrimination and do not protest. [...] She removed discriminative factors such as colored restroom by speaking out. Her brave behavior touched me and I realized that if no one is voicing about the unfair situation, things would not go well. If we would like to make a better world, we should have a bravery of acting what we think is right. [...]* (Boyong, class discussion).

## Excerpt 4

*[...] However, the three main characters continuously fought against discrimination and proved their abilities: breaking social stereotypes. Thus, I believe that the theme of this movie is to believe in yourself and stand against social stereotypes and inequality.* (Yeonjoo, movie review)

Like Boyong above, many students praised the Black woman's bravery in acting as she did. Also, as Yeonjoo said, they emphasized that being proactive is important in order to get rid of the prevailing social stereotypes of Blacks and women. Through discussion, it was revealed that pre-service English teachers understood the message of the film in that they learned about diverse types of discrimination resulting from prejudice and lack of respect for differences.

## Excerpt 5

*I could imagine myself in a situation depicted in the films as I have faced racial discrimination when I visited USA as a child. Our family was held at the airport for no special reason for hours and there was no explanation or apologies. Back then, I experienced racism and discriminations against immigrants. Nevertheless, the context is different between the film and my life. The film shows the context where it is mostly based on business, but I had to get along with people who had stereotypes. This film displayed a successful story, yet its solution was merely exceeding the majority. [...] fact, there is an importance of educating the majority with appropriate perspectives on multiculturalism or letting them experience that human beings are all the same.* (Nuri, movie review)

As shown in this excerpt, some pre-service teachers recalled their experiences of discrimination as Koreans in Western locations where White supremacy is rampant. Nuri particularly mentioned the difficult situation that she faced, of which she was reminded when analyzing an incident in the movie, suggesting the importance of educating the majority rather than focusing on only the success story of the minorities. Nuri's response shows that although the courage of minority groups to resist and strive is important, it is more crucial for the majority to receive education on diversity and social justice.

## 2. "We should achieve multicultural education goals in our language education."

While engaging in critical talk about scenes of discrimination in the movie and lessons to be drawn from them, the participants also considered the role of language teachers as providers of multicultural education for students. For example, the participants thought about their own responsibilities as pre-service English teachers and their need to develop proper teaching materials and activities, such as the use of the movie in this study, to open a space for students to talk about racism and gender discrimination.

## Excerpt 6

*I believe that using movies to raise multicultural awareness would be an effective way. For instance, this movie is based on a true story. The movie conveys the critical and important messages that there is no impossible thing and everyone is equal regardless of skin colors, nationality and gender. This movie is interesting and educational enough to break students' stereotypical perceptions.* (Haesol, self-reflection)

Participants mentioned the educational use of media for teaching about racism in the English classroom. In particular, Haesol pointed out that people's prejudices against others' cultures that they have never experienced and different races from theirs can be reduced through analysis of media presentations based on facts. While it may be difficult to

raise awareness about multiculturalism in the current educational curriculum, participants mentioned that using cinematic resources such as *Hidden Figures* can provide English language instruction and multicultural education at the same time.

#### Excerpt 7

*By empathizing with the characters of the movies students can learn how to put themselves in someone else's shoes. This will help greatly in raising the multicultural awareness goals in language education. Also, films provide audio and visual aids simultaneously, so it is an ideal learning material that can be used to enhance the students listening skills and keeping them focused.* (Arim, online discussion)

Most students acknowledged the positive contribution of the movie to multicultural education in English language teaching. The participants were in favor of using film to integrate cultural factors into English language teaching. As Arim said above, such movies provide authentic English language input and insight into cultural issues in western countries at the same time. Also, considering that the participants were members of the media generation, such materials could be expected to be more effective for them than more traditional materials such as textbooks.

#### Excerpt 8

*If we can implement a similar kind of project in school, I think it would be truly effective for raising the student's multicultural awareness. Honestly, it wouldn't be easy to implement this kind of task project since the curriculum in Korea is quite fixed and does not have many rooms for long term extracurricular tasks. If school environments change in the future, and if class for culture contents is devised, we might be able to acquire various methods to enhance student's cultural awareness.* (Dongmin, self-reflection)

On the other hand, some students like Dongmin above expressed their concerns that the current fixed school curriculum would not accommodate implementing films or other media projects. She added that the current curriculum actually prevented students from engaging in critical thinking and open discussion. In fact, as it would be difficult to evaluate critical thinking in the current test-driven system, these students doubted that it would ever be in the curriculum despite its importance. There was also concern about the amount of work for teachers the proper use of films entailed:

#### Excerpt 9

*However, we should be aware that using films will give more burden to teachers. It is necessary for teachers to check in advance whether the film is suitable for education and for the target students. Using movies might be interesting and engaging, but teachers should*

*be very careful when selecting movies. If the movie uses too difficult language, it will be no use because students won't be able to understand the content and lose focus. Furthermore, teachers should prepare a lot of the classes. They should have specific lesson plan, specific guideline, and appropriate activities in order to use movies in class.* (Jinchul, online discussion)

Perhaps looking ahead to the already labor-intensive nature of teaching, Jinchul expressed concern about the extra burden of special preparations for using films as a basis for discussion about issues of racial and gender discrimination. As most English teachers have never learned strategies for teaching about racism or gender-related issues, it could be difficult for them to create everything needed, including lesson plans, classroom activities, and evaluation methods to apply in class.

### 3. "I'll let my students to become one of the oppressed characters."

Despite caveats about the extra work required, the pre-service English teachers actively came up with ideas for supporting their students' critical thinking about racial and gender discrimination. As they had already learned effective activities for learning English in previous teacher education course, it was not hard for them to create classroom activities using films to teach cultural content.

#### Excerpt 10

*This film could be utilized as a teaching material in the context of EFL classroom. As there are various themes dealt in this film, instructors could teach students racism, gender roles, and stereotypes. This film both provides good and bad examples toward multiculturalism. Thus, the instructor could make an activity for students to find both bad and good examples (or problems) and solutions. Then, students can come up with their own solutions and present them to share thoughts on multiculturalism.* (Heekyong, self-reflection)

Heekyong, like many other participants in this study, observed that, rather than teach problems and solutions directly, EFL teachers could utilize films to create learner-centered environments in which students identified problems and formulated their own solutions. Rather than conveying a prepared unit of information about multiculturalism, she emphasized the necessity of cultivating students' critical thinking and creativity by having them vicariously experience problematic situations and respond to them on their own:

#### Excerpt 11

*I will tell the students to become one of the characters in the movie and show how do you think they would react to the incident if they were in the situation, or saw the situation. Students will write scripts, pretending they are one of the characters, and show their role-*

*play in front of other students. By doing this activity, students can get a chance to research different kinds of discriminations that have happened and are still ongoing in our society. (Subin, self-reflection)*

Like Subin, many pre-service English teachers created role-play situations that encouraged students to empathize with the characters' situation. Additionally, by giving them opportunities to research other examples of discrimination, she wanted students to expand on all the knowledge about and perspectives on race and gender issues that they had acquired throughout their schooling.

#### Excerpt 12

*I would like to design one activity with the scene of Mary Jackson with the judge. I would like to ask my students if you are Mary Jackson how would you persuade the judge to get permission to enter the university. By doing this activity, students can indirectly experience the position of black people at that time. Furthermore, this is related to critical thinking, so that the students can develop the ability of critical thinking as well as English skills. Since this activity might be too difficult for the students, I would provide examples in advance. (Jiyeon, self-reflection)*

Jiyeon expected that by participating indirectly in difficult experiences through role play, students could improve their critical thinking, which is very important in English language learning and teaching in the focus is not only on language skill learning but also on developing intercultural competence, which involves thinking critically rather than just accepting the surface of events. In this context it is important to directly teach the values of multiculturalism:

#### Excerpt 13

*[...] this film showed a successful story, yet its solution may not seem a quintessential example of overcoming racism. The film displayed the demand of burdensome barrier for the minority to exceed in order to get rid of stereotypes. Thus, I believe the instructor should additionally provide more appropriate aspects in terms of multiculturalism. In this manner, I also believe instructors not only rely on the contents, but they also should provide additional materials or comments to students to teach appropriate attitudes toward multiculturalism. (Nuri, self-reflection)*

Here Nuri pointed out that focusing on the situation of the group featured in the movie was not sufficient, as similar issues may be experienced by other groups of people, such as Asians in English-speaking countries. Based on her experiences at an early age, she proposed multicultural education for all.

## V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine pre-service English teachers' understanding of race-and gender-related issues through their reflections on their own multicultural awareness growth. As the researcher/instructor, I was particularly interested in the students' talk about these issues in the selected movie in relation to their reflections on becoming teachers with a multicultural perspective. The pre-service English teachers' cultural knowledge, understanding, and appreciation were explored through group discussion and individual assignments.

As a resource for critical talk about race and gender, *Hidden Figures* provides rich material in its depiction of Black women's experiences with racism and sexism in the past, which can be related to the present. Thus, the film is a good example of the pedagogical implications of media based instruction that integrates language and cultural learning (Khan, 2015). First, scenes of discrimination in the film can easily support discussions of racism and sexism. Second, it gives pre-service English teachers a platform for taking responsibility for teaching race-related concepts for understanding and key terminology for discussing discrimination. Finally, they can devise multiple ways to help prospective English teachers raise students' multicultural awareness and contribute to preventing discrimination against any groups.

The results indicated that watching the movie was effective in providing pre-service English teachers with a space in which to talk about race and gender issues (Thomas, 2015). Also, it was perceived as effective for promoting students' critical thinking (Eken, 2003) and multicultural awareness in English classes, resulting in attitudinal growth and openness to other cultures and different people in various situations. Finally, race talk in relation to the movie expanded the pre-service teachers' own knowledge about and perspectives on multiculturalism and diversity, which helped them to develop classroom activities they could eventually use to raise students' cultural awareness. The findings of this study therefore encourage the use of movies in teacher education programs to stimulate students' interest in learning and to provide and to promote learners' intercultural competence and expand their perspectives on race and gender issues, which is at the heart of critical pedagogy.

Movies can be used in teacher education not only to promote multicultural education for prospective English teachers but also to provide opportunities for them to develop strategies for promoting their future students' critical thinking and to design creative classroom activities they can use in their future teaching. For example, during a scene related to a main topic for classroom discussion, teachers could pause the movie and ask students questions based on the scene as well as have them engage in related language practices such as imitation, repetition, dictation, dubbing, and role-play. Using films effectively requires teachers to plan the instructional process carefully and maintain a good balance enjoyment and learning. An inter-

esting variety of exercises following the showing of films and other video materials will help students to have an in-depth understanding of conceptual and language content of the lesson. Teachers can help students cultivate critical thinking skills by having discussions on the cultural content of video materials and at the same time check students' sensitivity of the details in the materials and the effects of their pre-class activities on students' cultural competence (Pandey, 2012) and English proficiency. After these discussions, teachers can summarize the key points of students' presentations to consolidate their understanding of what was discussed. The experiences of creating such activities and engaging in critical race talk may be useful for enhancing the professional identity of pre-service English teachers while helping them build their knowledge about multicultural education.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this study, the responses of 20 pre-service English teachers to the racial and gender discrimination scenes in the movie *Hidden Figures* were examined to assess the use of film as a resource for integrating culture into English teaching and learning. The study was based on the premise that cultural learning is an integral part of language learning, that language classes should promote multicultural awareness, and that the success of multicultural education depends on effective preparation of teachers and their perceptions of cultural issues. The study shows that pre-service English teachers are keenly aware of the need to engage in race talk in their future classrooms and of their responsibility to provide space for their students to discuss sensitive cultural issues along with teaching language skills. The results also indicate that pre-service English teachers understand the importance of their own multicultural awareness and are willing to prepare for this responsibility.

The pre-service English teachers showed significant understanding about the need to provide opportunities for students to talk about race and gender issues in particular, for which films depicting authentic situations are valuable resources if used with practical classroom activities that enable students to explore cultural topics, especially issues of social discrimination. As future teacher educators cognizant of the increasing number of multicultural families and international students in school contexts, they also agreed with the benefits to be gained from the critical race talk to raise students' multicultural awareness. While pre-service teachers' knowledge and cultural awareness can be diverse depending on their individual experiences and learning, they can be educated to effectively transmit cultural awareness and multicultural values to their students in the future.

This study has several limitations in terms of research methodology. One limitation is that the results reflected the effects of not only the intervention but also the participants' prior learning about issues of racial and gender discrimination. Similarly, as this study was conducted as

one unit in a teacher education course on the teaching of culture in language instruction, it is difficult to relate the results specifically to the viewing and discussion of the target film. Another limitation of the study is that data were drawn from a classroom in which students' engagement in critical thinking and autonomous discussion was limited due to the rigid school curriculum centered on an entrance exam-oriented education system (B. Kim, 2016), which results in a classroom environment that hinders students' holistic human development. In order to investigate the full potential of the use of film to support students' critical thinking and appreciation of diversity, the scope of inquiry should be expanded to including settings featuring a flexible school curriculum and teachers' efforts to create learning environment integrating critical thinking into the classroom.

Despite these limitations, this study is significant in that it demonstrates a strategy for increasing students' multicultural awareness and critical thinking in English education.

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