# Enhancing Students' Vocabulary through a Cross-Cultural Simulation Game

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Foreign language instructors and academics are facing huge hurdle to students' comprehension. Not only do they need to offer training in the target language, but they also need to find ways to optimise 'students' communication skills and time in the target language. The present study employed a quasi-experimental research design to ascertain the effectiveness of a cross-cultural simulation game (BAFA BAFA) in enhancing Saudi EFL vocabulary. The respondents were a class of 20 students. The findings of this study indicate that BAFA BAFA improved students' vocabulary, and that it has an effective English teaching process. It helped students quickly memorise phrases, made them enjoy, and encourage them to learn. It also created a spirit of competitiveness and cooperation in the learning and teaching process. It is also a smart thing for the teacher to teach vocabulary, but the teacher who wanted to teach word games using vocabulary needed to consider the time, and to take the students' expectations into consideration.

**Keywords:** *Simulation game, Vocabulary, BAFA BAFA, Language learning, Language tasks.*

## Introduction

A lot of cultural awareness games exist, such as BaFa' BaFa'. This paper reflects on the usage of BaFa' BaFa,' which was developed in the 1970s for the United States. BaFa' BaFa' is an immersive game that divides participants into two culturally dichotomous classes, invites them to participate in actual gaming activity by adhering to some cultural rules; in the section on methods, the specifics of game-play procedures are described (Ong-Flaherty et al., 2017). A successful simulation is provided by BAFA BAFA (Horn & Cleaves, 1973), which, while labour-intensive, underlines the intent of the class. The simulation includes cognitive (who, when, where) components, and behavioural (how) and theory (Fowler, 1994). As Fowler (1994) states that, it is BAFA BAFA that enables the participants to understand "cultural influences on the assignment of value, thus enabling them to feel at intestinal level how the two cultures addressed during the simulation offer special importance to the task."

One key assumption of the current paper is that simulations help us to create an environment, where students can be introduced, and experience different aspects of the course, including the idea of otherness. We use BAFA BAFA to provide students with a first-hand understanding of perspective and otherness. Suransky's (1973) early works on the usage of computer games indicate that a computer is a valuable tool for language and social science for teaching, planning and forecasting, preparation, collaboration, sensitisation, and sobering. Wenzler and Chartier (1999) produced written games and simulations, which contribute to buttressing intelligence and meaning sharing. Their simulation goal with BAFA BAFA covers the explanations mentioned by Suransky, Wenzler, and Chartier and extends them. In this context, this article examines the improved use of BAFA BAFA, analysis approaches, and their application to EFL study in relation to the improvement of 'students' vocabulary and performance. We, first, provide a brief description of BAFA BAFA as well as two systemic improvements to make BAFA more suitable for our Social Sciences topics and substances. They describe instead how the meeting was carried out and how a formal report was scheduled. We, then, share insights into the assessments of our students, and the quality of the simulation learning, demonstrating the extent to which a simulation as an educational part of the research into language subjects is essential. Among the questions that we are to address are the following. Can BAFA BAFA increase consciousness of the issues of race and culture in a student? So what is the role of surface and deep learning in the contribution of BAFA BAFA to cultural diversity? We draw on our work and continuing curiosity in whether and how simulations bring us closer to our targets in the game and simulation literature.

Young students are challenging to teach as compared to teens and adults, as young students are easily overwhelmed. Children want to be enjoyable and friendly, so teachers can use appropriate teaching methods that suit the spirit of childlike nature. Sports are one of the methods used to avoid anger in the school. We have a particular interest in international

language teaching. School athletics will help both students and instructors. Furthermore, teachers can achieve all educational results by games in vocabulary teaching in particular.

## Significance of the Paper

Cultural humility is a condition that recognises and encourages respectful relationships between partners, and is particularly essential in partnerships with teachers and students, students to students. Through the experiences of students, we discovered that empathy could arise only when another individual is viewed as equal and respectful. Then, the issue of "Empathy" is listed as a sub-node of cultural humility and is defined as the capacity to convey the thoughts of others, and to acknowledge other people's opinions and emotions. BaFa'BaFa' is a cross-cultural simulation exercise, which is commonly used. The aim of this program is to encourage students to pay attention to variation and to explore the impact on intercultural interactions between values, standards, and attitudes. This calls for students to explore their own cultural perceptions and inclinations by their active participation as members of two fictional societies. BaFa' BaFa' helps us understand how differences in culture influence the ways in which we interact with others. The BaFa' BaFa's expectations recognise the powerful effects of culture on the lives of every person. It can encourage people to adapt to live and work in another country or to learn how to work alongside people from various cultures, professions, genders, races, and ages. The software for face-to-face modelling produces memorable experiences and evaluations. This simulation makes students aware of the differences between cultures, sensitising students to cultural diversity. Nevertheless, the participants clearly feel anxiety and confusion. BaFa' BaFa' shakes people by stereotyping and shows them how critical any part of the job is in a healthy and exciting environment.

Furthermore, BaFa' BaFa', a multicultural simulation, introduced a wide range of aspects of life in a multicultural world that are important for immediate student and long-term study research. Students enjoy BaFa, an entertaining real-life game. Our students will be highly receptive aware of cultural disparities in our multicultural and interactive society. It serves as a model for other educators and administrators who seek to heighten the effectiveness of interactions between their students. Intercultural awareness is a skill that can be gained by intercultural instruction (Cushner, 2005; Sharma & Jung, 1985). Through cross-cultural classroom interactions, cultural understanding and consciousness may be built and promoted (Fantini & Richards, 1997).

## Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching is another significant research component originating basically from the contact language theory. Language training helps to improve expressive

abilities through this framework (Savignon, 2018). CLT is a task-based grammar language training that teaches in a relaxing and substantive way. The students will research the proper usage and use of language. Students provided a detailed description of the grammar rules and were encouraged to use the words in appropriate contexts. In CLT, incorporation is stressed, instead of expertise isolation. Listen, say, learn, compose will be determined as a method of communicating by grammar instruction, through which two or three macro abilities can be combined through grammar. CLT also emphasises form and feature. Shape refers to a particular grammar point, or, target language structure, such as verbs, nouns, or adjectives. Function means language in various situations, such as telling of events from the past, inviting a friend to a party, apologising for an error made, proposing solutions to a specific problem, expressing likes and dislikes, and so on.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method in the teaching of a second/international language that aims at promoting language learning through the engaging usage of authentic vocabulary by students who carry out a variety of tasks. The exercises are done in various contexts, such that students can know a particular word. For CLT, the learning performance of students is for both teachers and students. Instead of creating a dominant personality in the learning process, teachers are facilitating the communication process and creating a climate of democracy, security, and non-defence.

**What is BaFa' BaFa'?**

BaFa' BaFa' is a face-to-face version of the instruction, which seeks to improve the cultural awareness of learners by having them appreciate the effect of culture on individuals and organisations' behaviour. Participants undergo "cultural shock" by going to, and, having to communicate with(in) a society in which individuals have differing beliefs, various coping strategies, and alternative remedies. BaFa' BaFa' is structured to be either autonomous or incorporated into the diversity training of an organisation. The test takes about an hour and a half and requires up to 300 participants. The debriefing time will last up to four hours after the simulation. BaFa' BaFa' has been developed by Dr Garry Shirts, and has been written and sold with the aid of Simulation Learning Systems in San Diego, CA, in three versions: one for colleges and universities; one for children of middle schools called RaFa' RaFa' from the late 1970s; and a technical BaFa. There are two distinct societies with completely different expectations and viewpoints in the BaFa' BaFa' Simulation. As the members of each culture are sent to another culture, they have to live in accordance with the norms, mores, and traditions of the other culture. They are confronted with these differences. Such experience, or encounter, helps participants to know what they are going to face, as they move on to another nation, and physically brace them for the surprise. Since simulation is rather dangerous and complex, the method can only be guided by well-trained facilitators, and the debriefing aspect of training is important.

## History of BaFa' BaFa'

As noted earlier, BaFa' BaFa' is a face-to-face instruction, which aims to enhance the cultural understanding of students by allowing them to recognise the effect of culture on their behaviour patterns. A "culture shock" happens in a community, where individuals have various values, coping mechanisms, and natural solutions. Nevertheless, BaFa' BaFa' is distributed by computer software in San Diego, CA. Three versions have been made: one for college and university, one for high school students, RaFa' RaFa' was created at the end of the 1970s and the BaFa' BaFa', a technological version, was first published in 1993, in accordance with specifications for private organisations and are governmental. The BaFa' BaFa' can be used for immediate usage in French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The vote to send the United States home in the early 1970s in Greece, the sixth Navy party generated significant confusion and conflict. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the United States declared that the Greek revolt of 1967–74 was in their favour. In Greece, two seafarers and entrepreneurs, including Robert Novak, were told in the Greek and American press about the failure of the Navy to train American sailors on international cultures. This arose when two sixth-story sailors figured out that they had bought the same drink from a retailer, but one was charging for a drink far better than the other. The navy man became furious, charging the higher price. He apologised to the merchant and believed that he had torn him away. Eventually, the fight in the Greek press became a front-page item. The Greek community was largely offended by the absence of US warships from detention. The event so far threatened that the Greek government would push Greece out. In addition, the Navy Research and Development Center in San Diego, California, has undertaken numerous projects to improve American military personnel in international cultures' cultural capabilities. An analysis of the interactions of Ted Yellen and Margaret was also included. Many of the problems referred to by the marine men will be reduced if they have a better understanding of Greek social standards and daily life, and are at least able to speak Greek and speak Greek to interact with host-country nationals.

## Activity Process

The activity persists until all members have had the opportunity to see how the other community functions. Once everybody visits the other community, the practice finishes, and the two parties return for debate. Usually, the exercise takes approximately one hour, although I have completed the introduction and parts of the activity in one 50-minute class. BAFA BAFA is best suited for sessions that last for at least two hours because the role-plays as well as the debriefing, can then be performed in one sitting. Nevertheless, I used it consistently in 50-minute courses back-to-back. However, if two sessions are needed, it is

crucial that the participants do not speak to leaders of the other community about what they heard before the debate session. The best way to do the activity is to use two facilitators, one for each group. If you choose to do the exercise alone, I assume, because I did, that while a facilitator can do the task, running back and forth to breakout spaces, ensuring that everything functions according to the guidelines can be very tiring.

**Development of 'Students' Vocabulary and Games**

Vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of the English language (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Nation, 2013; Schmitt  & Schmitt, 2020). Vocabulary education can require students to understand and master certain elements of language. Lack of vocabulary impedes the understanding and development of languages (Carter, 2012; Gass, 2013; Webb, 2007). Teachers need to incorporate specific teaching techniques that include correct teaching strategies to improve 'students' engagement for their vocabulary enrichment. An appropriate teaching strategy is important for making teaching and learning processes work in the classroom, and for making a better situation in the classroom. Games are one of the key strategies that help teachers to improve increasing pupil's thinking skills (Hidayat, 2016; Sugar & Sugar, 2002; Syamsul Bahrin, 2011).   Games allow students to make more casual use of their vocabulary (Amrullah, 2015; Sánchez et al., 2007; Tambaş, 2015; Udosen & Ekpo, 2016).   Games are ideal for vocabulary instruction (Chen, Tseng, & Hsiao, 2018; DeHaan, Reed, & Kuwanda, 2010 ; Lafourcade & Zampa, 2009; Yoshimoto, 2009). This is mainly because applying games to the classroom can be an effective strategy in language learning (Zou, Huang & Xie, 2019). Games get students more excited about vocabulary lessons (Carter, Gibbs & Harrop, 2012).   further states that several unfamiliar phrases, puzzles, and games can inspire students to acquire vocabulary. The wide variety of instructional methods in the training cycle allows students to feel comfortable and to develop 'instructors' plans and schemes for an effective teaching style.

The linguist David Wilkins claimed, "there were so few without syntax that can express and nothing without words to be articulated." Young people usually use symbols as they first start communicating and only understand skills (Thornbury 2002). Thornbury said that young students create a network to develop complicated ideas. There are also other words such as synonyms and antonyms in this process, and many techniques and strategies exist for the teaching of English to learners. The usage of terms that children will later think of is an excellent means of learning vocabulary. Another way is the simple method that there is no need for clarity, and the usage of the mother tongue is unconstitutional. The entire sentence of the target language is the only thing in the school. Another method is Total Physical Reaction (TPR), which instructors use a lot, as children are too active and have long been emotionally unable to concentrate. Nevertheless, this simulation method and various lessons will allow young students to acquire vocabulary very quickly. Additionally, young student-

teachers encourage their students to interact through the CLT, which stresses the value of language in the background. According to Al-Ahdal and Al-Ma'amari (2015), cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies are the most powerful. It is, therefore, important to raise awareness and educate students about their learning process. If autonomous, self-motivated, and efficient learners are to be developed, they need to be trained to use and develop these strategies.

**Learning Process: Workshop Set-Up Checklist**

| | |
|---|---|
| Workshop Title: | BaFa BaFa: A Cross-Cultural Simulation |
| Location and Room Specifications: | You need two rooms close to each other - one big room for the entire group and one smaller break-out room. The big room should be set up in a large square. The break-out room should be pods. |
| Recommended # of Participants: | 20 |
| Contact Hours: | 1.5 to 2 hours |
| Timing: | 10 min. – Introductions<br>10 min. – Review simulation instructions<br>20 min. – Break out into cultures to receive instructions (handout), nametags, clips or clasps, and practice<br>15 min. – Send observers to record for 10 min. and then debrief their group for 5 min.<br>15 min. – Entire group interaction<br>20 min. – Simulation debriefing |
| Other: | You need two presenters for this workshop |

BaFa BaFa set up:
- ☐ Flash drive with the three PowerPoint files for BaFa BaFa culture workshop
- ☐ BaFa BaFa Simulation Instructions and Debriefing
- ☐ The Alpha Culture
- ☐ The Beta Culture
- ☐ Print 10 copies of The Alpha Culture on yellow paper (Word document)
- ☐ Print 10 copies of The Beta Culture on green paper (Word document)
- ☐ Need 20 nametags: 10 that say ""Alpha"" in red and 10 that say ""Beta"" in blue
- ☐ Make a blue wrist band out of blue paper. Bring tape to tape it on the Alpha 'leader's wrist
- ☐ 1 box of 100 small paperclips for Alphans
- ☐ 1 box of 100 large paperclips for Alphans

☐ 4 boxes of 25 binder clips for Betans
☐ Flipchart and markers to capture ideas during the debriefing

**BAFA BAFA Modifications for Students with Special Needs**

The BAFA BAFA is a perfect platform for those students who are experiencing trouble learning, balance, and voice to interact with the community. While the rules do not address such various styles of students, they all profit from a little consideration and some changes from the same stage. The following are some instances:

**Students with Visual Difficulties**

A variety of shapes and/or small items should be employed to overcome the visual problems of a pupil. Throughout the cultural exchanges, shared values, such as marble, tiles, pencils, and all other small class items may be provided and used as various valued tokens. Alternative of facial gestures, you should use a speech gesture, or a contact, to the shoulder to signify the chosen amount of tokens. Clicking, clapping hands, or a vocal gesture may be used because of opening the hair. As regards Beta Society, it notes that there can be no physical interaction; but this provision will undoubtedly be updated to satisfy a visually-challenged student.

**Students with Auditory Difficulties**

The original game says that communication is in the form of various animal sounds as part of the Beta culture. If there are hearing problems for a participating pupil, animal behaviour may instead be covered. Perhaps the student will be matched with another participant of the same group, making it simpler to grasp and interpret. The friend might write down what people have mentioned, so that will allow the student an opportunity to decode the situations that may arise with auditory difficulties.

**Students with Mobility Difficulties**

A game of this type requires quite some room and flexibility to move around freely anywhere, so this should be suitable for students with mobility difficulties. Only make sure the room is cleared of any barriers to the full participation of the pupil in the game.

**Debriefing**

The most important part of the simulation is the debriefing, in which everyone actually has the opportunity to express and discuss their feelings and points of understanding. The Alpha

and Beta Cultures meet in plenary for the debriefing, and one facilitator leads the process. The facilitator holds the workshop on the basis of:

- Ask me, Alphas, terms that characterise Beta members' behaviour!
- Up Betas, tell me terms explaining the Alha members' actions!
— Home to Alphas, how did you feel when the Beta Culture visited you?
Betas, when you met Alpha Society, how did you feel?
- Towards Alphas, how did the Beta members behave as they visited your culture?

Towards Betas, how did the Alpha leaders treat themselves, as they visited your culture? The facilitator writes the responses on flipcharts visible to everyone. The answers make the people realise how they are observed by foreign people, how they felt when they found themselves in the lap of a totally different culture, and how easy it is to spot foreigners in your culture because they act confused and do not know the rules. During the simulation, you were not able to ask each other about the rules of the culture. In real-life situations, what are the factors that make it difficult to understand the norms of a culture? Subgroups number four, did it help you some that you had already known information about the other culture when you visited them? If you could have spent more time in the other culture, could you have found out more about the rules? How does that relate to real-life experience? Admittedly, every beginning is difficult. Do you agree with this statement? How can you prepare yourself before travelling to understand, and adjust better to the new culture? What should you do during your stay in a foreign country to make your experience more pleasurable?

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that BAFA BAFA improved students' vocabulary and have an effective English teaching process. It helped students quickly memorise phrases, made them enjoy, and encourage them to learn. It also created competitiveness and cooperation in the teaching process. It is also a smart thing for the teacher to teach vocabulary, but the teacher who wanted to teach word games using vocabulary needed to consider the time and the students' expectations into consideration. Studies should be done in pedagogical activities as well. The BaFa' BaFa' participants understand the critical effects of culture in a person's life. It can help students adjust to different ways of living and working in the world or learn how to communicate with people from other countries, professions, genders, races, and ages. It is a face-to-face educational program, which provides unforgettable experiences and outcomes. I have found that BAFA BAFA is a great way to show how quickly we should understand others as they vary from us. The practice, though, reveals how we tend to evaluate others who do not talk our language and the value of communicating effectively. BAFA BAFA also demonstrates why other joint problems (for example, high turnover, low

efficiency, lack of motivation) in multicultural contexts like the hospitality industry can also be prevalent. BAFA BAFA enables people, who have to interact with another culture, or subculture through preference, or situation to experience, to fear, to distorted beliefs and negative attitudes. It also allows future managers to understand how people of a different culture behave when they are regulated by rules and customs unfamiliar to their community. However, if students need to reflect on simulations to generalise their learning, their feedback suggests that links between simulation and other aspects of the course are explicitly required. The potential of integrating the simulation with different learning experiences, and, more importantly, with the course goals of critical thinking and an awareness of cultural differences allow students to see the entire experience of language learning.

## Implications to Teaching

While simulation games have proved an excellent way to teach language, teachers and students face challenges. Noise and unorganised classes are the first challenge. Students also move a lot, and talk too much when they are excited, and therefore are difficult to control. Language teachers must consider the characteristics of the students and create an excellent learning environment in order to implement the curriculum. Teachers must choose a range of creative games to encourage young pupils. As already mentioned, however, students are given a brief emphasis, and tasks should be as attractive as possible so that after 10 minutes, they are lost interest. The choice, or design, of games to teach young learners vocabulary is an essential factor. Another challenge facing teachers is that sometimes students want to interact with each other and their teachers in the mother tongue. Teachers answer in English, even though the student asks the teacher for something in their mother tongue. From my experience, teachers will also use the mother tongue of young students to inspire students to communicate and engage. Teachers may have little time to learn the language of their students after playing the game. Perhaps students cannot repeat the words. This could lead to students making mistakes with the photos of their instructors. It is necessary to balance game type, amount of words, time commitment, and use of the mother tongue of students. Experienced teachers cannot solve these problems by games that teach their young 'students' language.

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