

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS DURING ENGLISH COURSE PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Language cannot be separated from culture; they are both interconnected in such a way that influences the native speaker's thoughts, habits, perspective, and also speaking behavior. As foreign language students, both the D4 Archive and Record Management and D3 Business Administration study programs need to do some English presentations to fulfill their English course tasks, so somehow, they have to give the best English performance to get the best score. The one that seems to be the problem is their habit of making the presentation script in Indonesian, which is followed by translating using translation tools without further editing. Creating the script in Indonesia means they adopted their Indonesian-natural behavior in presenting their materials in English: in such a way, it further causes inappropriateness in using the dictions or certain expressions. Their unawareness that each language entails its own culture makes their presentation look unnatural. This article means to find out how far the students' awareness and what kind of perception they have related to the importance of intercultural competence to perform appropriate English presentations.

Keywords: *intercultural competence, presentation, students' perception and awareness*

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is not simply learning the grammar or knowing or remembering many vocabularies in the target language (L2) -though being able to do those means that learners have already been halfway in the journey of learning L2- there is another aspect that needs to be considerate in being able to have an appropriate performance in L2, that is attaching the L2 culture when performing. Having fluent and successful communication in L2 as a foreign or second language needs practice and enough knowledge, especially for the foreign language. Language is an unseparated part of the culture, for language represents its nation and has a close relationship with the attitude or behavior of the language (Rabiah, 2012). She also stated that: language is part of the culture, and even though language and culture are different, they have a very close relationship; language is strongly influenced by culture, and language significantly affects culture and the way of thinking of people living. In recent years, there has been a change in how the culture of second/foreign language focus; it is no longer on the target language itself, but it expands to the world concept of culture ((Dooly, 2021)

English as the lingua franca is seen as one of the most important languages to learn, for it is used as the primary language for many international occasions starting with entertainment, education, and also business communication. With the digital and social media era, the boundaries of interaction using English is getting limitless with the range not only interaction with native English but also with other people from different language who use English as their primary language to communicate with people across their country. That limitless boundary causes the necessity to learn about English as the

whole part is unavoidable. In communicative competence, we need vocabulary and grammar like what was mentioned previously and other aspects of the language. In the CEFR principle, communicative language competence covers linguistic competencies (lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, orthoepic), sociolinguistic competencies (linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expressions of folk wisdom, register differences, dialect, and accent) and pragmatic competence (discourse and functional). A similar finding was mentioned by Habiňáková (Habiňáková, 2015); she said that communicative competence goes with grammatical competence to formulate accurate linguistic utterances, sociolinguistic competence or attention to social context and norms of the given culture, discourse competence is the use of the language in context, and strategic competence or the ability to come in authentic communicative situations. So, foreign language learners must know that other things translate from L1 to L2 in learning a foreign language. In this case, Indonesian and English are different in some cases, such as in linguistic aspects, for example, the time-based. As we know, English is quite strict about the use of tenses, while in Indonesian, we only need the adverb of time as the signal referring to time, the positioning of the noun and adjective is also a bit different- Indonesian is the noun comes first before an adjective, but English is vice versa, etc. In addition, Indonesian culture is also quite different from English which caused some issues related to sociolinguistics (politeness, social markers, register, and dialect/ accent). The above facts about how each language has its characteristics make the awareness of intercultural communicative competence a critical issue in foreign language learning.

As the name is called, intercultural communicative competence includes both communicative and intercultural competence. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is proposed as knowledge, skills, and attitudes which can be developed through education to equip learners of a foreign language to engage in intercultural communication through that language (Baker, 2022). (Byram, 1997) stated that related to intercultural competence is divided into five components: attitudes (curiosity and openness about other culture and their own culture), knowledge (knowledge of social groups have their product, practices, and processes to interact socially and individually), skills of interpreting and relating (ability to analyze a document or event from another culture, to explain and connect it to their own culture), mastery of discovery and interaction (ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate inside, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication), and critical cultural awareness (ability to evaluate critically and based on explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries). Thus, the knowledge about translation from the native language to the target is insufficient to communicate appropriately in the target language. In foreign language and teaching, most intercultural communicative researches concerned with the teacher/ lecturer, which mostly finds that mainly the teaching and learning activity of ESL/EFL is a lack of intercultural communicative competence awareness (Iswandari, 2022), something related to the teacher's belief and understanding about intercultural communicative competence (Hasanah, 2020), teachers' contribute in intercultural competence developing and experiencing during the learning process (Bal, 2022)

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language, which means that it is only given at school as one of the required courses; it is not used for everyday

communication. It is different from the second language, and foreign language learners face more challenges compared to the second ones in FL learning. The learners have limited exposure and practice toward the language, both for formal and daily conditions. This condition leads to the tendency for an FL learner to do direct translation in performing the L2. They commonly make the transcript and directly translate it using translation tools such as google translate. There is nothing wrong with using translation tools, but with insufficient knowledge of the target language/ L2, there are some possible problems will occur, especially when the L1 and L2 have some uncommon similarities, like as the language subject of this study, Indonesian as L1 and English as L2.

Business Administration Department is one of the departments in Politeknik Negeri Malang that deals with courses related to the business and administration field. In this department, the foreign languages taught are English, Mandarin, and Japanese. English is taught to all study programs in this department, while the other two are only to two study programs (D3 Business Administration and D4 Marketing Management). The main subjects of this study are students of D4 Archive and Information Record Management programs in which D3 Business Administration experiences English in 3 courses (English for Communication, Business English, and English for Secretary) while D4 Archive and Information Record Management experience two courses (English for Archivist 1 and 2). In those English courses, the students get vocabulary related to the field, grammar, and speaking practices like handling telephone simulations and presentations about specific topics related to their study program. One activity to build up students' ability to perform good communication is by doing a presentation. Presentation is somehow the next level of communication, so to have good presentation skills, it is necessary to have practical communication skills. To have effective communication, a speaker needs to be able to convince people and make them want to listen while presenting. You need to add a 'tune' to audiences to make you can speak to them appropriately. So, in presenting a certain topic, it is vital to have practical communication skills (convincing and making the audience listen) added by knowledge of the topic and organization skills (which materials to include and the most effective sequence of points to make it fit with the time). A presentation in the native language is simpler than in a foreign language. In a foreign language, presenters need to consider the materials related to the topic: how to organize the presentation, and the appropriate language and behaviours that must be applied. Another challenge for them is they usually have to present something as a simulation presentation in a business environment, which is different from an educational or research setting.

As foreign language learners in higher education, the Business Administration Department students have English in their senior and high school. Still, as mentioned above that foreign language, those students only got English as a course, not as an everyday language. This condition required the students to be self-aware to find other exposure and practice outside of the class to master English better. However, since they do not need English as necessary as Indonesian or their local language, they tend to have less attention to learning and practicing it, which results in their limited knowledge and sensitivity to English, both the structure and the culture entails in it. The easier way to do the assignments, especially the ones that needed producing, such as writing, conversation practices, and presentations, they make the script in Indonesia and then translate them using a translation tool such as Google Translate. This mere translation

is risky, for the result is a one-to-one translation that leads to inappropriateness in the use of language, for most of them have less knowledge and sensitivity about English. Besides, Politeknik Negeri Malang does not use the intercultural competence approach to teach English as a foreign language, so it needs self-awareness to learn about and understand the intercultural required in producing language. This situation leads to the problem raised in this article:

1. Do the students of D4 Archive and Information Record Management and D3 Business Administration study programs know that English and Indonesia have different cultural conditions?
2. Do the students of D4 Archive and Information Record Management and D3 Business Administration study programs have an awareness of intercultural competence while producing English for their presentations?
3. How do they perceive the cultural difference between English and Indonesian?

METHOD

This study applied the qualitative research approach; qualitative research tries to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspective of the local population it involves (Mack, 2005). In this book, they also mentioned that qualitative research effectively obtains culturally specific information about particular populations' values, opinions, behavior, and social context, for it provides information about the 'human' side of an issue. This research is about students' perspectives of culture, and the qualitative approach is well-suited. The researcher used observation that followed up with spreading an open-ended questionnaire to the students of D3 Business Administration and D4 Archive and Information Record Management study program. Then next, it was analyzed using a descriptive qualitative technique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data, it can be seen that students in D3 Business Administration and D4 Archive and Information Record Management did some presentations during their English courses. But for some reason related to the curriculum policy, the D4 Archive and Information Record Management students have fewer experiences since they only get two semesters of English (English for Archivists 1 and 2). In comparison, the D3 Business Administration students experienced four semesters of English (English for Communication 1 and 2, Business English 1 and 2). When the research was conducted, they were performing the English for Secretary. In Business English 2, students of D3 Business Administration study program do longitudinal projects (making company) that make them do the presentation in each unit of the course, so somehow, they experience more in delivering English presentations. But based on the observations done during their performance in presentations, the awareness related to intercultural competence is quite similar. For most of their presentations, they did the translation method, both in the script of the presentation and in the content of the slides. The details related to the finding and discussion is presented below.

Students' awareness of the cultural difference between Indonesian and English

Based on the observation and questionnaire, it is found that the students were aware that Indonesian and English cultures are quite different in such a way. For

example, there was a time when the lecturers explained how to perform a good and effective presentation, and they asked some questions:

- Do we need to thank Allah SWT and Muhammad SAW, like what we commonly do to open a speech or presentation in Indonesia?
- Who should we address when we have a presentation in English?

Those questions commonly pop up during the lesson, for they understand that in business or any formal presentation that has been explained, it is not necessary to have an extended opening. It is only required to introduce the presenters and bring out the topic or issue they will present. They are aware that English in such a way is more straightforward than Indonesian, especially in Javanese culture. Indonesian people tend to speak indirectly (Jandevi, 2020). In Indonesia, it is necessary to keep polite, humble, and thankful to God for every situation. This custom is culturally embedded in the student's minds and attitudes, so somehow, it is hard for them to omit this attitude during their presentation performance. There are some essential principles for presenters in choosing the opening and closing (Hartley, 2002):

1. The opening comments establish the tone of what you are going to say and also your credibility
2. In most business presentations, the opening few minutes should provide clear signposts to the audience, so they know where the presenters are going, and they are trying to catch up
3. The closing remarks will leave your audience with a particular impression. It is necessary to make sure it confirms and reinforces the main argument that has been offered

In such a way, the cultural differences affect the presenters' performance in delivering proper and effective business presentations or other formal presentations, which will also affect the scoring since they mentioned too many context speeches.

Related to the language difference, the students also consciously understand that the Indonesian language is different from English, particularly in grammar and tenses. Indonesian is significantly different from English in many ways, even in linguistic terms such as syntax and semantic-like tenses. An analysis of the Indonesian and English language structure difference mentioned concludes that there is a tendency of misunderstanding related to the Progressive form of English in Indonesia. In contrast, in Simple and perfect conditions, there is no significant problem in understanding the concept (Rahayu, 2015). Another difference between Indonesian and English is translation (Teti Apriyanti, 2016), Apriyanti mentioned that a qualified translator should be aware of the linguistic characteristics difference between the source language and the target language to transfer the equivalent meaning into translated text. Referring to this issue, the data from the questionnaire found that all students knew about this difference, and it also became their primary problem.

Q: In which part language do you think Indonesian is different from English?

The answer to those questions is mostly about tenses, pronunciation, a procedure in writing, sentence structure, and terms commonly used in certain situations. First, as we all know, English is a time-based language that applies many different tenses based on time and conditions. In Indonesia, this strict difference in time is not significantly

noticed, for in Indonesia, it only needs '*dulu*' to talk about past, '*sekarang*' to talk about the present, '*sedang*' to talk about continuous/ progressive and '*akan*' to talk about future without any necessity to change the verb form. There is no basic form of a verb (infinitive), past, and also past participle, Indonesian differentiates them by the adverb of time only. This difference makes Indonesian students find it difficult to fully understand how to distinguish between tenses that affect their performance during English presentations. Second, it is about pronunciation. English is commonly known as a language that has the distinction between the way the word is spelled and how it pronounces, while in Indonesian, how the word is pronounced is the same as how it is spelled/ written. It causes a problem for Indonesian to pronounce English words well, out of the accent or inability to pronounce certain sounds that do not exist in their native language. The third is about the procedure of writing. Indonesian and English have the same terms in the order of writing, but as mentioned previously, Indonesians' tendency to deliver something indirectly makes it hard to communicate the inefficient topic language properly. They tend to repeat the same thing more than once, which is annoying and makes the audience gets bored, especially for business-related presentations. The fourth is about sentence structure. Though English and Indonesian share the same sentence structure (S+P+O+Adv), they are different in some terms, like in phrases. For example, in the use of the adjective, in Indonesia, the structure is started with the noun and is followed by the adjective, '*sebuah perusahaan garment besar*' the word '*perusahaan*' (company in English) is mentioned before the word '*garmen*' (garment in English) and '*besar*' (big in English): While in English, the noun comes at the end of the adjectives, like if we translated the phrase '*sebuah perusahaan garment besar*' into English, it will be 'a big garment company'. This diversity also makes the students have more mistakes in performing the presentation. The last one is the terms of the dictions that are appropriate in certain situations. This problem is mostly caused by the lack of students' knowledge about a certain topic when it is performed in English. Basically in Indonesia, they fully understand the topic, but when this topic is delivered by using English, they do not know the proper diction that they need to choose. In Indonesia, we use '*melihat*' for any situation, while in English, it has a different word with a similar meaning that is used for different situations, like 'see,' 'look at,' 'notice,' and 'observe.' Thus, deep in their thought, the students have an awareness of the cultural differences between Indonesian and English that can sometimes lead them to inappropriateness in using the language and attitude during the presentation.

The student's awareness of the intercultural competence

Another thing found from the data is that the students of D3 Business Administration and D4 Archive and Information Record Management are aware of the existence of intercultural competence. They probably do not have a clear definition of this. Still, they realize that each language comes up with its culture, so there is a big possibility that Indonesian, and English possess this difference.

Q: In learning a foreign language, do you know that there is a different culture in communication between the target language and the native language that can influence how a person communicates with others?

The responses to that question all agree that there is a cultural difference but mostly have no idea which part of it is the difference. One of the factors that affect this lack is that all the students in the class are Indonesians; they have been learning English as a foreign language since elementary school through an Indonesian English teacher. The non-existence policy related to putting intercultural competence in the curriculum makes it hard to develop sensitivity to this issue. Based on the observation, some students did little research on the topic of their presentation in English through an article on the internet. The lecturer also recommends they find an English source to make them more accessible in adjusting the appropriate words or diction related to the topic. Still, in the presentation, there is another aspect that needs to consider – audiences- the presenter usually used the simple explanation and using a local example from their surroundings. The absence of international students also makes them hard to interact with people who have a different culture from theirs. They may find out about the intercultural barrier while watching a movie, reading a book/article/story, or browsing their social media about the case related to the intercultural issue. Still, unless they are susceptible to it, there is a tiny possibility they realize that. The next question in the questionnaire also supports this finding.

Q: Do you consider adjusting the English culture in your presentation?

All of the students responded yes, but they found it challenging to accommodate the difference because they have less sensitivity to it. So basically, the presence of students' awareness of intercultural competence is supposed to be positively appreciated. Still, they need to have more experience communicating with other people, especially English native speaker (L2 native speakers), to gain a better sensitivity to intercultural competence.

The students' perception of cultural differences between L1 and L2

The data from the observation and questionnaire found that the students have a positive perspective and good awareness of cultural differences between Indonesian and English. However, they have minimal knowledge and sensitivity about it. The habit of making scripts in Indonesian for their presentation also played a significant role in making them have lesser sensitivity to this issue. Translation is essential for foreign language learners, and it can help improve knowledge about the target language, expand vocabulary mastery, improve listening and speaking skills, and understand the function of the target language. However, there is something ignored in this activity which is the culture of the target language (Castro Moreno, 2015). Another finding about translation being important in speaking is mentioned by Farida and Rahayu, who stated that there is a moderate correlation between translating ability and speaking ability (Farida, 2018). Moreover, Castro Moreno also added that intercultural learning -meaning the understanding of L1 language and culture in comparison with the L2 language and culture- is seen as an issue that should be taken into consideration not only in language teaching but also in the curriculum. The students need to acquire knowledge about how culture works behind the L2. Hence, teachers have to facilitate tools to develop it to give the students the ability to reflect their language and the new one. Thus, the positive perspective had by the students on cultural differences among L1, and L2 is supposed

to be built up and grown up, so in the future -when the curriculum and tools to facilitate these skills have been provided- it is easier for the teacher or lecturer to teach about these skills so that the students can perform their English (foreign language/L2) appropriately.

CONCLUSION

From the finding and discussion, it can be concluded that students of D3 Business Administration and D4 Archive and Information Record Management have a good awareness of cultural differences between Indonesian -as L1- and English -as L2. However, they have difficulties adjusting to the difference because of their lack of knowledge about intercultural issues, the experience of interaction with people from different cultures, and the absence of support in the curriculum and tools during the EFL learning. In their presentation, the students also find some problems in performing the appropriate English presentation attitude for their Indonesian culture is deeply rooted in their natural manner. It worsens by the habit of pure translating from L1 to L2 without considering the cultural barrier between them.

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