

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM: A NEED ANALYSIS

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### Abstrak

*Penelitian tentang kompetensi komunikasi antar-budaya atau intercultural communicative competence (ICC) telah banyak dilaksanakan. Namun, kompetensi komunikasi antar-budaya pada bidang pendidikan pariwisata belum banyak diteliti, padahal pekerja pariwisata bekerja dan menghadapi orang-orang dari berbagai budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi guru dan siswa tentang pengembangan kompetensi komunikatif antar budaya pada mata kuliah Bahasa Inggris untuk pariwisata dan dimensi yang dianggap paling dibutuhkan. Penelitian dilakukan dalam bentuk penelitian deskriptif. Lima guru bahasa Inggris dan dua puluh lima siswa Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) program perhotelan dipilih sebagai subjek penelitian ini. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa dan guru merasa bahwa kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya sangat dibutuhkan dalam kelas bahasa Inggris pariwisata. Diungkapkan juga bahwa diantara tiga dimensi kompetensi tersebut, dimensi keterampilan dianggap paling penting, diikuti oleh sikap dan pengetahuan. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini berimplikasi pada pengembangan kurikulum untuk memasukkan kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya untuk menjadi tujuan tambahan dari pelajaran bahasa Inggris karena diperlukan oleh siswa untuk mengembangkan kompetensi profesional mereka di industri pariwisata.*

*Kata Kunci: Kompetensi komunikatif antarbudaya, analisis kebutuhan, persepsi, pariwisata.*

### Abstract

A number of studies about intercultural communicative competence (ICC) has been carried out. However, in the area of tourism education is has not been much studied. Tourism worker works and face people from many cultures, but it has not been set as the purpose in English for tourism subjects yet. This study aimed at investigating teachers' and students' perception on the development of intercultural communicative competence in English for Tourism subjects and the dimension which is perceived to be needed the most. The study was conducted in the form of descriptive study. Five English teachers and twenty-five students who were joining training programs in hotels were chosen as subjects. The data were collected by using questionnaires and interview. The result showed that both students are teachers perceived that intercultural communicative competence is strongly needed in English tourism class. It was also revealed that among three dimensions of ICC, skill is placed in the first place due to its importance, followed by attitude and knowledge. Thus, this study give implication to the curriculum development to insert intercultural communicative competence to be the additional goal of the English lesson since it is needed by the students in to develop their professional competence in tourism industry.

Keywords: Intercultural communicative competence, need analysis, perception, tourism.

## 1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, individuals who are proficient in multiple languages have a significant advantage in the job market. However, language proficiency alone is not enough to effectively communicate with people from different cultures. Cultural norms, values, and customs impact language use, and learners must understand these aspects of the target culture to communicate effectively (Hazaea, 2019; Piątkowska, 2015).

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a new approach to teaching foreign languages that shifts from a knowledge-based approach to culture and toward a more comprehensive approach, placing the emphasis on both understanding of the interdependence of language and culture and the necessity of preparing students to interact across cultures (Ho, 2009; Y. Zhang, 2017). It involves not only language proficiency but also cultural awareness, empathy, and adaptability. Learners who possess intercultural communicative competence are better equipped to navigate intercultural communication situations, avoid misunderstandings, and build strong relationships with people from different cultures (Galante, 2015).

Moreover, intercultural communicative competence can enhance learners' personal growth and broaden their perspectives (Czura, 2018). By learning about different cultures and developing the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries, learners can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Some experts stated that ICC considers knowledge, skills and attitudes as its dimensions (Byram, 1997; Perry & Southwell, 2011; Sercu, 2004). In the context of communication, attitudes relate to the perspectives

that speakers have and perform on other culture. The intercultural approach's main objective in this regard is to encourage learners' favorable attitudes, i.e., attitudes of openness and curiosity on the other culture. The model makes a distinction between two kinds of knowledge, namely, knowledge of both one's own culture and the civilization of the target culture, and knowledge of the mechanisms that control social interaction. According to Byram (1997), there are two different kinds of skills: discovery and interaction skills, which emerge when a student lacks particular understanding of cultural meanings, beliefs, or values, and skills of reading and relating documents (understood in a very general sense) of the target culture.

Intercultural communicative competence is an essential component of foreign language learning (Czura, 2018; Hazaea, 2019; Piątkowska, 2015). Learners who possess this competence are better equipped to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultures, which can lead to personal and professional success.

In the area of tourism, intercultural communicative competence is essential for tourism workers because the tourism industry involves interactions with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Tourism workers must be able to effectively communicate with individuals from different cultures, understand their customs and traditions, and be sensitive to their needs and preferences.

Without intercultural communicative competence, tourism workers may unintentionally offend or misunderstand their guests, leading to negative experiences and reviews. On the other hand, possessing intercultural communicative competence can create positive interactions, build strong relationships, and foster cultural exchange.

Furthermore, as tourism continues to grow as a global industry, the demand for tourism workers with intercultural communicative competence is increasing. Employers seek workers who can communicate effectively across cultural boundaries and enhance the experience of their guests (Paragae, 2022). Thus, intercultural communicative competence is crucial for tourism workers to succeed in the industry, provide exceptional service to guests, and contribute to the growth of the tourism industry.

There have been many studies conducted on intercultural communicative competence. Some studies were conducted in the context of foreign language learning (Galante, 2015; Piątkowska, 2015). There are also some research on the intercultural communicative competence of language teachers (Czura, 2018; Y. Zhang, 2017). Even though there are many studies conducted in general English, the studies on ICC in English for Tourism are rarely found.

The result of preliminary study on the implementation of ICC in English for Tourism in some Tourism Vocational High Schools found that ICC has not been included in the curriculum. It has not been put in the lesson plan and it was also absent in the materials used in instruction. Moreover, based on the result of the interview, it was found that the teachers did not put it as one of the goals of the instruction. However, the teachers reported that they thought that learning culture is important for their students who will work in hospitality industry. The result of the preliminary study showed a big gap on teachers' expectation and the practice they do in their teaching. Thus, it is crucial to conduct a study on intercultural communicative competence in English for tourism. It is very urgent to find out students'

and teachers' perception whether it is needed in English for Tourism.

This study investigated the teachers' and students' perception on the development of ICC in English for Tourism class. Through interview and questionnaire, students' and teachers' perception on ICC in the class will be compared. Thus, it will be beneficial for the curriculum and material development (Sykes, 2017) and the method of teaching in English for Tourism subjects.

## 2. Method

This research was conducted in the form of qualitative research. The objects of the study are the students' and teachers' perception on the development of ICC in English for Tourism Class as well as the practice of the development of ICC. The subject of the study is five English teachers in Vocational High School who have Tourism Concentration. They are teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the area of tourism, such as English for Hotel Accommodation, English for Front Office, English for House Keeping and English for Food and Beverage Service. Five students from each teacher were also involved as subjects, so there were twenty-five tourism students in total.

To find out the data about teachers' and students' perception on the importance of the development of ICC in English for Tourism, questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of statements based on Jiang (2022) and some responses which were graded in 5-point Likert Scale (1= strongly not needed, 2=not needed, 3=undecided, 4=needed, and 5=strongly needed). The questionnaire for students and teachers were developed based on the same criteria but with different statement to make it easy to understand. Moreover, the questionnaires were written in native language to avoid

misinterpretation. Interview was also carried out to clarify some information which is important found in the questionnaire. The interview was carried out with list of questions and can be developed. The statements of the questionnaire are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Statements for Teachers and Students Questionnaire

Dimen-sions	Statements on Teach-ers' Ques-tionnaire	Statements on Stu-dents' Ques-tionnaire
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Cultural self-awareness	Students need to have knowledge about own cultural rules	I need to have knowledge on my own culture
	Students need to know new perspective that shape their own culture	I need to know new perspective that shape my own culture
Knowledge of the framework of cultural worldview	Students need to understand cultural elements of another culture such as history, economy, belief, practice, and communication style	I need to understand cultural elements of another culture such as history, economy, belief, practice, and communication style
<b>Skills</b>		

Empathy	Students need to be able to interpret intercultural experience and see it from their own and other culture point of view I need to be able to interpret intercultural experience and see it from their own and other culture point of view	
	Students need to demonstrate the ability to behave in a way that is respectful of other ethnic groups' feelings.	I need to demonstrate the ability to behave in a way that is respectful of other ethnic groups' feelings.
Verbal and Nonverbal communication	Students need to engage in verbal communication with people from other cultural background and negotiate understanding from the differences	I need to engage in verbal communication with people from other cultural background and negotiate understanding from the differences
	Students need to engage in non-verbal communication with people from other cultural background and negotiate understanding	I need to engage in non-verbal communication with people from other cultural background and negotiate understanding

	from the dif- ferences	from the dif- ferences
<b>Attitudes</b>		
Curiosity	Students need to ask questions about the other culture and find out answer to the questions	I need to ask questions about the other culture and find out the answer to the questions
Openness	Students need to establish and grows relationships with people from various ethnic back-grounds.	I need to establish and grows relationships with people from various ethnic back-grounds.
	Students need not to directly judge the interactions with culturally different others.	I need not to directly judge the interactions with culturally different others.

The data were also collected by interviewing teachers and students. The result of the interview were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994) which consisted of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. In data reduction, all parts of interview transcription which were not related to the data that should be collected were deleted. In the next phase, in data display, the excerpt of the important points of the interview were distributed under certain topics and subtopics. In conclusion drawing, researcher concluded the result of the interview

### 3. Discussion

Students' and teachers' perception were collected by using questionnaire and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students and Teachers Perception on the Need of Developing ICC in English for Tourism

Dimensions	Teacher's Perception	Student's Perception	Average
<b>Knowledge</b>			
Self cultural awareness	3.8	4.0	
Knowledge of the framework of cultural worldview	4.2	4.2	
Average of Knowledge	4	4.1	4.05
<b>Skills</b>			
Empathy	5	4.6	
Verbal and Nonverbal communication	5	4.8	
Average of skills	5	4.7	4.85
<b>Attitudes</b>			
Curiosity	4.6	4.0	
Openness	5	4.8	
Average of Attitude	4.8	4.4	4.6
TOTAL AVERAGE	4.6	4.4	4.5

From Table 2, it can be seen that based on the teachers' perception, the score of ICC on knowledge dimension is 4 which can be categorized as needed. The score of

ICC on skills is 5 which can be categorized as strongly needed. The score of ICC on attitudes is 4.8 which can be categorized as needed. From the students' perception, it can be seen in Table 2 that the score for ICC on the dimension of knowledge is 4.1 which can be categorized needed. The score for the ICC on the dimension of skill is 4.7 which can be categorized strongly needed. The score for the ICC on the dimension of attitude is 4.4 which can be categorized of strongly needed. The finding of this study about the importance of the development of ICC in foreign language learning has proven the research conducted by other experts (Cunico, 2005; Griva & Papadopoulos, 2019; Hazaea, 2019; X. Zhang, 2010).

When the students' and teachers' perceptions are compared, it can be seen that they share the same findings on the order of the importance of the dimensions, even though the score is different. Thus, from the three dimensions, teachers and students perceived that skills on ICC is the most needed by the tourism students, followed by attitudes and knowledge. It can also be seen from the average score of combination between the teachers' and students' perception that the skills dimension of ICC gets 4.85 points which means strongly needed, the attitude dimension of ICC gets 4.6 points which means strongly needed and the knowledge dimension of ICC gets 4.05 points which means needed.

For skill dimensions of ICC, it was found that it is considered strongly needed to be developed in English for Tourism. For skills, the students need to be able to show empathy to recognize the feeling of the people from cultural background and react to the problems caused by the difference. The empathy is considered very important because in the intercultural communication

there might be something happen which is not culturally acceptable by certain culture. In this case, someone should be very tolerant, show empathy to react on the situation. An example was given by Teacher 2 below.

*"...for example, our culture is that it is not really polite to stand very close to someone who are in the opposite gender when we are communicating. We of course react to that situation by stepping back or showing certain expression. The interlocutor needs to recognize what happens and let us stand not as close as before" (T1)*

Moreover, the students need also to engage in verbal and nonverbal communication and negotiate meaning or the problems happen during the communication. The students need to be able to use the language to communicate and negotiate the meaning. The ability to negotiate is very important like Student 6 explain below.

*"It is very important that we talk about the problems happens. If not, we may not understand that there is a difference and there is a problem" (S6)*

The excerpt from students 6, shows how important to talk about the problem faced. For example, when someone wanted to visit someone who are in the opposite sex who are at home alone – in this case, it is not acceptable in one culture – the host need to communicate that it is not acceptable in his/her culture. Therefore, a problem can be avoided. The importance of being aware is also highlighted by several studies. It is said that the practice of being mindful of how one is being understood in cross-cultural communication settings. the practice of actively considering different explanations for troubling actions done and words said by interlocutors (Haerazi Haerazi & Nunez, 2021; Lianaki-Dedouli, 2017; Snow, 2015). Thus, this skill should be practiced.

For attitude dimension, curiosity is not considered to be as important as openness. However, the curiosity of the students to question and find out information about other culture is still considered needed. The need of openness in ICC was put forward by Piatkowska (2015) who states that learners are expected to go through phases of cultural assimilation by learning about other cultures. In other words, attitudes are linked to the capacity to view and evaluate one's own culture from the perspective of the culture of the other person.

In other aspect of attitude dimension, openness, the students are required to establish and engage in the relationship with various cultural group. Moreover, it is also important that the students do not give direct judgement to the interaction with the people from different cultural background. The direct judgement without looking at the person's background may lead to the misinterpretation. Below is the excerpt from Teacher 3 about the importance of openness.

*"Openness is crucial, because it is the willingness to engage in interaction with people with different cultural background, especially for tourism workers" (T3)*

Teacher 3 emphasized the importance of openness, especially for those working in tourism industry. Without openness, someone should not be able to do their job well in tourism industry since they are not willing to open themselves for the people from different background. This is contradicting the principle of tourism which need to give the best service for anyone by communicating well (Paragae, 2022).

For knowledge dimension, the tourism students are required to have a knowledge of self-cultural awareness and knowledge of cultural worldview. Self-cultural awareness is perceived to be needed to be developed. Students need to have

knowledge about own cultural rules and updated with the new perspective which shape their own culture. Even though it is not considered to be as important as the aspects of other dimensions, it is still needed by the students as prospective tourism workers. Below is the reason stated by Student 11.

*"there are many occasions that we need to explain about our culture to the guest who are from different cultural background. They will have so many questions about our culture and it is a must that we can explain it correctly" (S11)*

Student 11 stated that self-cultural awareness is important to give explanation to guests. Thus, correct information and awareness about own culture cannot be neglected. This is also important that the students realized that they live in a place and it is embedded with culture. It means, when they are born in different area, they will have different culture. It is important to acknowledge that every culture may have different perspective and beliefs on something. There is no right and wrong. The importance of reflecting our culture is needed because our cultural behavior cannot be seen by the people who own the culture even though it is applied in the daily life (Ho, 2009). In addition the importance of reflecting of ones culture has also been stated by other researchers (Hazaea, 2019; Lianaki-Dedouli, 2017; X. Zhang, 2010; Y. Zhang, 2017; Zheng, 2014).

Another aspect in knowledge dimension is knowledge on cultural worldview. It means, the students need to understand cultural elements of another culture such as history, economy, belief, practice, and communication style. Based on the interview, the teachers and students perceived that the cultural knowledge about history, belief, etc. will enable someone to conduct communication with the people from different cultural background easier. It is also similar with

what elements that Zhang (2017) emphasized such as basic culture of the target language, basic concept, and its influence on the society. Some other research has also proved that the knowledge of ICC may support the effectiveness of the communication (Piątkowska, 2015). Thus, there will be an understanding that the problems that may occur in the interaction may be due to different culture.

The result of this study that knowledge places the last place among other dimensions is relevant with what has been put forward by Ho (2009). He stated that culture is very dynamic. Thus, the knowledge of the cultures owned by certain society may be changed. Moreover, culture and language is interdependent. Thus, ICC should not only emphasize on knowledge but also the language (Ho, 2009).

#### 4. Conclusion

Intercultural communicative competence is considered to be important to be owned by people who live in this globalization and internationalization era. It becomes more important to be owned by the people working in tourism industry since they are dealing

with people from various cultural background. Thus, since ICC has been considered by English teachers in tourism school, this study tried to investigate the perception of students and teachers on the need of the development of ICC in English for tourism subjects. The findings of the study revealed that both teachers and students perceived that the development of ICC in English for Tourism subjects is strongly needed. Moreover, among the three dimensions of ICC, skill which covers empathy and verbal as well as nonverbal communication is perceived to be the most needed dimensions of ICC. It is followed by attitude dimension covering curiosity and openness which is considered strongly needed and knowledge dimension covering cultural self-awareness and knowledge of the framework of cultural worldview which is considered needed. The result of this study implies that ICC needs to be considered and added into the purposes of learning in English for tourism subjects. It is also implied that curriculum and material should be reviewed for the insertion of ICC. Teaching model need also be developed to target competence in English for tourism and ICC.

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