Cross-Cultural Understanding in Learning English at IAIN Takengon Students

Vera Ramayana[1], Hartini Erfi Nurzannah[2*], Muhammad Hasyimsyah Batubara[3], Mukhlis Lbs[4]

[1,2,3] IAIN Takengon, Aceh Tengah, Aceh, Indonesia, [4]FKIP UGN Padangsidimpuan, Indonesia
[1]verarahmayoouna@gmail.com, [2]hartinierfinurzannah@gmail.com*; [3]muhammad.hasyimsyahbatubara@gmail.com,
[4]lbsmukhlis@yahoo.com
* corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Culture is the identity of a country, and as a differentiator between one country and another, the purpose of studying cross-cultural understanding is to understand the differences between cultures in other countries so that there will be no misunderstanding of the culture of one country and another. Therefore, it is essential for students, especially English students. This research is descriptive quantitative research with interviews and observations. The results show that the understanding of the 6th-semester students of the English study program about cross-cultural and language is excellent. In observations and interviews, students understand the cultural rules inherent in other countries, the concept of discipline and respecting time in other countries, and how to respect one's privacy. And students understand the relationship between language and culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the crucial things in studying foreign cultures is an understanding of cross-cultural understanding. Understanding the culture of outsiders is very important in language learning, especially in learning English, an international language. Mastery of language and cultural elements is a suitable medium for communicating through oral and written communication. So that the function of language as a tool of social interaction between one person and several other people can be maximally achieved. Culture is a country's identity and a differentiator between one country and another.

The purpose of studying cross-cultural understanding is to understand cultural differences between countries so that we will not experience misunderstandings about one country's culture (Hexelschneider, 2002). Language and cross-cultural understanding are fundamental to learning by students. A good knowledge of language and culture, distinguishing language and cultural patterns between countries, will facilitate communication and avoid being too surprised by each country's language and cultural differences. So that students can socialize globally in an increasingly open era now.

From the previous explanation, the author is interested in seeing and knowing how understanding and interested the 6th-semester students of the English education study program IAIN Takengon about culture and language are, whether they understand it or not, what difficulties they have in understanding the context of language and culture itself.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Language

There has never been a definite number of how many languages exist in this world (Crystal in Chaer, 2014). In the KBBI (2008); Sudaryono (2006); Haviland (1985); Keraf (2005); Wibowo (2001); Chaer (2014); Tarigan (2015); Anderson (1972); Leech (1993) mentions that language is a system of arbitrary, sound, symbols used by members of a society to cooperate, interact, and identify themselves, as well as a means of communication as well as the delivery of ideas and the distribution of feelings between individuals. Furthermore, Syamsuddin (1986); Tarigan (1987); Yule (2014) states that the notion of language can shape thoughts and is also a tool that influences the thoughts and actions of others. Language is also an introduction to good and bad human reason, so it cannot be separated from all human activities.

In addition, according to Wijana and Rohmadi (2010), language is a phenomenon that is present in all human activities. Meanwhile, in Tarigan (1986), Levinson argues that language is particular utterances in special situations and focuses on various ways that are containers of different social contexts. The experts' opinions above concluded that language is a symbol of sound used by the community in communication, building cooperation, and conveying ideas. However, language can also identify individuals in a cultural context, which can change according to situations and conditions.

2.2 Culture

The explanation of culture, according to Selo Soemarjang and Soelaeman Soemardi (2013:151), is that all the works, tastes, and creations of the community, the work of the community produces technology and culture by humans to control the natural surroundings so that their strengths and results can be devoted to the needs of society. Next, Sri Rahaju Djatimurti Rita Hanafi's (2016) culture is a set of rules, instructions, plans, and strategies consisting of a series of cognitive models humans have and are used selectively in dealing with the environment as manifested in behaviour and actions.

Meanwhile, according to Taylor in Liliweri (2002); Linton in Ihromi (2006: 18) defines culture as composed of categories of similarities and general phenomena called customs which include technology, knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, aesthetics, recreation and abilities and habits acquired by humans. as a member of society. From the opinion of previous experts, culture is an agreement in the form of rules of customs, morals, ethnicity, ethics, race, and beliefs passed down from generation to generation from ancestors.

2.3 Language and Culture Studies

Experts argue that language and culture are interrelated or influence each other in learning a language. There are two opposing opinions in this case, according to Wardhaugh in Sibarani (1992); Nababan (1993) states that culture affects language. It can be seen from how the vocabulary was born, which is influenced by where the area and culture of the vocabulary are present. While other opinions say that language influences culture, this opinion is emphasized by Sapir (1964), who argues that language users will reflect the habits of the speakers. Regardless of the idea of the above expert, whether culture influences language or vice versa, learning culture and language is an absolute must. This study aims to prevent misunderstandings or further conflicts due to a lack of understanding of other people's cultures in communicating.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methode

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques from 6th-semester students of the English language study program IAIN Takengon. In addition, the author conducted observations and interviews using several literature sources and the theory of cross-cultural understanding books to reference the importance of studying cross-cultural understanding.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 The Result of the Observation

Based on the results of the author's observations of the 6th-semester students of the English language study program IAIN Takengon on how far students understand culture and English and how important it is to understand foreign cultures. After making observations, it can be divided into two parts how to understand and know the foreign culture through cross-cultural understanding courses about understanding and not knowledge.

4.2 The Result of the Interview

The interviews and questionnaires mainly indicate that students understand cross-cultural foreign affairs well. They said that "from taking the cross-cultural understanding course, I understand and understand more about foreign cultures, such as the culture of discipline applied by foreigners. It is very important in everyday life because applying our discipline can manage time well". From the results obtained from the respondents revealed that it is essential for us to study foreign cultures, such as the rules in eating, "I know that foreign cultures in some countries apply the table manner system. From the respondents' results, it is rather difficult to have some procedures in table manner". They revealed that students know there are rules in small matters such as food layout in a country. From the two respondents' answers, we can see that although they do not understand table manners, they already know that every country has different rules and habits. Some of the questions and answers from the interviews are summarized below.

1. How do you understand cross culture understanding?
   Understand the cultural rules that are inherent in foreign countries.
2. What are the indicators of cultural understanding and the benefits of studying cross-cultural understanding?
   Understand the concept of a culture of discipline and respect for time.
3. Do students who take CCU courses understand more about foreign cultures?
   Know about the privacy height of some countries.
4. What is the student's knowledge of CCU courses?
   Know about the privacy height of some countries.
5. What is not understood about foreign cultures?
   A little less understanding about table manners, difficulties in terms of language structure, also language structure.

5. DISCUSSION

When we made observations, we could see that the student's interest in language understanding was not too bad, but some problems made some students a little lacking in language understanding, such as they had difficulties in language structure and still difficulties in language structure. The problems and difficulties of students in understanding this language so that they can misinterpret the meaning that is spoken and the lack of extensive knowledge of the language. In observation, students understand the cultural rules inherent in other countries, the concept of discipline and respecting time in other countries, and how to respect one's privacy because, in a country, privacy is the most sensitive thing for some people.

And when conducting interviews, we can see the results obtained that students' interest in language and cultural learning is found that most students understand the concept of culture. However, some of them still have difficulties with language placement, rules, and cultural deviations. It is also still challenging To understand each other's cultural differences in other countries. Students realize that understanding language and culture is essential, especially for English language students, because they have greater opportunities to interact with foreigners. If they do not understand the concept of language and culture, it will be difficult for students to speak or communicate and interact like native speakers.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the observations and questionnaires, it can be understood that 6th-semester students of the English language study program IAIN Takengon can understand the differences between our culture and outside. Therefore, it is essential to learn cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, mastering the language is important because it is a symbol the community uses in communication, building cooperation, and delivering ideas. Language can also identify individuals in a cultural context; language and culture are interrelated, so students feel it is essential to master them.

REFERENCES

Alo, Liliweri. (2002). *Makna Budaya dalam Komunikasi antar Budaya*.Yogyakarta: PT. LKiS Pelangi Aksara.

Anderson, R. C. (1972). *Language Skills in Elementary Education*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc.

Chaer, Abdul. (2014). *Linguistik Umum.* Jakarta : Rineka Cipta.

Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511486999

Depdiknas. (2008). *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Edisi Keempat*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Haviland, W. A. (1985). *Antropologi*. Jakarta: Erlangga.

Hexelschneider, Erhard (2002). *Das Fremde das Eigene als Grundkomponenten von Interkulturslität, dalam Alois Wierlacher (Ed.)* Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache Band 44 München: Iudicium Verlag.

Ihromi, T.O. (2006). *Pokok-pokok Antropologi Budaya*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Keraf, Gorys. (2005). *Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Leech, Geoffrey. (1993). *Prinsip-prinsip Pragmatik*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia.

Nababan. (1993). *Sosiolinguistik suatu pengantar*. Jakarta : Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Sapir, Edward. (1964*). "Conceptual Categories in Primitive Language", Dalam Dell Hymes (ed) Language in Culture and Society*. New York: Harper and Row.

Sibarani, Robert. (1992). *Hakikat Bahasa*. Bandung: PT. Aditya Bhakti

Soemarjan, Selo and Soelaeman Soemardi. (2013). Setangkai Bunga Sosiologi, Edisi Pertama. Jakarta: Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Indonesia.

Sri Rahaju Djatimurti Rita Hanafie. (2016). *Ilmu Sosial Budaya Dasar*. Yogyakarta: Andi Offset.

Sudaryono, S. (2006). *Otoritas Bahasa Dan Implikasi Bagi Masyarakat*. Diponegoro University Press.

Syamsuddin, A.R. (1986). *Sanggar Bahasa Indonesia. Jakarta*: Universitas Terbuka Jakarta.

Tarigan, H.G. (1986). *Menyimak Sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa.* Bandung: Angkasa Bandung.

Tarigan, H.G. (1987). *Membaca sebagai suatu keterampilan berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa.

Tarigan, H. G. (2015). *Berbicara Sebagai Suatu Keterampilan Berbahasa*. Bandung: Angkasa.

Wibowo, Wahyu. (2001). *Manajemen Bahasa. Jakarta:* Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Wijana, I. Dewa Putu & Muhammad Rohmadi. (2010). *Analisis Wacana Pragmatik: Kajian Teori dan Analisis*. Surakarta: Yuma Pustaka.

Yule, George. (2014). *Pragmatik.* Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.