



## WHY CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A BENEFICIAL EFFECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

FITRIYANI <sup>a</sup>, SUKARDI WEDA <sup>a\*</sup> AND MUH. HASBI <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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### ABSTRACT

Nowadays, there is an awareness of education policy makers in higher education in Indonesia to include cross-cultural communication (CCC) in university curricula, especially for linguistic and cultural studies. CCC is vital in everyday life, especially for people from different ethnic groups. This is in accordance with Mulyana (2012:38) who reveals that cross-cultural communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is very complex and is related to the tendency that cultural differences will remain forever, therefore knowledge and practical global guidelines on intercultural communication need to be taught to Indonesian people, including in the business world, to be able to work and communicate across cultures in the twenty-first century. This study aims to explore the purpose of the inclusion of CCC in the higher education curriculum and the benefits of studying CCU by students in higher education. This study uses a quantitative paradigm. The participants in this study were 37 students of the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Language and Letters, Makassar State University for the 2018/2019 academic year. The results reveal that the inclusion of CCU in the higher education curriculum is essential to promote communication across different cultures for mutual understanding. Therefore, this study suggests that a curriculum with CCC topics/subjects is beneficial for the higher education curriculum.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural communication (CCC); curriculum; higher education institution; Indonesia.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cross cultural communication is vital in a country with pluralistic society. Cross cultural communication occurs both cross nationally and intra-nationally [1]. Cross cultural or intercultural communication is not only a need, but a requirement for success in today's pluralistic society [2]. Indonesia as a multi-ethnic country which has pluralistic society needs to maintain cross cultural communication to overcome conflict communal in the society. In cross cultural communication, people communicate to adjust themselves to the environment [3: 8]. Mulyana

therefore asserts that adjustment does not mean that individuals have to agree with or imitate all other people's actions and feelings. As an individual in multi-ethnic societies, we have to make efforts to communicate effectively with people from different ethnic groups and cultures in all dimensions of life: business, politics, education, tourism, sports, etc. [3: 8]. Klimova [4, 207] mentions that the main goal of the educational process and curricula is the improvement of communicative competence, which, in turn to linguistic competence, includes understanding cross-cultural communication practical skills.

\*Corresponding author: Email: sukardiweda@yahoo.com;

Understanding of cultural diversity is the key to effective cross-cultural communications [5: 332].

As a large country with various cultures and languages, all individuals who live in Indonesia need to maintain a good communication to other people from different cultural background and they are expected to have intercultural competence to build harmony [6: 9].

Crosscultural interaction invariably implies that communicating entities appear as subjects of culture, representatives of a certain sociocultural community [7: 566].

In an era of having to operate with multiculturalism, a communicator has to be competent in intercultural communication [8: 25]. Padhi [8] therefore mentions that the competence in cross cultural communication would enable an individual or organization to achieve objectives due to the respect to values, norms, beliefs of the other people.

Being able to communicate cross-culturally increases the success in international arena, enables productive interpersonal contacts and decreases mutual misunderstanding [2]. To improve cross cultural competence of the students from various ethnic groups, the combination of classroom and social practices is important. The combination of classroom and local, cross-cultural activities resulted in greater improvements in overall cultural competence and each individual category [9].

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were 37 students of English Literature Study Program Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar at 2018/2019 academic year. The students programmed English Pronunciation course. Before collecting the data in the study, the researchers told the students the aims of the study. This intended to maintain rapport with the students.

### 2.2 Instrument and Procedure of Data Collection

The research aimed at exploring the students' perception on the inclusion of Cross Cultural Communication (CCC) in the language classroom at higher education in Indonesia. Data of the study were

collected during a class lecture in February 2019. The students came to the class and filled in the questionnaire which consisted of 15 items. Results of the test were used to identify to what extent of the students' perception the inclusion of CCC in the language classroom. In this research, the participants were asked to rate their views with response to test the inclusion of CCC in the language classroom by choosing one of the choices, Agree or Disagree.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Data of the study were analyzed using percentage to show the level of students' agreement and disagreement in the use of CCC in the language classroom. The percentage as stated in the table 1 is therefore followed by discussion.

## 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Demographic of Participants

There were 37 students participated in this present study to test their perception on the inclusion of cross cultural communication in the language classroom at higher education. The students were from from Undergraduate degree in English Literature Study Program of Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar. The demographic profile of participants is revealed in detail in Table 1 as follows.

**Table 1. Demographic profile of participants**

Demographic information		Frequency	Percentage
Gender			
1.	Female	25	67.57
2.	Male	12	32.43
Age			
1.	17	3	8.1
2.	18	25	67.5
3.	19	6	16.22
4.	20	1	2.7
5.	21	1	2.7
6.	22	1	2.7

Table 1 shows that there are 25 or 67.57% female and 12 or 32.43% male in this study. The participants are ranging from 17 to 22 years old. As revealed in Table 1, there are 3 or 8.1% of students aged 17 years old, there are 25 or 67.5% of students aged 18 years old, there are 6 or 16.22% of students aged 19 years old, there is only 1 or 2.7% of students aged 20, there is 1 or 2.7% of students aged 21, and there is only 1 or 2.7% of students aged 22 years old.

**Table 2. Students' perception on the inclusion of cross cultural communication in language classroom at higher education**

No.	Description	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
1.	The inclusion of cross cultural communication at university curricula is important.	94,6	5,4
2.	Cross cultural communication can promote social harmony in pluralistic society.	97,3	2,7
3.	Cross cultural communication can reduce conflict among people from different ethnic groups.	94,6	5,4
4.	Understanding nonverbal communication is vital in maintaining cross cultural communication.	100	0
5.	Respect each other is the key to maintain cross cultural understanding.	100	0
6.	Positive stereotype needs to be implemented in cross cultural communication practices.	97,3	2,7
7.	Each individual needs to maintain good cross cultural communication in his community to create social order.	100	0

The highest response for statement number 1 (The inclusion of cross cultural communication at university curricula is important) was Agree with 94.6%. This finding reveals that the inclusion of cross cultural communication subject in curricula at higher education is vital to maintain good communication among people from different cultural background.

The highest response for statement number 2 (Cross cultural communication can promote social harmony in pluralistic society) was Agree with 97.3%. This means that cross cultural communication at higher education needs to be maintained among students from different ethnic groups to build harmony and tolerance. In keeping with this, Weda and Atmowardoyo [6: 10] mention that to create harmony and tolerance in the multi-ethnic countries, cross cultural competence (CCC) becomes a connerstone in maintaining cross-cultural communication.

The highest response for statement number 3 (Cross cultural communication can reduce conflict among people from different ethnic groups) was Agree with 94.6%. The participants of the study strongly agree that cross cultural communication subject can reduce or minimize conflict, intolerance, and disharmony among people from different cultures.

The highest response for statement number 4 (Understanding nonverbal communication is vital in maintaining cross cultural communication) was Agree with 100%. The participants strongly agree that nonverbal communication is pivotal to be implemented by people from different cultural background.

The highest response for statement number 5 (Respect each other is the key to maintain cross cultural

understanding) was Agree with 100%. The participants strongly agree that respect other people from other ethnic groups is important to be successful in maintaining cross cultural communication.

The highest response for statement number 6 (Positive stereotype needs to be implemented in cross cultural communication practices) was Agree with 97.3%. The participants strongly agree that negative stereotype needs to be avoided in cross cultural communication practices and promote positive stereotype is a must in pluralistic society.

The highest response for statement number 7 (Each individual needs to maintain good cross cultural communication in his community to create social order) was Agree with 100%. Participants strongly agree that to create social order and to build social harmony, all individuals at pluralistic society need to maintain good cross cultural communication practices.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This present study concludes that the inclusion of cross cultural communication in higher education curricula is very important. This is because cross cultural communication can enhance and promote social harmony and tolerance in pluralistic society. Cross cultural communication can also improve mutual understanding among people from different cultural background and it can reduce disharmony, intolerance, and conflict in the society. The study therefore suggests that the educational practitioners and academics at the university need to include cross cultural communication subject at higher education, especially social sciences. This is because each individual meet people from different cultures in his

daily life, in work place, business, and other domains, whereas cross cultural communication practices is vital and becomes a must.

### CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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