

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION IN HIGHER INSTITUTION

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### Abstract

The authors address the study on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of EFL students from different culture at higher education in the classroom setting. ICC is the most interesting and important topic in every meeting among people from different ethnic groups. López-Rocha (2016) mentions that intercultural communicative competence (ICC) needs to be incorporated in the language curriculum if educators hope to help students develop an appreciation for the language and culture studied, an awareness of their own culture, and the development of skills that will allow them to be competent, adaptable, and communicators. This present study therefore aims at exploring students' perceptions on the practice of intercultural communication competence in EFL classroom at English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar, Indonesia in 2019/2020 academic year. A questionnaire was distributed and responded by fifty four undergraduate students. The data obtained from respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics illustrating mean, standard deviation (SD), sum, and percentage of students' perceptions on the questionnaire dealing with ICC practices in EFL classroom. The findings reveal that the students enjoy interacting with other students from different cultures. Other evidences from the study are: 1) they find it easy to talk to students from different cultures, 2) they like to be with students from different cultures, 3) they are open-minded to students from different cultures, 4) they respect the ways students from different cultures behave, 5) They try to get as much information as they can when interacting with students from different cultures, 6) they never think their culture is better than other cultures, 7) they often give positive responses to students from other cultures when maintaining interaction, and 8) they have a feeling of enjoyment towards diversity in their classroom interaction. The implication of the study is that the inclusion of ICC in the curriculum at higher education is a must.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, diversity, EFL, higher institution

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among language learners has been recognized as an important goal in foreign language education programs throughout the world. Not only is the integration of cultural elements in the language program recognized as facilitating the development of communicative competence in the target language, there is also a growing tendency among language teachers to move away from teaching information about other cultures towards developing knowledge from other cultures and one's own (Bouchard, 2017). Intercultural language learning has become an important focus of modern language education, a change that reflects greater awareness of language and culture inseparability,

and the need to prepare language students for intercultural communication in an increasingly multicultural world (Ho, 2009, p. 63). Ho addressed that the importance of developing intercultural communicative competencies together with linguistic competencies has resulted from the need for learners to acquire intercultural skills for cross-cultural communication where they can face linguistic and cultural barriers.

The Soltani's Study (2014) can encourage all education stakeholders to give weight to the intercultural competencies of FL learners and ethnic backgrounds as important components of modern language education. To this end, integrating cultural elements in foreign language education programs is also recognized as a way to enhance awareness among learners of intercultural citizenship, defined by Byram (2008) as the capacity to coexist and communicate (in local, national and international settings) with people and groups outside one's ethnic, cultural and/or linguistic identity, an ability which goes beyond national identification towards mutual respect, social engagement and the reduction of prejudice (Bouchard, 2017).

Nowadays people from one nation to other nations meet to share information. To transfer information effectively, two people who maintain communication need to know intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This is because, intercultural competence or intercultural communicative competence is a paramount of creating harmony in social life. ICC has an important role to build harmony in social life and at work.

In the last decades, intercultural competence was reintroduced as intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as a result of its impact on foreign language teaching (López-Rocha, 2014 as cited in López-Rocha, 2016, p. 105).

Weda & Atmowardoyo (2018: 9) emphasized that to create harmony, intercultural competence (IC) becomes the most important in maintaining intercultural communication. Intercultural communicative competence (CCC) has become the interesting issue in intercultural communication among people from different ethnic group and it has become interest among researchers from different countries (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019; Arasaratnam, 2009, 2014; Balboni & Caon, 2014; Klimova et al., 2019; Ahnagari & Zamanian, 2014; López-Rocha, 2016; Chen, 2014).

People realize that without the help of intercultural communication there are obstacles and restrictions when they enter a foreign territory and this can cause confusion and misunderstanding (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019). As Hammer et al (2003) suggest that we will use the term "intercultural competence" to mean the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways. Similarly, work by Dalib et al (2019) mentions that intercultural competence is a key element that enables people to not only recognize each other but also recognize differences.

Therefore in our daily communication, intercultural communication skills are very important, both domestically and internationally, which involve communication with people from different cultural backgrounds, business schools have the responsibility to prepare their students to become effective intercultural communicators (Cheney, 2001, p. 90).

## Communicative Competence

Martin & Hammer (1989, p. 304) asserted that in the field of migrant adaptation, communication competence has been positioned as an integral part of the success of individual adaptation in the foreign environment.

Using the ideas of Lustig and Koester (as cited in Mulyana, 2012, 42), he has intercultural competence, that is, "flexibility in thinking, 'world-mindedness' (which is a positive attitude towards people from other cultures), psychological and social adjustment in one's own culture and relativistic values (which means not being too rigid about the 'truth' of one's values." According to Williams, 2005 (p. 358) flexibility and open-mindedness are one of the important traits included by many theorists in their list.

### **Intercultural Communication**

Cultural competence is the ability to interact effectively with others regardless of cultural background to achieve a goal (Bell & McBride, 2014, p. 147). Intercultural communication focuses on face-to-face (or at least person-to-person) interactions among humans (Bennett, 1998, p. 1). Bennett added that for this kind of communication to occur, each participant must consider themselves to be perceived by others and in this communication, all participants must see themselves as potentially involved in communication and able to give and receive feedback.

From a general perspective, intercultural communication (IC) can be evaluated as a form of global communication because it focuses on various communication problems that arise among people from different cultures (Aba, 2015). The scholars of intercultural communication has long investigated ICC from various perspectives and produced many models and theories (Dai & Chen, 2014). In accordance with this, Nadeem et al. (2017, p. 11) confirms that the concept of intercultural communication competence (ICC) has been studied through various theoretical lenses. For example, Byram (1997) as cited in (Dai & Chen, 2014) approached the ICC from the aspect of teaching foreign languages. He stated that competent intercultural speakers had linguistic and sociolinguistic or socio-cultural knowledge and the ability to manage relationships between their own systems and other systems.

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence**

In today's interconnected multicultural world, citizens' differential levels of intercultural communication competence (ICC) can play an important role in the amount of enthusiasm, time, and effort they invest in communication and learning of second or foreign language (L2) (Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013, p. 300). Living in a multicultural world today, language learners need to develop not only their linguistic competencies but also their intercultural communicative competencies to overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers that they may encounter in interacting with people from other cultures (Ho. 2009, p. 72).

The 'International Business Trends Report' produced in 1999 (Training and Development, 1999) as cited in (Liu et al, 2015, p. 17) identified three very important competencies in the twenty-first century of global workplace: Intercultural communication skills, problem solving skills, and global leadership. Intercultural communication skills are the basic competencies needed to build effective foreign language teaching and learning for students from different cultures in the classroom. Furcsa (2009) and Steinert (2004) as cited in Awada & Diab (2018) who stated that intercultural communication competence (ICC) is a key component for interaction in

various settings, because people from different cultural backgrounds gain knowledge about their cultures and that of others. Portalla & Chen (as cited in Altan 2018) mentioned that intercultural communication competence (ICC) was conceptualized as the ability of individuals to achieve their communication goals while effectively and appropriately utilizing communication behavior to negotiate between different identities present in diverse cultural environments.

As our contacts with people from other cultures develop, the need for competent intercultural communicators increases (Liu et al, 2015, p. 26). Students' communicative competence in the context of intercultural communication or intercultural communication competence can be defined as their ability to take part in productive intercultural dialogue about meanings and relationships with people from different cultures (Klimova et al., 2019). Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is an important tool in teaching and learning foreign languages (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019). From this perspective, intercultural communication competencies are conceptualized as the ability of individuals to develop positive attitudes toward foreign cultures (Fritz et al, 2001, p. 4). As international business partnerships become more common throughout the world, the formation and development of communicative competencies becomes necessary to facilitate effective intercultural business communication (Klimova et al., 2019). Communicative competence in the context of intercultural communication not only involves communicative competence in linguistic and pragmatic terms of the language used in intercultural encounters, more importantly, this requires the ability to move between different cultural identities and awareness of different sets of cultural scripts or patterns of interactions that are unique to certain cultures (Klimova et al., 2019).

Chen and Starosta (as cited in Ahnagari & Zamanian, 2014: 10) outline three key components of intercultural communication competencies: intercultural sensitivity (affective processes), intercultural awareness (cognitive processes), and intercultural witnesses (behavioral processes), defined as verbal and nonverbal ability needed to act effectively in intercultural interactions. Eisenchlas & Sue Trevaskes (2007) assert that the aim of internalizing curriculum responses to the recognition those students need to develop a level of intercultural competence in order to function efficiently in an increasingly globalized environment. International and local students need to be partners in this process, and the cultural diversity of contemporary western universities is an ideal place to foster the ability to carry out intercultural mediation. Accordingly, Cheney (2001, p. 90) mentions that many business schools have begun to integrate intercultural communication into their curriculum through individual lectures, research projects, semester courses, study programs abroad, and other methods.

## METHOD

The research method employed for this present study was a mixed-method research design, integrating the method under the umbrella of quantitative and qualitative (Quan-Qual/Mixed) method.

## Participants

Table 1 shows the demographics information of participants. Participants (N = 54) were undergraduate students from English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature State University of Makassar (Males = 11 (20.37%) and females = 43 (79.63%). The participants ranged in age from 19 – 22. The participants enrolled in Research Method course and voluntarily filled out a questionnaire consisting of Likert-type (5-point variation) measures of the variables. The ethnic group of the participants is illustrated in Chart 1.

Table 1. Demographics Information of participants in questionnaire

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	43	20.37
	Male	11	79.63
Age	19	8	14.81
	20	35	64.81
	21	10	18.52
	22	1	1.85
Ethnicity	Buginese	30	55.55
	Makassarese	15	27.77
	Javanese	3	5.55
	Butonese	2	3.70
	Kajangnese	1	1.85
	Kabaenanesese	1	1.85
	Torajanese	1	1.85
	Mandarese	1	1.85

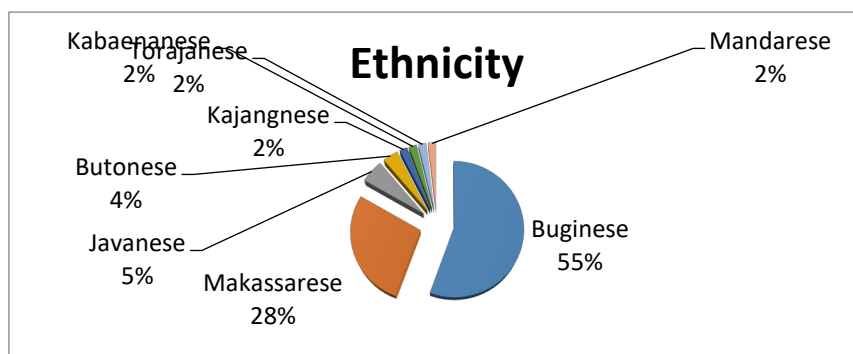


Chart 1. Ethnicity of Participants

## Instruments, Measurement, and Procedures

The study aimed to examine the students' perceptions on intercultural communication of people from different cultural background. Data about students' perception on intercultural communicative competence of students from different culture were collected during a class lecture in October 2019. The study was measured using Chen & Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) 2000). In this research, the respondents were asked to rate their emotions with response to test anxiety on a 5-point

scale on which 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = uncertain, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

## Data Analysis

Data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 9.0 which showed the mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Sum, and percentage. The Skewness, Kurtosis, are also revealed in the study. The students' responses of the semi-structured interview were transcribed and analyzed descriptively to show students' perception using qualitative content analysis with three main phases: preparation, organizing and reporting (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, pp. 109).

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is one of the research methods employed to analyze text or data to reveal the characteristics of language used in communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, pp.1278). Both inductive and deductive analysis processes are represented as three main phases: preparation, organizing and reporting as stated in Chart 2.

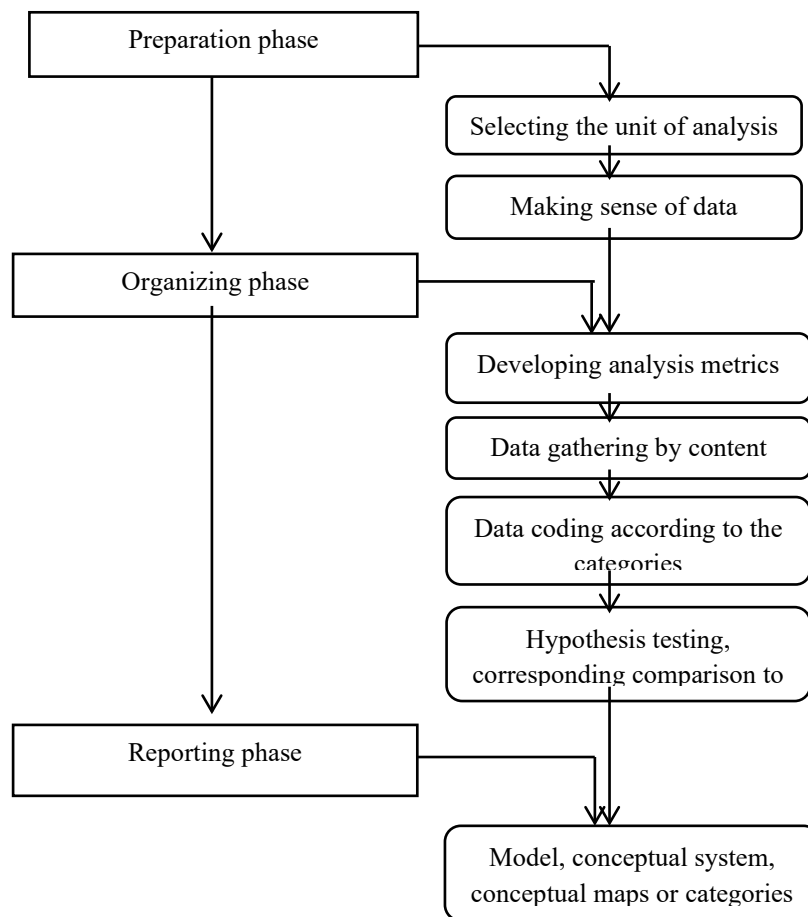


Chart 2. Preparation, organizing, and reporting phases in the content analysis process  
(Adapted from Elo & Kyngäs 2008, pp.110)

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Percentages, mean, standard deviation, weight and rank of students' perception on Intercultural Communicative Competence of Students from Different Cultures

No	Students' Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Sum	Mean	SD
1.	I enjoy interacting with students from other cultures.	0	0	1.9	35.2	63.0	249.00	4.6111	.52903
2.	I think students from different cultures are narrow-minded.	18.5	37.0	42.6	1.9	0	123.00	2.2778	.78708
3.	I find it easy to talk with students from other cultures.	0	7.4	48.1	40.7	3.7	184.00	3.4074	.68731
4.	I do not know what to say when interacting with students from other cultures.	3.7	40.7	44.4	11.1	0	142.00	2.6296	.73449
5.	I like to be with students from other cultures.	0	0	18.5	53.7	27.8	221.00	4.0926	.68041
6.	I do not respect the values of people from other cultures.	55.6	38.9	3.7	1.9	0	82.00	1.5185	.66562
7.	I get upset easily when interacting with students from other cultures.	25.9	37.0	31.5	3.7	1.9	118.00	2.1852	.93312
8.	I do not feel confident when interacting with students from other cultures.	24.1	42.6	27.8	5.6	0	116.00	2.1481	.85578

9.	I am open-minded to students from other cultures.	0	1.9	16.7	55.6	25.9	219.00	4.0556	.71154
10.	I am very observant when interacting with students from other cultures.	1.9	1.9	40.7	51.9	3.7	191.00	3.5370	.69263
11.	I often feel useless when interacting with students from other cultures.	13.0	50.0	27.8	9.3	0	126.00	2.3333	.82416
12.	I respect the ways students from other cultures behave.	1.9	1.9	13.0	57.4	25.9	218.00	4.0370	.80007
13.	I try to get as much information as I can when interacting with students from other cultures.	0	1.9	22.2	40.7	35.2	221.00	4.0926	.80724
14.	I like to accept the opinions of students from other cultures.	0	1.9	24.1	53.7	20.4	212.00	3.9259	.72299
15.	I am not sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	0	3.7	57.4	33.3	5.6	184.00	3.4074	.65929
16.	I never think my culture is better than other cultures.	1.9	3.7	18.5	44.4	31.5	216.00	4.0000	.91115
17.	I often give positive responses to students from other cultures when maintaining interaction.	0	1.9	13.0	68.5	16.7	216.00	4.0000	.61430
18.	I have a feeling of enjoyment towards diversity in my classroom interaction.	0	0	9.3	48.1	42.6	234.00	4.3333	.64428



As shown in Table 2, it is exposed that more than half of students (63.0%) strongly agree, saying that I enjoy interacting with students from other cultures.

As revealed in Table 2 that the highest response for statement number 2 (42.6%) was Uncertain, commenting that I think students from different cultures are narrow-minded. Table 2 also illustrates that the highest response for statement number 3 (I find it easy to talk with students from other cultures.) was Uncertain with 48.1% and there was 40.7% agree, saying that I find it easy to talk with students from other cultures.

The highest response for statement number 4 (I do not know what to say when interacting with students from other cultures) was Uncertain and Disagree with 44.4% respectively.

The highest response for statement number 5 (I like to be with students from other cultures) was Agree with 81.5%. The highest response for statement number 6 (I do not respect the values of people from other cultures.) was Strongly Disagree with 55.6%. The highest response for statement number 7 (I get upset easily when interacting with students from other cultures) was Disagree with 37.0%. The highest response for statement number 8 (I do not feel confident when interacting with students from other cultures) was Disagree with 42.6%. The highest response for statement number 9 (I am open-minded to students from other cultures.) was Agree with 55.6%. The highest response for statement number 10 (I am very observant when interacting with students from other cultures.) was Agree with 51.9%.

The highest response for statement number 11 (I often feel useless when interacting with students from other cultures.) was Disagree with 50.0%. The highest response for statement number 12 (I respect the ways students from other cultures behave.) was Agree with 57.4%.

The highest response for statement number 13 (I try to get as much information as I can when interacting with students from other cultures.) Agree with 40.7%. The highest response for statement number 14 (I like to accept the opinions of students from other cultures.) was Agree with 53.7%. The highest response for statement number 15 (I am not sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.) was Uncertain with 57.4%.

The highest response for statement number 16 (I never think my culture is better than other cultures.) was Agree with 44.4%. The highest response for statement number 17 (I often give positive responses to students from other cultures when maintaining interaction.) was Agree with 68.5%. The highest response for statement number 18 (I have a feeling of enjoyment towards diversity in my classroom interaction. ) was Agree with 48.1 %.

The scale that was used to measure test of students' perception on intercultural communicative competence of students from different cultures was reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7. The means and standard deviations of students' perception on intercultural communicative competence of students from different cultures are displayed in Table 2.

The findings indicate that the students achieved a mean of 4.6111 and SD = .52903 for item no. 1. The students achieved a mean of 2.2778 and SD = .78708 for item no. 2. The students achieved a mean of 3.4074 and SD = .68731 for item no. 3. They achieved 2.6296 and SD = .73449 for item no. 4. Therefore, means and SD for item no. 5 – item no. 18 are clearly stated on Table 2.

The majority of the participants responded to the statement “I enjoy interacting with students from other cultures.” This is because there are lots of benefits can be obtained during maintaining interaction with students from different cultures. Soltani (2014, p. 222) states that investigating the intercultural sensitivity of FL students as a prerequisite for intercultural competence can provide a new light on second language education given the dramatic increase in the amount of communication between individuals who enjoy diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and globalization trends that growing rapidly. In keeping with Soltani’s argument, Dollah et al (2017, p. 41) argue that the interaction of participants' enjoyment with other cultures takes place in EFL classes in higher education.

Interestingly, the majority of the participants ‘comments on the statement “I think students from different cultures are narrow-minded,” was disagree. This shows that according to participants, students from different cultures are not narrow-minded but open-minded. In common with Dewey's account, all open-mindedness accounts identify impartiality, avoidance of bias, prejudice, and dogma as central (Bowell & Kingsbury, 2016, p. 2).

The high responses for statement “I like to be with students from other cultures” were agree with 53.7% and strongly agree with 27.8%. This means that students do not differentiate to choose peers in intercultural communication practices. They are open to accept anyone regardless of cultural background.

The participants strongly disagree to the statement “I do not respect the values of people from other cultures.” This means that they do respect peers from different cultures. Baidhaw (2007:15) mentions that developing mutual respect puts all human beings in equal relation: there is neither superiority nor inferiority. To respect each other in human society is a universal value of religions in the world. Baidhaw (2007: 15) notes that mutual respect leads to sharing between individuals and groups in an equal relationship without superiority. The same comment is from Ip, Po-Keung (2014: 139) which states that people who live in society will have mutual respect and tolerance as a shared attributes in realizing social harmony. Students need to be taught to respect, appreciate, and interact positively with students who are different from them (Source: Cultural Connections Booklet, Child Professional Support Coordinator from <https://childaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Cultural-Connections.pdf>).

The high response for statement “I never think my culture is better than other cultures” was agree. This reflects that the participants do not position their culture higher (superior) than other people's cultures and they don't see other people's culture as inferior to theirs. People who see other people's culture as inferior to their culture are classified as ethnocentrism. Zikargae (2013, p. 130) notes that ethnocentrism refers to broad beliefs about the cultural superiority of one's ethnic group or, more loosely, extraordinarily high regard for one's ethnic group, religion, and culture.

Interestingly, the participants’ comments on “I have a feeling of enjoyment towards diversity in my classroom interaction,” were agree and strongly agree which mean that the participants enjoy interacting with people from different cultures or diversity. The finding also endorses of Walsh as cited in Mulyana (2012:42- 43) who asserts that universal human beings are people who respect all cultures: they understand what people think, feel and believe in various ethnic groups, and they respect cultural differences

### What are the first impressions that come to your mind when you hear the word ‘students from other culture’?

Indonesia is a multi-ethnic society. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its own culture and language. As a multi-ethnic country, intercultural communication is a must and it cannot be avoided in everyday life. Therefore, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has shown strong interest in promoting intercultural communication at the university, especially for social and humanity sciences. As an important element in Indonesian development, students at higher education need to promote harmony, peace, and tolerance. Harmony and peace can only be achieved if the students build mutual understanding and respect, and they show a variety of first impressions when they hear the word ‘students from other culture.’ Those first impressions are a) Excited, b) Knowing or sharing cultures, c) Opened-minded, d) Learning cultures, e) Strange, f) New friends, g) Feel happy and enjoy, h) Don’t care, i) Language, dialect, and accent, j) Diversity, and k) Curious, and detail information can be seen on Chart 3.

Table 3. Participants’ Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: I’m excited

Participant 8	I’ll learn new things and that make me excited.
Participant 12	My first impression is I’m excited.
Participant 17	I am very interesting and excited to learn about their culture, language, and try to make a good relationship with them.
Participant 18	My first impression when I hear the word ‘students from other culture’ is I feel interesting and excited to know all about their culture.
Participant 32	In my mind when I hear students from other cultures are that I am very excited to talk to them and ask them about their culture.
Participant 33	My first impression is I think that they are different, they have different culture and I am so excited to get along with them.
Participant 36	The first impressions that come to my mind when I hear the word ‘students from other culture’ is that I feel very excited because I get new friends from different cultures and I try to get as much information as I can when I interact with students from other cultures.
Participant 41	They are a bunch of new people that have completely different values, culture, habit, and behavior to interacting, respecting, and communicating each other that make me exciting to interact with them.
Participant 49	I am very excited and curious.
Participant 50	I am very excited because I can open my mind about another culture and surely I can learn about their culture deeply.

As reveal on Table 3 that the students' response to the question "What are the first impressions that come to their mind when they hear the word students from other cultures?" was "excited" in a wide variety of expressions to see other people and their cultures.

Table 4. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Knowing or sharing cultures

Participant 1	My first impression when hearing the word "students from other culture." I feel I must open my mind to know their culture and improve my knowledge about cross culture.
Participant 4	It is good, because we can share our opinion each other about culture.
Participant 16	They want to share something about their culture.
Participant 29	When I hear that there are students from other culture in my environment, I would like to know their culture. I want to know or share about cultural difference between their culture and mine.
Participant 30	My first impression, I am very interested in finding out or learning other cultures.
Participant 31	My first impressions when I hear the word 'students from other culture' is I am interested in knowing their cultures.
Participant 46	The first impression that comes to my mind when I hear the word 'students from other culture' is our culture is not the same. We can share with each other about our culture, and we have to respect each other.

As stated on Table 4 that the majority of participants gave comments on the first impressions that come to their mind when they hear the word 'students from other cultures' are "knowing or sharing cultures to others." "Learning to be intercultural involves more than just knowing about other cultures: it involves learning to understand how one's own culture shapes perceptions about ourselves, the world, and our relationships with others" (Scarino and Liddicoat 2009 as cited in Dart, 2015, p. 29).

Table 5. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Open-minded

Participant 1	My first impression when hearing the word "students from other culture." I feel I must open my mind to know their culture and improve my knowledge about cross culture.
Participant 50	I am very excited because I can open my mind about another culture and surely I can learn about their culture deeply.

As seen from the excerpts above, two students emphasized that they are open-minded to see people from different cultures. According to Howell & Kingsbury (2016, p. 1) Open-mindedness is generally recognized as an intellectual virtue, often even appearing at the

top of the list of intellectual virtues, perhaps because, unlike other intellectual virtues, intellectual virtues are also not recognized as moral virtues. Open-mindedness is an intellectual virtue that expresses itself in the willingness to form and revise our ideas in the light of a critical review of evidence and arguments that seek to fulfill ideals that are difficult to understand of objectivity and impartiality (Hare, 1993 as cited in Hare, 2011, p. 9).

Table 6. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Learning culture

Participant 2	I like to find out new words and learning culture is so fun.
Participant 10	Wow, I'll get new things to learn about new culture.
Participant 26	The first impressions that come to my mind when I hear the word 'students from other culture' is I can get more friends and I can learn new culture.

As seen from the excerpts on Table 6 that there were three students responded that they learn new things and new cultures. As Kuiper (2017, p. 23) acknowledges being a student in a class about intercultural communication opens more possibilities for transformative learning, not only because of the opportunity to learn about one's own culture and other cultures but also because of challenges that result from the basic concepts of identity.

Table 7. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Strange

Participant 3	My first impression is the difference of dialects that make me feel a bit strange, and it is a bit awkward to talk with them.
Participant 6	If I do not understand what they say, I will ask them. Sometimes I think what they say is strange.
Participant 42	They are strange.

As illustrated on Table 7, there are three participants gave comment on the first impression in intercultural interaction is the word 'strange,' ranging from the dialects, utterances, and even the people from other cultures are strange.

Table 8. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: New friends

Participant 5	In my mind, new friends, because it is very nice to know new people especially people from different cultural background.
Participant 26	The first impressions that come to my mind when I hear the word 'students from other culture' is I can get more friends and I can learn new culture.

Excerpts as shown in Table 8 reveal that the participants also responded that the first impression which comes to their mind when hearing students from different culture is the word ‘friend.’ This means that they can add new friends and they will learn new culture from them.

Table 9. Participants’ Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Feel happy and enjoy

Participant 11	Too many cultures in the world and I feel happy and enjoy.
Participant 20	The first impression is I feel enjoyable when I know that the students from other culture interact with me. We can build a good relationship.

Dollah et al (2017, p. 41) state that the enjoyment of participant interaction with other cultures takes place in EFL classrooms in higher education. The same comment has also been made by Soltani (2014, p. 222) mentions that investigation of the intercultural sensitivity of FL students as a prerequisite for intercultural competence and its relationship to their ethnicity can provide a new light in second or foreign language education given the dramatic increase in the amount of communication among individuals who enjoy diverse cultural backgrounds and the rapidly developing globalization trends.

Table 10. Participants’ Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Don’t care

Participant 9	I don’t care.
Participant 22	Actually, I do not really care or think about that.

Table 10 illustrates that the word comes to the participants’ mind when hearing the word students from other cultures is ‘don’t care.’ This means that they do not care about what is done and said by people from different ethnic groups with different cultures.

Table 11. Participants’ Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Language and dialect

Participant 3	My first impression is the difference in dialects that make me feel a bit strange, and it is a bit awkward to talk with them.
Participant 28	When I hear the word ‘student from other culture,’ I was thinking about different language.

Language is unique and becomes central to show identity in our communication. Language on the one hand, can be a potential source to learn different cultures, and on the other hand, language can become barriers to maintain good communication between people from different cultures.

Table 12. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Diversity

Participant 51	I like to maintain relationship in my environment because I love diversity.
Participant 52	My first impression is I imagine that diversity will bring new colors. I know much information from another part in the world.

As revealed on Table 12 that the participants' comments show that they like diversity in intercultural interaction. Jandt (2018) asserts that diversity in culture might exceed differences between cultures. So, knowing one's cultural identity does not provide complete or reliable information about that person. However, knowing the cultural identity of others helps you understand the opportunities and challenges that must be faced by every individual in that culture.

Table 13. Participants' Comments on the First Impressions that Come to Their Mind when They Hear the Word Students from other Cultures: Curious

Participant 7	Feel curious to know their culture.
Participant 35	Curious

Table 13 reveals that the participants responded to the statement "what first impression comes to their mind when hearing the word students from other cultures." This statement implies there is curiosity to know about culture, customs, habits, language, etc. from people of different cultural backgrounds.

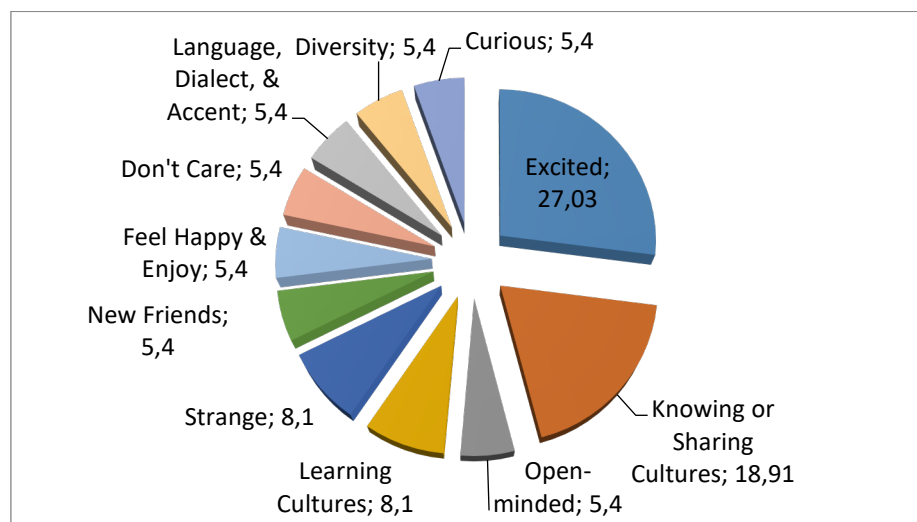


Chart 3. Words associated with the mentioned word “students from other cultures”

**What do you like most about students from other cultures?**

The students gave some responses on the question “What do they like most about students from other cultures?” Those comments are: a) Sharing and learning other cultures, b) Getting knowledge and information, c) Accepting differences or diversity, d) Getting new experience Language and accent, and the detail information is shown in Chart 4.

Table 14. Participants’ Comments on what They Like Most about Students from other Cultures: Sharing and learning other cultures

Participant 1	I like sharing to know one’s culture.
Participant 3	We can get to know each other and learn the culture.
Participant 4	I can know other cultures that I don’t know before.
Participant 7	We can share a story about culture, so that we can know each other.
Participant 8	We always find out something to share, for example: cuisine, interesting place, or unique tradition, etc.
Participant 13	Their culture, we can share our culture and our habit.
Participant 16	We can share our opinions or experiences.
Participant 18	I like to share my cultures and I like to hear about one’s culture. I also like to know their language and habit.
Participant 20	We can know each other, especially our ethnic groups, local wisdom, etc.
Participant 23	I could learn about my friends’ language and culture.
Participant 37	What I like the most is we can share with each other about our cultures and listen to their native culture.
Participant 43	I would like to know the way she or he speaks differently, the language that sometimes has a funny accent, and most importantly, I can learn anything typical of his or her culture.
Participant 45	I like to know new things from students who have other cultural backgrounds. I can get a lot of something that I have never known before, like their food or other uniqueness.
Participant 52	Things most I like when we share about our differences is I could understand what another person’s habit and culture.
Participant 53	I like to know their cultures, such as their behavior, opinion, customs, accent, etc.
Participant 54	Sharing, talking, and interacting with students form other cultures.



As seen from the excerpts above, sharing and learning other cultures are frequent comments from the participants in the study.

Table 15. Participants' Comments on what They Like Most about Students from other Cultures: Getting knowledge and information

Participant 2	I feel so happy because I can meet new people from other places and culture. I therefore can get knowledge and it can also open my mind that cultures will teach us several things.
Participant 48	The diversity that we have in classroom teaches me to be more respectful through differences that we have. I also get to know more information about other cultures, their habits, etc. It is so fun to learn their accent too.

Table 16. Participants' Comments on what They Like Most about Students from other Cultures: Accepting differences and diversity

Participant 5	We can accept differences from one another in forming new friendship.
Participant 17	I really like about their culture and story about their place and I love a difference.
Participant 36	I like most about students from other cultures are their cultural differences, which is certainly different from other cultures. So, I will enjoy when I interact with students from other cultures.
Participant 41	I like diversity of all of them, besides I could learn how they live in other places, and they can also learn how my people live in another part of the earth.
Participant 48	The diversity that we have in classroom teaches me to be more respectful through differences that we have. I also get to know more information about other cultures, their habits, etc.. It is so fun to learn their accent too.
Participant 52	Things most I like when we share about our differences is I could understand what another person's habit and culture.

Interestingly, another frequent comment occurs in the study relating to what they like most about students from different cultures was "accepting differences and diversity." This is based on the belief that students should be given opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations that expand their intercultural diversity competencies to incorporate intercultural concepts (Zikargae, 2013, p. 126).

Table 17. Participants' Comments on what They Like Most about Students from other Cultures: Getting new experience

Participant 6	I like their habit because I can get new information.
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Participant 27	I like students from other cultures when we interact and we can get new information.
Participant 46	We can get new information from their culture than can increase knowledge.

Table 18. Participants' Comments on what They Like Most about Students from other Cultures: The language and accent

Participant 9	Their language and the way they behave that I have never seen.
Participant 18	I like to share my cultures and I like to hear about one's culture. I also like to know their language and habit.
Participant 21	I like to hear about their cultures and accents.
Participant 23	I could learn about my friends' language and culture.
Participant 24	I like the language and dialect because I love studying about language.
Participant 25	I like dialect and traditional food they have.
Participant 28	I like the accent because I think people accent from other cultures is very unique.
Participant 29	The most interesting things to me when I want to know the culture of people from different culture are their language, their cultural history, and dialect. I think it is very enjoyable to discuss with students from other cultures.
Participant 30	Language – tradition – myth.
Participant 31	The thing that I like most of people from different culture is about the tradition and culture in their village and also their language
Participant 33	I am really interested in their language, mythical stories of their region and their manners.
Participant 43	I would like to know the way she or he speaks differently, the language that sometimes has a funny accent, and most importantly, I can learn anything typical of his or her culture.
Participant 48	The diversity that we have in classroom teaches me to be more respectful through differences that we have. I also get to know more information about other cultures, their habits, etc.. It is so fun to learn their accent too.
Participant 49	Probably the way they talk, like their accent.
Participant 51	Their accent. Since I come from a non-accented ethnic and was raised in the middle of city, it is just really nice to hear them talking in their language or accent.
Participant 53	I like to know their cultures, such as their behavior, opinion, customs, accent, etc.

The majority of participants commented that they like most to people from other cultures are language, dialect, and accent. Each ethnic group has its own language, dialect, and accent. Language, dialect, and accent used in intercultural communication also present uniqueness to the hearer from different cultures and attract the foreign language learners to know. On the other hand, the language, dialect, or accent used by speakers from different cultures sometimes makes difficulties for other people from other cultures to comprehend and understand verbal and non-verbal language used in intercultural interaction. Jandt (2018) argues that language can be a barrier to intercultural communication. Jandt adds that each of us lives not in the midst of the whole world but only in that part of the world that our language permits us to know. Thus, the world as we know it is determined by the language of our culture. And differences between languages represent fundamental differences in world views about diverse cultures. Therefore, it is interesting to learn and know cross-cultural languages in the world.

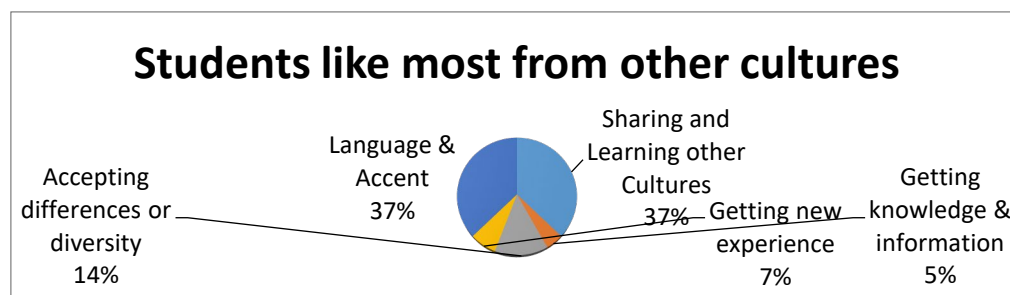


Chart 4. Students like most about students from other cultures

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students enjoy interacting with other students from different cultures in EFL classroom in higher education. Other evidences from this research are: 1) they find it easy to talk with students from different cultures, 2) they like being with students from different cultures, 3) they are open-minded to students from different cultures, 4) they respect the way students behave differently, 5) They try to get as much information as possible when interacting with students from different cultures, 6) they never consider their culture better than other cultures, 7) they often respond positively to students from other cultures while maintaining interaction, and 8) they have a happy feeling for diversity in their class interactions. Other important information from this research are: 1) first impressions that appear in their minds when they hear the word of students from other cultures are: a) excited, b) knowing or sharing cultures, c) open-minded, d) learning culture, e) strange, f) new friends, g) feel happy and enjoy, h) don't care, i) language, dialect and accent, j) diversity, and k) want to know. Therefore, students like most about people from other cultures are: a) Sharing and learning other cultures, b) Gaining knowledge and information, c) accepting differences or diversity, d) gaining new experiences, and e) languages and accents. The implication of this research is that ICC needs to be included in the curriculum in tertiary institutions.

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