



INTERCULTURAL READING

Titin Kustini



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Penulis
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This book is dedicated to my sons and a daughter,

M. Syahrizal Fakhri,

M. Syahrafly Hamdi,

M. Syahrofiq Al Fajri,

Nafisah Almaira Syahrheina.

you are my life.

And also my husband, Ading Setiyana Nugraha,

keep fight till the end.

*Love always to my mother and father, be happy in
jannah.*



PREFACE

We would like to express our gratitude to the presence of Almighty God who has given us His mercy and grace so that we have succeeded in completing the book with the title Intercultural Reading as targeted. This book contains several chapters, consisting of the first chapter Why Should We Learn Intercultural? Until the last chapter regarding Encountering Different Cultures. We realize that this book is still far from perfect, therefore we always expect constructive criticism and suggestions from all parties for the sake of perfection of this book.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to all parties who have participated in the preparation of this book from start to finish. May God Almighty always bless all our efforts. Amen.

December 2023, Author

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Chapter 1

WHY SHOULD WE LEARN INTERCULTURAL?

In this era, when distance, space and time are no longer far apart, studying between cultures is a necessity. The world has turned into a big village, interactions between people, regions or even between countries are increasingly intense and close.

In the academic world today, as participants of the exchange programs, visiting lecturers or plenary speakers, or even as tourists and family members, we cross the boundaries of many countries, meet many people from other cultures, speak with them or correspond with them by e-mail. This globalization of people creates a new and major challenge for everyone – to cross not only the frontiers of the country but to bridge the cultural boundaries of that country. Culture is the aspect of the global context that is most often overlooked (Thomas & Inkson).

A. Intercultural Definition

Intercultural comes from cultural situations. Cultural means relating to the habits, practises, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.

According to Merriam-webster.com/dictionary, intercultural is occurring between or involving two or more cultures.

Intercultural refers to exchanges taking place between different cultures.

Intercultural describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural is one of skill in communication ways that should people have in order to get successful communication.

Interculturally means “relationship between cultures”, and refers to making the best use of each culture, so there will be reciprocity, knowledge, appreciation, understanding, interaction, participation, horizontality, respect and solidarity with other cultures.

Interculturally acknowledges that diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds exist and intersect within social spaces (Smolcic & Arends, 2017).

Intercultural communication is different with cross cultural communication. In a nutshell, intercultural communication relates to interactions among people from different cultures, while cross cultural communication involves comparing interactions among people from the same culture to those from another culture.

Examples on intercultural communication:

- A Christian converses with a Muslim.
- A woman receives an order from a man.
- An American and African share their views.
- A Chinese politician’s discussion with an American leader.

B. The Purpose Of Learning Intercultural

People need to study interculturalism in order to have an open insight into cultural differences so that they are more tolerant, have the right attitude in responding to differences and are able to establish successful interactions.

According to D. C.Thomas and K. Inkson, the list of the most common intercultural failures could be the following one:

- being unaware of the key features and biases of our own culture. Just other cultures may seem odd to us, ours is odd to people from other cultures;

- feeling threatened or uneasy when interacting with people who are culturally different. All of us find difference threatening to some extent;
- being unable to understand or explain the behavior of others who are culturally different. When we use a be like me approach to explain the behavior of others, we are often wrong, because their behavior may not be based on the same goals or motives as ours;
- being unable to transfer knowledge about one culture to another culture;
- not recognizing when our own cultural orientation is influencing our behavior. Much of our behavior is programmed by culture at a very deep level of consciousness, and we are often unaware of this influence. Behavior that is normal to us may seem abnormal or even bizarre to culturally different others- being unable to adjust to living and working in another culture. The severity of culture shock may vary, but it affects us all; - being unable to develop long-term interpersonal relationships with people from other cultures, because even if we learn how to understand them and communicate with them a little better, the effort of doing so puts us off trying to develop the relationships any further.

Jonas Stier (an associate professor of sociology at the School of Social Sciences in Sweden) has suggested that intercultural competence can be divided into content-competencies and procession competencies.

Content-competencies predominantly have a one-dimensional or static character and refer to the knowing that-aspects of both the „other“ and the „home“ culture. They include knowledge of history, language, non-verbal behavior, world-views, „do's and don'ts“, values, norms, habits, customs, taboos, symbols, behavioral patterns, traditions, sex roles etc.

Typically much of such cultural, “knowledge” stems from „reductions“ or stereotypes and are attributed positive or negative value and emotional colour (Allport).

The term procession competencies considers the dynamic character of intercultural competence and its interactional context (Hall; Stier). Such competencies are relative to the cultural peculiarities, situational conditions and actors involved. This knowing how-aspect of intercultural competence, involves intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies.

Intrapersonal competencies involve cognitive skills, that is to say, placing oneself in the position of the other (perspective-alteration), viewing oneself „from the outside“ (self-reflection), alternate between and acting according to „insider“ and „outsider“ roles (role-taking), coping with problems originating in intercultural encounters (problem-solving) and keeping an open, receptive mind and noticing cultural peculiarities (culture-detection), without valuing them automatically and uncritically (axiological distance).

Intrapersonal competencies also pertain to emotional skills, i.e., understanding why feelings occur and their implications (Ruben; Triandis), coping with diverse feelings (e.g., xenophobia, uneasiness, uncertainty, ambiguity, frustration, anger, ethnocentrism,) triggered by unknown cultural settings (Bochner; Gudykunst), and preventing them from automatically determining one's actions or interpretations of behavior or events. Interpersonal competencies refer to interactive skills, that is to say, detecting and accurately interpreting variations in non-verbal cues, subtle signals and emotional responses (interpersonal sensitivity), mastering verbal and non-verbal language, turntaking (see Ruben; Triandis), cultural codes surrounding conversations and being

aware of one's own interaction style (communication competence) and adequately responding to contextual meanings (situational sensitivity).

According to Alvino Fantini, Intercultural Speaker should have the following attributes: respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interest, curiosity, openness, motivation, a sense of humour, tolerance for ambiguity, willingness to suspend judgment.

Intercultural Speaker should develop the following skills:

- the ability to identify areas of conflict in the relationship between two given communities;
- the ability to explain conflicting behaviour and beliefs;
- the ability to resolve conflict or to negotiate acceptance of unresolved conflict;
- the ability to evaluate the quality of an explanatory system and the ability to construct such a system on the basis of data from an interlocutor from a specific cultural background.

We're going to focus on Darla K. Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural competence which explains the process of how to get interculturally competent in the clearest way. Her model describes intercultural competence as a composition of attitudes (e.g. respect and openness to other cultures), knowledge (e.g. of different world views) and skills (e. g. listening and observational skills) that are conducive to the development of intercultural competence. She involved the most outstanding intercultural experts of the country into the research, and all the scientists arrived at the consensus that Intercultural Competence may be defined as "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations".

The elements, or components, they agreed on were categorized into attitudes, knowledge, skills and internal or external outcomes. Each of them will be discussed in detail.

Attitudes. As defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary, attitude is “the way you think or feel about someone or something”; “a feeling or way of thinking that affects a person’s behavior”, “a way of thinking and behaving that people regard as polite/impolite; friendly/rude, etc.” Key attitudes are considered to be those of respect, openness, curiosity and discovery. Openness, curiosity and discovery imply willingness to risk and to move beyond one’s comfort zone. In communicating respect to others, it is important to demonstrate that others are valued. This begins through showing interest in others – in their families and their cultures, and in simply listening attentively. These attitudes are foundational to the further development of knowledge and skills needed for intercultural competence, as well as crucial for successful intercultural dialogue.

Knowledge. In regard to knowledge necessary for intercultural competence, intercultural scholars are in agreement with the following: cultural self-awareness (meaning the ways in which one’s culture has influenced one’s identity and worldview), culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge including understanding other world views, and sociolinguistic awareness and the importance of understanding the world from others’ perspectives.

Skills. According to D. Bok, “students are able “to think interculturally”, therefore, the skills address the acquisition and processing of knowledge: observation, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting and relating.

Internal Outcomes. These attitudes, knowledge, and skills ideally lead to an internal outcome that consists of flexibility, adaptability, an

ethnorelative perspective and empathy. These aspects occur within the individual as a result of the acquired attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for intercultural competence. At this point, individuals are able to see from others' perspectives and to respond to them according to the way in which the other person desires to be treated. Individuals may reach this outcome in varying degrees of success.

External Outcomes. The summation of the attitudes, knowledge and skills, as well as the internal outcomes, are demonstrated through the behavior and communication of the individual, which become the visible outcomes of intercultural competence experienced by others. This then becomes the agreed upon definition of the intercultural scholars, that intercultural competence is "the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations." It is also important to understand the implications of "effective" and "appropriate" behavior and communication: Effectiveness can be determined by the individual while the appropriateness can only be determined by the other person – with appropriateness being directly related to cultural sensitivity and the adherence to cultural norms of that person.

Intercultural communication sometimes breaks down in real-life conversations, not because of the speaker's errors in syntax, or their inaccurate pronunciation in the target language, but because of their **pragmatic incompetence**, which leads to pragmatic failure.

Pragmatic failure is not the general performance errors in using words or making sentences, but those mistakes which fail to fulfil communication because of infelicitous style, incompatible expressions and improper habit. Although the speaker uses sentences which are grammatically correct, they **unconsciously violate** the norms of interpersonal relationships and social norms in speech, or take no notice

of time, hearer and context. For example, 'Where are you going?' is cordial greeting form among the Chinese, but if used to show friendliness to native English speakers, it is likely to be regarded as an intrusion of privacy. In interacting with foreigners, native speakers tend to be rather tolerant of errors in pronunciation or syntax. In contrast, violations of rules of speaking are often interpreted as bad manners since the native speaker is unlikely to be aware of sociolinguistic relativity.

Example 1: In China the drug stores in a town are usually open on Sundays. An English visitor didn't know that, so he asked the Chinese guide.

Visitor : Are the drug stores open on Sundays?

Guide : Of course.

(The visitor seemed embarrassed.) In the example it would be abrupt and impolite because it seems to imply that the English native speaker is ignorant or stupid, and only an idiot would ask such a question.

Example 2: A Chinese student was at a native speaker's home.

Native speaker : What would you like to drink? Tea or coffee?

Chinese : No, no, no. No trouble, please.

(The host did not serve him anything to drink.). In Chinese culture when the host offers something to drink or eat, the guest will usually refuse at first by saying 'no' whether s/he would like to take it or not. Then the host must keep on asking the guest to accept the offer until s/he accepts it. In contrast, the native English speaker generally expects that the guest will give a truthful reply, and does not serve any drink or food if the guest says 'no'. As a result, the Chinese guest's **improper reply** left him thirsty because the strategy he subconsciously used is not appropriate in the target language. In intercultural communication, being unaware of each

other's respective social and cultural tradition, the interlocutors may participate in the communication with their own cultural values and use their own cultural systems to interpret the new situations they experience.

Example 3: An American teacher was talking to a Chinese student.

American teacher: Your English is excellent.

Chinese : No, no! My English is very poor, and it is far from being perfect.

In the example above, the Chinese learner used polite and modest expressions of accepting a compliment in Chinese. S/he had transferred the Chinese appropriate politeness strategy of self-denigration to English as a way of showing modesty. This kind of response may be **perceived as embarrassing** because it implies that the native English speaker's compliment is questionable.

By learning intercultural, communication failure can be avoided. People need to understand and comprehend the culture of whom they talked to, and implied it, so what they want to talk or show can be delivered well without worrying misperception or misunderstanding.

Chapter 2

IDENTITY

In intercultural matters, it is important to understand the aspects that can support the harmonization of relations between people from different cultures. However, in reality, it is not something that makes someone a "new person" who accepts and integrates all the different values in order to become a successful person in interact with another..

On the other hand, people who succeed in studying intercultural studies are people who have broad insight into the various phenomena of differences that occur, whether in terms of language, fashion, etc., but still have strong principles about their identity.

Being an interculturalist does not mean swallowing everything new in culture, but still having a distinct concept of identity.

Culture also influences people perception of themselves. Identity can mean many different things to different people. Identity or self-concept, is who we think we are and how we see ourselves.

Ting Toomey (1999,p.28) categorizes identities or self-image areas into:

A. Primary Identities

It has impact on people life an on going basis. Primary identities includes:

- **Personal Identity**

Personal identity defined as “the sentiments and information an individual has regarding hr or his personal self images. These personal self-imagea are linked to her or his unique personalities, drives, goals, and values.” (Ting-Toomey, 1999). It includes many factors; age, religion, social class (income, occupation, education,

family background, lifestyle, possessions, manner of speaking, and attitudes and beliefs).

- Gender Identity

Gender roles are a fundamental part of identity. Hofstede (1980) claims that clear differences in gender roles can be seen in cultures;

- a. In a highly masculine culture: men are expected to be strong, aggressive and focused on success, whereas women are expected to be reserved, gentle and concerned about the quality of life for others.
- b. In a highly feminine culture; gender roles are not so obviously distinguished, the roles of both men and women tend to overlap.

- Cultural Identity

Gudykunst and Kim (2003) highlight two dimensions of cultural identity that affect contact between people from other cultures;

- a. The strength of someone's identification.
- b. The content of someone's identities.

The example of cultural identity; the culture of the US is described as an individualistic culture and the culture of Japan is a collectivistic culture.

- Ethnic Identity

For many people, ethnicity is a central element of self-identification and becomes an important social identity. In the past, social scientists categorized human beings in terms of basic racial categories, such as Asian, Caucasian, and Negroid. More common today is categorization on the basis of ethnicity, defined in terms of culture, language, and country of origin.

B. Secondary Identities

Secondary or situational identities are changeable from situation to situation. For example, education level, social class, address, etc.

The following text gives illustration about phenomenon related to identity.

The phenomenon of mixing English in South Jakarta's children which is contradictory to the development of Indonesian



This Phenomenon currently booming in Indonesia, namely code mixing that is happening in South Jakarta, especially among children. The mix of languages used by the children there is usually English and Indonesian. Why do they use such mixed language? Because you need to know in advance that English is often synonymous with the language of the rich or elite, people who use English are high-ranking both intellectually and materially.

Actually, the existence of this phenomenon is not a strange thing because this has also happened in several countries, such as Spain, where there is an example of one family, call it the Devie Family. He has descendants from Spain and England, and then the family uses a mixture of both Spanish and English or what they call English Spanish.

They don't think it's strange, and neither the people around them because this is usually caused by habits in the family, and this also does not have a bad impact on her family or on those around her.

This phenomenon also occurs in America, where Americans think that the mixing of languages is usually caused by a factor of power, often referred to as power distance," where they consider the language to be a higher language. And this also happens in Indonesia, where it is customary for Indonesians to think that social status is used to gain respect, so that people who are good at English represent people who are highly educated and respectable, so that people who are good at English in Indonesia are considered to have a higher degree than people who can only use Indonesian properly and correctly.



But in this case, why is code mixing or the mixing of languages often identified with South Jakarta children? In fact, many higher economic groups live in the South Jakarta area, so South Jakarta is often associated as an area of higher economic groups, and the mixed language is considered more relevant for use by the children of South Jakarta.

With the mixing of languages that occurs in South Jakarta children, it is considered to have a positive advantage, where they can be more expressive in showing their respective characters and flexibility; they can also be more relaxed in using the foreign language; and even foreigners will find it easier to understand the language spoken by these South Jakarta children, and foreigners can also learn a little from the Indonesian spoken by these South Jakarta children.