

A STUDY OF EFL STUDENT'S CULTURAL EMPATHY FROM CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

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Cultural empathy is an essential thing in cross-cultural communication, which is a complex unit in teaching foreign languages. Empathy plays a crucial role in placing oneself concerning the views of others. Briefly, (Matthew, 2003) stated, Empathy Pedagogy applied the theory of empathy to language teaching and appealed educators to pay more attention to the teaching system that can help students cultivate the ability of cross-cultural communication. The objectives of this study are to investigate the relationship between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication to create an effective method of learning English as a foreign language. This research uses a descriptive quantitative method. To accomplish this objective, this study conducted interviews with 39 students of English Education, Tidar University. The result of the research shows that there is a positive relationship between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication. That way, it is necessary to have an appropriate method in learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords- Cultural empathy, Cross-cultural communication, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the flow of globalization has penetrated all aspects of our life, such as social, political, cultural, educational, and health. It cannot be denied, that globalization is our independent variable of primary interest (Goryakin, Lobstein, James, & Suhrcke, 2015). The development of globalization has become a staple of our lives and has led to a blurring of cross-cultural communication between countries around the world. In fact, between one country and another, it seems like they have no boundaries. Cross-cultural communication always experiences various obstacles, this is due to differences in cultural backgrounds such as customs, traditions, beliefs, ideals, and so on. If these obstacles cannot be overcome, there will be disagreements or even serious disputes. Here, there is a need for cultural empathy in cross-cultural communication to help people understand a culture that is far different from ours so that cross-cultural communication can run well and effectively.

This is a tough challenge for foreign language teachers, especially English language teachers, which are English as an international language. Cross-cultural communicative skill is generous of skill that students who learn foreign languages should have. This becomes very important in shaping a child's personality and character, especially an attitude of empathy. According to Dökmen, empathy is the action of putting one's self in one's place,

to understand his emotions, his thoughts in the right way and up to today (Dokmen, 2001). Borba stated that empathy intelligence is the ability to understand and feel the concerns of others (Borba, 2008).

Empathy is understanding other people's feelings, accepting their point of view, respect the differences in people's feelings towards various things, be a good listener, and questioner (Budiningsih, 2008). He defined empathy as a form of children's ability to recognize, interpret, and feel other people's feelings with verbal, nonverbal expressions and be able to communicate them to others (Budiningsih, 2008). According to Goleman, the ability to empathize is the ability to find out how other people feel (Goleman, 2007). Empathy is also mentioned as a positive feeling that acts on the feelings of others with an emotional response to that person (Santrock, 2007). Cultural-empathize states to the cognizant transformation of cultural perspective by communicators, intentionally transcending the typecasts and frameworks of local culture, receiving rid of the restrictions of their own culture, and placing themselves in another cultural mode to knowledge, realize and comprehend another culture (Yumin, 2019). Furthermore, Matthew Schertz stated that Empathy Pedagogy applied the theory of empathy to language teaching and appealed to educators to pay more attention to the teaching system which can help students cultivate the ability of empathy (Matthew, 2003). In the same regard, Regina W. Nganga applied the theory of cultural empathy to counselors' training which strengthened their abilities of cultural empathy and improved their cross-cultural sensitivity. It is effective to solve problems generated by people from two totally different nations (Nganga, 2006). The necessary way for cultural empathy was to maintain cultural diversity, equality and to firmly resist ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice (Liu, 2012).

Report to Wan Man, in his paper "An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Cultural Empathy in Cross-cultural Communication" (Wan, 2013) elevated obviously that cultural empathy competence was an essential factor in successful cross-cultural communication. It can help us to construct a good appreciation of other nations' cultures and contract the psychological crack between different languages and cultures. Judging from some of these opinions, it becomes interesting to learn more about the attitude of cultural empathy related to cross-cultural communication. Given the importance of cultural empathy as the main weapon in cross-cultural communication in modern times, especially for students in EFL, the researcher intends to analyze the relationship between cultural empathy and cross-cultural competence to create an effective method of learning. English as a foreign language and improve students' skills in empathy.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative method in the analysis of cultural empathy from cross-cultural communication. Babones stated that quantitative social science has long been dominated by self-consciously positive approaches to the philosophy, rhetoric, and methodology of research (Babones, 2015). This research is included in quantitative research because it aims to investigate the relationship between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication.

The present study used a questionnaire for data collection. The use of questionnaires indorsed for investigation of selected issues related to the participants in greater depth and detail by using descriptions and direct quotations to capture the essence of the individual's personal experiences (Patton, 1990). The participant of this study were 39 students of English Education, Tidar University from grades 2018, 2019, 2020; 27 female and 12 male. The data for this study was collected by two questionnaires, namely to discuss empathy and cross-cultural communication. First, it the test adapted survey assembled by Gaumer Erickson & Noonan (G., A., J. , & L. P. , 2018) to ensure that the result of the test could reveal cultural empathy achieved by the student of English Education. This question examines the performance of nonverbal behavior and verbal behavior tailored to a particular social context. Second, this study uses a test of Chen and Starosta, Intercultural Communication Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000) to have a basic understanding of participants' cross-cultural communication competence. This data is presented in three tables, table 1 focuses on student's cultural empathy, table 2 focuses on cross-cultural communication, and table 3 shows the relationship between the two. In analyzing the data, there were some steps done by the researcher; (1) Collecting the data through the questionnaire (2) Identifying and analyzing the data were collected (3) Showed the results of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire, the following data were obtained;

Table 1
 General Analysis of The Score

Total score	5	Maximum	67
Participants	39	Minimum	38
Test Item	17	Mean	52.9
Score of one item	1	Standar Deviation (STEDV)	7.2

Table 2
 The Statistics of The Cultural Empathy Test

	Number	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	STEDV
2018	13	63	41	52.4	6.5
2019	13	67	38	52.9	7.2
2020	13	65	45	53	6.5

Table 1 and Table 2 show the results of the student's cultural empathy as a whole. From this data, the researcher can argue that students of grade 2020 get high scores on this test. Even though it only has a slight difference with other grades, this shows the high cultural empathy of 2020 grade students. In comparison, 2018 students and 2019 level students have a low level of relevance to the knowledge of cultural empathy. However, there is one thing in

common with this virgin, the three grades have an average in the range of 52-53. Moreover, the standard deviation in this statistical case is 7.2. This shows that these grades do not have a very significant comparison of cultural empathy attitudes. In this range, cultural empathy has shown pretty good results from 0-70.

Table 3
 The Result of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence Test

	Number	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	STEDV
2018	13	63	43	52.5	6.8
2019	13	67	47	52.8	6.2
2020	13	65	48	52.9	7.2

Table 3 shows the cross-cultural communicative competence test that was carried out on 39 students of Tidar University Magelang. From these results, we can conclude that 2020 students have a higher level of cross-communicative competence compared to 2019 students and 2018 students. In this case, it can be seen that the average score of 2020 students has a higher score than the others, namely 52.9. However, the results show that there is no significant difference between the three grades. Besides, the standard deviation of the three grades also shows results that are not much different or almost the same. This shows that the level of cross-cultural communication has reached a good enough

Table 4
 The Relationship Between Cultural Empathy and Cross-Cultural Communication Competence

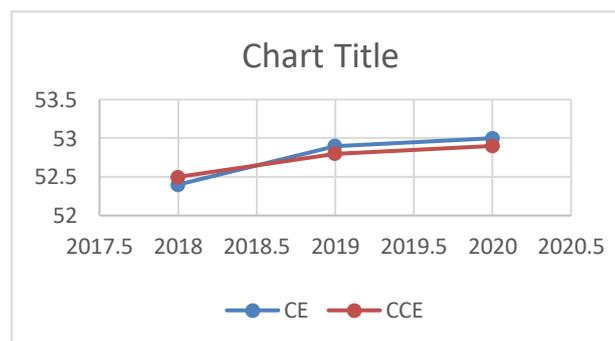


Table 4 shows that there is a positive relationship between cultural empathy and communicative across cultures competence. In this case, it is important to apply cultural awareness in communication so that cultural competence can be created. This is important to do to create communication by what is expected.

The data were collected to analyze cultural empathy attitudes and cross-cultural communication towards students of Tidar University, majoring in English Education. This

is important to do because it provides suggestions and a big role in the success of foreign language learning in Indonesia. Based on the discussion, it is concluded that there is a positive correlation between the two things as in table 4. Besides, tables 2 and 3 show the level of cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication of students who have reached moderate levels. This means that there are still some problems in communicating in foreign languages about cross-cultural communication. This is important because as we know, the English Education department focuses on understanding and using language in communication. Therefore, it is hoped that English Education students will be able to apply cultural empathy attitudes in cross-cultural communication well. Seeing the results of the data, it still shows a lack of application and teaching of cultural empathy attitudes towards students, for that we need an appropriate method to create competent and communicative students in using foreign languages. This is also supported by a positive correlation between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication as shown in table 4. This continues to spur to improvement the professionalism of language teachers in the creation of appropriate and effective methods. As explained by Ren Saixian, the ultimate goal of foreign language teaching is the cross-cultural development of students' communicative competences (Ren, 2015). English teachers are not only focused on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation but must also be able to teach cultural awareness and empathy so that the main objectives of teaching foreign languages can be maximally achieved (Jiang & Wang, 2018). The central goal of learning a second language is to achieve an effective statement with native speakers' usage of cultural empathy. Cultural empathy plays a very crucial role in teaching foreign languages. This is an effective method for achieving success in cross-communication as the focus of second language teaching. Therefore, it is imported English teachers need to try ways to develop students' cultural empathy skills in English classrooms, especially for students majoring in English Education. For example, the use of films and music as learning media. English teachers must be able to make maximum use of media such as technology. One of them is by playing foreign films that are meaningful in learning so that it can create comfortable conditions for students to learn languages. What's more, using this foreign film can help students to understand the culture of other countries. So that by doing so, the objectives of cross-cultural communication and cultural empathy will be achieved.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, we can conclude that cultural empathy and cross-communicative competence have a positive correlation, thus it will be a good way for foreign language teachers to seek and create effective methods of learning according to their goals and needs. Here, this research is very important to do because it is a key to creating a competent and professional generation related to foreign language mastery, as well as teaching about cultural awareness. Through cultural awareness or high empathy, culture can create success in cross-cultural communication. Overall, it is necessary to adjust the appropriate learning methods to achieve these goals.

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