EXPLORING DEVELOPMENT STAGES
OF INTERCULTURAL FRIENDSHIP AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract

Intercultural communication or Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is the different condition of society that used symbol systems and rules for communication and interaction with other cultures and languages. This research explored the stages of the intercultural friendship of English Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia who joined the International Community Service. Nine students in the same events participated in collecting the data of the questionnaire and interview based on the three familiar theories: trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation. Then the results showed that the students had prepared information about the place of events and learned the new cultures and habits of the different societies. The other one, the students avoided sensitive issues such as ethnicity, religion, and race to accept the contradiction among the students and society to understand one another to evaluate the contradiction to be a positive value based on the three theories of intercultural friendship. Lastly, their challenges were between them and society, and the students and their friends in a small group. Diversification of purpose and goal of their project made them difficult to implement such as internet connection and public fasilities. Besides, the village situation was poorer than other communities were, and required some facilities to assist them in their everyday operations. In accordance with the results, keeping good communication and relationship would be easier for students or institutions for the next event. The program was continued for the other participants to make the successful goals.

1. Introduction

Intercultural communication is a communication in different cultural communication among participants. Significantly, the differences in communicative competence is a successful communicative event using the symbol systems of communication as the principles of communicative interaction (Toliboboeva, 2020). Everyone believes Indonesia has many cultures and languages. Because of that, intercultural communication is important to explore the intercultural value. According to Mosed, et al., (2021) the concepts in intercultural communication are briefly characterized by communication as the sharing of information between people on different levels of awareness and control. In another explanation, it is said that intercultural communication is done by people from different cultural communication (Issa, et al., 2015). The researchers want to emphasize the latter

since in an intercultural context, this is can become a problem particularly with features of low degree of awareness and difficulties. To practice intercultural communication, people should have a relationship with other people.

Friendship is an amazing and unique, distinguished by its character and personality (Bubaš & Bratko, 2018). Intercultural friendships are characterized by differences between individuals' cultures that bring unique rewards as well as challenges. Individuals must negotiate differences in cultural values and languages, and overcome enduring stereotypes. However, they also gain unique cultural knowledge, broaden their perspectives, and break stereotypes. Further, Patricia, et al., (2008) says that various cultures have different meaning systems, making the exchange of communication more challenging and potentially increasing misunderstanding. Based on previous research, it is seen that intercultural friendship could be done by people based on their experiences. In this paper, the researchers conducted the research about development stages of intercultural friendship based on their experiences. The participants were in the first language (L1 (Indonesia)) already having intercultural friendship of foreign language (English). According to Khatimah & Kusuma, (2019) there are three stages of the development of intercultural friendship; trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation. The trial stage is the new meeting of intercultural relationships to understand both cultural differences and roles in relationships. The enmeshment stage is transferring cultural identity to give the information about one's own culture and to build the relation of different cultures. Then, the renegotiation stage is a process of supporting and understanding each other in cultural identity.

The intermediate language that they used was English as a foreign language for Indonesian. English is as an international language and Intermediate language for different cultures. Everyone who learns English has to be able in all skills of language, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. All skills of language are important for the participants to improve their foreign language. In intercultural friendship of their communication, the participants used some platforms based on social media, such as an email, WhatsApp, Instagram, twitter, and others. This previous study was conducted by Velasco, (2017) about incorporating intercultural communication activities in English language Classes. The similarity of this research is about intercultural communication using English as a foreign language for Indonesian. Then, the differences of this research are the place of setting and the participants. The next previous research was from Alhadad, (2020) about intercultural friendship in developing English skills of College students. The similarities of the research are about intercultural friendship in different languages and culture. The difference is that the research is conducted for college students to develope their English skills. From the explanation above, the researchers are interested to conduct the research to find out the implementation of development stages of intercultural friendship and the challenges of the stage in intercultural friendship. The key term of this research is intercultural friendshi. Then, the stage of intercultural friendship means how the participants face the different situations of their friendship, especially language and culture. The other one is challenges, which give the information about participants' challenges in the stage of intercultural friendship.

2. Literature Review

The topics of intercultural friendship have been discussed for many times. It is said that the research of friendship is still scarce. Experts say that cross cultural understanding among people is not well accepted till now and that is the reason this research is done to

make a sort of awareness to the public that communinations among various cultures and people could not be avoided. Gareis (2000) identified that foreign students in US using some key variables of intercultural friendship such as culture, personality, self-esteem, friendship elements, expectations, adjustment stage, communicative competence, demographic variables, contact frequency, US elements and chemistry. Lee (2006) explains that intercultural friendship shows varieties of friendship standings such as age, gender, all of which could be negative or positive. Alhadad, (2020) states that intercultural friendship can be used to enhance the fluency of speaking English. Technology makes a relationship easy and people can talk to anyone in different places. However some students are not sure of this. They find some sorts of difficulty in writing the text or message to their friends from different cultures. Moreover, slang or informal language could be when they have a communication and this is tough, either for the speaker or the addressee as slang or informal language could not be easily interpreted or understood; even the local people of the possessore of the respective language find the same difficulty. Based on the points of the stages of intercultural friendship adopted from Khatimah & Kusuma, (2019) there are three phases of identity in the management theort: trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation. Trial is how to invite the new culture in new circle to accept the value of the language used. Everyone has norms or rules, which they believe for cultural identity for any foreigner who wants to participate in communications done by people from various backgrounds, should well about the language habit of the speakers. The next one is enmeshment that is how to share the identity of the person to other people to accept the relational identity. The last is renegotiation that is to accept and support the identity each other. The evaluation of the relationship among them can be the value of the other strangers. People have to establish independent rules and evaluate different cultural positively. According to Lee, (2006) to develop relational identity within intercultural friendship total awareness is highly needed.

3. Research Method

The researchers employed descriptive qualitative method to learn the stages of intercultural relationship and the problems that come from each level. According to Creswell (2018), a qualitative method is used to analyze information of individual or group based on social phenomena. Thus, the researchers get the finding from deep understanding of research questions. Mardalis, (2003) explains that descriptive method covers recording, describing, analyzing, and interpreting the empirical data. The reason for choosing qualitative method is the researchers described the stages in intercultural friendship based on their explanation and experience. This strategy is commonly used to comprehend people's perceptions. The qualitative approach aids to the discovery of fresh ideas and individual perspectives by using analysis to delve deeper understanding. The participants were ELT students who had ever got intercultural friendship. The technique of data collection was questionnaire and interview to get deep information about the data. The interview was used to collect the data from the participants about their opinion, beliefs, and feelings about the condition. Then, the data were analyzed using from Miles & Huberman (1994) theories consisting of three components: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification.

The researchers used the questionnaire and deep interview as the research instruments. The questionnaire was given via Google form, whereas the interview via WhatsApp messenger.

No	Statements / Questions
1	I'm looking for the information on the new place that I'm going to occupy.
2	I study the cultures of the place where I will live.
3	The community is very welcoming of our arrival.
4	The community is very supportive of our program.
5	We follow all community activities.
6	We share the information about culture in each country/region.
7	I follow all activities very well.
8	I study the culture and the language of the place well and correctly.
9	We do activities and work well together and also respect other's opinion
10	We solve the problems that occur in the field well during the activity.

Table 1. List of Questionnaire and Interview

The researchers explained the result of the questionnaire and interview via Google form and whatsapp. The data were divided and explained related to the development stages of intercultural friendship and the challenges of participants when facing intercultural friendship in new places.

4. Results and Discussion

There are three stages of the theories in development of intercultural friendship: trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation which can be seen in the findings of the development stages in International communication

1. Trial (Accepting the new habit)

The first stage is trial, all of participants identify the new places which they should live. In the events of activity, they come to another country, that is Indonesia. Some of them are from Sarawak, Malaysia and Serwak is close to Indonesia, still in the same island of Kalimantan. Though both parties are in the same island, the cultures and even the language will be different. However, each parti is ready to do acitivity as they are also eager to know their neighbouring culture. The following are the samples of data taken for the analysis, based on the interview. The interview runs well though some of the utterance are not arranged grammatically, they use their everyday English.

Researcher : *I'm looking for the information on the new place that I'm going to occupy*

(Statement)

Interviewee : *strongly agree*

Researcher : *How did you find it?*

(Question) : *I found in the internet and asked the institution in that place which as a responsible for intercultural students who joined the events. Then, came to the place, we discussed with the community about their habit in the village.*

2. Enmeshment (Sensitive Issues)

The second is enmeshment, every country has rules and norms applied in their locality. As a visitor in new places, they learn about the rules of religion, ethnic, and other things. All participants strongly agree to develop the program and they say that the program is beneficial and form such a program they understand new things from new environement.

Researcher : *I study the cultures of the place where I will live*

We share the information about culture in each country/region

(Statement)

Interviewee : *strongly agree*

Researcher : *How did you solve it?*

(Question) :

Interviewee : *We shared the information each other, to give understanding of our cultures, language, and also rules or norm.*

3. Renegotiation (Support system)

The last is renegotiation; this is concerned with different views or ideologies of the participants as they come from differenc cultural and social background. Those difference could not forced to be accepted by a certain individual or goup. By this it is clear that negotiation or even renegotiation is very importan. If the first negotiation fails, it must be followd by the second negotiaton which is termed as renegociation. A norm is accepted in one society or community but not in another so all should be well adjusted.

Researcher : *We do activities and work well together and also respect each other's opinion*

We solve the problems that occur in the field well during the activity

(Statement)

Interviewee : *strongly agree*

Researcher : *How did you solve it?*

(Question) :

Interviewee : *We give the example and the history of our country which may be different or same. Then, we can take good relationship from another country or region.*

Participants say that they face many challenges in the field. Some of the people are introvert and some others are extrovert and here lies tha changes. They have to understand the personality in order to acoid any clash. Then, different culture make them aware to accept other cultures. Different accent or language sometimes become a problem or miscommunication among them, but all is to be discussed in good condition. Facilities become the next problems or challenges. They do not find any good internet connection to facilitate their progra. Then, the facilities of everyday such as toilet or *mushalla* it still so far from their places. In one village they have many leaders of the home but as participants in that program they have to need enough participants.

Based on the result, the participants could solve the problems and challenges in the field. The participants are aware of the differences among them. All is prepared well, especially when they are given quesionaire to complete. This shows that they are all enthusiastic to make the program successful. The participants have been able to define that they have explored the stage in intercultural communication of relationship. In the interview of the participants, they have set several challenges that could occur in the future.

5. Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned explanation, the researchers conclude that there are three stages of theory building an international friendship: trial, enmeshment, and renegotiation, as supported by the findings. Despite the fact that all participants are from various ethnic groups, they may maintain tolerance and understanding in spite of their

differences. The first is a trial. The majority of participants agree that they should try a fresh voyage in another location. Not only learning about the village culture and language, but they also learn about the villagers. Information regarding religion, either for the minority or the majority they need a deep understanding in this case. Some of the local people then convert their faith to Islam and called mualafthey so they need more information about islam. They also need some people who could guide them in their new religion. They need guidance to perform all the rules and norms as well as values of Islam.

The second is enmeshment, in which the participants maintain their characters in order to enjoy the program, although in different ways. They always learn new things from society and offer suggestions that are appropriate for them. People have always supported individuals' efforts to enhance their abilities in a variety of areas. The final step is renegotiation, in which participants can recommend changes to their culture that have a detrimental influence on their lives. The participants, on the other hand, encourage the community leader to talk of the problem or solution before making a suggestion or modifying their value or ideology. Finally, there are problems in the field, such as village infrastructure that could obstruct the success of the program. Human resources are to be highlighted too, especially women who averagely are not well educated.

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