Indonesian Students' Perceptions of Intercultural Awareness in Classroom Discourse

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Abstract. This study depicts the students' perceptions of classroom discourse, mainly through extensive listening. The study recruits tertiary students from East Java, Indonesia as the participants of this study. The study applies a qualitative approach. The study concerns how they perceive intercultural awareness in classroom discourse. The findings show that students must enhance their intercultural awareness in understanding language, cultural, and religious diversity. In classroom discourse, they have learned a lot about both Anglophone and non-Anglophone cultures. They consider diversity to be special. They believe that every culture has its own distinctive traits. In addition, students tend to respect to others with different cultural backgrounds. It can enhance students' tolerance and intercultural knowledge. The findings may assist educators in designing and exploring intercultural tasks to promote students' intercultural awareness in classroom discourse. Future studies should be concerned with fostering intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence by applying other intercultural tasks.

Keywords: Classroom Discourse · Intercultural Awareness · Perception

1 Introduction

The advancement of intercultural communication competence is crucial in an educational context. Intercultural communication competency has recently emerged as a recent issue to be explored due to the complexity and diversity of language, culture, and religion. The intercultural communicative competence issue has been spread out in Europe, America, and Australia in recent decades [1]. It can be found out in language teaching (e.g., Australia, Austria, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Switzerland, UK, Spain, Arab, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Malay, Japan, Korea) [1–9]. Intercultural communicative competence relates to skill in the effective interaction of intercultural exchange [10]. One of the models in expanding intercultural communicative competence is intercultural awareness [3].

Intercultural awareness is one of the intercultural communicative competence dimensions [10]. It has been growth in classroom discourse. Students need to develop intercultural awareness by equipping them with classroom discourse. In fact, it promotes students

to reach a deeper understanding in framing intercultural awareness. Students can get to know other people with a different cultural background in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, students are able to enrich their insights about various kinds of existing cultures. This phenomenon challenges students to accept, adapt, and appreciate it. In sum, intercultural awareness contributes to students' personal development. It covers students' intellectual, academic, and social achievements.

Several extensive studies about intercultural issues have been traced in an educational context. There is a basic difference between some research from Baker [4, 9–12]. Their studies develop intercultural competence in language learning. Furthermore, [12] emphasizes that intercultural competence can be developed through teacher professional development for improving intercultural schools. In addition, [4] proposes that in transcultural universities have been adopted to promote students' intercultural awareness in a higher education setting. Referring to the previous studies above, the study on the students' perception of intercultural awareness occurring in classroom discourse is little documented. In response to this, the current study is designed to explore the perception of Indonesian students regarding intercultural awareness in classroom discourse.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Classroom Discourse

Some researchers have documented a number of empirical investigations on classroom discourse [13–16]. Weninger's study of classroom discourse [16] examines English classes that used a critical literacy unit. His study focuses on a contextualized social issue. The study illuminates how classroom discourse in Singapore's secondary schools is influenced by ideologies of English teaching and learning. In a fifth-grade classroom in a public school in Colombia's north, [14] has conducted more pertinent work. This study intends to examine how discourse practices among teachers and students enhance peace-building. This study offers theoretical and practical guidance for re-creating relationships that are more effective in fostering peace.

A study [15] has also reported an extensive study of classroom discourse. The goal of this study is to explore the opportunities and challenges of grammatical metatalk in classroom discourse by examining procedural and declarative metalinguistic knowledge. This study considers how a functional grammar pedagogy affects classroom talk. Another study by [13] has been conducted in western America's high school. This study looks at how teachers' gestures are used to explore shared understanding. The main goal of this study is to demonstrate how teachers use their gestures to take part in classroom discourse.

2.2   Intercultural Awareness in Classroom Discourse

Intercultural awareness covers a means of conceptualizing knowledge, skill, and attitudes in reaching successful communication [4]. Students must understand about skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed for intercultural communicative competence. For this reason, intercultural awareness is viewed as an attempt to expand this competence [3].

As the crucial role of this competence, intercultural awareness is developed to respond the complexity of intercultural communication. Intercultural communicative competence is a competence that must be developed by EFL students in classroom discourse. The competence is developed to equip students to communicate effectively with students who come from various language, cultural and religious backgrounds [17]. In this regard, religious diversity also plays a crucial role in it. Furthermore, Kusumaningputri and Widodo [7] suggest that students' intercultural communicative competence can be upgraded by the use of intercultural tasks and digital photographs. Through intercultural tasks, students can build intercultural awareness in classroom discourse. In other words, intercultural awareness is an attitude that must be developed in responding to the language, cultural and religious diversity found in classroom discourse. In short, intercultural awareness reflects how students understand and respond to the language, culture, and religious diversity around them.

3   Method

A qualitative approach was applied in this study to investigate students' perception of intercultural awareness in extensive listening [18]. University students of East Java in Indonesia who participated in classroom discourse were the participants of this study. Before undertaking this research, participants had to fill out a consent form. They were 20 students who had an age range between 19 to 20 years old. In this regard, they had run into intercultural encounters with different ethnic people and foreign people. They interacted with different ethnic people, such as Balinese, Javanese, Madurese, and Kalimantan. They also communicated with foreign people, such as: British, USA, Korea, China, Canada, Australia, and Turkey.

The data in this study were gathered by interviewing the participants. The interview guidance was constructed to achieve the objective of the study. A semi-structured interview was chosen in this study by [19]. The interview process was recorded by using the zoom application. The time of the interview was decided by the researcher and participants on July 7th, 2022. The data derived from interviews were analyzed by means of data transcription [20]. The data analysis process was initiated by transcribing the interview data, coding the interview data and classifying the interview data. The next step was interpreting the data and producing credible data related to the participants' feedback.

4   Findings and Discussion

Based on the interview, students' intercultural awareness has been reflected students' responds to language, cultural and religious diversity. It can be seen in the following interview data.

> "Learning a foreign culture means we also learn a new habit in a country, where I in this listening material learn many things, starting from how to eat, habits, language, daily life of foreign people, discipline, and the education system in Indonesia and other countries. From this, I can know more and it turns out that

every country and even each area they live in have different habits. (IC, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

"I have learned a lot about material that I didn't understand before. Because for me this material is new things and knowledge for me. Culture is a habit that is often done (L, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

In their mind, students must boost their understanding of language, cultural and religious diversity. They have gotten much new knowledge regarding anglophone and non-anglophone cultures in classroom discourse. Furthermore, they think that communicative behavior (such as: understanding and respect) are needed to expand in social practice. They need to boost a deep understanding of different cultural backgrounds to communicate with others in intercultural encounters. It is supported by the following data.

"I think it's necessary, because of what? When we can understand their culture we can know or can respect each other's culture. This is very necessary in communicating, especially when we are talking to foreigners. When we don't understand or don't know their culture, this will cause misunderstandings and there is no mutual understanding or acceptance that these differences will unite not separate relations between countries (IC, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

"Yes, of course, it's different because every country has different beliefs or role models and has different cultures and customs. I think this is what is unique about each country which has differences. Then from here we can more easily recognize and remember the country because of the uniqueness of the country (IC, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

They think that cultural diversity is unique one. They view that each culture has its own characteristics. Intercultural awareness reflects how students understand and respond to the language, cultural and religious diversity around them. They also must appreciate intercultural values to survive in intercultural encounters. It is portrayed in this interview data.

"Yes, because sometimes their culture is very contrary to us or looks strange because it is different from our culture. But in my opinion, cultural differences are normal, we have to tolerate these differences and respect other people's cultures (MAP, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

"Yes, it promotes my intercultural awareness. Because intercultural awareness is necessary to open insights, thoughts, not easy to judge and others. The material supports the topic because intercultural itself discusses the differences between cultures and we are learning between cultures. From this learning the moral message that I can get is about not being easy to judge, tolerating, and respecting someone's habitual thinking in determining one's attitude. And it will become easier to adapt (L, Zoom Interview, July 7th, 2022)".

In this regard, intercultural awareness contributes to students' personal development. Respect is one of the intercultural values that grow in students. It can increase the students' tolerance and intercultural awareness in intercultural encounters.

Students' perception of intercultural awareness can be seen from students' responses in classroom discourse. Based on the result of the interview, there are some important points in classroom discourse, such as intercultural tasks in classroom discourse bring up new insight for students. In other words, students must be understood the differences, such as new habits and new behavior. In their mind, the phenomenon is the unique one. So, they need to understand and respect other cultures in avoiding intercultural misunderstanding to communicate with others about different background cultures. This is in line with Kusumaningputri and Widodo [7]. They propose that intercultural tasks can be adapted to promote students' intercultural awareness. In other words, students can enhance intercultural awareness in classroom discourse through intercultural activities. In sum, how students perceive and react to the diversity of language, culture, and religion in their surroundings is reflected in their intercultural awareness.

5   Conclusion

Realizing the contribution of intercultural awareness in language teaching, the current study promotes students' intercultural awareness through tasks. It provides meaningful tasks that covered some intercultural values. In this regard, the tasks can enrich students' insight regarding intercultural knowledge and values. It contributes to emerging and gain students' intercultural awareness. In their mind, they need to explore their intercultural awareness in classroom discourse. This study encourages educators to prepare the other tasks based on students' levels. It is a crucial part in reaching successful engagement in classroom discourse. Intercultural tasks in classroom discourse play a pivotal role in exploring students' new insight in learning English. The research could be useful to educators in designing and exploring intercultural activities to foster students' intercultural awareness in classroom discourse. Future research should focus on promoting intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence through the use of other intercultural activities.

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