

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Finding

In this part, the findings and discussions were divided into two parts: teachers' perspective about cross-cultural understanding and how teachers negotiate cultural values.

1. Teachers' Perspective about Cross-cultural Understanding

During interviews and observations, the researcher identified several points regarding teachers' perspectives on cross-cultural understanding: effective communication across cultures, understanding cultural differences, and appreciating diversity. Below are explanations of these points:

a. Effective Communication Across Culture

1) The Interview Result

Effective communication across culture is crucial when engaging with students hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds. It serves as a foundation for fostering understanding, respect, and inclusivity within the learning environment. One pivotal strategy to facilitate seamless learning experiences for all students is by employing language that is not only accessible but also culturally sensitive and inclusive. By utilizing appropriate language, educators can bridge linguistic barriers, promote comprehension, and ensure that every student feels valued and empowered to actively participate in the educational journey. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of communication but also cultivates an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation for cultural diversity, enriching the educational experience for everyone involved. That has been done by teachers from different school:

"Here we have students from East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur) and Jakarta. There aren't really any differences in how they learn English. When I teach, I mostly use Indonesian so that all students can understand. For instance, if I use Javanese, students from outside Java might struggle, and if I use English, students who are less proficient might have difficulty." (Teacher A, interview, 13th March 2024)

"I usually teach using Indonesian or Javanese. But most of the context examples are Javanese culture or

local culture.” (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

“In my personal opinion, I will use the Indonesian language so that we can both understand each other better, and it is hoped that the students can also respond in Indonesian to be more confident.” (Teacher C, interview, 14th May 2024)

2) The Observation Result

At School A, B, and C the teacher similarly begins and concludes each lesson with greetings and salutations, fostering a welcoming and respectful learning environment. These gestures are significant as they acknowledge the importance of interpersonal connections and set a positive tone for the learning experience. By incorporating elements of cultural sensitivity into their teaching approach, the teachers at School A, B and C not only promote effective communication but also cultivates a sense of belonging and mutual respect among students of different cultural backgrounds. (School A, B, and C, observation, 13th March 2024, 11th May 2024, and 14th May 2024)

b. Understanding Cultural Differences

1) The Interview Result

Understanding different cultures is also a crucial skill for teachers as it enables them to foster positive relationships, promote inclusivity, and create effective learning environments. When teachers lack cultural understanding, it can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications. Developing cultural competence allows educators to connect with students on a deeper level, appreciate their unique backgrounds, and adapt teaching approaches accordingly. Moreover, cultural competence empowers teachers to navigate sensitive topics respectfully, avoid stereotypes, and create inclusive curriculum materials. By honing their understanding of diverse cultures, educators can build stronger connections with students, promote mutual respect, and facilitate meaningful learning experiences that resonate with all learners. This assertion is supported by the experiences of the following educators:

“When I taught X grade, maybe there was a need for adjustment so they could understand the cultural context here. Sometimes if there are terms they don't

understand, they usually ask and it ends up with sharing like, "oh, in my area it's like this..." (Teacher A, interview, 13th March 2024)

".....if there are students from different cultures, perhaps an appropriate approach is needed. For example, by sharing cultural knowledge. If I explain the culture here, then I'll ask about their culture. So, we can understand each other." (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

"Perhaps by sharing cultural experiences. Like for example, here is a student from Jambi, I once asked him to share his experience of going to a museum in Jambi" (Teacher C, 14th May 2024)

2) The Observation Result

The observation results of the English learning process at School A further illustrate the integration of cultural understanding within the classroom. As the lesson progresses, the teacher introduces the topic of the degree of comparison using examples that encompass various cultural contexts, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and China. This approach not only facilitates learning but also highlights the diversity of cultural perspectives among the students. The teacher's inquiry into Javanese culture prompts students to reflect on cultural distinctions between rural and urban communities, fostering a deeper understanding of their own cultural backgrounds. Subsequent discussions about cultural norms, such as the behavior and attire of English visitors compared to Indonesian students, encourage students to consider cultural differences in practical contexts. (School A, observation, 13th March 2024)

Furthermore, the teacher at School B demonstrates a profound understanding of cultural differences through their proactive approach to encouraging participation and adapting questioning techniques to be culturally responsive. This approach reflects an acknowledgment of the potential variations in communication styles and engagement levels among students stemming from diverse cultural backgrounds. By actively involving all students, regardless of their initial level of participation, Teacher B creates an inclusive learning environment where every student's voice is valued and respected. This not only fosters a sense of

belonging but also validates the unique backgrounds and perspectives of each student. Through this inclusive teaching strategy, Teacher B ensures that all students feel heard and represented in the classroom, contributing to a richer and more meaningful educational experience for everyone involved. (School B, observation, 11th May 2024)

On the other hand, Teacher C is aware of various responses from students during his teaching sessions, especially with students who have mental disorders. She recognized the different behaviors and levels of engagement among the students, prompting her to employ various approaches to address these discrepancies. This demonstrates her understanding that students may possess diverse learning styles and speeds, which could be influenced by their cultural backgrounds. (School C, observation, 14th May 2024)

c. Appreciating Diversity

1) The Interview Result

Appreciating diversity is vital for educators, fostering inclusive learning environments by valuing students' backgrounds, experiences, and identities. It involves incorporating diverse perspectives into curriculum and practices, recognizing each student's unique strengths and challenges. This approach facilitates navigating sensitive topics and addressing social justice issues respectfully. Embracing diversity cultivates empathy, critical thinking, and global citizenship, preparing students for a diverse world. This sentiment is echoed in the experiences of the following teachers:

“We have open discussions. We let students answer based on their knowledge and experience..... Usually when there's a debate starting, I start merging in and tell them to take turns answering, like a moderator. Once it's finished, I summarize the discussion results with a reminder that every area has different cultures, so we should try to respect each other” (Teacher A, interview, 13th March 2024)

“To create an inclusive and supportive learning environment, I usually start by ensuring that every student feels valued and accepted. I encourage them to share stories and experiences from their cultural

backgrounds.” (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

“I think it’s necessary to learn our culture or another culture, like in Western culture, there’s something called table manners, which I like. And there’s also a culture of saying magic words (thank you, sorry, and please), which is rarely done in Indonesia. So, I think we also need to learn to practice that.” (Teacher C, interview, 14th May 2024)

2) The Observation Result

In the observed English learning process at School A, several instances highlight the appreciation of diversity among students. Firstly, the teacher introduces the concept of the degree of comparison by comparing countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and China. This comparative approach inherently acknowledges the diversity of cultures and sizes of nations, fostering an understanding of different cultural contexts among the students. Additionally, when posing a question related to Javanese culture, the teacher prompts students to reflect on the traits typically associated with rural and urban dwellers, encouraging an appreciation for the diversity of lifestyles and values present within their own community. Furthermore, the teacher engages students in considering cultural norms that an English visitor might adhere to, prompting recognition and appreciation of the diversity of cultural practices and norms across different regions and societies. Finally, the discussion about height comparisons between Russians and Indonesians serves to acknowledge and discuss physical differences between people of different nationalities, indirectly encouraging students to appreciate the diversity of human characteristics and attributes beyond cultural norms. These instances collectively illustrate how the teacher incorporates and fosters appreciation for diversity within the English learning environment at School A. (School A, observation, 13th March 2024)

In line with Teacher A's approach, to make the interaction more culturally responsive, Teacher B could tailor the questions to be more relevant to the students' everyday experiences or invite them to share examples

from their own lives. This approach would not only foster greater engagement but also validate the students' backgrounds and perspectives. By incorporating contextually relevant stories or anecdotes related to local culture, the teacher can bridge the gap between the students' everyday experiences and the lesson content. This strategy not only makes the lesson more engaging but also helps students better understand and retain the information, thereby fostering a more inclusive and appreciative learning environment. (School B, observation, 11th May 2024).

In addition, Teacher C incorporated culturally relevant examples into her teaching, such as explaining the process of making batik or how a motorcycle engine works. By doing so, she not only made the material more engaging and comprehensible for the students but also demonstrated respect and recognition for their cultural heritage. This approach not only deepened the students' understanding of the subject matter but also fostered a sense of pride and appreciation for their own cultural background within the learning environment. (Teacher C, observation, 14th May 2024)

2. How Teachers Negotiate Cultural Values

In the English language classroom, teachers navigate cultural values through various approaches aimed at fostering understanding, respect, and inclusivity among students from diverse cultural backgrounds. One strategy is incorporating culturally relevant content and materials into the curriculum, such as literature, media, and discussions that reflect the cultural diversity of the students. By doing so, teachers validate students' cultural identities and provide opportunities for them to see themselves represented in the learning materials.

"I usually incorporate reading texts such as reports or narratives, especially about other countries or folklore. From there, we can learn about the culture of the country or region from the folklore." (Teacher A, interview, 13th March 2024)

"When teaching about accents in English. I used Google's voice tool because I myself had difficulty imitating a British accent. There, many students didn't understand what was being said when using a British accent. From that, I thought that learning English doesn't have to involve imitating

accents. Because besides many native accents, we ourselves have a unique accent, which we can use as a characteristic of our culture.” (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

“I once used the fill-in-the-blank method when teaching material about suggestions, so I grouped my students into several groups to compete to see who could fill in the blanks in sentences the fastest. The students became more competitive and enthusiastic in answering.” (Teacher C, interview, 14th May 2024)

Additionally, teachers may engage in discussions and activities that encourage students to share their own cultural experiences, traditions, and perspectives. This not only promotes mutual understanding and respect but also creates a supportive learning environment where students feel valued and heard.

“We have open discussions. We let students answer based on their knowledge and experience.... Through discussions or critical thinking, so that empathy and tolerance towards cultural values, especially those of other cultures, can emerge.” (Teacher A, interview, 13th March 2024)

“I usually teach using Indonesian or Javanese. But most of the context examples are Javanese culture or local culture. So, if there are students from different cultures, perhaps an appropriate approach is needed. For example, by sharing cultural knowledge. If I explain the culture here, then I'll ask about their culture. So, we can understand each other.” (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

“...When playing the fill-in-the-blank game, I ask them to answer in turn. If there is a group that cannot answer, then I give the opportunity to another group to answer.” (Teacher C, interview, 14th May 2024)

Moreover, teachers can explicitly address cultural differences and values when teaching language and communication skills. For example, by discussing hypothetical scenarios involving English visitors and their cultural norms, attire, and physical features, the teacher encourages students to explore cultural diversity and challenge stereotypes. By addressing questions like “Will they wear headscarves? Will their attire resemble yours?” the teacher prompts students to consider the diversity within cultures and the importance of avoiding generalizations. (School A, observation, 13th March 2024)

Another example, teachers can discuss how language use varies across different cultures, including differences in vocabulary,

grammar, and communication styles. By highlighting these differences, teachers help students develop cultural competence and navigate intercultural communication effectively.

“So far, I have introduced vocabulary and accent differences in English, such as British and American accents.” (Teacher B, interview, 11th May 2024)

“Perhaps by sharing cultural experiences. Like for example, here is a student from Jambi, I once asked him to share his experience of going to a museum in Jambi.” (Teacher C, interview, 14th May 2024)

In conclusion, by navigating cultural values through the incorporation of culturally relevant content, fostering discussions and activities that promote understanding and respect for diverse perspectives, and explicitly addressing cultural differences in language teaching, teachers play a crucial role in creating inclusive and supportive learning environments where all students feel valued and empowered to succeed.

B. Discussion

This section presents a discussion based on research findings. The discussion related to teachers’ perspective about cross-cultural understanding and how teachers negotiate cultural values.

1. Analysis Teachers’ Perspective about Cross-cultural Understanding

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it has been found that teachers from schools A, B, and C predominantly use either Indonesian or the local language when teaching English. According to Mahboob and Lin¹, there are three primary functions for using the local language in English instruction: the ideational function, the textual function, and the interpersonal function.

Firstly, the ideational function involves using the local language to explain complex ideas and concepts. This helps students understand difficult English terms and concepts by relating them to familiar terms in their native language, facilitating better comprehension and retention. Secondly, the textual function pertains to the organization of the lesson and the clarity of instruction. Teachers might switch to the local language to ensure that the

¹ Ahmar Mahboob and Angel M Y Lin, “Using Local Languages in English Language Classrooms BT - English Language Teaching Today: Linking Theory and Practice,” ed. Willy A Renandya and Handoyo Puji Widodo (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 25–40, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-38834-2_3.

structure of the lesson is clear and that students can follow along without confusion. This use of the local language helps in maintaining coherence and cohesion in the delivery of the lesson. Lastly, the interpersonal function focuses on building rapport and managing the classroom environment. By using the local language, teachers can connect more personally with their students, address behavioral issues effectively, and create a more inclusive and comfortable learning atmosphere. This function is crucial for maintaining a positive and supportive classroom dynamic. In conclusion, the use of the local language in English instruction serves essential purposes in facilitating understanding, organizing lessons, and nurturing a supportive classroom environment. Through these functions, teachers can enhance students' learning experiences and contribute to more effective English language education.

In addition, teachers' perspectives on understanding cross-cultural issues are also demonstrated through their use of different approaches for students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This sensitivity to cultural differences enables teachers to tailor their teaching methods to better meet the needs of each student, thereby fostering an inclusive learning environment.²

For instance, Teacher A uses a comparative approach by comparing the height differences between Indonesians and Russians during a lesson on degree comparison. This approach guides students to understand how ethnic and racial differences can influence variations in height, thereby enhancing their awareness of cultural diversity. Similarly, Teacher B employs a proactive approach tailored to the specific dynamics of the classroom, aiming to encourage all students to actively participate in the learning process. By anticipating potential barriers to participation and addressing them in advance, Teacher B ensures that every student feels included and motivated to engage in classroom activities. This method not only promotes inclusivity but also fosters a collaborative learning environment where students can learn from each other's diverse perspectives. In alignment with Teacher B's approach, Teacher C, who is aware of students with mental health challenges, adopts a more private and individualized teaching strategy. Recognizing that some students may require additional support and attention, Teacher C provides personalized instruction to accommodate their unique needs. This approach helps create a safe

² Surjit Singha, "Creating Inclusive Learning Environments" 6, no. 1 (2024): 17–37, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0563-8.ch002>.

and supportive learning environment where all students, regardless of their mental health status, can thrive academically and emotionally.

Through these varied and culturally responsive teaching methods, teachers A, B, and C demonstrate their commitment to addressing the diverse needs of their students. By integrating comparative³, proactive⁴, and individualized⁵ approaches, they contribute to an inclusive educational setting that values and respects each student's background and personal circumstances. This holistic approach not only enhances students' academic performance but also promotes a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural and individual differences.

2. Analysis How Teachers Negotiate Cultural Values

Based on the interviews and observations, it is evident that English teachers from Schools A, B, and C employ diverse methods to integrate cultural values into their classrooms. Despite these differences, incorporating cultural values in English language teaching yields similar benefits. According to Chitte's research⁶, these benefits are threefold: students learn how to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds; students become more interested and motivated when learning within a culturally familiar context; and both teachers and students become more open to accepting and appreciating differences.

Furthermore, teachers from the different schools utilize various strategies to integrate cultural values into their teaching. For example, Teacher A from School A uses culturally relevant literature, media, and folklore to help students see their own cultures reflected in the curriculum. This method not only validates students' cultural

³ Jonas Almqvist, Malena Lidar, and Anette Olin, "Teaching Traditions in Classroom Practice – A Comparative Didactic Approach BT - Didactics in a Changing World: European Perspectives on Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum," ed. Florence Ligozat, Kirsti Klette, and Jonas Almqvist (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 55–65, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-20810-2_4.

⁴ Nada Jaber Alasmari and Abeer Sultan Ahmed Althaqafi, "Teachers' Practices of Proactive and Reactive Classroom Management Strategies and the Relationship to Their Self-Efficacy," *Language Teaching Research*, September 28, 2021, 13621688211046352, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211046351>.

⁵ Katharina Theresa Lindner and Susanne Schwab, "Differentiation and Individualisation in Inclusive Education: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 0, no. 0 (2020): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2020.1813450>.

⁶ Dr. Nilesh H Chitte, "Unveiling the Cultural Dimensions in ELT: Implications and Strategies," *International Journal of Applied Research* 6, no. 11 (2020): 475–78, <https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2020.v6.i11g.11165>.

identities but also provides them with a broader understanding of global cultures. Additionally, Teacher B from School B teaches the differences in accents of various native speakers, such as British and American, using Google's voice tool, fostering mutual respect and understanding. Meanwhile, Teacher C from School C employs interactive activities like fill-in-the-blank games to engage students in learning. These activities, while competitive, are designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural differences. Moreover, Teacher B utilizes modern technology, such as Google's voice tool, to demonstrate various English accents, highlighting the cultural diversity within the English language itself.

Regardless of the approach, integrating cultural values into English language teaching offers significant benefits. Chitte's research outlines several key advantages: students develop the skills needed to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, which is crucial in today's globalized world; students' interest and motivation in the subject matter increase when learning through culturally relevant and familiar contexts, enhancing their engagement and retention; and exposure to different cultures fosters a sense of openness and acceptance in both teachers and students, reducing prejudices and promoting a more inclusive classroom environment. As students learn about and respect different cultural perspectives, they become more empathetic and tolerant individuals.

In conclusion, while the methods of incorporating cultural values into English language teaching may vary among teachers from Schools A, B, and C, the benefits remain consistent and profound. By teaching students how to communicate across cultural boundaries, increasing their interest and motivation through culturally relevant content, and fostering an open and accepting classroom environment, teachers play a crucial role in preparing students for a multicultural world. Therefore, the integration of cultural values not only enhances language learning but also contributes to the development of globally competent and culturally aware individuals.