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English Language Education for Intercultural Communication: A Course Study in Alauddin State Islamic University

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study evaluates the effectiveness of the course English for Intercultural Communication in enhancing English proficiency and intercultural communicative competence among students at Alauddin State Islamic University, Makassar, Indonesian. It also explores pedagogical practices and students' preparedness for intercultural communication in multicultural contexts.

Methodology: This study employed a qualitative research design. Data were collected through teacher interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The analyzed documents included curriculum materials, assessment instruments, and students' feedback. No software, survey instrument, or review method was used in this study.

Main Findings: The findings provide critical insights into prevailing practices and challenges in the instruction of English for intercultural communication in Indonesian. The study identifies areas for improving curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and educational policy while supporting educational stakeholders in preparing students for global citizenship through English language education in multicultural contexts.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study examines English as a vehicle for intercultural communication by focusing on both pedagogical practices and students' preparedness within the English for Intercultural Communication course at Alauddin State Islamic University. The findings contribute practical recommendations for curriculum design, pedagogy, and educational policy in multicultural English language education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language that enables communication among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds [1], [2]. Along with globalization, English is no longer used only for academic purposes but also for international collaboration in education, tourism, business, technology, and social interaction. Effective communication in multicultural settings requires not only language proficiency but also intercultural communicative competence [3], [4]. This competence allows individuals to understand cultural differences, respond appropriately during communication, and develop mutual understanding across cultures. Therefore,

English language education should integrate linguistic competence with intercultural communication to prepare students for participation in global society [5], [6].

Indonesian is recognized as one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world, creating both opportunities and challenges for English language education [7], [8]. Although English has been introduced at different educational levels, classroom instruction continues to emphasize grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension more than intercultural communication skills [9], [10]. As a result, many students demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of English language structures but experience difficulties when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. Limited exposure to authentic intercultural interactions also reduces students' confidence in applying English in real communication contexts [11], [12]. These conditions indicate that English language learning has not fully addressed competencies required in multicultural and international environments.

Several previous studies have discussed relationships between English language teaching and intercultural communication [13], [14]. Earlier research reported that integrating cultural knowledge into English instruction could improve students' intercultural awareness and communicative competence [15], [16]. Other researchers also emphasized that intercultural competence should become an essential component of English language education because English functions as an international language used by speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds [17], [18]. However, most previous studies mainly investigated teachers' perceptions, curriculum implementation, or theoretical concepts of intercultural communication. Empirical evidence examining how a university course specifically develops students' intercultural communicative competence through classroom practices remains relatively limited [19], [20].

Despite increasing attention to intercultural communication in English language education, several research gaps remain unresolved [21], [22]. Previous studies rarely provide comprehensive evaluations that combine curriculum analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews, assessment analysis, and students' feedback within a single investigation [23], [24]. Furthermore, limited research has examined how intercultural communication courses are implemented in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions, particularly at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar [25], [26]. Existing literature also provides insufficient information regarding challenges encountered during instructional implementation and factors influencing students' readiness to communicate across cultures. Consequently, further investigation is needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of teaching practices and learning outcomes in English for intercultural communication.

Addressing these gaps is important because universities play a significant role in preparing graduates for increasingly interconnected global communities [27]. Students who possess intercultural communicative competence are more capable of participating in international academic activities, professional collaboration, cultural exchange, and global employment opportunities. Findings from this study are expected to provide valuable information for lecturers, curriculum developers, educational institutions, and policymakers seeking to improve English language education [28], [29]. Moreover, strengthening intercultural dimensions within English instruction may contribute to developing graduates who are culturally responsive, communicatively competent, and globally competitive. Therefore, evaluating implementation of English for intercultural communication courses represents an important contribution to educational improvement in Indonesian.

This study offers several contributions that distinguish it from previous research [30], [31]. Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on theoretical discussions or perceptions, this research evaluates implementation of an English for Intercultural Communication course through curriculum analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews, assessment evaluation, and students' feedback within one integrated qualitative case study [32]. This comprehensive approach provides a broader understanding of instructional practices, learning experiences, and challenges encountered during course implementation at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar. Findings generated from this study also provide practical recommendations for improving curriculum design, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and institutional policies supporting intercultural English language education. Consequently, this research contributes new empirical evidence regarding implementation of intercultural communication courses in Indonesian higher education and expands current knowledge concerning English language education for global citizenship.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate implementation of an English for Intercultural Communication course at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar, Indonesian. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of teaching practices, learning experiences, and intercultural communication development within a natural classroom setting. This research focused on understanding how intercultural communicative competence was integrated into English language learning through classroom instruction and course activities. A case study approach was considered appropriate because it

provides comprehensive information about a particular educational context using multiple sources of evidence. Consequently, this design allowed researchers to obtain a holistic understanding of curriculum implementation, instructional practices, and students' intercultural communication experiences.

2.2. Participants and Research Setting

This study was conducted at Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar Indonesian, during implementation of an English for Intercultural Communication course. Participants consisted of two English lecturers who taught the course and twenty-five student teachers enrolled in a two-credit English for Intercultural Communication class. Participants were selected using purposive sampling because they were directly involved in learning activities related to intercultural communication. Both lecturers possessed teaching experience in English language education and actively facilitated intercultural learning activities throughout the semester. Students participated voluntarily and provided information regarding learning experiences, classroom activities, and intercultural communication development during data collection. Penjelasan ini tetap sesuai dengan artikel asli.

Table 1. Research Participants

Participants	Number	Description
English lecturers	2	Lecturers teaching English for Intercultural Communication
Student teachers	25	Students enrolled in English for Intercultural Communication
Total	27	Research participants

2.3. Data Collection

Data were collected using several qualitative techniques to obtain comprehensive information regarding implementation of intercultural communication learning. Classroom observations were conducted to examine teaching activities, classroom interaction, and students' participation during learning sessions. Semi-structured interviews with English lecturers were carried out to explore perceptions, teaching experiences, and strategies used to develop intercultural communicative competence. Curriculum documents, course syllabi, assessment instruments, and learning materials were analyzed to identify integration of intercultural communication within course implementation. Students' feedback and assessment results were also collected to support interpretation of learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness. Langkah-langkah ini berasal dari prosedur penelitian pada artikel asli.

2.4. Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis involving four sequential stages. Data obtained from interviews, observations, document analysis, assessments, and students' feedback were first organized and classified according to research objectives. After data reduction, information from different sources was compared through data triangulation to improve credibility and consistency of findings. The interpreted data were then presented descriptively to explain implementation of intercultural communication learning, supporting factors, and existing challenges. Finally, conclusions were formulated based on relationships among research findings to generate recommendations for improving English language education emphasizing intercultural communicative competence.

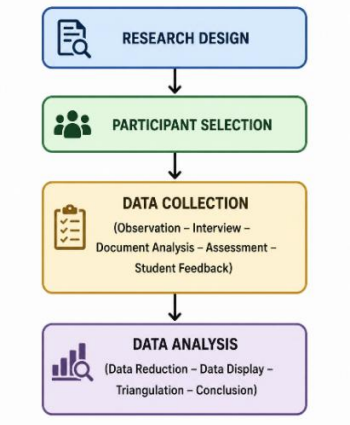


Figure 1. Research Procedure

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Course Assessment Components

The English for Intercultural Communication course was implemented through a structured learning system consisting of classroom meetings, assignments, quizzes, group projects, and examinations. Learning activities were designed to improve students' English proficiency while strengthening intercultural communicative competence. Assessment components were distributed across formative and summative evaluations to measure students' academic achievement throughout the semester. Group projects received the highest assessment percentage because collaborative learning was considered essential for developing intercultural communication skills. Overall, the assessment structure reflected a balanced evaluation system that emphasized knowledge acquisition and practical communication abilities.

Table 2. Course Assessment Components

Assessment Components	Frequency	Weight (%)
Assignments	10	15
Quizzes	4	15
Group Project	1	30
Mid-Term Examination	1	20
Final Examination	1	20

3.2. Course Content and Learning Materials

The course combined theoretical knowledge and practical communication activities to develop students' intercultural communicative competence. Learning materials included intercultural communication theories, language functions, cultural awareness, and practical applications for cross-cultural interaction. Two main textbooks were used to support classroom learning, namely Theories of Intercultural Communication by Renáta Panocová and English for Intercultural Communication by Nemira Mačianskienė. These learning resources introduced students to major intercultural communication concepts while simultaneously providing communicative exercises based on authentic situations. Integration of theoretical perspectives and practical language activities enabled students to understand intercultural communication from both conceptual and applied viewpoints.

3.3. Teacher Interview and Classroom Observation

Interview findings revealed that both English lecturers demonstrated positive attitudes toward intercultural communication and consistently integrated cultural perspectives into classroom instruction. Classroom observations indicated that lecturers encouraged active participation through discussion, collaborative learning, and communicative practice. Their international teaching experiences contributed to richer classroom interaction and supported development of students' intercultural awareness. Learning activities promoted respectful communication among students from different cultural backgrounds while encouraging meaningful use of English during classroom interaction. These findings indicate that instructional implementation successfully created a supportive learning environment for intercultural communication.

3.4. Student Assessment

Assessment results demonstrated that most students actively participated in classroom activities and showed positive attitudes toward learning English for intercultural communication. Students with stronger English proficiency generally performed better during communicative tasks than students with limited language competence. Several students still experienced difficulties in pronunciation, vocabulary use, and understanding differences between Bahasa Indonesian and English phonological systems. Additional explanations in Bahasa Indonesian were occasionally required to help students understand learning materials and classroom instructions. These findings suggest that students' English language proficiency remains an important factor influencing successful development of intercultural communicative competence.

Findings indicate that implementation of English for Intercultural Communication course successfully integrated theoretical knowledge with practical learning activities to strengthen students' intercultural communicative competence. Assessment components, including assignments, quizzes, group projects, and examinations, provided opportunities for students to apply English in both individual and collaborative learning situations. Course materials also combined intercultural communication theories with practical language use, allowing students to understand cultural diversity while developing communication skills. Learning activities

supported active participation through classroom discussion, collaborative tasks, and authentic communication practices. Findings suggest that a well-structured curriculum contributes positively to development of intercultural communicative competence among university students.

Results also demonstrate that lecturers played an important role in creating an effective intercultural learning environment. Interview data and classroom observations revealed that lecturers consistently integrated intercultural perspectives into classroom instruction while encouraging students to participate actively during learning activities. Students generally showed positive attitudes toward learning English for intercultural communication, although differences in English proficiency influenced classroom participation and learning performance. Students with stronger language competence participated more confidently during communicative activities than students with limited English proficiency. Findings indicate that successful implementation of intercultural communication learning depends on instructional quality and students' foundational English language skills.

Present findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that English language education should develop intercultural communicative competence in addition to linguistic proficiency. Previous research reported that integrating cultural knowledge into English instruction improves students' intercultural awareness and communication skills. Nevertheless, many previous studies primarily focused on theoretical discussions, teachers' perceptions, or curriculum analysis without examining classroom implementation comprehensively. Current study extends existing knowledge by combining curriculum analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews, assessment evaluation, and students' feedback within a single qualitative case study. Findings therefore provide broader empirical evidence regarding implementation of intercultural communication courses in Indonesian higher education.

Novelty of this study lies in comprehensive evaluation of an English for Intercultural Communication course implemented at an Indonesian Islamic university. Unlike previous studies that generally investigated only one aspect of intercultural communication learning, current research integrates multiple qualitative data sources to provide a holistic understanding of curriculum implementation, instructional practices, learning experiences, and assessment outcomes. Study also highlights relationships among course design, teaching strategies, and students' intercultural communicative competence within a multicultural learning environment. Findings address research gap identified in introduction regarding limited empirical evidence from Indonesian higher education institutions. Consequently, study enriches existing literature by providing practical evidence for improving intercultural English language education in similar educational contexts.

Findings have important implications for English language education, curriculum development, and institutional policy. University may strengthen intercultural communication components through authentic learning experiences, collaborative international activities, and increased opportunities for interaction with speakers from different cultural backgrounds. Curriculum developers may also integrate intercultural competence more systematically into English language courses by balancing theoretical knowledge and practical communication activities. Lecturers should continue encouraging active participation while providing additional support for students with limited English proficiency. Implementation of these strategies may improve students' readiness for global academic and professional environments.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting findings. First, research involved only one university and a relatively small number of participants, limiting generalization to other higher education institutions. Second, data were collected using a qualitative approach without quantitative measurement of changes in students' intercultural communicative competence. Third, investigation focused on one course during a single implementation period, which may not fully represent long-term learning outcomes. Future studies are recommended to include participants from multiple universities, employ mixed-method approaches, and examine long-term effects of intercultural communication instruction on students' academic development and global competencies.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined implementation of an English for Intercultural Communication course at Alauddin State Islamic University Makassar to evaluate how curriculum design, instructional practices, learning materials, and assessment activities contributed to development of students' intercultural communicative competence. Findings indicate that integration of theoretical knowledge, practical communication activities, collaborative learning, and authentic assessment successfully supported students' understanding of intercultural communication while improving English language skills. Positive instructional practices implemented by lecturers also created an inclusive learning environment that encouraged active participation, although differences in students' English proficiency remained a challenge during classroom interaction.

This study contributes empirical evidence regarding implementation of intercultural communication within English language education in Indonesian higher education, particularly through a comprehensive qualitative evaluation involving curriculum analysis, classroom observation, interviews, assessment, and students'

feedback. Findings provide practical recommendations for curriculum developers, lecturers, and higher education institutions to strengthen intercultural communication learning by expanding authentic learning experiences, improving instructional strategies, and providing additional language support for students with limited English proficiency. Future research is recommended to involve multiple universities, larger participant groups, and mixed-method approaches to obtain broader evidence regarding effectiveness of intercultural communication courses and their long-term contribution to students' global competencies.

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USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The author declares that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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