

Teaching (ESP) in Business and Economics with a focus on enhancing cross-cultural communication understanding

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ABSTRAK

Pengajaran bahasa harus memiliki elemen yang difokuskan pada analisis dan eksplorasi budaya yang terkait dengan materi pelajaran dan kebutuhan khusus siswa. Dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris untuk Tujuan Khusus (ESP) bisnis dan ekonomi, penerapan pengetahuan lintas budaya dijelaskan oleh penelitian ini melalui metode deskriptif kualitatif. Itu tersedia. Kemungkinan besar, temuan penelitian ini akan membantu siswa mempersiapkan diri untuk kelas masa depan dengan meningkatkan kesadaran mereka akan elemen budaya. Ditunjukkan bahwa materi pendidikan yang disesuaikan dengan budaya dapat memberikan pengaruh yang lebih positif terhadap perkembangan sosial siswa. Temuan simpul ini dibuat berdasarkan wawancara dengan dosen dan siswa. Tiga profesor bahasa Inggris bertunangan. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah snowball sampling yang menghasilkan partisipasi 40 siswa dalam wawancara. Di Universitas Putra Bangsa, para guru besar bidang bisnis dan ekonomi memberikan materi kajian yang fokus pada ekspresi verbal pemahaman lintas budaya. Ini termasuk menganalisis kata, frasa, klausa, dan kalimat. Level-level tersebut di atas disajikan oleh instruktur dengan menggunakan metodologi budaya dan kontekstual. Siswa mengantisipasi penggunaan bahasa yang lebih praktis dan relevan untuk komunikasi sehari-hari dalam lingkungan profesional. Dalam situasi kerja, para dosen menekankan pentingnya pemahaman lintas budaya non-verbal melalui kinesik (kontak mata dan gerak tubuh), proksemik, dan artifaktual. Kinesik sangat terlihat, sedangkan proksemik dan artifaktual kurang dipersiapkan dengan baik. Siswa menemukan tugas-tugas praktis dalam pemahaman lintas budaya non-verbal menarik dan menantang.

ABSTRACT

Language teaching should have elements focused on analysis and exploration of culture related to the subject matter and the specific needs of students. In business and economics English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes, the application of cross-cultural knowledge is explained by this research through qualitative descriptive methods. It's available. Most likely, the findings of this study will help students prepare for future classes by increasing their awareness of cultural elements. It was shown that culturally adapted educational materials can have a more positive influence on students' social development. This conclusion was made based on interviews with lecturers and students. Three English professors were engaged. The sampling technique utilised was snowball sampling, which led to the

participation of 40 students in the interviews. At Universitas Putra Bangsa, professors in the field of business and economics gave study materials that focused on the verbal expression of cross-cultural understanding. This included analysing words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. The aforementioned levels were presented by the instructors utilising cultural and contextual methodologies. Students anticipated the use of more practical and relevant language for everyday communication in a professional environment. In a workplace situation, the lecturers emphasised the significance of non-verbal cross-cultural understanding through kinesics (eye contact and gesture), proxemics, and artifactual. Kinesics was highly noticeable, whilst proxemics and artifactual were the least well-prepared. Students found the practical tasks in non-verbal cross-cultural understanding to be both engaging and challenging.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a comprehensive process that involves acquiring vocabulary and grammar. Although language research primarily emphasises vocabulary and grammar, it is crucial to acknowledge that numerous rules within any language are frequently implicit or undocumented. These restrictions are integrated into the linguistic and cultural practices of the community, particularly in regards to how native speakers employ their language. When it comes to acquiring a language, it is crucial for every language learner to also delve into the cultural aspect. It is commonly agreed that in language instruction, learners need to have both knowledge and proficiency in vocabulary and grammar, as well as the capacity to use language in a socially and culturally appropriate way (Douglas & Frazier, 2001; Abusyairi, 2013; Rondiyah, et al., 2017).

Culture arises within a society as a result of the creation of recurring patterns of behaviour that become deeply ingrained habits. Koentjaraningrat (2002) posits that culture can be perceived through three distinct manifestations, one of which is a complex amalgamation of organised behaviours and acts displayed by individuals within a society. Verbal communication and discourse writing are forms of human communication that reveal both the individual's personal traits and cultural background, as well as the intangible cultural identity of the community as a whole.

Kramsch (2013) contends that the inclusion of cultural acquisition in language instruction continues to be a subject of contention. According to Abusyairi (2013), there is a robust and continuous connection between language and culture. Rondiyah, et al. (2017) contend that the acquisition of language is intricately linked to the

study of culture. Several studies have been conducted to illustrate the significance of cultural factors. Language instruction focused on education. The phenomenon can be attributed to the strong link between language and culture (Douglas & Frazier, 2001). Acquiring a new language necessitates the development of cross-cultural comprehension. This mode of comprehension will offer crucial discernment into the rationales behind the divergent perspectives held by specific cohorts.

The linguistic manifestation of culture in a language pertains to the predominance of employing particular phrases or terminology in diverse situations and contexts. This type of knowledge is frequently disregarded during the language acquisition process. During the process of acquiring knowledge in the fields of business and economics The ESP context, classified as a "auxiliary language," should include the cultural aspects of transmitting messages, incorporating both verbal and non-verbal components. This entails the utilisation of lexicon, jargon, nonverbal communication elements like gestures, and spatial aspects such as proxemics in tangible materials and practical exercises. The topics commonly explored in business and economic English for Specific Purposes (ESP) encompass not just logical and informative content, but also incorporate social aspects. Proficiency in intercultural communication is essential to prevent the improper use of this substance, which can lead to significant societal consequences. This language acquisition methodology employs a communicative approach and genuine materials (Ratnasari, 2019).

Schulz (2007) asserts that numerous studies have highlighted the significance of comprehending diverse cultures in cultivating the capacity to proficiently explore and communicate in foreign language education. The understanding of culture significantly shapes pupils' attitudes and motivation. Studies have shown that integrating cultural elements into language instruction might enhance students' motivation to learn the language (Amzah, et al., 2012). Ishi (2009) conducted a study that demonstrates a correlation between the learner's attitudes and the culture being examined in the target language. This study examines the beneficial impacts of incorporating cultural elements into the educational process. Research has indicated that incorporating cultural elements into language acquisition fosters a favourable attitude towards the target language among students.

According to Velentzas and Broni (2014), communication is the process of transmitting information through many means such as speaking, visuals, signalling, writing, and behaviours. The aim of this action is to cultivate a reciprocal comprehension of something. Communication, a means of interpersonal connection, is conducted by individuals through many channels and can transcend geographical boundaries, facilitating international engagement. Effective cross-cultural communication, whether through spoken or unspoken means, requires understanding of cultural differences.

International business communication can be affected by cultural differences, resulting in misperceptions. This observation is made from the perspectives of commerce and economics (Pratama, 2015). Mastery of business and economic English, with a particular emphasis on cultural sensitivity, is crucial for specific reasons (ESP). When faced with the dynamic nature of the present period and its numerous changes. This is done in an effort to decrease occurrences of failure in the implementation of corporate communication. The objective of this project is to showcase the practical use of business and economic English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching, specifically emphasising the promotion of cross-cultural comprehension throughout the instructional process. This concentration enables learners to actively participate in cross-cultural dialogues in English, hence reducing the likelihood of cultural misunderstandings. The objective of this study is to clarify the practical implementation of understanding cross-cultural communication in a classroom environment. Moreover, this study presents novel methods for incorporating the concepts of communication, cross-cultural understanding, and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teaching in the fields of business and economics.

METHOD

Research design

This research utilised the qualitative descriptive method. The researcher endeavoured to gather evidence regarding cross-cultural communication comprehension in business and economics ESP classes. The research was carried out at Universitas Putra Bangsa.

During the period of March 2021 to September 2021. The study included both professors and students who were currently enrolled in English classes. Three individuals holding the position of English professors were in the process of getting married. The employed methodology was snowball sampling, resulting in the participation of 40 students in the interviews. The data reported in this study was gathered via individual in-depth interviews. The interviews were done using a semi-structured style, which means that the researcher had a clearly

specified list of subjects to address. Arranged inquiries were given in a versatile sequence. The main consideration is the interviewee's flexibility, as they may bring forth novel thoughts and offer a more comprehensive viewpoint on the given matters (Denscombe, 2017). The data collected from the interviews were recorded through audio recordings and written field notes. Throughout the interviews, the researcher concurrently recorded the respondent's answers in a table to aid in later analysis. The study began by confirming the precision of the recording and the field notes to minimise the chance of any overlooked information. The recordings were played in a specific order, and at the same time, detailed observations were examined to determine the essential element in the data simplification process. Table validation was essential because the table served as a primary source of information needed for clarity. The finalised table formed the basis for the subsequent coding procedure, specifically the classification of the informants' arguments into distinct categories. After the coding process, multiple arguments were analysed and presented as factual case examples to encourage further discussion and ultimately arrive at conclusions..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Verbal communication

Verbal communication is often acknowledged as the most prominent kind of communication, as it comprises the articulation of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Kusumawati (2019) argues that voice communication consists of a set of symbols that are regulated by predetermined rules for their mixing. Language refers to a set of symbols and conventions that a specific group uses and understands.

According to Johnson, et al. (2006), a significant part of foreign company failures can be attributed to the insufficient cross-cultural competence of business professionals. When engaging in cross-cultural interactions, particularly in the realms of business and economics, it is crucial to comprehend the utilisation of language across several dimensions, encompassing vocabulary, expressions, grammatical units, and whole statements. Comprehending this concept is crucial for enabling the practical objective of language, which is to interchange ideas. Three informant-lecturers unanimously concurred that words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are key elements of efficient corporate communication. However, it lacks the ability to fully achieve complete understanding through spoken communication. The lecturers have also unanimously agreed to cultivate a comprehension that is rooted in both the context and culture.

1. Word-level

The three lecturers unanimously acknowledged that words are the fundamental level of language acquisition that pupils must master. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine the inherent manner in which words are employed. During English sessions, instructors focused on the various uses that a word may possess in both English and Indonesian languages. All forty (100%) students concurred on the importance of comprehending words as the foundation for conducting communication. Regarding the comprehension of individual words, instructors also concurred on emphasising the various cultural connotations associated with the word "I", which lacks any social hierarchy in Indonesian. The same assertion was made that this particular personal pronoun is an obligatory component of in-class activities to elucidate the contrasting cultural aspects of English and Indonesian cultures. In addition, a lecturer analysed the various cultural implications associated with the term "we", which has two distinct explicit meanings in Indonesian. However, while translating to English, the concept of clusivity must be taken into account and carefully considered. 85% of the students, specifically 34 out of 40, expressed that comprehending the idea of clusivity was both intriguing and crucial for their comprehension of the diverse cultural applications of personal pronouns in communication.

Instructors said that word-level comprehension is the most straightforward level to instruct, as pupils may autonomously grasp its meaning. Lecturers unanimously emphasised the significance of understanding the context while giving word-level cross-cultural comprehension. This conclusion corroborates the findings of Pratiwi and Rakhmasari (2019) that conducting an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) class using a contextual approach is the most suitable method. This technique allows students to encounter words in their appropriate contexts and situations.

2. At the level of individual phrases

Within the scope of ESP in this research, all forty (100%) students emphasised the significance of acquiring knowledge in business and economics English expressions. The three lecturers were in close proximity.

The statement emphasises the necessity of providing examples of language usage at the phrase level, particularly for phrases that require a knowledge of their predominance in the perspective of native English

speakers. Essentially, it was asserted that there exists a distinct English native culture of employing certain expressions in the realms of business and economics, particularly in the field of English for certain Purposes (ESP), which had to be imparted during the educational journey.

In an interview, the instructor presented examples of phrase-level comprehension, specifically focusing on the terms "work for" and "work on." These phrases were analysed for their typical usage patterns and distinctive qualities. In Indonesian, both expressions, "bekerja di" and "bekerja pada," have the same meaning. However, in the context of business and economics ESP, these phrases have notable distinctions. This study found that all forty (100%) of the students surveyed did not perceive any distinction in the roles of "work for" and "work on" in an English-native-business-setting. They concurred that comprehending phrases at a high level is crucial for learning.

3. Comprehension at the level of clauses and sentences

Teaching English sentences in a business and economics context necessitates heightened caution and deliberation. According to Fadeeva and Kalinin (2012), the way words are used in conversation is largely influenced by the speakers' understanding of the social and cultural aspects of the language. The lecturers teaching business and economics English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes unanimously acknowledged the challenge of adapting to the subtle nuances of English at the clause and sentence level, particularly in terms of cultural comprehension. A lecturer provided an example of a telephone conversation, where En says "It's Mark (here)" or "This is Mark (here)" (Mascull, 2010), while Ina responds with "Dengan Doni" and "Saya Doni".

According to Yuryeva (2019), English speakers have a communication culture that is characterised by a formal communication style. This style is founded on the notion of maintaining a certain distance between the people involved in the conversation. This topic is utilised in the context of an English class. The lecturers highlighted the significance of maintaining both distance and equality in social interactions when conducting English sessions. During the English session, students were acquainted with the notion of low/high-context language to facilitate their comprehension of the contrasting cultural norms between English and Indonesian. English is typically considered a low-context language. However, in the context of verbal communication in business and economics ESP settings, implicit intent is also commonly used. An important aspect to highlight in business and economic English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learning is the significance of employing small chat as an initiatory tool in conversations. Students were intrigued by the issue and desired to delve deeper into gaining a more profound understanding of appropriate and typical small talk in business settings. Students who understand the correct meaning of small talk are less likely to make mistakes when giving answers.

Non-Verbal Communication: Kinesics

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), kinesics refers to the examination and understanding of human body motions that can be interpreted as symbolic or metaphorical in social interactions. Merry

(2000) defines kinesics as a framework for understanding ethology in a broader and more comprehensive manner with respect to human behaviour. The kinesics component of communication is manifested through facial expressions, gestures, and postures. Each region possesses its unique kinesics, which carries a distinct message and significance for its inhabitants. An in-depth comprehension of the kinesics aspect should be given particular attention in business and economics ESP instruction, with a focus on facilitating cross-cultural communication.

1. Eye Contact

The human face plays a crucial part in communication by effectively conveying the intended message through a range of emotions. Generally, facial expressions in Indonesian culture and English culture exhibit similarities, although there are not able disparities in terms of eye gazing as well. The role of eye gazing in the formation of facial emotions requires consideration in terms of politeness.

Three instructors highlighted the significance of maintaining eye contact, whereas 67.5% of the students (27 out of 40) regarded it as essential for comprehension. The cultural background of the twenty students engaged in this research was mostly focused on Javanese culture during the student interviews. Seventy-five percent of the pupils, specifically thirty out of forty, agreed to refrain from staring at people in various settings. They believed that maintaining eye contact with others is indicative of rudeness and lack of courtesy. Three lecturers were emphasising the significance of eye look in English communication. Eye gaze is utilised effectively to regulate verbal communication by indicating one's willingness to speak and inviting others to talk.

This viewpoint aligns with the assertion made by Hans and Hans (2015) that a speaker can utilise eye contact to ascertain the level of engagement of the discussion partner and discern their emotions. This information can then

serve as a cue to adapt the transmitted message accordingly.

The phenomenon of eye contact in interpersonal communication in English culture differs from the eye contact norms observed in Indonesian culture. Indonesian individuals, particularly those of Javanese descent, possess a cultural inclination to maintain a more relaxed level of eye contact. The Javanese social culture places great emphasis on showing profound respect towards others, particularly towards those who are older or more senior. In contrast to English-speaking culture, the social hierarchy in Javanese society is readily apparent as it is manifested in the daily conduct of individuals. According to Poedjosoedarmo (2017), eye gazes are not deemed to meet the duty of decency and politeness among the Javanese people.

The many cultural perspectives on gaze should be incorporated and given importance in the field of business and economics, particularly in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) training. Learners must familiarise themselves with adapting to the English culture of kinesics, namely non-verbal communication through eye contact. During the classroom exercise, the three English instructors introduced the practice of direct interpersonal communication among native English speakers, which involves maintaining eye contact with the other person. According to Scott et al. (2019), direct eye contact involves the listener's attention shifting from the speaker's eyes to different parts of the speaker's face as a sort of reaction. In the context of English speakers, the study conducted by Dutch researchers Hömke, et al. (2017) suggests that in Dutch-speaking culture, making eye contact and blinking during a face-to-face conversation is considered a way for the listener to provide feedback to the speaker.

Lecturers unanimously acknowledge that eye gaze functions as a means of nonverbal message reception and is a crucial component of human nonverbal communication that demands attention. The lecturers emphasised that in this context, the desired kind of eye contact is known as eye gazing, which involves sweeping one's gaze across the face of the person one is speaking to, rather than solely focusing on their eyes. Furthermore, within English-speaking societies, eye contact can serve as an indicator of an individual's level of self-assurance. 92.5% of the students, specifically thirty seven out of forty, agreed that keeping adequate eye contact is a tough endeavour.

2. Gesture

This study showcased prevalent hand movements that English native speakers frequently employ to complement their vocal communication. The usage of this gesture is uncommon among the Javanese people, particularly due to the linguistic diversity.

Stratification is employed in the context of communication. According to Prakoso (2019), Javanese individuals exhibit a high level of attentiveness and caution when it comes to indirect and implicit communication. They consistently strive to prevent confrontation in their interactions.

Within the realm of business and economics ESP, the curriculum also encompasses the act of giving presentations in the context of the professional environment. Therefore, a learner of business and economics English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is required to effectively utilise non-verbal communication techniques that align with the cultural norms of native English speakers.

Three teachers emphasised the importance of gesture, while 85% of the students (34 out of 40) considered it crucial for understanding. Based on the interviews, three lecturers said that students showed insufficient improvement in utilising gestures throughout their class presentations. Seventy-five percent of the students, precisely thirty out of forty, chose to employ a frozen-style technique while delivering their presentation. Although the professor provided instruction, they did not develop a familiarity with utilising gestures. A total of 15% of the students, precisely six out of forty, argued that hand or body gestures are not required when giving a presentation, especially in an online or video format, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Merely 10% of the students, precisely four out of forty, exerted themselves to employ suitable hand gestures during their presentations. All three teachers agreed that it was difficult to encourage students to make suitable gestures during presentations.

A handshake is a meaningful gesture that necessitates thoughtful deliberation in the realms of business and economics, especially within the framework of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) studies. Three teachers delivered a presentation and underscored the importance of a handshake in a business setting. They provided a juxtaposition between a Javanese handshake and a formal handshake. All forty (100%) students involved in this study unanimously reported that shaking hands was one of the most engrossing behaviours observed during the English session. Understanding the differences in communication culture, as exemplified by this type of nonverbal conduct, will be an essential feature for learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the fields of business and economics. This comprehension will specifically advantage them in their career opportunities. This concerns the

findings of Schroeder, et al. (2019) which state that a handshake is seen as a sign of being willing to work together, thereby improving people's willingness to cooperate and impacting the outcome of potential agreements.

The students who were participated still perceived the utilisation of the left hand for social interaction as prohibited, which contrasted with the viewpoint of English native speakers. Therefore, understanding and awareness are essential since the English-speaking society demonstrates a significant level of tolerance for the use of the left hand in social interactions. The professors attempted to convince the students that it is normal for English native speakers to utilise their left hand, although they were unsuccessful in substantiating this claim through their interactions with the students.

Non-Verbal Communication: Proxemics

Proxemics is a field of research that investigates human perceptions of space, both personal and societal, as well as how humans utilise space and the impact of space on communication (Hall, et al, 1968). Proxemics can be defined as a visual representation of human behaviour and reactions in different cultures have distinct variations of personal space. Tobing (2016) asserts that location plays a crucial role in fostering non-verbal communication connections. Irgin (2017) emphasises the importance of understanding the concept of proximity in communication. This understanding is crucial for successful communication because it is often influenced by cultural norms. What may seem normal in terms of distance to someone from a specific culture may appear either too close or too far for someone from a different culture. He suggests that this approach is applicable and relevant within the context of careers and business. When considering business and economics in the context of English-speaking countries like Britain and America, it is important to note that the social interaction culture among these speakers is characterised as non-contact (Biel, 2010; Pérez, 2019).

Both ESP teachers participated in this research and explained the basic principles of proxemics. However, only one speaker offered additional clarification. 72.5% of the students, specifically twenty nine out of forty, expressed the view that they strongly advocated for the importance of proxemics. According to the interviews, a specific topic emerged in the prepared material regarding proxemics, specifically in relation to a meeting held in an office environment. Previously, students who participated in interviews had limited awareness regarding proxemics. 85% of the pupils, namely 34 out of 40, considered proxemics to be a new concept. However, only four out of forty students (10%) associated the concept of maintaining distance with the presence of Covid-19, rather than recognising it as an essential aspect of effective communication. Only one student, which accounts for 2.5% of the total, was familiar with the idea of proxemics since her high school days.

Non-Verbal Communication: Artifactual

Artifactual refers to all tangible objects that encompass the realm of physical appearance, such as clothing, cosmetics, footwear, luggage, and similar items. Istiyanto (2019) asserts that the diverse material creations observed in different cultures are representations or embodiments of their respective values and beliefs.

Belief systems prevalent in that particular society. Khozyainova (2017) asserts that artifactual non-verbal communication possesses the potential to be the paramount element of non-verbal communication due to its role as a potent reciprocal stimulus from the surroundings. Hence, the issue of appearance is an essential subject to be taught in business and economics, particularly due to its strong correlation with the professional realm. When teaching business and economics English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it is important to understand how signals transmitted through artefacts can affect and influence individuals. This understanding helps raise awareness of the significance of self-physical organisation, which is mirrored in one's appearance. Interviews revealed that the two instructors presented and taught vague information with an emphasis on artefacts in the field of business and economics ESP. They furnished comprehensive details regarding attire in the workplace. Meanwhile, 77.5% of the students, specifically thirty-one out of forty, said that understanding the artifactual component is essential.

Artifactual communication is commonly expressed through the use of clothing and cosmetics.

Aghaei, et al. (2017) assert that clothing serves as a distinct means of communication, conveying social signals that significantly impact the impressions and behaviour of others towards an individual.

Khozyainova (2017) asserts that clothing plays a significant role in shaping a central impression due to its influence and distinctive qualities, known as the clothing effect. Out of a total of forty pupils, twelve (30%) expressed a need for additional information regarding specific types of women's footwear and bags.

In order to effectively teach Business and Economics English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it is essential to have a comprehensive awareness of the colours often utilised in the professional environment. This is because

one's self-expression can be conveyed through the colours of their attire and cosmetics. Colour terminology, colour harmony, colour preference, colour symbolism, and the psychological components of colour are influenced by culture, resulting in significant variations in colour perceptions across different locations and historical periods (Colour, n.d). Voevoda (2012) asserts that while colour perception must be universally consistent in terms of physics and physiology, individuals from different cultures exhibit variations in their perception of colours. During the instructional activity, the instructors failed to establish any connection between the topic being discussed and the cultural variations in colour perception.

CONCLUSION

The English lectures at Universitas Putra Bangsa employed a cultural methodology, with the objective of equipping students with the essential proficiencies for global communication. The cultural orientation is clearly apparent in the materials. The verbal communication materials were provided at the suitable level.

Comprised of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Lecturers commonly employ a contextual approach across various proficiency levels as it is deemed the most suitable method for teaching English with cultural comprehension enhancements. Students are anticipated to acquire a greater understanding of vocabulary, expressions, clauses, and sentences that are specifically employed to promote cross-cultural comprehension in professional environments. English materials also included components of non-verbal communication. The component of kinesics received more attention and discussion compared to proxemics and artifactual features. Students highly preferred and anticipated frequent incorporation of practical exercises in English class to enhance their cross-cultural knowledge. Further discussion on proxemics and cross-cultural understanding in the professional setting was anticipated.

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