

ABSTRACT

Shakila.2025. *Challenges in Cross-cultural Communication: Indonesian EFL Students Experiences with International Peers*. English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Academic Year 2024/2025. The first supervisor is Dr. Sri Wachyunni, S.S., M.Hum., MA., and the second is Dr. Nyimas Triyana Safitri, S.Pd., M.Ed, St.

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Communication serves as an essential bridge in social relationships, yet it often faces challenges, particularly in direct interaction among language learners. This study investigates the oral communication challenges and strategies employed in cross-cultural communication between Indonesian EFL students and international peers at Universitas Jambi. Four participants were involved in this research: two Indonesian students from the 2021 cohort and two from the 2023 cohort of the English Education Study Program. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed three major categories of challenges: linguistic challenges (such as accent and pronunciation differences, limited vocabulary, and difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions), psychological barriers (including anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and avoidance behavior), and cultural and interactional misunderstandings. Furthermore, the study found that participants applied various Oral Communication Strategies (OCS), including circumlocution, approximation, code-switching, and the use of non-linguistic cues to maintain communication flow and enhance mutual understanding. Additionally, students adopted adaptive coping strategies, such as increasing exposure to English and practicing confidence-building techniques, to overcome these challenges. These findings provide insights into the dynamics of intercultural interaction and offer practical implications for EFL learners, educators, and institutions in fostering effective cross-cultural communication.

