

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The researcher found that are three challenges faced by Indonesia EFL students when communicated with international students. Concludes based on the findings and discussion in this study, EFL students as participants experienced cross-cultural communication challenges. These challenges are explained based on the participants' personal experiences during cross-cultural communication with international peers. The factors contributing to this obstacle hindered them from delivering an effective message in communication. These challenges categorized into three main themes, namely linguistic challenges, psychological barriers, and cultural and interactional misunderstandings.

Linguistic challenges are the main challenges faced by EFL students in direct communication. This includes the individual's ability to communicate in the target language, namely English. The sub-themes within this category include accent and pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary or forgetfulness, and understanding idioms or specific terms. Furthermore, this challenge will create a new challenge for EFL students if it continues. The challenge in question is the second theme, Psychological Barriers. This includes psychological barriers such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and avoidance behavior. Subtopics include anxiety and fear in communication and avoidance behavior. These psychological barriers make participants feel awkward, hesitant, and less confident when interacting with international peers.

The third theme is cultural and interactional misunderstandings, which includes difficulties in understanding cultural norms, social values, and differences in emotional expression that occur in cross-cultural interactions. Subthemes in this category include difficulty integrating with international peers, miscommunication and misinterpretation, and emotional sensitivity in cross-cultural interaction. Differences in speaking styles, humor, or ways of expressing emotions often lead to tension or misunderstandings that hinder social relationships among students.

In addition to facing various challenges in cross-cultural communication, this study also found that Oral Communication Strategies (OCS) play a very important role in helping Indonesian EFL students maintain smooth communication, clarify meaning, and increase confidence when interacting with international peers. Participants utilized various OCS such as circumlocution, approximation, the use of gestures, the use of all-purpose words, and code switching to overcome language limitations.

The role of OCS not only helps students overcome linguistic barriers but also allows them to remain engaged in communication without having to stop the conversation when faced with difficulties. This strategy plays a role in preventing communication breakdown, as theorized by Dörnyei (1995), and helps students maintain the continuity of conversation even though their language competence is not yet perfect.

The application of OCS also contributes to increasing participants' self-confidence. By having strategies that can be used when facing difficulties, students feel more prepared and courageous to interact. Furthermore, OCS helps participants

bridge cultural gaps by facilitating meaning negotiation and communication style adaptation, in line with the principles of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997).

To overcome these challenges, this study identified three major themes of strategies used by participants. The first theme is linguistic strategies, with subthemes: the application of Oral Communication Strategies (OCS), use of translation tools, and rely on keywords. These individual strategies enable students to remain engaged in communication despite linguistic limitations. They use gestures, translation apps, and keywords to guess and clarify meaning.

The second theme is psychological strategies, with subthemes of peer assistance and practice or exposure to English. These strategies emphasize the role of social and emotional support in helping students overcome anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and avoidance behaviors that often occur in cross-cultural communication. By relying on peers who are more proficient in English, students gain both practical help in expressing ideas and increased confidence to continue engaging in conversations. Similarly, consistent practice and exposure to English, whether through daily interactions, academic discussions, or self-directed learning, gradually reduce nervousness and improve fluency. These psychological strategies highlight that overcoming challenges in cross-cultural communication requires not only linguistic competence but also the development of self-confidence, resilience, and a supportive learning environment.

The third theme is cultural and interactional strategies, focusing on emotional sensitivity and adjustment. This includes learning to recognize differences in communication styles, respecting cultural norms, and managing emotional responses to avoid misunderstandings or conflicts. By becoming more sensitive to their peers' reactions and adjusting their own behavior, students were able to maintain harmonious relationships while deepening intercultural understanding. This suggests that intercultural competence is not limited to language use but also extends to the ability to adapt socially and emotionally within diverse contexts.

Overall, this study confirms that cross-cultural communication challenges among EFL students are not only linguistic but also involve psychological and cultural factors. Therefore, the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which includes language skills, cultural awareness, and adaptive communication strategies, is crucial to help students navigate the dynamics of global communication in higher education settings.

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the conclusions above, the researcher provides several suggestions. First, students are urged to take a more active role in cultivating the habit of speaking English outside informal learning environments, such as daily talks and conversation. This aims to familiarize students with English and minimize the psychological barriers that exist. Additionally, in situations where challenges disrupt the flow of communication, using code switching, approximation, and all-purpose word use can be considered as a last resort to ensure the message is

conveyed effectively. All of this thing is not only a suggestion for participants, but also for researchers and all students who experience similar obstacles in cross-cultural communication, especially with international peers.

For future research, it might be beneficial to broaden the study's focus by including additional individuals in order to provide more varied results. In addition, future research could focus on examining the relationship between gender and status in cross-cultural communication. In this study, the researchers noted that participants frequently communicated and interacted with international peers of the same gender, allowing them to discuss topics outside of academic or daily conversations. Additionally, based on the interview results, the researchers observed that class roles could influence the frequency of interaction with international peers in the classroom. With further research, it is hoped that more effective approaches can be identified to help students overcome the challenges of cross-cultural communication with international peers.