



INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Intercultural Communication

- IC involves Cross-cultural Understanding
- What is cross cultural understanding?
A comprehensive way to look into similarities and differences between L1 culture and the target language culture
- Why understanding IC is important for EFL learners and teachers?
to avoid cultural conflict – culture shock –
miscommunication – false interpretation – different
forms of hostility – individual and social feeling of
depression –feeling of marginality -alienation

WHAT IS CULTURE?

The way of life of any society including:

- its artifacts
- beliefs
- accumulated knowledge
- the system of values by which its member live
- the arts
- the family life
- child rearing
- customs of marriage and courtship
- education
- government – the total legacy of the society which is potentially available to its members

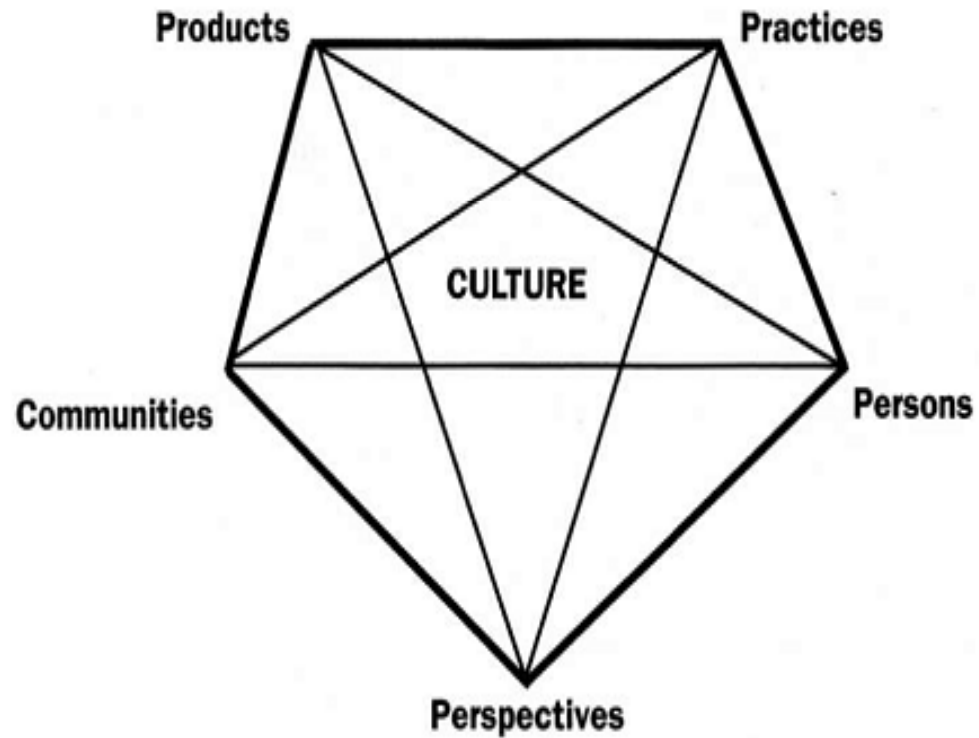
CULTURAL TERMS

Culture in this matter refers to

- A shared background resulting from a common language and communication style, custom, beliefs, attitudes, and values;
- The informal patterns of human interactions, expressions, and viewpoints that people in one culture shared

Moran (2001) formulated 5 dimensions of culture:

Figure 3.1: The Five Dimensions of Culture



CULTURAL TERMS

- Communication:

The process of sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal behavior

- Cross-cultural communication:

Communication (verbal and non-verbal) between people from different cultures— influenced by cultural values, attitudes, and behavior

Some Principles

- Culture is not comprised of fixed rules that apply to all members of one culture.
- Cultural generalizations are different from stereotypes.
- Cultural generalizations are learned behaviors often demonstrated by many people in a given group.
- Stereotypes are exaggerated images and beliefs.

Some Principles

- All cultures have values and ideals that their members say are true.
- People's behavior may not always reflect those values.
- Culture does not explain all behavior.
- It is not best not to overemphasize either cultural differences or similarities.
- Learning about culture is enriching.

The Terms Americans & Europeans?

- It is not easy to describe Americans or Europeans or Indonesians
 - Americans—North Americans, Central Americans, South Americans—Brazilians, Argentineans, Mexicans?
 - Europeans—Dutch, English, German, French?
 - Indonesians—Bataknese, Minangkabaunese, Sundanese, Javanese, Balinese?

The term American refers to US people

Is it possible to describe American culture?

- People describe other cultures based on stereotypes or images from media (TV, movies, or newspapers)
- It is hard to generalize about Americans because Americans do not come from a common ancestor except for "Indians." All Americans come from different immigrant and refugee groups

Melting Pot and Mosaic

- Melting pot is the belief that ethnic groups and races would eventually completely assimilate and become one group. (American immigrant or refugees until mid-1900)
- Mosaic is a situation where each group of races and ethnic groups was seen as separate and distinct but contributing its own color, shape, and design toward the creation of an attractive mosaic (Asian-American, Mexican American, Arab-American, Jewish-American, etc.)

Stereotypes and Generalizations

- Stereotypes are exaggerated beliefs and images about groups of people and are often based on a lack of information or contact. (How do you value western people?)
- Cultural generalizations are learned behaviors often demonstrated by many people in a given group.

Mainstream American Values

- Mainstream of a certain culture—the reflection of the majority culture.
 - What is the mainstream of American and Asian Culture? Specifically what is the mainstream of Indonesian culture?

American Values

- Value—Certain ways of thinking, acting, and communicating are the result of cultural value.
- Knowing a group people value is important for describing their behavior.

American Values

- Personal control over the environment (people direct their lives)
- Change is healthy
- Control over time (rush to get things done and follow their schedules)
- Equality and egalitarianism
- Individualism and privacy
- Self help (try to improve their own lives)

American Values

- Future orientation
- Action and work orientation
- Informality (first name usage)
- Directness, openness, and honesty
- Materialism

Individualism and Privacy

- Individualism affects many aspects of American behavior and attitudes including the attitude toward privacy.
- Americans want and value privacy.
- Privacy to Americans does not mean isolation or loneliness
- Many languages, such as Arabic, Russian, Japanese, and Indonesian, do not have an exact word of privacy.

Equality and Egalitarianism

Americans

- like to present an image that everyone is equal—there is no hierarchy in using first name, joke freely with the boss, informal behavior and communication;
- choose not to be overly polite and formal with a person of a higher status.
- minimize status differences without forgetting politeness.

Future Orientation

Americans

- look to future rather than the past;
- focus on change on progress and change;
- do not depend themselves on fate.
- do not use the concept of “Whatever will be, will be.” “Bagaimana nanti saja lah.”



References:

- Levine, D.R. and Adelman, M.B. 1993. *Beyond Language*. Cross-cultural communication. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.