

Intercultural sensitivity in the online multicultural community: Indonesian students' experiences

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Abstract

The online social network facilitates excessive opportunities for intercultural communication in the online multicultural community. Occasionally, intercultural communication possibly results in misunderstanding, confusion, or stereotypes. Intercultural sensitivity, therefore, is necessary to respond to probable issues in online intercultural communication based on Indonesian students' experiences. This narrative study portrayed the development of intercultural sensitivity in the online multicultural setting. The data were compiled from narrative reports and recordings and then analyzed based on Hunter's analysis of the narrative. It reveals the development of intercultural sensitivity in the themes of 1) embracing a phonemic variation of English, 2) developing mutual strategies to understand the language, 3) celebrating small similarities, and 4) self-control to listen respectfully. The findings are primarily meant for intercultural education. The study also suggests the use of an authentic intercultural setting for English language learners to develop their intercultural sensitivity and bring the discussions after practice in the classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

The demand for intercultural communication grows as society progresses toward a more integrated community through the use of communication technology. As approximately 1.5 billion people speak English natively or as a second language worldwide (Szmigiera, 2022), opportunities to interact with English as Lingua Franca are increasing. After the emergence of online communication, intercultural communication has remained a source of concern in English language teaching (ELT).

The technology of communication helps society from any background to exchange ideas, feelings, information, opinions, knowledge, or an understanding among parties. However, as generally happens in a social setting, communication can sometimes lead to misunderstanding, confusion, embarrassment, frustration, tension, and conflicts among people (Anum, Shaibu, & Okeme, 2021). Effective intercultural communication is required to facilitate harmonious coexistence and interaction among people.

Intercultural communication is part of the verbal and nonverbal cues in the interaction process between different cultural groups in a system (Anum, Shaibu, & Okeme, 2021). As current communication relates to mediation among different cultures, being able to communicate with others from a different culture is not enough. There is a need for developing the ability to respond to people from different cultures for purposeful communication. Byram (1997) suggests that individuals should be educated with intercultural communication skills and the ability to be sensitive to various cultures. Scholars mentioned the ability as Intercultural sensitivity (see Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Chen &

Starosta, 2000; Foronda, 2008). Intercultural sensitivity is notably required to develop a sense of being a global citizen appropriately. Those with interculturally sensitive minds and behaviours, according to Chen and Starosta (2000), are better at adapting to people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

However, few studies have examined intercultural sensitivity in the intercultural communication, especially in English language learning. Some studies on intercultural sensitivity focused on intercultural communication in classrooms, such as Dollah, Abduh, & Ahmad (2017), Moradi & Zargham (2019), and Kim (2020). Other studies on intercultural sensitivity relates to international mobility programs (Jacobone & Moro, 2015; Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2018). By using communication technology, Li et al., (2020) had empirical study on intercultural sensitivity by using Virtual Reality in Hongkong. However, there was no study yet to explore the intercultural sensitivity of English learners in the online multicultural community.

On the other hand, English learners have intercultural communication not only by direct interaction but mostly also by social media. Because of the relevance of the issue in the multiculturalism, this study then attempts to accommodate a need of investigating intercultural sensitivity in the online multicultural community. Indonesian students' experiences are the uniqueness of the study since Indonesian students come from various regions along archipelago who gather in the "ethnic-related diversity" (Tamam & Krauss, 2017) of higher education. Thus, the study empirically explores intercultural sensitivity of multicultural individuals if they experience the online setting of multiculturalism.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Contact with different cultures potentially develop Intercultural Sensitivity or IS. However, without the active reflective processes, intercultural understanding is not automatically developed (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2016). Bennet (1986) described intercultural sensitivity as a development process in which one is able to adjust oneself emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally as they progress from ethnocentric (such as denial, defense, and minimization) to ethnorelative stages (such as acceptance, adaptation, and integration). In its development, Chen & Starosta (1996, 1997, 2000) conceptualize IS to the psychological and emotional aspects of intercultural competence (Chen & Starosta, 2000). This psychological features entail an individual's emotional desire "to appreciate humans who have similarities and differences, and to embrace cultural, ethnic, and racial distinctions" (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 5).

IS is the ability to positively respond to different cultures, beyond the ability to decipher the similar and different cultures of others (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Furthermore, cultural engagement, respect for cultural differences, and interaction satisfaction are key features of intercultural sensitivity. The interculturally sensitive person develops the ability "to overcome the problems of denying or concealing cultural diversity" and "attempting to protect their own world views" (Chen, & Starosta, 2000, p. 4).

People who successfully develop IS can achieve dual identities and enjoy cultural differences. Instead, the capacity of a person to communicate with individuals from different cultures to achieve communication goals refers to intercultural adroitness (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Finally, when intercultural sensitivity takes place, the result is effective interaction.

IS should be viewed as developmental, not static (Bennet, 1993). The failure to establish a relationship in the orientation stage cannot be directly perceived as intercultural insensitivity. Rather, one may develop intercultural sensitivity after learning from frequent interaction with a person, or an interaction with some people. It means that IS is the process of learning which cultivate their intercultural competence to experience intercultural awareness from experimenting, making mistakes, and reflecting.

Intercultural Education in Digital-mediated Language Learning

In the sociocultural paradigm, language learning is the interpersonal process situated in a social and cultural context and mediated by language. Almutairi (2021), therefore, emphasized the significance of integrating language teaching with culture. Similarly, Bada (2000) proposed the importance of

cultural literacy in ELT. In light of this, ELLs require exposure to cultural elements of society in order to develop intercultural sensitivity in communicating meaning to people of different cultures.

However, most students find it difficult to learn foreign languages in a natural environment as most language teaching is done in the classroom. Moreover, some of them may have studied a foreign language for years without having the opportunity to communicate with others in regional or international contexts. It is apparent that their ability to exchange meaning will be hindered to some extent by their lack of understanding of pragmatic norms. Because of this inadequate knowledge, cultural norms of the target community should be prevalent in linguistic and pedagogical aspects of language learning.

However, providing sufficient exposure to the dynamic elements of culture for language learners is a time-consuming and inefficient job. The capacity for autonomy may have been the option herein. The crucial instruction for developing students for being more interculturally sensitive is dependent on their level of autonomy. As a result, it is critical to allow students in current digital age, be autonomous in learning as they grow sensitive to new behaviours and adopt them naturally (Fatalaki, 2015).

As the fact of the internet era, interaction in online communication diminishes border lines which makes global citizens easier employ the linguistic repertoire of their second—or third, even fourth—language. ELT teachers must be better prepared to engage in intercultural contexts and instruct their students on what to do to communicate across boundaries in physical and virtual intercultural settings.

Mobile devices currently enable learners to study in places other than traditional classrooms. The benefits of digital technology in promoting intercultural exchanges would not be possible without virtual mobility (Catalano & Barriga, 2021). Online interactive forums such as Zoom or Google Meet certainly already exist. As the earliest applications, they begin group long-distance chats which innovatively delineate boundaries between the roles of broadcasters and listeners.

Nonetheless, other social media, Clubhouse, offers a casual way of interaction without talking on camera while enjoying being heard by tentative listeners. The Clubhouse users have choices to select their area of interest and then join or to left the conversation. The casual interaction greatly opens the chances for exchanges of any information as it creates choices and a comfortable space for sharing their expertise, experiences, identities, or values.

Furthermore, Clubhouse consists of users from various nationalities and backgrounds. The rising number of the users during COVID-19 Pandemic in 2021 supports the popularity of the application by inviting users outside the US from Germany (the biggest users, 250 downloads), followed by Japan and UK (Clubhouse User Statistics, 2022). In 2022, the Asia Pacific region dominates the share of clubhouse downloads. Among diversity, they mostly use English as *Lingua Franca*. The data shows that most users are non-native English speakers. Meanwhile, most users are generation aged 18-34 (56%) who share similar interests and concerns.

According to the data of users, this application facilitates opportunities to engage ELLs in the online intercultural community while providing them with autonomous authentic learning. Insofar, it is significant to mention that virtual worlds and digital platforms has successfully expanded face-to-face communication (Coste & Cavalli, 2015). In this construction of online communication, ELLs' voices are acknowledged and respected with the aim of building knowledge and transforming their own realities to use English.

The study will, therefore, address the development of IS in engaging with an online multicultural community. By taking the perspectives of ELLs as online social media users, the study aims to (1) depict the experiences of ELLs in developing their intercultural sensitivity by using English as *Lingua Franca* and (2) to find out aspects ELLs learned to develop intercultural sensitivity in using English as *Lingua Franca*.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used narrative study (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006) to better understand how research participants create narratives from their own experiences. Narrative inquiry was chosen in the study since it enabled participants to have an active role in co-constructing meaning from personal

experience, and to view “experience as phenomenon under study” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). In the lens of social constructionism, “culture specifications” have a genuine impact on people's lives (Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1996, p. 80). Individuals, therefore, were encouraged to tell their own narratives about his or her existence in the social context. The objective was to deconstruct prevalent narratives to open up other perspectives (Zimmerman & Dickerson, 1996).

The study involved three of 32 students of the English Education study program in an Indonesian higher educational institution. Initially, for five months 32 students had weekly assignments on ‘speaking with strangers’ online and they reported their experiences in the form of weekly diaries. They spoke with strangers without the supervision of their lecturer for facilitating their natural process of communication. For the study, the purposive sampling was then implemented based on criteria of participants which shared communal characteristics to yield in-depth information. The main data were their diaries.

The selected criteria were determined based on the uniqueness of the participants’ characteristics and the characteristics of data. After reading the data, the criteria include the commonality use of application, the activity and duration to use application. It was found that specifically three participants frequently joined the online multicultural community in Clubhouse as a platform for social networking. Clubhouse application is a US-made social network application with 10 million active users (Ruby, 2022). The application is able to assemble netizens worldwide to discuss with anybody in the ‘voice-only’ forums. The technology is designed to be a safe space for strangers to have a discussion without having eye contact as the features combines the conference call, talkback radio, audio podcast, and an online video chat. The users can create or join a chat room, have real-time conversations, contribute to these conversations (Strielkowski, 2021).

As narrative inquiry considers personal characteristics or identities of individuals and how participants view themselves in a personal or larger context (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), the criteria also include participants’ experiences on learning English, prior experiences in intercultural communication and going overseas. Based on criteria, three participants share similar characteristics. The selected criteria are rigidly derived in Table 1.

Table 1. The selected criteria of participants

Criteria	Specific consideration
The application used	Clubhouse
The activity on the application	Discussion with multicultural users
Duration to use the application	2-5 hours a week for 5 months
Cultural background	Living in the ethnic-related multicultural and plurilingual setting
Experience of learning English	Practicing speaking in English for less than one year
Prior experiences in intercultural communication	No experience of intercultural communication in English with native and non-native English speakers
The experiences of going overseas	Never

In the narrative report, three participants were allowed to share their thoughts, feelings, and their choice of action in relation to their experiences without restriction. The free-writing type of diary was chosen to accommodate their flow of thought which contribute to temporal, societal and spatiality aspects of narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Participants shared stories about their initial experiences of intercultural communication, including how the online setting influenced their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in relation to those stories.

Meanwhile, in the midst of 5-month writing, the reporting activities were followed by group interviews to share their feelings with the group and to validate information they had experienced with the researcher. From the group interview, the forgotten plots of the story or information in the narrative reports were found and those were positioned as corresponding data of the narrative report.

On the side of the participant of the research, group discussion also led them to explore what they would write further in the remained weeks of narrative reports.

Once collected, the data from diaries and recordings were then analyzed. The inductive method of narrative analysis, therefore, was used to code the entire block of text for each of research participants' stories. This narrative study particularly used analytic lenses by positioning narratives as narrator's tone of voice, verbal actions, and choices in early experiences of intercultural communication and emphasizing how the online setting of communication affected how the story is narrated. Therefore, the study adopted the data analysis of narrative by Hunter (2010) as it focuses on the similar analytic lenses. The stages are described in the picture 1.

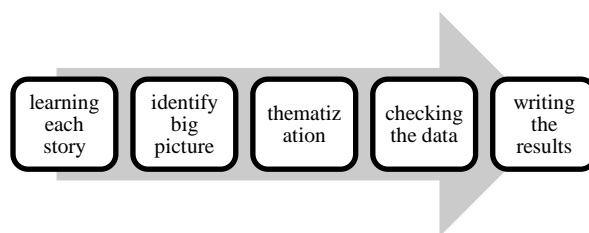


Figure 1. Stages of Narrative Data Analysis (Hunter, 2010)

In grounded theory paradigm, each participant' story was learnt to find the sociocultural meanings of texts. However, the data were still messy and multivoiced. The data predominantly informed about the participants' enthusiasm and anxiety in multicultural community. Therefore, the primary data were supported by recording transcripts in the stage of identifying the big pictures. In the stage, the data were finally deconstructed to be the intertwined description of main issues, especially about feeling, thought and behaviours in intercultural communication. The next stage was drawing themes by annotating data to represent each issue while using one phrase to summarize the theme. The thematization was then conducted in the dynamic process as it related to the predominant issues on the data. Therefore, the next stage was continuous data check-up. Major themes which related to intercultural sensitivity emerged as findings. The last stage was writing the interconnected process by identifying themes and analyzing them. For this research, the analysis focused on the impact on their first experiences on their feelings, thoughts and decision-making to develop intercultural sensitivity in intercultural communication.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The resulting themes of cultural sensitivity ELLs learned from the experiences are 1) embracing a phonemic variation of English, 2) familiarization, 4) celebrating similarities, and 5) self-control to listen respectfully. The bold typing in the quoted result demonstrates the highlighted findings which signifies the interconnected step of data analysis by Hunter (2010).

Embracing a Phonemic Variation of English

Embracing a phonemic variation of English is the capacity that is highlighted as the user of “the voice-only online interaction tool”. Participant A reported that they joined the discussion in Clubhouse that involved most NNSs from Asian countries and Europe. Voices from various nationalities exhibit various ways to pronounce English word of “people” [pee·pl] in the excerpt:

***“I heard a Japanese said the word ‘people’ as [puipeu] and the Vietnamese pronounced it as [pyopo]. No one confirmed or revised the pronunciation of ‘people’, especially because there is no letter ‘l’ in the end (with the tip of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth). It seemed that they all understood what they said. Interestingly, I listened to the speaker from England who also pronounced “people” without the clear letter ‘l’.** (A-2, March 2022)*

This quote explains the slight difference in pronunciation of an English word which possibly changed the meaning of the words. Linguistically, the different ways to say “people” such as [puipeu] and [pyopo] are called as language differences (Goral, Mira & Conner, 2013). Instead of perceiving it as mispronunciation, the listeners agreed that it was only different ways of pronouncing “people”, called as localized or regionalized English varieties (House, 2012).

The other cases also occurred to other participants (B and C) in their reports when they listened to a Korean saying the word “heart” as [hetsə] and power as [pouwerə]—there were a voiced ‘s’ and ‘r’ at the end of the words. Other stories, a Thai person saying “construction” as [kon-syaksen] as well as a Tonkinese saying the word “problem” with [plobrem]. Linguistically, “construction” as [kon-syaksen] and “problem” with [plobrem] are called as language disorder (Goral, Mira & Conner, 2013). According to the cases, it seems that language differences and disorders were still tolerable for them. Instead of evaluating the mistakes, participants sensibly responded to them as details of language variation which characterized people’s origins.

To me, East Asian people are alike. But I think if I met people without knowing their nationality first, I bet I can guess where they come from when saying words like [hetsə] and [pouwerə]. They are Koreans, maybe. (C-3, March 2022)

According to the excerpt, differences in phonemic aspects are not prescribed as a language barrier, but the probable clues to identify the nationality of a person. The ability to recognize and identify a person is the common sense for a person to approach someone new. It is scientifically common for a person to identify others to trial their sensitivity whether they socially feel connected or not (Hodges & Gore, 2019). It shows that being aware of their phonemic differences enriches their ‘cognitive data’ to learn about other identity in multicultural settings.

Moreover, the difference in pronunciation encouraged participant A to validate the pronunciation. In addition, the lesson from experiences helped participants develop phonemic awareness by comparing and contrasting phonemes from NNSs.

“I notice some words may be tolerable but sometimes I worry to myself that I mispronounced words which caused the different meaning or they might don't understand the meaning...” (B-4, April 2022)

It is assumed that the role conduct in the Clubhouse which uphold respect to speakers develop the listeners’ attitude to adjust themselves to comprehend the speakers’ utterances. This adjustment leads to the effort to get the meaning from the context. Interestingly, the participant is able to reflect himself as the one who may make listeners difficult understand his own utterances so they attempt to be aware of his own phonemic production. The reflection process led him to do anything to be the part of community by accepting differences while adjusting himself. It indicates that acceptance is not only about knowing much differences but stops seeing their own culture as the center of reality and starts seeing cultures in relation to the particular context. It confirms Bennet (1993) about acceptance as ethno-relative stages. Interestingly, the finding shows that ELL did not experience ethnocentric stages to finally develop IS.

Anticipating Various Accents and Dialects

Participants experienced the phenomena of various accents and dialects in the Clubhouse. It tested their understanding in English since they could not directly confirm the meaning of what they listened. Instead of always confirming to the communicants, they gathered data about different accent or dialects from any conversations and learnt more about them from other resources.

*“I noticed that speakers from England have many English accents and dialects, in one areas even can be different. I don’t know how to say but I guess the person from Irish and London have different ways of speaking. **I can differentiate only from their utterances.** Then, **I learned about English accents another day.** I found there are nearly 40 different dialects in England that sound very different from each other, and in many cases use different spellings and word structures. Wow!” (B-3, April 2022)*

The phenomena of different accents and dialects generally happen in World Englishes (see Nelson et al., 2020). However, multicultural conversations they experienced showed them that different accents and dialects are natural, including in NS countries. The differences in accents and dialects inspired them to learn more about those sociolinguistic aspects to address oneself to the phenomena.

*“My strategy was to listen to as many different English accents as possible so that **I ended up being familiar with those accents and avoid misunderstandings.** I also **politely asked speakers to speak slowly and clearly** when they spoke to give me chance to interpret.” (B-3, April 2022)*

The development of cultural sensitivity in the sociolinguistic perspective may hardly jeopardize the standard variety of English. Individual stylistic variations, sociolinguistic affiliations, and the ensuing patterns of language usage generate diversity in English (House, 2012). The different accents and dialects may hesitate listeners in comprehending the interlocutor. However, according to the data, various accents and dialects were prescribed as a well-informed sociolinguistic foundation to develop sensitivity to language variety. Familiarizing with different accents and dialects adjusted themselves to easier adapt with various types of communicants.

Participant B also reflected himself whether he had their own accent and dialect of English which might hinder comprehension. The stage of reflection is part of intercultural learning as depicted by Lucas (2003) in the model of structured intercultural learning. Therefore, after reflection, the participant conceptualized his experience that the way of minimizing misunderstanding was by speaking slower. By reflecting to his difficulties to understand people’s utterances, his strategy to speak slowly demonstrated empathy for anticipating others’ possible limitations in comprehending his own accents and dialect. As Chen & Starosta (2000, p. 4) stated, the person can develop IS according to the “empathic ability” to accept and “adapt to cultural differences”.

Appreciating Small Similarities

Difference is common things in the intercultural communication but communication may be challenging for people who do find similarities to o develop and maintain interpersonal relationships, albeit how strongly they desire this depends on their culture. Participant C and Participant B have different experiences talking online about the same topic with NNSs.

“... If I was already overwhelmed enough that no one wanted to budge during the conversation, I was the first to mediate the matter. Because, in most of the chats, I was the one who started the conversation and brought culture as a topic. I explained the problems and misunderstandings like what happened, and end the chat politely.” (C-3, April 2022)

Participant C opened the discussion by talking general topic of culture with eight NNSs people from European and Western Asia countries. However, she happened to talk with people who did want to talk about that point of view. The different interests in topic influenced the continuity of international communication. Some general topics, such as culture and hobbies, may be agreeable for some people as the topic but sometimes some people thought it was a sensitive topic because of their individual beliefs.

On the other hand, B has an exciting conversation about the same topic. During long conversations with users from Germany and India, they even could identify the part of the topic

comfortable talk after learning about the worldview of each other so participant B used his communication strategy by changing the topic.

“... He was also happy to talk about his culture. Our light and cheerful conversation didn't create any conflict while we were talking. We like to get to know each other's culture. If there was a conflict in our conversation especially when it came to the sensitive topic in culture, I slowly politely changed the subject...” (B-5, May 2022)

As the excerpts, establishing an engaging conversation needs a process of experimenting and making mistakes. Intercultural communication involves the process of a person readily accepts other cultures' aspects similar to one's own culture. Participants B and C learned to mediate dynamics of their own identities as they reflect upon and navigate the liminal spaces of community, as insider or outsider.

Based on findings, similarities, though it is small, is not about being intolerant to difference, but it is to develop a sense of belonging. Belongingness is the human emotional need to connect with and be accepted by members of a group. The experiences of ELLs' depicts an effort to build a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging “may stimulate the perception of a difficult situation as a challenge, which is a much more constructive form of appraisal, in contrast to threat or harm” (Wilczynska et al, 2015, p. 73). Likewise, if people are unable to develop and cherish deep connections with others, naturally they will express despair. A sense of belonging revolves around the element of life such as the similarity in families, areas of interest, activity, occupation, lifestyles, or hobbyists. Those similarities create online multicultural group with similar interests. For those who cannot find similarities have decision to leave the chat group since online multicultural community challenges individuals to perform their knowledge and interpersonal values, for finding group sense of belonging, instead of telling about their individual identity. It relates to

Self-control to Listen Respectfully

Listening seems to be the indicator of passiveness, however, the continuity of talk in the multicultural discussion will take longer if the audience in the forum to speak less dominantly and listen attentively. Participant C practiced attentive listening in a discussion.

“... The topic of cultural etiquette actually triggered me, as the only Indonesian. I wanted to tell them about unique etiquette in my country but I end up listening only. Surprisingly, in 15 minutes I learned many things I just knew. It would be a different 15 minutes if I also spoke.” (C-6, May 2022)

As the discussion is a light topic about etiquettes in cultures, her decision to listen more than to speak contributes to new knowledge from the multicultural audiences.

*“... There are so many etiquettes around the world. **This is what I learned.** In the eastern culture like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, it is acceptable to burp after your meal because it indicates that you eat plenty and enjoy the meal. In the middle east, you can't shake with the left hand because every hand has a specific function such as the right hand for eating and the left hand is reserved for wiping after using the bathroom. **It is surely the same as shaking hands in Indonesia.** Then there is the same etiquette in Chile and Brazil that we cannot eat with our hands. **It is different from the eating habit of many people in southeast Asia. I can say politeness is relative.**” (C-6, May 2022)*

Some lessons are unreachable when dominating the conversation. Even people who control the conversations are those who trigger people to talk more than themselves (House, 2012). The control to speak more is motivated by the desire for understanding. Moreover, a desire for understanding is a key ingredient in cultural sensitivity (Harvest, 2004). Listening more creates a

comfortable space for communication partners to express their feelings and thoughts because they feel respected and valued.

According to Harvest (2004), in order to integrate cultural sensitivity, one must listen attentively and demonstrate respect for one's culture and language. Listening carefully gives information on how to manage one to fit or match their partner of communication which leads to intercultural sensitivity.

Nevertheless, listening to different perspectives needs more power to control our feelings. The subsequently excerpt is taken from the narrative in the discussion about gender equality in Clubhouse. Participant A observed communicants who demonstrated unfriendly attitude to the others in the discussion.

“... Because of differences in culture and teachings, the man who answered the question said that he did not agree with the woman's statement. He said that women could not be on the same level as men. From this problem, I realized that selfish behaviour and unsightly thinking should not be allowed. We must be able to respect other people in terms of any aspect. Besides, some frequently cut off the speaker's speech just because it didn't match their thinking. I learned that regardless of any topic being discussed, respect, courtesy, and sympathy are things that must be done as an ethical social being.” (A-7, May 2022)

Disagreement may possibly happen in any conversation. Intercultural sensitivity also possibly touches on sensitive topics such as religion, ethnicity, national origin, or gender. Others areas include age, education, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and mental/physical challenges. Participant C also experienced a similar uncomfortable question. In the discussion about “gender”, someone asked her because her photo wearing a hijab identified her as an obedient Muslim.

“When I began talking about my point of view, I was shocked that someone cut my second sentence and she suggested me listening more than talking because I might have little knowledge about what gender should role in the world. If I was not mistaken, it implied that she had the prior assumption that my religion had a traditional point of view about gender.” (C-6, May 2022)

The idea of ‘self’ to present what is believed and justified in a multicultural setting has a greater chance of conflict. Multicultural settings need more people to have the ability to listen, as there are many different that trigger enthusiasm or, in contrast, confrontation among people with a different culture. To address herself, Participant C develop their cultural sensitivity by listening more than talking.

“I decided to listen more anyway. I did not react too expressive because I thought it was embarrassing to do that before (online) audiences. I felt offended but I decided not to leave the conversation. I learned from my friend, A, about the priority to listen more. So, I sometimes responded to the speaker's arguments to show agreement or to appreciate her point of view. I actually was provoked to tell her that she was wrong about me or about my religion but finally I thought she only needed to be valued. It was not the right time to make her listen to me. Maybe one day.” (C-6, May 2022)

Being respectful after being underestimated is the powerful self-control that was successfully demonstrated by participant C. The lesson of self-control to listen better than being impulsive gave her time to choose their reaction and, surprisingly, to find out the way to understand the communicant: “I thought she only needed to be valued”. Finally, after her inner dispute, she chose to demonstrate compassion by appreciating others' views. Van hook (2000) explained tailoring as the ability to change his or her own perspective while considering the viewpoints of others.

Her decision to respond peacefully developed her affective aspect that sometimes people said something bad not because they are bad people or something wrong with her. The unpleasant

attitude or stereotype are mostly the result of their experience, prior perception, or their personal needs. It means that participant C sensitively found that people's perception towards others were not the objective view which reflected the actual facts.

As the participant learned aforementioned, Holt (2002) also argued that respect is the fundamental component of cultural sensitivity. Respect for the different perceptions is certainly challenging. Tailoring or adjustment, therefore, must take place in an attempt to demonstrate cultural sensitivity. Moreover, cultural sensitivity enables one to successfully circumnavigate a different culture with which they are interacting. As House (2012) explained, cultural sensitivity enables speakers to formulate their own questions and respond to others' questions in an appropriate way. They can also realize their own communicative intentions in a "less superficial manner" and develop "a deeper understanding of others' communicative intentions" (House, 2012, p. 200).

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal the development of English learners' IS in experiencing online multicultural discussion. It seems that the students focused and reflected not only on the content in the online discussion but also on the features of multicultural communication as well as values and characters they bring to join the discussion. The role of conduct in Clubhouse which relates to professionalism supported to create the safe place for anyone to experience intercultural elements.

Intercultural sensitivity plays a vital role in students' decision-making, especially to continue their interaction or not or to join the online group or not. However, leaving group does not relate to intercultural insensitivity. Based on their reflection, online multicultural community give them space to measure the impact of the culture contact they are able to cope with. Moreover, intercultural sensitivity develops their attitude to address themselves in inconvenient conversation.

The study also exposed the significance of a good attitude in the online multicultural community. Similarly, they reviewed how different cultural codes influenced how they behaved. They critically reflected on conflict situations in order to find best strategies for resolving intercultural communication challenges. The sensitivity with which one judges others' actions in diverse contexts is connected to his or her sensitivity to the reasons for their actions, not merely the action itself. IS can improve approachability to other cultures so they can take longer in group chats. It reveals that people who can survive in broader multicultural community, both online and offline, are those who are interculturally sensitive.

Additionally, Intercultural sensitivity may be effective for respecting different cultures, races, and dialects in the online community, but it takes more time for other factors like ideologies and lifestyles. An individual still needs to find similarities as it is encouraged by a sense of belonging one needs to maintain the relationship, such as professions, areas of interest, or even life values. It shows that intercultural communication may possibly eliminate or underpower the stereotyped lines of social classes based on race, dialects, or appearances but they still need sense of belonging by creating different discussion groups based on occupations, ideologies, and lifestyles. It implies that the study on Intercultural sensitivity need to take into account the human's common sense to search for familiarity or similarity among differences. This common sense can inspire practical training to develop IS in the intercultural lessons or language classrooms. Finding differences will enrich knowledge, but learning to find similarities need reflective process which lead students to develop non-judgmental response to other cultures. It also implies that and individual needs to have common hobby, interest or occupational things to engage in intercultural communication. Being difference on those aspects lead to alienation on multicultural communication.

Moreover, preconceived ideas, judgments, and stereotypes from multicultural interaction should be the concern on the classroom discussion. Thus, English language learners) need opportunities in intercultural education to be interculturally sensitive by giving time to connecting to multicultural and multilingual contexts through inquiry and interaction. The findings also promote autonomous learning that allows students to develop their sensitivity to new behaviours by seeing differences naturally. It further implies that allowing students to make errors and embracing differences and misconceptions as learning opportunities is a crucial aspect of finding ways to deal with misunderstanding, stereotyping, and disagreement.

Certain intercultural interactions may result in more simplistic comparisons, stereotyping, or essentially categorizing groups of people within a culture, or from other cultures. In respect of the emerged issues, intercultural education should take a part to be a tool for peace. Its role is not merely about tolerating or adopting other cultural perspectives but also undermining "existing social and political inequalities,". From the point of view, Intercultural education should be critical to "shift in awareness about socio-political context, raise concerns about control and power, and inform, rather than conform, in practice" (Gorski, 2008, p. 522). This insight allows us to be aware of the importance of organizing the social aspects as learning topics in English classrooms. Opportunities to participate in multicultural communities naturally may benefit from including the multicultural experience in the classroom discussion about intercultural problems, such as discrimination, stereotyping, or gender roles. ELLs learn from experimenting, observing, reflecting, and conceptualizing.

Finally, learning from students' stories about IS, make one's observations of and interactions with a foreign culture concrete and available for personal development. Further narrative studies in intercultural education are encouraged for understanding the multifaceted concept of intercultural competence.

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