

Capturing Intercultural Communication as Discourse Study between Filipino and Indonesian Exchange Students

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Abstract. The cultural richness of the world in the midst of the onslaught of this technology-dominated era is still very well preserved. Cultural exchange or cultural introduction to someone who has a different culture is now very easy to find with the support of technology, especially social media. This study analyzes the intercultural communication between students from two Southeast Asian countries, namely the Philippines and Indonesia to address a gap in the literature regarding the specific dynamics of Southeast Asian intercultural interactions and their relevance to developing intercultural communicative competence in language learning. Participants in this study were five Philippine exchange students and two Indonesian students who accompanied them for a month living in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach with Intercultural Discourse Analysis. Data was taken from conversations that occurred on Instagram and also through personal experiences interacting with Filipino students with documentation. The results show that as the host, Indonesian culture is dominant compared to Philippine culture even though the comparison of the number of participants is quite large. Although Indonesian culture dominates, Filipino students still try to bring their culture from language to habits that are commonly done by Indonesians. Apart from the cultural differences, it turns out that there are a few cultural similarities, especially non-verbal culture, namely giving souvenirs to close friends. The interaction successfully shows cultural exchange through a modern platform, namely social media. Therefore, Instagram is an effective social media to bridge intercultural communication. The online interaction that occurs in it successfully reflects cultural values by bringing cultural symbols from each country. This study contributes to ELT by illustrating how social media interactions can develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Culture, Southeast Asian countries, Instagram

1. INTRODUCTION

Every country in the world is very rich in different cultures. It is this cultural diversity that each country has that attracts a lot of attention and ultimately becomes an individual's interest. Culture is everything people have ever learned about how to communicate and how to think about things which comes down to the same thing

(Tannen, 1984). What is interesting about culture is that it represents how people live, think and behave, which is something that has been learned from generation to generation. Culture has many definitions, but in the context of this research, culture can be defined as a learned set of shared interpretations of beliefs, values, norms, and social practices, which influence the behavior of a relatively large group of people (Lustig et al., 2018). There are three approaches to understanding communication and interaction between cultural groups, including; cross-cultural, intercultural, and intracultural. According to Tannen (1984) cross-cultural, this is when we are faced with different ways of speaking because of the different places or countries where we grew up and the languages used, but also because of regional, ethnic, class, and even gender. It is called intracultural when someone shares their extensive knowledge related to linguistics and culture so that the message they want to convey is often interpreted as intended. It is different from intercultural where someone does not always share previous knowledge as a prerequisite for the accuracy of symbolic exchange but they work together to build a meaning (God & Zhang, 2018).

The existence of cultural diversity throughout the world has given rise to differences in ways of communicating between groups with different cultural backgrounds. An expert defines communication as a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process in which people create shared meanings (Lustig et al., 2018). From the statement regarding the definition of communication, it can be concluded that communication has six characteristics, namely; communication is symbolic, communication is interpretive, communication is transactional, communication is contextual, communication is a process, communication involves shared meanings (Lustig et al., 2018). From the six characteristics of communication, it can be seen that communication is very important in various fields, one of which is to achieve a shared meaning and avoid misunderstandings.

Misunderstandings often occur between two or more people from different cultures or can be said to be intercultural communication. Gudykunst and Kim (2003, as quoted in Damyanov (2024)) state that Intercultural communication involves the exchange of information between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. According to Lustig and Koester (2010), the definition of intercultural communication itself is a symbolic, interpretative, transactional, contextual process in which people from different cultures create shared meaning. Intercultural communication occurs when two or more people from a group with different backgrounds interact and communicate with each other (Safi et al., 2022). Misunderstandings will continue to occur when someone does not know the meaning and purpose of interculturalism itself, because no meaning is achieved.

However, apart from that, it can be said that intercultural communication can open up unique opportunities for student exchange which encourages students to study the dynamics of communication between two or more countries. Through intercultural communication, people will gain knowledge and also the ability to better understand other cultures and communicate with people from that cultural background (Safi et al., 2022). Moreover, in the field it is increasingly understood as a soft factor that can increase understanding and tolerance between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. One important shift in the importance of cultural adaptation and communication strategies requires efforts to overcome cultural gaps. Intercultural communication not only provides many benefits for overcoming cultural gaps. These

cultural adaptations and communication strategies are important in addressing cultural equality.

Intercultural communication which is increasingly becoming an interesting topic nowadays, because of its contribution to the field of education, one of which is through student exchanges. Ritz (2011, as cited in Diem et al., 2023) international student exchange programs have emerged as a powerful tool to provide students with direct exposure to global markets and facilitate interactions in diverse cultural contexts. It is commonplace to say that this opens up unique opportunities for student exchange that encourage students to study the dynamics of communication between two or more countries. Moreover, intercultural communication is increasingly understood in the field as a soft factor that can increase understanding and tolerance between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. International exchange programs aim to promote cross-cultural understanding, enhance participants' academic and professional skills, and foster global citizenship (Diem et al., 2023). In fact, one of the important changes in the importance of cultural adaptation and communication strategies includes efforts to overcome cultural gaps. Paradoxically, this not only provides many benefits for overcoming cultural gaps. One of the many calls from researchers is to highlight the importance of cultural adaptation and communication strategies in overcoming cultural equality, because according to Nguyen (2011, as cited in Diem et al., 2023) language barriers, unfamiliar learning environments, and cultural differences can pose significant obstacles to their adjustment and academic success.

Student exchanges occur not only from Indonesia to the United States or vice versa, but Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries also carry out student exchanges. One of them is Indonesia and the Philippines. Even though the two countries are in the same region and have similar historical backgrounds, the cultural differences between the two are very clear. Starting from language, traditional games, politeness, dance, food, how to interact with friends, clothing, and much more. This student exchange between Filipino students to Indonesia provides an opportunity for two groups, namely Filipino and Indonesian students with different cultural backgrounds, to interact and communicate directly with each other. Sharing or introducing each other's stories and culture which ultimately makes it communication with the same goal (intercultural communication).

In this sophisticated era, communication can be done anywhere and through anything. The internet age has increased intercultural interactions among individuals, thanks to the social media platform Instagram (Anfas et al., 2023). Instagram is an application that is very popular among generation Z, because of its many features which of course can connect its users to everyone around the world. Intercultural communication between Filipino and Indonesian students often occurs on this platform through the Direct Message (DM) feature. Previous research has found that several cultural elements influence the development of the learning process of international students, these elements include language, clothing and cuisine variations (Safi et al., 2022). Furthermore, investigating intercultural communication is significant for English language teaching as it has become one of the goals in language education. Language teaching should prepare learners to communicate with people from different culture (Byram, 1997). This indicates that the teaching of language should not only focus on linguistic competence, but also cultural competence.

Nevertheless, the existing literature has a notable gap in the study of Southeast Asian social media intercultural communication. Current studies focus on the West-

Asia communication (God & Zhang, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Furthermore, most of these studies focus on direct, face to face communication instead of a virtual communication through social media (Safi et al., 2022; Anfas et al., 2023). Furthermore, most studies on intercultural communication focus on Facebook and WhatsApp (Seifert & Machado, 2025; Cheung et al., 2025) and are based on East Asia (Yang et al., 2024). Few studies focus on Southeast Asia and on social media channels beyond Facebook and WhatsApp. There has been an increasing interest in the cultural exchanges of ASEAN students in Indonesia (Wicaksono et al., 2025) and the online exchanges of Indonesian and Malaysian students (Nurmala et al., 2025); however, limited research has been done on the intercultural communication between Filipino and Indonesian students, particularly using Instagram direct messages, and in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT).

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the cultural differences that occur in students with two different cultural background and answer the question: “How do Filipino and Indonesian exchange students engage in intercultural communication through Instagram?”. What is clear is that this study does not only focus on culture that occurs directly, but on how virtual intercultural communication becomes a bridge for intercultural communication and interaction between Indonesian and Filipino exchange students via the social media Instagram, contributing to ELT by illustrating how social media interactions can develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach using the discourse analysis research method, to see how intercultural communication is carried out by Indonesian and Filipino students. The focus of this study is the use of language by both of them in Instagram Direct Messages (DM). This research design allows researchers to capture meaningful cultural differences in everyday conversations by individuals who have two different cultural backgrounds. There were seven participants, 2 of whom were Indonesian students and 5 were Filipino students. The Filipino participants stayed in Indonesia for a month and the two Indonesian students became their companions. The Filipino students selected for internships in Indonesia were four of them majoring in Physical Education and one majoring in Special Schools, while the two Indonesian students were majoring in English Education. The age comparison between the two students was quite far apart, where the age of the Indonesian students was 20-21 years old while the age of the Filipino students was 23-27 years old.

Data were obtained from conversations between students that occurred on Instagram DM. The conversations captured were when and after the student exchange took place. Data were collected using screenshots of Instagram DM, audio transcripts, and documentation of activities referring to each culture. The data that had been collected were then analyzed using Intercultural Discourse Analysis, which focuses on how two languages and cultures can go hand in hand through digital platforms. The process includes data coding where this process can identify how the two languages are adapted, misunderstandings in the conversation that occurs, or politeness. Then there is interpretation where in this process it can identify the choice of word use that reflects the cultural values of their respective backgrounds. The next process is a comparison that highlights the similarities or differences between the two. Before this

research was conducted, the researcher asked for permission from both parties. All identifiable information anonymous to maintain the privacy of the participants. The researcher followed ethical guidelines in research in handling a private conversation and cultural sensitivity.

3. RESULT

The results of this study indicate that there is a cultural exchange between Philippine culture and Indonesian culture. For further discussion, see the following finding and discussion chapter:

(October 15, 2024, 9:21 p.m.)

- I1 : "Hello P1 sorry to text you at night, I just want to tell you that Bu Rini said that tomorrow the class starts at 8 am, so I'll ask the driver first what time he wants to drop us off tomorrow."
- I1 : Same as tomorrow, our activities are still observation. Oh yeah, next week you will be teaching, so before teaching you can send the material or the instruments related to anything you want to teach (for example dancing, singing, etc.). You can teach non-academic lessons to the students there, the important thing is that you are comfortable and the students are also comfortable. One more thing, you can choose which class you want to enter for teaching practice next week. You can choose a class, for example, on Monday you want to go to the deaf class, then on Tuesday you want to go to the mute class, and so on. We have classes from Monday to Thursday. Classes start at 8 am.
- P1 : "Ok. Got this! Will send these tomorrow!"

(October 21, 2024, 06:12)

- I1 : "P1, excuse me, I want to ask, do you want to take Grab or my motorbike?"
- P1 : "An take your motorbike!"
- P1 : "See you at 740?"
- I1 : "Okay"
- I1 : "I'll be there at 7.40"
- P1 : "Okay"
- P1 : "See you I1!"

In the conversation, it can be seen that I1 (Indonesian Student 1) showed his politeness by apologizing first when opening a chat in the middle of the night and saying excuse me when opening another chat. This really shows the habit of Indonesians who usually ask permission first when talking to new people or to older people. Not without reason, I1 apologized to P1 first because they had just met, second because the chat was sent at night, and the last was to show respect. Then in the next conversation I1 had started to get close to P1 but still showed his respect by asking permission first even though the conversation took place in a chat. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), due to the threat of utterances, a particular speaker needs to choose a strategy' to minimize or if possible, to eliminate such a threat (as quoted in Sukarno, 2019). One strategy to minimize the threat is to show politeness, as done by I1. This finding supports studies on the communication patterns of Indonesians,

characterized by high-context and high-power distances culture, where markers of politeness are pivotal in interactions (Hofstede, 2001). The use of apologies and permission embody the cultural value of *unggah-ungguh* (respect) that is embedded in the culture of the Indonesian people.

This finding underscores the importance of teaching politeness strategies and cultural awareness in language classrooms. As denoted by Byram (1997), intercultural communicative competence requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also the skill to understand the cultural value embedded in language use, or in other words, to use cultural norms in communication properly. English teachers can utilize authentic interactions like these in order to help students understand how cultural values influences language use. In this way, students can develop pragmatic awareness crucial form effective intercultural communication in English. Moreover, this finding indicates that English should be taught beyond grammar and vocabulary to include socio-cultural aspect of language use. This will better prepare students for navigating cultural differences in real-world communication (Kramsch, 1988). Similar cultural exchange situation can be incorporated into curriculum and classrooms where students can observe and reflect on how the strategies of politeness differ among different cultures.

(October 21, 2024, 10:53)

I1 : "P1 there is lustration board do you want some?"
P1 : "Oh yes!"
P1 : "How much is it?"
I1 : "9k"
P1 : "Ok can you get 3 already?"
I1 : "How much do you want?"
I1 : "Okay"
P1 : "Thank you!!❤❤❤"
I1 : "Sama sama"

(October 21, 2024, 5:35 AM)

I1 : (Sending an eye for doll image)
P1 : "Can you get 4 of those?"
I1 : "Different size?"
P1 : "What do you think for the small plates?"
I1 : "I think the medium one"
P1 : "Okay can you get 2?"
I1 : "Okay"
P1 : "Thank you!!!"
I1 : "Sama samaa"
I1 : "This one, right?" (Sending a picture)
P1 : "Yes!"
P1 : "Can you also send me the video of the walking sticks earlier? ❤"
P1 : "Also why are you there?"
P1 : "Are you buying stuff for yourself?"
I1 : "Okay"



Figure 1. Filipino Student Trying to Play Egrang

In the conversation above, I1 tries to introduce his culture by including Indonesian language that is commonly used every day, namely words such as *sama-sama*. Then P1 asked to send a photo of him playing with a traditional Indonesian toy which he called the walking stick or in Indonesia is called *egrang*. The intercultural interaction in this conversation is dominated by Indonesian culture, which is indeed the place of internship for the Filipino students. This illustrates to the notion of cultural accommodation, where individuals adapt to the host culture to successfully conduct intercultural communication (Gyudkunst & Kim, 2003). The fact that the Filipino students learn and use those Indonesian expressions shows their effort to accommodate the Indonesian hosts. This is with the aim of facilitating better social interaction and relationship building. Moreover, this finding aligns with Kim's (2001) cross-cultural adaptation theory, arguing that newcomers naturally adapt to host culture as a strategy of communication and survival.

This finding demonstrates how language learning occurs naturally in authentic intercultural context. The Filipino students learn Indonesian expressions through meaningful social interaction instead of formal instruction. This supports the notion of experiential learning in language acquisition (Warschauer & Kern, 2000). Moreover, this also demonstrate that the process of learning English can replicate similar situation for students to engage in a meaningful intercultural exchange, especially through social media, while aiming to learn the target language and cultural values. As found by Mahaputri et al. (2025) that social media, particularly Instagram, can act as an effective digital learning platform that provides students with an opportunity to simultaneously learn language and culture. This suggests that it is possible for practitioners in ELT to consider more meaningful real-life context learning where students not only learn the target language, but also acquire the cultural norms.

(February 20, 2025, 10:38 p.m.)

P2 : "Hello I1 good evening, I just wanted to ask if you know some shops in Magelang that I could contact to make some gift for I3. Thank you!"

I1 : "Hi P2, how are you?"

"What kind of gift do you want?"
 P2 : "Hello Danniee, I'm doing good. Me and P3 missses you"
 P2 : "What do men want? I just don't want it to be cheezy"
 I1 : "Allright, lemme search"
 P2 : "Thank you Danniee"
 I1 : "My pleasure"
 P2 : "Do you also have your thesis this sem?"
 I1 : "Yess🙄 I just trying to find the topic for my thesis now"
 "So that I can graduate in 2026"
 P2 : "Semangaaaat!!!!"
 I1 : "Thankyou P2💕"
 I1 : "Do you graduate this semester?"
 P2 : "Hopefully HAHAAHAHAHAHA we're doing the phase 2 of our internship right now"
 I1 : "So you're still teaching right now?"
 P2 : "Yup, and it's everyday. so tiring."
 I1 : "You guyss must semangattt?"
 P2 : "You too!!!!"
 "Semangat to us"
 I1 : "Semangat"
 P2 : "Dannie, we will sleep now because we have to wake up very early tomorrow, so have a good night's sleep and have a sweet dream. Oh mahal ikaw na bahala sa sweet words (mahal (love) you'll be in charge of the sweet words)
 P3 : "And good night, have a sweet dream, sleep well. And we love you so much, I1. And always be thankful."
 P2 : "Tell I1 semangat"
 P3 : "Se...semangat"
 P2 : "Lancar selalu"
 P3 : "Terima kasih"
 P2 : "Ano, the evening one. Malam"
 P3 : "Malam"
 I1 : "Omgg that makes me want to go there so baddd."
 I1 : "Miss you guys voice"
 "Ooo I need to tell you something, it's almost ramadhan, me and I2 going to fasting in a month. 🙄"
 P2 : "What fasting will you guys do?"
 I1 : "No food, no drink from sunrise to sunset."
 P2 : "Ohhhh have a Ramadan Mubarak!"
 I1 : "Yess exactly."
 P2 : We search that on the internet cause we don't know the greetings. But we sincerely wish you a peaceful and blessed Ramadan!"
 I1 : "Aamiin, thankyou P2 and P3. Love you guys."
 "Malamm."

In the conversation above, it can be seen that I1 asked P2 how she was because the conversation took place when the internship was over. This proves that I1, who is

from Indonesia, has a high-context culture (Hall, 1976) where she likes to make small talk before starting a conversation. The researcher also found that P2 (Filipino student 2) called I1 as Dannieeee, which is not I1's real name. It can be seen that what P2 did was to twist the name or create her own nickname for her friend or it could also be because of P2's pronunciation as a Filipino. The researcher also found that during one month in Indonesia, Filipino students had mastered several simple words that are often used in everyday conversation such as *semangat*, *lancar selalu*, *terima kasih*, and *malam*. Then there are some words from the Philippines that add to the diversity between the two cultures. Moreover, the use of emoticons in the conversation describes the expression of each participant where it can be seen that there is a love emoticon that describes warmth when connected to the context of the conversation. Then there is a crying emoticon which in the conversation describes I1's fear in facing the thesis. Then there is a hand emoticon that describes support and word *semangat* itself I1 to P2 and P3. The vocabulary used by Filipino students is a form of their adaptation to Indonesian culture.

In addition, it is also seen that Filipino students do not know about Ramadan (the holy month of fasting for Muslims) but they still try to respect Indonesian students by searching on the internet and then giving greetings to their Muslim friends. This is a reflection that one of the cultural symbols, namely the religion of the two countries, is also different. Indonesia is known as a country with a majority Muslim population while the Philippines is Catholic. Despite these religious differences, communication between the two parties is still warm and tolerant. However, the cultural adaptation is not balanced because there is no Filipino vocabulary or culture that is adopted significantly by Indonesian students. Students only get the vocabulary, but do not practice it to be used in conversations in the chat.

This imbalances in cultural exchange raises important questions regarding power dynamics in intercultural communication. The dominance of Indonesian culture can be related to the relationship between the host and the guest, where the guest naturally adapts to the condition surrounding the host for smoother communication and integration (Kim, 2001). This particular finding supports what is found by some previous studies in the context of study abroad, where the foreign students will be very likely to adapt to the culture of the host country, therefore making the host culture dominate (Jackson, 2018). In spite of that, such circumstance hinders the goal of intercultural exchange as mutual accommodation and equal sharing of both culture is the ideal condition. Some studies have found more balanced exchanges. In such condition, both parties exchange their cultures equally (Diem et al., 2023). Moreover, Xin et al. (2025) found that in a short-term intercultural program in Southeast Asia, either the host and the guest can engage in a reciprocal learning when the activities are structured intentionally. This shows that cultural understanding requires more intentional efforts from both parties.

From the standpoint of English teaching, this finding indicates that the use of English as a lingua franca can help students for authentic cross-cultural communication. Students learn and use new language and cultural norm mediated by English. However, the imbalance in the cultural exchange means that in incorporating real-life context of intercultural communication in the classroom, teachers should design activities that encourage mutual understanding. Moreover, as shown by the willingness of the Filipino students to find an appropriate greeting, intercultural communication not only requires knowledge on cultural differences, but also the

attitude and willingness to accommodate different cultures to navigate seamlessly. Moreover, the use of emoticon and multimodal resources shows that intercultural communication, especially those done virtually requires digital literacy, this is also shown in several previous studies (Ren & Tahir, 2026; Yeh & Swinehart, 2024). Therefore, in teaching intercultural communicative competence, ELT practitioners should also integrate digital literacy and the development of attitude and willingness to accommodate different cultures.

(December 2, 2024, 16:02 p.m)

- P3 : “Hi I1 we hope you like our *pasalubong* and we missed you I1 and I miss you so so much and I hope and I hope you can come to Philippines next year and we will wait for you and I2. And of course, we always remember you and I2. We are thankful for everything that you have given to us and how you treated us in Indonesia. And ah we’re so blessed to be one of your friends. You *mahal*.”
- P2 : “And I have the same message. Just don’t forget to drink water every day.”
- P3 : “Yeah, we love you I1. *Hati-hati*.”
- I1 : “That’s so yummy, I love it. (The *pasalubong*)”
- P3 : “Yey!! Thank you for the appreciation.”

In this conversation, it can be seen that Filipino students who have returned to their hometowns still send souvenirs typical of their hometowns, which are usually called *Pasalubong* in Tagalog or in Indonesia are called *oleh-oleh*. The tradition of giving souvenirs is similar to that of Indonesia, where it is done to show affection for someone. Moreover, with people who have different cultures, this can be a tool to introduce or promote their culture to ordinary people through cultural symbols in the form of food. This shows that non-verbal communication like this can make communication continue to be connected and its closeness warmer.

In the context of English language teaching, this finding demonstrates the role of non-verbal and material communication. While language teaching primarily emphasizes on verbal communication, this finding shows that non-verbal communication also plays a key role in a successful intercultural communication and building relationship across cultures (Byram, 1997). Therefore, in developing the skill of intercultural communication, teacher can also discuss the use of non-verbal means of communication, including the use of gifts and cultural objects to prompts the use of verbal communication and cultural exploration. Some previous studies, such as Febrianingrum et al. (2025) and Mae et al. (2026) have also noted that virtual intercultural exchange can be an effective pedagogical tool in enhancing intercultural communication competence.

From the researcher's findings, there is a cultural exchange especially in linguistics or language from the two students from different cultural backgrounds. It is seen that students accidentally get some words from the Filipino language. Likewise, Filipino students who have lived in Indonesia for a month get a lot of Indonesian vocabulary that they have mastered until they return to their hometown, they still remember it. The researcher also found some differences in attitudes between the two students, where Indonesian students are still reluctant to start a chat with new people, especially knowing that Filipino students are older than them. Then there is a similarity between attitudes in friendships such as in the findings above, namely creating new

nicknames for their friends. Then, the minimal use of Tagalog by Indonesian students and the dominance of the use of Indonesian by Filipino students proves that the warm interaction is still dominated by the *tuan rumah* culture by Indonesian students.

Overall, this study demonstrates how virtual digital platform, particularly Instagram, can bridge cultural exchange. This has also been argued by Mahaputri et al. (2025) that social media platforms, such as Instagram provides a solid alternative for the development of students' intercultural communication which is possible to be used by the teacher. The findings suggest that while the interaction is still dominated by the host culture, a potential for more balanced intercultural exchange still exists. This requires a more intentional strategies from both parties to exchange their cultures. Therefore, further students exchange programs need to be designed to foster a more equal intercultural learning, where both parties can engage equally in a reciprocal exchange (O'Dowd, 2011).

To conclude, this study offers several practical recommendations, especially for ELT practitioners. First, curriculum designer and teachers can incorporate social media such as Instagram in teaching intercultural competence to create authentic cross-cultural exchange. Secondly, this study explores how intercultural communication is done between two Southeast Asian students, therefore, teachers can use the findings as a case study in discussing and developing strategies for teaching intercultural communication in classroom. Third, as the findings show that digital skill is pivotal in navigating modern cross-cultural communication, teachers can also take this into account by developing students' digital literacy skill to enable them to effectively communicate across culture online (Warschauer & Kern, 2000; O'Dowd, 2011). Finally, this study underscores the importance of developing students' intercultural communicative competence. This can be done by integrating Byram's (1997) framework that emphasizes attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical awareness. Overall, this study provides an empirical support for integrating social media to develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

4. CONCLUSION

From the research above, it can be concluded that Intercultural Communication can occur anywhere, both in the real world and on social media. Platforms like Instagram can really bridge cultural differences. Even more than that, it can be a place to exchange cultures in the sense that two parties from two cultural backgrounds can introduce their respective cultures to each other. The findings show that politeness strategies, language adaptation, the use of emoticon, and non-verbal communication such as exchanging gifts and cultural souvenirs have a significant role in facilitating understanding across cultures. However, the study also found that host culture dominates the interaction. This, as discussed above, is a natural outcome of host-guest relationship. This suggests that in order to achieve a balanced cultural exchange, more intentional efforts from both parties are required. This study contributes to English language teaching by providing empirical evidence that intercultural interaction mediated by social media can develop students' intercultural communicative competence. ELT practitioners can integrate digital platforms such as Instagram to provide authentic experience for students to experience intercultural communication in order to develop their English and intercultural communicative skill.

However, besides that, this study has several limitations, including too few participants, so that the results of the study cannot be generalized widely. Then the study only focuses on the use of Instagram DM which is too narrow even though there are so many cultural exchanges that occur during one month in real life that cannot be captured in DM chat. Then Indonesian students who are too dominant (in DM chat) cause an imbalance in Intercultural Communication in the context of cultural exchange itself. It is recommended for future studies to involve a larger and more diverse participant, for example participants from various Southeast Asian countries. Future studies can also employ a multi-method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative means of data collection, for example to also deploy a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyze it quantitatively. Moreover, future studies can also analyze intercultural communication in several social media platforms and conduct a longitudinal study to track how cultural adaptation and competence develop. This way, a more holistic picture of intercultural communication can be achieved.

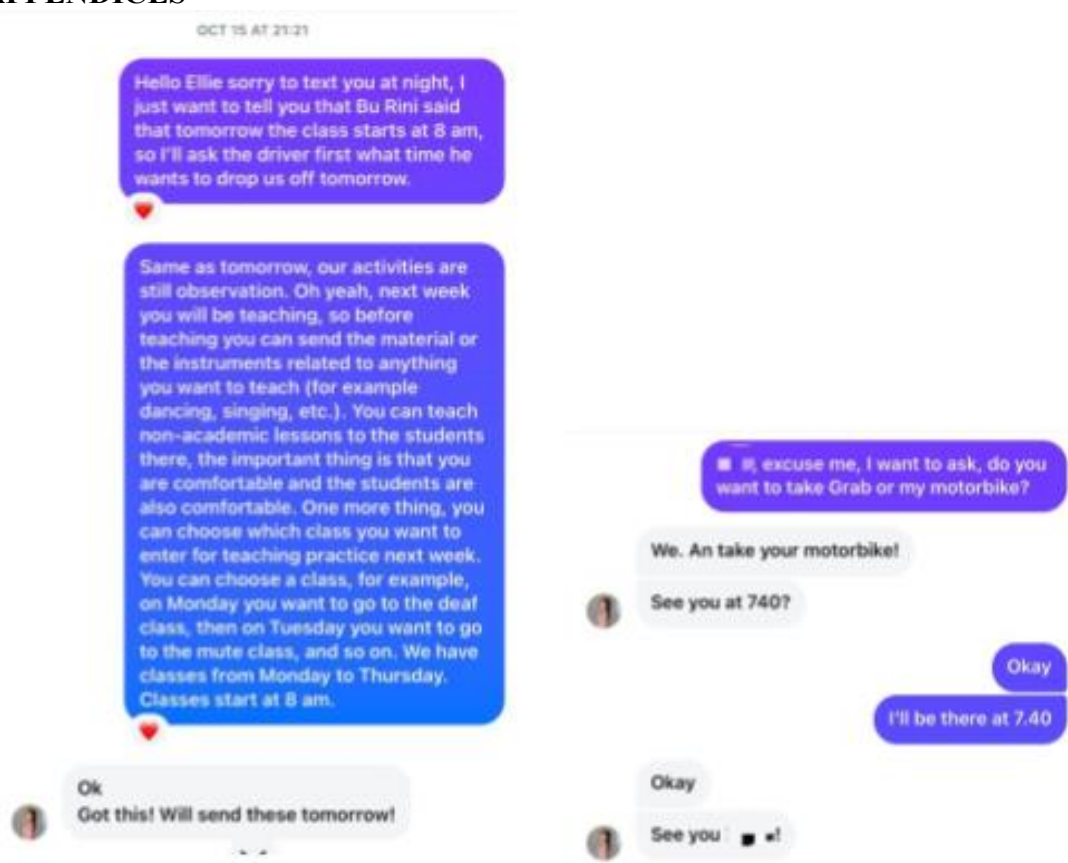
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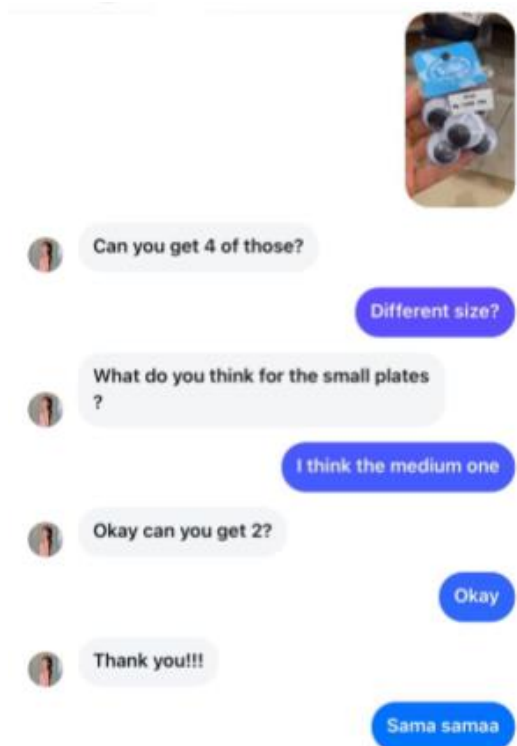
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APPENDICES



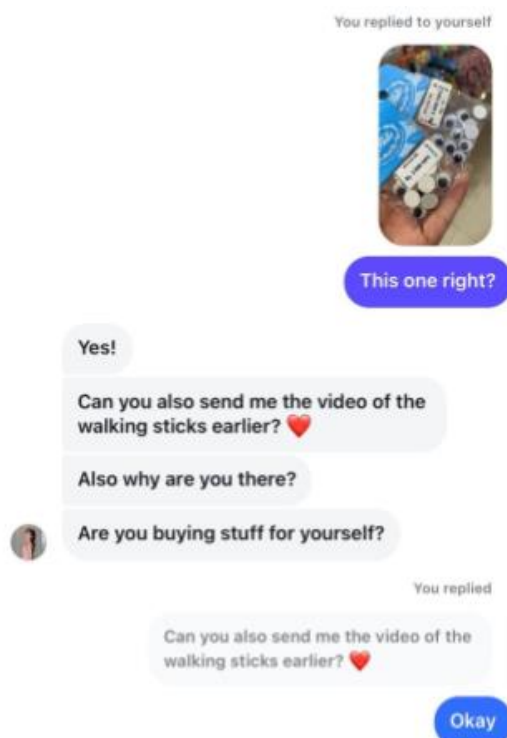
Appendix 1. Conversation between I1 and P1



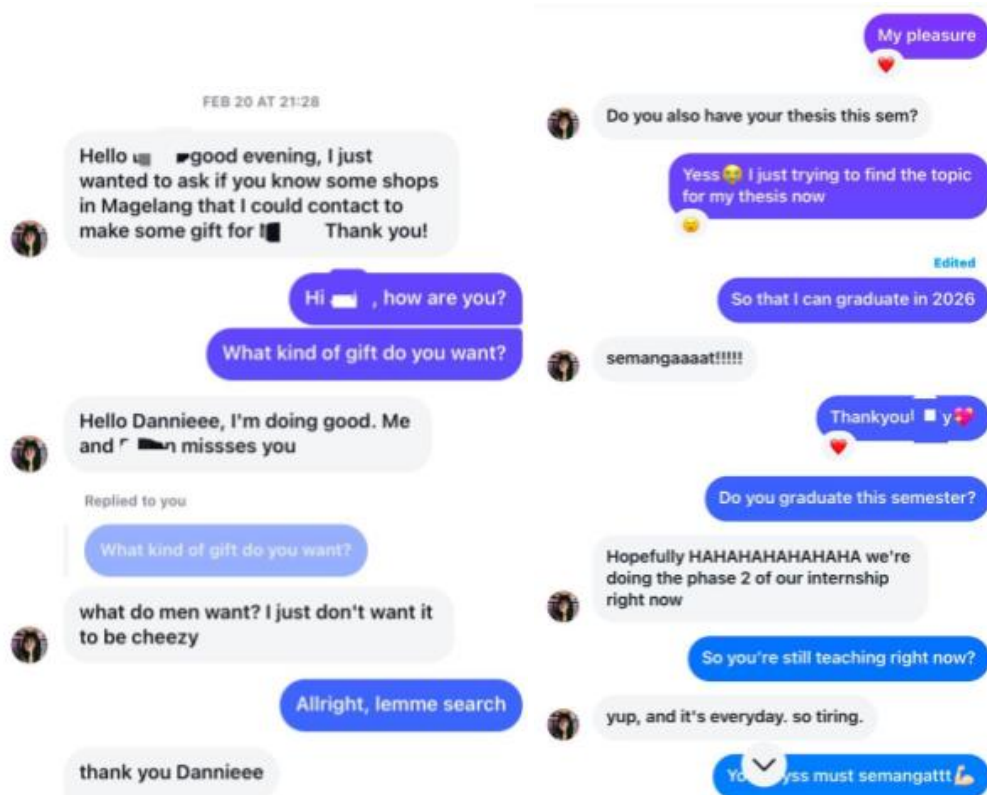
Appendix 2. Conversation between I1 and P2



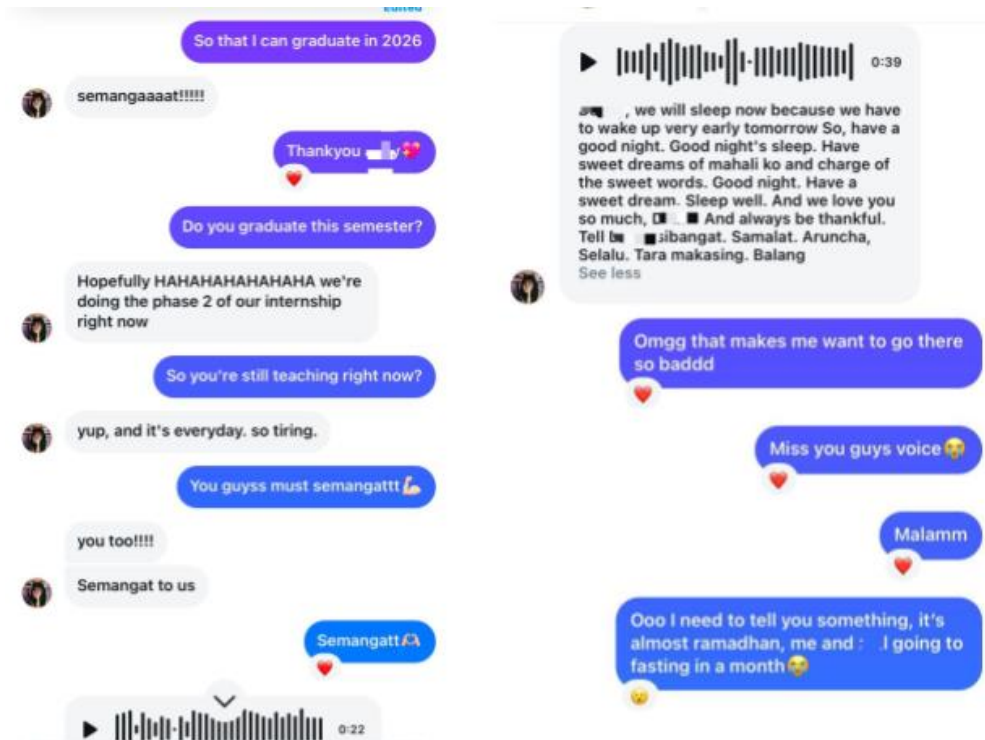
Appendix 3. P2 Playing Indonesian Traditional Sport Kasti and Traditional Game Bekel



Appendix 4. Conversation between I1 and P1



Appendix 5. Conversation between P2 and I1



Appendix 6. Conversation between I1 and P2



Appendix 7. Conversation between I1 and P2



Appendix 8. Conversation between P3 and I1 and the Image of the *Pasalubong* (*Oleh-oleh*/Gift)



Appendix 9. The *Pasalubong* (Tote Bag and Snacks from the Philippines)