



THE INFLUENCE OF PRAGMATICS FAILURE IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ON UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study investigates pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication among undergraduate students majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia. Pragmatic failure—miscommunication arising from inappropriate language use or misinterpretation due to cultural differences—can hinder effective intercultural interaction. The study focuses on two main types: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure, as well as the factors contributing to them. A quantitative survey design was used to collect data from 104 undergraduate students in the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The instrument was a validated questionnaire consisting of three sections: pragmalinguistic awareness, sociopragmatic sensitivity, and student self-assessment on pragmatic challenges. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results show that both types of pragmatic failure are commonly experienced by students. Pragmalinguistic failure was linked to literal translations and inappropriate word choices, while sociopragmatic failure reflected misunderstandings of politeness norms, social distance, and indirect expressions in English. Student responses also revealed limited confidence, lack of exposure to authentic English interactions, and insufficient pragmatic instruction in the curriculum. This study highlights the need to integrate intercultural pragmatics into EFL instruction and teacher training. By raising awareness of pragmatic norms in English, students can become more competent communicators in global contexts. Further research should explore the impact of instructional interventions and technological tools on improving students' pragmatic competence.

Keywords: pragmatic failure; cross-cultural communication; EFL students; pragmalinguistic; sociopragmatic; Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication is crucial, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In the Indonesian context, EFL students often face challenges not only in mastering the language but also in understanding the sociocultural nuances embedded within it. Cross-cultural communication is more than mere language exchange—it encompasses the interpretation of behaviors, values, and social norms that differ between cultures (Valencia & Michelson, 2023).

Language and culture are inherently interconnected. Baggio (2025) emphasizes that

language reflects our cultural thought patterns and influences how we perceive the world. Pragmatic failure, which occurs when speakers fail to understand or convey intended meaning due to cultural differences, can hinder communication between individuals of different backgrounds (Thomas, 1983). These failures may stem from pragmatic transfer, where learners apply sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic norms from their first language inappropriately to the target language context (Altakhaineh et al., 2024).

In the EFL classroom, students may produce utterances that are grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate, leading to

misunderstandings. For example, an Indonesian student might directly ask a personal question (e.g., age or marital status), which is culturally acceptable in their local context but considered intrusive in English-speaking cultures (House & Kádár, 2021). This reflects a lack of pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in different social situations (Youn, 2020).

While several international studies have addressed pragmatic failure in intercultural communication, few have explored how Indonesian undergraduate EFL students experience and manage these failures. Most research has focused on advanced learners or bilingual settings, leaving a gap in the literature concerning novice EFL learners in monolingual environments such as Indonesia.

This study aims to explore the types and causes of pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication among undergraduate English majors in Indonesia. By identifying specific patterns of pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic failure, the findings are expected to inform culturally responsive teaching practices and the development of materials that foster pragmatic awareness.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design using a survey method to investigate pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication among undergraduate EFL students. A quantitative approach was chosen to systematically measure and analyze students' pragmatic competence and the types of pragmatic failure they experience, using structured instruments and statistical analysis (Alford & Teater, 2025).

The participants were 104 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. They were selected using purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria such as: (1) currently enrolled in the English Education program; (2) aged between 18–22 years; and (3) having completed at least one English pragmatics or intercultural communication course. This criterion ensures that the participants have a foundational understanding of relevant linguistic and cultural concepts, making them suitable subjects for pragmatic failure analysis.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of three sections: (1) Pragmalinguistic Failure Section (2) Sociopragmatic Failure Section (3) Self-

assessment on causes and awareness of pragmatic failure.

Each item was scored using a 3-point Likert-type scale: (1) A = Appropriate (3 points) (2) U = Uncertain (2 points) (3) I = Inappropriate (1 point).. The third section used a slightly different scale: Agree (3), Neutral (2), Disagree (1)

The questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in applied linguistics and intercultural pragmatics to ensure content validity. A pilot test involving 15 students was conducted to evaluate clarity, reliability, and item functionality. Based on the pilot results, necessary adjustments were made to improve item clarity and consistency. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded values of: (1) Pragmalinguistic Section: $\alpha = 0.81$ (2) Sociopragmatic Section: $\alpha = 0.84$ (3) Self-assessment Section: $\alpha = 0.79$. These values indicate acceptable to good reliability (Mohajan, 2017).

The final questionnaire was distributed both online and offline during regular class sessions. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, and anonymity was ensured. After collection, the data were compiled and coded for analysis.

The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, with the assistance of Microsoft Excel. Although the focus of this study is descriptive, the researchers also noted patterns and distributions of responses to explore emerging trends related to pragmatic failure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained in this study is using quantitative research, namely by distributing questionnaires to students from UIN Sunan Gunung Djati University.

Table 1. *Number of students from each semester*

Semester	The Total of College Student
2	25
4	26
6	30
8	23
Total	104

The quantitative data were obtained from 104 undergraduate EFL students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung through a structured questionnaire focusing on pragmalinguistic failure, sociopragmatic failure, and student perceptions regarding causes of pragmatic failure.

Pragmalinguistic

From the data that has been obtained from distributing questionnaires about pragmalinguistic to all students with English Language Education majors at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, it will then be analyzed. The analysis used is descriptive analysis so the results are calculated using Microsoft excel along with a diagram to facilitate the following explanation:

Table 2. *Analysis descriptive of pragmalinguistic*

Pragmalinguistic	
Mean	24.62135922
Standard Error	0.404880869
Median	24
Mode	23
Standard Deviation	4.109092035
Sample Variance	16.88463735
Kurtosis	-0.592034688
Skewness	-0.016007966
Range	19
Minimum	14
Maximum	33
Sum	2536
Count	103

The calculation results that the value of pragmalinguistic in the average value (mean) is 24.62, with a standard deviation value of 4.109, then the sample variance value is 16.88, the median value is 24, the mode value is 23, the range value is 19, the minimum value is 14, the maximum is 33, and the sum is 2536. Then after the descriptive table analysis, the next step is to know the interval, frequency and percentage per interval and frequency.

The analysis of pragmalinguistic in the form of frequency distribution data is as follows:

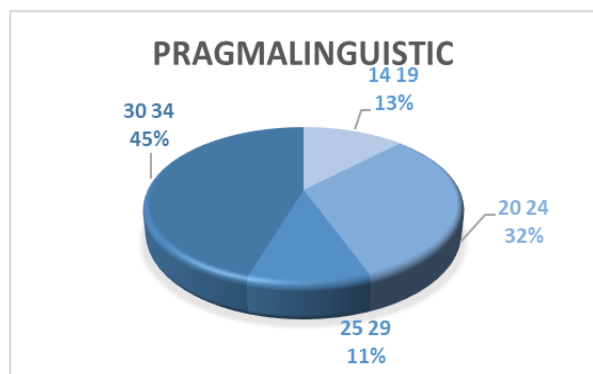


Figure 1. *Pragmalinguistic*

Based on the diagram above, The descriptive analysis shows that the mean score for pragmalinguistic awareness was $M = 24.62$, with a standard deviation of 4.11. Most students (45%) scored in the high range (30–34), indicating a

relatively strong recognition of linguistic appropriateness in English. However, 32% scored in the moderate range, suggesting varying levels of understanding, especially in idiomatic and indirect expressions that differ from native speaker norms.

Sociopragmatic

From the data that has been obtained from distributing questionnaires about sociopragmatic to all students with English Language Education majors at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, it will then be analyzed. The analysis used is descriptive analysis so the results are calculated using Microsoft Excel along with a diagram to facilitate the explanation as follows:

Table 3. *Analysis descriptive of sociopragmatic*

Sociopragmatic	
Mean	25.42718447
Standard Error	0.395963341
Median	26
Mode	26
Standard Deviation	4.018589016
Sample Variance	16.14905768
Kurtosis	1.089994765
Skewness	-0.551696629
Range	21
Minimum	11
Maximum	32
Sum	2619
Count	103

The calculation results in that the value of sociopragmatic in the average value (mean) is 24.42, with a standard deviation value of 4.018, then the sample variance value is 16.14, the median value is 26, the mode value is 26, the range value is 21, the minimum value is 11, the maximum is 32, and the sum is 2619. Then after the descriptive table analysis, the next step is to know the interval, frequency and percentage per interval and frequency.

The analysis of pragmalinguistic in the form of frequency distribution data is as follows:

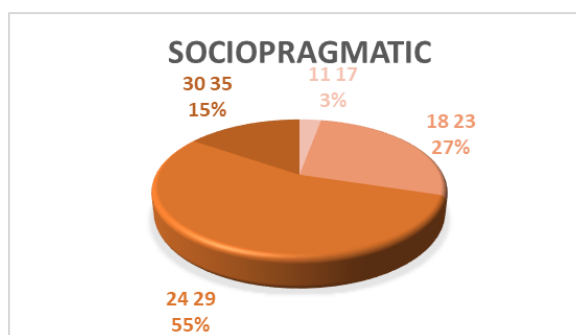


Figure 2. *Sociopragmatic*

Based on the table and diagram above, the mean score for sociopragmatic failure was $M = 25.42$, with a standard deviation of 4.01. A majority of students (55%) fell within the 24–29 range, suggesting that although students are aware of context-based appropriateness, many still struggle with understanding the sociocultural expectations in English-speaking contexts, such as formality, politeness, and status-based variation in speech.

Respond

Then after explaining the data from the type of pragmatic failure, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic, the next data is about responding to the reasons why students can produce pragmatic failure in the process of understanding English cross culture in communication. From the data that has been obtained from distributing questionnaires about sociopragmatic to all students with English Language Education majors at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, it will then be analyzed. The analysis used is descriptive analysis so the results are calculated using Microsoft excel along with a diagram to facilitate explanation as follows:

Table 4. Analysis descriptive of respond

Respond	
Mean	16
Standard Error	0.297844276
Median	16
Mode	15
Standard Deviation	3.022789259
Sample Variance	9.137254902
Kurtosis	-0.70555747
Skewness	0.021719175
Range	12
Minimum	9
Maximum	21
Sum	1648
Count	103

The calculation results in that the value of sociopragmatic in the average value (mean) is 16, with a standard deviation value of 3.022, then the sample variance value is 9.137, the median value is 16, the mode value is 15, the range value is 12, the minimum value is 9, the maximum is 21, and the sum is 1648. Then after the descriptive table analysis, the next step is to know the interval, frequency and percentage per interval and frequency.

The analysis of pragmalinguistic in the form of frequency distribution data is as follows:

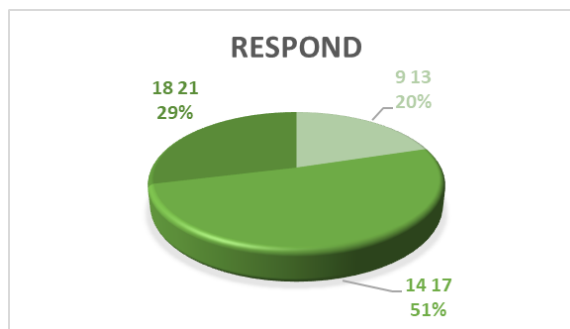


Figure 4. Respond

Based on the table and diagram above, Students’ responses to self-assessment items revealed three primary challenges: (1) Limited exposure to native speakers and cultural models. (2) Low confidence and motivation. (3) Insufficient focus on pragmatic awareness in the curriculum.

The average score for this section was $M = 16$, showing moderate awareness but highlighting a need for more integrated cultural instruction.

Hyphothesis testing

Furthermore, the data homogeneity test was conducted as a prerequisite for hypothesis testing. The aim is to find out whether the sample variance is homogeneous or not. Levene Test of One Way ANOVA using SPSS ver 26 for Windows is the formula used in the homogeneity test. Based on this homogeneity test, if the significance value (sig.) is higher than 0.05, then the data is considered homogeneous.

Table 5. ANOVA result

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	321.311	1	321.311	22.619	.000 ^b
	Residual	1477.340	104	14.205		
	Total	1798.651	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Pragmatic Failure

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cross Culture Communication

The ANOVA results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the level of pragmatic failure between participants who came from a high background and interest in foreign languages compared to those with a less high background and interest in communicating in cross-cultural contexts, $F(1,104)=22.619$, $p<.001$. Specifically, the average student showed significantly higher/lower levels of pragmatic failure, higher if the student was familiar with the culture and foreign language and lower if the

student had less background with the culture and foreign language.

In this section, the researcher will explain the results of the data analysis survey that has been carried out and its relation to the problems and objectives of this study. This study aims to survey English language students whether they cause pragmatic failure in understanding cross culture in communication in English which they learn while studying at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati University Bandung.

Then this research was conducted by distributing questionnaires in each semester by taking several samples each semester. Then the results of the questionnaire are pragmatic failures and student responses will be explained in the form of points as follows:

Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic

The first cause is cultural differences that cause pragmatic failure in understanding and communication. The results show that the majority of students experience pragmatic failure in understanding cross-cultural communication in the form of pragmatic failure, this type of failure arises from the misuse of linguistic forms due to lack of understanding of conventional usage in the target language. It is about not choosing the right language expression for a particular context, leading to unintended pragmatic forces. And socio-pragmatic failure in this case refers to the inappropriate choice of language forms due to lack of understanding of the social and cultural rules, etiquette, and customs of the target language community. It is related to misjudging social context, inter-speaker relations, or cultural values as explained by Thomas (1983).

Experts also generally agree that culture has a significant impact on language and culture. Cultural differences are the root source of cultural transmission (Gergely & Csibra, 2020). The findings of this study demonstrate that English majors frequently make mistakes while communicating across cultural boundaries due to the typically great distance between cultures. Several of the statements in Test Section One can be used as examples.

“When you visit your English friend on a rainy day, you complain about the weather and say that you hate rainy day”

In this statement most students answered I (inappropriate). In the scenario above, it might be argued that, according to Indonesian habits it is

considered disrespectful to talk and hurt other people's feelings, but according to English customs, the situation is considered normal as it is not customary for people to become too involved in their personal matters. The typical inquiry posed by Indonesians is "How old are you?" "Are you in a marriage?" "Where are you heading?" Even in a chat with a complete stranger, ask them where they currently live. These are somewhat common greeting or conversation starters in Indonesia, meant to express concerns or build an enjoyable atmosphere, and the meaning of the responses is unimportant. English people, on the other hand, will be disturbed and upset by those questions since they are especially sensitive to issues pertaining to age, weight, wealth, politics, religion, and social standing.

The conclusion then claims that although it is common for Indonesians to ask about privacy, asking for privacy in Indonesia is definitely quite different from asking for it in other cultures. Culture as the social process of passing down behaviors that define, characterize, and guide people's way of life from one generation to the next, provide credence to this assertion (Weisgrau, et al., 2023). Furthermore, cultural differences may cause non-native speakers to evaluate social distance or relative power differently than native speakers (Rühle & Lev-Ari, 2024). Language is the fundamental means through which culture is articulated, and that language plays a crucial social function in promoting a sense of collective identity and collaboration by serving as a medium for the transmission of values, beliefs, and practice (Eslit, 2025).

Other research results also show that students have different experiences and show that experience alone is not enough to develop listening skills and have pragmatic awareness in cross-cultural communication. As described by Kecskes, this explains that in intercultural communication, past experiences (from first language and respective cultures) and current situational experiences will mix and influence each other. This leads to communicative behaviors that are not entirely first language or foregns language, but a unique “blend” of both backgrounds. And another fact that intercultural communication is related to intercultural pragmatics (Kecskes, 2020) even with cultural differences, the conclusion is that cultural differences have a significant impact on the emergence of pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication (Nabila & Daulay, 2023). While international practicality compares different civilizations through the study of particular

language usage aspects like speech acts, patterns of behavior, and speech behavior, intercultural pragmatics focuses on interactions between people who speak different languages and come from different backgrounds (Moafian, et al. 2022). Language plays an important role when it comes to lowering barriers to international interaction since it is from one language to another. It functions as our primary channel for communicating thoughts, feelings, and concepts to others. Getting along with and understanding people from other cultures who don't speak the same language might be difficult, but it's not impossible (House, 2022). It proves that the practical failure caused by cultural differences can really obstruct cross-cultural communication and give rise to misunderstandings (Xabibullayevna, 2024). A student may make errors or misinterpret some cultural nuances of the language, which might result in pragmatic failure.

Language negative transfer

The pragmatic and cross-cultural rules of students' mother tongue should affect their cultural values and mindset because "The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group from another" is another definition of culture (Li, 2024). Furthermore, transfer often refers to the learner's native language's effect in the context of acquiring or using a non-native language (Nsengimana, et al., 2024). Any two languages have some differences and some similarities. The results showed that the majority of students in understanding cross-cultural communication caused pragmatic failure in the type of negative language transfer. Negative language transfer occurs because the rules of pragmatics are often not taught as clearly as grammar in general. It is usually learned through exposure and experience as described by Kecskes (2020), so learners tend to rely on their first language skills. Then there is the lack of awareness, many learners do not realize that pragmatics exists or do not even realize that they can make pragmatic mistakes, even though their grammar is perfect and this leads to inappropriate language transfer. And Thomas (1983) also explains that it is important to understand how pragmatic knowledge of the first language is, so that pragmatic knowledge of the second language and so on does not interfere with foreign language communication, leading to "pragmatic failure".

Furthermore, there are advantages and disadvantages to switching from one's first language (L1) to a foreign language (FL). Additionally explained from Cheng (2023), says that whereas negative transfer—also referred to as

interference—leads to errors or inappropriate forms in the target language, positive transfer improves accessibility to learning, supported by Xinzhi (2024), Positive and negative native language transfer are two categories for this unavoidable phenomena in the learning of a second language. While negative transfer can lead to pragmatic mistakes and impede the learning of foreign languages, positive transfer promotes the acquisition of second languages.

For example, some statements in the questionnaire:

"On the street, you told your English speaking friends grasp the time, or else we cannot catch the bus."

Regarding this statement, the students most of them answered A (appropriate) but some answered U (uncertain). The explanation in this statement can be included in the language negative transfer because it shows misunderstanding, because in Indonesia when someone is going to be late, they usually say what is said in the statement above, but the words "grasp the time" in English habits do not make sense because they are usually very strict with time and an appointment.

You say to your English speaking friends, "Excessive smoking will injure your body, so try to keep away from it."

In this statement most of the students answered A (appropriate). Which if among Indonesian people smoking is not a strange and unfamiliar thing, because many people smoke. In the Indonesian sense "body" shows not only the state of the body, but the condition of the body and the effects on the people around those who smoke. Whereas in the English sense it is only the physical body. In this statement it is better to use "health" rather than "body".

In addition, with the language distinction between the target language and the mother tongue, usually the further the difference (Vâlcea, 2020). The increasing frequency of negative language transfer occurs because, as stated by Feng (2017), the degree of dissimilarity between the mother tongue and the target language affects the quantity of negative transfer (Dangzeng, 2021). According to Brocca and Nuzzo (2023), cross-cultural comparisons between source and target languages are essential to identify instances of pragmatic transfer and separate the impact of

transfer from the developmental changes between languages that usually cause pragmatic failure.

Brocca and Nuzzo (2023) explain, however, that pragmatic transfer can result in miscommunication and breakdowns in cross-cultural communication when it forces a speaker to unintentionally adhere to the social norms of his or her native language or culture, which may conflict with or at least not conform to those of the target language or culture. According to Ridgeway and Markus (2022), culture is comprised of common ideas, values, customs, and behaviors that influence people's actions and perspectives toward pain. This explains why various cultures have extremely varied perspectives on health, as indicated by the second sentence. Rogger, et al., (2023), have provided more evidence for the idea that healthcare practitioners must comprehend the cultural variations in pain perception in order to deliver effective and culturally responsive care.

This brings us to the subject of interlingual negative transfer. Because pragmatic failure can result from a variety of cultural comprehension gaps, including language negative transfer. This explains why, according to Bardovi and Harlig (2017), pragmatic transfer can result in miscommunication and breakdowns in cross-cultural communication (Bavandi & Savadkouhi, 2023) when a speaker unintentionally conforms to the social norms of their home language or culture. These norms may conflict with, or at the very least not align with, those of the target language or culture (Grammon, 2024) and as a result, the pragmatic failure came into existence. Because both incorrect speech act strategies and semantically and syntactically equivalent utterances transferred from the native language to the target language that, because of various types of "interpretative bias," tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language are examples of language negative transfer (Rass, 2024). Then, intralingual negative transfer, as defined by Bao (2020), is the transfer inside the language and refers to a scenario in which learners make inaccurate assumptions from previously taught rules of the target language.

Brocca and Nuzzo (2023) have added that, from the perspective of teaching second languages, identifying possible negative pragmatic transfer effects in the production of a speech act can help foreign language teachers identify which aspects to specifically bring up with their students. Transfer might be the reason for pragmatic failure, miscommunication, and breakdowns across cultural boundaries (Altakhaineh, 2024). This

leads to the conclusion that pragmatic failure from one culture to another can be caused by negative transfer here (Qian, et al., 2024). The efficiency and rapport of communication can be negatively impacted by pragmatic transfer, which can lead to communication breakdowns.

Pragmatic competence

Hui, et al., (2024), state that a non-native speaker still confronts a number of difficulties with regard to pragmatic competence in English. To combat pragmatic failure and communication breakdowns, several components—like pragmatic competence, language competency, and understanding of the norms and practices of the target language—have gained a lot of support (Shakki, et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to Thomas (1983), pragmatic competence is the ability to understand language in context and successfully use language in interpersonal communication despite linguistic and cultural disparities in order to accomplish certain goals.

The result is that most students still cannot develop pragmatic competence in cross-cultural communication. because many foreign language learners still do not fully realize or master pragmatic competence, which often results in pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. This is an important issue highlighted by Jenny Thomas (1983) and later enriched by Istvan Kecskes (2020) in the context of cross-cultural pragmatics. Thomas (1983) significantly changed the way we view language acquisition, emphasizing that the ability to use language accurately is not enough; the ability to apply it appropriately and effectively in specific social and cultural contexts - i.e. pragmatic competence - is what determines successful communication. So it is necessary to understand pragmatic competence so that success in intercultural communication does not lead to pragmatic failure as happens when students do not pay much attention to flexibility, adaptation, and the ability to “think outside the box” of their cultural rules. As Kecskes (2020) explains, pragmatic competence in an intercultural context is the dynamic and flexible ability of an individual to effectively navigate and construct meaning in communication with people who have different cultural backgrounds, by combining cognitive and sociocultural experiences, and actively building on commonalities that arise during the communication process. It is not just about avoiding mistakes, but about creating understanding and successful relationships within the complexities of intercultural communication.

According to Xabibullayevna (2024), claims that EFL students who acquire pragmatic competence learn how to interact politely and responsibly in a variety of cultural settings. They will know how to use language in a culturally sensitive manner and know the conventions of polite communication. However, in the event that they are not competent, their interactions may result in misunderstandings and unanticipated outcomes. This study demonstrates the need for further development of pragmatic competence since some students provide fewer accurate answers (Youn, 2020) and have difficulty responding to questions that are context-based. For example, the following statements are examples:

“You meet a new friend Peter at a party. When you say goodbye to him, he says, “We must get together soon.” You can reply, “Thank you for your invitation! I expect it very much.”

In this statement more than half of the students chose A (appropriate) and the rest chose I (inappropriate) and U (uncertain). Only a few students got the context point of the statement above, which is that for people in English they do several habits when holding parties, one of which is the phrase "We must get together soon" which turns out to have the same meaning as "goodbye" or "see you again", which when compared to Indonesian people have different habits.

Then the conclusion is that pragmatic competence in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes is known to help EFL learners to convey meaning in various contexts by interacting communication and interpreting messages better, not only through what is said but also what is not said. Because most of the students are still in a situation that does not really understand how other cultures communicate (Holliday, 2021) and interact with communicating with each other with their usual culture or habits. It may be concluded from an analysis of the UIN Sunan Gunung Djati students' responses that their grasp of cross-cultural communication is sufficient to demonstrate their comprehension of the habits and ways of thinking of another culture. Given their level of comprehension, it appears that their practical ignorance of cross-cultural communication will not significantly impede their ability to learn in the future. It's like they're beginning to adjust to their new learning style since there are so many variables, such as the requirement to combine knowledge context with the material in the teaching process and the fact

that different learning situations provide different challenges.

According to Yan (2022), pragmatic competence has a significant influence on communicative competence and accounts for the variations between what second language learners learn in a classroom and in a real-world situation. In cross-cultural communication, pragmatic competence is another strategy to avoid pragmatic failure, according to Bao (2020). As stated by Amaliah (2021), pragmatic competence comprises knowing how to utilize language that is appropriate for achieving an aim in a variety of contexts. If you cannot grasp pragmatic competence, there will be misunderstandings. Lack of pragmatic ability will impede successful communication and lead to pragmatic failure (Perkins, & Azios, 2024).

Respond

Then next is what are the causes of pragmatic failure caused by English students when understanding cross-cultural communication. The result of responses indicate that, generally, learners still struggle to fully grasp that the meaning perceived by the listener often diverges from the meaning intended by the speaker. This suggests that the core issue lies not in grammatical correctness or lexical knowledge, but rather in a deficient understanding of the underlying pragmatic intent of an utterance. This challenge is further exacerbated by differences in cultural backgrounds and a lack of motivation in foreign language acquisition. As articulated by Thomas (1983), this difficulty arises because learners frequently fail to comprehend or correctly utilize the appropriate linguistic forms to realize a specific pragmatic force in the target language. This often stems from negative first language transfer, where learners assume that the expressive conventions of their native language will carry the same pragmatic weight in the target language. Furthermore, this also involves a failure to adequately understand the social and cultural norms underpinning language use. The problem, therefore, is not with the linguistic structure itself, but with the appropriateness of communicative actions within a broader social context.

Consequently, the responses reveal that the extensive and complex nature of meaning, coupled with the difficulty in enhancing motivation due to diverse backgrounds, habits, mindsets, socialization patterns, and even educational experiences, contributes to this pragmatic failure. This directly relates to Kecskes's (2020) explanation, where a misalignment of shared

knowledge and the insufficient salience of certain information lead to differing assumptions and a lack of adaptation. These factors ultimately result in pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication, often compounded by disparities in educational backgrounds and general cultural experiences.

The statement is obtained from the answers to the student questionnaire which answers about the response of students to the question "You often have difficulty in understanding English" most of them answered A (agree) which states that they feel difficulty in learning cross-cultural communication which can show pragmatic failure. In addition, some other respond are answered in the question "You often feel a lack of understanding of the cultural context in English" almost all students answered A (agree). Proving that English students have limited space in the community to practice, especially in communicating with each other when understanding English which ultimately causes pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication.

Next is the student response from the statement, "You feel a lack of motivation in learning English" almost all students also answered A (agree) which explains that apart from the lack of space and practice in English, students also feel a lack of motivation to learn English which also causes pragmatic failure in cross-culture communication. Lack of motivation causes lack of enthusiasm in learning or desire to understand more English in terms of culture, habits, mindset, how they socialize or even in terms of education. The next statement is, "You have experienced situations where you felt you failed to use English pragmatically". From the statement above, the students answered N (neutral) and A (agree) which is a very thin difference. The explanation is that students almost all have experiences where the situation they experienced at that time caused mistakes when using English and they felt they failed.

In addition, the answers from the student's response section show that their level of understanding is quite good but they are not confident in showing it because there are still some students who feel that there are limitations to their opportunities in sufficient communicative practice space, then learning methods that only focus on grammar and vocabulary, inappropriate introduction into cultures of English-speaking nations, and also learning motivation which in the end when they try to communicate most of them

cause pragmatic failure in the context of understanding cross-culture communication.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the types and causes of pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication among undergraduate EFL students in Indonesia. The findings indicate that both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failures are prevalent due to students' limited exposure to native-like communication, negative language transfer, and underdeveloped pragmatic competence.

While many students demonstrated a moderate awareness of pragmatic appropriateness, they still encountered difficulties in interpreting indirect language, culturally specific expressions, and socially appropriate responses. These challenges often result from insufficient training in pragmatic use and limited integration of cultural content in language instruction.

The results underscore the importance of embedding intercultural pragmatics into English language teaching, especially in EFL contexts where learners have limited access to authentic interactions. Teachers must be equipped to raise students' awareness of both linguistic form and sociocultural context, enabling them to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Educators should receive professional development in teaching pragmatic competence and cross-cultural communication strategies. English language curricula should include explicit instruction in speech acts, politeness norms, and cultural discourse patterns.

Further studies could employ inferential statistics to explore the relationship between demographic factors (e.g., age, exposure to English media, international experience) and pragmatic awareness. Additionally, the role of technology and AI tools in simulating intercultural communication deserves further exploration. By addressing these gaps, EFL learners can be better prepared for real-world communication in a globalized context and avoid the common pitfalls of pragmatic failure.

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