

# INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI YOGYAKARTA AND STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP IT

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## ABSTRACT

Intercultural competence has important meaning in the context of diversity in Indonesia and globalization in the 21st century. The development of this competency is emphasized by UNESCO, the Council of Europe, scholars from various fields of science and professionals. In the context of education in Indonesia, the development of intercultural competence supports one of the government program priorities outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 concerning the need for college graduates to appreciate diversity which covers various aspects of national and state life. As a soft skill, intercultural competence also plays a strategic role in supporting the success of *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (Emancipated Learning) Curriculum in producing graduates who are well-prepared for and in line with the workforce demands. The aim of this research is to explore students' intercultural competence and examine strategies for developing their intercultural competence.

The research setting was Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. The aims of this descriptive-exploratory qualitative research were achieved through an assessment of the intercultural competence (Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020) of English Literature study program students as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and a questionnaire about the strategies they consider appropriate to develop their intercultural competence (Deardoff, 2006; Deardoff, 2011; Lantz-Deaton & Golubeva, 2020). Data enrichment was carried out through interviews with 9 students selected through purposive nested sampling based on their willingness to respond to the informed consent given at the end of filling in the questionnaire. An interpretive qualitative approach to the interview results was carried out based on content analysis.

The research results show that the majority of English Literature students have good intercultural competence in the intercultural knowledge-awareness aspect and attitude aspect, with a small number of students at a very good level or low level. Of the three aspects studied, the skills aspect needs to be given more attention because most students express difficulty in behaving or acting when experiencing cultural misunderstandings, especially those caused by language barriers. The most appropriate strategies to improve the students' intercultural competence vary and can be carried out through curricular and co-curricular activities, as well as combining curricular and co-curricular activities. Integrating intercultural content needs to be implemented in various activities by adding portions related to local culture. The implication is that the English Literature Study Program of UNY needs to formulate various concrete steps to accommodate strategies that according to students are suitable with their needs and expectations.

Kata Kunci: *Intercultural competence; globalization; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); soft skills; emancipated learning*