

Does Shared Language Always Mean Shared Understanding in EFL Intercultural Communication?

Hanifa Mawadah¹, Anugrah Imani², Dedi Sulaeman³

English Education Master Program

UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

Email^{1*}: nifahmaw@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the interpretation of meaning in communication influenced by cultural backgrounds such as values, beliefs, identity, social norms, and communicative experiences of students learning English as a foreign language. And the influence of this background is a factor that can shape the development of understanding in intercultural interactions. Differences in cultural backgrounds can cause students to interpret the same message in different ways, resulting in misunderstandings even though the language used is the same. By using a systematic literature review with the PRISMA approach, and going through several stages such as identifying, selecting, evaluating, and analyzing relevant previous journal articles. Data were drawn from 20 journal articles published between 2020–2025 through Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC. This study shows that culture is the background that influences English-language communication, especially in the aspects of communication style, politeness, contextual meaning, and message interpretation. The findings indicate that good skills in communication are not enough to create effective intercultural communication because understanding cultural perspectives is also very important. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how culturally shaped interpretations influence meaning-making and misunderstanding in intercultural communication among EFL learners. Therefore, this study confirms that the use of a shared language does not necessarily guarantee shared understanding.

Keywords: *EFL learning, intercultural communication, language and culture, meaning-making*

INTRODUCTION

English as a lingua franca has become the most widely used global language for international communication because it allows people from different countries, cultures, and backgrounds to communicate through educational, professional, academic, and social environments (Mendes de Oliveira, 2024). In EFL itself, English is used as a bridge to communicate, which, of course, is not only a subject that needs to be learned. More than that, English can be a tool for students from different countries

to communicate (Iswandari Yusingva Ariyani & Ardi Priyatno, 2022; Omar, 2024). But as a bridge used to communicate does not only require good grammar or vocabulary skills; it also requires the ability to understand the meaning conveyed by the interlocutor who has a different cultural background. Because everyone from different countries certainly has different habits, values, beliefs, ways of thinking, and communication experiences. Because these differences can form a different mindset or point of view when trying to understand a word. Therefore, even though they are able to use the same English, they do not necessarily have the same understanding. This is in line with the concept of English as a lingua franca that communication is not only through the use of the same language, but also seen from the process of understanding each other and adjusting the meaning when communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. This process involves the student's efforts to understand the intent and meaning conveyed by the interlocutor (Wilczewski & Alon, 2023).

In the process of communication, meaning is not only conveyed through language but also formed through the relationship between language and culture that is the background of each student (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020). This view is supported by (Risager, 2007), which says language and culture have long-recognized attachments in the study of intercultural communication. According to Risager, language is something inseparable from culture. Language can indeed bring meanings, values, and cultural perspectives that influence the way people understand messages or meanings in communication. A similar perspective is also reflected in the work of (Kramsch, 2009), who explains that language is a tool that individuals use to construct and understand meaning according to the social environment and cultural background. This view is then reinforced by the understanding of (Croucher, 2020) which emphasizes that language is a tool that individuals use to understand meaning according to their social and cultural environment. This shows that culture has an important role in communication because the values, beliefs, and habits that a person has can influence the way they understand and Communicating using English with people from different countries and socio-cultures, of course, also requires an ability that goes beyond just a good command of the language. But students also need to understand the differences in the way of communication that are influenced by the culture.

This is what makes intercultural communication important in EFL learning. According to (Zhou et al., 2024) Intercultural communication competencies help students learn English and understand cultural differences. This ability makes students

more open to diversity, helps them see things from a different perspective, and makes them better prepared to communicate with people from other cultures. Additionally, cultural understanding can help reduce stereotypes and misunderstandings in interacting. Classroom learning activities, language teaching strategies, study abroad, digital communication, and multicultural learning environments are some examples of where these can be used. Research from Tovar-Correal & Pedraja-Rejas (2025) and Kamila et al., (2025) demonstrated that the ability to communicate with people from different cultures is essential for language learning. Both studies emphasize how important it is for students and prospective teachers to learn to communicate with people from different cultures. On the other hand, current discussions concentrate more on the development of intercultural skills and their learning approaches. This shows that understanding and conveying meaning in communication is influenced by a person's cultural background.

These limitations are important to note because differences in cultural backgrounds have an influence on how an individual can understand the message received. In intercultural communication, of course, misunderstandings do not always occur because individuals use different languages, but they can also arise even though the language used is the same but the interpretation or meaning is different. This difference in understanding the meaning of the message in a communication shows that the use of the same language does not necessarily result in the same understanding. Therefore, understanding how individuals construct and interpret meaning becomes essential to explain why communication can work well in one situation, but lead to misunderstandings in others, (Tovar-Correal & Pedraja-Rejas, 2025).

To understand these differences in understanding, of course, it is necessary to look at how a meaning is formed and interpreted during the communication process. Meaning formation serves as a key process in intercultural communication when students actively construct meaning based on cultural backgrounds. Any communicative action involving interpretation is influenced by embedded personal experience. When two students may hear exactly the same sentence, but they may understand the meaning differently because each understands what is being conveyed through a different point of view (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020). Then these differences show that the interpretation process needs attention in intercultural communication. Because

the process of interpretation is an important part of explaining the relationship between cultural background and communication outcomes. How to understand the message can then determine whether communication results in mutual understanding or actually causes misunderstandings. By looking at this process, intercultural communication can be understood not only from the language skills but also from the way students understand messages in different cultural situations (Szecsi et al., 2025). To understand the relationship between culture and the process of meaning in intercultural communication, this discussion suggests that previous studies should be better researched. A large number of studies have talked about the formation of meaning, interpretation, and intercultural communication. However, these studies are still different from each other and do not provide a complete picture of the problem. To obtain empirical results, this study uses previous studies published in the period between 2020 and 2025 using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach and combined with the PRISMA framework. In the context of EFL, this research includes current research on language and culture, interpretation of meaning, intercultural communication, and understanding and misunderstanding. This study aims to examine how cultural background influences the interpretation of meaning in EFL intercultural communication. The results of this research are expected to be useful and add to the understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and interpretation of meaning and become the basis for EFL's research and teaching methods in the future.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize the current knowledge on the relationship between cultural background, interpretation of meaning, and intercultural communication in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The Systematic Literature Review was chosen because it allows researchers to collect, evaluate, and synthesize evidence from previous studies through transparent and systematic procedures, thereby minimizing bias while providing a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Okoli, 2015). In contrast to traditional literature reviews that often rely on unsystematic selection of references, SLRs follow explicit procedures to identify, screen, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, this method is very appropriate for examining recurring themes in various studies and identifying conceptual patterns in the existing

literature. In this study, the review focused on understanding how cultural backgrounds shape the interpretation of meaning and how these processes affect communication outcomes among EFL learners.

This study uses the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, to help organize the review process through four main stages, namely identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and inclusion. The PRISMA guidelines ensure that the research process is conducted transparently. By using this method, the research process becomes clearer and easier to understand by other researchers. In addition, it helps researchers systematically select relevant literature (Page et al., 2021).

Data Source

The literature included in this review was obtained from three widely recognized academic databases:

- a. Google Scholar
- b. Scopus
- c. ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center)

This database was chosen because it contains a collection of peer-reviewed publications in applied linguistics, English language teaching, intercultural communication, and educational research. To find research relevant to the topic discussed, a search through various databases was carried out using keywords such as the following: Intercultural communication, EFL learners, English as a foreign language, language and culture, Creation of meaning, interpretation of meaning, mutual understanding, misunderstanding, and intercultural competence. In all three databases, the same keyword combination is used to find research that is as close to the subject as possible by using AND and OR to organize search results.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

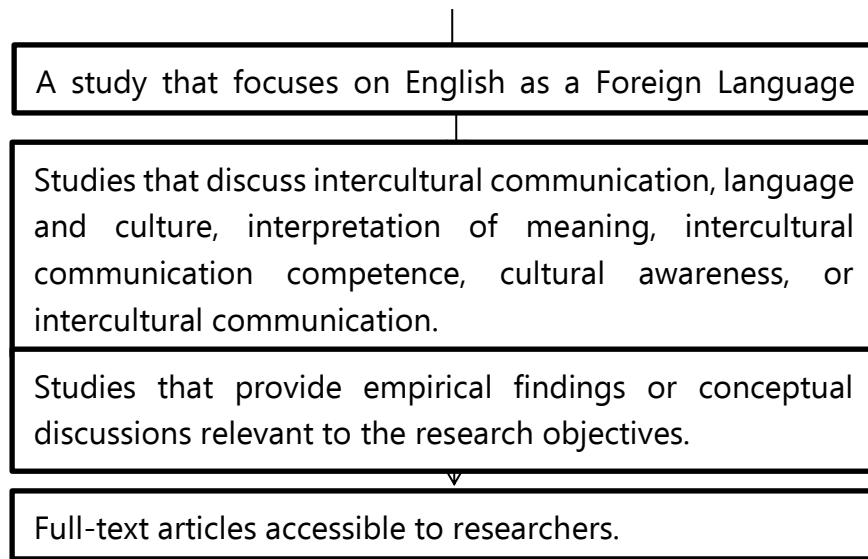
To ensure only relevant, high-quality studies are included, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria have been established prior to the literature search.

The inclusion criteria are as follows:

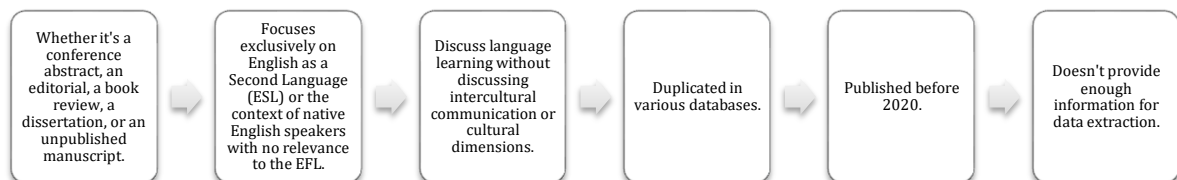
Articles published between 2020 and 2025.

Peer-reviewed journal articles.

Studies written in English.



Meanwhile, studies are excluded when:



The application of these criteria ensures that the selected studies directly address the research objectives while maintaining consistency throughout the review process.

Literature Selection Process

The literature selection process follows the PRISMA 2020 flow which consists of four stages (Page et al., 2021).

Identification

At the identification stage, articles are searched through Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC using predetermined keywords. The search results are then collected and the same article from multiple databases is deleted. After that, the remaining articles are put into the screening stage. At the screening stage, articles are searched through Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC using predetermined keywords.

Playback

The remaining studies are rotated by title and abstract. At this stage, articles that are not related to intercultural communication, language and culture, or the context of

the EFL are excluded. Publications that do not address the purpose of the study are also removed.

Eligibility

The full text of potentially relevant articles is then carefully examined. Each article is evaluated based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Particular attention is paid to whether the studies address the influence of culture on communication, interpretation of meaning, or communication outcomes in an intercultural setting.

Inclusions

After the feasibility assessment, 20 studies were selected for final synthesis. These studies represent a diverse range of educational environments and cultural contexts while addressing issues relevant to intercultural communication among EFL students.

Data Extraction

After the final selection, the relevant information from each article is systematically extracted using a data extraction table. The extracted information includes:

1. Author
2. Year of publication
3. Country or research context
4. Research Design
5. Participants
6. Research objectives
7. Key findings
8. Implications related to intercultural communication

The extraction process allows for comparisons between studies while facilitating thematic synthesis.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis selected for this study, using this approach allows researchers to identify concepts, patterns, and relationships that are repeated across different studies, rather than simply summarizing individual findings (Anderson et al., 2014). The analysis is carried out through several stages. First, each selected article is read repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of its objectives, methodology, and findings. Important statements related to intercultural, language and cultural communication, meaning-making, and communication outcomes are highlighted and

encoded. Furthermore, a broader category is formed for codes that have the same characteristics. In this process, four main themes are found in the reviewed articles: (1) Language and Culture; (2) Interpretation of Meaning; (3) Intercultural Communication in EFL Learners; and (4) Common Understanding and Misunderstanding. These four themes are used as a basis for analyzing the results and discussions in the article. The analysis not only examines each article separately, but also compares the results of the twenty articles to find relationships and patterns. The results of the analysis show that interpretation of meaning is an important component that connects cultural background with success or misunderstanding in communication. Furthermore, the discussion and conceptual model of this study relies on this relationship.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Twenty peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2025 were included in this systematic literature review. Selected studies examined intercultural communication in a variety of EFL contexts, including high schools, universities, teacher education programs, online learning environments, and multicultural educational environments. Although the studies differed in research design, participants, and geographic context, they consistently emphasized the importance of culture in shaping communication among English language learners.

The thematic analysis identified four main themes that repeatedly appeared in the literature that had been reviewed: (1) Language and Culture, (2) Interpretation of Meaning, (3) Intercultural Communication among EFL Learners, and (4) Common Understandings and Misunderstandings. These themes show a progressive relationship in which language serves as a medium of communication, cultural background influences the construction of meaning, interpretation determines the process of communication, and communication ultimately results in a shared understanding or misunderstanding.

Table 1 presents a summary of the main themes identified across the studies that have been reviewed.

Table 1. Key themes identified in the literature reviewed

Theme	Key Focus	General Findings
Language and Culture	The relationship between language and culture	Language carries cultural values and is inseparable from culture.
Interpretation of Meaning	The process of forming meaning	Cultural background influences how messages are interpreted.
Intercultural communication among EFL Learners	Cross-cultural communication	Successful communication requires linguistic and intercultural competence.
Shared Understandings and Misunderstandings	Communication results to mutual understandings or misunderstandings.	Different interpretations can lead to mutual understandings or misunderstandings.

1. Language and Culture

Previous studies have revealed major connections between language and culture. Language is not only spoken but also utilized to communicate cultural identity, values, ideas, and information. So if you want to communicate in English, you need to grasp the cultural distinctions (Szecsi et al., 2025; Tektigul et al., 2023). Learning EFL enhances not just the speaking skills but also the comprehension of the cultural context behind the use of the language. Vocabulary and grammar are necessary, but not sufficient, for efficient communication. Even words that are linguistically acceptable can be misconstrued because of the cultural variances of the way the word is understood (Iswandari Yuseva Ariyani & Ardi Priyatno, 2022; Croucher, 2020). And some studies emphasize more that language reflects social norms and cultural expectations. Speakers from different cultural communities may use identical linguistic expressions even if they mean different meanings. Similarly, listeners can interpret the same speech differently according to their own cultural experiences. Therefore, language functions simultaneously as a linguistic and cultural system (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020; Tektigul et al., 2023).

These findings are in line with (Croucher, 2020), explaining that culture should be understood as central to the communication process because cultural values, beliefs, and practices influence how meaning is constructed during interactions. Learners who

understand cultural differences show greater flexibility in interpreting messages, responding appropriately, and negotiating meaning during communication. In contrast, learners who rely solely on linguistic knowledge often have difficulty interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. It can be said that the results of this study show that language and culture should be seen as inseparable components of intercultural communication. Language provides a medium of communication, whereas culture provides a framework within which communication is interpreted.

2. Interpretation of Meaning

The process of interpreting meaning is discussed in the second theme. Despite the fact that each study uses different terms, such as meaning formation, negotiation of meaning, interpretation of messages, and understanding of context, the results are the same. It's not just the language used, but also the way one understands and interprets the message (Szecsi et al., 2025). Supported by a view (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020), Forming meaning is a process that is constantly changing during interactions and involves many aspects of communication. It is not only the language used that shapes the meaning, but also the way the speaker and listener understand the message. Values, beliefs, identity, communication experiences, and social norms all influence this process (Tovar-Correal & Pedraja-Rejas, 2025). For example, identical expressions can convey different meanings in different cultural contexts. Statements that are meant to be politeness in one culture can be interpreted as indirectness or even insincerity in another. Similarly, silence can mean respect in certain cultures but disagreement or lack of interest in other cultures. Such differences show that communication involves interpretation, not direct transmission of meaning (Tektigul et al., 2023).

A person's socio-cultural experiences and knowledge also influence their interpretation. Participants in intercultural interactions use their cultural knowledge to deal with situations they are not yet familiar with. Therefore, even though they speak the same language, two people can understand the same message in different ways (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020; Wilczewski & Alon, 2023). Participants can change this understanding during the conversation by providing further explanations, addressing unclear aspects, and adjusting their understanding according to the situation. Therefore, for effective communication, one must have the ability to change the way they understand a message, rather than just understanding its meaning directly

(Abdullah & Sahar, 2020). Meaning is defined as the relationship between language, culture, and communication outcomes (Szecsi et al., 2025).

3. Intercultural Communication among EFL Learners

The third theme focuses on intercultural communication in the EFL learning environment. Studies reviewed consistently show that globalization has increased opportunities for EFL learners to communicate with individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, intercultural communication has become an important component of English language education (B. E. Saaida, 2023; Wilczewski & Alon, 2023; Hossain, 2024). These findings are also in line with (Zhou et al., 2024) This suggests that EFL learning should include intercultural communication (ICC) competencies. Students learning English not only need to learn grammar and language skills, but they also need to understand cultural differences, think critically, and be able to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Language skills are important, but they are not enough to guarantee that students can communicate well when they have a different cultural perspective. Students must also develop intercultural awareness, empathy, openness, and sensitivity to cultural differences (Tovar-Correal & Pedraja-Rejas, 2025; Tambunan et al., 2021). Then previous research highlighted the importance of intercultural experiences in developing communicative competence. Classroom discussions, collaborative projects, online exchanges, and international learning activities allow learners to discover a variety of perspectives and develop a greater awareness of cultural diversity. Experiences like this encourage learners to reconsider their own assumptions while also becoming better able to interpret messages from different cultural points of view (Omar, 2024; Wilczewski & Alon, 2023; Tambunan et al., 2021).

Differences in communication styles, politeness strategies, contextual expectations, and cultural values often create barriers during interactions. Even when the linguistic message is understood correctly, participants can still experience misunderstandings because they interpret the communication intent differently. These findings suggest that intercultural communication should be understood as a process of negotiating meaning across different cultural perspectives, rather than simply an exchange of linguistic information. Therefore, effective communication requires the integration of linguistic competence with intercultural competence (Szecsi et al., 2025).

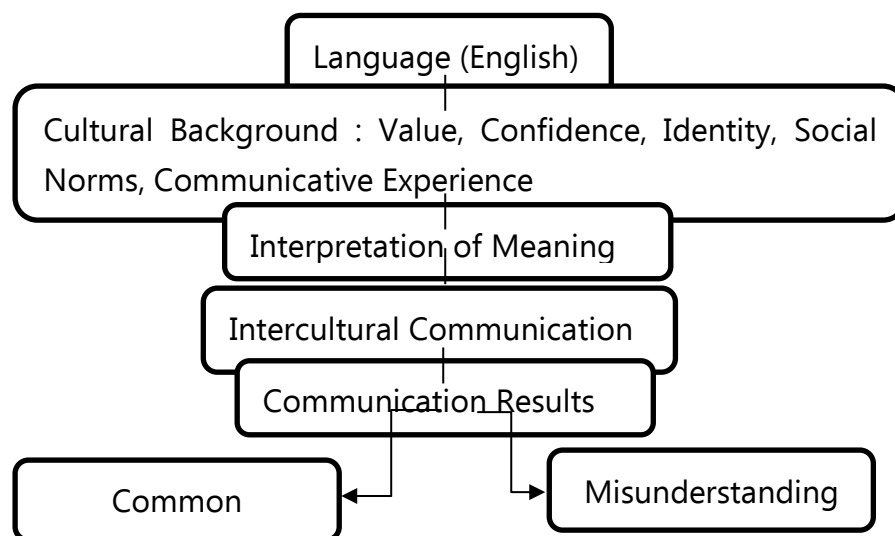
4. Common Understandings and Misunderstandings

The results of communication in intercultural interaction are discussed in the fourth theme. Communication between EFL learners can result in misunderstandings or misunderstandings, according to twenty reviewed studies. This depends on how participants understand and interpret the messages communicated during the interaction. Although participants have different language and cultural backgrounds, they can understand each other. Openness to other perspectives, a willingness to explain meaning, and attention to cultural context can all help with this process. In addition, studies have shown that a sense of empathy and cultural awareness helps reduce misunderstandings and improve the quality of communication. (Fantini, 2020).

Nonetheless, communication does not always lead to mutual understanding. When students give different interpretations to the same message, it can lead to misunderstandings. Poor English skills are not always the cause; Cultural differences, different ways of communicating, rules of decency, previous experiences, and context can also play a role. Because it uses different cultural understandings, a person may have a proper understanding of a word or sentence, but still fail to understand the speaker's intent (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). This is in line with (Primary, 2020) Which Differences in values, norms, and cultural perspectives can cause the same messages to be understood differently. However, misunderstandings don't always mean communication fails, as everyone has a different cultural background. Therefore, differences in understanding are natural in intercultural communication. Students can learn to understand cultural differences and find common meaning in communication through adjustments, explanations, and clarifications in these situations (Croucher, 2020)

The results of various communication studies reviewed show that a person's understanding of the message influences the success of communication more than the type of language used. People who speak the same language may not have the same understanding because each person interprets the message based on their own culture. This shows how important it is to understand meaning in intercultural communication. To explain how culture influences the communication process, the four themes are interconnected (Fantini, 2020). Language provides a medium of communication, cultural background shapes interpretation of meaning, interpretation influences communicative interactions, and communication ultimately leads to mutual understanding or misunderstanding. This relationship is summarized in the conceptual model presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Conceptual Models Synthesized from the Literature Reviewed



Interpretation of meaning is an important element that connects cultural background to communication outcomes, according to this conceptual model. Effective communication depends not only on the ability to speak but also on one's ability to accept and adjust meaning in different cultural contexts. This is in line with the model developed by (2023), where not only language skills are necessary to communicate well in a multicultural society, but also intercultural skills, the ability to adapt, and an understanding of cultural contexts. According to the findings of this review, interpretation of meaning is a process that explains how cultural background can affect the outcome of intercultural communication.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic literature review suggest that intercultural communication among EFL learners goes beyond the use of a common language. Effective communication depends not only on language skills, but also on cultural understanding. Cultural background influences communication through the process of interpreting meaning, according to the combined results of twenty studies (Croucher, 2020). One of the most significant findings of this review is the inseparable relationship between language and culture. These findings support the perspective of Risager (2007) that language is closely related to culture and cannot be understood without its

cultural context. Language not only conveys the meaning of language, but also carries cultural values and perspectives.

This review also reinforces Kramsch's (2009) which states that social identity, cultural experience, and communication context influence meaning. The results of the study show that a person not only receives messages but also interprets them based on their culture. According to (2025), the relationship between language and cultural interpretation forms meaning. This view is also consistent with (Mendes de Oliveira, 2024), communication is a social process that allows participants to change and build meaning during interactions. Therefore, communication not only transmits data, but also the process of understanding and interpreting messages. This view is also in line with (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020), explains the same thing, believe that intercultural communication is always changing because context and elements of interaction form meaning. Overall, the results show that language skills are not the only way to guarantee successful intercultural communication. The way a person understands and understands a message according to their cultural context also determines whether communication generates understanding or actually causes misunderstandings. This interpretive process then determines whether the communication results in a shared understanding or misunderstanding.

This view is reinforced by (Huang, 2023), EFL learners who study cultural metacognition get help in understanding and understanding their own cultural perspectives. When they communicate with people from different cultures, this awareness helps them interpret messages more precisely. How they interpret these messages then determines whether communication results in misunderstanding or misunderstanding. The concept of Intercultural Communication Competency (ICC), built by (Fantini, 2020), is also in line with this perspective. Fantini explained that not only language skills are necessary to communicate well between cultures, but the ability to understand other people's perspectives, appreciate differences, and adapt the way of communicating to situations. In other words, intercultural competence is not only about getting to know other students' cultures but also being able to understand and make meaning in interactions. One of the important outcomes of this review is these findings. Culture is thought to influence communication and the way a person interprets messages. Cultural background does not determine the success of communication. The effect is seen on the way a person understands the message, which can lead to misunderstandings or misunderstandings. This explains why people who

speak the same language can have different understandings when speaking in different cultural environments (Kamila et al., 2025; Tovar-Correal & Pedraja-Rejas, 2025).

The relationship between language, culture, and communication outcomes is demonstrated by the conceptual models discussed in this review. Language helps convey a message, but a person's culture influences the way they understand it. Values, beliefs, identities, social norms, and communication experiences can influence the interpretive process. It is possible that the result is a correct or wrong understanding (Abdullah & Sahar, 2020; Fantini, 2020). These results are in line with Zhou et al. (2024), who emphasize that the development of Intercultural Communication Competency (ICC) is crucial in EFL learning because English learning is not just limited to vocabulary and grammar.

In addition, students must learn critical thinking, interact with people from different backgrounds, and understand cultural differences. The results of this review reinforce the idea that students' ability to understand meaning in a cultural context also influences the success of intercultural communication. Therefore, EFL learning must provide students with the opportunity to understand messages, build mutual understanding, and understand cultural assumptions that can influence communication. Powered by (Lee et al., 2023), which shows that the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in EFL learning, including through online classes, is able to increase cultural awareness, openness to different perspectives, and students' readiness to communicate effectively with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. These results reinforce the importance of language learning that is not only oriented towards mastering linguistic structures, but also on developing the ability to interact and build understanding in intercultural contexts. In addition, this review highlights the importance of negotiating meaning in intercultural learning. Instead of avoiding misunderstandings, educators can utilize them as valuable learning opportunities where students develop greater cultural awareness, empathy, and communication flexibility. When learners are encouraged to discuss various interpretations and reflect on cultural assumptions, misunderstandings become opportunities for deeper intercultural understanding, not indicators of communication failure (Hossain, 2024).

The results show that students don't always understand messages in the same way when using the same language with other students from other country. The cultural

background of each affects the understanding of the message. Therefore, interpretation of meaning is essential in intercultural communication, especially in EFL learning. These findings could also serve as a basis for research related to the way people understand and shape meaning when talking to people from different cultural backgrounds (Wilczewski & Alon, 2023). The findings support the view (Pratama, 2020) that cross-cultural communication always contains the potential for misunderstanding because each individual brings a different cultural framework in interpreting the message. Therefore, the success of communication depends not only on the use of the same language, but also on the ability to understand cultural differences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This systematic literature review looks at how cultural background influences meaning in intercultural communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The review looks at four main themes: language and culture, interpretation of meaning, intercultural communication in EFL learners, and understanding and misunderstanding. The results show that culture has always been concerned with the use of language, which includes social norms, identities, values, and beliefs. Therefore, communication is not just about conveying information; It is also about giving someone an understanding of the intent of the message they receive. A person's cultural background can affect the way they understand messages and interact with others. This is a process that can determine whether communication is going well or is actually causing misunderstandings. According to the conceptual model used in this study, a person's culture can influence the way they understand communication messages. Although language is used to convey a message, a person's culture can influence the way they understand it. Misunderstandings or effective communication can occur due to differences in understanding the message. Therefore, people who use the same language may not necessarily have the same understanding. Intercultural communication requires not only the ability to speak English, but also an understanding of the meanings of different cultures. Therefore, the results of this review provide some suggestions for the research and learning of intercultural communication.

First and foremost, subsequent research will have the ability to see firsthand how students understand and convey meaning in communication. This can be achieved through classroom observation, interviews, conversation analysis, or

intercultural interaction analysis. Second, research can be conducted on different learning contexts, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiency levels to find out if the same communication patterns function in different contexts. Third, research comparing participants from different countries can also provide a broader picture of intercultural communication. To find out how students' ability to understand meaning changes after experiencing intercultural experiences, further research can use combined methods or follow their development over a period of time. The results of this research can help clarify the cultural learning process and build collaborative skills. Finally, English teachers can integrate intercultural communication into their lesson plans. Language learning helps students not only improve their language skills, but also helps them understand how to use and interpret language in different cultural contexts.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, N. N., & Sahar, R. (2020). The CALA 2020 Proceedings Paper 10 - 3 Semiotics and Semiology , Paper 3 Exploring Intercultural Interaction : The Use of Semiotic Resources in Meaning-Making Processes. *The CALA 2020*.
- Anderson, C. A., Bushman, B. J., Bandura, A., Braun, V., Clarke, V., Bussey, K., Bandura, A., Carnagey, N. L., Anderson, C. A., Ferguson, C. J., Smith, J. a, Osborn, M., Willig, C., & Stainton-Rogers, W. (2014). Using thematic analysis in psychology Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 0887(1), 37–41. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11752478>
- B. E. Saaida, M. (2023). The Role of Culture and Identity in International Relations. *East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 49–57. <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2023v04i01.0255>
- Croucher, S. M. (2020). The Importance of Culture and Communication. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5(August), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2020.00061>
- Fantini, A. E. (2020). Reconceptualizing intercultural communicative competence: A multinational perspective. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(1), 52–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499920901948>

- Hossain, K. I. (2024). Reviewing the role of culture in English language learning: Challenges and opportunities for educators. *Social Sciences and Humanities Open*, 9(August 2023), 100781. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100781>
- Huang, L. (2023). Developing intercultural competence through a cultural metacognition-featured instructional design in English as a foreign language classrooms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14(February), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1126141>
- ISWANDARI YUSEVA ARIYANI, & ARDI PRIYATNO. (2022). Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Setting: A Systematic Review. *REFlections*, 29(2), 361–380.
- Kamila, D. N. S., Nurkamto, J., & Haryati, S. (2025). EFL teacher strategy for promoting students' intercultural communication competence: A case study at a senior high school. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, 12(1), 533–556. <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v12i1.40817>
- Kramsch, C. (2009). Third Culture and Language Education. *Contemporary Applied Linguistics: Language Teaching and Learning: Volume 1*, 1, 233–254.
- Lee, T. Y., Ho, Y. C., & Chen, C. H. (2023). Integrating intercultural communicative competence into an online EFL classroom: an empirical study of a secondary school in Thailand. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 8(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00174-1>
- Mahadi, T. S., & Jafari, S. M. (2012). Sepideh Moghaddas Jafari , PhD Student. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(17), 230–235.
- Mendes de Oliveira, M. (2024). English as a lingua franca and interculturality: navigating structure- and process-oriented perspectives in intercultural interactions. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 24(2), 105–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2023.2254285>
- Nadeem, M. U., & Zabrodskaia, A. (2023). A comprehensive model of intercultural communication for international students living in culturally diverse societies: evidence from China. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1332001>

Okoli, C. (2015). A guide to conducting a standalone systematic literature review. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 37(1), 879–910. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1cais.03743>

Omar, A. (2024). Enhancing Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Education for Sustainable Development and Globalization Challenges. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(1), 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n1p247>

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *Bmj*, 372. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>

Pratama, R. (2020). 34038-103961-1-Pb. 4(1), 127–132.

Risager, K. (2007). Language and Culture Pedagogy. *Language and Culture Pedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.27710858>

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104(March), 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>

Szecs, T., Rivera, M., & Szende, T. (2025). Digital Storytelling: Meaning-Making of Cultures and Intercultural Competence in a Collaborative Online International Learning Project. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 9(2), 236–256. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/16283>

Tambunan, A. R. S., Lubis, F. K., Andayani, W., & Sari, W. S. (2021). Intercultural Communicative Competence Levels of Indonesian EFL Students: A Preliminary Study in a Higher Education Context. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, 7(2), 134. <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v7i2.2870>

- Tektigul, Z., Bayadilova-Altybayeva, A., Sadykova, S., Iskindirova, S., Kushkimbayeva, A., & Zhumagul, D. (2023). Language is a Symbol System that Carries Culture. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*, 11(1), 203–214. <https://doi.org/10.22034/IJSCL.2022.562756.2781>
- Tovar-Correal, M., & Pedraja-Rejas, L. (2025). Gender, Ethnicity and Teaching Competencies: Do They Influence Intercultural Communicative Competence in Teacher Education? *Education Sciences*, 15(5), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15050520>
- Wilczewski, M., & Alon, I. (2023). Language and communication in international students' adaptation: a bibliometric and content analysis review. *Higher Education*, 85(6), 1235–1256. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00888-8>
- Zhou, R., Samad, A., & Perinpasingam, T. (2024). A systematic review of cross-cultural communicative competence in EFL teaching: insights from China. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04071-5>