

## **INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE-BASED CULTURAL VALUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL IN INDONESIA**

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### **Abstract**

The present research aims to explore English teachers' perception of intercultural competence in English language teaching at one of the Islamic schools in Lombok, Indonesia. Cultural categories and aspects were analyzed using Cortazzi and Jin's category of culture and Byram's checklist of cultural aspects. This qualitative case study employed observation, textbook analysis, and interviews to gain the primary data. Three English teachers were involved in an in-depth interview. The findings revealed that the teachers positively perceive intercultural competence in ELT. Furthermore, local culture was still dominant in the textbook and the teachers confirmed that local culture exposure was pivotal for students as they might be able to introduce the cultural content or products to foreigners. In terms of cultural aspects, the teachers recommended food and historical or famous places that should be recognized by the students to enhance intercultural competence. It is suggested that English teachers should introduce cross-cultural values toward intercultural competence to the students.

**Keywords** — *Aspect of culture, Category of culture, English Language Teaching, Islamic School*

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### **Introduction**

In the Indonesian context, Islamic boarding schools have a very important role in realizing the unity and integrity of the nation. The background of the students coming from various regions with cross languages and cultures, but they can tolerate and respect each other. It is truly an asset for the Indonesian generation who have perspectives, character and intercultural competence (Ariawan et al., 2023). They view heterogeneity as a social capital, not a potential threat of social and national disintegration. What's more, lately the issue of national identity and character has become one of the nation's problems where fanaticism and racial sentiment cannot be handled thoroughly (Intan & Handayani, 2017).

However, there are several challenges to the management of Islamic boarding schools, particularly regarding their openness and ability as a modern educational institution that is contextual to the present times. The unstoppable flow of information and globalization requires educational institutions to adapt and master the tools that can be used to access this information and to have a broad global perspective without leaving local identity and uniqueness that has become a rooted character in Islamic boarding schools. At this point, a multicultural competence approach is needed in teaching foreign languages where students will be introduced to national and international cultural differences in the context of learning English.

Teaching cultural diversity as an integrated part of language learning is very important in the classroom toward the global learning community (Doganay et al., 2021; Gui & Kew, 2023). By understanding diversity, students will acquire intercultural competence as well as

conserving their native cultures (Zheng & Gao, 2019). With these competencies, students will have the skills of intercultural speakers where they will be able to become mediators in bridging complex cultural identities while minimizing stereotypes in a multicultural society (Garret-Rucks, 2016). In addition, this intercultural competence will direct students to tolerance and acceptance of differences and obtain information and new perspectives (Page, 2020). However, this concept has not been fully implemented by teachers in teaching English. Some arguments say that the lack of learning resources such as textbooks that contain elements or cultural values, the lack of equipment and facilities to support learning English and the most important factor is the teacher's lack of theoretical and practical understanding regarding multicultural competence which is considered to be one of the obstacles in realizing intercultural based English learning (Azizah & Surya, 2017).

Based on the background above, there are three problem formulations that will be investigated in this study: 1) How are the teachers' perception on the integration of cultural values in ELT context toward intercultural competence?; 2) How are the proportions of cultural categories in the practice of ELT toward intercultural competence; 3) What cultural aspects need to be introduced in ELT context toward intercultural competence?

## Literature Review

Competence in language learning includes language competence (linguistics, sociolinguistics and discourse) and intercultural competence (attitude, knowledge, skills and awareness) in the context of a multicultural society. Intercultural competence can be interpreted as a person's ability to interact appropriately and effectively with people who have different language and cultural backgrounds with them (Tran & Duong, 2018). Another opinion says that intercultural competence is an ethical orientation related to moral concepts and the right way of thinking and acting (Jokikokko, 2005). According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence is a person's ability to interact within a cultural community and be able to understand those who are not part of their community even though there are various differences and changes when compared to the cultural values understood by the group. It can be concluded that intercultural competence is intercultural communication competence. This competency is expected to be an asset for students to actively interact and build international networks as expected by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the context of basic competencies and learning outcomes of English (Sarah Nurmala Sari, 2017).

Many studies on the integration of cultural values in language learning have been conducted with various approaches. There are studies that focus on the textbook aspect by analyzing the cultural content in it. However, there are also studies that directly investigate and observe the practice of foreign language teaching in the classroom. In addition, some studies also combine observation and interview approaches in exploring cultural integration both in materials and in classroom teaching practices. Jelita (2020) conducted descriptive qualitative research in Magelang with the research subject being a group of grade 6 students in an elementary school. This study aims to find out the teacher's strategy in integrating the culture of the target language in the context of learning English as a foreign language. The result of this study shows that the integration of cultural values in supporting students' linguistic ability in the context of Teaching English as Foreign Language is rarely done by teachers. They only focus on the use of LKS (worksheets) as a teaching reference, without maximizing adequate teaching media in supporting the integration of cultural values in English learning. Teachers only accommodate three topics in integrating culture, namely topics related to literature, games (arts) and food (product). The three cultural topics in English language learning are expected to be able to represent the value of history, beliefs, differences and similarities in an intercultural context. Jelita (2020) in other research, at a practical level, teachers integrate culture in English learning by making sentences in the form of text, dialogue or behavior that reflects noble values. Cultural elements in the form of products such as artifacts and customs are also content in multicultural competency-based English language learning (Azizah & Surya, 2017). In addition, another study also examined the cultural values in Islamic education context (Juliastuti et al.,

2023; Kuraedah et al., 2018; Noviyanti, 2024).

More specific research on cross-cultural communication patterns of students in Islamic boarding schools has also been conducted by Al Mahmudi et al. (2020) where the students come from various countries. By using descriptive qualitative methods through interviews, observation and documentation, this study confirmed the urgency of intercultural communication competence. In addition, this study also revealed several factors that hinder cross-cultural communication in Islamic boarding schools, especially between foreign students and local students. Some of them are language factors and stereotypes. On a smaller scale, research on cross-cultural communication in boarding schools was also conducted by Romadon (2021). This research with a case study approach found that the Darut Tafsir Cibanteng Ciampea boarding school in Bogor is a very heterogeneous environment. Santri do not only come from one region, but often come from different geographical and ethnic backgrounds, causing cultural diversity in the boarding school environment. However, because the Islamic values taught not only concern theological aspects, but also practical in the context of social life and prioritize the value of tolerance and mutual respect among others, the boarding school is able to present a cross-cultural understanding space for students.

The research above shows the potential of Islamic boarding schools in playing the role of creating multicultural awareness and competence. This awareness and competence will become the social capital of the santri in building togetherness and tolerance attitudes that become the glue of national unity and integrity. However, the research is still in the context of investigating how the portrait of multicultural interaction and communication in Islamic boarding schools. This research is only limited to exploring phenomena that grow and develop among students, without identifying more deeply about how the process of applying or teaching the value of multicultural competence is applied, both by teachers and management of boarding school institutions. Moreover, in the context of foreign language learning such as English in Islamic boarding schools. There is a great opportunity to support these multicultural attitudes and behaviors and awareness through English language learning. After all, when two or more than two languages are learned, especially foreign languages, a cross-cultural competence is needed so that students are able to understand these differences, especially in the context of multicultural education (Irwansyah, 2013). Cultural literacy in English language learning in the classroom can also improve students' communicative competence. This can be done by creating cultural content, using authentic materials, literary approaches or with ethnographic studies (Afriani, 2019).

Cortazzi & Jin (1999) distinguish three categories of culture; target language culture, source/local culture and international culture. Target language culture is the culture of the language being learned, in this case English. It is the culture that comes from English-speaking countries such as America, UK, Australia, Canada etc. The source language culture is the local culture that is part of the learner's own culture. In this context, it is the local language (Indonesian culture). While international culture is a culture other than the target language and source language culture. This means cultures that come from countries other than Indonesia and countries where English is the first language.

The critical question that arises then is what or which culture will be a standard of truth of the concept or ethical orientation? Kramsch & McConnell-Ginet, (1992) then argued that English language teaching should use an intercultural approach where the target language culture is integrated in it and compared with the source culture or culture of the language learner. Thus, this will help students to reflect on the culture and civilization in various countries. This means that students will be accustomed to adapting and playing the role of a cultural mediator with a broader perspective on various phenomena around them. In the context and perspective of multicultural education, English language learning should also use literature that has cross-cultural content. This learning process will make it easier for students to understand, accept and build knowledge, awareness and cultural sensitivity (Rosyidah, 2016).. Although in some studies it was found that the integration of local culture is more dominantly taught by teachers and contained in textbooks to make it easier for students to understand the cultural content and context (Sorongan et al., 2014). However, the proportionality and

percentage of integration of each cultural value is not widely discussed or still very dynamic to be discussed.

Several studies have found that the target culture category is more dominant than local culture in textbooks. The cultural aspects are highlighted by naming characters, places, locations and rituals that become topics of discussion in the reading material of the book (Hermawan & Noerkhasanah, 2012). Another study found the opposite that local cultural content is more dominant in English textbooks. Nafiah (2020) in their research mentioned that students and teachers have a positive perception of English textbooks that contain local culture (local wisdom). However, other studies also propose the concept of balance where local and global content must be inserted in English textbooks in order to present diverse learning experiences and create intercultural competencies (Hartono, 2017).

There are three aspects to consider in integrating culture in English language learning: the context in which the language is taught, the age of the learners and their ability level and the teacher (Abbaspour et al., 2012). This needs to be done first before developing the materials. With the analysis of these three aspects, it will be easy for teachers to design teaching materials with appropriate cultural content. Some other forms of integration include teachers discussing the topic of cultural celebrations in English language learning or by taking a multimodal approach in the form of videos of various topics with different cross-cultural contexts so that it is more interesting for students (Gay, 2010). In a study conducted by Nguyen (2013) in Vietnam, it was suggested that several topics such as food, drink, lifestyle and traditional festivals could be integrated in English learning materials. In addition to presenting the source culture (local culture), the cultures of several countries such as Morocco, Africa, Japan and China are also integrated so that students are able to compare the cultural characteristics of each country.

There are three models of intercultural competence that have been the main references for discussions or research related to cultural aspects in English language learning (Tran & Duong, 2018). The first is the model developed by Byram (1997) where intercultural competence is closely related to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. There are five components of intercultural communication: attitude, knowledge, interpretation and relation skills, discovery and interaction skills and critical cultural sensitivity. In addition, Fantini (2000) also introduced intercultural aspects which include awareness, attitudes, skills and knowledge. Meanwhile, the third model is offered by Deardorff (2006) by accommodating attitudes and knowledge, then adding external factors. More specifically, the dimensions or aspects of culture investigated in this study are the 8 dimensions or aspects initiated by Byram (1997). These aspects include social identity and social communication, social interaction, beliefs and customs, social and political institutions, socialization and life phenomena, national history, national geography and stereotypes and social identity.

The first aspect or dimension is social identity and social group which includes social class, ethnic minority and majority, regional identity, professional identity, and individual social status. The second dimension is social interaction which includes the situations or ways used in certain groups of society; including verbal and non-verbal behavior in social interactions, different levels of formality, and character (feelings, attitudes, values, and perceived problems). The third dimension is beliefs and behaviors that concern daily activities in society involving religious and moral values. The fourth dimension is social and political institutions that deal with institutions in the country, for example, a particular organization's department for certain business affairs, and seeks to look at the meaning and values of the institution. The fifth dimension is socialization and the life cycle which includes smaller level institutions, for example, family, school, and work, as well as ceremonies that mark the passage through the stages of social life. The sixth dimension is national history which includes historical and contemporary moments, which are essential to support teaching and learning in the classroom. The seventh dimension is national geography which refers to the geographical features associated with a particular group of people. The last dimension is national stereotypes and identities that reveal the nation's landmarks, including artefacts, popular places or people.

Awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes towards cultural differences will be obtained in intercultural competence. It becomes a teacher's obligation then to instill these values and

competencies in the midst of a diverse cultural environment and is one form of strategy as part of global citizenship (López-Rocha, 2016).

### Research Method

This study uses a constructivistic paradigm approach with a qualitative design that aims to deeply explore by Yin (2014) on social phenomenon in the context of English language teaching in Islamic boarding schools. This research explores teachers' perceptions in integrating the value of intercultural competence in teaching English in Islamic boarding schools as well as their perceptions in terms of the proportionality of cultural integration and cultural aspects. This research is a type of qualitative research with a type of case study where according to Creswell (1998) there are several characteristics of research with case studies, namely the identification of a case, the case is an integrated system or applied by respondents, data are collected in detail and in depth about the response to a case and emphasize the context of the research. The research was conducted at the one of modern salaf boarding schools located in East Lombok. Primary data were obtained from observations and interviews. Observations were conducted in two classes as a representation, while interviews were conducted separately with 3 teachers with a structured question format to obtain a complete picture of teacher perceptions of intercultural competence-based cultural integration. Secondary data were obtained from analyzing cultural representations in the English textbooks used. The analysis focused on images and reading texts. In this case, two textbooks (grade XI and XII) were selected for analysis using Byram's checklist approach (Byram, 1997) to look at cultural aspects and Cortazzi & Jin (1999) in determining cultural categories and cultural proportionality. Due to time constraints, the analysis focused on the cultural aspects and types of culture contained in the reading and images in the book.

As the purpose of qualitative research emphasizes the important aspect of investigating a problem or phenomenon, researchers need to confirm directly into the field (Hansen, 2020). Interviews then become very fundamental technique in obtaining a complete and valid picture of the research results. Data from the observation results were analyzed by determining the percentage of each checklist item. The interview results were analyzed by transcribing from audio to text and conducting content analysis of the respondents' answers (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Content analysis was conducted in order to connect and present meaning from text to context (Krippendorff, 2004).

### Results and Discussion

To get an initial picture of how the learning process in the classroom so that this could be discussed during the interview. In this observation, it was found that one teacher explained not only the language aspect but also the context aspect in this case the cultural context of how the language is used by native speakers. However, there is one teacher who does not touch the cultural realm in teaching English and focuses more on the aspect of vocabulary mastery. This is due to many factors. One of them is the readiness of the content/material in teaching. It could also be because the material at that time was grammar or vocabulary so the teacher focused on that material.

Table 1 Result from observation

Number	ASPECT	YES	NO
1	Teachers teach linguistic aspects	100%	0%
2	Teachers teach sociolinguistic aspects	100%	100%
3	Teachers teach cultural aspects	50%	50%
4	Teachers act as facilitators of cultural values (intercultural competence)	50%	50%
5	Teachers create materials with cultural value content (intercultural competence)	50%	50%

6	Teachers adopt cultural value-based learning (intercultural competence)	50%	50%
7	Teachers raise certain themes from cultural aspects	50%	50%
8	Teachers introduce cultural aspects of the target language	50%	50%
9	Teachers introduce cultural aspects of the local language	50%	50%
10	The teacher introduces cultural aspects of the international language	50%	50%
11	The teacher explains the meaning of intercultural communication	0%	0%

**Result from textbook content analysis**

Cortazzi & Jin (1999) made three categories of culture in the context of English language learning, namely target language culture, local/source language culture and international language culture. In the Grade XI English textbooks, the local/source culture is very dominant with 70% in the pictures and reading texts, then the target and international cultures with only 21% and 9% in the pictures and reading texts. This shows that the textbook is designed not only to learn English from a linguistic point of view, but also from the aspects of target language culture, international culture and especially source language culture/local culture. The 70% percentage is a form of dominance by the insertion of local culture.

Table 2 Cultural categories in English textbook for grade XI

No	Cultural categories	N	P
1	Target culture	7	21%
2	Local culture	23	70%
3	International culture	3	9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Meanwhile, the dominance of local cultural content occurs not only in English textbooks of grade XI, but also in grade XII. However, the percentage of target language and international culture is very high compared to the grade XI books. 41% of the pictures and reading texts contain source/local language cultural content. Meanwhile, the international language culture content is quite high at 36% in the reading pictures. Meanwhile, the target language culture category only reached 23%. Class XII textbooks are quite different from class XI in terms of the percentage of insertion of target language culture and international culture. Grade XII books are more varied in the context of presenting culture.

Table 3 Cultural categories in English textbook for grade XII

No	Cultural categories	N	P
1	Target culture	15	23%
2	Local culture	27	41%
3	International culture	24	36%
<b>Total</b>		<b>66</b>	<b>100%</b>

Content analysis was conducted on two textbooks, namely textbooks for grades XI and XII, by only analyzing the reading and image sections. These two sections are considered representative so there is no need to analyze other sections, in addition to reasons of limited time and energy. In class XI textbooks, the cultural aspects that are mostly discussed are socialization and life phenomena in various forms of illustrations (48%). Then, the other portion displays many aspects related to beliefs and habits (27%) and social interactions (24%). This is similar to the data on the results of the analysis of the reading text which shows that the aspects of

socialization and life phenomena are the most dominant of the other aspects. This shows that the cultural aspects that appear in the grade XI textbooks are not very diverse because they only concern 3 cultural aspects.

Table 4 Cultural aspects in English textbook for grade XI

No	Cultural aspects	F	P
1	Social identity and social group	0	0%
2	Soocial Interaction	8	24%
3	Belief and behaviour	9	27%
4	Social and political institutions	0	0%
5	Socialisation and the life cycle	16	48%
6	National history	0	0%
7	National geography	0	0%
8	Stereotype and national identity	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

In class XII textbooks, the cultural aspects are more diverse. Almost all cultural aspects that are items in this analysis are fulfilled. The largest portions are national geography and national identity, which are 23% and 16% respectively. In addition to these two aspects, social and group identity, socialization and national identity also received an insignificant portion of 11% each. Meanwhile, other aspects are represented below 10%.

Table 5 Cultural aspects in English textbook for grade XII

No	Cultural Aspect	N	P
1	Social identity and social group	8	11%
2	Soocial Interaction	6	9%
3	Belief and behaviour	8	11%
4	Social and political institutions	4	6%
5	Socialisation and the life cycle	8	11%
6	National history	4	6%
7	National geography	16	23%
8	Stereotype and national identity	11	16%
9	Uncategorised	5	7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Result from interview

Interviews were conducted with three English teachers separately. Open-ended questions were asked and respondents were given the freedom to explore their answers. Three core questions were asked: their perceptions of intercultural competence and the importance of learning culture, which cultural categories should be taught to students and what aspects of culture should be taught to students.

All three respondents agreed that intercultural competence is very important for students because learning a language cannot be separated from the culture of the language itself. So it is necessary to introduce terms that may not exist in the local culture/culture where the student lives. This is important so that they are able to communicate not only correctly, but appropriately according to context. Another reason mentioned by respondents is the location of Lombok as a tourism area visited by guests from various countries so it is necessary to master English both language and culture. Another reason mentioned was the opportunity for students to study abroad so that this intercultural competence becomes an asset for them so that they can interact later in the country where they study.

R1:

*“Very necessary. The textbooks used in language training even introduce customary terms that may not be familiar. Learning about other people's cultures is not something to be afraid of because it will be found in the location.”*

R2:

*“It is very necessary since our area is a tourism area, not only for vacationing but also wanting to know the culture of the area.”*

R3:

*“It is very necessary because we interact not only with Indonesians, especially since we are a tourist area, there will be many tourists and outsiders. And we need to introduce to them, who knows they could study abroad, so there needs to be an overview.”*

### **Cultural categories in English language teaching**

On the question of which cultural categories should be taught to students, there were three different answers. First, they said that local culture should have a larger portion than outside culture (target language culture and international language culture). This is due to the belief that their own culture should be prioritized so that they can introduce it to outsiders. Secondly, the target language culture and international language culture are also important because they will introduce new terms and regional names in other countries so that they become familiar. Thirdly, there are respondents who think that the cultural categories in English language learning should be balanced. In addition to containing local language culture, it is also necessary to provide a portion of target language culture and international language culture.

R2:

*“For beginning, the culture of the region itself is necessary.”*

R3:

*“It is also important to introduce local culture, educate local culture, so that when there are visitors or guests, they can explain in English.”*

However, in addition to local culture, two respondents also emphasized the importance of learning the target language culture. According to R3, students are already familiar with the local culture because they learn directly in community life. R1 also emphasized that the textbooks should also increase the cultural content of the target language by introducing places in the UK etc.

R1:

*“Textbooks tell us about Stanford Bridge, places in the UK and other places. Introduce the term underground etc. that we don't have here.”*

R3:

*“Local culture is already understood from the surrounding environment, they have memorized it. If it's a foreign culture then it can't just be done on its own, but it will be more interesting if they are introduced to it.”*

There are also respondents who argue that there should be a concept of proportionality in determining which cultural categories should be taught in English language learning. The content of local culture, target language and international culture should be balanced.

R3:

*“There must be a balance between local and foreign cultures.”*

### **Cultural aspects of English language learning**

The first respondent argued that in learning English, it is also necessary to introduce some places in other countries so that they are familiar and students have an idea. Cultural aspects that are important to introduce are those related to art as an identity or characteristic of the region or country.

R1:

*“Textbooks tell us about Stanford Bridge, places in the UK and other places. It introduces underground terms etc. that we don't have here. In addition, learning Monday is important because of the experience of performing arts when I studied in Pakistan. Art became a specialty.”*



In addition, learning local culture that can be introduced to foreigners is considered very important, especially learning things that can be offered to foreigners considering Lombok is a tourist area that is visited by many people.

R2

*"It is important to introduce things related to tourism. Local culture that foreigners can learn from is also necessary."*

Other respondents argued that the cultural aspects that should be introduced are food and arts. Food needs to be introduced so that students are able to offer it to visitors so that it provides economic benefits. In addition, art is also something that must be introduced in the context of intercultural communication.

R3

*"The form of culture is food or something that can have an effect on advancing the economy so that visitors are interested in trying it. Dance and artistry are also very important."*

## **Discussion**

Motivation is fundamental in English language learning. One type of motivation that students should have is instrumental motivation. This motivation reinforces students to learn English in order to engage as a global society so that English becomes a communication tool. This study found that, in terms of motivation, more than 50% were motivated to learn English because they wanted to be able to communicate with foreigners. This is similar to the research conducted by Rita Sari (Sari, 2019) that students' motivation in learning English is to be able to communicate with outsiders. In addition, some of them want to continue their studies abroad and introduce Indonesian culture abroad. This phenomenon is quite interesting considering that this research was conducted in a boarding school setting. This variation in their choices shows that students have an open mind about global insights. It is also reinforced by the results which show that students do not only learn English from teachers and books, but from social media and Youtube, even through games. One more supporting data is that the choice of countries they want to visit ranges in America and Europe. Only about 30% of them want to go to Middle Eastern countries.

This phenomenon occurs due to many factors. One of them is the role of teachers in transferring knowledge and information both personally and professionally. Teachers have a strategic role in instilling student motivation in learning (Usman et al., 2016). When teachers succeed in playing this role, motivation will emerge from the students themselves (Mubarak, 2019).

Meanwhile, the observation results show that teachers already understand the concept of cultural integration in English language learning, but there are still some who have not technically taught it in class. This can be caused by several obstacles such as the lack of teacher preparation or the real condition of students in the classroom who still need other materials. Meanwhile, from the results of the textbook analysis that the researchers have conducted, there are various variations of cultural categories and cultural aspects that can be taught to students. The content analysis found that there is still domination of the local culture/source language compared to the target language culture. The results of this study are the same as those conducted by (Hermawan & Noerkhasanah, 2012; Nafiah, 2020) who found that the value of culture and local wisdom is positively assessed by teachers and students so it is important to be used in English language learning. The same research results were also shown by (Ariawan, 2020) that local culture is prioritized in several school textbooks, especially books recommended by the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, in this study, the proportion of the emergence of the target language and international culture is also quite a lot with, one of them, bringing up international tourism in the US and Africa. Even some topics in reading texts also mention or identify some international language cultures such as China.

In terms of cultural aspects, socialization and daily life phenomena such as schools, markets, and environmental conditions, are often raised as discussions in this textbook. One substance of the results of this study is that English teachers at the school as the research location agree that cultural insertion in English learning is very important as an effort to instill intercultural competence in students. Moreover, Lombok's status as an international priority

tourist destination adds to the urgency. In addition, opportunities to study abroad are also very open with various scholarships from government and non-government institutions that allow students to continue their studies in various countries. Therefore, teachers emphasize mastery of local culture so that it will be easy to introduce it to foreigners. However, learning the culture of a foreign language is also important so that students do not experience culture shock later when visiting the country. As for the cultural aspect, respondents argued that food, art, dance and historical places are important parts that should be included in English learning materials.

## Conclusion

The focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers in Islamic boarding schools towards intercultural competence in English language learning. This study utilized a qualitative design by using several techniques to collect data: questionnaires, observations, content analysis and interviews. The results showed that teachers strongly agree with cultural integration in English language learning. This will foster intercultural competence in students so that they will become more open individuals in viewing any cultural differences that exist in the community, both on a local, national and global scale. The lack of resources that promote culture proportionally in English language learning is an obstacle in itself. It needs a textbook that is representative and can be a reference for teachers in teaching English based on intercultural competence. In addition, teachers' competence in transferring knowledge related to certain cultural information is also still limited due to the absence of training or lack of direct experience interacting in culturally different environments, more specifically the target language culture and international culture. Therefore, teacher training in increasing awareness, knowledge and skills of teaching English based on intercultural competence needs to be implemented.

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