COMMUNICATIVE REPERTOIRES USED BY STUDENTS WITH MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUNDS IN ESL WRITING CLASSROOM

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Article History: Received on 24th March 2020, Revised on 26th April 2020, Published on 06th May 2020

Abstract

Purpose of the study: The objective of this study is to describe the communicative repertoires used by students with multicultural backgrounds in an ESL writing classroom. We drew upon the notion of communicative repertoires and English as an International Language (EIL) to explain how gestures, turn-taking habits, and different dialects shaped the interaction among students during the process of English language learning.

Methodology: The research method was a case study in which classroom observation, field notes, interviews, and documentation were carried out as the tools for data collections. The data were then analyzed qualitatively and were discussed within various perspectives from scholars in the related discipline to explain the findings of this study.

Main Findings: We found that the participants used some forms of communicative repertoires (i.e., gestures, turn-takings, and dialects) that are culturally-bound to their own heritage culture. Although the use of these traits was perceived differently among students, these communicative repertoires leveraged their English learning process situated within a dynamic bidirectional classroom interaction.

Applications of this study: This study is applicable in a classroom in which students are from different cultural backgrounds. It might also be useful for a teacher who experiences teaching English for students who are culturally different from her/him. In a wider context, this study can be an additional reference for some areas of English Language Teaching (ELT) disciplines like teaching writing skills or teaching culture.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The findings suggest that English teachers and students need to recognize non-linguistic elements of interaction as tools to heighten the awareness of using the language for learning. The goal is not to achieve elegant language performance, but to widen opportunities in demonstrating communicative competences, so intelligibility can be achieved.

Keywords: Communicative Repertoires, English Language Teaching, English as an International Language.

INTRODUCTION

Students who learn English as a second, foreign, or additional language often bring a set of distinct knowledge to the classroom, which could be utilized to develop language skills. Unfortunately, this knowledge that comes naturally from homes and communities has not been recognized in educational settings (Martinez, et al., 2017). Students’ social and cultural resources in communicating a new language are considered as deficits for many language educators (Kirkland, 2010). This situation is likely to happen due to less attention paid to those two elements since language teaching focuses more on developing grammatical competence rather than socio-cultural competence. This competence refers to the ability to use language contextually, which involves pragmatic knowledge about how language can be applied appropriately in a society. If the goal of learning the language is to communicate effectively, then students should have the opportunities to use the language in various ways (Ibatova & Smirnova, 2019), including multiple means of communication such as, gestures, dress, postures, and accessories (Rymes, 2012) which closely attribute to social construct and daily practices.

The possible way to observe how students use those non-verbal elements, in reality, is through classroom interaction. Vygotsky’s (1987) notion of consciousness insisted that the manifestation of the thinking process is first developed through interaction in an activity and that it should be socially benefitting (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). The interaction may occur between student-student or teacher-student. In a heterogeneous classroom context where the students have already enacted to a certain culture and ethnicity, these dyadic relationships perhaps will not run as smoothly as those in a homogeneous classroom. It is due to the function of communicative elements (e.g., gestures, dialects, turn-takings) that might be perceived differently across individuals. For this reason, Rymes (2014) advocates that multiple functions of language should be evaluated to understand the intricacy of students’ communicative repertoires. By doing so, it is expected that learning objectives can be achieved, and misunderstanding related to language usage can be avoided when the interaction is taking place.

Communicative repertoires have long been researched in the language teaching discipline. It is deemed as assistance to accelerate students’ understanding about teaching materials delivered in the classroom, as reported in the study of Hopewell (2011), Martinez (2010), and Jiménez, et al. (2015), but the focus of their works is limited to translanguage...
activity. The analysis of communicative aspects like gesture, turn-taking, or pausing is not found in those previous research. Another study conducted by Gutierrez, et al. (2011) shows an attempt to find the significances of linguistic repertoires in a writing class. Their study presents a robust effect of how students’ familiarity with sociocultural context helps them composing a text. Although participants are bilingual speakers, the situation does not highlight the diversity of language use because most participants share the same first language. This is the existing gap that we try to fill in this current study. We sought participants from different nationalities with different native languages to broaden our perspective about how these two components shape their awareness about cultural barriers among them. The aim was to find the answer to how the class navigates cultural differences and deals with communication breakdowns by optimizing the use of students’ repertoires with English as the only verbal means of communication.

To actualize the investigation, we addressed an overarching research question: how do students with diverse cultural backgrounds exert communicative repertoires in an ESL writing classroom? We observed the teaching of writing in the ESL writing program at one tertiary education. The program is designed for international graduate students who come from different countries. The students are placed based on the result of their ESL composition placement test before starting graduate school. Thus, the class is taught in the context of English as a second language. Teaching writing in a diverse environment in which the students come from different countries and have different English proficiency as well as different major yielded a unique teaching and learning process as a measured variable to study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study lies on the underpinning notion of English as International Language (EIL) as proposed by Canagarajah (1999), Matsuda (2012), McKay (2009), Kachru (1992), and Smith (1976). EIL, in their essence, is defined as a language of broader communication where the user can be among individuals across nations or within one country that may trigger wide variations of English. EIL allows a variety of usages that is not necessarily one user or learner of English should achieve a certain degree of native-like competence. Pennycook (2017) asserts that as English has been widely used across social differences, it creates a new atmosphere for descriptive grammar while marking the end of prescriptive grammar. Hinkel (2018) defines descriptive grammar a language that is casually used by its speakers, which is strongly affected by the context where it is used. Prescriptive grammar, on the other hand, specifies how language is supposed to be used by providing its rules and structures. Nevertheless, some scholars like Wossabi (2014), Bodine (1975), Davis (2019), and Rodriguez-Gil (2003), criticize the inflexibility of this dichotomy. A similarity among their arguments is that socio-cultural context cannot be ignored while making meaning of another language.

Making meaning of English, in this regard, is somehow challenged by a huge number of English speakers from Kachru’s (1992). Quantitatively, Crystal (2003) reported that roughly three out of four English speakers do not speak English as their mother tongue, but rather their second or foreign language. This fact, according to Seidlhofer (2005), has resulted in two paradoxical situations. First, there are many new verbal exchanges created by non-English native speakers without the involvement of native speakers. Second, native speakers, in contrast, are still regarded as a role model of a standardized English. As a win-win solution for this situation, the goal of teaching EIL is shifting, from being a fluent speaker like a native to be more globally accepted. McKay (2009) suggested that the goal of teaching EIL is to ensure clarity among English speakers, to help students develop strategies to achieve pleasure when English is used in different cultures and to develop text competencies. It is, therefore, in this study, we draw upon the notion of communicative repertoires introduced by Gumperz (1972) as a linguistic tool to discover classroom interaction where the participants utilized varied use of English. This tool views language as codes derived from gestures, dialects, styles, dresses, postures, and accessories. The use of language might be different among speakers with the same language or with different languages which sometimes produces different meanings. Rymes (2010) underlined features of communicative repertoires in classroom discourse such as turn-taking habits, gestures, pronunciations of certain words, and languages in play. To understand the repertoires in the classroom setting, researchers can classify various classroom events, characterize the language use and the variations.

Language in this study is used as a medium to understand how classroom members construct the teaching and learning experiences. The interaction in the classroom creates a different communicative environment from other settings (e.g., peer interaction or community) (Green, 1983). Besides, classroom interaction is not simply an activity of learning the lesson. There are meanings and cultural values that attached beyond what actually happens in a classroom (Bloome, et al., 1989). As such, in order to achieve the learning outcomes effectively, each member of a classroom should make sense of the language and the culture. Central to this framework is the opportunities provided for students to demonstrate their communicative competences during the process of learning, not the performance outcomes in using the language (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974).

METHODOLOGY

A case study was employed as the research design (Duff, 2012). The classroom observations were conducted twice a week for one month. Field notes, interview, and documentation were also gathered for data triangulation. The setting of this study was a writing class in English as a Second Language (ESL) at a university setting situated in the Midwestern area of the United States. The participants were graduate students enrolled in this class based on the result of their composition placement test prior to the beginning of their graduate study at the university. There were 18 students in a
weekly-based attendance and one ESL instructor. The ESL instructor is a female Indonesian who has been teaching ESL for three years as a teaching assistant. She is named pseudonym in this study as Sarah. When this study was conducted, Sarah was a Ph.D. candidate in foreign and second language education programs. She was exposed to a diverse teaching environment in which the students come from different countries, have different English proficiencies, and take different majors. Look at Table 1 below for the student participants’ demographic information.

Table 1: Demographic information of student participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of student participants</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of student participants based on country of origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 from China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 from India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 from Brazil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 from Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Designated major</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<td>Medicines</td>
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<td>Finances</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Sciences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the positionality of the researchers, Sarah and the first author have known each other since they started graduate school at the university. The first author was pursuing his doctoral degree in reading and literacy. The data were mainly collected by the first author. He took an outsider standpoint (Yin, 2014) during the observation by sitting in the class and did not interrupt the process of teaching and learning. Over time, his existence in the classroom became familiar to the participants, so everyone was comfortable enough and acted naturally. The second author, on the other hand, provided assistance to the first author in analysing the data and evaluating the report of this study. She also collaborated with the first author to clarify any issues related to the trustworthiness of the data. She was accomplishing her master’s degree in applied linguistics during the completion of this research. The major focus of her study was second language acquisition and to some extent, she studied sociolinguistics, too. Her knowledge contributes to deepening the analysis.

The observation and field notes focused on the atmosphere of the classroom regarding the process of teaching and learning, such as steps in teaching, class setting, classroom behaviour, and the student’s one-on-one interaction. The interview was conducted in English to gain information about the experiences of both the instructor and the students. They were asked informally in a semi-structured interview about their experiences in the teaching and learning ESL writing, including learning materials, classroom interaction, difficulties, and classroom behaviours. We used audio recording during the observation and the interview. For analysis purposes, we transcribed verbatim the classroom interaction and the interview in order to capture the flow of the discourse in written and spatial medium (Edwards, 2001). We analysed the data by employing the grounded theory method.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to describe the communicative repertoires used by students with multicultural backgrounds in an ESL academic writing class. Coming from diverse countries, the participants in this study (the ESL instructor and 18 students) utilized their social and cultural dimensions as resources to learn English. In a preliminary observation, we found that communicative repertoires were evident in the interaction between Sarah and the students, and among the students. There were various forms of English used in different pronunciations, intonations, and rhetorical styles. We identified four major groups in the classroom based on country of origin: (1) China, (2) India, (3) Brazil, and (4) Russia. The instructor, Sarah, is from Indonesia. So, including her, there were five countries in one class and none of them was a native English speaker. During the interaction, the student participants tended to sit together in a group of the related country of origin. They often used their first language when talking to their group mates, even when the instructor was still explaining an activity. This condition continued in every meeting.

When we confirmed to Sarah about this concern during an interview, she explained that,

“Since I believe their first language can facilitate their learning, I don’t forbid them to use it for discussion in their own group. And they are adult; I think they are responsible enough for their own understanding of the lesson, so I can tolerate that, as long as they are making progress in their writing.”

It is clear that Sarah categorized the students’ first language as a learning resource in her teaching. Students whose first language is the same can use it to confirm or discuss the lesson, so they can progress faster in learning writing and gain a
deeper understanding of classroom instruction. This finding is a point of departure to explore more about the research question that is how students with diverse cultural backgrounds exert communicative repertoires in an ESL writing classroom.

As for the analysis, we used the communicative repertoire (Gumprez, 1972; Rymes, 2010) to draw the relation between language and culture within the classroom that might shape the notion of language learning. The first aspect that we looked at was gesture since it is believed that some forms of gestures (e.g., eye contact, hand, and head movements) have a possibility to mediate understanding. According to Goldin-Meadow (2005), gesture refers to any movements that are directly associated with what the speakers convey. The way how somebody uses gestures is varied. Some people use their hands to imitate the objects that they are discussing, point out the objects that refer to their speech or utilize some parts of their body to indicate certain actions that are generally accepted in their society. For example, when someone has done a great presentation in a meeting and the audience will stand up and give applause to support and appreciate what the presenter has done.

However, some gestures might not be interpreted similarly across the world owing to different cultures, languages, races, and any other socio-cultural aspects. This is what Sarah, the Indonesian teacher, experienced in her writing class. She misunderstood the head-shaking gesture when interacting with her Indian student, called pseudonym here as Nithya. When Nithya asked Sarah, a question related to a task, Nithya confirmed that she has understood the explanation by saying “O.K.” but, at the same time, she was shaking her head (see the following excerpt), which in Indian culture signals that everything is clear or good. In Sarah’s metacognitive awareness, Nithya still did not understand, thus she kept explaining the case in different ways until Nithya said: “I got your point” and stopped shaking her head.

(Thes students were assigned to enrich their paragraph by adding citation based on existing related literatures)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nithya: (raising hand) I have a question.</th>
<th>Sarah: Yes, please!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nithya: About the tenses in writing citation, what tenses that we generally use? like Smith stated or Smith states?</td>
<td>Sarah: That’s a very good question. Well, it basically depends on common writing consensus in your field. But generally, we use the past tense or perfect tense. So, for example, you might write Smith stated that, outlined that, or underlined that. Or using perfect tense like ‘Studies have found that. ‘Previous research has argued that’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nithya: O.K. (shaking her head for a couple of seconds)</td>
<td>Sarah: Again, it is closely related to the writing convention in your field. Some writers prefer to use past tense or present perfect, others prefer to use the present. But the present tense is not commonly used since the study was done in the past right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nithya: O.K. (shaking her head for a couple of seconds)</td>
<td>Sarah: So, let’s take a look at APA styles provided in Purdue online course. So… here… Yes… here… look! they said here it should be past tense or present perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nithya: O.K. (shaking her head for a couple of seconds)</td>
<td>Sarah: Well, let’s try in the COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). What does COCA say about your question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nithya: Yes, I got your point (shaking her head for a couple of seconds). Thanks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We showed Sarah about the circumstance above during the interview. She realized that the “shaking-head signal” is part of Indian culture to signify agreement; however, she found it was quite surprising to experience it for the first time. She recounted, “I have a lot of Chinese friends that make me familiar enough to their English and gestures when speaking, but not from India. So, it takes me some time to catch my Indian students’ point when they are speaking.” This statement is in line with Erickson (2004) that similar experience in the past can help us understanding or predicting what the next talk should be. Because Sarah, in this case, cannot capture the general sense of what head-shaking means. This possibly happened because she has a different interpretation about head-shaking in her daily practices. As such, she spontaneously referred to her personal perception and assumed that her Indian students had the same thought as hers. Additionally, she had no experience in communicating with people from India. When the interaction occurred between them for the first time, Sarah was still attached to her initial knowledge that head-shaking means disagreement because that is how people in her country of origin practice it. Regardless of this contrasting view, Sarah was successful to maintain the conversation smoothly to ensure that Nithya had understood her explanation as she was committed to facilitate her student’s learning.

In regard to language learning, gesture has a strong connection with the learning process. Goldin-Meadow and Wagner (2005) state that gesture and speech are two aspects that cannot be separated from students’ performance as gestures signal more than what words can be expressed. They believe that gestures indicate what students are actually thinking or what is truly happening in their mind although sometimes there is a mismatch between gestures and utterances. This form of nonverbal communication will help teachers to diagnose which learning targets that have or have not worked for students. In a recent study, Pratolo (2019) argues that body language plays a pivotal role in making classroom interaction
effective, particularly gestures. Appropriate gestures or hand signals help students to understand the teacher’s explanation more easily. Similarly, students may use gestures to express their meaning and ideas or to clarify questions and answers. Using gestures while interacting may be classified as social strategies to increase interaction and more empathetic understanding (Gani, et al., 2015). However, if the teacher and the students come from multicultural backgrounds, they need to understand the meaning of non-verbal communication of every member of the classroom.

For the contribution to language learning, Tellier (2005) reveals that gestures have a robust effect to improve students’ memorization of vocabulary in their first language. Alibali and Nathan (2007) also advise that hand and arm gestures can act as a scaffolding tool when teachers are able to adjust it with the information accordingly. The word “scaffolding” has a strong attachment to Vygotsky (1987) whose work mostly focused on Psychology and Psycholinguistics so that he has brought psychological theories to the field of language acquisition. In the language acquisition context, Scaffolding has long been an important factor that aids students to comprehend learning materials. Scaffolding itself is defined as assistance provided to help students accomplish the task and improve their understanding and without it, it seems less possible for students to gain the expected learning achievements (Hammond, 2001). From the views above, the scholars have shown that inevitably the role of gesture either in daily communication or more specifically in the language classroom is pivotal to digest the information given by speakers.

The second aspect of the communicative repertoire that we focused on was turn-taking participation of who can talk and when to talk (Gumperz, 1972; Green, 1983; Rymes, 2010). In other words, turn-taking is the ability to know when to start and finish talking in a conversation. Turn-taking then is used as an organizational tool in dialogic discourse. For instance, a speaker may lower the volume of their voice to signal a stopping point of an utterance. This process entails cognitive processing in which a speaker uses various language properties (Levinson, 2016). Turn-taking management in the classroom context plays a major component that signifies the structure of social interaction and social organization (Demajo, 1982). Since language use is a rule-governed, expectation for participation is determined by its culture (Green, 1983). In this sense, two students in the following excerpt, called pseudonym as Yi (a Chinese student) and Rahul (an Indian student) engaged in an interaction that was culturally-bond to their first language culture attached to their English.

(The underlined word/syllable shows intonation or syllable stress)

Yi : So, what do you think? Are you still writing? (1)
Rahul : So, we need to write here? (pointing out his laptop screen)
Yi : … aaa … Yup! So, what is your name?
Rahul : (Spelling his name)
Yi : O.K. So, what is your opinion about answer number one (Fast and unique Chinese – English falling intonation) (5)
Rahul : Sorry, say it again.
Yi : If you haven’t had your answer, take your time.
Rahul : Ooh . . . I think this paragraph is too long, right? I am struggling with reading it. (Slow and unique Indian – English ‘syllable’ stress) (10)
Yi : Are you saying this paragraph is difficult to understand?
Rahul : Yes! Because the organization of the paragraph is not that easy to read like no connecting word between sentences.
Yi : Sorry, can you repeat it?
Rahul : You know, like no sequential order … um…um… first, second, third (using a hand gesture to point out paragraphs) (15)
Yi : Oh, ya…ya…
Rahul : I think that’s important
Yi : O.K. you can type your answer then
Rahul : Should I type here? (20)
Yi : I think so.
Rahul : O.K.

According to Sacks, et al. (1974), there are three rules of how turn-taking occurs. First, the speaker will select the next speaker after she/he finishes speaking. Second, the next speaker nominates him/herself to give a response. If no one is willing to speak when it comes to the third rule which is the first speaker gets the turn to speak or the conversation end. From the excerpt above, it is clear that the first rule was mostly chosen. This might happen because there are only two people involved in the conversation, so the turn-taking mechanism is not really complex as the speaker already gets the one who will give the response. The selection strategy that Yi used in the conversation was pointing Rahul to speak by asking a question, the pronoun ‘you’ inline 1 is directly for Rahul. After that and onwards, both students paid careful attention when someone was talking without interrupting until the speaker finished talking.

This turn-taking participation is commonly accepted in Asian culture. Unlike people from western countries, such as the US and Italy, who do not really mind being interrupted, people from Asia tend to wait for the interlocutor to finish as a way to show politeness (Ulijn & Xiangling, 1995). This is supported by Yi’s explanation during the interview, saying
that “…in Chinese culture, especially in a learning context, we are more passive. We listen first to our partner before giving feedbacks”. As exemplified in the excerpt above, both speakers show many agreements to each other’s utterances (e.g., line 3, 5, 13, 18) although in some occasions they also performed other forms of speech acts within their turn-taking like confirming (e.g., line 2, and 12) and asking for clarification (e.g., line 7, and 15).

The way both speakers used different types of speech acts demonstrates that they worked so well to keep the conversation in harmony. Either Yi or Rahul was able to build awareness to anticipate intercultural communication breakdowns and could maintain a smooth conversation. This effort is essential because it will provide a learning opportunity for students. *Sivers, et al., (2009)* studied the cultural variation of turn-taking during the conversation. They discovered that there were strong parallels in turn-taking behaviour across 10 languages depending on the varied type, geographical location, and cultural setting. Similar findings were found by *Young (2018)* who investigated the contrastive models for turn-taking in English and Japanese. He found that Japanese students of English often use pauses between speakers that reflect that Japanese style of floor management. If teachers would like to teach the students to use the English style of floor management, understanding that reorientation may be a difficult transition for the students.

Studying turn-taking in small group interaction, *Hellerman (2005)* found that turn-taking, especially in the beginning of the classroom may be used as resources to facilitate advanced language development. *Rymes (2010)* highlights that raising awareness of how students participate differently in different class setting can build resources for further learning activities. Moreover, managing a synchronous turn-taking habits is an effort to have intelligibility (*Erickson, 2004; McKay, 2009*) which is the primary goal in communicative competence. It is expected that students not only able to speak fluently but also able to recognize any possibilities that might intrude the conversation to raise their socio-cultural awareness.

The third communicative repertoire that we found was related to dialects. The excerpt below also shows how the speakers have distinct dialects and pronunciation of certain words. Both students used question or statement of confirmation a couple of times to make sure what his interlocutor was saying. We suspect that what makes them difficult to understand each other is because of their different English dialects and pronunciation. The Chinese student, Yi, mostly used nasal sound like [n] and [m] with certain falling intonation at the end of every sentence, which is similar to when he speaks Chinese, while the Indian student, Rahul, stressed certain syllables as more voiced like [I] or [r] just like when he speaks Indian language. The examples are in bold and underlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yi</th>
<th>O.K. So, what is your opinion about answer number one? <em>(Fast and unique Chinese – English falling intonation)</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rahul</td>
<td>Sorry, say it again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yi</td>
<td>If you haven’t had your answer, take your time.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Rahul</td>
<td>You know, like no sequential order … um…um… first, second, third <em>(using hand gesture to point out paragraphs)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both of the students above put an effort in their interaction by trying to negotiate the meaning and respect the differences for the sake of learning. Although the context is only seen from their pronunciation, it is evident that culture might shape meaning and understanding. By confirming each other, for instance, “sorry, say it again”, “are you saying…”, “sorry, can you repeat?”, they are actually negotiating meaning and assume that different dialect and pronunciation in culture is not a serious matter for learning (*Rymes, 2010*) because the primary goal of communication is to deliver the messages. When the message is conveyed, language has finished its job as a means of communication. Majority of second language acquisition nowadays also puts more emphasize on the development of communicative competence as the main goal of learning a new language. This view has replaced the traditional perception which believes that the ultimate target is to be native-like. This finding also confirms what *Matsuda and Matsuda (2010)* argue that many English language users deviates more naturally from the accepted norms and sometimes the deviations are more marked than others that may create important social meanings. It means that when students learn another language, they do not only master the grammatical aspect but also social norms about how the language can be used appropriately.

**CONCLUSION**

In this study we have analyzed gestures, turn-taking habits, and dialects or pronunciation of certain words as components of communicative repertoires. We conclude recognizing communicative repertoires in a classroom is pivotal in order to heighten the awareness of using language for learning, keep a smooth conversation, and avoid communication breakdowns. This recognition may shift the goal of language teaching. The goal is not to achieve elegant language performance, but to widen opportunities that demonstrate communicative competence (*Hymes, 1974*) which emphasizes more on the appropriateness of language use rather than learning the language itself. Furthermore, the use of
communicative repertoires in a classroom may be followed by certain speech-acts of politeness, agreement or disagreement (Sameer, 2017; Sharqawi & Anthony, 2019), which may be dependent on individual differences and the teachers are expected to be aware of these differences. Future researchers may examine the linguistic variation in a classroom that consists of multicultural students as reflected in this study.

Concerning the idea of English as an International English (EIL) which shows the growing number of English learners around the world and the fact that the vast majority of them are not English native speakers, a productive English teaching should recognize the various ways of English use in multilingual communities (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1992; Matsuda 2012; McKay, 2009; Smith, 1976). Research continues to challenge the existence of English standard; should a speaker of English coming from non-English speaking countries achieve an English-native-like competence? Additionally, more research is needed to enrich the current knowledge on the influence of non-verbal communication within the frame of EIL.

We subscribe to the view that language in classroom setting is not only a medium to learn the lesson, but also a lesson to be learned. Meaning that by using language, teaching is not simply an activity of transforming knowledge from the teacher to the students. Beyond than that, there is culture, which is attached to each member of the class based on country of origin, and culture that exists within the classroom. Interaction, academic procedures, cultural meaning and values are tied to the learning process (Bloome, et al., 1989). In order to achieve the learning outcomes effectively, each member of the classroom should make sense of the culture; both classroom culture and individual culture. Future researchers might be interested to investigate how does the instructor develop intercultural sensitivity in the ESL classroom? If spoken English in the teaching practice is viewed as a tool to master written form, how does every member of the classroom make sense of its relation?

Finally, recognizing communicative repertoires that exist during English teaching is pivotal for intelligibility. When facing variety use of English as a challenge, teachers need to ensure mutual intelligibility among the speakers is taken place (McKay, 2009). Intelligibility is speakers’ ability to use alternative ways to signal different intention so that people can understand the intention without having difficult utterances (Erickson, 2004). Paying attention to different gestures, turn taking habits, and dialects can facilitate meaning (Bynes, 2010). This study, however, will be more comprehensive with presence of analyzing the cultural identity possessed by the students in a multicultural classroom. For example, there are cross-cultural differences during making meaning by those students. The differences may challenge the identity of each interlocutor. Should the speakers, like the student participants in this study change their cultural identity? This question needs to be investigated further study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to extend our gratitude for the reviewers of this manuscript who have guided us to improve the quality of the content and the writing. This study did not receive financial support from any governmental or organizational agents.

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