

## STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON USING STORYTELLING IN DEVELOPING SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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### ABSTRACT

*The research aimed at finding out students' perception of using storytelling as one of the techniques used in English class in order to develop students' sociocultural competence. The research was conducted under mixed-method research. The sample of the research was English students at IAIN Bukittinggi who had taken storytelling classes and English students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang who had joined an English activity (storytelling) held by the English students association of English study program. Data collection was done by distributing questionnaires and conducting interview. The instruments of the research were a questionnaire and an interview guide. The data were analyzed using quantitative analysis for the data from the questionnaire and qualitative analysis for the data from the interview. The research finding shows that the students agree that they have improved their ability in sociocultural competence, at least in five aspects. They state that they are good in these five elements; (1) students' attitude toward sociocultural competence, (2) students' knowledge of sociocultural competence, (3) students' ability to interpret and relate cultural issues, (4) students' ability in discovery and interaction, and (5) students' ability of critical cultural awareness. Thus, it can be stated that storytelling is a good technique that can be used to develop students' sociocultural competence based on students' perceptions.*

**Keywords:** student perception, story-telling, socio-cultural competence

### INTRODUCTION

Today's English learning has come into a phase that emphasizes the use and application of language, both oral and written communication. Learning a foreign language nowadays is not merely about producing sentences that are grammatically correct but considering the appropriateness of those sentences based on mutual understanding among the language users. In other words, the language students are expected to be able to produce understandable texts. Furthermore, it is in line with the statements from Tariq et al. (2019), which state that producing language is a social process involving the interaction among language users who have the same or even different cultures. It proves that the skills of interpretation and establishing relationships between two different

cultures and the skills of discovery and interaction are mainly important during communication among language users who have different mother tongues (Byram, 1995; Hoff, 2020; Smakova & Paulsrud, 2020). Moreover, it is also strengthened by Croucher (2020), who has explained that exploring cultures in many cases will always intersect and involve discussion of human communication and its language.

These theories lead to a general concept that foreign language learners should be able to produce the language by involving a set of competencies that include not only grammatical competence but also sociolinguistics competence and strategic competence, mainly known as communicative competence (Prihatiningsih, 2020; Tulasi & Murthy, 2022; Khomenko et al., 2021). This theory, in fact, is used as a basis to develop the curriculum in Indonesia.

The goal of teaching English as a foreign language has to mainly concern with all standards of communicative competence. Sociocultural competence is the ability to use language appropriately by considering cultural elements and the situation in which the language is used (Kattayeva, 2022; Jumanazarovna, 2020). To achieve mutual understanding in communication, speakers must have the willingness and ability to communicate and participate in cultural dialogue, which means they have sociocultural competence. The concept of sociocultural competence is basically based on the argument that foreign languages and cultures reflect the daily lives of people around the world (Jumanazarovna, 2020; Arif & Jusuf, 2022). Therefore, foreign language learning, in this context, English learning in Indonesia, should encourage students to have competencies related to foreign languages and cultures and enable them to communicate across cultures.

In the implementation of learning English, many teaching methods and techniques have been used, all of which lead to the achievement of the goal of mastering English. One method that emphasizes communication skills is storytelling. Many previous studies have discussed the benefits and implementation of storytelling in various English competencies, such as improving speaking skills, interacting fluently, increasing vocabulary levels, and improving reading skills and grammar (Satriani, 2019; Nguyen, 2021). However, theoretically, storytelling is also helpful for improving the sociocultural competence of English language users. As stated by Ruppert, Adcock, and Crave (2017), storytelling can be used as one of the tools for developing students' competence in sociocultural aspects. It is said that storytelling is a fun teaching method, while it can also improve students' abilities in some areas, such as reading ability, speaking, writing, and sociocultural competence. Thus, storytelling is mentioned as a suggested teaching method in the classroom. Besides, Saripudin, Komalasari, and Anggraini (2021) have also argued that storytelling can strengthen students' characters. The values contained in a story may lead students to behave in a good manner (Saripudin, Komalasari, & Anggraini, 2021).

In this case, there have been many research conducted related to storytelling. Astuti (2017), Mutashim and Syafi'i (2018), Dewi (2021), and Sumbayak and Tamala (2022) do research to find out the effectiveness of storytelling in speaking activities. Besides, Hidayati (2020) and Kasami (2021) have also studied the advantages of storytelling in improving students' communication skill and motivation in using English. However, any research related to students' perceptions of viewing storytelling as an effort to develop sociocultural competence is still very limited. The researches so far discuss the use of storytelling in teaching English as a general aspect or even just limited in teaching speaking. In fact, there is almost none of the research investigated the effect of storytelling on developing students' sociocultural competence.

In other words, the research related to how students perceive the influence of using storytelling on their sociocultural competence is one of the significant areas of research that needs to be investigated more. For this reason, the research aims to look at students' perceptions of implementing storytelling as one teaching method containing elements of sociocultural competence. It is expected that the result of this research may give valuable input for the teachers on their students' perception of their sociocultural competence during English learning process. The result surely may give a picture of how the students reflect on their sociocultural competence. Thus, it may help the teacher to decide to use storytelling continuously in teaching English, which aims to involve sociocultural competence in teaching English.

## METHODS

The research applies a descriptive research using a mixed-method design. It aims to analyze students' perceptions of the use of storytelling in developing their sociocultural competence. The research describes students' opinions about their sociocultural competence development after taking a storytelling class. The research is done in two universities with English Education study programs and storytelling activities for the students. The research population is English students at IAIN Bukittinggi and UIN Imam Bonjol who have taken storytelling classes. At IAIN Bukittinggi, the storytelling class is offered under Spoken English Activity (SEA) subject, which has some sub-subjects, such as SEA storytelling class, SEA debate class, SEA news reader class, and others. While at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, the storytelling activity is a part of the extra activity of the students' association in the English Education study program. The total number of the population can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Population of the Research

Population	Total Number of Population
IAIN Bukittinggi	80 students
UIN Imam Bonjol	81 students
Total Population	161 students

Based on the population in Table 1, the researchers chose the samples for the research. The samples of the research are chosen by using cluster random sampling. Therefore, the samples are taken from 25% of the population (Sugiyono, 2010). Since the total population is 161 students, the total sample is 42 students, which is taken using random cluster sampling. Thus, the sample is taken from one class at IAIN Bukittinggi and one at UIN Imam Bonjol. However, because at UIN Imam Bonjol, storytelling is a part of the students' association in the English

Education study program, then the total number of students for one class is not as many as the total number of students for one class at IAIN Bukittinggi. The sample data for the research can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Samples of the Research

Sample	Total Number of Sample
IAIN Bukittinggi	33 students
UIN Imam Bonjol	9 students
Total Population	42 students

However, the samples that could fill out the questionnaire directly are only 20 students, while 22 students fill out the questionnaires through Google Forms since they still attend the classroom online. In other words, not all the samples can be met directly because the system of teaching-learning processes uses hybrid learning (a combination of offline and online learning). Data collection is conducted by distributing questionnaires and conducting interview. The instruments (questionnaire and interview guide) are categorized as a kind of self-design instrument in which the researchers have a part in designing the points included on the instruments. Besides, the use of both of those instruments is aimed at getting real data. In other words, the data from the questionnaire are supported by the data from the interview. Because of that, the data in the research are real data as a fact.

The points that are asked in the instruments of the research rely on the theory about students' perception of using storytelling in developing their sociocultural competence. It includes students' perception of the attitude, knowledge, interpreting and relating intercultural issues, discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

In using both questionnaires and interview guide, the researchers do validation for both of the instruments. The validation is done related to the points of the questionnaire checklist and questions in the interview guide. In order to validate the instruments, the researchers ask for help from the experts. The validation process is done before the researchers come to the field to collect the data.

In gathering the data, the researchers use a closed questionnaire and an interview. The data are gathered firstly by distributing closed-questionnaire to the students. In doing this, the researchers are helped by two assistances to distribute the questionnaires. The questionnaire covers students' perceptions of using storytelling in developing their sociocultural competence. Moreover, the interview is also a multiple interview. In this case, the interview is done with the same participants to reflect the students' perception of using storytelling in developing their sociocultural competence. While interviewing the participants, the researchers take notes. The field note is used in order to help the researchers in clarifying the data.

The interview is stopped when needed data has been collected (saturated).

For analyzing quantitative data, firstly, the researchers tabulate the data from the questionnaire. In tabulating the data, the researchers divide the data based on the kinds of statements in the questionnaire. The questionnaire statements consist of two kinds of statements; positive statements (positive attitude to a diversity of culture) and negative statements (negative attitude to a diversity of culture). Thus, in tabulating the data, the scoring for the Likert scale is also different. The score of the Linkert scale for those statements can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Likert Scale

Options of Statements	Scoring for Positive Statements	Scoring for Negative Statements
Strongly Agree	5	1
Agree	4	2
Neutral	3	3
Disagree	2	4
Strongly disagree	1	5

Furthermore, the researchers calculate the percentage of the data for each item in the questionnaire. The formula used to calculate the percentage is stated as follows:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

P = percentage

f = frequency chosen by sample

N = amount of the sample

The researchers categorize the percentage of each item based on the category proposed by Morissan (2014), which can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 Interpretation Data

The range of category	Interpretation
81%-100%	Very good
61%-80%	Good
41%-60%	Enough
21%-40%	Low
<20%	Very low

The steps in analyzing the data obtained from the interview are done through these steps: the researcher transcript the data collected from the interview. In this case, the researchers differentiate between participants'

opinions and facts on the data obtained from the interview. In other words, the researchers have to be able to clarify any personal bias from the data collected. After that, the researchers gather pure data related to the research. Any other data that are not about the research should be put out, so that the researchers get the real facts of the data. Then, the researchers interpret the meaning of the phrases or statements from the interview and participants' activity during the questionnaire. Lastly, the researchers describe the deeper meaning of the participants' statements from the interview and the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire and interview are studied and analyzed to get real data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 5 shows data obtained from students at UIN Imam Bonjol and IAIN Bukittinggi related to students' perception of using storytelling for developing their sociocultural competence. Data can be analyzed by dividing it into indicators. The first indicator is about students' perceptions related to students' attitudes toward sociocultural competence after having a storytelling class. Points 1 to 6 show the data on students' attitudes toward sociocultural competence.

Based on the data in Table 5, it can be stated that the students agree that their attitude toward

Table 5 Questionnaire Shared on English Students at UIN Imam Bonjol and IAIN Bukittinggi

No	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	%	Category
1	Aware about cultural diversity			10	23	9	79,5	Good
2	Comfortable being with similar communities			11	23	8	41,4	Enough
3	Appreciate different cultures' behaviours			9	22	11	80,9	Very good
4	Interested in learning about other cultures			4	24	14	84,8	Very good
5	Uncomfortable with people speaking other languages	4	10	15	10	3	60,9	Good
6	Interested in learning and socializing with people		2	10	20	10	78	Good
7	Do not notice cultural differences	3	14	17	5	3	64,2	Good
8	Have two or more cultural frames of reference		2	24	14	2	67,6	Good
9	Have and use knowledge about different cultures		3	14	23	2	71,4	Good
10	Assume that everyone from the same culture are the same		13	16	9	4	58,1	Enough
11	Respect cultural differences			5	22	15	84,8	Very good
12	Analyze and evaluate situations from different cultural perspectives			17	21	4	51,9	Enough
13	Question my own prejudices and cultural stereotypes		2	28	10	2	54,3	Enough
14	Have the ability to see events from different perspectives		2	20	15	5	70,9	Good
15	Think my culture is better than other cultures	1	15	15	11		62,8	Good
16	Use verbal and nonverbal communication skills of other culture			16	23	3	73,8	Good
17	Can give up my own world view to participate in another one	2	5	19	14	2	64,3	Good
18	Can shift between two or more cultural perspectives in a given situation and make a choice to act from one of these cultures	2	2	20	16	2	66,7	Good
19	Incorporate attractive aspects of other cultures into my own way of doing things		3	28	11		63,8	Good
20	Feel self-confident socializing with people from other cultures		4	15	21	2	70	Good
21	Ability to deal flexibly and adjust to new people, places or situations			17	21	4	51,9	Enough
22	Think negative about people who act or look different	4	19	11	5	3	67,6	Good
23	Consider what other people say about my culture		4	20	15	3	68,1	Good
24	Can act as cultural mediator and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures		3	21	15	3	68,6	Good

sociocultural competence is categorized well after they learn English through storytelling for one semester. It is strengthened by the fact that the students think they are categorized as very good at appreciating different cultures' behaviors and showing interest in learning about other cultures. Besides, they also think they are good at being aware of cultural diversity, being comfortable with people speaking other languages, and being interested in learning and socializing.

Besides data related to the second indicator (students' knowledge of sociocultural competence), it can be stated that the students agree that their knowledge of sociocultural competence is categorized well. Points 7 to 10 in Table 5 show students' knowledge of sociocultural competence. In detail, after having storytelling class, they agree that they are good at noticing cultural differences, having two or more cultural frames of reference, and having and using knowledge about different cultures. Besides, they think that they are quite good (enough) in assuming that everyone from the same culture is the same.

In addition, based on data in Table 5, it can be interpreted that after having storytelling class, they agree that their ability to interpret and relate cultural issues is categorized well. It is proved by the data in Table 5, points 11-15. In detail, the students think that they are categorized as very good at showing respect for cultural differences, while they are also good at seeing events from different activities and having an opinion that their culture is not better than others. Additionally, they are good enough at analyzing and evaluating situations from different perspectives and arguing their prejudices and cultural stereotypes.

Moreover, related to data of the fourth indicator (students' ability in discovery and interaction), it can be seen that the students agree that their ability in discovery and interaction is categorized as good. It is proved by the data in Table 5, points 16-21. In fact, they think that they are good at using verbal and nonverbal communication skills of other cultures, giving up their own worldview to participate in another one, shifting between two or more cultural perspectives in a given situation, and making a choice to act from one of these cultures, incorporating attractive aspects of other cultures into their own way of doing things, and feeling self-confident socializing with people from other cultures. Furthermore, they agree that they are good enough at dealing with flexibility and adjusting to new people, places, and situations. These opinions are derived after they take a storytelling class for a semester.

The last indicator (students' ability of critical cultural awareness) proved that the students thought they had good ability in critical cultural awareness. It is proved by the data on Table 5 point 22-24. It shows that they thought that they can avoid any negative thinking about people who act or look different, can consider what other people say about their culture, and can act as cultural mediator and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures.

The last indicator (students' ability of critical

cultural awareness) proves that the students think they have good ability in critical cultural awareness. It is proved by the data in Table 5, points 22-24. It shows that they think that they can avoid any negative thinking about people who act or look differently, can consider what other people say about their culture, can act as cultural mediators, and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures.

Based on these five indicators (students' attitude of sociocultural competence, students' knowledge of sociocultural competence, students' ability to interpret and relate cultural issues, students' ability to discover and interact, and students' ability to critical cultural awareness), it can be analyzed that as whole the students think that they are categorized well in developing their sociocultural competence after they have storytelling class.

In order to strengthen the data from the questionnaire, the researchers also interview the students. There are 5 of 42 students who are interviewed. The data from the interview is stated in Table 6.

Based on data from interviews, it is known that most students thought they get many good impacts from storytelling, especially when the text is related to Western people or foreign people's life. They have said that they think storytelling influences them in a good way for developing their sociocultural competence. These data are in line with the data from the questionnaire in which the students think that they have good ability in sociocultural competence after they have learned English through storytelling. Thus, it can be stated that English students have a positive opinion about using storytelling as a medium for developing their sociocultural competence.

Based on the data analysis, which has been explained in the previous section, it is known that the English students at IAIN Bukittinggi who have taken storytelling classes and English students at UIN Imam Bonjol who have joined extra activities in their English student's association English Education study program have argued that they can develop their sociocultural competence through storytelling. It is in line with the theory proposed by Stanley and Dillingham (2009) that has said storytelling does not only help students to improve their speaking ability through retelling the story but also helps them to develop their sociocultural competence by noticing the values in the story (Stanley & Dillingham, 2009; Tural & Cubukcu, 2021).

In a detail component of sociocultural competence, the students argue that they are categorized 'good' in all indicators used for measuring sociocultural competence, which consists of students' attitude toward sociocultural competence, students' knowledge of sociocultural competence, students' ability to interpret and relating cultural issues, students' ability in discovery and interaction, and students' ability of critical cultural awareness.

As stated by Baldasaro, Maldonado, and Baltes (2014) and Rohmani and Andriyanti (2022), in learning English as a foreign language, it is important for the

students to show a good attitude in seeing two or more different cultures in different social environments. The students should be able to show a good attitude, which can be seen from their ability to appreciate different cultures' behaviors and show interest in learning about other cultures. Furthermore, Byram (1997) has also explained that having knowledge of many kinds of cultures also influences students' sociocultural competence. It can be developed by using storytelling to improve students' knowledge. The students can notice the different cultures and have more cultural fame as a reference when they act in heterogeneous environments. In relation to the research, these theories are in line with the result of the research in which students think that storytelling helps them get more knowledge of sociocultural factors in Western life.

Another element of sociocultural competence that can be improved through storytelling is the ability to interpret and relate cultural issues. In short, the data from the research also show that the students argue that they have a good ability in interpreting and relating cultural issues.

The other component of sociocultural competence that also needs to be acquired by the students is discovery and interaction. Besides,

they should also be able to deal with flexibility and adjust to new people, places, and situations. In fact, the research results show that students have a good perception in which they think they are good at discovery and interaction as a part of sociocultural competence. It can be stated that students should have cultural experiences, which can be done through discovery or interaction (Falchetti et al., 2021). The last indicator is related to students' ability to critical cultural awareness. The data of the research show that the students think that they can avoid any negative thinking about people who act or look different, can consider what other people say about their culture, and can act as a cultural mediator and serve as a bridge between people of different cultures (Yuldashbayevna, 2020).

In a more detailed explanation, through interviews few students, it is also known that the students perceive that storytelling can help them improve their communication skills. Storytelling is a technique that can be used to improve students' ability to speak and read while also can help students to improve their critical thinking and sociocultural competence (Ikramuddin, 2017; Kardena et al., 2019).

Table 6 Transcript of Interview

No.	Questions of Interview	Answers
1	What sociocultural knowledge have you acquired through storytelling?	<p>S1: I finally know that Indonesia has many different cultures comparing to foreign culture. For example, I realize the way to offer and accept something can be different between these two cultures.</p> <p>S2: Many things I get, such as they have culture to read a book or story for the children before going to bed. I know it in my class. Besides, they have a culture to make a rule for the family and do it honestly. So, I get much knowledge related to sociocultural aspects after taking storytelling class.</p> <p>S3: I get many things, such as knowledge about the relationship between parents and children in western culture. The way they call their sister or brother, etc.</p> <p>S4: I learn more about the attitude there. I realize that there are some positive and also negative things about western culture. In some ways, we are more polite, but we can absorb the positive things from their culture.</p> <p>S5: hhhmmm... I think I get much knowledge. I learn about the use of address of terms. The slang language which also stated in my story.</p>
2	How do you think storytelling influence your ability in socio-cultural competence	<p>S1: I think storytelling is good to help learn about other cultures. I notice some different cultures based on the story I read. So, yeah, it gives me some influences, I think. In a good way.</p> <p>S2: I like to learn storytelling. It helps me to improve my reading and speaking. Then, I think I also get much valuable knowledge about people in western countries, especially when I read and retell western short stories or fable, etc.</p> <p>S3: I like to read something new, so not Indonesia story. So, sure I get many influences from the text. Sometimes the lecturer leads our attention to the different social and cultural factors we find in the text. Sometimes, I notice it by myself. It is interesting, I think.</p> <p>S4: I think storytelling really helps me to improve my knowledge about people outside, I mean foreign people. It is really great to read stories from western countries. We get knowledge about their habits, or which one is polite and which one is not. Something like that.</p> <p>S5: I learn a lot of idioms and slang language from storytelling. I mean I know when it should be used, such as, with friends or sister or brother.</p>

Thus, it can be stated that based on students' perceptions, storytelling is a useful technique that may give many benefits to the students. Then, it can also be stated that students' percept that storytelling is a technique that can help them develop and increase their sociocultural competence from many aspects, such as attitude, knowledge, ability to interpret, and awareness. Although there are data on students' perception of using storytelling in developing students' sociocultural competence, the research has not investigated the level of students' sociocultural competence after learning English through the storytelling technique.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted by a mixed-method, it is found that the students agree that they think sociocultural competence has helped them to develop their sociocultural competence. They think that they are categorized well in students' attitudes toward sociocultural competence, students' knowledge of sociocultural competence, students' ability to interpret and relate cultural issues, students' ability to discover and interact, and students' ability of critical cultural awareness. Thus it can be concluded that based on students' perceptions, storytelling is a good technique that can be used to develop students' sociocultural competence. Meanwhile, the research is limited only to analyzing students' perceptions of using storytelling in developing sociocultural competence. The research cannot give enough data on improving students' sociocultural competence after using the storytelling technique. Thus, for further research, it is suggested to conduct experimental research to see how storytelling affects students' sociocultural competence.

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