

Intercultural Communication of Vietnam and Thailand Students in Indonesian Language Learning

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Abstract. This research is a critical and comprehensive study and analysis of verbal communication patterns often used by ASEAN students from Vietnam and Thailand in learning the Indonesian language at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang. This research is useful in supporting BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) learning, especially in developing students' oral and written communication skills with native speakers of Indonesian while still positioning them as unique individuals without ethnocentric views. This study aims to find out how students from Vietnam and Thailand form certain cultural patterns in their communication using the Indonesian language. It also seeks to find out patterns of communication that result in intercultural miscommunication in Indonesian. The research method is by conducting the intensive discussion, filling out a list of questions and interviews to get qualitative results that illustrate the things raised in the formulation of the problem. Subsequently, an analysis was performed using thematic data analysis with an apriori approach. The results of the study revealed that (1) ASEAN international students, especially Vietnam and Thailand, have shown effective intercultural communication without showing stereotypes and prejudices; (2) ASEAN international students, especially Vietnam and Thailand, do not show group generalizations, but individual personality, in the intercultural communication; (3) the researcher found that an intercultural approach is the right approach in learning the Indonesian language by including concepts of intercultural communication.

Keywords: *Intercultural Approach, BIPA Learning, Individual Personality, Intercultural Communication*

INTRODUCTION

Entering the global world, the role of learning a foreign language is crucial. Many languages are studied as foreign languages for various interests, such as political and cultural diplomacy, trade, tourism, economics and business, as well as bilateral research and cooperation between countries. In this case, the Indonesian language has

improved its function and position as an international language, as written in Act 24 of 2009. As many as 75 countries in the world study Indonesian, including ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). The Indonesian language studied by foreigners is called BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers). The goal is to make the Indonesian language understood and used as a means of communication and intercultural understanding of bilateral relations with other countries for various purposes. Promoting BIPA is also necessary to develop intercultural education and improve communication. As reviewed by Sutraphorn Tantiniranat for ASEAN cases concerning the globalized world and impact of the globalization, language teaching enables intercultural understanding of (1) people-to-people interaction, (2) unity, (3) language and cultural globalization, (4) globalization, (5) identity (with sub-codes of ASEAN identity, national identity and multiple identities), (6) unity in diversity, (7) connectivity (with a sub-code of beyond ASEAN), (8) impacts of the AEC on Thai higher education (with sub-codes of mobility, employment opportunity and liberalization of education service), and (9) multiculturalism (with sub-codes of the diversity of culture and peoples) [1].

Foreign language learning and intercultural studies are fundamental. In this study, the intercultural students of ASEAN, especially Vietnam and Thailand, study the Indonesian language for foreign speakers (BIPA). The critical role of intercultural education was conveyed by Huynh Thanh Tien (2016), who mentioned that intercultural education is an area of research, study, and application of knowledge about different cultures, including their differences and similarities. Currently, intercultural education is a topic that increasingly receives much interest. This is mainly due to the rise of cultural studies and globalization. Culture has become an instrument for social interpretation and communicative action. Intercultural education and learning are primarily important in the context of the foreign language classroom [2].

This article focuses on ASEAN students, specifically Vietnamese and Thai students, in studying BIPA. Why ASEAN? It is because ASEAN plays an essential role in the political and economic growth of the Asian region. Many ASEAN students, mainly Vietnamese and Thai,

learn Indonesian. They study in different programs in many universities in Indonesia and informal institutions. Thao Q. Tran and Tham M. Duong (2015) stated that an ASEAN Community would be established by 2020. This community will consist of three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). Studying foreign languages (including the Indonesian language) help learners become intercultural speakers who can communicate and interact appropriately and effectively with people from different cultures [3].

As a new treasure in learning foreign languages, BIPA is very important to learn in the ASEAN region. This article is the result of a study of the intercultural attitudes of BIPA students from Vietnam and Thailand in the teaching and learning process in class. Previous studies show that from a broad perspective, the concern of intercultural communication is when and how the lingua cultures (linguistic and cultural backgrounds) of the participants have a significant influence on the interaction [4], [5]. It focuses specifically on intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca (ELF), and hence any claims made will be restricted to this context.

However, the number of English users is potentially vast. The use of English as a global lingua franca (ELF) raises challenges concerning how we understand the relationship between languages and cultures in intercultural communications. Intercultural communication competence was examined using three constructs: knowledge, skills, and motivation. It refers to intercultural communication competence as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and motivation resulting in appropriate and effective behavior and communication with people from different cultures [4].

Furthermore, according to research by Paula Grace M. Muyco and Benjamina Paula G. Flor (2018), just like cultural awareness, the successful intercultural communication as a process goes beyond vocabulary, grammar, and phonology. However, cultural awareness tends to deal with cultures as definable entities. It recognizes the intercultural nature of the socio-cultural context of lingua franca, primarily through English [5]. This is in line with Will Barker (2012), who mentioned that cultural awareness involves an understanding of cultures as fluid, hybrid, and emergent in intercultural interactions [6].

This paper aims to describe a critical and comprehensive study and analysis of verbal communication patterns often used by ASEAN students from Vietnam and Thailand in learning the Indonesian language at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang. They joined BIPA through the Indonesian government scholarships.

This research is useful in supporting BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) learning, especially in developing students' oral and written communication skills with native speakers of Indonesian while still positioning the students as unique individuals without ethnocentric views. This study aims to find out how students from Vietnam and Thailand form certain cultural patterns in their communication when using Indonesian. It also aims to find out patterns of communication resulting in intercultural miscommunication in Indonesian.

This study follows the results of Kirk Patrick's research on Language education policy among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which produces foreign language learning principles with an intercultural approach. The principles are: (1) The native speaker is not the linguistic target; (2) The native speaker's culture is not the cultural target; The goal is (ASEAN focused) intercultural competence adopting a goal that aims to provide learners with an ASEAN-intercultural competence; (3) Well-trained local multilingual; (4) Lingua franca environments provide excellent foreign language learning environments for lingua franca speakers, and (5) Assessment must be relevant to and appropriate for the lingua franca approach and curriculum [7].

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive method. The research method is by conducting the intensive discussion, filling out a list of questions and interviews to get qualitative results that illustrate the things raised in the formulation of the problem. Subsequently, an analysis was performed using thematic data analysis with an *a priori* approach. This study investigates: (1) the extent to which the intercultural communication of BIPA students from Vietnam and Thailand can be effective without showing stereotypes and prejudices, (2) How ASEAN international students, especially Vietnamese and Thai, in intercultural communication-related subjects were given a list of questions to be answered both written and orally. Subjects were chosen purposively and based on the answers displayed.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The results showed that before learning the Indonesian language in Indonesia, this study's subjects had been familiar with Indonesian culture and society. These students knew Indonesia through formal studies. They chose the department of Indonesian studies or Southeast Asian Studies, where they studied Indonesian culture. From their indigenous background, there were no problems in differences in food, religion, habits, or social relations. Cultural shock did not happen much.

They responded by adopting, combining, and learning new things with the spirit of fellow Southeast Asian. Research subjects from Thailand stated that in Thailand, many universities teach Indonesian. Indonesian Thai Dictionary already exists. Indonesian culture and society are taught at universities, both in Southeast Asian and Indonesian language studies. In Southern Thailand, some people speak Malay, including their culture. Research subjects from Vietnam also stated that in Vietnam, especially in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, many universities teach Indonesian. Indonesian Vietnamese Dictionary already exists too. Indonesian culture and society are taught at universities, especially related to Southeast Asian studies. The Indonesian government's program to introduce culture in Vietnam gains positive responses. They feel there is a common feeling and social ethics when socializing with Indonesian people.

ASEAN international students, especially Vietnam and Thailand, have shown effective intercultural communication without showing stereotypes and prejudices. They have demonstrated effective intercultural communication without exhibiting stereotypes and prejudices. The specialty of Thai and Vietnamese students in Indonesian is accent or intonation. This is influenced by the differences between the vowel and consonant pronunciation in their language and Indonesian. However, during their stay in Indonesia, they managed to adapt and mastered the Indonesian language well. Similarities in eastern culture and physical etiquette made it easy for them to blend and engaged in intercultural activities. Following is a description of BIPA students' intercultural communication based on the questionnaire data obtained. The data below illustrates that more than 80% describing the conditions as listed in the table, namely in neutral conditions and very strong in intercultural aspects.

Table 1 BIPA Student's Intercultural Communication Characteristics

| No. | Aspects | Weak | Neutral | Very Strong |
|-----|-------------------------|------|---------|-------------|
| 1. | Personal Characteristic | | | V |
| 2. | Intercultural Abilities | | | V |
| 3. | Communication Styles | | V | |
| 4. | Intercultural Areas | | V | |

In intercultural communication, ASEAN international students, especially Vietnam and Thailand, did not show group generalizations. Intercultural communication happens more with personal factors. Many respondents did not answer personal questions, but they stated in general that

their representation was personal, not reflecting group or nation. The similarities in learning Indonesian make them feel like an Indonesian by thinking the Indonesian way. This is not only due to the intensity of meeting and communicating with Indonesians but also because of the awareness that some cultural aspects in Indonesia are the same as theirs, although there are some differences too. Religious aspects were not mentioned much in the research data.

The research found that the intercultural approach is the right approach to learning the Indonesian language by including intercultural communication concepts. The diverse Indonesian culture can be introduced by incorporating the materials into language skills learning. There are two problems in understanding culture with a small "c" and a large "C" for the word Culture. The easy thing is the introduction of art, food, clothing, gestures, and material cultural knowledge. In the small "c" aspect of culture, it is necessary to integrate the culture in Indonesian text lessons, such as attitudes, values, ideals, goals, beliefs, opinions, and worldview. Regarding the "big C," respondents were cautious but wanted to know more about it from texts.

Another aspect investigated is their understanding of cultural-based recommendations and prohibitions. They understood the importance of understanding how communication works and how easy miscommunication could happen. From this investigation, some important things related to developing intercultural competence are addressed.

1. Develop communication strategies to avoid misunderstandings.
2. Understand the complexity of culture, where it comes from, and many different social groups within nations and extend beyond them.
3. Understand what it means to be interculturally competent and take steps to improve competence.
4. Do not assume that using the Indonesian language in intercultural communication with native speakers is the same as using BIPA. Understand the added intercultural problems of using BIPA.

CONCLUSION

Intercultural communication of Vietnam and Thailand students In Indonesian Language Learning looked at the importance of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness, which is then combined with language skills. The students showed flexibility, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and avoid judgment. In BIPA learning, the discussion is essential by connecting matters related to learning intercultural competencies in BIPA. It is suggested that the best way to avoid miscommunication and

to avoid linguistic or cultural imperialism is to deal openly and directly with inner circle from host culture using the tool of critical awareness. This intercultural approach is appropriate for BIPA learning and intercultural communication. An important finding is that individuals in groups have their own characteristics in learning the target language as a new cultural entity.

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