Types of Communications Pattern for Overseas Students (*Santri*) in Cross-Cultural Adaptation in *Pondok Pesantren*

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Abstract—This study aims to find out how the overseas student (*santri*) adapts to the world of Islamic boarding schools (after this named *Pondok pesantren*). Not only about *pesantren* as a culture in particular, but also Indonesian culture in general, because these overseas students will interact fully with a heterogeneous community of students from various regions in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological study approach. Researchers will conduct an in-depth exploration of the results of direct interviews with resource persons who are students from abroad, including at least from the Southeast Asian region or existing international students. The result of this study is that the typification of the communication pattern of international students at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is a communication pattern formed within the framework of language discipline. Communication between students who must use Arabic and English in daily conversation and deliver learning materials in class. The involvement of international students with all activities in the pesantren, including participation in various cultural events, did not dampen their pride in the nationalism of the santri's country of origin.

Keywords—cross-cultural communication, cultural adaptation, pesantren, santri

I. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (hereafter named Pesantren) have long historical roots n Indonesia. Statistically, the number of *pesantren* in Indonesia until 2020 was 28,194. There are approximately five million *santri* living in *Pesantren*. With such resources, *pesantren* will become the pillars of the country's progress with such great potential. As an educational institution uniquely originating from Indonesia, it is not uncommon for students from abroad to deliberately study at the *pesantren*.

One of the role models of *pesantren* in Indonesia is Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor (later called Gontor). The long journey of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor began in the 18th century. Gontor's real name is Darussalam, meaning "peaceful village," whose primary curriculum is *Kulliyatul Mu'allimin al-Islamiyyah* (K.M.I.). The education process lasts

for 24 hours so that "everything that is seen, heard, and noticed by the students at this boarding school is for education." Religious and general lessons give in a balanced manner for 6 or 4 years. Skills education, arts, sports, organizations, and others are part of the life activities of santri at *pesantren*.

This research is the first step which can later be seen in the author's research roadmap. The study of overseas students can then be mapped out to optimize pesantren services to overseas students and invite more students from abroad to Indonesia. Policymakers need to carry out special treatment, such as the Ministry of Religion.

Murtadho, in a written statement received by Republika. co. id, Jakarta, Thursday (24/5), stated that "Research on services for foreign students like this need to be carried out more,"... "We want to know the extent to which pesantren foreign students are interested in providing educational services to them. At the same time, knowing foreign students' expectations towards Islamic boarding school education in Indonesia." According to him, this study is essential to improve education services in Islamic boarding schools globally, including anticipating the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (M.E.A.).

Pondok Pesantren is an institution that is fully managed privately. However, the government needs to know the motivation of overseas students studying at Indonesian Islamic boarding schools to reflect on the expectations of students who come from abroad for what is given by Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

The Workshop on Research for Overseas Santri in Indonesia presented speakers from P3M Jakarta and the Directorate of Early Education and Islamic Boarding Schools. Agus Muhammad from P3M welcomed this research because it was relatively new and exciting. Methodologically, he suggested exploring the research qualitatively to more in-depth interpretation. The Head of Sub-Directorate for Islamic Boarding Schools also expressed the same opinion. According to him, in addition to exploring the services of Islamic boarding schools, this research also needs to map the ability of overseas students to understand the typical Islam of Indonesian

pesantren, namely Wasatiyah Islam (moderate). It is essential to realize the development of Islamic moderatism, which is the primary mission of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia to become a color when they return to their respective countries.

II. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological study approach. Researchers will conduct an in-depth exploration of the results of direct interviews with resource persons who are *santri* from overseas, which include at least from the Southeast Asian region or according to the presence of existing overseas students.

This research expects to be able to explore behavioral patterns. The result of changes is an indication of new symptoms that often appear and become the social attention of the community, where the phenomenon or sign requires a new observation as a way of looking at the main goal to explore meaning. It is constructed as part of the human perspective to see the symptoms of concern.

According to Polkinghorne [1], "a phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon. Phenomenologist explores the structure of consciousness in human experiences".

The researcher chose the Schutz phenomenological approach because it was adapted to determine the typification. Schutz's typification concept itself is a combination of the thoughts of Weber and Husserl. The type of typification depends on the person who makes it. Schutz also emphasizes typification based on the similarity of goals and structures relevant to the research objectives. By Kuswarno [2] concludes, "in short, typification provides a set of identification tools, classifications, and comparative models of social action and interaction. By using the criteria that have been defined for the placement of phenomena into particular types.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cross-cultural communication occurs because cultural differences are natural and commonly found in people's lives. People cannot avoid Cultural differences because they are a gift from the creator. According [3], Cross-cultural communication occurs between people of different cultures, whether in race, ethnicity, cultural entities, or social classes, such as economy, gender, and politics.

[3] developed the concept of cross-cultural competence consisting of personality strength, communication skills, psychological adjustment, and cultural awareness. Personality strength is a person who is steadfast in showing his artistic identity. Communication skill is the ability to process words in speaking. Psychological adjustment is an individual's ability to be responsive to what is happening in cross-cultural communication to complement and respect other parties in communicating. Cultural awareness is knowledge and awareness of different cultures in cross-cultural communication.

Cross-cultural adaptation is a dynamic process in which individuals can build, organize, and maintain a relationship with a relatively stable and functional cultural environment that was previously unfamiliar [4]. Cross-cultural adaptation based on cross-cultural communication in a particular community environment integrates the host's culture and the guest's culture through adaptation and maintenance of harmonious relationships. A cross-cultural communication process shows learning from each other and giving meaning to each other among the participants in the touch.

Cross-cultural communication requires adaptation, which includes promoting mutual understanding through interaction to increase social compatibility to meet the needs of the new cultural environment [4], Risgar describes the stages of cross-cultural adaptation. The crisis stage, the adjustment stage, and the adaptation stage of biculturalism or multiculturalism.

The crisis stage is when participants in cross-cultural communication will experience initial euphoria in the process of cross-cultural interaction that occurs in a particular community environment. These interactions will be colored with differences so that, in the end, they will experience a clash that will cause a sense of dislike, incompatibility, frustration, and even hostility towards a difference. It is the stage of crisis experienced by them, and then they have the right to decide to continue the cross-cultural interaction or not.

The adjustment stage is the cross-cultural adaptation stage, where cross-cultural communication participants, who can pass the crisis stage, will adjust gradually until relationship recovery is achieved. Such as adjustment efforts identifying cultural phenomena that are different from their original culture and thinking about how appropriate to address these cultural differences then applied in social life.

As students who study in other regions or other countries, students who come from abroad also exclude *pesantren* in Indonesia have an experienced obstacle in cultural adaptation (cross-cultural) with local Indonesian culture, especially in the region. Indonesia is a country whose culture is vibrant and varied. On the other hand, they (overseas students) are rich in insight into the archipelago because they interact with other santri friends from various regions in Indonesia.

One of the cultural anxiety felt is the language difference between the country of origin and Indonesia. Even though in the general discipline in Gontor, students are not allowed to speak Indonesian, let alone regional languages (such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Melayu languages). Still, it can be overcome over time by making friends with Indonesian students and learning Indonesian/ regional languages in Indonesia.

average, adjusting to Indonesian culture takes two months to a year for both male and female students, depending on how they have obtained much about Indonesian culture before studying in Indonesia. For female students, language

differences are an obstacle. Indonesian is considered too fast, so it is not easy to understand.

Cultural diversity also makes overseas *santri* need different processes to adjust (adapt). Such as the difference in food between Aceh (the male Gontor students who have lived in the Aceh branch Gontor) and Ponorogo (On Central Gontor). They also fell deferences in the native language, accent, and intonation of speech between students from the island of Sumatra or the island of Java or students from central and eastern Indonesia.

The problem of word choice is often the root of misunderstanding. The Malaysian and Indonesian languages are different, so it is easier to understand each other. The use of tone of voice or intonation often causes misunderstandings; for some cases, female students from Malaysia find it challenging to distinguish between ordering and inviting, forcing and persuading. In the case of male students, misunderstandings arise from the meaning of different words. Although Indonesian and Malaysian are close together.

The process of experiencing overseas students from Malaysia in both male and female Gontor can run well because of the establishment of consulates in Gontor. The consulate consists of students from the exact regional origin from Sabang to Merauke, west to east Indonesia. Overseas students combine in the same consulate, namely the foreign consulate.

Overseas students' communication patterns in pesantren described the situation, events, and communicative actions of overseas santri in their cross-cultural communication activities at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Gontor *Putra* (for males) and Gontor *Putri* (for female).

As previously stated, individuals in the cross-cultural adaptation stage have three stages: the crisis stage, the adjustment stage, and the adaptation stage of biculturalism or multiculturalism [5], which then produces communication patterns for students and the student.

The crisis stage is when participants in cross-cultural communication will experience initial euphoria in the process of cross-cultural interaction that occurs in a particular community environment. Life in the pesantren also demands their independence in its implementation. Students have to prepare themselves, unlike in their country where their parents have designed everything. Overseas, students continue to compare what they feel in Indonesia with what they experience in their home country. At this stage of the crisis, with the pattern established in the pesantren, they felt quicker adapting to the existing situation.

There are differences between Indonesian and Malaysian language in verbal language; however, with the discipline of the language program at Gontor, it is easier for students and female students to overcome these differences. In Gontor itself, both male and female, students must speak Arabic and English in daily communication, both in conversation and in class. Usually, Arabic and English are determined every week alternately, starting from Friday to another Friday. In the

context of differences in verbal language, asking questions is a solution to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of language.

By speaking Arabic and English, there are relatively no problems. All students understand each other by using the two languages, and it is just that the regional accent is carried away. Still, it does not become difficult to perceive with the same impression. After going through the crisis stage, the students enter the adjustment stage, where cross-cultural communication participants who can get through the crisis stage will try to adjust gradually until a relationship is restored. There are self-adjustment efforts such as identifying cultural phenomena that are different from their original culture and thinking about how to take appropriate actions to address these cultural differences, which applied in their social life.

Interestingly, every cross-cultural communication event has various perceptions of non-verbal communication behavior, including these students. Furthermore, when the adjustment stage is achieved. For other non-verbal communication such as gestures, expressions, and the like, the students feel there is no problem. They are easier to understand because there is a natural interaction between the students in dormitories, classes, scout groups, or other extracurricular activities. The students also feel that way more complicated than verbal communication.

An interesting finding from this research is that no matter how long they see, hear, feel. The experience interactions while being *santri* at pesantren. Their element of pride or nationalism does not fade even though they feel a psychological process 'collision.'

From this study, the description of the communication patterns of the students and how they adapt within the framework of cross-cultural communication is that cultural differences are more widely felt in terms of language but helped by Arabic and English disciplines which can parse potential differences in verbal language. So when overseas students study in Indonesia, language becomes the biggest challenge in adapting across cultures. The way to overcome this is to ask native Indonesian students and read gestures / facial expressions to find out the other person's emotions (happy/ angry/ annoyed/ sad).

With such cultural adaptation, supported by discipline in the nuances of education in the *pesantren* environment, the students can develop cross-cultural competence. With cross-cultural competence, a person can communicate effectively in a different society from his own culture; thus, cross-cultural interactions can run harmoniously.

IV. CONCLUSION

The typification of communication patterns for overseas *santri* at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor is formed within the language discipline. Communication between *santri,* who must use Arabic and English in daily conversation and deliver learning materials in class. The involvement of overseas *santri* with all activities in the pesantren, including participation in

various cultural events, does not dampen their pride in the nationalism of the *santri's* country of origin. They are more proud as students of Gontor.

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