



CONVERGENCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG VIETNAMESE STUDENTS TO LOCAL STUDENTS AT TADULAKO UNIVERSITY

Fadhliah

*Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Tadulako University, Jl. Soekarno-Hatta Km 09, Palu 94118, Indonesia
fadhliahcyio72@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

Vietnamese students who continue their studies at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University certainly have cultural differences with local students. To prevent conflict, the effort that must be made by Vietnamese students is to implement convergence actions. The purpose of this research is to identify the efforts of Vietnamese students and local students at Tadulako University in conducting convergence/adjustment through intercultural communication. The research paradigm uses constructivist. This type of research is a qualitative method with a case study approach. The results showed that there was convergence behavior by Vietnamese students towards local students who were generally Kaili ethnicity as an indigenous tribe in Central Sulawesi. This convergence behavior is a form of adjustment, especially in terms of the use of Indonesian by Vietnamese students in order to be able to convey messages well to local students so that there is no miss communication. The next convergence is related to how to behave and behave so that social interactions that occur between Vietnamese students and local students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University are well established.

Keywords: *Intercultural Communication, Convergence, Vietnamese Students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that is rich in islands and has a variety of cultures. Based on the data obtained, Indonesia as an archipelagic country has a wide area, stretching from Aceh to Papua. There are 17,504 islands scattered throughout the sovereignty of the Republic of

Indonesia, consisting of 8,651 named islands and 8,853 unnamed islands (Situmorang, 2006). In addition to its natural wealth with biological and vegetable diversity, Indonesia is known for its cultural diversity. In Indonesia, there are dozens of ethnic groups that have their own culture. For example, on the island of Sumatra: Aceh, Batak, Minang, Malay (Deli, Riau, Jambi, Palembang, Bengkulu, etc.), Lampung; on the island of Java: Sunda, Bedouin (traditional communities isolated from the outside world in Banten Province), Java, and Madura; Bali; West Nusa Tenggara and East Nusa Tenggara: Sasak, Mangarai, Sumbawa, Flores, and so on; Kalimantan: Dayak, Malay, Banjar, etc.; Sulawesi: Bugis, Makassar, Toraja, Gorontalo, Minahasa, Manado, etc.; Maluku: Ambon, Ternate, etc.; Papua: Dani, Asmat, etc.) [1]

Each island has a different culture of course with different community characters ranging from habits in the form of food, art to the language used in everyday life. One of the cultures that is also interesting to study is the Kaili ethnic culture which is spread in all regencies and cities in Central Sulawesi Province. Based on data written by Adrian [2] related to the character of the Kaili tribe, it has a very different culture from the Javanese people in Yogyakarta. In communicating, the people of Central Sulawesi have a loud, uncomplicated voice intonation, and always convey what is when speaking (if you like it, say you like it, if you don't say no). This is very different from the behavior shown by the Javanese people, when communicating the intonation of the voice they use is so smooth and soft. The differences in behavior shown by the two cultures are part of the system, values and norms that have been agreed upon as a manifestation of the culture itself.

The cultural character possessed by the Kaili tribe

in Central Sulawesi is certainly a characteristic that is used as an identification with other people or other tribes both in Indonesia and abroad. The cultural character possessed can certainly affect the social interactions that are woven with people of different cultures. Sya'roni [3] states that social interaction does not take place automatically well, especially in terms of interaction with other ethnic groups. Cultural differences between ethnic groups basically greatly determine how to communicate for everyone [4]

Research written by Adrian explains that differences in ways of communicating can cause inter-ethnic problems due to differences in perception, differences in the use of both verbal and non-verbal messages, and differences in habits of how to behave and behave, for example how to behave in Kaili ethnic students will be very different from the way they behave with Vietnamese students when conducting social interactions while on the Tadulako University campus. This difference can make these students have limitations to interact, for example, limitations in mastering language.

The phenomenon that occurs in Kaili ethnic students and Vietnamese students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University is that they are unable to establish social interactions well, this is due to the limitation of language mastery, for example in Vietnamese students who are unable to use English and Indonesian language well, so that in communicating with local students it causes many mistakes. These limitations ultimately make Vietnamese students choose to withdraw or limit themselves in social relations. The boundaries that occur between Vietnamese students and local students at Tadulako University can certainly cause new problems such as the emergence of inter-ethnic stereotypes (badmouthing other tribes), resulting in offense and disputes between them. This phenomenon has made the writer raise the title of Convergence Behavior in Intercultural Communication of Vietnamese Students and Local Students at Tadulako University.

2. Intercultural Communication

According to Brian H. Spitzberg in Samovar & Porter, [5] explains that communication in an intercultural context is said to be successful if the communicator's goals are achieved and the means used are in accordance with the context. The context in question includes culture, relationship, place and function. Culture is an important aspect in utilizing and evaluating behavior. Behavioral abilities also depend on the form of the relationship between the people involved in what is appropriate to do in a friendship or work relationship.

When communicating, the function of cultural patterns (beliefs, values and norms) can be applied by all cultures. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck in Lustig & Koester [6] classify the reasons for the need to apply cultural patterns. First, every human being from a different culture faces the same general problem and they have to find a solution. Second, the number of options for solving cultural problems is very limited. Third, in a culture, the available problem solutions will be chosen according to the culture but its members may choose other solutions. And fourth, over time, the

solution that has been chosen will form cultural assumptions related to beliefs, values and norms.

3. MESSAGE

The message is an element of communication, the message has a physical form that can be felt or received by the senses. Dominick (2002) defines a message as: the actual physical product that the source encodes. Difference between encoding and message. Encoding is a process that occurs in the brain to produce messages, while messages are the result of an encoding process that can be felt or received by the senses. The message conveyed can be simple but can have a fairly effective impact, such as by saying "No". Messages can also be complex and complex. Messages can be addressed to a single individual or millions of individuals, messages can be delivered cheaply or free (eg spoken words), but messages can also be produced at a high cost (eg books).

In his book *The Handbook of Communication Science*, Berger, et al [7] define a message as a collection of behavioral expressions, usually consisting of symbols that are understood together, and produced to convey an inner state. Although the relationship between symbols and what they represent varies, communication is still possible, in part because most of the symbols used in interacting in a community have conventional communication.

4. Accommodation Theory

The theory compiled by Howard Giles (1991) in Littlejohn [8] is one of the most influential behavioral theories in Communication Science. Accommodation theory explains how and why we adapt our communication behavior to the communication behavior of others. In this theory, there are two forms of accommodation: convergence and divergence. Convergence is the process of adapting communication styles to be more similar to the communication styles of other people or groups, while divergence is the process of adapting communication styles to be more different than the communication styles of other people or groups.

Accommodation in both forms of convergence and divergence can occur in all communication behaviors through conversation, including similarities or differences in voice intonation, speed, accent, voice volume, words, grammar, gestures, and others. Both the convergence and divergence can be mutual, the two speakers become mutually fused or mutually separated, or non-mutual, one speaker blends, and the other speaker moves away. Convergence can also be partially "partial" or "complete". For example, by speaking a little faster to get closer to the speed level of the other person, or speaking as fast as possible to match the speed level of the other person.

5. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Mulyana [9] states that the paradigm is a perspective to understand the complexity of the real world. Paradigms are firmly entrenched in the socialization of adherents and practitioners. Paradigms show them what is important, valid, and reasonable. Paradigms are also normative, showing practitioners what to do without the need for lengthy existential or epistemological considerations. The paradigm used in this research is the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm is a paradigm

that is almost the antithesis of the notion that puts observation and objectivity in finding a reality or science. This paradigm views social science as a systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through direct and detailed observation of the social behavior concerned with creating and maintaining/managing their social world [10]

6. RESULT

Vietnamese students at Tadulako University are students who are imported from their country to pursue undergraduate education. These students are scattered in almost all faculties, at Tadulako University, for example in the Communication Science study program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. In its existence, Vietnamese students will meet many other students who are generally residents of Central Sulawesi Province. Based on their character, local students are people whose habitual patterns apply to the culture of the Kaili tribe a native ethnic group in Central Sulawesi.

The meeting that occurs between students is a social interaction of different cultures in which there is communication. However, sometimes the communication that exists between them is not good, because there are many misunderstandings of meaning due to language limitations, causing them to be reluctant to carry out social interactions even though they have met in class. Furthermore, in their daily life while on campus, Vietnamese students prefer to socialize with each other and very rarely socialize with local students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University.

The actions of Vietnamese students who prefer to hang out with their fellow students can produce negative stereotypes from local students. This can be proven in the results of research written by Andriana Noro Iswari and Prof. Pawito, Ph.D (Adrian, 2006) in the article titled Intercultural Communication Among Students (Studies on Intercultural Communication Among Ethnic Batak Students with Javanese Students at Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta (explaining whether or not differences in cultural backgrounds can be recognized or not). makes us very rigid in the process of interacting and communicating. To realize good or effective communication with different cultural backgrounds is not as difficult as we imagine and not as easy as many people think. In communicating and interacting with different cultures, many things must be considered and there are also many possibilities for misunderstandings in it. These differences give rise to attitudes of social prejudice, economic prejudice, and inter-ethnic political prejudice. These attitudes appear in inter-ethnic stereotypes (badmouthing other tribes), social distance (choosing to associate with other tribes), and attitudes discrimination (removing other races) which if not handled properly will lead to inter-ethnic social disintegration. So basically that the differences in cultural backgrounds, it will bring up the stereotypes of each tribe in the interaction which of course will hinder the occurrence of effective intercultural communication.

Vietnamese students who have social distance with local students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, such as choosing friends to hang out with basically show an attitude of culture shock. People who enter a new

culture will at least experience "culture shock". Culture shock generally occurs between two individuals from different cultures. People who experience the phenomenon of "culture shock" will feel physical symptoms such as dizziness, abdominal pain, unable to sleep, excessive fear of things that are not clean and unhealthy, helpless and withdrawn, fear of being cheated, robbed, injured, loneliness, disorientation and so on, (Dodd, 1982). Due to its nature that tends to be oriented, "culture shock" can hinder effective inter-ethnic communication. The stages of "culture shock" that a person goes through in experiencing the transition process have been studied by several experts (Dodd, 1982).

Based on the results of further research, it was explained that there were adjustments made by Vietnamese students and local students at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University. The adjustment pattern is carried out in many ways, such as involving oneself to work together to completing group assignments given by the lecturer. From this assignment, Vietnamese students study with local students to be able to communicate well using Indonesian and English. Not only that but adjustments were also made by local students by inviting Vietnamese students to sit together on the sidelines for relaxing time, giving jokes to each other, and of course learning each other's character together so that communication, especially in the use of non-verbal language/messages, could be made. run effectively.

In his book *The Handbook of Communication Science*, Berger, et al (2014: 214) define a message as a collection of behavioral expressions, usually consisting of symbols that are understood together, and produced to convey an inner state. Although the relationship between symbols and the things they represent varies, communication is still possible, in part because most of the symbols used in interacting in a community have conventional communication. Messages are not just symbols that makeup words and sentences; a message is a speech act - the demonstration of action through expressions in the form of words and gestures.

The adjustment made by Vietnamese students to local students at Tadulako University is referred to as a form of a convergence of an Accommodation theory. Convergence is the process of adapting communication styles to be more similar to the communication styles of other people or groups.

7. CONCLUSION

The results of the research related to the social interaction of different cultures, it was found that there was convergence behavior by Vietnamese students towards local students who were generally ethnic Kaili as an indigenous tribe in Central Sulawesi. This convergence behavior is a form of adjustment, especially in terms of the use of Indonesian by Vietnamese students to be able to convey messages well to local students so that no miss communication can produce negative stereotypes. The convergence is also related to how to behave and behave so that social interactions that occur between Vietnamese students and local students at the Faculty Of Social And Political Sciences Tadulako University both in interpersonal and group relationships can be well established.

References

- [1] Siahaan, Chontina & Donal Adrian. 2018. Strategi Mengurangi Ketidakpastian Informasi dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya Mahasiswa Etnik Papua dan Mahasiswa Etnik Jawa di Universitas Kristen Indonesia Jakarta. *Proceeding ISKI*, Jakarta
- [2] Adrian, Donal. 2016. *Relationship* Dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya Etnik (Studi Kasus: Pembentukan, Pemeliharaan dan Dinamika *Relationship* dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya Mahasiswa Sulawesi Tengah dan Mahasiswa Jawa di Yogyakarta). Universitas SebelasMaret, Surakarta.
- [3] Sya'roni. 2008. Interaksi Sosial Antar Kelompok Etnik di Kelurahan Tambak Sari Kecamatan Jambi Selatan Kota Jambi. *Kontekstualita*. 23(1):15-25
- [4] Zhang, Xiaochi. 2010. *Developing Students' Intercultural Communication Competences in Western Etiquette Teaching*. China West Normal University. Vol. 3, No. 4. p. 224-227
- [5] Samovar, Larry A., dan Richard E. Porter. *Intercultural Communication (Ninth Editions)*. USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company. 2000
- [6] Lustig, Myron, dan Jolene Koester. *Intercultural Competence, Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures* (Fourth Edition). USA: Allyn & Bacon Pub., 2003
- [7] Berger, C. R. dkk. 2011. *The Handbook Of Communication Science*. USA: Wadsworth
- [8] Littlejohn, Stephen W., and Karen A. Foss. *Theories Of Human Communication*, Tenth Edition. USA: Waveland Press, Inc, 2011
- [9] Mulyana, Deddy . 2003. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya)
- [10] Hidayat, Dedy N. 2003. *Paradigma dan Metodologi Penelitian Sosial Empirik Klasik*, (Jakarta: Departemen Ilmu Komunikasi FAKULTAS ILMU SOSIAL DAN ILMU POLITIK Universitas Indonesia)

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

