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by Nurrahmi Nurrahmi

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Phenomenology of Wedding Communication in Different Countries (Indonesia's Cultural Wedding with A Swedish Man)

Nurrahmi Nurrahmi¹, Jupendri Jupendri², Sumaiyah Sumaiyah³, Fatiha Maharani⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Faculty of Communication Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau
Alamat: Jl. KH. Ahmad Dahlan No.88, Kp. Melayu, Kec. Sukajadi, Kota Pekanbaru, Riau 28156
Correspondence Email: nurrahmi@umri.ac.id

Abstract. Cross-cultural communication in marriage involves understanding and adapting to the different norms, values, and traditions between partners from different cultures. Addressing differences in language, attitudes, and expectations is essential to establish effective communication, build trust, and minimize conflicts. This study aims to explore cross-cultural communication in interethnic marriages in Sweden. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The participants were married couples from different countries: a woman from Indonesia and a man from Sweden. The research method used was descriptive qualitative with a phenomenological approach, and the researcher connected the research object to Face Negotiation Theory. The results showed that the couple from two different countries tended to avoid conflict and displayed cooperative attitudes (obliging) in responding to differences and conflicts arising in daily interactions. Consequently, a harmonious marital relationship was established.

Keywords: Interethnic Marriage, Cross-Cultural, Cultural Communication

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of communications technology has opened up access to information for the world's people. It can make it easier for everyone to interact with others without time and distance constraints. Open access to information gives everyone the ability to build a wider social network, one of which is by marrying different nationalities. Marriage between two people of different cultures, even different countries, is not new and has been happening for a long time, especially in Indonesia.

Different cultures have different value systems. The way everyone communicates depends on their culture, including their language, rules, and norms. Culture is responsible for the entire treasure of communicative behavior and meaning that each person has. Consequently, the treasure that two people from different cultures have will also be different. It can cause all sorts of difficulties. Intercultural communication is a situation that occurs when the communicator is a member of one culture and the communicant is the member of another culture. This situation is inevitable, because whenever one communicates with another, there is always the potential for intercultural communication. It's because of the cultural differences that everyone has, no matter how small the differences are.

The entry of communication as one of the indicators of the happiness of married couples. According to Karlfried Knapp (in Suprpto, 2011:6) it explains that ¹⁵ communication is an interpersonal interaction that uses a system of linguistic symbols, such as verbal and non-verbal symbols. This system can be dissociated face to face or with other media such as written and visual. According to Ali Qaimi (2009:32) that many couples communicate in the official language style and with the dialect of an official or leader of the people. According to him, misunderstandings in communication can trigger conflict, often due to the use of negative communication styles. In fact, communication is used for the exchange of inspiration, ideas, feelings, explanations, suggestions, requests, encouragement, and orders. Communication also enables the same understanding and interpretation as well as certain perceptions of various things in life, including in the interpersonal communication network such as spouses in daily family life.

Errors in communicating often occur when someone communicates with people who have different cultures. The main problem is the assumption that culture itself is the best and is a must without questioning. One real form of intercultural communication activity can be seen from the marriage case. In Riau, Indonesia, there are married couples who have cultural differences even different countries. Where women from Indonesia marry men from Sweden. Early observations with the Female Informer, started communicating with the male informer in September 2003 via the social media Yahoo Messenger accidentally. After learning each other's background and the relationship becoming more harmonious, the male informant decides to marry the female informant. Where weddings are held in Indonesia. After his second marriage settled in the Swedish state. Now this parish marriage is 18 years old and in the gift of 2 (two) children.

There are many factors that can create communication barriers, namely language and culture. Language is the most important thing in the formation of communication, but culture can influence one's communication. Communication by individuals of different cultures, can cause misunderstandings in communicating caused by languages that are used differently.

According to Sri Lestari (in Megi Primagara, 137) various studies have been carried out to determine the elements that affect the nature of marriage, in which the term marriage quality is usually compared to marital happiness or the satisfaction of husbands. Gleen sees the positive feelings that couples have in their marriage, that is, the happiness of husbands depends on emotional judgment, whereas the fulfillment of spouses is based on cognitive evaluation. David H. Olson and Amy K. Olsson, as quoted by Sri Lestari (2012:45), reveal that there are ten indicators that can distinguish between happy and unhappy couples, namely:

- 1) personality matches,
- 2) conflict resolution,
- 3) communication,
- 4) flexibility,
- 5) closeness,
- 6) leisure activities,
- 7) family and friends,
- 8) financial processing,
- 9) spiritual beliefs, and
- 10) sexual relationships.

Of the ten indicators, the five most prominent are communication, flexibility, proximity, matching, and conflict. Couples who are new to a new culture will be prone to a culture shock or a cultural shock. Culture shock is a kind of anxiety reaction that loses known signs of an old environment that arises as a result of being in a new environment that is previously unknown. (Bochner, 2003).

The problem in this study is that after a female informant from Indonesia is married to a male from Sweden, the female Informant is taken to settle in Sweden, and this is where the problems that women informants face arise. The problem is how women informants adapt, communicate, educate their children, and preserve the cultural authenticity they bring to Sweden. Based on the above background, researchers are interested in researching about the phenomenology of marriage communication in different countries.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication is a process of exchange of thoughts and meaning between people of different cultures. When communication occurs between people of different nations, groups, races, or languages, such communication is called intercultural communication. (Heryadi dan Silvana 2013: 97).

Culture and communication are inseparable. Because culture not only determines who speaks to who, about what, and how people encrypt messages, but also the meaning of messages and their condition to send, observe and interpret messages. Communication plays a role in sending, observing, and interpreting messages. Communication and culture are portrayed as two sides of a currency, where culture becomes part of the behavior of communication, and in turn, communication also determines, nurtures, develops, or inherits culture.

Communication touches all aspects of social life, or, on the contrary, every aspect of the social life touches communication. Therefore, people describe communication as ubiquitous or omnipresent, meaning communication is anywhere and anytime.

Communication theory is used as the basis of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is one of the studies in communication science. As a formal object of study, intercultural communication has theories that help to discuss inter-cultural human problems. These theories specifically generalize the concept of communication between communicators with different cultural communications and discuss the influence of culture on communication activities. (Liliweri, 2001:29).

Intercultural communication, according to Tubbs and Moss (in Sihabudin, 2013:13), refers to the interaction of communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic differences. According to Young Yung Kim (in Suranto, 2010:32), intercultural communication describes a phenomenon of communication in which participants come from different cultures and engage in direct and indirect contact with each other. The understanding of these two definitions provides an in-depth picture of the complexity and importance of intercultural communication in understanding cross-cultural interactions.

Face Negotiation Theory

Face negotiation theory, first proposed by Stella Ting-Toomey in 1988, is a concept that humans use to solve cross-cultural conflicts. This concept of "face" refers to the image of one person in front of another. A face is a representation of an identity or self-image that a person wants to project in a particular social situation. This theory acknowledges that each individual, with a different cultural background, has a different view of other people's faces. This perception of faces affects the way individuals deal with conflicts, because faces reflect a person's self-concept (Ting-Toomey, 2004).

This theory provides a basis for understanding how humans handle self-image in different cultures. The concept of "face" refers to a person's image of himself in front of others, including elements such as respect, honor, status, connection, loyalty, and similar values. In other words, faces reflect the identity that one wants to project in social situations.

The concept of face negotiation involves human communication behavior used to build, protect, and maintain their own faces, as well as to influence the faces of others. This theory combines research in cross-cultural communication, conflict, and agitation. The face negotiation theory is remarkable because Stella Ting-Toomey has focused her

research on a variety of cultures,¹ including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, and the United States. Ting-Toomey explains that culture provides a broad framework of interpretation in which the concepts of faces and ways of dealing with conflict can be expressed and understood significantly.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenology in this study explains to clarify about the experience, the meaning of what a person has experienced depends on how the person relates to him. The results of this study were analyzed using the face negotiation theory. Data collection techniques using observation methods, interviews and documentation. The subject of this study is married couples who are married in different countries, namely Indonesia and Sweden.¹⁴ The purpose of this research is to find out about the phenomenon of marriage between Indonesian women and Swedish men.

DISCUSSION

Language Differences

The differences in the language used daily by informants must have differences, both in verbal and non-verbal forms. For example, couples from different countries who are going to get married make a prior agreement on the language that will be used after the marriage. In this study, the informant admitted that he had reached an agreement to use a specific language. Both couples chose to use English and Indonesia to interact. Nevertheless, the pair remained appreciative of their language differences and used various strategies, such as heart-to-heart communication or what is known as face negotiation, as well as using non-verbal language and translator media to overcome difficulties in everyday communication. Though sometimes there are misunderstandings, they're still trying to build a harmonious interaction.

This is reinforced by both informants who say that one of the barriers to communication in cross-cultural marriages is language differences. Sweden has its own national language, namely Swedish, so although many of them speak English there, many of the elderly do not speak English. But both have to communicate in English and Indonesian.

Indonesian Women's and Swedish Men's Facework Shapes

The form of facework in intercultural communication interactions can vary depending on the ethnic background of the individual involved. In Indonesian and Swedish cultures, their facework characteristics play an important role in the dynamics of communication. Culture has a significant influence on how individuals express themselves and interact with others. Smith (1996) explains that culture is not only a code or a rule learned together, but also a foundation of effective communication. One striking aspect of communication is facial expression, which involves a variety of mimics and gestures that reinforce or modify the meaning of spoken words.

In this context, when people from different cultures communicate, their facial expressions can reflect cultural values, social norms, and their self-availability in interaction. For example, in an eastern Indonesian culture where when communicating always be careful when speaking, more respectful and considerate facial expressions may be more commonly seen.

Unlike someone from the Swedish country who adheres to Western culture is impressed with a little talk. Strict and honest facial expressions may be often found. Thus, facework not only serves as an individual expression, but also as a window into the cultural values that guide and shape communicative interactions between individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. This diverse facial mimic reflects the richness and complexity of the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia, enriching and deepening our understanding of cross-cultural communication. That means no one has exactly the same facial expression, not even twins.

The need for facial expression greatly affects communication. The appearance of the face has a significant influence on how the message is delivered and received by the interlocutor. This statement is reinforced by an informant who is married to different countries, namely Mother Yenni and her husband. They assume that living side by side with individuals from different tribal backgrounds or even different countries is not a difficult thing, as long as a friendly and caring attitude is shown. For him, it's a way to show empathy and the need to help each other in everyday life. Which means Yenni's mother and her husband can control their facial mimics as they interact in their everyday lives.

Although they both had a culture shock at the beginning of their marriage. Based on the discussion above it can be concluded that there is a culture shock in married couples different countries between women from Indonesia and men from Sweden.

In cross-cultural interaction, there are often misunderstandings that can lead to conflict. Each ethnic group has its own distinctive characteristics in communicating, as has been described earlier about Indonesia, which adheres to an eastern culture where when communicating is always careful when it comes to speaking, more respectful and considerate facial expressions may be more commonly seen. Unlike someone from the Swedish country who adheres to Western culture is impressed with a little talk. Strict and honest facial expressions may be often found.

Conflict becomes inevitable in social life, mainly because of differences in communication behaviour based on their respective cultural expectations. Conflict management plays an important role in overcoming these differences. Ting-Toomey (1994) explained that conflict can damage one's self-image and affect the proximity of interpersonal relationships.

At first, Mother Yenni met her husband and finally decided to establish a relationship up to the marriage level, which is not apart from the phenomenon of cross-country marriage in today's era of globalization, influenced by technological and communications developments. The female informant also told about her experience when she first moved to Sweden, her partner's home country. She revealed that she was experiencing a culture shock, mainly because of ethnic differences and beliefs with her partner. Living in a non-Islamic majority country, Mother Yenni finds it difficult to get legal food in the small town she lives in. However, as time passes, the number of Muslim immigrants living in her town is increasing, so it is now easier for her to get food that matches her religious beliefs. The climate differences between Indonesia and Sweden also influence its adaptation. A free way of life in Sweden has become a special challenge for Mother Yenni, especially after having a child from a cross-cultural marriage. She must educate her children according to their religious beliefs, while preserving the cultural freedoms that apply in Sweden.

In this country, physical and verbal violence is not allowed, and schools often promote equality with the slogan "all are equal", including in the case of LGBT. Mother Yenni emphasized the importance of harmonious communication in cross-cultural marriages, respecting and understanding Indonesian and Swedish cultures in a balanced manner, as long as it does not conflict with the beliefs adopted. As a couple, they must communicate with each

other to ensure that the messages delivered are well understood. Learning and accepting intercultural openness is the key to finding harmony in intercultural marriages.

In the context of these types of marriage, Mother Yenni classifies cross-cultural marriage as a type of communication, in which couples of different ethnicities learn to solve conflicts within their families. It gives a message to couples considering cross-cultural marriages to think maturely about their decisions, especially in terms of ethnic differences and beliefs. According to him, people who choose to marry cross-cultural should have strong convictions before taking the step, to avoid losing their own cultural identity and faith in the process of adaptation in their partner country. Based on the results of this study, the researchers concluded that the mother and her husband tend to avoid conflict and tend to show a cooperative attitude in responding to differences and conflicts arising from everyday interactions.

CONCLUSION

From the research carried out on cross-cultural marriages, it can be concluded that the mother and her husband tend to avoid conflict and tend to show a cooperative attitude in responding to differences and conflicts arising from daily interactions.

Despite the cultural turmoil, this Indonesian-Swedish daughter-in-law was able to sustain her marriage by finding a way to communicate with her partner. For 18 (eighteen) years of her marriage, she used to use the Indonesian and English languages for everyday communication.

The success of cross-cultural marriages does not depend on the face negotiation theory on intercultural communication and depends heavily on a number of key factors. First of all, a deep understanding of each partner's culture is crucial. Couples need to learn about each other's traditions, values, and cultural norms to avoid conflict that may arise as a result of misunderstanding.

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