

COMPARISON OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN SASAKNESE (LOMBOK), VIETNAMESE, AND WESTERN

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ABSTRACT

Non-verbal behavior is still becoming an interesting thing to observe about. It has special meaning of each expression which has unique side of it. This article focuses on comparison of some non-verbal behaviors in Sasaknese, Vietnamese, and Western. Before coming to the topic, in introduction this paper explains about definition of cross cultural communication and intercultural communication and how do both differ each other. Both are essential in developing communication especially nonverbal communication. The nonverbal behavior will create misunderstanding and different interpretation among different cultures and places. It is the problems in cross cultural communication where the nonverbal communication among countries are different views each others. Therefore through this paper, I want to say that understanding cross cultural differences in behavior is a perquisite for understanding communication.

Keywords : Non-verbal communication, culture

ABSTRAK

Perilaku nonverbal masih menjadi hal yang menarik untuk diperhatikan. Ini memiliki arti khusus dari setiap ekspresi yang memiliki sisi uniknya. Artikel ini berfokus pada perbandingan beberapa perilaku non-verbal dalam bahasa Sasak, Vietnam, dan Barat. Sebelum membahas topik ini, dalam pendahuluan makalah ini menjelaskan tentang definisi komunikasi lintas budaya dan komunikasi antarbudaya dan bagaimana keduanya berbeda satu sama lain. Keduanya sangat penting dalam mengembangkan komunikasi terutama komunikasi nonverbal. Perilaku nonverbal akan menciptakan kesalahpahaman dan perbedaan interpretasi antar budaya dan tempat yang berbeda. Ini adalah masalah dalam komunikasi lintas budaya dimana komunikasi nonverbal antar negara saling berbeda satu sama lain. Oleh karena itu melalui tulisan ini, saya ingin mengatakan bahwa memahami perbedaan lintas budaya dalam perilaku adalah suatu hal yang indah untuk memahami komunikasi.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi non verbal, budaya

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a human's need. It is delivered and received information between two or more person. It is the way to help people in having relationship with other. Communication in general means a source of information, which people get from the message is that sent from others by using media like words, symbols or other media communication. On the other hands, according to communication in delivery, it is consist of communication verbal and communication non-verbal. Verbal communication is a direct communication by using words, but non-verbal communication is an indirect communication which use symbols in gesture. Both need to comprehend in contact with the others in order to avoid misunderstandings which may cause hurt, anger or confusion because sometimes in daily interaction the people might be find a problem if they do not understand what their opposite talked about. It makes us important to understand the pattern of language and also the variety of culture from the people who are used the language. The different groups may have different values, different ways of communication, different customs, conventions and assumptions.

The individual and the culture are a set of relationship where the individual determines its culture and the other it is determined by its culture. Encounter between people of different culture background in communication will make disturbances. Gudykunst explains what happens when we communicate with people of different cultural backgrounds. The theory suggests that when interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds clash in face-to-face interactions, they are confronted with uncertainty and anxiety (affective). The uncertainty describes our inability to explain actions and reactions of the "strangers" we communicate with. Anxiety, on the other hand, portrays our

feeling of uneasiness and apprehension about what might happen in the intercultural communication encounter. So the communication should be emphasized on understanding the verbal and nonverbal communication pattern among the different cultures because the communication will work well if the person or a community transmits stimulus whether verbal and non-verbal to other individuals directly. Here the communication between people of different cultural background called as cross cultural communication. The term of cross cultural implies interaction with persons of different cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, religious, and class backgrounds. The cross cultural communication is defined by Gotland University cited in <http://www.ehow.com> as "a process of exchanging, negotiating, and mediating one's cultural differences through language, non-verbal gestures, and space relationships. It seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures behave, communicate and perceive the world around them. From the definition we can see that culture and communication are related each other where the culture as a way of thinking while communication takes place between people within the same culture or across culture. In the cross cultural communication problems may exist in term of each participants may interpret the other's speech based on his/her own culture.

The terms of cross cultural communication and intercultural communication are frequently used interchangeably although both can be treated synonymously because it is linked to language use. Moran (2007) defines that the intercultural communication is as the presence of at least two individuals who are culturally different from each other on such important attributes as their value orientations, preferred communication codes, role expectations,

and perceived rules of social relationship. Both definitions of cross cultural communication and intercultural communication above seem interchangeable but they have different things where in Unie's article (2011) explains that the differences between them; in cross cultural communication, there is some reaching across boundaries while in intercultural communication there is comprehensive mutually, reciprocity, and equally. Here the intercultural communication deals with the interaction between at least two people who are different in significant ways culturally.

Intercultural communication is a necessary part of human communication. One of the topics or problems are included in intercultural communication is nonverbal communication. Non-verbal behavior includes many features – touch, glance, eye contact, smell, clothing, masks, vocal features and body movement. Sometimes each country or even religion has its own different way in performing something through nonverbal communication. The cultural differences have significant impact on our intercultural communication. They are the source of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The different views in interpreting the nonverbal communication caused by the people do it based on their culture. Different pond different fish, it means that the verbal communication, the people of one place must be different from other places. The interpretation of nonverbal communication can cause conflicts, especially because of differences in displaying emotions. Many ways of nonverbal communication are the same across the world like sadness, surprise, fear or anger, but that is not the problem in communication. The point of conflict is which expressions are acceptable to show and by whom.

The intercultural communication can be difficult in some countries because

what is acceptable in one culture may be unacceptable in another. When people are immersed in an environment where facial expressions such as eye contact and body gestures are alien to their own experience, they may suffer from disorientation and frustration. Therefore, it is significant to learn the body language of different cultures as Norton media (2009) posts that throughout the day you witness many behaviors, but few people put their observations to us. As what I want to discuss about here is the comparison of non-verbal behavior within three places, these are Sasaknese (Lombok), Vietnamese, and Western.

Discussion

Nonverbal communication or gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body. One gesture may be common in a certain country and have a clear interpretation, but it may be meaningless in another culture or even have an opposite meaning. If we don't understand the non-verbal communication from different culture, it is possible that we can make a mistake to know the other person means. According to the explanation, this paper tries to discuss the non-verbal communication in Lombok, Vietnam, and western. This paper explains about the compare and contrast the non-verbal communication in Lombok with other cultures.



The first gesture is *cross fingers*. A hand gesture in which the middle finger of either hand is crossed over the top of the index finger of the same hand. Many western cultures make this gesture when wishing for good luck. The gesture commonly used to beg God for protection, as well as to wish for good luck. The gesture is referred to by the common expression "keeping one's

fingers crossed" or just "fingers crossed" and has also been historically used in order to allow believers to recognize one another during times of persecution. A hand with the index and middle fingers crossed is even the logo for the UK's National Lottery. In other word, the gesture is also referred to by the common expression "fingers crossed", meaning to hope for a good outcome for someone or something.

The act of crossing finger is said to bring luck. The one person makes the wish, the other empathizes and supports. In Great Britain which is written by Jamie on <http://www.funkyenglish.com/profiles/blogs/british-culture-crossed-fingers> stated some people cross their finger when they buy a lottery ticket or gamble. Other people cross their people their fingers when they take exam or have important interview. This superstition originated from the Christian religion. Christian used to cross their fingers to ask for protection from God and to pray for blessings. Before Christianity was legalized, making the sign of the cross to another person was also used as a sign between two Christians to identify each other. When they would be asked whether they're Christians or not, they would say no but had their fingers crossed behind their back as if signing that Jesus would forgive them for lying.

Still in western views, Francis Grose in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crossed_fingers recommend to keep one's fingers crossed until one sees a dog to avoid the bad luck attracted by walking under a ladder. Another is that during the time of Hundred Years' War which lasted from 1337 to 1457 between France and England, the rival armies wanted all the luck they could muster. The archer preparing to make a shot would have crossed his fingers and then said a prayer before pulling the bowstring. On Cambridge dictionary, the

idiom of Keep your fingers crossed means to hope the things will happen in the way that you want them to. The saying originally derives from the superstition that bad luck may be avoided by making the sign of the cross.

In Lombok, the people avoid to cross finger in daily interaction with the others because that is an obscene gesture, especially when done while looking at or addressing another person. The crossed fingers are said to resemble female genitals. The same rule goes to Vietnamese. Therefore, in both regions to cross fingers is something that people claim as taboo, rude and disrespectful gesture that refers to part of the female anatomy.



Still relate with finger, the Sasaknese will act thumbs up or sometimes use their five fingers to ask people to sit. It means they respect to the others. The Sasaknese also use their thumb up to point something because if they point it with the left hand, the people will angry to accept that. But in western people, they use thumb as the symbol of liking something. In the United States, American Sign Language users use this hand shape to indicate the number ten (10) when wiggled modestly left and right. When held stationary and thrust toward another person the meaning is "yourself". When lifted up by the other palm, the meaning is "help". In vietnamese, the gesture means ok or appraising a good job for someone.

The third is shaking hands. People in Lombok have different nonverbal communication in touch, like shaking hand and kissing hand. In Lombok, shaking hand as a regard of the people to whom they meet and kissing hand to command the old people like parent and teacher. However, for western people

shaking hand is a symbol of agreement for something business and kissing hand as the symbol of loving someone (man touch to woman). In vietnam culture, the gesture means friendly greeting between men (but not the elderly); not customary between women or between a man and a woman; acceptable between a Vietnamese woman and non-Vietnamese man.



The four is eye contact. Eye-contact is the primary notion to where a message of attention is being conveyed in engagement with Nonverbal communication.



Eye contact is when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time; it can indicate interest, attention, and involvement. Studies have found that people use their eyes to indicate their interest and not just with the frequently recognized actions of winking and movements of the eyebrows, but it can indicate social behavior. Men and women have different ways of eye contact. Men stare at the women they are interested in for at least a half an hour, whereas women tend to always keep their eyes roaming around the room to see who is there. Disinterest is highly noticeable when showing little eye-contact in a social setting. Pupils dilate when they are interested in the other person. People, sometimes, even, without consciously doing so, probe each other's eyes and faces for positive or negative mood signs. Generally speaking, the longer the eye contact between two people the greater the intimacy is felt inside. According to

Eckman, "Eye contact (also called mutual gaze) is another major channel of nonverbal communication. The duration of eye contact is its most meaningful aspect.) Gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking and listening. The length of a gaze, the frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate are all important cues in nonverbal communication. "Liking generally increases as mutual gazing increases." Along with the detection of disinterest, deceit can also be observed in a person. Hogan states "when someone is being deceptive their eyes tend to blink a lot more. Eyes act as leading indicator of truth or deception," Eye aversion is the avoidance of eye contact. Eye contact and facial expressions provide important social and emotional information. Overall, as Pease states, "Give the amount of eye contact that makes everyone feel comfortable. Unless looking at others is a cultural no-no, lookers gain more credibility than non-lookers".

In many Western cultures, a person who does not maintain good eye contact is regarded as slightly suspect. Those who avoid eye contact are unconsciously considered unfriendly, insecure, untrustworthy, inattentive, and impersonal. However, in Lombok eye-contact has no special meaning. People do not particularly pay a lot of attention in how long someone looks into other person's eyes or how they look into other's eyes like what American do. Though there are some people, teenagers specifically, claim that if someone cannot look into someone else's eyes that means he/she has some sort of romantic feeling towards that particular person. Another thing that might be applied and believed in the society is that once one cannot look at her/ his opponent's eyes, he might be accused lying.

A very distinctive situation happen in Vietnam, Shapiro (2002) says direct eye contact with parents, teachers, or authority means a challenge and should be avoided (note: providers are considered authority figures). Direct eye contact with someone of the opposite sex can be interpreted as deep passion and should be discouraged, especially in public settings.

A Vietnamese student who sits quietly and listens attentively to the teacher wants to express respect to his teacher. This behavior has often been misinterpreted by the American teacher as passivity and non-responsiveness. It is also out of respect that the Vietnamese student avoids eye contact with the teacher when speaking or being spoken to. By American standards, a person acting in this way would appear suspicious, unreliable, or mischievous. In Vietnamese culture, however, looking into somebody's eyes, especially when this person is of a higher status (in age or in social or family hierarchy) or of a different gender, usually means a challenge or an expression of deep passion. The proper respectful behavior is to avoid eye contact in talking who is not an equal or the same sex.



The next gesture is patting person's back. In America and most western country patting someone's back pretty much symbolizes praise, congratulations and encouragement, so does in Lombok. It is fairly normal to be patted or patting one's back. It is a sign of salutation, or even the feelings of love. To be very honest, it is warming at the heart to see such view. However, again a quite contrast condition happens in Vietnam, *patting a person's back, especially those senior in age or*

status is a sign of disrespect. Or in other word, someone who is younger and lower in status is not expected to pat the senior's back.

The last gesture is the crossing of the arms. This is when you fold your arms over your abdomen, generally hiding your hands under your upper arms.



Some people hide just one hand, others simply cross their arms and touch their biceps muscles with their fingers or their palms.

In the US, when people talking to someone with their arms crossed American tend to think they are mad at them or are trying to cover something up. Therefore, we also can conclude that, this is a self-comforting posture used mostly unconsciously to alleviate nervous tension. In special situations this position might also suggest self-importance or disagreement. The signs are clear: straight back, raised elbows pointing out plus a general self-sufficient attitude. For example: women often cross their arms in front of men they don't like and in not so easy to handle situations – that's pretty simple to read. Men rarely cross their arms in a self-preservation pose. They do cross their arms to show (mostly involuntary) self-confidence and arrogance.

However, the act of crossing your arms also has a different meaning in Vietnam. Instead of something that is done when someone is upset, here crossing your arms is considered a sign of respect. This is quite different from what we see in Lombok, when someone is talking with her/his arms crossed it symbolizes disrespectful and rudeness towards whom we talk to. The cross-armed pose gives the impression that you

are a bossy person, who loves to boss people around and arrogant.

CONCLUSION

Nonverbal communication is known well as another form of language expression. When communicating with individuals of our own culture, we can more readily assess the communication cues so that we know when our conversation, our ideas and words, are being understood and internalized. However, when communicating across cultures, communication misunderstandings can occur. The several of nonverbal behavior show their meaning depend on how the society consider on it conventionally. Each place will have special nonverbal behavior. All these situations might be nerve-wracking, but it is important that we don't let our body send out negative messages and we don't allow negative non-verbal signs put us off. Therefore, we cannot say that one verbal communication is wrong because we are in different situation, views in thinking and action, time, and place. And also we can say that what is good for us it does not mean good for the others. So we need to know the diversity of interpreting the nonverbal communication in every place because by understanding the cross cultural differences in behavior are a prerequisite for understanding the communication.

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