

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF A MULTICULTURAL FAMILY IN BURU REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aimed at: 1) exploring the process of intercultural communication in a multiculturalism family in Namlea; 2) investigating the functions of intercultural communication in a multiculturalism family; 3) knowing the multiculturalism family developing their intercultural competence. This research applied the qualitative research using a case study design. The informant of the research consisted of a multiculturalism family in Jikubesar of Buru Regency, Maluku. The data collection technique employed the observation, interview, field notes, and documentation. The technique of data analysis was data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the adjusting and understanding others culture were the key of the success of the intercultural process in a multicultural family through some functions and strategies in developing the intercultural communication competence. The results of the study contributed to develop the communication model in the multicultural society such in the environment interaction. It also could be adapted as a strategy or model of teaching and learning a language in the multicultural classroom.

Keywords: *Intercultural communication, multicultural competence*

I INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication (IC) plays an important role in the globalization era especially in the economic, trade, social, tourism, political context, and also education. It was defined as an interaction between the personal and interpersonal communication is done by some people who have a multicultural and multilingual background involved in a context of communication or interaction (Samovar & Porter, 1994, p.19; Liliweri, 2003, p. 13; Bin-Tahir, 2015, p. 32; Amri, et al, 2017, p. 125; Edi, et al, 2017, p. 1234).

Indonesia has derived various ethnicities, cultures, and languages, one of them being Buru Regency. Buru is one of the regencies in Maluku province, known as the area that has a diversity of ethnic, cultural, and religion. People living in Buru Island can be distinguished between natives (*Geba Bupolo*) living in mountainous areas and migrants (*Geba Misnit*) who live in coastal areas. Currently, the number of *Geba Misnit* is relatively more from *Geba Bupolo*. The immigrants and natives have always claimed to be the Buru. The *Geba Bupolo Fuka* inhabits mountainous areas. The *Geba Fuka Unen* is those who live in the central island, where there is a lake Rana. Those living on the slopes of the mountain call themselves *Geba Fuka Fafan*, while *Geba Masin* is those who live in coastal areas interact to social programs for the resettlement department together with immigrant communities. Currently, the number of *Geba Misnit* relatively less more than *Geba Bupolo* because of intermarriage with tribes outside as Buton, Bugis, Javanese, Sanana, who came to the district Buru to work or because of transmigration. However, they always claim to be the Burunese (Taher, 2013).

Some of the conflicts occurrences in Maluku and Buru Regency are generally caused also by miscommunication across cultures and religions. As known, the presence of gold mine in Buru Island since 2012 was often causing a conflict between local citizen and the migrants. The conflicts are triggered by the seizure of land mines and also disharmony between cultures and religions (Tempo, 2012).

The phenomena show the crucial relationship between culture and communication in understanding the intercultural communication. Therefore, through the influence of culture, people learn to communicate. For instance, people from Buton, Ambon or Sunda learn to communicate, such as Butonese, Ambonese, and Sundanese. Their behavior may give a meaning, because it is learned and known, and it is bound by the cultural behavior and attitude (Bin-Tahir, 2015, p. 210; Tahir, 2015, p. 45). Thus, people looked at them through the categories, the concepts, and labels produced by their culture where they live in multicultural and multilingual society (Bin-Tahir, et al, 2017, p. 1210).

Since Buru Island is a complex and culturally diverse, the topic of intercultural communication is becoming increasingly important. Therefore, the benefit is to learn how to communicate between different cultures in a society and increase the intercultural awareness. The awareness will lead to intercultural communication competence that affects the ability to communicate successfully in work environment, school, home, and community.

Based on the background which has been mentioned above, the researchers formulated the objectives of the research as follows: 1) to explore the process of intercultural communication in a multilingualism family in Namlea; 2) to investigate the functions of intercultural communication in a multilingualism family; 3) to know the multilingualism family developing their intercultural competence.

II MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are many definitions of Intercultural Communication proposed by some experts. Sitaram (1970) defined intercultural communication as the art of understanding and being understood by the audience of another culture. While Rich (2013, p. 1) stated that communication is cultural when occurring between peoples of the different culture. It is in line to what stated by Prosser (2012, p. 857) that intercultural communication is communication which occurs under the condition of cultural difference-language, values, costumes, and habits.

Intercultural communication occurs when a message must be understood is produced by members of a particular culture to members of other cultures (Samovar & Porter, 1994, p. 19). The intercultural communication process is the interaction between the personal and interpersonal communication that done by some people who have different cultural backgrounds (Liliweri, 2003, p. 13).

Based on those definitions, the researchers concluded that intercultural communication is a process of sending and receiving messages between people whose cultural backgrounds can take them to interpret the signs of verbal and non-verbal communication in different ways.

Chen and Starosta (1996, p. 353) offer a model of intercultural communication competence. This model aims to improve interaction in understanding, respecting, tolerating and integrating cultural differences, so that they are ready to become a member of the world community. This model presents a transformational process of interdependence symmetries can be explained through three perspectives: (a) affective (intercultural sensitivity); (b) cognitive (intercultural awareness); and (c) behavioral (intercultural skills). These three perspectives are equally important these are inseparable and form a holistic illustration of intercultural communication competence.

Wahlstrom (in Liliweri, 2007) explains that an interactive intercultural communication is a communication that done by the communicator to the communicant in two directions/reciprocal but still at a low stage. When communication process entered a high stage, for example, to understand each other, understand the feeling and act together, so the communication has entered the transactional stage. Transactional communications include three essential elements: (1) a high emotional involvement, ongoing and continuous in the exchange of messages; (2) communications events includes time series, which is associated with the past, present and future; (3) participants in intercultural communication execute specific role.

The human communication included the intercultural communication because there are a purpose and function to meet the call relations by way of stating the contents. In general, there are four main categories of communication functions that are; (1) information function; (2) instruction function; (3) persuasive function; (4) entertaining function. If all four functions are extended it will be found two other functions, those are (1) private function; and (2) social function. Private function consisted of (a) state social identity; (b) social integration; (c) cognitive; and (d) escape function. While social function consists of (a) the monitoring function; (b) the connecting function; (c) the social function; and (d) the entertaining function.

A private function is the communication indicated through the behavior that comes from an individual. The private function consisted of several functions, they are; a) Social identity that is the behavior is expressed through the act of speaking both verbal and non-verbal language. The behavior is appearing of the origin or background of the social and culture such as ethnicity, religion, education, and knowledge; b) Social integration is to accept the interpersonal and inter-group but still recognizes the differences of every element; c) Increase knowledge (cognitive) of both communicator and the communicant. They got new knowledge about the others' culture by learning it; d) Escape means that sometimes the communication is made to escape or finds a way out of the problem being faced.

The communication also has a social function that consisted of several functions, they are; a) monitoring functions to monitor the practice of intercultural communication between the communicator and communicant that has mutual monitoring function; b) connecting functions in the process of interpersonal communication including the intercultural communication that occurred between two people of different cultures that bridging the differences between them. The bridging functions can be

controlled through the messages they exchanged, both explain differences in interpretation on a message so as to produce the same meaning between them.

The socialization function is a function to teach and introduce the values of a culture of a community to other communities. In the intercultural communication often appear the non-verbal behaviors that are poorly understood, but more important than that are how to capture the value contained in the movement of the body and an imaginary movement in the non-verbal behavior. Besides, the entertaining functions are often performed in the process of intercultural communication (Liliweri, 2007).

This research employs the qualitative research using a case study design. Nawawi and Martini (1994: 73) defines a case study as a method of illustrating a certain objective circumstances or events based on facts that appear or as it should then accompanied by efforts to making general conclusions based on the historical facts. In addition, according to Supardan (2000, p. 103), the analytical descriptive study is a research focused on the problem that exists at the present time.

The informant of the research consisted of a multilingualism and multiculturalism family in Jikubesar of Buru Regency. In this research, the researchers directly applicable as a principal observer (key instrument) which conduct the research process directly and actively interviewing, gathering various materials relating to intercultural communication in the multicultural family activities (Nasution, 1988).

The techniques of data collection used in this research were observation, interview, field notes, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2007). 1) Observation: observing how the role of intercultural communication in the multilingualism family and the process of communication that occurs between a husband and wife, husband and children, wife and children, then the process of communication between the child and the child; 2) Interview was conducted in the form of a discussion to find out the process of intercultural communication that occurred in the family.

The data were analyzed using a model analysis by Miles and Huberman (in Burhan Bungin, 2003, p. 69) who stated that the activity of data analysis in the qualitative research conducted interactively and continues through to the end, in which the data is already saturated. The activities of data analysis as disclosed includes three elements, they are data display, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. To check the validity of the data and to formulate the results, the study used three techniques: (1) persistence of observation, (2) triangulation of data, and (3) referential adequacy. The data validity was analyzed with relevant reference sources of the observation, documents, and family's interaction activities (Kothari, 2004; Cohen, et al, 2007).

III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding of this research was obtained through observation and an in-depth interview with the entire participant. The whole informants were a member of a multiculturalism family (Sundanese, Butonese, Javanese, and Ambonese) in Namlea, Maluku.

3.1 THE PROCESS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MULTICULTURAL FAMILY

Based on the observation results in the intercultural communication of multicultural family at Namlea, it can be presented in Table 1 as follows.

Intercultural Communication Process	Appraisal			
	1	2	3	4
Husband communicate with wife by using Sundanese	√			
Wife communicate with Husband by using Butonese	√			
Parent communicate with children by using their local languages	√			
Teaching the language and culture of husband to children		√		
Teaching the language and culture of wife to children		√		
Communicating with families using local languages	√			

Adjusting the culture when communicating with family				√
Communicating with other people who are from the same culture in the neighborhood by using local languages			√	
Trying to understand the language and culture of the husband or wife				√
Pretending to understand the language and culture of the husband or wife	√			
Being offended or conflict when communicating			√	

Table 1: The Intercultural Communication Process

Table 1 shows that adjusting to others culture and trying to understand the others' culture was the most condition of the intercultural communication process in a multicultural family. Based on the deep interviewed about how the process of intercultural communication occurs in multicultural family obtained the answers that almost equal to another informant answers.

The interview begins by interviewing Mr. Rohman, the head of the family. The researcher asked about the most of the language used to communicate with his children and wife?" the answer was "I communicate with them by using Maluku's local language (Malay-Ambonese). The answer to the question "How children communicate with the family of their mother or father?" the answer was "My children communicate with their mother/father families using Malay-Ambonese language, but sometimes I hear their grandmother invited them to have lunch and dinner in the house using Buton language. It aimed to make them be accustomed with their ancestor language, and sometimes their uncle and aunt asked "what are you doing?" or "Who is it?" using Buton language or Sundanese in everyday communication in the house, they understand those short sentences and answered with the local language (Malay-Ambonese).

Those interview results strengthen the observation result which convinced us that the adjusting to others' culture and trying to understand the others' culture was the success of intercultural communication process in a multicultural family even sometimes they felt offended to the communication process. It could be concluded that the cultural diversity awareness was the key to intercultural communication success.

3.2 THE FUNCTION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MULTICULTURAL FAMILY

The observation result of the intercultural communication of multilingualism family in Namlea can be presented in Table 2 below.

The Function of Intercultural Communication	Scoring			
	1	2	3	4
Social Identity				√
Social Integration				√
Increase Knowledge (Cognitive)				√
Escape or as a way out			√	
Monitoring		√		
Connecting		√		
Socialization		√		
Entertaining		√		

Table 2: The Functions of Intercultural Communication

Table 2 shows that the dominant functions of intercultural communication in a multicultural family were the social identity status, the social integration, increased knowledge, and escape. In communicating, certainly, there is a function in the communication process. Thus, the researchers conducted interviews with some questions that lead to the intercultural communication functions. Here was Mr. Rohman's answered when the researcher asked about how to explain and show his culture to his wife, children, neighbors, and society "I explain my culture to my family by telling and teaching them directly about my culture, while for the neighbors and the society, sometimes, I explained to someone who doubts of my originality, I think my face and accent already show my culture and my identity". Those findings convinced that the face, language or dialect, and custom show the personal identity of a person that mostly recognized by other people through knowledge and integration.

3.3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

The observation on intercultural communication competence of a multilingualism family in Namlea could be described in Table 3 as follows.

Intercultural Communication Competence	Scoring			
	1	2	3	4
Sensitivity				
Self Concept				√
Open Mindedness				√
Non Judgmental Attitudes				√
Social Relaxation				√
The Cognitive Process				
Self Awareness				√
Cultural Awareness				√
Behavioral				
Message Skills	√			
Appropriate self disclosure	√			
Behavioral Flexibility			√	
Interaction Management		√		
Social Skills (Empathy)			√	

Table 3: Intercultural Communication Competence

Table 3 shows that the participants have a high competence in term of sensitivity and cognitive process but they have less competence in behavioral competence. It means that what they already felt and known about could not be implemented in their behavior. In other words, there was less correlation between the cognitive process and behavioral process.

The findings show that the process of intercultural communication occurred in this multicultural family was transactional communication process and dynamic. This is in accordance with the communication process proposed by Liliweri (2004) "In essence, the process of intercultural communication is similar to another communication process, namely the interactive, transactional process, and dynamic".

The transactional communications process that exists in a multicultural family could be seen from the data of observation and interview. The observation data and interview explain the informants can

understand each other, understand the feelings, and act together. It is seen from the way they communicate with each other, although the family derived from different cultures and did not know the mother language of the other, the communication process can continue smoothly and they preferred to communicate using Malay-Ambonese language. As for the little barriers caused by cultural and perception differences, but it did not become a problem for them. Figure 1 described a model of the process of intercultural communication in the multiculturalism family.

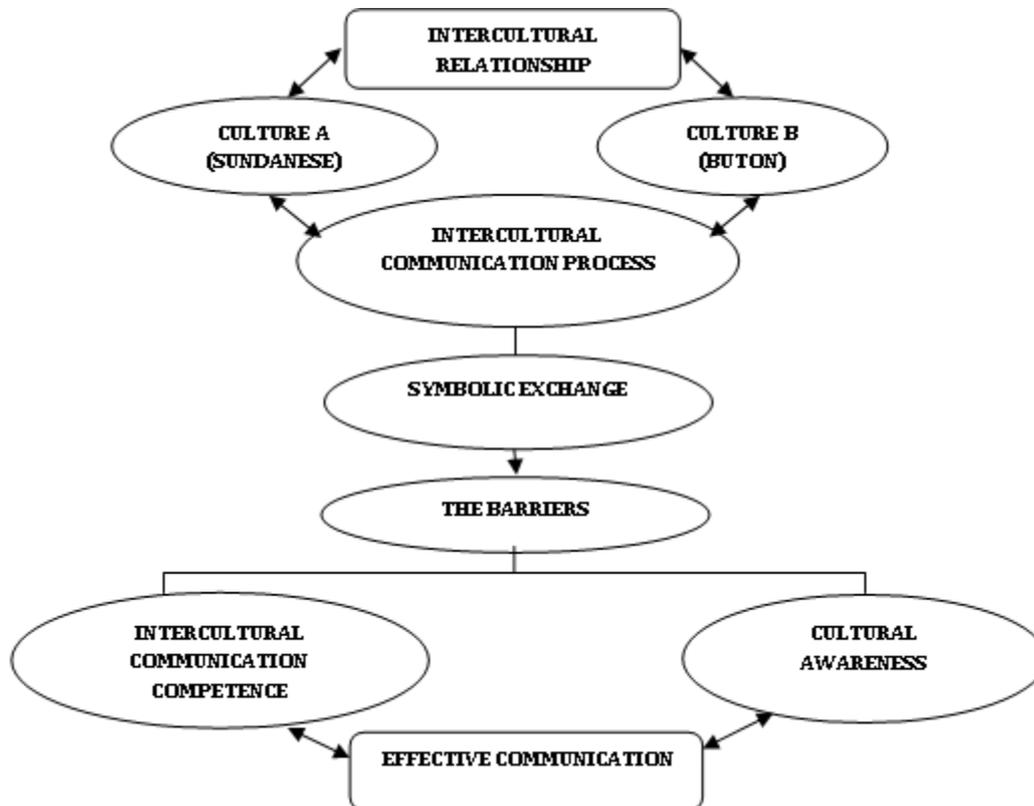


Figure 1: Intercultural Communication Model (Source: Research Data, 2016).

The figure 1 shows the process of intercultural communication in this multicultural family occurred by exchange of verbal and nonverbal symbols, and if there were barriers in the exchange process, the speaker and interlocutor can handle the obstacles by their intercultural communication competence and by their cultural awareness that they have to form effectively in communication.

Based on the results of interviews, the researchers found the function of intercultural communication in a multicultural family, namely a private function. The private function of communication between cultures in this multicultural family, namely: a) Social Identity Function, b) Social Integration Function, c) Cognitive Function, d) Escape Function. Besides the functions mentioned above, the researchers also found the escape function in the intercultural communication of a multicultural family where the informant explained that there was a problem they usually find a way out by discussing the problem.

The intercultural communication competence model was similar to the model provided by Chen and Starosta (1996, p. 353) which showed the affective (intercultural sensitivity) consisting of self-concept, open-mindedness, non-judgmental attitudes, and social relaxation. Cognitive (Intercultural Awareness) consists of self-awareness and cultural awareness. The behavioral process consists of message skill, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, interaction management and social skills (empathy)?

Affective Process including; 1) open mindedness, informants could receive ideas and each other's opinions. This was disclosed by the informant during the interview; 2) non-judgmental attitude, informants can understand these cultural differences, they do not look bad culture with the culture of the other, on the contrary, they learn from each other to be better for understanding the culture of their mate; 3) social relaxation, the informants can overcome their anxiety when faced with a problem. The ability to overcome this anxiety helps them to still be able to communicate well even though they are faced with the problem.

The Cognitive Process consists of cultural awareness; the informants have enough knowledge about each other's culture. During their interaction, they learn from each other to understand and accept their partners' culture. They cannot speak their mate language, as well as their children; she could not speak Butonese or Sundanese. This is due to their everyday communication using the local language (Malay-Ambonese).

The behavioral process included; a) interactional management, they can build a good conversation to start and end it; b) behavioral flexibility was the informants could sort behavior that fits with their situation. It can be seen from the explanation of the informant who can solve the problem well and explanation of their children who do not intervene in the problems of his parents; c) social skill, the informants have good social skills, in the family they are empathy when a family member was having problems, not only within the family environment, the social skills of informants within the society is also good, it can be seen from the informants' explanation in the interview that they often help friends, neighbors, and relatives who have trouble, and always took the time to participate in social activities in the village.

IV CONCLUSION

In accordance with the findings and discussion, the researchers concluded that: 1) the process of intercultural communication occurred in a multicultural family through that adjusting to others' culture and trying to understand the others' culture as the success of intercultural communication process in a multicultural family even sometimes they felt offended to the communication process. The cultural diversity awareness was the key to the intercultural communication success; 2) The functions of intercultural communication in a multicultural family were: a) social identity function to inform each other about their social identity to family, friends, and society through action, verbal and non-verbal language; b) social integration function to accept the cultural differences; c) cognitive function to reveal that the cultural differences between them have made them acquire knowledge about the culture of their mate; d) escape function to explain if there was a problem, they usually find a way out by discussing the problem; 3) developing multicultural communication competence in a multicultural family through a) Affective (intercultural sensitivity) consisting of self-concept, open-mindedness, non-judgmental attitudes, and social relaxation; b) Cognitive (intercultural awareness) consists of self awareness and cultural awareness; and c) behavioral process consisted of message skill, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, interaction management and social skills (empathy).

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