

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY (A STUDY ON THE ADAPTATION OF JAVANESE ETHNIC MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN MATARAM UDIK VILLAGE)

Made Dewi Purnami

Master of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Lampung
Correspondence author email: madedewip10@gmail.com

Tina Kartika

Master of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Lampung

Nina Yudha Aryanti

Master of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Lampung

Anna Gustina Zainal

Master of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
University of Lampung

Abstract

The Balinese ethnic community has undergone transmigration due to the eruption of Mount Agung. Transmigration was carried out to Lampung Province, specifically in Central Lampung. This study aims to understand "How is intercultural communication among the Balinese ethnic group in a multicultural society?" Given this phenomenon, the author employs a qualitative research method using the symbolic interactionism model to observe behaviors and interactions of individuals, discerned through symbols and their meanings. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research findings reveal an interconnected adaptation between the Balinese ethnic migrants and the indigenous Lampung ethnic group. Due to mutual respect and appreciation between the ethnic groups, both migrants and natives are able to practice their respective cultures. The Javanese ethnic community is still respected for their use of the Javanese language in this village. Therefore, the relationship between these two ethnic groups can proceed smoothly without significant obstacles as each group has accepted the other as they are.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Javanese ethnicity, Lampung ethnicity.

INTRODUCTION

According to Steward L. Tubbs, as cited in Suryandari (2019:21), intercultural communication is defined as communication that occurs between two different ethnic groups. These differences lie in diverse cultural backgrounds, distinct ethnicities, and even varying economic or social statuses. In intercultural communication, there are

often varying levels of differences among individuals, primarily stemming from cultural factors such as beliefs, values, and norms.

Intercultural communication occurs through the process of symbolic exchange when individuals from two different cultural groups mutually accept meanings in interactive situations (Suryandari, 2019:23). It is important to have intercultural communication to achieve harmony and unity. Furthermore, it aids in understanding differences among ethnicities. Intercultural communication already has positive effects, facilitating socialization and reducing misunderstandings (Lubis, 2019:12).

Intercultural communication occurs when there is a movement or transmigration of different ethnic groups to a new area. It is through this process that intercultural communication arises. If migrant ethnic groups intend to settle in a particular area, they must adapt in terms of customs, language, and culture. Throughout this adaptation process, there are bound to be obstacles, both cognitive and affective, that individuals will face.

The process of adaptation inevitably involves several processes undertaken by immigrants in a different indigenous society. Long-standing relationships will lead to acculturation and resocialization. According to Gudykunst and Kim (1992:214 as cited in Saputro, 2019:5), the adjustment or adaptation of a culturally different group of refugees or immigrants occurs through several processes. When immigrants socialize with a new culturally different environment for an extended period, a process of resocialization or acculturation occurs.

In various stages of immigration, individuals may acquire new patterns of thinking and behavior. Daily interactions with the indigenous population lead immigrants to understand the differences and similarities with their new environment. Immigrants or newcomers may grasp the nuances of their new surroundings and adopt some values and norms of the indigenous community. The interaction between immigrant ethnic groups and indigenous ethnic groups gives rise to several issues, including: firstly, elements of foreign culture that are easily accepted; secondly, elements of foreign culture that are difficult to accept; thirdly, which individuals quickly embrace the new elements; and fourthly, the tensions arising from such acculturation.

Several ethnic groups in Indonesia have distinct differences that are easily recognizable and relatively easy to distinguish, such as the Batak, Minang, Javanese, Sundanese, Lampung, and Balinese ethnic groups. For example, in the Javanese and Sundanese ethnic groups, their dialects are relatively similar, with soft and gentle tones in their speech. According to Schram, there are four conditions required for effective intercultural communication: firstly, respect for the culture of other ethnic groups; secondly, the ability to genuinely respect the culture of other ethnic groups; thirdly, respecting the rights of individuals from other cultural backgrounds to do things differently from our actions; and fourthly, competent cross-cultural message delivery

involves learning to enjoy living with people from other cultures (Suryani, as cited in Mustopa, 2023:3).

This research aims to examine the communication that occurs during the adaptation process among the Javanese ethnic community in Mataram Udik village within a multicultural society. The researcher finds this study intriguing because the relationships observed demonstrate integrative tendencies among ethnic groups. However, delving deeper into how the behavioral and cultural components of the Javanese ethnic group adapt to their surroundings provides further insight.

The research problem statement for this study is: "How is the adaptation process of the Javanese ethnic community with the Lampung Ethnic community in Mataram Udik Village, Bandar Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency?" This research aims to understand the adaptation process of the Javanese ethnic community with the Lampung Ethnic community in Mataram Udik Village, Bandar Mataram District, Central Lampung Regency.

Intercultural communication is communication that occurs between individuals with different cultures (which may differ in ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, or a combination of these differences). Culture refers to the way of life embraced by a group of people and passed down from generation to generation (Ayuni, 2022:3).

Intereethnic communication is part of intercultural communication, as well as inter-racial communication, inter-religious communication, and part of inter-gender communication (between men and women). Therefore, intercultural communication is broader than other fields of communication (Khadijah, 2018:3).

There are three aspects of culture in the division of social and cultural elements that directly contribute to the creation of meaning for perception, and subsequently influence communication behavior. The effects in this communication are varied and encompass all aspects of human social activity. There are elements in the intercultural communication process that function well because they are interrelated and necessary. These elements are: belief systems, values and attitudes, worldview about the world and social organization (Luthfi, 2018:8-9).

The understanding of intercultural communication on a larger scale encompasses all forms of communication between individuals who are different. Furthermore, intercultural communication on a smaller scale consists of communication between cultures that are different (Azmi, 2018:10). The situation in our immediate environment that fosters intercultural communication feels increasingly important today due to societal mobility, economic interdependence, communication technology, immigration patterns, and political well-being.

Symbolic interaction theory looks at an approach explained by several scholars such as William James, Charles H. Cooley, John Dewey, and others. According to George H. Mead, as cited in Luthfi (2018:9), this concept is linked to an individual's thoughts, sociality, and the structure of community groups in social interaction processes.

Symbolic interactionism theory begins to examine the social reality created by humans. Humans as social beings have the ability to socialize symbolically, possess cultural essence, interact with each other, form communities, and have ideas. All forms of social interaction begin and end by considering human self (Ahmadi, as cited in Rafi, 2021:6).

Symbolic interactionism generally exhibits distinctive characteristics through specific ideas about society. Therefore, according to Ballis (1995), as cited by Littlejohn in Kusuma (2018:17), several opinions are conveyed: (1) Individuals create choices and behaviors based on their subjective understanding of the conditions in which they find themselves, (2) Social life stems from the processes of relational arrangements, and this social life changes directly, (3) Individuals understand their experiences through the meanings found in the symbols of their primary groups, and language is an integral part of social life, (4) Our world is constructed from named social objects, and social situations are determined by meanings, (5) An individual's behavior is based on their interpretations, where objects and actions are good within understood and defined conditions, (6) The individual self is an important object, and all social objects are interpreted through interactions with others.

Blumer and Mead argue that symbolic interaction theory relates to an individual's understanding of their consciousness (Ruhyaana, 2021:382). Blumer adds a distinctive approach to symbolic interactionist groups, stating that humans interpret each other's behaviors and actions, rather than merely reacting to them as stimulus-response mechanisms. Individuals are not directly responded to by the behavior of others but are grounded in the meanings attributed to those behaviors. Thus, an individual's social interaction is connected to the use of symbols, interpretation, and the certainty of the meaning of others' behaviors (Suhartono, 2019:2).

Blumer emphasizes that symbolic interactionism consists of "root images" or basic thoughts, which can be summarized as follows: (1) Society consists of interacting individuals, (2) Interaction occurs in various activities of individuals interacting with one another's activities, (3) There is no intrinsic meaning in objects, (4) Individuals not only perceive external objects but can also see themselves as objects, (5) An individual's behavior is interpretative and used by the individual themselves, (6) This behavior can be interconnected and matched by the community, which is referred to as "social groups of various human behavior actions" (in Rahmadani, 2021: 38-40).

From the above explanations, it can be concluded that symbolic interactionism is highly useful for determining important concepts in an individual's life, such as self-concept, object concept, activity concept, joint action concept, and social interaction concept. These concepts, in everyday human life, are the result of constructions between mind, self, and society, whose presence can mutually influence and complement each other. Societies are formed by individuals who have their own selves. An individual's behavior is a construction formed through documentation and interpretation.

Symbolic interactionism as a theory attempts to view the environmental facts created by individuals through the exchange of symbols. This theory seeks to construct meanings about oneself, behavior, and objects.

Blumer (in Rizaldy, 2022:27-28) suggests Mead's opinion by stating that there are five basic concepts in symbolic interactionism, the first being the concept of self, which means an individual is not just an organism moving under the stimulus effect, both internally and externally. An individual can see themselves as an object of their own thought and relate or socialize with themselves.

The second concept is the concept of behavior, as human behavior is created within and through the stages of interaction with oneself, thus this behavior is fundamentally different from the movement of creatures other than humans.

The third concept is the concept of an object, which is seeing living beings in the midst of objects. The primary thing about these objects is not determined by their intrinsic characteristics but by the meanings individuals attribute to these objects.

The fourth concept is the concept of social interaction, where an individual interprets and interprets the movements of others and acts according to that meaning. The fifth concept is the concept of joint action, which means collective actions arising from the behaviors of each participant, which are then matched and adjusted to one another. The purpose of this concept is the coordination and amalgamation of various meanings, goals, ideas, and behaviors.

In the theory of symbolic interactionism pioneered by George Herbert Mead, as stated in Thadi (2020:3), the focus is on the relationship between individuals and groups, where individuals socialize directly face-to-face using symbols containing signs, signals, and most importantly, written and spoken words. The essence of symbolic thought is based on freeing us from the limitations of individual experiences to only what is truly seen, heard, and felt. This theory continually prompts us to think of objects symbolically.

According to Cooley, the self exhibits its own perception in an individual's ideas and affective behaviors, as mentioned in Pramana (2021:12). This is consistent with the elements that show who we are. As social beings, we observe how others perceive us, and these appearances and judgmental decisions become a reflection of ourselves.

Dominant culture or indigenous culture in an area can affect minority cultures or immigrant cultures. In other words, immigrant cultures are influenced by indigenous cultures due to pressures from the environment. Barth (1988), as explained by Ronaldo (2021:4), further elaborates on two thoughts: First, cultural boundaries can persist even though the tribes intermingle. In other words, ethnic and religious differences are not determined by updates, contacts, and message exchanges, but are caused by social processes of separation and unification. Second, good social interactions, which endure and are significant between two different ethnic groups, usually arise because the different ethnic conditions are not determined by the absence of social relations and acceptance.

Ethnic differences in society are caused by processes of separation and unification, so the differences that occur can be maintained throughout human life. Therefore, each different ethnic group is based on the social system in society.

The object of this research is the Javanese ethnic group in Desa Mataram Udik, who undergo integration and adaptation processes in diverse social environments. In order to delve deeper into relevant field data, informants were purposively selected based on the researcher's data needs. The selected criteria for informants are: (1) general informants, who are village officials formally tasked with managing their governmental jurisdiction. These informants are expected to know about the socio-cultural aspects of their community, (2) key informants are leaders from each ethnic group who know the history and intricacies of their community's culture, and (3) participant informants are immigrants who have settled for a long time, not community leaders but understand and comprehend their community's culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative method. The qualitative approach is beneficial in research that describes a reality and social situations in society. According to Nasution (in Afandi, 2022: 3), the qualitative approach is based on field facts and what is experienced by the informants. In order to uncover the phenomenon of communication between the Javanese ethnic group and other ethnicities, the researcher used the qualitative research method with a symbolic interactionism approach. This research used data collection techniques in three ways, namely: (1) observation through participatory approach, (2) in-depth interviews, and (3) document usage.

To capture the phenomenon in the field, the researcher used observation techniques. The observation utilized is participatory observation. Participatory observation is observation carried out while participating in the life of the individual being studied, as stated by Fitria (2019:4). Participatory observation involves following the individuals being studied in their daily lives, observing what they do, with whom, when, under what circumstances, and also asking about their behavior.

In this case, the researcher demonstrates participatory observation within the Javanese ethnic community in Desa Mataram Udik, Bandar Mataram District. The researcher aims to observe the phenomenon of intercultural communication. In other words, the researcher conducts direct observation of the Javanese ethnic community and the surrounding community members who interact with them.

During participatory observation, the researcher will engage in unplanned and informal conversations. By conducting participatory observation, the researcher aims to understand, study, analyze, and explain what the informants do in their daily lives. In conducting interviews, the researcher uses in-depth or unstructured interviews. The researcher intends to delve into the research focus not only by accepting what is said

and experienced by the informants but also to uncover deeper insights. In the data analysis of this research, an inductive analysis is conducted, which is a systematic collection and processing of data to develop theory. In drawing conclusions, the researcher goes through the process of reduction, data presentation, and reconfirmation with the informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The village of Mataram Udik in the Bandar Mataram District is inhabited by various ethnic and cultural groups living side by side, with the Javanese ethnic group being the majority. The Javanese language in Mataram Udik Village is not only used among fellow Javanese but also when Javanese residents converse with other ethnic groups. Many residents of non-Javanese ethnicities in Mataram Udik Village are proficient in the Javanese language. Additionally, Javanese ethnic group members can also speak the Lampung language. Therefore, when Javanese and Lampung ethnic group members converse, they can use either the Javanese or Lampung language.

So far, the relationship between the Javanese ethnic group and other ethnic groups has not resulted in conflict. The residents of Mataram Udik Village, with their diverse cultural backgrounds, mutually respect each other, thus avoiding surface-level problems. The attitude of mutual respect and appreciation among ethnic groups in this village is evident in the willingness of each resident to learn and use the language of other ethnic groups. Individuals living in a new environment face various obstacles such as language, belief systems, community attitudes, and cultures that differ from their previous environment.

To adapt and live in a diverse ethnic and cultural community, residents are encouraged to respect the culture of other community members. Enculturation refers to the process by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. As the nation's successors, we learn culture rather than inherit it. Culture is transmitted through the learning process, not through genes. Cultures that have undergone enculturation can change when exposed to external cultures through the process of acculturation. According to Young Yun Kim (in Putri, 2018:5), acculturation is a process undertaken by immigrants to adapt to their new environment. Immigrants will learn to understand and adopt some norms and values from the dominant reference group of the native community. The differences between immigrant and local residents often present challenges, which affect mutual understanding among them.

Every culture has its own distinct language in each region to facilitate communication. Language is influenced by culture and reflects cultural values. In order to preserve themselves from assimilation, some groups of immigrant residents still maintain their cultural identity by continuing to hold traditional cultural events. Integration begins when immigrants have a desire to maintain their culture and language, even though they interact with other residents in the area on a daily basis.

Immigrants can preserve their cultural identity by continuing to speak their original language when at home.

The researcher will discuss the relationship between the Javanese and Lampung ethnic groups from several aspects, including the common religion as a unifying factor, inter-ethnic marriages between Javanese and Lampung ethnicities, the choice of language used in inter-ethnic communication, and the attitudes developed in interactions between ethnic groups. One such moment is during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr observed by Muslims. During this occasion, Muslims gather at the nearest mosque to perform prayers. There are no barriers between the Lampung and Javanese ethnic groups during the prayer. During Eid al-Fitr, members of each ethnic group celebrate by visiting relatives and neighbors to seek forgiveness. Even in public places, such as the market, Javanese and Lampung ethnic groups coexist peacefully. Both Javanese and Lampung traders sell their goods without discrimination.

In terms of language use, a mixture of Javanese, Lampung, and Indonesian languages often occurs to facilitate understanding among communicators. Children in this village attend the nearest elementary school and tend to play with anyone regardless of status or ethnicity. They interact and share their respective cultures at school. Javanese children who understand and speak Lampung, and vice versa, contribute to cultural exchange. Childhood is an opportune time for children to learn and appreciate cultures other than their own, ensuring that they develop respect for other ethnic cultures as adults.

Based on the research findings, initially, Javanese immigrants were reluctant to engage in inter-ethnic marriages with the local Lampung population due to rumors of the Lampung people being strict. However, this perception changed over time, and inter-ethnic marriages became more common. The main obstacle to inter-ethnic marriages was the differences in marriage customs. According to Mr. Suyat, an immigrant from Java in 1905, marrying a Lampung woman was financially challenging. However, over time, doubts about inter-ethnic marriages diminished, and many residents of Mataram Udik Village began to embrace inter-ethnic marriages.

Inter-ethnic marriages demonstrate the strong harmony between the Javanese and Lampung ethnic groups, evident in the amalgamation of their cultures. Each ethnic group brings its culture into the marriage, resulting in a synthesis of Javanese and Lampung cultures without abandoning their original cultural characteristics. The offspring of these inter-ethnic marriages undergo a process of cultural acculturation. They inherit a new culture, a direct synthesis of Javanese and Lampung cultures. Some residents of Mataram Udik Village are descendants of inter-ethnic marriages and generally understand both Javanese and Lampung cultures simultaneously, although they may lean towards one ethnicity.

As Dian, a child of mixed ethnicity—her father being Lampung and her mother Javanese—prefers to speak Javanese with her Lampung father, even though she also

knows Lampung language. However, Dian identifies herself more as a Sumatran rather than Javanese because she was born and raised on the island of Sumatra. The outcome of inter-ethnic marriages not only involves children learning to understand both of their parents' ethnicities but also depends on the socialization patterns employed by the parents. In inter-ethnic marriages, it's possible for the parents not to teach their respective cultures; they might instead opt to teach only a single language, such as Indonesian.

When Javanese immigrants converse, there isn't a fixed pattern in the choice of language. Individuals from the Lampung ethnic group may choose to speak Javanese, Lampung, or Indonesian when interacting with Javanese individuals. For example, Mr. Sutar prefers to speak Javanese when conversing with individuals from the Lampung ethnic group if they also speak Javanese. However, Mr. Dedi will consider what language his conversation partner will use; if they speak Javanese, Mr. Dedi will also speak Javanese, and vice versa.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sugiyo prefers to speak the common language, which is Indonesian, when conversing with the Lampung ethnic group. However, occasionally, Mr. Sugiyo also uses the Lampung language.

The Javanese and Lampung ethnic groups have been living alongside each other since the transmigration program began in 1905. Over time, both ethnic groups have accepted each other as they are. Javanese immigrant residents have become accustomed to adapting to Lampung culture, resulting in no significant barriers. Therefore, this aligns with the statements obtained from all informants, indicating that there is nothing special that needs to be prepared when engaging with people from different cultures.

This is because Javanese immigrants have met the criteria necessary for cross-cultural communication: (1) They exhibit respectful and courteous behavior towards members of other ethnicities as fellow human beings, (2) They show respect and courtesy towards other ethnicities as they are, not because of preference, (3) They demonstrate respect and courtesy towards other ethnicities by accepting that they may behave differently, and (4) Cross-cultural communicators must be competent in learning to coexist happily with people from different cultures.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between the Javanese ethnic group as immigrants and the Lampung ethnic group as natives has been going on for quite some time. Over the years, both ethnic groups have undergone mutual adaptation between their respective cultures. Javanese residents have embraced Lampung customs, such as using the Lampung language when conversing with Lampung people, participating in Lampung traditional ceremonies, and preparing and enjoying Lampung cuisine. Similarly, native Lampung residents are proficient in using the Javanese language when conversing and

preparing Javanese dishes. Javanese cultural events, such as the Jaranan performance, are also frequently held in Desa Mataram Udik and attended by Lampung people.

The mutual respect and appreciation between different cultural ethnic groups can lead each individual to uphold their own culture. The integrated community is supported by the commonality of religion between the ethnic groups, which unites the two different ethnicities. Additionally, mixed marriages further strengthen the integration pillar. Javanese people typically use Javanese when conversing with fellow Javanese, but when interacting with Lampung people, they may use Lampung, Javanese, or Indonesian, and vice versa for the Lampung ethnic group.

The relationship between the Javanese and Lampung ethnic groups in Desa Mataram Udik has been relatively peaceful without significant issues. This is because each ethnic group accepts each other as they are. Based on field findings, the researcher offers some recommendations: (a) Each ethnic group should respect and honor the culture of every other ethnic group to prevent conflicts, and (b) Local government authorities are encouraged to maintain good relationships among the various ethnic groups in Desa Mataram Udik and respect existing cultures.

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