

Contrastive Analysis of Indonesia and Taiwan Nonverbal Communication: Cross culture Misunderstanding

Sri Handayani Gultom

Department of English Foreign Language, National Chiayi University

sri.gultom27@gmail.com

Abstract

Nonverbal miscommunication is something crucial and frequently happening if the message receiver misinterprets the meaning of message which is got from the sender. It commonly happens between cross culture countries because message sender and receiver don't know different behavior used by each other. It is faced by Indonesian students who are studying in Taiwan. To minimize the miscommunication, an observation and investigation about Indonesian and Taiwanese's nonverbal communication used in daily life were done, re-watching you-tube about gesture used by Taiwanese and Indonesian for several times, and interview of 30 Taiwanese and 30 Indonesian students who are studying in NCYU at least for 1 year about gesture (kinesics), eye contact (oculesics), appearance, touch (haptics) and smell (olfactics). The aims of this study are to know the differences of nonverbal communications between Indonesia and Taiwan and to find out kinds of nonverbal miscommunications were ever faced by Indonesian students studying in NCYU. Eye contact was nonverbal communication ever faced and.

Keywords: Cross culture miscommunication, nonverbal communication, Indonesian culture, Taiwanese (Chinese culture).

1. Introduction

Nonverbal messages are often unconsciously sent to the receivers and as a result they often give misinterpretation because of culture differences between senders and receivers of the messages. Therefore, cross-cultural communication can be difficult in some countries because what is acceptable in one culture may be unacceptable in another. This paper studies about issues in cross-cultural communication, especially about comparison between Indonesia and Taiwan non-verbal communication. A few questions are going to be analyzed in this study. Those are:

1. What are the differences of nonverbal communications between Indonesia and Taiwan?
2. What are nonverbal miscommunications ever faced by Indonesian students studying in National Chiayi University?

2. Literature Review

The different behavior people sent could lead to miscommunication as Safadi, Michaela; Valentine, and Carol (1985) found in their study that behavioral differences lead to miscommunication as illustrated in Arab and American nonverbal behavior. Individualism is the ideal for the American middle class, whereas Arabs are motivated by public opinion. Taylor, Harvey M. (1975) in his study also found that communication between American and Japanese, misunderstandings are found of two types: first, Japanese behavior which is completely new to

the American and second, Japanese behavior which is similar or identical to American behavior, but which carries a different meaning.

3. Result

3.1 Eye Contact (Oculesics)

Nowadays, many Taiwanese feel more confidence to do direct eye contact but it's not too long. Some of them don't want to look at the eyes of their interlocutor. They feel shy and do not feel comfortable to do direct eye contact. When boys are talking with girls, they seldom use eye contact. While Indonesian people do direct eye contact, it depends on gender, age and religion. Communication between boys and girls, they seldom use long eye contact. A muslim girl is not allowed to do eye contact with boy and vice versa.

3.2 Gesture (Kinesics)

Some similar gestures which are frequently used in Taiwan and Indonesia have different meaning. For example,  in Taiwan it means victory or happy, while in Indonesia it means number 2;  in Taiwan it means number 6, in Indonesia it means telephone;  in Taiwan it means paper (kind of game scissor, paper and stone), in Indonesia means number 5;  in Taiwan means stone (kind of game scissor, paper and stone), in Indonesia it means hiding something;  in Taiwan it means angry, in Indonesia it means I'm a boss;  in Taiwan it means hungry, in Indonesia it means having stomachache.

3.3 Touching (Haptics)

In Taiwan, touching between boy and girl is not allowed except they are a couple or done by older one to the younger one. Shaking is only a touching allowed between boy and girl. In Indonesia, a boy can touch a girl if they have known so well and haven't met for a long time and he will say "long time no see you, how are

you?" and vice versa. However, the area of touching is only shoulder and hand allowed.

3.4 Smell (Olfactics)

People in the north Taiwan more often use perfume than people in the south. However, the moment of using perfume is only done when they are going shopping, eating in a restaurant, dating, or attending a party. Students rarely use perfume at school. In Indonesia, most people like to use perfume to go school or work, date, attend a party although they have just taken a bath. Students, even frequently use perfume when they go to school every day.

3.5 Appearance

Indonesian commonly has medium size height, brown skin and black hair. They don't like to wear too short cloth going out. Muslim girls usually wear long cloth which covers their head to feet. Indonesian girls also really like to use gold jewelry. Taiwanese people have almost the same body height with Indonesian, medium size. They have black hair and yellow skin. They rarely use gold jewelry and might use it when attending a party or a very important moment.

References

- Hans, Anjali and Hans, Emmanuel. 2015. Kinesics, Haptics and Proxemics: Aspects of Non - Verbal Communication. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 20, Issue 2, Ver. IV, PP 47-52.*
- Safadi, Michaela; Valentine, Carol. 1985. *Contrastive Analysis of American and Arab Nonverbal and Paralinguistic Communication.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Taylor, Harvey M. 1975. *Americans and Japanese Nonverbal Communication. Linguistic Communications.* University of Michigan.