

The cultural language code adaptation by students from East Nusa Tenggara to Javanese culture

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Abstract

Every human being has a different culture and self-identity. These differences can be adjusted through intercultural communication activities. This study discusses adjusting the language code in intercultural communication for students from Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) towards Javanese Culture within the Stikosa-AWS Campus which aims to find out how the process of adjusting the language code in intercultural communication for students from NTT who interact with Javanese people. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method in which to analyze data on cases that occur objects. The research subjects were five students from NTT, one of whom was born in Surabaya and lives near the Stikosa-AWS Campus. The results of this study indicate that verbal and nonverbal are used when adapting the language code between students from NTT to Javanese culture. A dialect is a verbal form that NTT students can adapt due to daily interactions. There are only slight differences in nonverbal forms such as gestures, expressions, accents, intonation, and tempo of NTT students who live in the Javanese ethnic area, namely, only body movements. The processes NTT students can go through with Javanese culture are assimilation and integration. NTT students and the surrounding Javanese community both assimilate without prejudice to each other to gain comfort and peace. The integration process is carried out by maintaining regional language codes but still interacting with each other. The attitude that must be possessed by NTT students and the Javanese community is to emphasize mutual tolerance.

Keywords: *Adaptation, Intercultural Communication, Javanese Culture, NTT Students, Speech Code.*

Abstrak

Setiap manusia memiliki budaya yang berbeda-beda sebagai identitas diri. Perbedaan itu dapat disesuaikan melalui kegiatan komunikasi antar budaya. Penelitian ini membahas proses penyesuaian kode bahasa dalam komunikasi antarbudaya mahasiswa asal Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) terhadap Budaya Jawa di lingkup Kampus Stikosa-AWS yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana proses penyesuaian kode bahasa dalam komunikasi antar budaya pada mahasiswa asal NTT yang saling berinteraksi dengan masyarakat Jawa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu metode deskriptif kualitatif di mana melakukan analisis data pada kasus-kasus yang terjadi pada objek tertentu. Subjek penelitiannya adalah lima orang mahasiswa asal NTT yang salah satunya lahir di Surabaya yang berdomisili di sekitar Kampus Stikosa-AWS. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam proses adaptasi kode bahasa antara mahasiswa asal NTT terhadap budaya Jawa yang digunakan yaitu verbal dan nonverbal. Dialek merupakan bentuk verbal yang mampu di adaptasi oleh mahasiswa asal NTT akibat interaksi sehari-hari. Hanya sedikit perbedaan bentuk nonverbal seperti gerak tubuh, mimik, logat, intonasi dan tempo mahasiswa NTT yang tinggal di kawasan suku Jawa yaitu hanya gerak tubuh saja. Proses yang dapat dilalui oleh mahasiswa NTT terhadap budaya Jawa yaitu asimilasi dan integrasi. Mahasiswa NTT dan masyarakat Jawa sekitar sama-sama melakukan

asimilasi dengan tidak saling berprasangka buruk demi mendapatkan kenyamanan dan kedamaian. Proses integrasi dilakukan dengan mempertahankan kode bahasa daerah namun tetap saling berinteraksi satu sama lain. Sikap yang harus dimiliki mahasiswa NTT dan masyarakat Jawa ialah menekankan sikap saling toleransi.

Kata Kunci: Adaptasi, Budaya Jawa, Komunikasi Antarbudaya, Mahasiswa NTT, Speech Code.

Introduction

As newcomers studying in an area with new cultural traditions, students from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) will often feel like outsiders in Surabaya, especially in regions that have different cultural traditions than their hometown. Their presence is easily distinguishable, particularly in terms of the speech code they use, such as language and accent, which is markedly different from the local Surabaya culture, which acts as the host culture in the process of cross-cultural communication adaptation. The cultural differences are quite evident for NTT students at the University of Surabaya, particularly in language, speaking style, and the cultural habits of the local population. Javanese is the primary language used in Surabaya in their daily life, and even among the elderly, Javanese is the only language used as opposed to Indonesian (Ardyles & Syafiq, 2017).

Speech code adaptation is the adjustment of language code by an individual as a means to enhance communication and culture in order to create unified verbal and non-verbal communication and specific meanings. The process of speech code adaptation is a collaborative effort that begins through communication between newcomers and local residents in a new cultural environment (Philipsen, 1997). Cultural diversity can be observed through communication codes that connect cultures. Speech code underpins a conversational community's significance in becoming someone, relating to others, and how to act and communicate within a social group, allowing members of a culture to understand it. It can be concluded that the behaviors of Eastern people can shape communication patterns for Easterners as well. Speech code encompasses speaking, language style, accents, intonation, loudness, and other components related to language style. In this context, speech code serves as the foundation of a culture, and this culture will undergo changes in interaction due to adaptation to a group or relocation to a different area (Liliweri, 2009). Communication patterns, speech intonation, speaking style, expression, and fluency in speaking can be used as reference points for Eastern students' speech code to interact and adapt to Javanese culture, especially in Surabaya.

The explanation above states that there is a cultural adaptation that affects changes in interaction, including changes in language style, speaking style, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, and other differences that encompass communication aspects. Newcomers, especially those from NTT who migrate to Java, undoubtedly undergo changes in their communication forms as a means of adapting to the host region. Therefore, the author is interested in researching speech code interactions in cross-cultural communication.

Intercultural communication influences the way individuals communicate and transforms the cultures being exchanged through communication methods. Intercultural bonds become one of the strong connections between culture and communication. This system will continue to operate regardless of generations. The communication process will always be present when there are different cultural relationships. Cultural differences will also generate discussions and an understanding of the meaning of a group's identity (Rahardjo, 2005).

METHOD

The research method used is ethnographic research. Ethnography is a research approach used to describe how individuals use their culture to make sense of reality. This research aims to provide an in-depth description of a specific culture from various aspects such as cultural artifacts, life experiences, beliefs, and value systems of a society (Kriyantono, 2012). There are two main focuses in discussing the scope of ethnographic research (Kuswarno, 2008: 14): Particularistic: This involves explaining and understanding communication behaviors within a specific culture. As a result, the explanations are limited to a particular context of place and time. Generalizing: This entails formulating concepts and theories for the development of metatheories in global human communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained and observations made by the researcher, Informant I is Ilham Ibrahim, a 25-year-old graduate of Stikosa-AWS. Ilham hails from Manggarai, Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. According to the researcher, Ilham is capable of providing the necessary data and information for completing this research. Living in an area predominantly inhabited by the Javanese community, who use the Javanese language in their daily lives, Ilham must be able to describe the adaptation process he has undergone during his seven years of living in Surabaya. Communicating with Javanese people in his daily life is something he finds enjoyable, and he doesn't feel any hindrance in interactions, even though he has a different dialect. As a person from East Nusa Tenggara living among the Javanese majority, the informant is certainly capable of recognizing the differences in dialect spoken by his conversational partners when interacting.

Maintaining his original language and cultural code when interacting with the Javanese community, according to him, is done naturally and unconsciously because it has become his identity. His accent and intonation still reflect the Javanese culture. His frequent interactions have enabled him to position himself as a minority. The researcher also heard and observed this adjustment. The researcher also witnessed the adaptation process in the form of integration that occurred with Informant I.

Informant II, Elvis Deventus Geroda (21 years old), is a student from Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara) who is currently in his sixth semester. He hails from the Long Iram District in the Kutai Barat Regency of East Kalimantan Province. The researcher chose Elvis because they believed he would provide the necessary information and data for this research. Elvis resides in the Sukolilo District of Surabaya, East Java. Adapting to the Javanese environment makes Informant II feel special, and the researcher observed that Elvis is happy to be among the Javanese majority.

Informant II is also very familiar with his neighbors and warmly welcomes the researcher when visited at his home. Elvis's residence in Surabaya is in an area where the everyday language used is still Javanese. Based on the researcher's observations and in accordance with the responses from Informant II, the presence of the Javanese ethnic group adds to the tranquility and diversity in the Javanese community, as they are able to adapt to the language code. Despite the different speech codes of the two ethnic groups, Informant II does not feel hindered when interacting with them.

The differences acknowledged by each informant regarding the Javanese ethnic group do not hinder their interactions, as they consider the Javanese language to be easily understood and almost the same as Indonesian. While interacting with Javanese people, Informant II can conclude that differences in body language, facial expressions, accent, and intonation between the Javanese people

and those in his environment can be observed. Informant II feels that it is important to maintain the Javanese accent and will not abandon it as it is considered part of his identity. Informant II mentioned that during interactions with the researcher, he can use the Javanese language while still maintaining the Javanese accent, and he affirms that he will continue to uphold his original language code when interacting with the Javanese community, even though he can speak Javanese.

The researcher observed and decided to collect data from a student living in the same place as Informant II to gain a different perspective on the same location. Yustinus Kia Hawan (25 years old) from Adonara, East Flores, was chosen as Informant III because the researcher wanted to understand how he adapts to Javanese society on a daily basis and to serve as a comparison to Informant II, who resides in the same location. The difference in language code does not hinder people from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), like Informant III, when interacting with each other, especially Informant III. The dialect in intercultural communication between Javanese and NTT is clearly different. Nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, accents, intonation, and tempo between people from NTT and Java also differ slightly. Informant III stated, "If he's from the east, he seems to speak a bit faster, while Javanese people speak more gently and slowly."

It is important to have good intentions in achieving a common goal as living beings who depend on each other. The adjustment made between the Javanese and NTT communities, according to Informant III, should be carefully considered. Based on the researcher's observation, Informant III has a deep understanding of the character of the person they are communicating with, and they believe that awareness of their fellow social beings should be mutual and positive to prevent conflict and division in this safe and peaceful environment. Informant III can maintain their original speech code because they are used to speaking the NTT language and using the NTT accent every day, especially with their fellow students. Informant III is also friendly when questioned by the researcher right in front of their boarding house.

The informant IV appointed by the researcher is Marselinus Putra Raga Delang (23 years old). Marselinus is a student of NTT descent born in Surabaya on June 19, 1998. He hails from Nitakloang Village, Sikka Regency, Maumere City, NTT Province. The researcher chose him because he was born in Surabaya but lives in NTT, which can serve as a comparison for other informants. The difference in speech code does not hinder interaction with the Javanese community, especially since informant IV is familiar with the Javanese people. According to him, there is a significant difference in dialect between the Javanese and NTT people, where the Javanese are soft-spoken, while the NTT people are quicker and seem in a rush, making it easy to recognize someone's identity through their way of speaking.

Regarding body language, facial expressions, intonation, and tempo, there are no dominant differences between the Javanese and NTT people, except that pure Javanese people are calmer, and those mixed with NTT do not have any differences in facial expressions. He believes that abandoning one's original speech code or culture when interacting is not justified because Indonesia has diverse cultural groups, and there are unifying elements within these cultures.

Informant IV also believes that using the Indonesian language can boost self-confidence, eliminating any hesitation in interactions. Learning about other cultures is fascinating, especially as a mix of Javanese and NTT, being able to speak and use the Javanese language. Based on his experiences, he concludes that in his place of residence, even though it's considered a Javanese community, there is still tolerance, and everything depends on the individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Based on observations made by the researcher, the researcher selected Petrus Ola Pelan (25 years old) as Informant V, who is a member of the NTT ethnic group, born in Keningau on November 2, 1997, and is an alumnus of Stikosa-AWS Surabaya. As a former student who interacts with Javanese people on a daily basis, he is certainly familiar with his views on the language code used by his conversational partners. Therefore, Informant V is capable of providing insights and experiences regarding the differences in speech code between Javanese and NTT due to this adaptation.

Javanese and NTT ethnic groups face barriers due to differences in regional languages, but not with their speech code. According to Informant V, the language code is only slightly different but does not hinder interaction between the two groups. Differences in body language, facial expressions, accent, intonation, and tempo are forms of nonverbal communication where variations are observed when Javanese and NTT people interact. The politeness of speech and the gentleness of each word spoken differ between Javanese and NTT people. Informant V answers questions while thinking that the language he currently uses is quite melodic, even when using Indonesian. A distinctive feature of Javanese and NTT people's expressions is that they speak while smiling at each other; when they need each other, they will go to great lengths to achieve their goals. Polite Javanese language speakers use their thumb when pointing at something. The tempo and intonation in the Javanese community are pleasant and melodious to the ear; Javanese should be spoken with a melodious tone. While interacting with the Javanese community, efforts to maintain their native Javanese accent must be continued. Maintaining the speech code or the native culture when interacting with the Javanese community is a form of assimilation.

Amalgamation (intercultural marriage) or the process of mixing two different cultures through marriage is something that can be learned and observed. The strong NTT culture can also blend with other cultures, and the choice of which culture to use during Javanese and NTT marriages depends on individual preferences. In the Javanese community, Javanese traditional clothing and Javanese dance are still performed according to customary traditions.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from the research on the process of adjusting speech codes in intercultural communication between East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) students interacting with Javanese communities is as follows: Speech code is one of the cultural elements adapted by NTT students and Javanese people. The form of language code (verbal and nonverbal) successfully adapted by NTT students is the dialect. This is because the dialect is easy to learn and imitate.

NTT students are quite capable of adjusting their communication by understanding and using the Javanese language in their daily adaptation. Javanese dialect is considered friendlier and softer compared to the NTT dialect. As for nonverbal forms, there are not many differences, but one notable difference is that Javanese people use their thumbs to point at something for politeness. The successful language code adjustment processes are assimilation and integration. NTT students practice tolerance, avoid negative assumptions, and have a strong commitment to learning the Javanese language and culture to achieve peace and comfort, especially during their academic studies. NTT students, as a minority, and the Javanese majority, maintain their own speech codes but continue to show tolerance in their interactions with each other. Typically, NTT students and Javanese people use the Indonesian language when interacting with each other.

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