**Cross Cultural Understanding**

**The Difference and Contrast Between Javanese And Batak**

**NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**



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**2013**

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Abstract

*This paper aim is to show the difference and contrast in Javanese and Batak non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is process to delivering message without words. It is very important in communication because it emphasizes the verbal language. The non-verbal communication types are touch, gestures, body language, facial expression, eye contact, clothes, haircuts, symbols and paralanguage, such as: intonation, emphasis, sound quality, emotional style, and style of speaking. This paper only discusses five differences between Javanese and Batak non-verbal communication; those are: touch, eye contact, facial expression, intonation, and gestures. The non-verbal communication itself can reflect and create stereotype in the society. Every ethnic have a different meaning in non-verbal language. This leads the cross cultural problem in the society.*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is multicultural country. There are so many ethnicity can be found. In different regions in Indonesia have their own cultures. Even, they are in one island but the cultures are totally different. One of cultures is language. It is the main communication tools for the society. Purpose of communication is divided into two: First, the communication is used to accomplish tasks that are important for our needs. Second, the communication creates and nurtures relationship with other. In addition, communication itself has two functions: social function and decision function. The social function is building and maintaining relationship, such as the purpose of pleasure, to showing bonding with others, etc. On the other hand, the decision function decides to do or not to do something, such as: what will we eat in the morning today, what are we going to school or not, how to learn to face the test. Language as the main communication tool is divided into spoken language and written language. Spoken language uses direct in communication. Furthermore, it is also divided into verbal and non-verbal language. This paper will focus on non-verbal language in communication.

Non-verbal communication is process of communication which is the message is delivered not use words. It can be seen, if someone uses gestures, body language, facial expression and eye contact. Besides that, it can be seen from object that uses by the speaker like clothes, haircuts, etc. Symbols are also non-verbal communication. Non- verbal communication also can be seen in how to speak (paralanguage), such as: intonation, emphasis, sound quality, emotional style, and style of speaking. The issue of non-verbal communication is related to the Javanese non-verbal communication to speakers of other ethnic languages. According to Hall (1959), “Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants”. If we don’t understand the non-verbal communication from different culture, it is possible that we can make a mistake of reading the other person incorrectly.

Some forms of non-verbal signals are the same and universal and they have the same meaning or interpretation. But, the other forms are different and the have different meaning too, or no meaning in the other culture. Craig Storti in “Figuring Out” as quoted by Wienchecki (1999) mentions three main categories of non-verbal communication in the cross-cultural context. These are:

1. Non-verbal behaviors which exist in your own culture and in the target culture which have the same meaning in both cultures.
2. Non-verbal behaviors which exist in both cultures, but which are assigned different meanings in the two cultures.
3. Non-verbal behaviors which have meaning in one culture but no meaning at all in the target language.

In addition, just as verbal language differs from culture to culture, the non-verbal language may also differ. One gesture may be common in a certain country and have a clear interpretation; it may be meaningless in another culture or even have an opposite meaning. Take, for example, the cultural interpretations and implications of hand gestures, the ring gesture, the thumb-up and V sign (Pease, Allan: 1990).

Indonesia has various the numbers of non-verbal languages. They have similarities in meaning or interpretation, but some of them also have a different meaning. This paper also will discuss about Javanese non-verbal communication and Medan non-verbal communication. There are some types of non-verbal communication which is different and similar in both ethnics. To make the focus in line, this paper only discusses about the different especially in touch, eye contact, facial expression, intonation, and gestures. As the result, it will show that there is cross cultural communication.

1. Statement of the Problem

Based on the short explanation above, the problem in this paper is: “What are the differences between Javanese and Batak non-verbal communication?”

1. Discussion

Javanese and Batak clearly have some differences in using non-verbal language. This paper will compare and contrast the non-verbal communication in Javanese with Batak. When we are talking about the non-verbal communication, the stereotype of some ethnic will use. There are six differences between Javanese and Batak non-verbal communication:

1. Touch

In this time, touch means shaking hand. Shaking hand usually appears when people meet for the first time. It also can be used to maintain the relationship. Javanese commonly does a different shaking hand to get in touch. The hands are in front of the chest, and then the fingers’ points touch each other. They also do “sungkeman” as the way to apologize to the old people or someone who has higher position. In contrast, Batak shake short and gently. They also only shakes hand to say apologize no matter what the age and the position.

1. Eye contact

The next non-verbal communication is eye contact. In Javanese culture, women cannot stare to the men during conversation. They only allow having eye contact if they speak with their friend in the same gender. It is also happened if Javanese talks with someone who has higher position or noble. On the other hand, Batak always stare the other people when they are taking. Whatever your gender and your position, they will stare to you during the conversation. It shows that they seriously listens to you and give their respect.

1. Facial expression

Javanese has a simple face expression. Even, the situation is happy, but their face expression will be simple. The stereotype is Javanese cannot allow to give too much expression in their face. It shows that they are impolite. In contrast, Javanese always show their smile when they meet someone who never meet before. This is one of Javanese hospitality. However, Batak are more expressive than Javanese. They will be surprised if someone gives surprise. They have a contrast expression when they meet someone who never meet before. They will not smile, but their face is flat. There isn’t any expression like Javanese people.

1. Intonation

Javanese is famous with their hospitality. They always speak softly and slowly. This is also their famous hospitality. They also never interrupt the other people when they are talking. Sometimes, the other ethnics are not patient to wait Javanese speaking. They also use falling intonation, because raising intonation is impolite for them and it waste energy. In contrast, Batak speak loud. They also use raising intonation. Sometimes, we will think that they are angry and quarrel each other. If someone listens to Batak from the different culture, they will think that they are rude and impolite person. In fact, their intonation is only part of behavior.

1. Gestures

Gesture of Javanese is graceful. They never do something in a rush. It is also because of their philosophy “alon-alon waton kelakon”. It means that slowly but sure. Most of Javanese shows the gesture of noble or the royal family. It can be seen in daily life such as when they are laughing and yawning, they close their mouth using a hand; they do not raise their feet into the chair when they are sitting and etc. On the other hand, Batak move faster than Javanese. It is because of their habit. They also use more gesture than Javanese such as when they are speaking, they hands in front of their chests for men.

1. Conclusion

From the short explanation above, it can be seen that there is a difference and contrast in Javanese and Batak non-verbal communication. There are five differences, they are: touch, eye contact, facial expression, intonation, and gestures. Javanese is more polite, soft, slow but Batak is hard, fast, and expressive. Those are the stereotypes that can be found in the society during they make an interaction or communication. It proves that even in a country, cross cultural communication occurs and cannot be avoided.

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