

# Intercultural Communication Patterns of Local Students with Students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti Tegal University

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**Abstract:** *This study describes intercultural communication patterns between local students and students from Eastern Indonesia at UPS Tegal through interview dialogue with sources from both cultural backgrounds. This research uses the intercultural communication model by Porter and Larry A. Samovar. Similar cultural backgrounds make it easier to agree in communication. In contrast, cultural differences make this process difficult due to various barriers such as language, intonation, appearance, lifestyle, and point of view. The research method is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews and observation. The result is a description of intercultural communication patterns based on the Samovar model, identifying barriers and stages of communication such as first impressions, introduction, friendship, and cultural understanding. This study provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of intercultural communication in the UPS Tegal academic environment, especially between students with different cultural backgrounds.*

**Keywords:** Intercultural Communication Patterns; Communication Barriers; Cultural Understanding

## INTRODUCTION

Human life is required to be inseparable from communication. In their book, Suryawati and Maryati (2013:38) say that, in general, communication is the sending and receiving of messages or news between two or more people so that the message in question can be understood. Humans need communication to interact with other social creatures wherever they are. Communication is created through verbal and non-verbal messages that occur among social creatures and cannot be separated from the help of the surrounding environment. They interact with each other both directly and indirectly. As social creatures who live in groups and communicate with each other, humans and society also have different cultural backgrounds.

Culture is closely related to a society's outlook on life regarding its values. These values include, among others, religious values, family systems, tenacity, and toughness. A cultural system can directly become an attitude in an individual, which then becomes a pattern of action in a society. The results of the values adhered to by society can be seen in clothing, customs, language, art, architecture, and religion (Suryawati & Maryati, 2013, pp. 100-101).

According to Selo Soemardjan in Suryawati & Maryati (2013:6), society comprises people who live together and produce culture. The formation of a culture is caused by the habits, traditions, and attitudes people believe in and apply to a particular environment.

Society is people who live together and produce culture. The formation of a culture is caused by the habits, traditions, and attitudes people believe in and apply to their environment. It is essential to understand intercultural relationships and communication to understand intercultural communication. Therefore, it is through cultural influence that people learn to communicate (Rakhmat & Mulyana, 2010, p. 24). The communication process here is greatly influenced by cultural factors inherent in a human being. Different cultural phenomena in an environment require interaction. The condition for interaction to occur is to communicate in everyday life.

Some intercultural communication interactions are face-to-face, some are via mass media and social media, some are fleeting or short-term, and some are long-term or permanent. Simultaneously with the exchange of information, there is also a process of exchange of socio-

cultural values, which gives rise to the opinion that intercultural communication is now essential compared to previous times.

In discussions of intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication is often mentioned. There is a slight difference between intercultural and cross-cultural communication. Intercultural communication occurs between two or more people with different cultural backgrounds and between communication participants from the same country. Meanwhile, cross-cultural communication is communication between nations influenced by cultural background.

Cultural differences between communication actors occur in intercultural communication, which involves two or more people from different cultural backgrounds. This is what makes researchers use intercultural communication theory to support this research. Intercultural communication occurs not only in society in general but also in the educational environment. One of them is on the Pancasakti University campus in Tegal City. Students studying at Pancasakti University Tegal consist of different socio-cultural backgrounds, both local students and migrant/migrant students from outside the city and even from outside the island. Cultural diversity in an educational environment such as a campus is challenging for each individual. This is because of differences in language, race, and culture. This is seen in students from Eastern Indonesia who study at Pancasakti University Tegal. This gives rise to several obstacles in the communication process.

Researchers use phenomenological theory in this research. Phenomenological theory refers to the visible appearance of an object, event, or condition. Therefore, phenomenology is a way that humans use to understand the world through direct experience (Littlejohn & Foss, 2019: 57). This is supported by the phenomenon of personal experience experienced by one of the students from Eastern Indonesia who studied at Pancasakti University Tegal:

*"The first time I was in Tegal, I felt confused by the Javanese language and did not understand the meaning. I feel confused when my friends use Javanese. So, I have an alternative to using Indonesian. That is all I have to get used to saying 'I' because I usually only use 'sa' to indicate the word I in my area. 'Apart from that, I also feel that people from Tegal look at me in a different light, and I even feel there is discrimination on several occasions."*

(Student X semester 6 of Pancasakti University Tegal, 15 July 2020).

The phenomenon of differences in cultural backgrounds, such as Eastern Indonesian culture, occurs in the Pancasakti Tegal University campus environment. Many students come from outside Java, are of East Indonesian ethnicity, and are from different cultures such as NTT, Maluku, and Papua. This requires students as immigrants to adapt to the environment in Tegal City. Both from habits, language, behavior, and speaking style. However, the fact that researchers found in the field was that few of the majority of local students accepted this difference. So, students from Eastern Indonesia need help adapting to a new environment.

In the lecture environment, there is a process of interaction. The interactions carried out aim to fulfill information needs. However, individuals with different socio-cultural backgrounds, such as students from Eastern Indonesia, often need clarification in the interpretation of meaning due to cultural differences, thus affecting their effectiveness in communicating. Intercultural communication is communication between ethnicities characterized by differences in language, customs, and cultural norms or values. There are three essential things in understanding intercultural communication: perception, verbal, and nonverbal communication. These three elements are the basic building blocks that cause failure and success in intercultural communication (Ruliana & Lestari, 2019, p. 149).

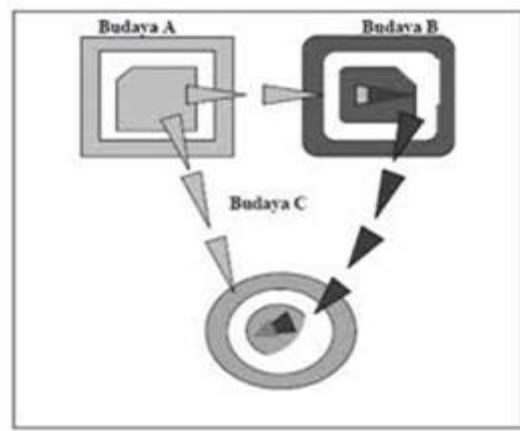
The presence of a minority race (East Indonesia) in a majority race environment (Javanese) is also an exciting thing to discuss because there is interpersonal communication in intercultural communication, which creates individual (communicator) perceptions of other individuals (communicants) so that Researchers use perception theory to support this research. Perception is a process of awareness of objects or events, especially towards other people, which is perceived

through the five senses. From this, there are two types of perception: perception of objects and humans. However, it is not just about being aware; perception is also a process of meaning so that the person can understand what he has seen or felt. Various things influence a person's inner perception.

Researchers also use symbolic theory because communication patterns and forms of communication, such as appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication, are the benchmarks in this research. Therefore, an appropriate communication process between different cultures is needed. So that there are no more misunderstandings or differences in interpretation of meaning when conveying messages and cultural understanding is created. The symbolic interaction perspective seeks to understand human behavior from a point of view. This means that humans communicate using verbal and nonverbal language. Symbolic interaction theory is closely related to what is said by a researcher who wants to know how students from Eastern Indonesia adapt to a new environment, find out the obstacles these students experience when adapting, and what changes these students feel according to intercultural communication patterns.

According to Porter and Larry A. Samovar, researchers use the intercultural communication model to apply the results of this research. Intercultural communication occurs when the sender of the message (sender) is a member of a particular culture while the recipient (receiver) is a member of another culture. In such communication, problems will arise where a message is coded (encoded) in one culture and must be recoded (decoded) in another. This needs attention because culture influences people in communicating; therefore, for intercultural communication to run smoothly, the parties involved must understand each other's culture and the cultural values held by their communication partners. How intercultural communication occurs can be described as follows according to Porter & Larry A. Samovar's intercultural communication model (Ruliana & Lestari, 2019:150):

**Figure 1. Intercultural Communication Model**



The picture shows communication between three cultures: A, B, and C. Culture A and Culture B are relatively the same, each represented by one quadrangle and one irregular octagon, almost resembling a quadrangle. Culture C is very different from the first two cultures, which is shown by the shapes that represent it, namely the shape of a circle.

The differences in these cultural forms can be seen for the first time when they surround the individuals within them. Apart from the form, cultural differences also lie in the individuals who are formed from that culture. The contents of the circle show this model. The differences between individuals from cultures A and B are relatively small, with both individuals from these cultures depicted by irregular octagons. However, individuals in culture C are very different from those two cultures, depicted by an incomplete circle. For example, an individual with culture A conveys a message to an individual with cultures B and C, where cultures A and B have more similarities.

In contrast, culture C has quite significant differences compared to culture A. Then, the message received by B will only change slightly, quite approaches the original message conveyed by A because he has a cultural perception that is similar to A. However, the message received by C will be very different because it is influenced by a very different culture (Ruliana & Lestari, 2019, pp. 151-152).

The encoding and decoding process in intercultural communication is shown by arrows that connect one culture to another. Arrows indicate the transmission of messages from an individual from one culture to an individual from another culture. When a message leaves the culture that is coded (encoding), the message contains the meaning desired by the message's sender. This is indicated by the arrow, which indicates that leaving a culture will contain the same pattern as the individual encoding.

When the message reaches the culture where the message is recoded (decoding), the message will change. Thus, the cultural influence of the recipient has become part of the message's meaning. In intercultural communication, the original message's meaning changes during decoding. Therefore, the communicative behavior and mana of the recipient do not contain the same meanings as those of the sender of the message. (Ruliana & Lestari, 2019:151).

The level or degree of cultural influence in intercultural communication shows the differences between cultures. In the figure, the degree of difference between cultures is indicated by changing patterns of message arrows. The change in arrows from culture A to culture B or vice versa is smaller than in the arrows from culture A to culture C. This is due to the more remarkable similarity between culture A and culture B. Communicative behavior, meaning, and decoding between culture A and culture B are relatively the same, producing a meaning close to the meaning intended by the sender. However, because culture C is different from these two cultures, the meaning received differs from the meaning intended by the sender.

This model indicates the large variety of cultural differences in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication occurs in various situations, ranging from interactions between people with extreme cultural differences to interactions between people with the same culture but different subcultures and subgroups. The magnitude of the difference between one culture and another depends on the uniqueness of one culture compared to others.

Lastly, this research uses phenomenological theory. Theories in the phenomenological tradition assume that people actively interpret their experiences and try to understand the world through their personal experiences. The phenomenological tradition strongly emphasizes perception, interpretation, and subjective human experience. This theory is very appropriate to connect with this research to underlie the process of intercultural communication among students between Javanese and East Indonesian ethnic groups at Pancasakti University Tegal.

Knowledge is the awareness of individuals or groups in carrying out intercultural interaction or communication directly from the conscious experience of the students themselves, from the students' intercultural interaction or communication giving rise to perceptions where students view different cultural backgrounds and how this impacts the students themselves. One of the interactions carried out by students can occur through verbal communication and non-verbal communication. When this communication occurs, they will learn different languages, races, dialects, and lifestyles according to each student's culture. After that, we will find out how intercultural communication is accepted based on the experiences of each student with cultural differences.

This research will explore the intercultural communication patterns of students from Eastern Indonesia and local students of Javanese ethnicity. Several students with different cultural backgrounds have similarities or are almost similar to both cultures and will be able to compare the establishment of intercultural communication by looking at several factors such as physical appearance, religion, philosophy, social attitudes, language, and the degree of technological development.

In this research, researchers reveal communication problems in the campus environment. These, namely Pancasakti Tegal University students, come from Eastern Indonesia and are local Tegal students, so they can identify problems of failure in intercultural communication and are expected to be able to provide solutions to failures in intercultural communication. Researchers used symbolic interaction theory, phenomenological theory, and intercultural communication theory to determine communication patterns between students from Eastern Indonesia and local students.

Based on the description above, the focus of the object of this research is the intercultural communication patterns carried out by local Tegal students with students from Eastern Indonesia. Taking the title "Intercultural Communication Patterns of Local Students with Students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti University Tegal."

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive type. Namely, research aims to carry out phenomena through data collection in as much depth as possible. Qualitative research does not always aim to find the cause and effect of something happening but instead seeks to understand a particular situation to arrive at an objective conclusion. Qualitative research explores and breaks through the symptoms by interpreting the problem. Data is collected through participant observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study. Interviews and questionnaires are primary data sources, and secondary data sources are obtained through documentation and literature.

In this study, researchers had access to 6 informants who would be used as research samples. The informants in this case are three students from Eastern Indonesia and three local students actively studying at Pancasakti University Tegal class of 2019, 2018, and 2017. Researchers chose student informants from Eastern Indonesia based on class because the students have lived between three and five years in Tegal and its surroundings and have more experience interacting with local students.

According to HB, we used an interactive analysis model (Interactive Model Analysis) to analyze the data in this research. Sutopo said that every researcher must understand three main components of the data analysis process. The three components are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The communication process to achieve goals will be successful if the communicator and communicant have the same understanding of the message that has been conveyed. In intercultural communication between local students and students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti University Tegal, several obstacles are caused by very different cultural backgrounds. This phenomenon of communication involving different cultures is called intercultural communication. This often leads to disagreements between one individual and another with a different culture.

The intended intercultural communication is communication between ethnic groups characterized by differences in language, customs, and cultural norms or values that are adhered to. There are three important things to consider when understanding intercultural communication: perception, verbal, and nonverbal communication. These three elements are the basic building blocks that cause failure and success in intercultural communication. (Ruldiana, Poppy & Puji Lestari, 2019: 49)

## **Intercultural Communication Patterns of Local Students with Students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti University Tegal Based on Researcher Findings**

### **1) First impression of meeting (First impression)**

The first time they see students from Eastern Indonesia, local students tend to see striking physical differences. Eastern people are identified with fierce facial features, black skin, large bodies, curly hair and figures, and thick lips. This makes some local people or students afraid to start interaction or communication. Initial perceptions before communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia also determine the continuation of communication patterns. Several local student informants who researchers interviewed said that local students' initial perception of students from Eastern Indonesia was that they had a tough character, loud voice, and language that was difficult to understand when communicating.

The initial perception that made local student informants afraid to start communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia was included in internal barriers in intercultural communication patterns because they had to struggle with themselves to have the courage to start interacting or communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia.

However, the first impression of students from Eastern Indonesia on local students was formed by how local students treated them for the first time. Several student informants from Eastern Indonesia became victims of bullying when they first studied at UPS Tegal. This makes the first impression of students from Eastern Indonesia towards local students could be better. Student informants from Eastern Indonesia even said that Javanese people were evil.

At this stage, mental trauma will occur to students from Eastern Indonesia who receive lousy treatment. Getting to the next stage takes quite a long time, and it takes hard work and heartache.

### **2) Introduction Stage**

Several local student informants finally dared to start interacting and communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia because of the supportive situation and circumstances. At this stage, local student informants can choose to use direct face-to-face communication or indirect communication, for example, communication via chat. After communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia, their initial negative perception was shattered. When they opened communication with students from Eastern Indonesia, they were greeted with friendliness and courtesy that they had not previously expected.

At this stage, local students found obstacles in communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia. These barriers are language and speaking intonation. Their regional language of origin influences their accent when they speak Indonesian. So, it affects his speaking intonation. So, even though we use Indonesian as an alternative language between the two languages, the speaking intonation of students from Eastern Indonesia makes it difficult for students from Indonesia to understand the meaning of sentences in the communication process.

Student informants from Eastern Indonesia also experienced barriers in communication, namely language. It took quite a long time to understand the daily language used by the people of Tegal. There will often be offense and misunderstanding at this stage due to the use of language that needs to be understood by students from Eastern Indonesia do not understand. Apart from that, the lifestyle and culture of Tegal City.

The informant can decide whether to continue with a more intense relationship or stop at this stage. Because some informants feel uncomfortable when communicating with people, they do not better their way of speaking.

### **3) Friendship Stage**

After passing the introduction stage, the informant then entered the friendship stage. At this stage, the informant decided to establish a more intense relationship between the two so

that local students and students from Eastern Indonesia could exchange stories, opinions, views, and attitudes. As time goes by, an inner relationship will grow between the two. At this stage, trust will also grow between the two, and we will support each other in any case.

In this stage, an adaptation process occurs. Students from Eastern Indonesia will naturally adapt to the informants' cultural and cultural habits and vice versa. At this stage, a sense of tolerance and acceptance of cultural understanding will be built, however, when habits are unacceptable to each other. This friendship cannot continue.

#### 4) Cultural Understanding Stage

At this stage, local students and students from Eastern Indonesia will be on cultural understanding. A sense of tolerance and mutual respect will occur at this stage. If you reach this stage, the communication pattern between the two cultures will boom, and an understanding will be reached.

Local UPS Tegal students have lived and settled since childhood in Tegal and surrounding areas such as Pemalang, Pekalongan, and Brebes. Meanwhile, students from Eastern Indonesia at UPS Tegal are students from Eastern Indonesia who have migrated to continue their undergraduate studies at UPS Tegal. The communication that occurs between students from different cultures can be described using the intercultural communication pattern model, according to Porter and Larry A. Samovar.

**Figure 2.** Intercultural Communication Model

according to Porter & Larry A. Samovar on the Application of Research



The picture shows the form of communication between three students with different cultural backgrounds, namely local students from Tegal City, students from areas around Tegal City, and overseas students from Eastern Indonesia. The culture of local students from Tegal City and students from around Tegal City are relatively similar. The distance is not far, each represented by one quadrangle and one irregular octagon, almost resembling a quadrangle. The culture of overseas students from Eastern Indonesia is very different from the first two cultures; this difference is shown by the shapes that represent them, namely the circle shape.

The differences in cultural forms can be seen for the first time when the two cultures meet, like the informant named Sumaya, a student from Tegal City, when she first interacted with students from Pemalang. This was discovered when researchers interviewed one of the informants, namely Sumaya. When the two of them communicated, Sumaya felt uncomfortable with her slurred

language when the other person spoke with a different Javanese accent. Sumaya sometimes finds it difficult to understand the meaning of what she says in a shrill tone.

The individual differences between students from Tegal City and students from areas around Tegal City are relatively small because the distance is not too far, so the differences between the two are not that significant. This model depicts an irregular octagon. However, both are very different from the culture of students from Eastern Indonesia, which is depicted in a circle. When local students from Tegal City communicate with students from areas around Tegal City and students from Eastern Indonesia, where the culture of Tegal City and the culture of areas around Tegal City, such as Brebes and Pemalang have more similarities, the communication that is established will be pretty good and easy—accepted by each other. The message conveyed mostly stays the same as the actual meaning because it has similar cultural perceptions; apart from that, there is little misunderstanding.

Meanwhile, the culture of students from Eastern Indonesia significantly differs from that of students from Brebes and Pemalang. Communication between the two will be challenging, and misunderstandings often occur. Messages received by students from Eastern Indonesia and vice versa tend to change meaning—very different cultural influences cause this.

The level or degree of cultural influence in intercultural communication shows the level of difference between one culture and another. In the figure, the degree of difference between cultures is indicated by changing patterns of message arrows. The change in arrows from local students from Tegal City to students from areas around Tegal City or vice versa is more minor than that from students from Tegal City to students from Eastern Indonesia. This is caused by a greater level of acidity between local students from Tegal City and students from areas around Tegal City. Communicative behavior, meaning, and decoding between the two cultures are relatively the same because they produce meaning that is close to the meaning intended by the sender. However, because the culture of students from Eastern Indonesia differs from these two cultures, the meaning received differs from the meaning intended by the sender.

They are based on the Symbolic Interaction Theory, according to Herbert Blumer, which tries to understand human behavior from a perspective. This means that humans communicate using verbal and non-verbal language. Researchers obtained student informants from Eastern Indonesia who had experience in the form of the behavior of a local student named Titin, who gave rise to interpretations based on his point of view by Blumer's three basic thoughts regarding symbolic interaction as follows:

1. Humans behave towards things based on the meaning those things have for them. Local students gave the informants behavior that they thought was a joke. However, the meaning received by the informant was different; the informant considered this behavior to mock him.
2. The meaning of these things originates or arises from social interactions that have been carried out. The behavior obtained by the informant may be that his friend has done it with someone else. Then, the person does not mind and accepts the treatment given to him. However, this treatment does not apply to informants.
3. These meanings are managed internally and changed through the process of interpretation used by people who relate to the things they encounter. The incident that happened to the informant made him think that local UPS students did not have a good attitude.

Based on De Vito's Interpersonal Perception Theory, there are five stages in intercultural communication. The first stage is stimulation. A person will experience or occur in a process after the stimulation of our senses. When the informant first saw the student from Eastern Indonesia, he was immediately attracted by the different shapes of his face. Second is the organizational stage. All stimuli are felt so we will manage or organize this information quickly in the organizational process. Various regulations can be carried out by conducting stimulus organizations, some of which are similarities, differences, schemata, or references to general events. In this research, it is proven that Papuan students who have fierce faces, big bodies, and black skin are fierce and have tough characters, so when we see a student from Papua with a physical shape like that, we suspect that he is a person with a challenging and fierce character.



Third, the Interpretation and evaluation stage. This stage is influenced by experiences, needs, desires, values, beliefs about how things should be, expectations, physical and emotional statements, etc., so it can be subjective. In this research, this stage occurs when students from Eastern Indonesia and local students and vice versa start to interact by starting communication. The suspicion that students from Eastern Indonesia had a tough and fierce character became wrong when they communicated directly. When this communication occurred, local students discovered that students from Eastern Indonesia had friendliness and politeness that should be appreciated. Apart from that, students from Eastern Indonesia are very open to anyone. Fourth is the memory stage. This process means that the results of the interpretation and evaluation will enter short-term memory, which we can use to start communicating or interacting with the person we are talking to. In this research, people's perceptions of students from Eastern Indonesia will change when communicating and are stored in the person's short-term memory. Lastly, the remembering stage. This process, of course, occurs in conjunction with the four processes above because it will be carried out or experienced by the subject when he has experienced a specific perception process and tries to remember it for other needs at other events.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this research, the researchers concluded that students from Eastern Indonesia often experience bullying behavior on and off campus when they first enter college seniors who are local students. Some local students feel that there is something strange in the environment with students from Eastern Indonesia who are of a different race. Local students perceive that Eastern people have a challenging and fierce character before interacting or communicating directly with students from Eastern Indonesia. Local students find it easier to communicate with students from areas around Tegal because they have cultural similarities. However, misunderstandings often occur when communicating with students from Eastern Indonesia due to certain factors, such as the cultures being very different. The barriers to intercultural communication that researchers in this study have discovered are language, speaking intonation, different perspectives and lifestyles in the communication process between local students and students from Eastern Indonesia.

The pattern of intercultural communication between local students and students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti University Tegal that researchers found was a pattern of cultural understanding. Researchers found several stages in the intercultural communication patterns of local students with students from Eastern Indonesia at Pancasakti University Tegal to find cultural understanding, namely, first impression, introduction stage, friendship stage, and cultural understanding stage.

Based on the conclusions, there is a message that we can take away, namely that as students, it would be better if we could increase our sense of tolerance, empathy, mutual respect, and a humble attitude so that there would be no more bullying occurring towards students from Eastern Indonesia at UPS Tegal. We can form good cooperation between local students and students from Eastern Indonesia in adapting to the same environment with each other to realize an understanding of different cultural backgrounds. We can also use alternative languages, such as Indonesian when communicating daily with students from Eastern Indonesia.

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