

# The Urgency of National and Local Cultures in Intercultural Communication in Indonesia

Pattaling

Department of Communication, State Islamic University of Sultan Amai Gorontalo, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

Indonesian national culture is a system of ideas that gives identity to Indonesian citizens. The national culture is the culmination of local cultures that are general and can be accepted by other ethnic groups. In the midst of many local cultures, it is necessary to have adequate intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is a communication made by people from different cultural backgrounds, religions, races, education, and others. With the existence of Indonesian as a unifying language, language differences among various ethnic groups with different cultural backgrounds can be minimized. For intercultural communication to be successful, it must acknowledge and accept cultural differences. Besides, it does not force the will on the other person to prevent miscommunication.

**Keywords:** National Culture, Local Culture, Intercultural Communication

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is essentially a dialectical effort from the community to answer the challenges faced by it at every stage of its development stability. It gives sufficient space for the public to at any time assess the stability. So, what is called the democratic process is a part of the cultural process because it is a force that drives the process of forming a new figure from a concept of power, which is considered to replace the old concept which is felt to be obsolete by a society. [1] Thus the cultural system is an abstract form of culture. Cultural systems are human ideas that live together in a society. The idea is not in a state separated from the others, but always related and

become a system. Thus, the cultural system is part of the culture, which is also interpreted as customs covering the cultural value system, the system of norms according to the institutions that exist in the society concerned, including religious norms.

The function of the cultural system is to organize and stabilize human actions and behavior. The learning process of this cultural system is carried out through culture or institutionalization. In this institutionalization process, an individual learns and adapts his nature and attitude to the customs, norms, and regulatory systems that live in his culture. This process starts from childhood, from the family environment, then to the environment outside the home, first by imitating various actions. After the feelings and cultural values that motivate the act of imitating are internalized in his personality, the action becomes a steady pattern, and the norms governing his actions are cultivated. However, there are also individuals who, in the process of civilization, experience deviants, meaning individuals who cannot adjust themselves to the cultural system in the surrounding environment.

In the cultural context, the state and society of Indonesia are as follows: a) the fact that the Indonesian nation consists of various ethnic groups with all cultural diversity that is reflected in various aspects of its culture, which is usually not separated from primordial ties, ethnicity, and regionalism. b) The ongoing civilizing process has positive and negative impacts in the form of changes and shifts in the cultural

value system so that the mental condition of a human being is affected. A further consequence of this clash of cultural values is the emergence of conflict in life. [2] c) Advances in science and technology cause changes in the conditions of human life, cause conflicts with cultural values so that humans confuse themselves against the progress that has been created. This is a result of technology which, besides having positive aspects, also has negative aspects. Thus, due to the negative impact of technology, humans are now restless and agitated.

What causes human damage is due to the clash of values of modern technology with traditional values. Its science and technology are based on a cultural framework. Another cause is the occurrence of cultural conflicts with foreign cultures that cause changes in cultural orientation and have an impact on people's values. This study reviews the urgency of national and local cultures in intercultural communication.

### **National and Local Culture**

National culture is the culmination of regional (local) culture that is universal and can be accepted by other ethnic groups, without causing disturbance to the cultural background of groups that accept and realize the configuration or ideas of national cultural unity. National culture, in this case, interpreted as an integral culture, is a totality of the process and results of all activities of the Indonesian people in the aesthetic, moral, and ideational fields. The form of national culture includes artificial goods, social institutions, and ideas.

The national cultural treasures that are lifted from local cultural heritage and other nations include painting and fine arts, which in general depart from the rules that developed in western countries-preservation of local culture as the realm of care for ethnic culture. In reality, it is the culture of these tribes that gives root to the Indonesian people as a whole. This ethnic culture needs to be preserved because it is also a source of

inspiration and a source of reference for new creation. Its existence is also an embodiment of cultural diversity that is united into the unity of the country. It is following the motto of unity in diversity. It is a translation of the principle of recognition of the plurality of local cultures of the Indonesian nation. [3]

### **Intercultural Communication**

When communicating with people from other tribes, or other religions, they are confronted with a different system of values and rules. Therefore, it is difficult to understand communication with each other when it is very ethnocentric. In Indonesia, tribal stereotypes often occur. For example, Javanese and Sundanese people think that they are delicate and polite, while Batak people are rude, reckless, like to talk loud, brave, and fight. The Batak people themselves think that they are brave, open, like to speak brightly, smart, diligent, strong, and tough. They consider Javanese and Sundanese to be more subtle and spontaneous, but weak and do not like to be frank. What people think violence, for the Batak, is honesty. Likewise, what Sundanese and Javanese consider subtle, for the Batak are hypocrisy and weakness. [4]

In Islamic teachings, Allah has emphasized in the Qur'an Surah Ar-Rahman verses one through four that God is merciful, who has taught the Qur'an. God created man and taught him how to speak. Thus, humans always want to communicate with other humans by talking to one another, both conducting interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, or mass communication. [5] Humans have a communication instinct besides that it is also equipped with an inquisitive ability. Humans want to know everything in the natural world around them. As said by Allah in the Qur'an An-Nisa verse 113, that Allah revealed to people books and wisdom, and taught them something that is not yet known. Thus, humans will achieve everything with the ability to communicate.

One element of cultural patterns is the way of thinking that shows the way a group views the decisions to be taken. Every culture teaches a system of logical thinking, truth, and wisdom. Likewise, culture forms the structure of thought and perception of the universe and interpersonal relationships. [6] As happened in multi-cultural meetings between Americans, Japanese, and Arabs, there are often differences between cultures when the meeting will begin. Americans go directly to the purpose of the meeting; the Japanese prioritize searching for information even until the session ends, there is no conclusion. But for Arabs, all of that is not important except building relationships and creating a basis of trust. So that among the participants, there were differences of opinion, this is one example of intercultural communication. Because intercultural communication can be fun, bring a peaceful atmosphere, reduce misinformation, and ease tensions.

Effective communication will only occur when two parties give the same meaning to the message they are exchanging. On the other hand, chaotic communication brings dissent, which results in fights and disputes when two parties give different meanings to the message. [7] Talking about a culture that includes art is very interesting throughout the history of human life because it is bound to the system, patterns, and all the results of human efforts to maintain and improve the quality of life. Because culture is an expression of the deep passion of society by making its rules, in a narrow sense of culture is defined as the thoughts, works, and creations of humans who fulfill their desire for beauty.

In Islamic teachings, the most crucial aspect is the teaching of beauty; that is, Allah is beautiful and always loves beauty. The aesthetic elements taught in Islam are the beauty that results from all forms of human culture must reflect the values of monotheism. It does not exceed the limits, so that the resulting beauty is not just looking for emotional satisfaction, lust,

but also must find the value of essential beauty, namely the beauty of the almighty beautiful, namely Allah. As the Muslim view of aesthetics, which is still not properly valued, then art is the culmination of being ignored, even now it escapes the attention of most Muslims. Yet without realizing it, they need beauty, entertainment, and fun. For example, many people say: how beautiful the girl is, how beautiful the scenery is, how melodious the singing is, and so on. Thus, whether we realize it or not, art is a normal part of life. Therefore, it is impossible if the teachings of Islam, which uphold the values of humanity or the value of human nature, ignore the problem of art for the people.

Art is essentially a beauty and pleasure that has become the value of human nature. However, in order not to grow in unlimited pleasure and beauty that will ultimately plunge humanity into ruin, it is necessary to look for boundaries which are permissible or recommended, and which are not permitted or prohibited. In expression, a Muslim must stay on the path of human nature, because Islam, as the religion of life, returns humans to the path of fitnah. It is as in Qur'an Surat Al-Rum verse 30, which means: then face your face straight to the religion of Allah; stay on the nature of God who has created humans according to that nature. There is no change in the quality of God that is a straight religion, but most people do not know. [8]

In another statement, Allah Almighty affirms in the Qur'an Surah Al-A'raf verse 31, which means as follows: O children of Adam, wear your beautiful clothes in every entering the mosque, eat and drink, and do not overdo it. Surely Allah does not like excessive people. [8] Thus in the view of Islam, a Muslim may be artsy because it is a part of his life but does not go beyond the limits and make it the center of wonder that forgets the majesty of the Substance of the Most Beautiful, Allah. After seeing the reality in life, it appears that there is a place of art in Islam. Because art is a sub-system of Islamic culture, which

is assumed to be an expression of having normative limits of Islamic teachings. Because Islamic art is the result of a combination of aesthetic values, morals, and monotheistic values. <sup>[3]</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

Human civilization today has developed so complexly. Humans, as individuals with different cultural backgrounds, meet each other, both face to face and through communication media. Communication media are not only in the form of mass media but also in general media, such as letters, e-mails, telephone, and others. So, it is not surprising, the development of the world today is increasingly leading to a global village. It has led to the assumption that nowadays, intercultural communication is more critical than ever before. <sup>[9]</sup>

Communication that occurs between people of different nationalities, races, languages, religions, education levels, social status, or even gender is called intercultural communication. <sup>[4]</sup> Therefore several factors can be said to be the golden bridge of intercultural communication. This golden bridge includes mobility, economic interdependence, communication technology, immigration patterns, and political welfare. <sup>[10]</sup> In communicating with individuals, people must pay attention to the culture of the individual. According to Devito, effective intercultural communication can generally be further strengthened by utilizing characteristics that mark effective interpersonal interactions. For example, openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, equality, confidence, closeness, interaction management, power of expression, and orientation to the interlocutor. <sup>[10]</sup>

Thus, every person who communicates with people of different cultures, at least be open to differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes put themselves in the position of interlocutors who come from different cultures. Be spontaneous and descriptive, communicate positive attitudes,

assume communication is equality, remain confident and calm in every situation, and are not arrogant. In intercultural communication, the quality of closeness is essential to minimize differences and be sensitive to differences when taking over the conversation. Also, the need to signal differences with facial expressions, gestures that are full of interest and attention, and responses that reflect understanding, both verbal and nonverbal. By realizing that everyone has a share in the conversation, the barriers that exist in intercultural communication can be minimized.

Muslims realize that religion is something revealed by God and is a guide for humans to live their lives and interact with others. Religion is a source of values that must be a reference for all human actions. Meanwhile, in the philosophy of positivism, religion is nothing more than a human creation and merely becomes part of the culture in general. People who put religion as a perspective in seeing things and put religion in a superordinate position over culture have difficulty accepting things that are considered irrational or excessive. In reality, in various Islamic countries, it shows that Islam expresses itself very differently in accordance with the characteristics of their respective societies and cultures. As the Indonesian nation, it is realized that the archipelago consists of diverse colors of culture and language, so that for the sake of national integration, a single unified concept is formulated, which means that even though different shades of culture and language remain united in defending Indonesia.

How vital the national culture is because it is a characteristic of the Indonesian people. For example, the red and white flag as the flag of the Indonesian state, which has a very profound meaning and has drained the energy and mind of the Indonesian people and has risked the lives of the Indonesian people to gain independence. In addition, it needs to be grateful for having a unity language as the national language, namely Indonesian, so

that it can communicate with different ethnic and cultural groups. According to Koentjaraningrat, the development of Indonesia's national culture needs to be oriented to the glory days of Indonesia's forefathers. Culture needs to provide the ability of the Indonesian people to face today's world civilization. The concept of national culture put forward by Koentjaraningrat is operational, which is oriented to the ancestral heritage of the glory and in modern times. Furthermore, Koentjaraningrat said that Indonesia's national culture functions as a giver of identity to some citizens of a nation. It is a historical continuity from the glory of the Indonesian people in the past to the present national culture. So, the overall collective ideas of all colorful Indonesian citizens constitute the Indonesian national culture in its function of communicating with each other and strengthening solidarity. <sup>[11]</sup>

The functions of national culture, according to Koentjaraningrat, are as follows: a) a system of ideas and symbols that give identity to Indonesian citizens, b) a system of beliefs and symbols that can be used by all the different Indonesian citizens, to communicate mutually and can strengthen solidarity. The function of the Indonesian national culture as a philosophical system that gives an identity to Indonesian citizens must meet three conditions. Namely: 1) the work of Indonesian citizens, 2) containing Indonesian characteristics, 3) the work of Indonesian citizens who are valued highly by their citizens, and became the pride of the Indonesian people.

The old and original culture functioned as cultural peaks in regions throughout Indonesia counted as the nation's culture. Cultural efforts must be able to move towards progress, culture, and unity without rejecting new materials from foreign cultures that can enrich the culture of one's nation and elevate the humanity of the Indonesian people. If it is said that national culture is the culmination of regional culture, then what is meant by the

completion of the local culture are regional cultural elements that are universal and can be accepted by other ethnic groups. It is without causing interference to the cultural background of the group that allows at once realizing the configuration or group of national cultural unity. National culture is characterized as an integral culture, which is a totality of the process and results of all activities of the Indonesian people in the aesthetic, moral, and ideational fields. The form of national culture includes manufactured goods, social institutions, and ideas.

Indonesia has a *Pancasila* (the five philosophical basics of Indonesian State) ideology foundation, so from a functional perspective, Pancasila will be tested because of the values contained in it. It will determine the orientation of socio-political and cultural objectives at the macro level and will determine the rules that underlie national life patterns. *Pancasila*, in this case, is not only a determination of the moral life of the nation but, through the theological function, will provide an ideological umbrella for various elements of society.

*Pancasila*, with the values contained in it, includes the existence of Indonesian people, can function as a national cultural ethos. *Pancasila*, as the ethos of Indonesian culture, must be realized in everyday life. In this case, *Pancasila* functions as a normative culture that will manifest in the form of personalization. The personalization is national culture and national identity. <sup>[11]</sup> Culture is born because of the demands of meeting human needs. Birth is closely related to the situation, conditions, and needed of each community. Therefore, human culture in its journey experiences development and change according to the dynamics of its era. The development and dynamics of human civilization cannot be separated from the concepts of space and time that surround it. The difference in space and time significantly influences the diversity of cultures produced by humans.

The variety of traditional music of the archipelago as one of the cultural products is inseparable from these conditions. It is because music is an archipelago tradition that is an integral part of the culture of each of the supporting community groups. Central Javanese music is an essential part of Javanese culture itself. It was born because of the needs and demands of aesthetic musical taste from the supporting community. Javanese traditional musical identity is a crystallization of a long journey in the cultural climate and views of the Javanese people. The prevailing value system strongly influences Javanese culture itself, and historical experience experienced by Javanese society itself. Thus, it can be ascertained that the existence of traditional music in Central Java is to express the system and values that apply to community groups in Central Java.

Based on its development, traditional art is classified into three art forms, namely primitive art, folk art, and classical art. A type of society can have a culture that has a great tradition and a small tradition that first shows the cultural pattern of the village community. Forms of society with great traditions will produce city or palace artistic creativity with labels that develop and are or are complicated, delicate, and expensive. On the contrary, the form of a small traditional society will produce creativity in village art or folk art with labels that are or in the kind of simple, rough, and inexpensive. It is used to mark the results of the village people's artistic creativity.

The form of folk art is very closely related to the life of local traditional ceremonies. Folk dance is one type of dance that, in its appearance, is not bound by specific dance treasury patterns that exist. In the procedure of the show, starting from the makeup, dress code, accompaniment, and arena of the show are not bound, although sometimes some certainties or norms must be obeyed. The appearance of the composition of folkdance moves is more spontaneous, free, and cannot be separated

from the wobble that shows the characteristics of his distinctive identity. Each dancer will get certain impressions of free expression. One form of the same dance, for example, the *ganrangbulo* dance, from one region to another even though it is close together, sometimes there will be differences in both the motion and poetry of the song and the structure of the performance.

Throughout its history, art has never been separated from society; art in a variety of patterns and expressions is the creativity of citizens who support a culture. Thus, art is one of the results of community creativity, then the form, style, and expression of art will always run with the dynamics of the lives of the people concerned. The more dynamic society is, the more dynamic its art life. Changes in the needs of life, changes in the values adopted, also affect the development of various branches of art. It means that art is never static, but it always develops and changes following events or changes in society.<sup>[3]</sup>

With so many cultures in Indonesia, it causes many tourists who come from abroad to be attracted by the beauty that exists in Indonesia, thus increasing income for the Indonesian people. Likewise, the culture brought by tourists from abroad who wear transparent clothes and show genitalia to us Muslims is not compatible with religion and ethics. However, with the advancement of technology, television media has caused many people to be attracted by the fashion styles exhibited by fashion exhibitors both from domestic and abroad.

## **CONCLUSION**

National culture is the culmination of regional culture that is general and can be accepted by other ethnic groups, without disrupting the cultural background of the group that receives it. Indonesian national culture is a system of ideas that gives identity to Indonesian citizens. Also, national cultures can be used by all the different Indonesian citizens to

communicate with each other and strengthen solidarity. Every person who interacts with other people of different cultures, at least be open to differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes, put themselves in the position of interlocutors who come from different cultures, being spontaneous, and descriptive communicating a positive attitude. In intercultural communication, the quality of closeness is essential to minimize differences and be sensitive.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Kayan U. *Demokratisasi Politik, Budaya dan Ekonomi*. Cet.I. Jakarta: Yayasan Paramadina; 1994. p. 145.
2. Sulaeman MM. *Ilmu Budaya Dasar (Suatu Pengantar)*. Cet. VIII. Bandung: Refika Aditama; 2001. p. 25.
3. Yayah K, Thoyibi M, Aly A. *Sinergi Agama dan Budaya Lokal; Dialektika Muhammadiyah dan Seni Lokal*. Cet. I. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University; 2003.
4. Mulyana D. *Nuansa-Nuansa Komunikasi, Menoropong Plotik dan Budaya Komunikasi Masyarakat Kontemporer*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya; 1999. p. 13.
5. Littlejohn SW. *Theories of Human Communication*, Seventh Edition, Belmont. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company; 2000.
6. Liliweri A. *Dasar-dasar Komunikasi AntarBudaya*. Cet.I. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar; 2003. p. 148.
7. Liliweri A. *Makna Budaya Dalam Komunikasi AntarBudaya*. Cet. I. Yogyakarta: LKIS; 2003. p. 46.
8. Departemen Agama RI. *Alqur'an dan Terjemahnya*. Semarang: Toha Putra; 1989.
9. Mulyana D. *Komunikasi AntarBudaya, Panduan Berkomunikasi Dengan Orang-Orang Berbeda Budaya*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya; 2000.
10. Devito AJ. *Komunikasi AntarManusia*. Edisi V. Jakarta: Professional Books; 1991.
11. Koentjaraningrat. *Manusia dan Kebudayaan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Djambatan; 1988. p. 62-64

How to cite this article: Pattaling. The urgency of national and local cultures in intercultural communication in Indonesia. *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences & Humanities*. 2020; 4(2): 1-7.

\*\*\*\*\*