

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In Indonesia, there are various cultures and languages. Various cultures have different norms that cause interference with communication (Ahour & Mukundan, 2012). From the above opinions, cultural differences become communication disorders for people who experience problems communicating. Many people have communication problems only because of cultural differences. One of the primary drivers behind the inclusion of the cultural component in language training is the rise in intercultural communication over the past few decades (Novinger, 2001).

Intercultural communication is the process of exchanging thoughts and meanings between people from different cultural backgrounds (Mulyana et al., 2005). Basically, intercultural communication examines the influence of culture on communication activities, including interpreting the meaning of verbal and nonverbal messages according to each culture, what is considered appropriate to communicate, how to convey messages (both verbally and nonverbally), and when is the right time to carry out this communication (Mulyana et al., 2005).

In social interactions, communication is often a very important first step, while cultural diversity has a big influence on the continuity of these interactions.

Culture plays a key role in shaping the way we communicate, and in turn, each form of our communication is reflected in the richness of an individual's culture and identity, which is influenced by the background and customs of the region of origin. In addition to culture, psychological and physical discomfort can also influence the dynamics of social interactions. This discomfort can arise from differences in language, values, social norms, or even communication styles. This phenomenon is often referred to as culture shock or culture shock. Darmastuti (2013), stated that cultural differences can give rise to different perceptions between communicating individuals, which often results in uncertainty and anxiety, requiring adaptation and accommodation in these interactions.

As highlighted by Byram (1997), English is a "lingua franca," and it is important to include elements of the target culture and global society in English language teaching. From this statement, it is important for people learning English to understand cultural elements so that it does not become a problem in communication. as highlighted (Ahourand Mukundan, 2012). Nisbet (2006) and Zhu (2010) explained that there are many communication breakdowns when various groups interact since their speech and mental habits are influenced by their culture. As highlighted by Garand (2009), the origins of a misunderstanding can be categorized into three types. First, there are pragmatic misunderstandings, where the parties involved start with preconceived notions that shape their interactions and expectations of each other. Semantic misunderstanding is the

second problem. It is solely linguistic and is caused by auditory problems. Discourse misunderstandings and cognitive lag come in third. This particular form of misunderstanding is more closely related to, say, how arguments are presented in the dialog. In the categories already mentioned, misunderstandings in speech often occur in intercultural communication issues. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to find out what strategies can overcome intercultural communication problems. It is also implied in the Al-Qur'an surah Al-Hujurat verses 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Based on the meaning of the Qur'anic verse that Allah created humans into various nations and tribes highlights the complexity of diverse human backgrounds, which can cause challenges in intercultural communication. This is caused by differences in cultural norms, values, and practices between individuals. Therefore, this research aims to explore whether these background differences have a significant impact on the communication process. By understanding the implications of this cultural diversity, people can find effective strategies to facilitate better communication between individuals who come from different backgrounds. It is hoped that this research will provide valuable insights in efforts to build better intercultural understanding and tolerance among humanity.

Several studies related to intercultural communication are strategies for overcoming intercultural communication and what problems cause it. Research conducted by Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian (2020) suggests that strategies for overcoming intercultural communication are developing communicative skills, increasing cultural awareness, developing interpretation skills, using relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills, and increasing critical cultural awareness. Apart from that, another study conducted by Coleman et al. (2022) with the title "Competent Communication" also concluded that there are five barriers to intercultural communication, namely anxiety, assumptions of similar values, attitudes and communication styles, ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice. On the other hand, research by Ruben et al. (2013) with the title "Communication and Human Behavior" reported that there are several strategies that can be used to overcome problems in intercultural communication, namely recognizing cultural differences, self-evaluation, recognizing cultural customs, avoiding negative judgments, and protecting against culture shock.

A researcher concluded that the main gap between previous research and current research lies in the different focus in the context of English as a foreign language education, especially in the Islamic boarding school-based school environment. Previous research tends to focus on aspects of communication in a general context. Thus, current research reflects a shift in emphasis from general communication situations to the specific environment of English language learning in schools with an Islamic boarding school background.

Based on mini interview carried out by researcher to assess the feasibility of the research, information was obtained from teacher at the Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School. Mini interview results show that there is a diversity of regional backgrounds among students, which results in cultural plurality and language variations, especially in the context of English learning. This condition often creates challenges in the communication process for students at the Islamic boarding school. Therefore, this research is planned to be carried out at the Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School, especially in class 1 I'dadi at Darul Hijrah Putra High School, which consists of 39 students. The case study (CS) method will be used in this research, using questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments. The focus of the research will be on the strategies used by students in overcoming intercultural communication challenges. Therefore, the title of this research is **“THE STUDENTS' STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS IN ENGLISH LEARNING”**

B. Definition of Key Terms

Several terms related to the research are clarified to avoid misconceptions.

1. Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication refers to the communication between people from two different cultures. The goal of intercultural communication is

to promote understanding, respect, and empathy among individuals and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds. It also involves understanding the different cultures, languages, and customs of people from other countries and learning the tools to facilitate intercultural interaction (Sumiati, 2017).

In this research, intercultural communication refers to interactions between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. The focus is to explore the problems that arise and the strategies used to overcome intercultural communication among grade 1 I'dadi students at the Darul Hijrah Islamic Boarding School for boys. Based on mini interviews with one of the teacher there, researcher found that these students came from various cultures such as Dayak, Banjar and Javanese. So research can be carried out there.

2. Problem

A problem is a situation or circumstance that causes difficulty, conflict, or discomfort for an individual, group, or society. The source of problems can come from various factors, such as differences in values, unmet needs, conflicts of interest, or inadequate environmental conditions. This problem generally requires a solution or resolution so that the situation can be resolved or improved.

In the context of intercultural communication, these problems occur when individuals or groups experience difficulties in interacting due to cultural differences. In this research, researcher explored problems that are

often experienced in intercultural communication, such as misunderstandings in speech intonation or difficulties in adapting to learning English.

3. Strategy

Strategy is a plan or method prepared to achieve certain goals. Strategy involves selecting steps or actions that are arranged systematically to overcome challenges or take advantage of existing opportunities. The goal of strategy is to maximize desired outcomes by considering available resources, risks, and relevant environmental conditions.

In the context of intercultural communication strategies, strategies are plans or methods chosen by students to achieve goals in overcoming intercultural communication challenges, especially in learning English. The focus of the researcher's research is to understand the strategies students use in dealing with these intercultural communication situations, with the aim of increasing understanding and effectiveness of communication between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

C. Research Questions

The main questions to be investigated in this study are:

1. What are the problems of intercultural communication in English learning?
2. What are the strategies to overcome the problems of intercultural communication in English learning?

D. Objectives of Study

Highlighted to the research questions, this study purposes to investigate:

1. To find out the problems of intercultural communication in English learning
2. To find out the strategies to overcome the problems of intercultural communication in English learning

E. Significance of Study

This research will provide useful information to teachers, students and future researcher regarding intercultural communication in the context of English language learning.

1. For the Teacher

Teachers can use the results of this research as a guide to improve their teaching methods. By understanding how students overcome difficulties in communicating in different cultural contexts, teachers can adapt learning methods to better facilitate students' learning processes. This could include using a wider variety of materials, using technology to facilitate intercultural interactions, as well as providing more specific guidance and support to students who experience difficulties in these areas.

2. For the Students

Students will gain new insights into how to face communication challenges when learning English. This research provides practical strategies that they can apply in their daily lives, helping them become more confident

and effective in interacting with people from different cultures. The strategies identified in this research can serve as a practical guide for students in dealing with challenging communication situations, such as understanding cultural norms, using appropriate body language, or managing differences in understanding with people from different cultures.

3. For the Next Researcher

By providing a strong foundation in understanding effective strategies in overcoming intercultural communication barriers in English language learning, this study makes an important contribution to future research in this area. Future researcher can expand this research by exploring additional factors that may influence the effectiveness of strategies used by students, as well as analyzing the impact of different cultural contexts in dealing with this problem. This can assist in the development of more detailed and adaptive learning practices and contribute to further understanding of intercultural communication in the context of English language education.