



## **Different Perspective of Understanding between Indonesian and Malaysian in Communication Style**

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### **ARTICLE INFO**

Received:  
22 January 2022

Accepted:  
28 March 2022

Published:  
1 April 2022

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### **Keywords:**

Communication,  
Cultures, Indonesian and  
Malaysian,  
Misunderstanding

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### **ABSTRACT**

Since many people have different cultural groups or cultural values sometimes causes misunderstandings. The research used descriptive qualitative which to investigate the different perspectives of both cultures such as the problem of misunderstanding of communication, the difference in communication styles and also to investigate the contrasting perspective in oral or written communication. The respondents of the research are Indonesian and Malaysian who took on social media YouTube. In collecting the data, the researchers used the observation with a video on YouTube and used diary notes to write the essential data of the research. The results shown that even though Malaysia and Indonesia are neighboring countries and these two countries almost have similar cultures, there are some different perspectives of understanding, especially in communication. Two aspects of communication became the issues of these two countries such as verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The different perspectives of communication style which classified into two aspects, namely verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The different perspective of verbal communication style occurs by using the words used or intonation to communicate or transfer the meaning. Meanwhile, the different perspectives of verbal communication style can be seen in the mannerism such as gestures or mimicking of people.

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**Doi:** <https://doi.org/10.59011/austronesian.1.1.2022.21-28>

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## 1. Introduction

A broad concept like culture has many different definitions. But to put it plainly, culture is a group or community that we share some common experiences with and that has an impact on how we see the world. Gender, race, and national origin are examples of categories into which we are born. The environment also can influence the changing of people's culture. When we study culture in this way, we discover that we all simultaneously belong to several different civilizations. The exchange of cultures could be transferred by cross-cultural communication. The study of cross-cultural communication looks at how people from different cultural backgrounds interact with one another in both similar and different ways, as well as how they try to communicate with one another from different cultural backgrounds. The study of cross-cultural communication looks at how people from different cultural backgrounds interact with one another in both similar and different ways, as well as how they try to communicate with one another from different cultural backgrounds (Liliweri, 2009). Communication between individuals from various diverse cultures, such as that found in international, inter-ethnic, and inter-social societies, is known as cross-cultural communication (Bakker-Pieper & de Vries, 2013). The study of cross-cultural communication examines how individuals from various cultural backgrounds interact with one another in both similar and dissimilar ways as well as how they attempt to communicate across cultural boundaries (Umami, 2022). From the definition, cross-cultural communication means the process of transferring communication with various cultures such as international, interethnic, etc.

When two cultures have different interpretations of the same term, gesture, item, social setting, or about anything else you can think of, a cultural misunderstanding results. Misunderstandings can sometimes be cleared up, sometimes they go nowhere, and occasionally they can turn violent—from love to war. When people from various cultures converse or interact with one another, cross-cultural misunderstanding occurs. People from one culture behave in accordance with their norms and values, but because of cultural variations, people from other cultures may not perceive the message as it was intended to be understood. Another kind of cross-cultural misunderstanding is when words, gestures, or social contexts have distinct meanings in other cultures (Umami, 2022). Through communication with people in different cultures, cross-cultural misunderstanding will happen because of something a word, gesture, social context, and everything from your thought has different meanings in two cultures. There are six primary patterns of cultural differences (DuPraw & Axner, 1997). These can all have an impact on our daily lives and will cause cross-cultural communication challenges such as the various styles of communication, different perspectives on conflict, various methods for completing tasks, various types of different non-verbal communication, and disparities in disclosure attitudes.

The cross-cultural misunderstanding also happened in both cultures Indonesia and Malaysia. A word that is frequently used and articulated as cognate brothers has emerged as a result of the cultural overlap between Malaysia and Indonesia. In the framework of culture,

this expression ought to serve as a unifying force for the two nations (Indonesia and Malaysia). These two countries are connected in so many different ways—cultural, historical, geographical, and so on.—anyone with an interest in Indonesia is likely to develop an interest in Malaysia at some point in the future. Additionally, if people utilize Malaysian, they would quickly realize that, despite being fundamentally similar to Indonesian, it still differs significantly. Therefore, this research is concerned with the different perspectives of understanding the communication between Indonesian and Malaysian.

## 2. Literature Review

The communication style reveals how they perceive and evaluate the information in their environment (Pânișoară, Sandu, Pânișoară, & Duță, 2015). The collection of speech traits used by a person when communicating is known as their communication style. Style refers to particular means of understanding and personal means of interpreting a message, as well as particular means of responding to and providing feedback. A person's communication style is a good indicator of how they organize their social network (Pânișoară et al., 2015). Communication styles is the distinctive manner a person conveys verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal cues in social interactions that indicate who they are or wish to appear to be, how they typically relate to others, and how their messages should typically be interpreted (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, Siberg, Van Gameren, & Vlug, 2009). According to Cazden (2001), communication styles refer to how people perceive and evaluate the information all around them. A group of speech characteristics used by a person when communicating is referred to as communication style. Style refers to particular ways of receiving messages, individual ways of understanding messages, and ways of responding to and providing feedback (Duta, Panisoara, & Panisoara, 2015).

The previous study of this research done by Tanjung (2019) about awareness of history nation *serumpun* (Indonesia Malaysia). The study focused on describing the differences between both cultures Indonesian and Malaysia which are considered two similar cultures yet were different. The study described some causes why both these countries considered the similarity in all aspects. Meanwhile, in this research study, the researchers just focused on linguistics which the pronunciation has similarities yet the meaning was not. Another previous study is about communication styles of the students (Pânișoară et al., 2015). There are four communication styles investigated in the study, they are the aggressive style, the assertive style, the persuasive style, and the passive style. The study found that students must have an orientation toward interpersonal communication if they are to succeed in the future and contribute to the development of human society. Different from this present study that investigated communication style based on the verbal and non-verbal aspect.

Loraine (2019) studied communication style and learning style of students in higher education institution. In this study was found that the respondents are divided into groups based on sex and birth order, there is a noticeable difference in their communication preferences. The respondents' communication and learning styles do not significantly differ

from one another. So, in addition to learning style, other factors can also influence communication style. Students from the College of Teacher Education exhibit narrator communicator style, which is characterized by a tendency to focus on other people. As a result, they have a warm, amiable, kind, and cooperative demeanor, which makes them suitable for careers in teaching. This study different from this present study. This present study studied the difference perspective of understanding between Indonesian and Malaysian in communication style.

Sdeeq, Sulaiman, Hamad, & Abdullah (2021) figured out the underlying factors of proper communication styles in educational settings from lecturers' perspectives. The findings showed a statistically significant difference between the views of proper communication held by teachers at private and public universities. While there was no statistically significant difference between the perspectives of male and female lecturers on listening, oral, and written communication. The only difference that was discovered was in the conveyance of body language, and it favored female lecturers. The results of this study will help to clarify the elements of appropriate communication practices in educational settings.

### **3. Method**

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. According to (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011), qualitative research is descriptive, meaning that the data was acquired using words or pictures, rather than numbers. The qualitative method was used to investigate the different perspectives of both cultures such as the problem of misunderstanding of communication, the difference in communication styles and also to investigate the contrasting perspective in oral or written communication. The respondents of the research were Indonesian and Malaysian who took from the video on social media YouTube. To collect the data, the researchers used the observation with a video on YouTube and used diary notes to write the essential data of the research. The data in this research is analyzed descriptively.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

Everybody has a different communication style, just as everyone has a different personality. Verbal communication is the use of sounds and words to convey ideas, as opposed to utilizing body language or mannerisms (non-verbal communication) (Umami, 2022). Two aspects of communication became the issues of communication style between two of these countries. These two aspects were verbal and non-verbal communication. Speaking communication, which includes the use of words and intonation to communicate meaning, was referred to as verbal communication. Meanwhile, the way of mannerism such as gestures, mimicking, and no sound of communication was known as non-verbal communication. The different perspective of communication style which is classified into two aspects, namely verbal communication and non-verbal communication could be seen as follow.

#### 4.1 Verbal Aspect of a different perspective of communication Style

According to McKey, Davis, & Fanning (2009), the uttered words and their meanings, as well as the message that is intended or inferred by the said words, are referred to as verbal communication style. The definition of verbal communication is spoken language, which includes the use of words and intonation to communicate meaning (Umami, 2022). The different perspectives of cross-culture communication in Indonesian and Malaysian could be seen in their daily communication. The following was an example of a conversation between Malaysian and Indonesian.

Malaysian : *bile awak nak kat sini?* [When did you come here?]  
 Indonesian : *Kami akan datang bila diundang*

The word “bile” in Malaysia means “when”, it was for asking someone about the time. Meanwhile, in Indonesian, it means (bila) “If”, which means it is used for conditional sentences. Another example also could be seen in the following conversation.

Malaysian : *bilik air ada kat situ* [the bathroom is there]  
 Indonesian : *kamar kecil dibelakang rumah*

The context of the word “bilik air” in Malaysia actually had a similar meaning to Indonesian, but it had a different writing style of the word that could create misunderstanding in communication.

Malaysian : *comel sangat budak-budak ni* [the children are very cute”]  
 Indonesian : *budak itu terus menerus bekerja*

But, in the context of language, “comel” in Indonesian means someone who could not keep a secret and the word “budak” means servant.

There are several words could make Indonesian and Malaysian had different perspectives on the way they communicate as describe into Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** The differences between Indonesian and Malaysian Vocabulary

Malaysia	Meaning	Indonesian	Meaning
<i>Kereta</i>	car	<i>Kereta</i>	motorbike
<i>Bile</i>	When	<i>Bila</i>	If
<i>Budak</i>	Child	<i>Budak</i>	Servant
<i>Percuma</i>	Free	<i>Percuma</i>	Useless
<i>Awak</i>	You	<i>Awak</i>	in some Malay culture in Indonesia, awak means “I”
<i>Kakitangan</i>	Employee/staff	<i>Kaki dan tangan</i>	Feet and hand
<i>Berbual</i>	Chatting	<i>Berbual</i>	Lie
<i>Bandar</i>	Town	<i>Bandar</i>	There are several meaning of Bandar in Indonesia, such as port and trench.
<i>Tasik</i>			
<i>Bola keranjang</i>	Basketball	<i>Bola basket</i>	Basketball
<i>Ais</i>	Ice	<i>Es</i>	Ice

<i>Bilik air</i>	Bathroom	<i>Kamar mandi</i>	Bathroom
<i>Laju</i>	To pass by	<i>Laju</i>	To move fast
<i>Doctor</i>	Doctor (medical); the title of educational	<i>Doctor</i>	Doctorate (education title). For medical context, it is called as <i>dokter</i>
<i>Detik</i>	Jiffy	<i>Detik</i>	Second
<i>Comel</i>	Cute, pretty	<i>Comel</i>	To call someone who cannot be a secret keeper.
<i>Jimat</i>	Frugal, pennywise, save money or something e.g. electricity	<i>Jimat</i>	Amulet (the Malay equivalent is <i>azimat</i> )

#### 4.2 Non-verbal Aspect of a different perspective of communication Style

Their suitable facial expression, gesture, body position, and attendance behavior in communicating are related to their nonverbal communication style (Sdeeq et al., 2021). The use of gestures, postures, position, eye contact, facial expressions, and conversational distance all constitute non-verbal or “silent” communication. Nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, hand gestures, seating arrangements, and sense of time are all examples of nonverbal communication. Different cultural norms regarding the right amount of aggressiveness in communication can also contribute to cultural misunderstandings (Umami, 2022). Looking intently at other individuals was a prevalent occurrence in Malaysia. Therefore, contrary to what Indonesians assume, just because you (Indonesian) go to a foreign country and the locals there give you a serious look does not indicate they hate or wish to fight you. Don’t worry; it happens all the time in Malaysia. When we see other people seriously in Indonesia, it can lead to fights or indicate that we despise them.

Another example of misunderstanding in non-verbal communication, in Indonesia, when we wanted to get or stop the bus, most of the people waved their hands to give a sign to the driver of the bus. Meanwhile, this way was rare to happen in Malaysia because most of the buses would stop without any sign as long as you wait at the bus stop.

The findings data above are also supported by Yuniarti, Sastromiharjo, Sunendar, & Mulyati (2019) that intercultural communication is generally used in situations of communication directly between people who have different cultures. Charley (1991) defined that intercultural communication focuses on differences in cultural ancestry that affect the participants’ communication behavior. It involves communication with participants who represent people, individuals, or groups. Intercultural communication is generally used in situations of communication directly between people who have different cultures (Yuniarti et al., 2019). Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel (2010) also stated that it occurs when a person of one culture produces a communication while a member of another culture receives it. One is instantly faced with the problems that arise when a message is encoded in one culture and needs to be encoded in another when faced with such a dilemma.

Based on the discussion, we know that both misunderstandings in verbal and non-verbal communication are really common happened for people who have different cultures. Learning more about the communication norms of our own culture is the first step in improving

communication abilities with people from other cultures. Likewise, understanding the most prevalent roadblocks to effective cross-cultural communication is the first step toward overcoming them. It also means that we are not less prone to criticize someone from a different culture based on our cultural values.

We must be aware of the culture when learning a new language in addition to the language itself. Discovering new meanings and ways of behaving is crucial. However, misunderstandings may occur, and when they do, the two opposing communities should work together to overcome them so that they can reach mutual understanding.

## **5. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion above, the researchers concluded that even though Malaysia and Indonesia are neighboring countries and these two countries almost have similar cultures, there are some different perspectives of understanding, especially in communication. Two aspects of communication became the issues of these two countries such as verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Both aspects had a misunderstanding in the way of communication both Malaysian and Indonesian. Misunderstanding in verbal communication usually occurs by using the words used or intonation to communicate or transfer the meaning. Meanwhile, misunderstanding of non-verbal communication can be seen in mannerisms such as gestures or mimic of people.

The issues of cross-culture communication in these two countries are really common happened. The first approach to communicating with other people in different cultures by understanding the most prevalent roadblocks to effective cross-cultural communication is the first step toward overcoming them. We must not only learn the language but also be aware of the culture when learning another language. It is critical to find new meanings and ways of acting. However, misconceptions may arise, and when they do, the two opposing communities should work together to resolve them so that mutual understanding may be achieved.

## **Conflict of interest**

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

## **Authors' contribution**

The author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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