

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Study

Language has become one of an important part in humans' life and by the existence people can communicate to one another. To be able to conduct a successful communication there should be at least two participants; they are a speaker and a hearer. Language is a necessary tool for human communication, and all languages have meaning. This case in linguistic is known as minimal requirements of performing communication. In relation to the discussion of communication, language and culture are two parts that are not able to be separated and always be alive in society as a heritage. The connection between them needs to be a concern for us as our basic understanding (Rachmawati, 2018).

When people engage in communication, it is not always to the same race, group and the same background. As stated by Mahadi and Jafari (2012), culture is acquired via interactions among one and others. Thus, culture is the product of social interaction rather than something that is inborn, inherent, or driven by choice. It means that culture and society have a close correlation in between. People will inherit the culture by social interaction and what people had done gradually will create a culture for people themselves as well. Thus, people need to get in touch with someone who has a different background, such as a different race and culture.

Cultural values which can be used wisely to overcome the social problems and to increase the people's welfare and peacefulness may refer to local wisdom. Culture and communication are intricately bound, one cannot understand communication without understanding its social and cultural context. Cross-cultural communication skills are critical in a global society where encounters with diverse groups are part of everyday life. All interactions are cross-cultural, as human beings tend to be bounded by a set of symbols and meaning that have been culturally imprinted in time (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2004).

Study abroad will give a great opportunity to learn about diversity of other culture, nation, or race. We will interact with people from different cultural background because there are a lot of people who come from other countries in around the world as nowadays are so many kinds of programs which offer opportunities to students who want to study abroad such as students exchange program or scholarship from the government as many countries around the world have been tied cooperation for academic purposes among educational institutions.

However, living in other country or different culture is not easy to live in for some many people, there are a lot of difficulties in the beginning of their live. Language may be the one of the most crucial matters in intercultural communication because we do interaction when we meet with people who have a different cultural background and it can affect to a process of interaction that may cause incomprehension or feedback that is not expected (LaRay Barna, 2016).

Those who participate in student exchange programs must notice some elements and have experienced miscommunication, especially with countries

whose cultures are far apart, such as America and Indonesia. In this research, researchers used the theory from Brown (1995) summarized the elements or visible attributes of culture as follows: artifacts, stories, histories, jokes, celebrations, heroes, symbols or symbolic action, beliefs or assumptions, attitudes and rules or norms. Chick (1996) gives five different sources of miscommunication. According to her, the first source of cross-cultural miscommunication is sociolinguistic transfer. Sociolinguistic transfer is the use of the rules of speaking of one's own speech community or cultural group when interacting with members of another community or group (Chick, 1996). In this research, the researchers analyzed the elements of cross-cultural communication and the reasons for miscommunication they faced between the students during the exchange program but does not include communicating with native American speakers.

According to Chick (1996) the second source of miscommunication is the systematic difference in contextualization cues. Contextualization cues are in the form of verbal and nonverbal messages: lexical, syntactic, phonological, prosodic, and paralinguistic choices; use of formulaic expressions, code switching and style switching; and changes in postural configurations, gestures, and facial expressions. The third source of miscommunication is intonation. As different languages have different intonations, speakers may exploit intonation in different ways. Chick (1996) gives having different politeness strategies in different cultures as the last source of miscommunication. For example, in terms of accent,

an Indonesian student, while staying with their American host family, asks for go to the mall but it sounds like mole.

Because of the problem above, the researcher is interested to analyze the experiences of Indonesian exchange students in the United States, focusing about the elements of cross-cultural communication and the miscommunication happened during their students exchange program. The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable contributions to the fields of language education and cross-cultural communication, providing practical recommendations for improving student exchange programs and language learning strategies.

Based on the observations I conducted from the student in MAN 2 Model Medan and SMA Panca Budi Medan that participating to the external students exchange program namely Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) organized by the Bina Antarbudaya organization. The student's name is Almeyra Musyaaqena Lubis (Oneida High School, New York), Aldea Cyntia Alyuzra Nasution (Nampa High School, Idaho), and Wa Hidayah Asyura Fiestri Palari (Nacogdoches High School, Texas). This program started on August 6, 2023, and will end on June 22, 2024. The program is a full scholarship. The student exchange program has three selection stages: the first is the chapter selection held in Medan, the second is the national-based selection, and the last is the international-based selection.

While numerous studies have examined of cross-cultural communication on language acquisition and the general advantages of studying abroad (Michael Byra, 1997), there is a noticeable lack of in-depth exploration into the specific

impact of cross-cultural communication activities on English oral proficiency among senior high school students. This study seeks to address this by investigating how these activities directly influence students' oral proficiency, offering new insights into this under-explored aspect. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research that examines the unique experiences of students from non-Western countries, such as Indonesia, who participate in exchange programs in Western contexts. The cultural adjustments, communication strategies, and specific challenges faced by these students are critical to understanding the nuances of cross-cultural language learning, yet they remain under-explored.

Additionally, not much research has concentrated on high school students specifically those involved in exchange programs such as the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Studies (KL-YES) program. This program, which provides full scholarships for high school students to study in the United States, offers a unique opportunity to explore these dynamics at the high school level.

This study aims by focusing on the cross-cultural communication activities and the reasons miscommunication happened during their students exchange program. The research will specifically examine the case of three Indonesian participants from public school in United States that participating in Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Studies (KL-YES) Program. Through a detailed analysis of her experiences, including the initial culture shock and the adaptation process, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of cross-cultural interactions in enhancing English oral proficiency. By doing so, it aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of language acquisition in a

cross-cultural context and offer practical recommendations for improving exchange programs and language education strategies.

1.2 The Problem of The Study

Based on the background of the study stated above, the problem of the study namely:

1. What kinds of elements in students' cross-cultural communication are present based on Brown's theory?
2. Why does miscommunication occur between students' cross-cultural communication based on Chick's theory?

1.3 The Objective of The Study

According to the research problems above, the followings objectives were addressed in this study:

1. To analyze the elements of students' cross-cultural communication activities on English oral proficiency.
2. To analyze the reason of miscommunication between cross-cultural communication students can occur.

1.4 The Scope of The Study

In order to reach the research goal, the researcher limited the problem to the terms. This study focused on analyzing about elements of cross-cultural communication also the reasons miscommunication occurred among eleventh grade students that participating on exchange program by Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) program on their English oral proficiency.

1.5 The Significance of The Study

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, the goal of this study was hoped to be able to enrich and to strengthen the theories and their understanding about the elements of cross-cultural communication and the miscommunication experienced by the students which had been explained by the researchers in the previous studies from the result of this study.

2. Practically

- a) For teachers, this research can be an additional reference to understanding the elements of cross-cultural communication for enhancing students' English oral proficiency.
- b) For students, this research helps them to know and enhancing cross-cultural communication in their English oral proficiency, so their speaking and communication skills improve through better understanding of cultural differences.

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