

Research Article

The Impact of Stereotypes in Cross Cultural Communications between PMM and PNM Students

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Abstract. This study aims to describe how stereotypes occur in cross-cultural communication between PMM and PNM students and to examine their impacts on students' achievement and interaction. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires to capture both behavioral and perceptual aspects of communication. The findings reveal several key points. First, initial interactions shaped expectations and assumptions about each other's behavior and culture. Second, stereotypes often caused miscommunication, misunderstandings, and confusion in interpreting messages. Third, they influenced group dynamics, including cooperation, participation, and conflict resolution. Fourth, students' perceptions of identity, both personal and cultural, played a role in shaping their interactions. Fifth, the study identified both positive and negative impacts. Positive effects included enhanced Javanese language skills, increased cultural awareness, strengthened group identity, and cognitive shortcuts that facilitated understanding of others. Negative effects involved communication gaps, misinterpretation, discrimination, cultural barriers, and language difficulties. Overall, the study highlights that stereotypes in cross-cultural communication are a double-edged sword: while they can provide quick cognitive frameworks for understanding others, they can also impede effective communication and collaboration. These findings emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity, awareness, and reflective practices in multicultural student interactions to maximize learning and minimize conflicts.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Communication; Cultural Awareness; Descriptive; PMM Program; Stereotype

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the government conducts an exchange student program, also known as *Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka* (PMM). It was a mobility student program spanning one semester, aimed at acquiring learning experiences within higher education institutions in Indonesia, while simultaneously fostering unity amidst diversity. The purpose of this program is to enhance students' ability to apply national insights, improve students' understanding of ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup diversity, and foster the spirit of unity. Also fostering intensive encounters and dialogue within diversity, promoting attitudes of mutual understanding, and thereby reinforcing unity. Furthermore, the last is to expand and deepen students' academic knowledge. Those programs can create cross-cultural communication, as every human may have their own perspective about friends from different islands who have different languages and cultures. Based on the informal interview, several barriers emerged, one of which was related to stereotypes. Sociological views stereotypes as fundamentally incorrect and derogatory generalizations of group traits, reflective of the stereotyper's underlying prejudices or other internal motivations (Schneider, 2004). Sometimes, stereotypes can create prejudices when they highlight negative aspects or weaknesses. For instance, people from other islands with good English communication skills often set a stereotype that those from other islands are inferior to them. Alternatively, scholars have posited that stereotypes serve as cognitive tools aiding individuals in navigating the intricacies of a complex and sometimes contradictory environment (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994).

Stereotypes function as navigational aids, shaping our preconceived notions in communication, influencing our behavioral choices, topic selection, linguistic expression, and other related decisions. They may also prompt individuals to avoid activities or

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situations perceived as exposing their vulnerabilities. These cognitive processes are particularly pronounced in scenarios involving limited social interactions with members of outgroups (Brewer & Kramer, 1985), indicating that stereotypes tend to manifest in contexts characterized by minimal social contact. Stephan emphasized the significance of stereotypes in shaping communication dynamics, suggesting that to enhance our effectiveness in interacting with unfamiliar individuals, we must enrich the complexity of our stereotypes (Stephan, 2009).

Therefore, it is essential to comprehend stereotypes within communication frameworks, recognizing their dual potential for both constructive and detrimental outcomes, as they significantly influence our cognitive processes and subsequent behaviors. Stereotypes serve as foundational knowledge guiding our interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, attitudes, and abilities. Expanding their complexity involves actively seeking to understand and engage with the nuances that distinguish others from ourselves. This can be achieved through questioning and exploring the differences that exist between us and those we encounter or anticipate encountering. Based on the description above, the researcher must investigate this case further.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe how stereotypes in cross-cultural communication between PMM students and PNM students and to investigate the impact of these stereotypes on the achievement of PMM and PNM students in cross-cultural communication. The Study's results could yield several benefits: Firstly, for the researcher, this study provides an understanding of the stereotype in cross-cultural communication. Secondly, for the students, the results of the study will help them gain a better understanding of CCU practice in daily life. By studying cross-cultural communication and stereotypes, they can become wise men in diversity. As a result, their understanding of the materials will be much better. Thirdly, for English lecturers, this study can provide a contribution to help them apply effective and efficient cross-cultural communication

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stereotype

Definition

A stereotype is a generalization of people or groups based on past experiences, which are deeply rooted in the psyche of the people. In another definition, it is said that a stereotype is a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person, thing, or event. However, it is not always accurate in reality. Cultural stereotypes mean applying both evidence and our existing beliefs about the members of that cultural group.

Meanwhile, according to Webster, a stereotype is defined as a standardized set of mental images that an example of a particular social group is perceived to have, representing a simplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment of another individual. Stereotypes are also referred to as idiosyncratic when used by only an individual, or social or collective when widely shared by a group of people. In everyday use, the concept of a stereotype is applied in various contexts. Typically, the word "stereotype" is used to refer to members of a collective: firefighters are often perceived as courageous, blondes are sometimes associated with being less intelligent, and Italians are sometimes characterized as being noisy, and so forth. The term "stereotype" itself, allegedly first used by Walter Lippmann in 1922, is used today to refer to a readily available image of a given social group, usually based on rough, often hostile generalizations. Although stereotypes can be positive as well as negative, they are, in everyday usage, most often understood as irrationally based negative attitudes about specific social groups and their members. The concept of the 'stereotype' itself was borrowed from old raised printing technology, where copies of a composed type were made by using papier mache molds for new printing plates, identical to the original, and used to produce the same image over and over again.

Types of Stereotypes

Stereotypes are divided into two types: hetero stereotypes and auto stereotypes. Hetero stereotype refers to the stereotypes associated with other groups, while auto stereotypes are stereotypes associated with oneself (Triandis, 1994, p. 107; Matsumoto, 2003, p. 69). These stereotypes are not always harmful, but sometimes contain a positive image. This stereotype can take the form of either a positive or negative view; it can be entirely accurate, but it can also be entirely incorrect (Matsumoto, 2003).

a. Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are beliefs about the differences in characteristics or attributes typically associated with men or women. People usually have higher expectations of men than women, so this factor plays an important role in discriminatory actions in the workplace for women. Gender stereotypes tend to judge that women are always emotional, illogical, submissive, and passive, in contrast to men who tend to be unemotional, logical, dominant, and aggressive. Example, a public relations job description for a company will be given to women, because they have an attractive physique and gentle behavior that makes it easier to make relations with clients. Women who work in tourism will have a negative stereotype in society, because this is related to their job, which is known as glamorous.

b. Job stereotypes

Job stereotypes are beliefs about the different types of work that people typically occupy. Every job is believed to have certain traits that will influence the process of social interaction in the context of survival. Stereotypes tend to generalize too broadly, failing to recognize differences within a single group and leading to inaccurate perceptions of individuals. Example, security forces can always be bribed with money. This is also a form of quick thought processes, allowing stereotypes to emerge and become widespread among the public. The figure of the teacher in society is believed to be a wise figure and can be used as a role model. Not all teachers can be role models for others.

Cross-Cultural Communication

Definition of Cross-Cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication theory (CCT) encompasses the notion of communication between individuals with diverse backgrounds. These distinctions may involve variances in age, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender ("Cross-Cultural Communication"). Body language, gestures, and verbal communication are employed to establish common ground among multiple parties. Achieving a harmonious balance and reaching compromises amidst cultural disparities facilitates effective and efficient communication, thereby fostering coherent dialogue (Hall, 2005).

Geert Hofstede, a prominent social psychologist (Hofstede, 2005), is one of the leading figures in the fields of cross-cultural communication and management. Hofstede's theory delineates cultural dimensions along a spectrum ranging from high to low, allowing for meaningful comparisons between different cultures. The dimensions proposed by Hofstede include.

3. METHODS

This research is qualitative descriptive research. Descriptive research is research that conveys research results descriptively. Meanwhile, qualitative research describes and analyzes phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts individually and in groups (Sukmadinata, 2011). This research describes the stereotypes that affect communication between PMM students and PNM Students, especially in the English Department.

The data collection techniques employed in this research included interviews and questionnaires. Interviews are data collection techniques used to identify problems that respondents need to investigate in more depth (Sugiyono, 2016). The questionnaire technique involves providing a list of questions for respondents to answer under the supervision of researchers (Nasution, 1996). The number of questions in the questionnaire and interview posed to the respondents was twenty-five. Interviews were conducted with twelve respondents, six PMM students and six PNM students. Data collection techniques, such as interviews and questionnaires, help collect more accurate and reliable data because they come from direct sources. This makes the research results more factual and can provide accurate information. Data are facts and figures processed into information (William & Sawyer, 2007). It can be interpreted that the data are the material used and processed to answer the problems in this research. Data based on the method of acquisition is divided into two, namely primary data and secondary data.

This research utilizes primary data as its primary source of information to address the research problems. Primary data is data collected by researchers directly from the first source or where the research object is carried out (Sugiyono, 2009). This research uses a research instrument to collect data for analysis. Research instruments are tools or facilities used by researchers to collect data, making their work more accessible and ensuring that the results are accurate, complete, and systematic (Arikunto, 2002). In this research, two research instruments were used, namely an interview guide and a questionnaire.

The data analysis techniques used in this research are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification as something that is interconnected and is a cyclical process and interaction at the time before, during, and after data collection, and presented in a parallel form, which can then build general insight (Silalahi, 2009). Data reduction involves summarizing and simplifying data, selecting relevant information, and categorizing it into broader patterns. The presentation of data involves presenting narrative text in the form of field notes that have been obtained. Conclusions are drawn by reviewing all the data that have been obtained and followed by discussions between group members (Agusta, 2003)

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Stereotype in Cross-Cultural Communication among students of PMM Program

Based on observation, stereotypes in cross-cultural communication between PMM Students (participating in the Student Exchange Program) and PNM students, as the hosts of PMM, were revealed to exist. Initially, there was an interaction and expectation. Students who arrived with stereotypes about the host culture or the students they would interact with. These preconceived notions could shape their expectations. It often happened that their expectations did not match their initial expectations or the image they had formed when they entered a new environment and encountered different social habits. These preconceived notions can also lead to misunderstanding or discomfort in initial interactions. If one group of students perceives another through a stereotype, it can create a barrier to forming genuine connections or interactions. For example, if student from Western or Eastern Indonesian culture believe that their counterparts were overly serious or unfriendly, they might approach interaction with hesitation. This fact was in line with the result of the interview. Based on the interview results, it became apparent that some students initially felt uncomfortable not being able to adapt to the native Madiun students or local people. However, as time passed, they began to adapt to them. They reported experiencing culture shock upon arrival at PNM. Their expectation did not meet the initial expectation before they arrived in Madiun.

The results of the questionnaire showed that 50% of the students strongly agreed and 50% agreed that PNM and Madiun local people had a different way of communication than PMM students. They stated that the Madiun people had distinct habits, cultures, languages, social environments, and communication ethics. The questionnaire revealed that 25% of PMM students experienced communication difficulties due to their diverse cultural backgrounds. Most of the PNM Students tend to speak Javanese; meanwhile, no PMM students or exchange students can speak or understand it. It was not easy to communicate well with PNM students. They suggested that PNM students use Bahasa Indonesia well when conversing with them. It could help them understand what is actually being asked or talked about.

The second observation result showed that stereotyping in cross-cultural communication can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. Stereotypes about language proficiency lead to assumptions about students' ability to communicate. PMM students may differ in their proficiency in speaking English compared to PNM students, as the hosts of the program. If students believe that a particular group struggles hard with the language, they might speak down to them or avoid engaging altogether, further exacerbating language barriers. For instance, PMM students who speak with an inappropriate pronunciation or incorrect diction can be assumed not to speak fluently. This fact was related to the results of the interview and questionnaire. Some of the PMM students noted that the language barrier could still pose a significant problem. About 50% students agree and 25% strongly agree that certain cultural stereotypes, for instance, the language level used by Javanese people, influenced the way they communicate with their classmates. Differences in communication styles, such as direct and indirect

communication, can also lead to misinterpretations. Students who stereotype others as being overly confrontational may misread assertive communication as aggression. It was about cultural norms in which Javanese people tend to use indirect communication to deliver their thoughts rather than direct communication.

Meanwhile, people from outside of East Java tend to use direct communication or frontal meaning. Approximately 75% of students agree and 25% strongly agree, believing that different cultural understandings can help decrease misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. So miscommunication between students could be reduced.

The third, stereotype, cross-cultural communication had an impact on group dynamics. Stereotyping led to the formation of cliques based on shared cultural backgrounds, resulting in the exclusion of students who were viewed as "different." Students who felt excluded from the class would be unintentionally marginalized. This could limit the diversity of perspective within groups and hinder collaborative learning. The questionnaire results showed that more than 50% of the students agree that PMM students or people from outside Madiun are open-minded in communication. This encourages them to form a small group that comes from the same cultural background. The results of the interviews revealed that stereotypes can significantly affect the dynamics of students' exchange programs, such as PMM, influencing everything from initial interactions to long-term relationships. Addressing these issues through education and open dialogue can increase the effectiveness of this program and enrich the learning environment for all participants.

The fourth was about the perception of identity. Students feel that they were labeled as non-Javanese people who were pigeonholed by stereotyping. This could lead to a sense of frustration or resentment. When people are only seen through the lens of a stereotype, it can overshadow their unique identities and experiences. Exchange students felt pressured to conform to stereotypes about their culture, limiting their ability to express their selves. For instance, students from Padang, who were assumed to be joyful, might be expected always to be cheerful, even if they were experiencing homesickness. This fact was in line with the result of interview, they said " Saya merasa stereotype budaya seringkali tidak akurat dan menyesatkan dalam komunikasi antar mahasiswa terutama yang berasal dari daerah luar jawa". It means that stereotypes can be inaccurate and misleading in cross-cultural communication. Meanwhile, the questionnaire also showed that 100% of the students agreed with that.

The Impact of Stereotype in Cross-Cultural Communication

Here is the result of an investigation into the impact of stereotypes on cross-cultural communication between PMM and PNM students regarding their Achievement.

Positive Impact

a. Javanese Language Mastery Improvement for PMM students

Based on the interview, supported by the questionnaire, it was revealed that some students from Riau feel they could improve their Javanese language skills by learning while communicating with native speakers of Javanese in Madiun. Initially, they were uncertain whether they would be able to communicate effectively with PNM students, who often speak Javanese rather than Bahasa Indonesia. After several months, they were taught by their colleagues about Javanese, and they were finally able to speak and understand it.

b. Academic Achievement improves

Based on the interview, it can be observed that stereotypes had an impact on emotional Achievement. Approximately 50% of the students stated that stereotypes and differences can make them afraid to express their points during discussions, oral tests, and the teaching-learning process. One of them said that it had a significant impact, as cultural and linguistic differences often lead students to hesitate in expressing their opinions during the teaching and learning process, which in turn affects their academic performances.

c. Cultural awareness

Based on informants' judgments of cultural awareness, stereotypes can help individuals anticipate behaviors and reactions in an intercultural environment, facilitating more fluent interactions. Meanwhile, another informant stated that stereotypes can increase awareness of cultural differences, facilitate cultural

adaptation, and foster a sense of identity. People would not be shocked by new behavior or acts from other parts of Indonesia.

d. Group Identity

Based on the interview, it was revealed that the positive impact of stereotypes is that they provide a quick impression of a group. Group identity refers to the shared values, beliefs, and behaviours that define and connect members of a particular group. This identity shapes how individuals perceive themselves and interact with others, particularly when engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds.

e. Cognitive Shortcuts

Based on observation and interview, it can be found that stereotypes serve as "cognitive shortcuts", stereotypes could be used to explain social events, and stereotypes may benefit both individuals and their social group. Stereotypes are sometimes viewed positively because they create a sense of familiarity or shared understanding among groups. Positive stereotypes, such as viewing the Madiun People as warm and welcoming, and their culture as hardworking or friendly, may lead individuals to have higher expectations or a more favorable view of others. Ultimately, relying on stereotypes—whether positive or negative—can hinder genuine understanding and respect in cross-cultural communication.

Meanwhile, the informant from Kupang said that stereotypes are sometimes seen as positive because they can help us adapt to new cultures more easily. However, it is essential not to rely too heavily on stereotypes and to remain open to a deeper understanding. Stereotypes can also be viewed as positive in cross-cultural communication because they offer quick insights into cultural norms, enabling individuals to navigate interactions and establish common ground. Positive stereotypes, such as viewing a culture as friendly or hardworking, can enhance receptiveness and encourage engagement. However, they may not accurately reflect the diversity of individuals within that culture.

Negative Impact

a. Miscommunication and misunderstanding

Based on the observations, interviews, and questionnaires, it was found that the impact of stereotypes led to miscommunication. For instance, when students from Padang heard the word "*Awak*" from Madiun people, they would be confused. It has a different meaning. The word "*awak*" means "body" in Javanese, whereas in Padang, it means "I or me". Then, for the Riau people, most of whom are of the Melayu ethnic group, it could be "You".

Another informant stated that, "In general, not all Madiun people have the same characteristics as I mentioned before; culture shock and misunderstandings can occur. Stereotypes can influence people's minds in a group in a bad way. Additionally, stereotypes often provide less valid information, which can lead to misunderstandings and create an inaccurate image. Brings up the idea that our culture is better. Stereotypes can lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations in cross-cultural communication.

b. Discrimination and Communication Gap

Based on the observation, interview it was revealed that stereotype create discrimination and communication. As it happened to the students from Bengkalis. He said that at the beginning he felt that there was a communication gap. He said that there was a communication gap in which most of students seemed hesitant in initiating conversation with him. Only two or three students had begun to engage.

c. Cultural Barrier

Based on the interview, when they first visited Madiun, they experienced culture shock. Some of them felt that some students from Madiun used to go out of the boarding house until late at night, whereas in their hometown, it was very forbidden for female students to do so. It is a free lifestyle. As a student from Bengkalis, she said that at first, she was afraid of adapting and responding to learning in a new environment. However, this condition can show me how every student has a good opportunity to explore and find a new way to demonstrate achievement in learning. For instance, in the discussion, due to the language barrier and the use of different languages, the local people often had to repeat themselves several times and translate their message into Bahasa Indonesia to ensure we understood what they wanted to convey.

An informant from Riau stated that when I first arrived in Madiun, I may have felt curious and had to adjust to the new culture and customs. However, with the friendliness of the local people, I would likely feel welcomed, even though I would need to adapt to the new environment. Her friends added information, "When I first stepped on the ground in Madiun, I had mixed feelings, such as excitement to learn a new culture. The first time I lived in Madiun, I felt confused because Madiun is a one-street town. Stereotypes can create barriers in intercultural communication and shape individual attitudes and behaviors towards members of other groups.

d. Language Barrier

Based on the interview, it can be revealed that the language barrier was still the most significant one; most of them stated that it was challenging to understand Javanese, which is the language most students in PNM use to communicate, even in class or on campus. She stated that "Stereotypes can lead to barriers in intercultural communication, and can shape individual attitudes and behaviors towards members of other groups."

5. CONCLUSION

The stereotype that occurred in cross-cultural communication between PMM and PNM Students can be concluded as follows: (1) There was initial interaction and expectation, (2) Stereotyping in cross-cultural communication has caused miscommunication and misunderstanding, (3) The stereotype of cross-cultural communication had an impact on group dynamics. (4) Students feel that they were labeled as non-Javanese people who were pigeonholed by stereotyping. The impact of stereotypes in cross-cultural communication between PMM and PNM students towards their Achievement can be concluded become two, those are positive and negative impact. For the positive impact were (1) Javanese Language Mastery Improvement for PMM students, (2) Academic Achievement improves, (3) Cultural awareness (4) Group Identity (5) Cognitive Shortcuts. For the negative Impact were (1) Javanese Language Mastery Improvement for PMM students, (2) Academic Achievement improves (3) Cultural awareness (4). Group Identity (5) Cognitive Shortcuts.

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