Cross-Cultural Communication Strategy in the Development of Pakudui Ecotourism Village, Tegallalang, Gianyar – Bali

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to reveal cross-cultural communication strategies between local people and foreign tourists in Pakudui Village, which is nicknamed "Garuda Village". Pakudui Ecotourism Village is visited by many foreign tourists to see handicrafts and ask various questions related to these crafts. Language and cultural differences often hinder the formation of effective communication, but both communicants try to understand each other. This study uses a qualitative method with an interpretative analysis. This study found that cross-cultural communication strategies are based on three principles, namely clarity of purpose, communication management, and thinking of the interlocutor carefully. They manage communication with the principle of mutual understanding so they tend to use common English vocabulary, pay little attention to grammar, and use body language. They also try not to offend the other person by paying attention to each other's responses during the conversation. Thus, cross-cultural communication can build understanding and not cause conflict due to misperceptions and miscommunication.

KEYWORDS: cross-cultural communication, ecotourism, local people, foreign tourists.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the number of tourist visits to Bali to fall drastically, even reaching the lowest point in the history of Bali tourism. However, along with the improvement of the pandemic situation, the number of tourist visits foreign tourists to Bali have shown a positive upward trend since the beginning of the year 2022. Based on data released by the *Central Bureau of Statistics for Bali Province* on November 1, 2022, the number of tourist visits to Bali through the airport entrance *Ngurah Rai Airport* and *Benoa Harbor* in the last three months (August-October 2022) totaling 305,244 people. The increasing number of tourist visits is a breath of fresh air for the development of Bali tourism, which during the pandemic has stagnated.

The situation faced by Bali during the pandemic shows that the mass tourism paradigm has a relatively low level of resilience when facing sudden and unpredictable conditions (Ace, 2017). Considering that the mass tourism industry wants large numbers of tourist visits to survive. While the number of visits is not fulfilled, the tourism industry is in danger of being paralyzed and having a broad impact on the people's economy (Astawa, 2021). Apart from that, mass tourism also has another weakness, namely that it tends to be exploitative towards nature and humans because it is only profit-oriented (Arida, 2017).

The various weaknesses of this mass tourism paradigm have also encouraged the birth of the idea of ecotourism as a new alternative tourism paradigm. According to Arida (2017), ecotourism was born from criticism of the paradigm of mass tourism which tends to be exploitative of the environment and natural resources. Then, in Permendagri No. 33/2009 [Regulation of the Minister of Home Affairs] concerning Guidelines for the Development of Ecotourism in the Regions states that "Ecotourism is a natural tourism activity in a responsible area with due regard to aspects of education, understanding, and support for natural resource fishing businesses and increasing the income of local communities". This definition of ecotourism has a meaning that is in line with the concept of sustainable tourism, namely the management and empowerment of resources that can be met socioeconomically by maintaining cultural integrity, ecological elements, biodiversity, and other supporting elements (Satria, 2009).

The idea of ecotourism also seems to have received a positive response from the people of Bali, marked by the emergence of new ecotourism objects in a number of areas. One of them is the Pakudui Ecotourism Village in Tegallalang District, Gianyar Regency. In addition to its beautiful natural environment with terraced rice fields, the Pakudui Ecotourism Village is also unique as a center for Garuda statue craftsmen, so it is nicknamed "Garuda Village". According to Arthajaya, et al. (2018), almost 90% of the people in Pakudui Village are craftsmen of Garuda statues, even making it their main source of livelihood. The daily life of the Garuda sculptors

is an object of interest for most foreign tourists who visit the village. They not only see how the sculptors work, but also often want to dig up more information about matters related to these activities.

To provide the information needed by foreign tourists, of course the sculptors must interact and communicate with tourists who visit them. This of course raises a separate problem because not all of these sculptors have the ability to communicate with foreign tourists, especially using English. What's more, not all foreign tourists invite tour guides on their visits so that local residents are expected to take on this role. In the context of ecotourism development which prioritizes services, impressions, and tourists' understanding of the objects visited, of course cross-cultural communication strategies play an important role in it. Remembering cross-cultural communication does not only involve language interaction, but also understanding between different cultures.

Failure to build a cross-cultural communication strategy can undoubtedly have an impact on the lack of tourist impressions after making a visit, even can cause miscommunication between the two. For example shown by the results a study conducted by Astina and Muliadiasa (2017) that some foreign tourists feel uncomfortable being called "Boss", even though the local Balinese think so it's a form of respect. Miscommunication and misperceptions of this kind can certainly create an unfavorable impression on tourists and have the potential to hinder ecotourism development. Based on the main problems, cross-cultural communication strategies in the development of the Pakudui Ecotourism Village are the focus of this research.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out using a qualitative method based on a cross-cultural communication approach. According Suyanto and Sutinah (2005), qualitative research is a naturalistic and inductive research strategy in approaching a setting without being preceded by hypotheses, and does not use statistical calculations of numbers. In addition, qualitative research emphasizes understanding (*verstehen*) of the relationships between facts through interpretive strategies. This research is focused on cross-cultural communication between local residents and foreign tourists visiting the Pakudui Ecotourism Village based on persuasive communication theory.

Data were collected by involved observation techniques, interviews, and documentation studies. Participant observation is carried out by involving researchers directly to observe cross-cultural communication between local residents and foreign tourists. During the participant observation process, researchers also listening to conversations between local residents and foreign tourists (Sudaryanto, 2013). In-depth interviews were conducted with local residents and foreign tourists who communicated. Documentation studies used since attempts to find research problems are included in selection of relevant concepts and theories. Data analysis procedure through three stages as stated by Miles and Huberman (1992), namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Descriptive-interpretative analysis was carried out to explore meaningful construct.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Etymologically, communication comes from the Latin "*communicatio*" which comes from the basic word "*comminis*" which means something that is communicated (Suprapto, 2008). The process of sending and receiving messages between two or more people so that the message is understood is the essence of communication. In a broader sense, communication as a process is carried out between two or more people, between groups or organizations, and also between people who are connected to each other to exchange information. With regard to the process of exchanging information, communication can be carried out through writing, using body language, style, and self-appearance, not to forget other tools around it that can be used to enrich a message or better known as non-verbal communication (Liliweri, 2002).

Cross-cultural communication is a communication process carried out by two or more people with different cultural backgrounds. The aim is to build mutual understanding, while reducing the level of misunderstanding and minimizing the occurrence of conflict. Liliweri (2002) asserts that cross-cultural communication requires actors to maintain and develop shared cognitive aspects. The parties who communicate must understand the cultural background of their own life and the cultural background of others. This knowledge can be obtained by reading references, daily interactions, or continuously understanding the attitudes and behavior of communication with people who have a certain cultural background. Luce (in Liliweri, 2002) states that communication cross-cultural essentially explains the comparison (comparative study) to certain cultural variables, as well as the consequences or effects of cultural influences, from two different cultural contexts.

In this regard, Urry (1990) states that cross-cultural communication strategies in the context of tourism are closely related to the ways or steps taken by a tourist and a tourism service provider to understand various aspects of communication between them. There are four forms of cross-cultural communication strategies that should be developed in tourism, as follows. *First*, it is important to understand that everyone has potential problems in cross-cultural communication and so they should work to overcome these problems. *Second*, it is important to understand that one's efforts will not always be successful so adjusting behavior (adaptation) appropriately is a necessary strategy. *Third*, it is important to understand that any cultural differences cause communication problems. Therefore, the

willingness to be patient and forgive when misunderstandings occur in communication must be developed. *Fourth*, everyone can communicate slowly or carefully in exchanging information across cultures.

To analyze cross-cultural communication between local residents and foreign tourists in Pakudui Ecotourism Village, use persuasive communication theory. According to Ronald and Karl (in Littlejohn and Foss, 2009), communication persuasive is a solid communication process, in which individuals or groups shows a message, either intentionally or unintentionally, either verbally or nonverbal to get a specific response from individuals or groups another. Devito (2010) explains that persuasive communication is a technique of influencing the human mind by utilizing psychological data or sociological to the communicant who wants to be influenced. This mean that persuasion is a process with the aim of changing opinions, behavior, and attitude of a person in communication.

Cangara (2010) states that there are three factors that can influence the effectiveness of persuasive communication, including (a) *the clarity of the purpose*, that communication persuasive aims to change the opinion, attitude, or behavior of the communicant persuasive. This goal must go through the affective aspect, for example clarifying information by illustrating, strengthening, and presenting correct information; (b) *choose the right communication strategy*, that is managing the message to be conveyed and how to convey it so that the message is conveyed; and (c) *thinking careful*, that diversity of communicants requires a strategy that appropriate in communication, such as paying attention to gender, demographic characteristics, level of work, lifestyle to ethnicity. Understanding of cultural background communication is needed so that the message is conveyed effectively. This theory will be operationalized to analyze cross-cultural communication between local residents and foreign tourists in Pakudui Tourism Village.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The majority of the local population in Pakudui Tourism Village are industrialists in the Garuda bird statue which in Hindu mythology is the vehicle of the Lord Vishnu. According to Suardika (interview on May 23, 2023), foreign tourists are actually not the main market for this craft, but occasionally some buy it as souvenirs. They usually choose a statue that is relatively small in size so that it is easy to carry it when they return to their country. Therefore, the main purpose of their communication with foreign tourists is to offer these handicrafts. Meanwhile, foreign tourists who visit ultimately do not intend to buy the craft, but many also just want to enjoy its beauty and know how it is made. These differences in goals create a cross-cultural communication model that can be observed from conversations between local people (abbreviated as "LP") and foreign tourists (abbreviated as "FT") as follows.

LP : *"Hello, good morning Sir"*
FT : *"Hello, good morning"*
LP : *"Where are you from?"*
FT : *"Germany"*
LP : *"Is this the first time you come here?"*
FT : *"Yes, this is my first time coming here. I have been to Bali before, but this is my first time here"*
LP : *"Ok. Introduce, my name is Made. In Bali, Made is special name for son number two. Because this is the first time you coming here, I informing you that majority of people here are craftsmen of Garuda statue. In our believe Garuda is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. You can see, many Garuda statue shops along the road in this village"*
FT : *"Yes, I know that"*
LP : *"Because you here now, what are you interesting to buy this one? You can buy the small or the middle one as a souvenir. Or you will choose the big one, it is more amazing. I think your house will be more beautiful with this statue and everyone will say amazing"*
FT : *"Yes, I know this statue is very beautiful, really-really amazing. But, I am sorry, I am not interested in buying it at this time. I just want to see it. If you will allow, I also want to see how this statue is done"*
LP : *"Oh, no problem, no problem. You can see my workers do it"*
FT : *"Really?"*
LP : *"Yes, of course. Come on!"*
FT : [Shrugged and followed Made to the workshop]
in a woodcarving workshop
FT : *"Can you explain to me how the Garuda statue is made?"*
LP : *"At the first time, I must prepared the wood with best quality. I am buy this wood from Java, because this wood is very difficult to find in Bali. And then, we make the basic pattern like the shape of the statue we want. After that, we start to sculpt it, like that* [while pointing to a worker

who is sculpting]. *The next step is smoothing by 'amplas'???* ("Ape je bahasa Inggrisne 'amplas'? ['What is *amplas* in English?"], Made ask his workers in Balinese. One of the workers replied, "*sandpaper* amen sing pelih" ['*sandpaper* if not mistaken']). *Yes, smoothing by sandpaper. Finally we colored the statue and the process is end."*

[While explaining this, Made always pointed out how the work was being done by his workers].

FT : *"Wow, amazing Made, it's very complicated. May I know, May I know, how much do you sell it?"*

LP : *"Not too expensive. The small one are three hundred thousand to one million rupiahs. The middle one are one million to five million rupiahs. The big one, not less than ten million to thirty million rupiahs. It is depends on the quality of wood and work. Are you interested to buy one?"*

FT : *"Ha ha ha…. You absolutely perfect Made. Once again I have say, sorry. I don't have much money to buy it right now."*

LP : *"Are you kidding me?"* [Made has laughed]

FT : *"No… no… I am very-very serious. But, I promise you, If I'm interested, I will come to you again"*

LP : *"Ha… ha… ha… don't think about it mister, I'm just kidding"*

FT : *"Ok, thank you Made. Nice to meet you and see you next time"*

LP : *"You are welcome. Ok see you next time!"*

FT : *"Bye!"*

Based on the dialogue above, it can be understood the cross-cultural communication strategy used by the two communicants. Asking about the country of origin of foreign tourists is one way for local residents to find out the cultural background of the other person. This initial understanding is important for establishing further communication. In the conversation, it appears that local residents build communication with the aim of offering the Garuda statue to foreign tourists. On the other hand, foreign tourists who do not wish to buy the statue, but only want to enjoy it and know the manufacturing process, also try to politely refuse. That is, the two communicants are trying to get their respective goals in the communication that is done. From the perspective of persuasive communication theory, this strategy reflects *clarity of purpose.* Even so, both of them try not to impose their goals on the interlocutor.

In subsequent conversations, it appears that the local people are trying to communicate well in English. When we look at the sentences used one by one, it can be seen that the vocabulary used is general in nature and does not conform to grammar. Even for specific terms, such as 'sandpaper' he doesn't know. He clarifies his statement with body language such as pointing at the work process being carried out. Even so, foreign tourists as interlocutors are able to understand this explanation. He also responded by using relatively common and easy-to-understand English. This fact shows that they *manage communication* with the principle of mutual understanding so they tend to use common English vocabulary, pay little attention to grammar, and use body language. This strategy is effective for building productive communication to the end without any offense to one another.

This effectiveness cannot be separated from the understanding of each communicant against the social and cultural background of the interlocutor. The people of Pakudui Tourism Village, who have frequently interacted with foreign tourists, at least have experience in dealing with these foreign tourists. Culturally, the Balinese view that 'guest is king' also contributes to creating effective and persuasive cross-cultural communication. This means that the communication is in line with the principle of *thinking of the interlocutor carefully* in the persuasive communication theory. Thus, cross-cultural communication can build understanding and not cause conflict due to misperceptions and miscommunication.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that language differences between local residents and foreign tourists indeed provide its own obstacles in cross-cultural communication. However, this obstacle potentially can be overcome by communicants with a persuasive communication approach. A cross-cultural communication strategy based on a persuasive approach that emphasizes three main principles, namely clarity of purpose, communication management, and careful thinking of the interlocutor, has proven to be able to build mutual understanding. This strategy should be developed in a sustainable manner in the context of developing Pakudui Ecotourism Village as a center for Garuda statue crafts combined with natural beauty and education.

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