

Acculturation In Mixed Marriage Family (A Case Study In The Inter - Cultural Communication In Javanese And Tionghoa In Medan)

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Abstract: The objective of the research was to find out inter-cultural communicative activity in a family of mixed marriages between two different culture (Javanese and Tionghoa). The research subject was a married couple who had been married for 21 years. The husband was a Tionghoa and the wife was a Javanese. The research used interpretative paradigm with phenomenological approach. The final objective of phenomenological data analysis was to present the deep, analytic description of the communicative inter-cultural phenomenon of the mixed-marriage. The result of the research showed that 1) the respondents always attempted to pay attention to anything outside themselves, did not give any negative comments and were ready to listen to each other, 2) were tolerant to the spouse's ambiguity, respected to each other, did not coerce personal belief, and 3) showed empathy and were willing to get involved in the spouse's activity.

Index Terms: Inter-Cultural Communication, Mixed Marriage, Empathy, Acculturation

1. INTRODUCTION

In the study of intercultural communication, there are three social organizations that survive and influence in society concerning internal structures; namely, family, state (community) and religion (viewpoint) (Samovar L, et al, 2010: 59). A family itself is the smallest sub-system in a community. A child grows, develops and establishes his identity beginning from the values given by his/her family. A family will form a community and then the community will form a state; thus, it can be said that the identity presented by a person also reflects the identity of a nation/state. Up to the present time we recognize two forms of family; nuclear family and extended family. A nuclear family is a family consisting of one or two parents and a child or children, while an extended family consists of a nuclear family added with grandparents and other relatives. In the traditional view, a family is formed by a marriage, in which it consists of a man and woman who have agreed to establish the institution through a series of processions namely validity processes in law, religion and local customs.

As mentioned by Goodsell W (1936: 423), the first step of a wedding is choosing a potential partner and then registering the marriage before the court. Legal validity means that the bride and groom report and register their marriages to the state through marriage registrar office. Religion and customs validity mean that the bride and groom meet a set of terms, conditions and procession of their religions and customs as they establish their marriage. A marriage is an inner and outer bond between a man and woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and everlasting family or household in compliance with God the Almighty (Marriage Act 1974, Article 1). The inner and outer bonding embodies the physical and psychological relationship between the man and woman who establish the marriage. In realizing this bonding, someone generally looks for the suitability of a prospective spouse by asking the same criteria that he/she has. Similarities in religion, education, economic and socio-cultural background are the deciding factor in finding a soul-mate. But in some cases differences in culture, economy, education and even religion are no longer the absolute requirements that must be met when establishing a marriage. Their emotional and physical interest is usually the one that initiates the marriage. Indonesia as a multiethnic state consists of various tribes. Javanese, Mandailingnese, Acehnese, Dayaknese are some indigenous tribes/ethnic. The tribe/ethnic groups which members came to Indonesia and have become Indonesian citizens are Tionghoa, Arabians, Indian and even European. A marriage between Native Indonesians is common, but not a marriage between the indigenous tribe group members and immigrants of different races which is called mixed marriages. Javanese is one of the tribes in Indonesia, which is also distributed across the archipelago in Indonesia such as in North Sumatra, and is predominantly Muslims. A Javanese who marries a Tionghoa who is usually Buddhist or Confucian would arise a question mark. Cultural and religious differences will be the root of the main problems in such marriage live. Either each husband or wife in a mixed marriage will bring each of their customs and cultures. Consequently, both of them need to make adjustments in their respective cultures. Javanese adopts a paternalistic, where every decision falls on the roles of men or through power lines of male parent. However, in its practice, Javanese apply a bilateral understanding. This bilateral understanding believes that

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"everything depends on the circumstances" that led to tolerance which respect each individual. Javanese women are known by their patience and obedience. Javanese woman is a *garwa* (wife) who has an egalitarian position, equal with men (Handy & Novianto, 2004: 120). Especially in the Java community, giving respect does not always refer to the actual authority, which authority actually lies in the hand of the mothers; however, the one who receives a respectful attitude is the father (122). Tionghoa people, their men in particular, are known to be tenacious and hardworking. They tend to adopt the principle says after rain comes sunshine. Conscientious and thrifty attitude is often misinterpreted as stingy. In fact, this attitude is formed because they believe that future preparation is the most important key. When a mixed marriage between Tionghoa and Javanese takes place, there is an acculturation of the two cultures and characters. Acculturation is the process of encounter of different cultural elements followed by the mixture of these elements, but the differences between the foreign and the original elements are still visible. In this study, researchers took a sample of the marriage of Mrs. P which has been established for 21 years. Mrs. P is a native Javanese while his husband is a Tionghoa. Before getting married, Mrs. P's religion was Islam, while her husband was Confucianism. Another unique thing in their marriage is that Mrs. P always strives to guide her husband to remain in Islam but she keeps tolerant by following the cultural professions of her husband's extended family. A family is the media that teaches culture to each family member. Gudykunst (in Samovar et al, 2010: 71) states that the family does not only teach norms and values to children, but also influence them to question about belief. Due to these things, the researchers are interested to observe the communication of the couples in their family so that they can survive until 21 years and how the acculturation of Tionghoa and Javanese has been maintained in the family without negating one of them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPT

This study uses the theory discussion on effective intercultural communication. Effective intercultural communication presented by Ruben B (Samovar, 1985: 338) regarding several things is: self-oriented behaviors, non judgementalness, tolerance for ambiguity, the display of respect, personalizing knowledge and perception, displaying empathy and turn-taking. In addition to outlining how to keep communication between people who have different cultural backgrounds can work effectively, so this study also discusses further about acculturation. Acculturation is a process of learning how to live in a new culture. Samovar L et al (2010: 479) discusses some of the issues related to acculturation, namely the issue of language, imbalance and ethnocentrism. The discussion eventually leads a person to be in the form of adjustment/ adaptation. Then a few steps that need to be done in order to adapt well is: creating a personal relationship with the indigenous culture, learning the culture of the natives and taking part in their cultural activities (Samovar L et al, 2010: 482).

Culture

Culture is the behavior patterns formed and developed in a society and later would become its characteristic. According to Edward B. Taylor (Liliwari, 204: 107), culture is an entirely complex, in which there are knowledge, belief, art, morals, law,

customs, and other abilities acquired by a member of the community or society as the forerunner of the beginning of a culture or civilization that occurs to every person who has a pattern on certain characteristics. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara (Pakpahan F, 2013: 238) culture is the results of human mind gained from the struggle against two strong influences, age and nature which are also a proof of the achievement of human life to overcome obstacles and hardships in life and livelihood in order to attain salvation and happiness which is naturally orderly and peaceful. Culture is a subjective and objective element made by humans in the past to increase their survival possibility and resulted in a satisfaction in ecological media, and thus distributed among those who can communicate with each other, because they have a common language and they live in the same time and place (Triandis in L Samovar, 2010: 27). Due to the complexity of the elements that form a culture, we cannot look at a culture from only one side. Culture is dynamic, evolving in accordance with the developments that shape it. Looking at a culture is looking at it physically and non-physically, as mentioned by Hedding and Glick (Liliwari, 204: 107) that a culture can be seen materially and non-materially. The form of material culture can be seen on clothing, traditional houses, dances, and so on, whereas non-material culture lies in the norms, beliefs, language and way of life. These cultural elements will influence a person later in his life; how a person dresses, behaves and speaks. The way a person speaks reflects his/her communication style. Communication is influenced by his/her culture. Edward T Hall states that culture is communication and communication is culture.

INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Good intercultural communication reflects an effective communication. Ruben B (Samovar, 1985: 338) describes some of the elements of an effective cross-cultural communication; they are:

a. Self oriented behaviours

The behaviors that oppose or reject any new ideas from the people around will in fact add a new problem. It is suggested to be open and unselfish in a new culture.

b. Non judgementalness

People will feel more comfortable when they are around those who are always judging. We should try to listen to others and understand them because there must be a specific reason of any behavior.

c. Tolerance for ambiguity

The ability to adapt to new things is a good skill when someone is in a different culture. When he/she is in contact with the culture besides his/her indigenous culture, he/she will certainly encounter different conditions that often seem ambiguous.

d. Display of respect

The ability to show respect and positive outlooks to others will be judged as an important component in a personal communication as well as communication background cultural differences.

e. Personalizing knowledge and perception

Each person should first understand and recognize his/her own values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and opinion. Then

they can share what he/she has with the others. When he/she has understood his/her personal values, it will be easier to interact with people with different values.

f. Displaying empathy dan turn taking

The ability to feel what other people feel or the ability to place oneself in the situation being encountered by the others indicates that we are able to empathize. This attitude is important as it shapes and maintains a positive interpersonal relationship with different cultures. It also shows how a person treats another culture like its own culture.

Acculturation

Acculturation means adjustments. Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological changes that occur due to a correlation between two or more cultural groups and their members (Berry in Samovar et al, 2010: 479). In a personal context acculturation indicates a change in behavior. Acculturation itself touches language, imbalance and ethnocentrism problems. Someone who lives with a new culture means to be confronted with a different language both verbal and non-verbal (Samovar et al, 2010: 480). Imbalance means that a person is expected to make adjustments manifested in an emotional state where he/she has to consider accepting the new culture by either ignoring or retaining his/her own culture. Furthermore, we need to understand ethnocentrism which is prejudices against other cultures, which we must be cautious and aware of.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Type

This research used phenomenological method. Phenomenological method is one of qualitative research methods. The word Phenomenology (Phenomenology) is derived from the Greek phainomenon and logos. Phainomenon means to appear and phainen mean to show. While logos means word, speech, reason, and judgment. Thus, phenomenology can generally be defined as the study of the phenomenon or something that appears/ is symptomatic (Sobur, 2013: 150).

Research Location

The research location is in the district of Medan-Marelan, Medan city. There is an mixed marriage between a Tionghoa man and an indigenous native woman, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Padangnese and others.

Data Source and Type

1. Primary Data: A husband and wife as key informants.
2. Secondary Data: namely data obtained through several sources of information, they are:
 - a. Documents or records, reports and others.
 - b. Scientific books and research results which are relevant to this study.

Technique of Data Collection

1. Library Research
2. Field Research: Observation, interview, documentation. The data analysis method used in this study is the method used in phenomenological research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Marriage is a sacred institution established by two people, male and female. In the Islamic religion marriage is considered valid if the bride and groom both are Muslim, if one of them remains in the non-Islamic religion then their marriage becomes void. In the marriage established by the informants, they agreed to get married according to the Islamic religious teachings in which both finally became Moslems. After getting married, they remain being Moslems, although the husband who originally a Confucian. The husband stays a Moslem after married, but he has not been able to live an entire Islamic life. Getting married is creating a new culture. Two people coming from different cultures agree to establish a marriage which means that both are creating a new culture because they will create new habits based on the values, beliefs and understanding that have been approved.

Self oriented behaviours

In the marriage that has been lived by the informants, both have been very open-minded from the beginning concerning the issue of religion. The wife who is a Moslem demanded their partners to convert into the same religion and the husband agreed to that. The disapproval of the husband's brother over their marriage was not an obstacle, because the husband believed that it was their responsibility because they would be the ones who would undergo the marriage and they had to be independent. The wife's openness also was also marked with a statement before the marriage saying that it would cause no problem if the marriage had to be canceled because their relationship did not transgress. After getting married, the wife did imposed her will that the husband had to fully carry out Islamic rites. The husband accepted and granted the wife's demands, but eventually the wife realized that her husband did the worship forcedly. Eventually she understands that her husband has not been able to practice their religion as a whole considering that even real Moslems have not fully performed it. By not only concerned with her own will, the wife lives their marriage life calmly, and so does her husband, he no longer feels forced to perform the worship in Islam and he still performs the daily worship which is not heavy to do that people call him not being a real Moslem (only indicated by his ID Card as a Moslem).

Non Judgementalness

Religion has become a major element of the causes of conflict in informants' marriage. There is not in fact any problem concerning the customs of the Javanese or Tionghoa. What happens is no a major conflict, only the wife demands her husband to be more diligent in worship so that when it is not fulfilled, the wife would sulk. Eventually, the wife realized that her husband should not be judged as a convert to Islam, especially the husband works in a motorcycle shop which often makes him dirty so it is difficult to always perform prayers. The wife finally understands that and consequently the wife finds serenity in living their household.

Tolerance for Ambiguity

Mrs. P (Informant/wife) is a capable and adaptable person, though she got married young at the age of 17, she is able to immediately understand that her husband brought old habits before marriage. This is called tolerance. Tolerance is to understand not because we are weak but to show that we understand the differences. The wife was also very tolerant

when dealing directly with the husband's family habit or belief who are Tionghoa. Mrs. P also welcomes her father in law with joy when he visits them. There is a habit of her father in law that she thinks unusual; namely gambling. For Tionghoa, gambling is not a deviant behavior (deviance) which raises moral issues (Pelly U, 2016: 93), gambling is likened to business. Her son (husband) always gives money to his father even though he knows that the money is used for gambling. As a Moslem Javanese wife considers it a bad habit, but she can understand because that is what is believed by the Tionghoa about gambling, especially the husband who gives the money to please their parents, for the Tionghoa parents and ancestors are important to be respected as taught in Confucius. The family always goes to the husband's hometown in Dumai in March every year to join the grave prayer ceremony. The informants (husband-wife) in this case do not necessarily perform prayer rituals like the Tionghoa, but just like the Javanese when performing pilgrimage to the grave of parents. The wife always participates in this activity, where initially she wanted to know how the actual process of grave prayer. The main objective when returning home to worship the grave is to gather with relatives. The attributes of the culture as a Muslim wife (wearing the veil and does not eat pork) still apply when interacting with the Tionghoa family of the husband.

Display of respect

The husband, although he has not able to practice the Islamic teachings completely, still he is respected by the wife because the husband is the head of the family. Likewise, the husband also appreciated his wife as someone who maintains and manages the housekeeping. The wife realizes her hardworking husband is trying to manage their household and children by providing the best education for their children. Even though the Husband is the one who works hard and makes money, but he does not demand more from his wife, for example: the wife is not good cook and sometimes they go out to buy food, but it is not considered the wife's flaw.

Personalizing knowledge and perception

Mr. P (Informant/husband) has already had frequent interaction with the native since he was still single. When he lived in Bagan Siapi, he even made friend with a native man and gave help when there was work to build a mosque. When he got married, he did not have a significant obstacle in dealing with his Javanese wife and family.

Displaying empathy dan turn taking

Mrs. P (Informant/wife) always tries to get involved in the event/ceremony conducted by the family of her husband, the Tionghoa with Confucian or Buddhist religion. Together they go to his hometown annually in grave prayer time with the intention to gather with the whole family. The Wife understands her husband's longing for his extended family; thus, although the grave prayer event is not on holidays, the family saves their time to go hometown to their big family in Dumai. The informants currently lives in Medan, when there is an event of Tionghoa ethnic, such as funerals, they will attend for humanitarian reasons. When the husband's sister gets married, Mrs. P also follows the customs set by the husband's Tionghoa family namely giving a gift of jewelry because it is viewed as a form of responsibility and affection of an older sister to the younger sister. Mr. P is a taciturn figure, while

visiting his wife's parents' house in Stabat, he did not comment much. He still greeted and honored his parents in law, but he found it difficult to create an attractive conversation. Although he has not performed the religions teaching entirely like a Muslim does (daily prayers), but he still take on the role as the head of a Islamic family. When Mr. P must pay zakat (Moslem obligation) he pays it himself and he also fasts sometimes. When his wife asked him to register for hajj journey (pilgrimage), Mr. P did not reject it, because the wife has firstly described that hajj cannot be performed in a short time. The wife also explained about Hajj rituals that can be learned from a pilgrimage teacher. With his wife's explanation, the husband certainly would and allow his wife's intention.

CONCLUSIONS

A mixed marriage requires an effective intercultural communication. Two persons with different religions, ethnicity, customs, habits, language and values are believed to have different views in living their marriage life. The differences which are not overcome as time goes by will create a domestic conflict. A wife who is patient, tolerant and able to manage the household well and a husband that always respect his wife, hard-working and independent has always made the family as a central or life purpose. The characters of the husband and wife have become the capital for lasting mixed marriages. However, an effective form of communication is required to overcome differences. Every person from a different culture will bring beliefs that are considered strange and unreasonable. Under these conditions, the informant showed empathy to her spouse. The results of this study indicate that the informants live a married life by always trying to pay attention to the surrounding environment, do not make a discrediting/ unwilling statement to listen to each other, tolerate the attitude of spouse's/partner's family that seems strange, to show respect to one another, do not impose personal beliefs, show empathy and want to get involved in partner's activity. It is also found that the wife's role is dominant to balance the intercultural communication in the family. These conditions continue to enable the couple survive up to 21 years of marriage. With the efforts and guidance from the wife, the family stays as Islamic believer, but does not break the chain of culture and friendship with the husband's Confucian family as long as it does not contradict the rules of Islamic teaching believed by their family.

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