

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research background, research problem, research objective, research significance, scope and limitation, also definition of key terms. Those will be discussed in the following explanation as the introduction of the thesis.

A. Research Background

Hall in Larry A. Samovar, et.al points out that “Culture is communication and communication is culture.” Put into slightly different words, when looking at communication and culture it is hard to decide which is the voice and which is the echo. The reason for the duality is that you “learn” your culture via communication, while at the same time communication is a reflection of your culture.¹ The study about culture and communication is well-known as intercultural communication (ICC).

Meanwhile, John Fiske assumed that communication is central to the life of culture, without it culture of any kind must die. Consequently the study of communication involves the study of the culture with which it is integrated.² A communication is considered worthwhile if the hearer gives response as the speaker wants. Eventhough, it is not easy to understand the

¹ Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, Edwin R. McDaniel, *Communication Between Cultures Seventh Edition*, 2010, (USA: Wadsworth), p22

² John Fiske, *Introduction To Communication Studies*, 2002, (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library), p2

peoples' mind, but at least it is easier to understand the people who come from the same culture.

Intercultural communication is an important subject to learn especially for Indonesian. Indonesia is known as multicultural country because it has many cultures and traditions which are kept constantly. People often interact with the other people from another culture. It will bring trouble in communication when they do not know the culture of the speaker. For example, the word *sampean* in east and central java is considered a polite word to call someone. But in west java, the word *sampean* is very rude.

Indonesia also has many rules related to communicate with other people especially the elders or unfamiliar people. From gestures till the way to call someone has a specific way to do it. As the example, in a teaching learning process when teacher gives questions, students will answer by raising their right hand. When they raise their left hand, it is considered impolite. This fact is very different with western country. Whether they use left or right hand is not important. The main point is the answer given.

From the difference above, people who do not know anything about intercultural communication will feel shocked and cannot tolerate anything which is different from theirs. But when people know the others' culture, they can communicate well and it will bring harmony to the life.

Through intercultural relationships, we can learn a tremendous amount about other people and their cultures, and about ourselves and our own cultural background. At the same time, there are many challenges.

Intercultural communication can also involve barriers like stereotyping and discrimination. And these relationships take place in complex historical and political contexts.³

Shuli zhang and Dongyuan deng who analyzed intercultural communication based on the stereotypes stated that information and communication attract people's attention more than ever before. The desire to communicate with strangers and the relationships with them depend on the degree to which people are effective in communicating with them. There are many factors restricting or improving people's communication. Stereotypes is one of them.⁴ When people come from different background meet, they tend to have different stereotypes. These will bring problem because of misinterpreting others' behaviours.

In order to avoid misinterpreting and cultural conflict, Zahra wrote that students should develop their cultural understanding.⁵ Developing cultural awareness has become a very important focus in the field of intercultural communication.

In addition, there are many other researches which take intercultural communication as their topic with different sub-topic. One of them is intercultural communication in the term of apology. Apology is one of the most effective means for re-establishing trust in negotiations and disputes. However, the function and meaning of an apology (and thus its

³ John Fiske, *Introduction To Communication Studies*, 2002, p4

⁴ Shuli Zhang and Dongyuan Deng, *Stereotypes Communication*, 2009, CCSE International Education studies vol. 2 no. 4 november 2009

⁵ Zahra Ghorbani Shemshadsara, *Developing Cultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching*, Vol. 5, No. 3; March 2012

effectiveness for negotiators) may differ across cultures. Although apologies can be effective for negotiations, conflict resolution, and trust repair, it also can suggest that there may be distinct cultural differences in how, when, and why apologies are used. Thus, without adequate cross-cultural knowledge, it is possible that using one's own cultural lens to respond to conflict in a different culture may actually escalate conflict rather than reduce it.⁶

To know more about culture and communication, analyzing two different cultures which often contact is really helpful, China and America for example. Tian compares those country based on their cultural context. It mentions that those two belong to different cultural types, basic values, language characteristics, and non-verbal behaviour characteristics. It also points out that only when people from different system know the culture context of the target culture can they have an effective communication.⁷

One of the studies about intercultural communication in China by Wei Lu and jingjing wan mentioned that China is recruiting more and more international students in many of its universities. Intercultural communication problems in Chinese campuses, however, have until now been seldom mentioned. In this era, it has now been a very common phenomenon that students with quite different cultural backgrounds are studying in one campus, where teachers or students of the host culture will communicate with the students from other cultures. Confronted with a

⁶ William W. Maddux, et.al, *Cultural Differences in the Function and Meaning of Apologies*

⁷ A comparative study of chinese and american cultural context and the influence on communication by Jin Tian, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 524-526, July 2010 © 2010 ACADEMY PUBLISHER Manufactured in Finland.

totally different culture, students from other cultures will inevitably undergo a kind of “culture shock”, which means “troublesome feelings such as depression, loneliness, confusion, inadequacy, hostility, frustration, and tension, caused by the loss of familiar cues from the home culture”.⁸

From the explanation above, intercultural communication is a broad field to study because it relates to many other fields. To ease the learning process, the researcher uses movie as the object of the research. Movie is a media which can help people understand a knowledge easier by visualizing and giving the example using the sequential pictures. Movie is also a reflection of human’s life. Although the scenes taken are directed by play director, the inspiration of it is the real facts in human’s life.

The movie used here is “Shanghai Noon”. A movie which involves two men of different personalities and ethnicities (a Chinese imperial guard and a Western outlaw) who team up to stop a crime. By using the movie, this research is hoped to give a clear explanation by giving example from the dialogue and the description of the actors’ movement in the movie.⁹

Shanghai noon is a movie which is easy to understand. It is a popular movie which has been watched by many people. People will understand how culture really gives big influence in communication. Without knowing a person’s culture, talking can bring a problem. The scenes on the movie have pointed out the misunderstanding which is often happened among the

⁸ Wei Lu and Jingjing Wan, *On Treating Intercultural Communication Anxiety Of International Students in China*, World Journal of Education Vol. 2, No. 1; February 2012.

⁹ Wikipedia.org

characters. The movie also has elements of comedy so that it will not bore the viewers.

When talking about culture and communication (intercultural communication), this research is not new. What makes this research different is that the research before focuses on the influence of the cultural context between Chinese and American in communication, explains and compares both cultures. But, this research will concentrate on misunderstanding scenes and analyze it from cultural variability.

Over the past few decades, anthropologists, communication researchers, psychologists, and sociologists have isolated several dimensions of cultural variability that can be used to differentiate cultures. This research will focus on five dimensions of cultural variability: individualism– collectivism, high–low context, value orientations, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. Each of these dimensions affects how people communicate.¹⁰

Therefore, it is very useful to learn intercultural communication remembering people cannot live without culture or communication. By knowing the culture from the different countries, it will not make people take a wrong move. And finally, the title of the research is called “Intercultural communication in ‘Shanghai Noon’ Movie”

¹⁰ James W. Neuliep, *Intercultural Communication: A contextual approach 5th edition*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2012), p 47

B. Research Problem

In this research, the researcher will focus on the problem as follows:

1. What scenes show cultural variability in “*Shanghai Noon*” movie?
2. How do cultures influence the communication among characters in “*Shanghai Noon*” movie?

C. Research Objective

Concerning the research problems, the writer has two research objectives. They are:

1. To describe the scenes which show cultural variability in “*Shanghai Noon*” movie
2. To describe the influence of culture among characters in “*Shanghai Noon*” movie

D. Research Significance

The result of this study is hoped to help the readers. The significance is listed below:

1. To the next researcher

The next researchers will get much information about intercultural communication between China and America. They will really need these information if they would go to america or china. Considering those two are big countries which have big role in the world, learning about their

culture will give a good effect in researchers' life. This research can also be applied in daily life.

2. To The Students of English Department

As the english department students, studying about culture and communication is a must. Those two have a tight relationship practically and theoretically. Only when students know the culture of the target language can they make a good communication. Studying about culture also can prevent misunderstanding which often occurs when people from different country have a talk.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Research

In this research, the researcher focuses on the the cultures of chinese and american which influence the communication in shanghai noon movie. These relationships will be shown in the form of description.

The limitations of the research are, the first is the setting of the movie itself. It is set in the 19th century. An era which cowboy existed and china was a monarchy. The second is that the researcher will analyze two countries, China and United States (Northern America). And the third is, the researcher will only analyze the culture from its cultural variability. They are individualism-collectivism, high-low context, value orientatons, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.

F. Definition of The Key Terms

There are some key terms in this research. The following terms are the definitions of the key terms.

1. Culture

Kroeber and Kluckhohn in Oatey state that Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of further action.¹¹

2. Intercultural Communication

Generally, intercultural communication is a study about the relationship between culture and communication. This field concerns to analyze situations in which members of different groups are in social interaction with each other and the interpretive processes they must bring to bear to understand each other in those highly altered hybrid and culturally mixed intermediate situations.¹² Intercultural Communication

¹¹ Helen Spencer-Oatey and Peter Franklin, *Intercultural Interaction: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Intercultural Communication*, (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2009), p14

¹² Ron Scollon And Suzanne Wong Scollon, *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach Second Edition*, (UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), P 13.

is simply defined as situated communication between individuals or groups of different linguistic and cultural origins.¹³

3. Cultural Variability

Cultural variability is a range of variations between cultures. James W. Neuliep in his book *Intercultural communication :A Contextual Approach* denominates cultural variability into five dimensions, they are individualism-collectivism, high-low context, value orientations, power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

4. Shanghai noon movie

Shanghai Noon is a 2000 Chinese-American adventure comedy western film starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson. The film, set in Nevada and other parts of the American West in the 19th century, is a juxtaposition of a western with a kung fu action film with extended martial arts sequences. It also has elements of comedy and the "Buddy Cop" film genre, as it involves two men of different personalities and ethnicities (a Chinese imperial guard and a Western outlaw) who team up to stop a crime.¹⁴

¹³ www.lanqua.eu/theme/intercultural-communication access on March, 23rd 2015

¹⁴ en.wikipedia.org/ accessed on November, 2nd 2014