

# Anxiety Uncertainty Management In Communication Of Pattani Thailand Students At Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School Aceh Besar

Raja Maghfirah

**Abstract:** Anxiety and uncertainty in communication are occurs when someone enters to new cultural environment and interacts with a stranger. The aims of this resesarch is to know and describe how foreign student from Pattani Thailand manage their anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural communication context. Subject of this research is seven foreign student from Pattani Thailand in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School, Aceh Besar. The analysis is using descriptive qualitative method from field observation, depth interview and documentation. The result of the research shows that student from Pattani Thailand feel anxiety uncertainty in communication and culture shock at the beginning of the semester. The anxiety and uncertainty that they experience have an effect on the quality of relationships and learning achievement. But, as time passes the anxiety and uncertainty diminishes. They do anxiety uncertainty management with three ways, there are by observing, learning the language and adapting to new cultural habits. In this research, authors also found the fact that person's competence to manage anxiety and uncertainty in communication very depending on the cultural character, motivation, knowledge and skills they possess.

**Index Terms:** Anxiety Uncertainty, Communication, Student, Pattani Thailand, Islamic Boarding School

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Anxiety uncertainty management in communication is an important effort in minimizing the occurrence of communication barriers especially when interacting with stranger in different cultural backgrounds. Differences in cultural background can cause stiffness in the process of interacting and communicating. Such rigidity can be anxiety and uncertainty that have the potential to create obstacles in developing a relationship. New situations when interacting with people from other cultures or other ethnic groups are characterized by high levels of uncertainty and tension (Mardolina, 2015). In 2016, in Aceh Province there are 471 pesantren (Islamic Boarding School) institutions consisting of type A, B and C with the number of staying student reach 91,401 people. This data does not include a non-type pesantren which amounts to almost 500 units (Jailani, 2017). There are three major pesantren in Aceh region which have foreign students, namely Pesantren Darul Ihsan in Aceh Besar, Pesantren Darul Munawwarah in Pidie Jaya and Pesantren MUDI in Samalanga Bireun. The foreign students are from Malaysia and Pattani Thailand (source: PPID Dinas Pendidikan Dayah Aceh Province). As strangers or precisely as sojourners, the students from Pattani at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School really aware that there is a distinction between their culture and the local students culture in general (student from Aceh). The ability to manage anxiety and uncertainty is expected to reduce the level of stress they feel in a new environment According to Fritz (2011) in general, the level of stress and anxiety felt by foreign student in adapting due to family separation factors, language and financial mastery.

Ustadz Murtadha, one of the foundation managers at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School who once interviewed by the author said that student's comfort living in a boarding school environment is strongly influenced by their ability to build communication relationships with other fellow student. When anxiety and discomfort feeling lasts longer and not managed properly, the student will surrender and decide to get out of from the boarding school. Awareness to adapt to the environment and manage anxiety in communicating must be owned by student, not only for foreign student but also for local student (Interview, 21 November 2017). Ustadzah Mutia Ulfa one of teacher and administrator at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School said that the academic achievement of foreign student (especially Thailand) is relatively below the average of other local student at the beginning of the semester because of anxiety and uncertainty factors in the association and language. According to her, they tend to be always grouped with fellow foreign student and not want to mingle and still keep the distance with other local student (Interview, 21 November 2017). According Sarbaugh (1998) and Samovar, et.al (2006), quoted in Lubis (2016: 63), there are three main elements of cultural perceptions that have a major influence and directly to individuals involved in an intercultural communication, namely:

- 1) World view, which includes religion / beliefs, values and behaviors
- 2) Symbol or language system, which includes verbal and nonverbal
- 3) Social organizations, which include families and institutions / schools

Gudykunst assumes when a person from a particular cultural group enters a different group of cultures, the individual will experience a series of crises at the beginning of his first correspondence. The initial sequence referred by Gudykunst is:

- 1) He (the stranger) will experience two things: anxiety and uncertainty, they feel insecure and do not know exactly what to do.
- 2) He tends to be hyper-aware in the culture he enters, although in their new interpersonal situations (strangers and group insiders) have a degree of similarity about

- 
- *Raja Maghfirah, Postgraduacte Student, Department Communication Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara. Email: [rajamaghfirah@gmail.com](mailto:rajamaghfirah@gmail.com)*

anxiety and uncertainty (Griffin, 2012: 133).

Many foreign students feel frustrated and uncomfortable at the beginning of education because they have no friends and have not been able to adapt to the surrounding environment. For foreign student, the ability to manage the anxiety and uncertainty of communication must be immediately mastered, unless this will greatly affect the academic activities and affect the comfort to continue the study. Individuals who experience communication barriers (communication apprehension) will feel anxious when participating in the communication of a wider form, not just anxious to speak in public. Individuals are unable to anticipate their negative feelings, and try to avoid communication whenever possible. From the above description the authors are interested to analyze the uncertainty anxiety communicating experienced by student from Pattani Thailand at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar and how they manage the anxiety and uncertainty to achieve effective communication.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

### The purpose of this research:

- 1) Evaluating the communication process of student from Pattani Thailand at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar.
- 2) Analyzing the causal factors of Students from Pattani Thailand in experiencing anxiety and uncertainty of communication at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar.

Analyzing the strategy of student from Pattani Thailand in managing anxiety and also communication uncertainty at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar.

## 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework is an explanation of how theory relates to various factors that have been identified as important issues.

### 1. Effect of Leadership on Employee Performance

Leadership has an influence on the performance of employees due to the attitude of leaders who are less assertive in giving sanctions to employees. (Irianto, 2001). According to Wibowo (2014, pp. 94) states that "Leadership in the organization plays an important role in influencing employee performance". It shows that there is a link between leadership to employee performance. Implementation of leadership in accordance with the situation and condition of the company will have a positive effect on employee performance. The results of Ida Brahmasari and Agus Suprayetno (2008, p 132) show that leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance, meaning leadership is an effort to influence many people through communication process to achieve organizational goals.

### 2. Effect of Work Discipline on Employee Performance

Work discipline is an attitude, behavior, and deeds are in accordance with both written and unwritten rules. The decrease in employee work discipline will make the targets set by the company unfulfilled just in time. According to Ambar Teguh Sulistiyani (2009, p.229) states "Employee performance can be improved

by applying the formal disciplinary actions undertaken in the personnel department". The results of Andri Rahman's (2004) judgment have a positive and significant influence on work discipline on performance, the better the work discipline, reflecting the great sense of responsibility including the good category. Conversely, when the level of employee discipline is high, the target of the company will be completed on time. This shows that employee performance can be improved with high work discipline.

### 3. Effect of Leadership and Work Discipline on Employee Performance

Leadership and employee discipline are indicated to have a mutual influence - same to employee performance. High levels of employee absenteeism and unresolved leader behavior in sanctioning undisciplined employees cause the target set by the company can not be completed on time (Gary Dessler, 2004). The results of Ahmad Saifudin (2011) study that leadership factors have a positive effect on performance, and the factors of work discipline also affect the performance. Thus, high work discipline and proper leadership style will make employee performance more optimal. So with the optimal performance of employees will bring the company to achieve a predetermined vision.

## 4 HYPOTHESIS

According to Iqbal, Hasan (2002) "Hypotheses are temporary answers to research problems that are still weak, so they must be tested empirically ". Then the following hypotheses are based on the problem boundary and the previous problem formulation are:

1. There is influence of leadership on employee performance of PT. Perkebunan Nusantara IV Pabatu Business Unit
2. There is influence of work discipline on the performance of employees of PT. Perkebunan Nusantara IV Pabatu Business Unit.
3. There is influence of leadership and work discipline together to the performance of employees of PT. Perkebunan Nusantara IV Pabatu Business Unit.

## 5 METHODS

The method in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Bogdan and Taylor mentioned that qualitative research is basically the research procedures used to obtain descriptive data in the form of writing, speech, or behavior that can be observed (Moleong, 2011: 4). Researchers conduct this qualitative research directly to the foreign student holistically without reducing or isolating certain variables. The data obtained are then used to describe a reality or social interaction comprehensively. The data were gathered by conducting in-depth interviews with 7 (seven) Students from Pattani Thailand and with some people who were very close to them such as their teacher, supervisor and friends. Besides interviews, the research also used observation surrounding Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar and make some documentation. The result of the research data would be analyzed by using relevant communication theory.

## 6 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in Aceh Besar Islamic Boarding School or pesantren have differences compared with other educational institutions. That is because pesantren have some power. The student live with their teachers and supervisors in a dormitory for 24 hours and is secured from

the influence of outside environment. According Jailani (2017), there are some characteristics of pesantren life:

- 1) The close relationship between student and teacher;
- 2) Obedience and adherence of student to his teacher;
- 3) The independent and simple life of the student;
- 4) Spirit of mutual cooperation and full of brotherhood;
- 5) Life of discipline.

Pesantren Darul Ihsan is the development of previous traditional pesantren of Tgk. H. Hasan Krueng Kalee that was developed since 1901-1946. Since 1999 Darul Ihsan was formed into a modern pesantren. Darul Ihsan has been actively accepting foreign student since 2013. The foreign student generally come from Malaysia and Thailand. In this study the authors special conduct research on foreign student from Pattani Thailand. Here is the data of the number of foreign student from Thailand in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School.

*Table Data of Foreign Students from Pattani Thailand in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School in 2018.*

No	Name	Age	(year) Stay in Aceh (year)
1	Sufyan Samae	18	1,5
2	Romzee Stan	19	2
3	Nianwa Bahengma	20	2
4	Muhammad Nasri	18	2
5	Ahyat Saman	18	2
6	Abdulrahman	17	1
7	Amron	18	1

**Source:** Data from Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School, Aceh Besar.

Some years earlier there were two female student from Pattani Thailand, but they did not complete the study until the end of the academic. In this study, the authors involve 7 (seven) student as an informant to be able to provide information needed in describing the study.

#### *Anxiety Uncertainty Management in Communication of Student From Pattani Thailand*

Creating friendships in new environments is certainly not easy, especially when we are around the strangers. Overcoming anxiety and uncertainty is the first step to start interacting with strangers. The requirement needed to be able to manage anxiety and uncertainty is that one must be mindful in communicating. Mindfulness is a process in which a person must consciously manage his or her anxiety and uncertainty to others to achieve effective communication (Gudykunst, 2003: 30). William Gudykunts develops Berger's thinking significantly by looking at how that uncertainty and anxiety are in different cultural situations. He finds that everyone who belongs to a particular culture will seek to reduce uncertainty in the early stages of their relationship, but they do so in different ways based on their cultural background. This difference can be explained by looking at whether someone is from a member of a high context culture or low context culture (Morissan, 2009: 133). Cultural backgrounds of Students from Pattani Thailand have no significant differences with the Indonesian cultural context because they share a high-context culture. The seven informants interviewed, the authors observed that all the students in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School had culture shock at the beginning of entry in the dormitory. Their culture

shock is caused by differences in language, style of communication, differences in habits, differences in dress and appetite. They tend to feel anxious, worried, isolated, performance degradation, helplessness, problems in communicating and interacting and the longing for homesickness. The existence of culture shock due to these cultural differences led to the emergence of a sense of uncertainty and anxiety in communicating. Nianwa Bahengma said that at the beginning arrived in Indonesia was very worried because it is unable to use the Indonesian language at all. Nianwa uses the language of Siam and Thai Malay in his daily communication. While the rules in pesantren require students to use three languages namely Indonesian, English and Arabic. Students are not allowed to use the local language. According to Nianwa, he is more silent in the dorm and only communicates with his fellow countrymen. In the classroom and in the room, the Acehese student friends were the ones who were more actively invited him to communicate first and he learned a lot from their vocabulary. Ahyat Saman and Abdulrahman also feel not fluent to write Latin writing, especially writing Arabic language lessons or other lessons such as nahwu, sharaf, hadith and traditional Arabic book. They need an intensive time to get used to using Indonesian and Latin script. Uncertainty and anxiety are closely related to the symptoms of culture shock, because every culture shock will always be accompanied by anxiety and uncertainty. Culture Shock is anxiety and shock when individuals enter a new different culture from the culture that has been attached to him. Culture that has been attached to the individual when entering a new culture will seem ineffective because every culture has its own way. Abdurrahman said the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in the association made him miss the family in the village and wanted to return to Thailand. Abdurrahman is a single child and is a spoiled child. He was forced by his parents and family to study abroad and enter the Boarding School in order to become an independent child. For 1 year in Aceh he thinks many changes that he felt. Life disciplined in a boarding school leaves him spoiled and acts more mature. Student activities at boarding schools require them to be mutually attentive to each other whether they are foreign student or local student, as they should consider friends as relatives. However, misunderstandings and conflicts have also been experienced. Ahyat Saman said that he has experienced several conflicts with his friends like during the queue to eat, while exercising and while losing things in the room. But he tried to solve the problem by understanding each other's characters around him and learning to tolerate and communicate well. Although the Pattani students at Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School seem to have a closed character, they are still trying to minimize the anxiety and uncertainty of their communication by motivating themselves to appreciate and understand the differences and empathize with the people encountered. At the time of the interview process, the authors can see the anxiety shown by the informants because the author including people who are foreign to them. They look quite tense, worried and confused during the interview. But over time they can communicate more relaxed. Sufyan Samae so less talk and stare down more during interviews. He uses more nonverbal movements when answering the questions as with nodding and shaking his head. He also moves his hands a lot when trying to explain what he wants to say. According to Buklew (1980) in Siska (2003), signs of anxiety can be seen from two sides, namely:



- 1) Psychological level, such as tense, confused, worried, difficult to concentrate, etc.
- 2) The physiological level, the anxiety that already affects the physical, especially the function of the nervous system such as sleeplessness, palpitations, excessive sweating, often trembling and nausea stomach.

It is also relevant with Miles Patterson and Vicki Ritts (1997) statements. According them several parameters in communication and socializing anxiety namely:

- 1) physiological aspects such as heart rate, red cheeks due to embarrassment,
- 2) behavioral manifestations such as avoidance and self-protection,
- 3) Cognitive dimensions such as self-focus and negative thoughts.

The most powerful parameter is the cognitive dimension which means that communication and social anxiety is closely related to how to think about oneself in relation to the communication situation. The unwillingness to communicate or avoid verbal communication is caused by anxiety. The great anxiety of communicating creates a low desire to communicate (Littlejohn and Foss, 2011: 221). According to Romzee Stan, at the beginning of the semester he tends to be shy away from the interaction of communication with the local student. He only communicate with his fellow group (in-group). However, this did not last long. Approximately about two months he can adapt well, and already have many friends. He admitted initially had trouble predicting the people around him. This inability to predict causes anxiety and uncertainty, preferring to avoid interaction and choose to associate with fellow student Pattani. Anxiety and uncertainty in communication will surely affect the desire of someone to interact with others. In accordance with previous research results indicate that anxiety and uncertainty are positively related to the avoidance of communication with different cultures. And there is no positive relationship of anxiety and uncertainty in the avoidance of communication between strangers from the same culture (Duronto, 2005). This is also appropriate and supported by the results of Florack's (2014) study which mentions the importance of reducing anxiety and self-confidence for a group in forging new friendships in the context of intercultural communication. The level of communication competence in a person can be seen from his ability to manage the anxiety of uncertainty (Masril, 2014) Strangers who have a strong motivation to interact, it will be able to reduce the level of anxiety experienced. Similarly, the Student of Pattani Thailand in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School. The level of ability among the seven informants is different. Three of them (Sufyan Samae, Abdulrahman and Amron) claimed to still feel anxiety during the stay in the pesantren. They sometimes still feel confused when receiving lessons from teachers in the classroom. The results of interviews with some teachers also say that the language factor is the biggest factor causing students from Pattani often have difficulty in understanding the lesson, so in terms of academic value they are still under local student. Although they can speak Malay, some vocabularies still have different meanings that can lead to confusion and misunderstandings. For example the word "Bingung", for Indonesian student using the word confused is showing a sense of not understanding, but for student Pattani Thailand said confused means "Bodoh". The ability to increase

knowledge and skills seriously in language is absolutely necessary for foreign student to be able to make an effective communication while in Islamic Boarding School. There are three main factors that can cause ups and downs the level of anxiety and nervousness in an intercultural meeting. Those are the factors of motivation, knowledge and skills (Rahardjo, 2005: 69). These three factors, according to Gudykunst are considered as intercultural communication competence which conceptually is a skill needed by a party to communicate with other people with different cultural background (Rahardjo, 2005: 71). Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) describe three factors of intercultural competence components as follows (Gudykunst, 2003: 275-294):

- 1) Motivation Factors consist of needs, attraction, social bonds, and self-conceptions and openness to new information.
- 2) Knowledge Factors consist of expectation, shared network, knowledge of more than one perspective, knowledge of alternative interpretation, knowledge of similarities and differences.
- 3) Skill Factors consist of ability to emphasize, ability to tolerate ambiguity, ability to adapt communication, ability to create new categories and ability to gather appropriate information.

Here are some management strategies undertaken by students from Pattani Thailand in Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School to overcome anxiety and uncertainty of communication that is:

- 1) Performing communications accommodation in the form of convergence, divergence verbally and nonverbally as follow nonverbal behavior of indigenous student in terms of cultural habits adopted by native student.
- 2) Observe new cultures, explain the differences in culture directly to eliminate communication misunderstandings
- 3) Adapt to new cultural habits by following the workings and customs of the local culture and tolerating the emerging differences
- 4) Learn the language to make it easier to recognize and communicate with the local culture.
- 5) Senior Thailand student serve as leaders in spurring the backwardness in academic affairs. They routinely do group study with their fellow countrymen and slowly establish friendship with friends from Indonesia and approach with the teachers.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

There are various interesting things which could be obtained from this research, especially when it was seen from the small number of researches on foreign student in Islamic Boarding School. A number of inductive conclusions, suggestions, and recommendations in this research were as follows:

### A. Conclusion

- 1) Students from Pattani Thailand experiencing various obstacles when entering the new environment. These constraints include language barriers, differences in cultural perceptions and differences in the use of non-verbal messages.
- 2) Anxiety Uncertainty Management is needed to help create effective communication among communication actors from different cultures and they must do it with mindfull.
- 3) There are three main factors that can cause ups and

downs the level of anxiety and anxiety in an intercultural meeting that is the motivation factor, knowledge factor and skills factor.

- 4) Pattani Thailand Student performs the management of anxiety and communication uncertainty by observing similarities and differences, learning the language and adapting to customs in the Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School.

## B. Suggestions

- 1) There is need for educational materials about intercultural communication developed in Boarding School because in the dormitory there are student who come from different regions.
- 2) Foreign students who attend school at Islamic Boarding School (pesantren) should receive special attention (support) from the foundation and pesantren environment so that they can adapt to their new environment and avoid bully from their friends.
- 3) Islamic Boarding School can further maximize effective intercultural communication with outside countries in sending and receiving interstate student for the creation of harmonious cooperation across the country.

## C. Recommendation

- 1) This research was inductive with descriptive qualitative. It provides the opportunity for other researchers to do researches on anxiety uncertainty management in the other Islamic Boarding School for foreign student like in Banda Aceh and others;
- 2) Concerning information about foreign student in Islamic Boarding School is very limited in Aceh and in Indonesia in general. This kind of research can be used as the material for making monograph on the phenomena of increasing foreign student in Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Duronto, Patricia M, Tsukasa, Nishidab dan Shin-ichi Nakayamac. (2005). Uncertainty, Anxiety, and Avoidance in Communication with Strangers. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29. 549–560.
- [2] Florack, Arnd, Anette Rohman, Johanna Palcu dan Agostino Mazziotta. (2014). How Initial Cross-Group Friendships Prepare For Intercultural Communication: The Importance of Anxiety Reduction and Self-Confidence in Communication. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 43. 278– 288.
- [3] Fritz, Marie Vaˆfors, Dorothy Chin dan Valerie de Marinis. (2008). Stressors, Anxiety, Acculturation and Adjustment among International and North American Student. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32. 244–259.
- [4] Griffin, EM. (2012). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. Eight Edition. McGraw-Hill. New York.
- [5] Gudykunst, William B dan Young Yun Kim. (2003). *Communicating with Strangers, an Approach to Intercultural Communication*. International Edition, Fourth Edition. Mc Graw Hill.

- [6] Jailani. (2017). Peran dan Tanggungjawab Dayah dalam Membina Akhlak Student. *At-Ta'dib: Volume IX, No. 2, Juli-Desember*. 179- 195.
- [7] Littlejohn, Stephen W dan Karen A. Foss. (2011). *Teori Komunikasi*. Edisi 9 Jakarta: Penerbit Humanika.
- [8] Lubis, Lusiana Andriani. (2016). *Pemahaman Praktis Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Medan: USU Press
- [9] Mardolina, Yiska. (2015). *Pola Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Mahasiswa Asing dengan Mahasiswa Lokal di Universitas Hasanuddin*. (Skripsi). Makassar: Universitas Hasanuddin.
- [10] Masril, Munzaimah. (2014). *Kompetensi Komunikasi Antarbudaya (Analisis Hubungan Kecemasan dan Ketidakpastian Terhadap Kompetensi Komunikasi Antarbudaya Warga Jepang di Indonesia)* (Tesis). Medan: Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- [11] Moleong, L.J. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- [12] Morissan dan Andi Corry Wardhani. (2009). *Teori Komunikasi: Tentang Komunikator, Pesan, Percakapan dan Hubungan*. Jakarta: Ghalia Indonesia.
- [13] Rahardjo, Turnomo. (2005). *Menghargai Perbedaan Kultural: Mindfulness dalam Komunikasi Antaretnis*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- [14] Siska, Sudardjo. (2003). *Kepercayaan Diri dan Kecemasan Komunikasi Interpersonal pada Mahasiswa*. *Jurnal Psikologi* No. 2, 67 – 71