

Verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian exchange students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia

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Abstract

This study explores the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian exchange students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia. Employing a qualitative case study, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, with Speech Codes Theory as the main analytical framework. Findings reveal that Indonesian students encounter challenges in understanding accents, vocabulary, and nonverbal expressions of Malaysian peers, which affect both academic and social interactions. To overcome these barriers, they adopt adaptive strategies such as code-switching between Indonesian, Malay, and English, adjusting gestures, and using neutral facial expressions. Conversely, Malaysian students perceive their Indonesian counterparts as polite, adaptable, and communicative. Rather than being obstacles, cultural symbol differences are often regarded as opportunities for mutual learning. The study highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptive strategies in fostering effective intercultural communication.

Keywords: Cultural Adaptation; Intercultural Communication; Verbal Communication; Nonverbal Communication

1. Introduction

Communication is the process of delivering messages or information from one party to another to achieve mutual understanding (Littlejohn et al., 2016). In the context of globalization, intercultural communication has become increasingly important as it enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to interact effectively. Students participating in student exchange programs are required to adapt to differences in language, social norms, and cultural practices in their new environment (Kusherdiana, 2020). Indonesia and Malaysia share cultural, linguistic, and historical similarities; however, significant differences still arise in their communication styles. Although both countries belong to the Malay language family, variations in accents, vocabulary, emotional expressions, and nonverbal communication often pose challenges for Indonesian students participating in exchange programs in Malaysia. According to the Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students report published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021), Malaysia ranks as the second most popular destination for Indonesian students, with a total of 8,440 students (Jatmika & Mulyawan, 2025). This highlights the high level of interest among Indonesian students but also emphasizes the importance of understanding differences in intercultural communication patterns.

A study by Maharani et al. (2024) found that many Indonesian exchange students in Malaysia face difficulties adapting due to differences in communication styles and social expectations, which are not always effectively conveyed through verbal or nonverbal symbols. Similarly, Adina & Andrianto (2021) revealed that exchange students often struggle to understand the Malay accent and vocabulary, even though language similarity is initially perceived as an advantage. Furthermore, differences in nonverbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and vocal intonation can lead to intercultural misunderstandings. For example, Indonesian students' smiles and nods, intended as expressions of politeness, are sometimes interpreted differently by Malaysian students, who tend to adopt a more formal and cautious communication style.

The CEO of Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS), Novie Bin Tajudin, reported that Indonesia ranks second in terms of the number of international students in Malaysia, with approximately 11,000 students as of 2022 (Fatunnisa, 2023). This reflects the strong attraction of Malaysia's research-based and diverse educational system. However, the linguistic and cultural

similarities between the two countries can also lead to false assumptions about the ease of adaptation. Misinterpretations of verbal and nonverbal symbols have the potential to create misunderstandings, social distance, and even feelings of alienation within academic and social environments.

Therefore, this research is significant in understanding how Indonesian exchange students adjust their communication patterns and develop adaptive strategies to foster more harmonious interactions. The objectives of this study are:

- a. To identify the verbal communication patterns of Indonesian exchange students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia
- b. To identify the nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian exchange students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia

The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of intercultural communication theories and provide practical insights for Indonesian students as well as universities in preparing more effective exchange programs. Previous studies have explored various aspects of intercultural communication but have yet to focus specifically on the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian students in Malaysia. Among them are:

- a. Safhirah & Misnawati (2024) examined intercultural communication acculturation between Indonesian and Malaysian students.
- b. Kholil et al. (2017) analyzed the supporting factors and barriers in intercultural communication at UIN Sumatera Utara.
- c. Novealdi et al. (2022) analyzed the supporting factors and barriers in intercultural communication at UIN Sumatera Utara.
- d. Roshima (2017) discussed the interactions between international students and local students at UIN Suska Riau.
- e. Fasai (2021) studied the communication patterns among students at Universitas Bina Darma and Universitas Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

This research complements previous studies by adopting a more specific focus on the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian students participating in exchange programs at UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia, using the speech codes theory as the analytical framework.

2. Method

In conducting this research, the researcher employed a qualitative case study approach. According to Rahardjo (2017), a case study is a series of scientific investigations conducted intensively, in detail, and comprehensively about a program, event, or activity either at the individual, group, institutional, or organizational level to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The qualitative research process involves several essential steps, such as formulating research questions and procedures, collecting specific data from participants, and analyzing the data inductively.

The scope of this research focuses on verbal and nonverbal communication patterns in intercultural interactions between Indonesian exchange students and local Malaysian students within academic and social settings. The object of the research is the communication experiences of Indonesian students during their exchange program at UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia.

The subjects of the study consist of six informants:

- a. Three Indonesian students participating in the student exchange program at UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia.
- b. Three Malaysian students who directly interacted with Indonesian students throughout the program.

The research site is Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia, as the university serves as the primary setting for both academic and social interactions. To collect the required data, the researcher applied three data collection methods:

2.1. In-depth interview

In-depth interviews are face-to-face data collection techniques conducted to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of a particular social phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, in this study, the interviews were conducted online with three Indonesian students and three Malaysian students. The questions focused on their experiences, perceptions, and adaptation strategies related to verbal and nonverbal communication patterns during the exchange program.

2.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation is a qualitative data collection method in which the researcher actively engages in the social environment under study to better understand behaviors and interactions in their natural context (Lungu, 2022). The researcher observed student interactions within academic and social settings, including class discussions, group work, campus activities, and informal conversations. The observations primarily focused on facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and other aspects of nonverbal communication.

2.3. Document Analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative method used to review and interpret written, visual, or electronic materials relevant to the research focus (Bintang P & Ilma F, 2020). These documents include personal, institutional, official, or public records that provide contextual and supporting information. Document analysis was conducted to complement and validate findings obtained from interviews and observations.

2.3.1. This research examines two key variables:

- a. Verbal communication patterns, which refer to the use of language, vocabulary, accents, and sentence structures in intercultural interactions between Indonesian and Malaysian exchange students.
 - b. Nonverbal communication patterns, which encompass facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, voice intonation, and physical distance used in everyday communication.
- Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model by B. Miles et al. (2018), which involves

2.3.2. three main stages:

- a. Data reduction: Selecting, focusing, and simplifying interview and observation data according to the themes of verbal and nonverbal communication.
- b. Data display: Presenting the findings in the form of narratives, tables, and direct quotes from informants to facilitate interpretation.
- c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: interpreting the identified communication patterns and validating findings through member checking with informants and data triangulation from interviews, observations, and documents.

The validity of the data was ensured using the trustworthiness approach (Nowell et al., 2017),

2.3.3. which consists of four indicators:

- a. Credibility: achieved through triangulation of sources and techniques by comparing data from in-depth interviews, observations, and supporting documents.
- b. Transferability: ensured by providing detailed contextual descriptions of informants' backgrounds, interaction situations, and sociocultural contexts, allowing readers to assess whether the findings can be applied in similar settings.
- c. Dependability: maintained by systematically documenting the entire research process, including interviews, data collection, and data analysis procedures.
- d. Confirmability: ensured by maintaining objectivity and transparency during data analysis, supported by reflective notes and external verification of findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research Informant Profile

This study involved six informants: three Indonesian students participating in the exchange program at UiTM Shah Alam and three Malaysian students who directly interacted with them. The informants were selected based on their firsthand experiences in engaging in intercultural communication within both academic and social contexts during the exchange period.

Table 1. Informant Description Table

No	Informant Code	Category (Country of Origin)	Gender	Home University (Indonesia)	Status	Additional Information
1	I1	Indonesian Student	Female	Institut Teknologi Surabaya	Exchange Student	Active in academic and non-academic activities
2	I2	Indonesian Student	Male	Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta	Exchange Student	Have been in a project group with Malaysian students
3	I3	Indonesian Student	Male	BINUS University	Exchange Student	Join a local cultural club
4	M1	Malaysian Student	Male	-	Interaction Partner	Classmates with Indonesian students
5	M2	Malaysian Student	Male	-	Interaction Partner	Same faculty as Indonesian student
6	M3	Malaysian Student	Female	-	Interaction Partner	Living in the same dormitory with Indonesian students

These six informants provide complementary perspectives. The Indonesian students describe their adaptation process and the challenges of intercultural communication they encountered, while the Malaysian students offer insights into how they perceive and interpret the communication styles, attitudes, and cultural symbols brought by the Indonesian students. The combination of experiences from both groups serves as an essential foundation for understanding the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns within the context of the exchange program. They do not merely share information but also interpret cultural symbols, navigate differences, and develop adaptation strategies to ensure effective and harmonious communication.

3.2. Initial Interaction Experiences and Adaptation to Communication Culture

In the early stages of interaction, Indonesian students faced challenges in adjusting to the communication patterns of Malaysian students. In terms of verbal communication, most informants admitted to experiencing confusion when they first interacted due to differences in accent, vocabulary, and speaking tempo. For example, one informant said that he felt awkward because he did not understand the meaning of some words used by Malaysian students. This made the initial communication process challenging and required quick adjustments.

To overcome these obstacles, Indonesian students began to use code-switching strategies, combining Indonesian, Malay, and English so that messages could be more easily understood by both parties. Most informants acknowledged that the use of mixed languages helped them bridge the gap in understanding, especially in informal situations and everyday conversations.

In terms of nonverbal communication, informants explained that smiles, facial expressions, and eye contact play a major role in creating a positive first impression. One informant said that during the first meeting in class, he chose to smile and maintain a polite posture as a form of courtesy. This action was considered effective because the Malaysian students responded warmly, making the interaction more fluid. These findings show that successful initial adaptation is not only influenced by verbal skills, but also by understanding and adjusting to nonverbal cues in the local cultural context.

3.3. Communication Patterns in the Academic Environment

In the academic environment, Indonesian students adapt to the communication patterns that apply at UiTM Shah Alam, both in terms of verbal and nonverbal communication. In terms of verbal communication, most informants explained that they use a mixture of languages during the learning process, especially when discussing in groups and giving presentations. English is the dominant language in academic forums because it is considered more neutral, while Malay is used to explain parts that are less understood by local students. Conversely, Indonesian is sometimes still used among fellow Indonesian students to ensure understanding of the material.

In addition, communication adjustments are seen in the way Indonesian students express their opinions. Several informants mentioned that they usually start with English, then adjust to Malay when they feel it is necessary. This strategy makes the message easier to understand and helps maintain the smooth flow of discussion.

In terms of nonverbal communication, Indonesian students observed differences in communication etiquette in academic settings. In Indonesia, interactions with lecturers are generally more formal, with the use of very polite language and strict manners. However, at UiTM Shah Alam, Indonesian students found that interactions with lecturers and classmates were more relaxed and open. One informant said that initially he felt awkward because he was used to keeping his distance from lecturers, but then he adjusted his body language, eye contact, and tone of voice to be more in line with Malaysian academic norms. This adjustment helped Indonesian students communicate more effectively, maintain good relationships with lecturers, and build smooth collaboration with local students.

3.4. Communication Patterns in Social Environments

Outside the classroom, Indonesian students build more relaxed, flexible, and familiar communication. In terms of verbal communication, most informants revealed that they often use mixed languages more freely, combining Indonesian, Malay, and English according to their conversation partners. Language choices are adjusted according to the level of closeness, where interactions with close friends use more local terms and familiar greetings.

Several informants mentioned that humor is an important element in social communication. Using light jokes helps to break the ice and facilitates the process of building closeness with Malaysian students. In addition, Indonesian students are also actively learning everyday vocabulary and local slang to enrich their communication skills.

In terms of nonverbal communication, social interactions tend to be more expressive. Several informants said that they often use smiles, laughter, and body gestures to show enthusiasm when talking. Malaysian students also find Indonesian students' expressions pleasant and easy to understand, which helps strengthen social relationships. In addition, the involvement of Indonesian students in campus activities, community events, and other social activities is an effective means of adapting to local communication norms and expanding cross-cultural friendship networks.

3.5. Barriers and Misunderstandings in Cross-Cultural Communication

Although the adaptation process went quite well, most informants revealed that they still experienced communication barriers, both in verbal and nonverbal communication, especially in the early stages. Verbally, differences in accent, speaking tempo, and vocabulary were the main causes of misunderstandings. Several Indonesian students mentioned that they had difficulty understanding the meaning of certain terms in Malay, which sometimes have different meanings from Indonesian. To overcome this obstacle, Indonesian students chose to ask questions directly, slow down the pace of conversation, and use English as an alternative when confusion arose. One informant explained that he learned to gradually adjust his Malay vocabulary and accent so that he would be more easily accepted in everyday conversation.

In terms of nonverbal communication, misunderstandings also sometimes arise due to differences in the interpretation of facial expressions and gestures. For example, a smile intended as a form of politeness by Indonesian students is sometimes considered passive by Malaysian students. However, these misunderstandings generally do not cause serious conflicts because students from

both countries tend to be open, ask each other questions, and use humor to clarify the meaning of messages. Over time, the adaptation process has made communication errors less frequent.

From a broader perspective, differences in symbolic meanings also emerge in social relationships. Indonesian students generally perceive Malaysian peers as friendly, open, and polite, while Malaysian students describe Indonesian peers as respectful, adaptable, and pleasant conversational partners. These mutual perceptions highlight that despite initial communication barriers, both groups succeed in building positive intercultural relationships.

Table 2. Comparison of symbolic meanings between Indonesian and Malaysian students

Category	Symbol/ Communication Events	Interpretation by Indonesian Students	Interpretation by Malaysian Students
Verbal: Accent and Vocabulary	Malay dialect (e.g.: “kat”, “ <i>awak</i> ”, “ <i>yeke</i> ”)	At first it was difficult to understand; some words caused confusion and needed adjustment, such as “ <i>awak</i> ” which was thought to mean ‘I’ when it actually means “you”.	Indonesian slang is considered funny and interesting; words such as “ <i>baper</i> ”, “ <i>hape</i> ”, and “ <i>macet</i> ” need to be explained, but they make interactions fun and enrich their knowledge of the language.
Polite Expression	Tone of voice, choice of words when speaking with professors or friends	Malaysian students are considered to be gentler, more refined, and more polite, especially towards lecturers; Indonesian students are more careful in their choice of words.	Indonesian students are considered polite and friendly; although shy at first, they become open and cheerful. Their communication style is considered sincere and pleasant.
Informal Social Context	Casual conversation, jokes, group work	Indonesian students tend to be relaxed and straightforward, with some adapting to local accents or styles.	Informal interactions occur easily; communication is considered lighthearted and fun. The body language and humor of Indonesian students feel warm and blend well.
Nonverbal: Expressions and Gestures	Tone of voice, facial expressions when speaking	Assessing the expressions and tone of voice of Malaysian students, they are rather high-pitched and soft; adaptation is needed. However, in general, their expressions are easy to understand.	No significant differences were found. Indonesian students are considered expressive and their gestures are easy to understand. Sometimes they are more expressive, but pleasant.
Communication Adaptation	Accent’s adjusting, expressions, or speaking style in discussions and friendships	Indonesian students adjust their accent and style of speech to avoid misunderstandings; they often use a mixture of English, Malay, and Indonesian.	Malaysian students also try to adapt, for example by learning from Indonesian films or trying out certain accents to make communication flow more smoothly.
Misunderstanding Language	Ambiguous words or expressions (e.g., “ <i>awak</i> ,” “ <i>baper</i> ,” “ <i>macet</i> ”)	It often happens at the beginning, but it's no big deal. Respond with direct questions or shared laughter.	They immediately ask questions and learn from their mistakes. New words from Indonesia actually strengthen relationships because they learn each other's languages.
Social Acceptance	Attendance in group activities, friendships, working together	Indonesian students feel accepted and valued; although initially introverted, many are helped by social activities	Malaysian students stated that they felt very comfortable befriending and working with Indonesian students, considering them friendly,

Symbols of Cultural Identity	Cultural references, food, daily habits	and a supportive environment. Adapting and introducing Indonesian culture; there is pride in introducing unique terms/customs.	polite, and quick to adapt. Interested and enthusiastic about learning about Indonesian culture; feeling a sense of kinship and welcoming Indonesian students with warmth and curiosity.
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These findings indicate that the process of symbolic adaptation is an important part of successful intercultural communication. Differences in symbolic meaning do not necessarily hinder communication; rather, they provide opportunities for learning and deeper cross-cultural understanding.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the intercultural communication barriers experienced by Indonesian exchange students are minor and situational. With an open attitude, adaptive strategies, and the use of alternative languages, these barriers can be overcome. Differences in accent, vocabulary, and nonverbal expressions are both a source of challenge and opportunity in forming a deeper cross-cultural understanding.

3.6. Adaptation Strategies of Indonesian Students Toward Communication Patterns in Malaysia

Based on the interview results, Indonesian students apply various adaptation strategies to adjust to the communication patterns of Malaysian students. One theory relevant to explaining these adaptation strategies is Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) developed by Howard Giles (Giles in Larona, 2017). This theory states that individuals tend to adjust their speaking style, language choices, tone of voice, and even nonverbal expressions to create comfort in interactions and minimize social and cultural distance.

In the context of Indonesian students in Malaysia, the form of adaptation they undertake reflects a process of convergence, namely adjusting their communication to resemble the communication style of local students. This process can be seen in their efforts to imitate accents, use local vocabulary, adjust facial expressions, and behave more openly in social and academic interactions. Some students also use translation applications to understand new words. English is often used as a neutral language when they encounter difficulties. In addition, Indonesian students also observe local communication to learn daily interaction patterns. CAT helps us understand that these strategies are carried out consciously or unconsciously as an effort to build harmonious communication in a cross-cultural environment.

In terms of nonverbal communication, adjustments are made to voice intonation, facial expressions, and gestures to conform to local communication norms. Several informants said that they learned to read social contexts and adjust their expressions so as not to offend others. Support from local students and programs such as UiTM Global Ambassador (UGLAM) was also an important factor in accelerating the adaptation process. This assistance facilitated the understanding of cultural symbols and increased the confidence of Indonesian students in interacting with others.

3.7. Malaysian Students' Perceptions of Indonesian Students' Communication Patterns

The results of the study show that Malaysian students have a positive perception of Indonesian students' communication patterns, both verbal and nonverbal. Most Malaysian students consider Indonesian students to be polite, friendly, and adaptable. They appreciate Indonesian students' efforts to adapt, such as using the Malay dialect and learning local terms.

In terms of nonverbal communication, Malaysian students consider Indonesian students' body language to be similar to their own, which facilitates interaction. Indonesian students' smiles, eye contact, and facial expressions are considered to help create a familiar and comfortable atmosphere. In addition, Indonesian students' ability to engage in pleasant conversation makes social relationships feel closer.

Some Malaysian student informants also revealed that they find it easy to work with Indonesian students, both in academic and social contexts. This shows that the success of Indonesian students' communication adaptation plays a major role in creating harmonious relationships and strengthening intercultural interactions on campus.

3.8. Discussion

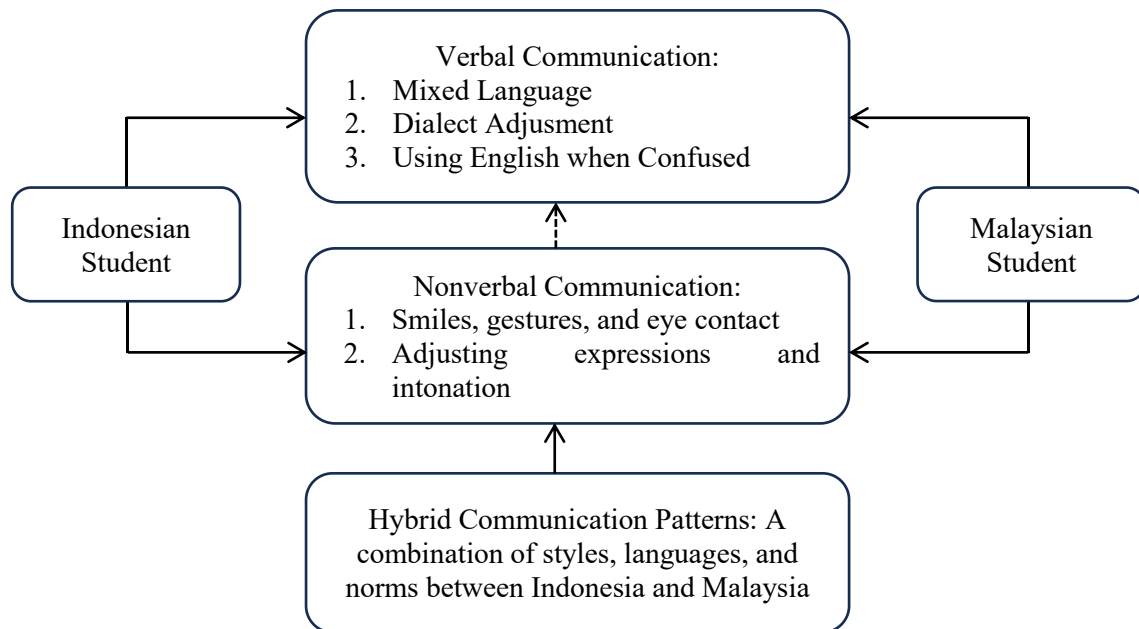
Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Indonesian students participating in the exchange program at UiTM Shah Alam, Malaysia undergo a complex communication adaptation process, both verbally and nonverbally, in order to adjust to their new academic and social environment. During the initial stages of interaction, Indonesian students faced several challenges, including differences in language, accent, and speech tempo. They admitted experiencing difficulties understanding certain Malay terms and expressions commonly used by Malaysian students. To overcome these obstacles, Indonesian students applied mixed communication strategies by using Indonesian, Malay, and English depending on the context of the conversation.

In academic settings, English tends to dominate, particularly during class discussions, presentations, and group projects. However, students also adapt by incorporating Malay in specific situations as a form of respect for the local culture. This linguistic adjustment is essential to ensure smoother communication with lecturers and classmates. Meanwhile, in social contexts, Indonesian students' communication style tends to be more relaxed, flexible, and expressive. They frequently utilize nonverbal communication, such as smiles, eye contact, and gestures, to build connections with Malaysian peers. These findings align with Malaysian students' perceptions from the interviews, where Indonesian students are seen as friendly, open, and easy to socialize with.

However, the research also reveals that communication barriers were more evident during the early stages of interaction. These obstacles arose due to differences in accents, vocabulary, and messaging styles. Some Indonesian students reported experiencing misunderstandings when encountering Malay terms that carry different meanings in Indonesian. Nevertheless, these challenges were gradually resolved through an ongoing adaptation process. The adaptation strategies used by Indonesian students include:

- a. Adjusting accents and vocabulary to be better understood by Malaysian students.
- b. Using English as a neutral language to minimize misunderstandings.
- c. Observing local communication styles, including facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonation.
- d. Leveraging social support from communities such as the UiTM Global Ambassador (UGLAM) to better understand the local culture and language.

Another key finding highlights that Malaysian students generally have a positive perception of Indonesian students. They view them as polite, respectful of local culture, and good communicators. This suggests that the adaptation process of Indonesian students has been largely effective, allowing them to establish harmonious academic and social interactions.



Description:

-----> : The relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication

————> : Direct communication flow

Figure 1. Communication patterns formed through the adaptation process of Indonesian students

The illustration above depicts the communication patterns formed through the adaptation process of Indonesian students during their participation in the exchange program in Malaysia. Indonesian students interact with Malaysian students through two main channels: verbal communication and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication is carried out using several strategies, including adjusting accents, using a mixed-language approach (Indonesian, Malay, and English), and utilizing translation technologies to overcome semantic barriers. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication involves the use of smiles, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, and tone adjustments to maintain harmony in both social and academic interactions. In the illustration, dashed lines represent the interconnectedness between verbal and nonverbal communication, indicating that both channels operate simultaneously and mutually influence each other during the adaptation process. On the other hand, solid lines signify direct communication flows, both from Indonesian students to Malaysian students and toward the formation of a hybrid communication pattern. This hybrid pattern results from the integration of communication styles, cultural values, and symbolic expressions from both parties, creating a new, flexible, and contextually adaptive communication system.

Furthermore, the communication built during the exchange program is not merely functional, but it also fosters strong emotional bonds between students from both countries. This is evident from M3's statement, where they expressed feelings of longing for the Indonesian students after the program ended. M3 felt as though they had lost an integral part of their classroom, reflecting the emotional closeness developed during the exchange. This sentiment serves as evidence that cross-cultural interactions, established through both verbal and nonverbal communication, have created a memorable, meaningful, and profound experience for students from both Indonesia and Malaysia.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the verbal and nonverbal communication patterns of Indonesian students participating in the exchange program at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia. The findings indicate that the intercultural communication process between Indonesian and Malaysian students is dynamic and requires adaptation strategies to ensure effective interaction. Indonesian students initially faced challenges related to language differences, accents, and variations in word meanings. To overcome these obstacles, they employed a code-switching strategy, utilizing

Indonesian, Malay, and English depending on the context of the conversation. In academic settings, English is the dominant language of choice, while Malay and Indonesian are used in specific situations.

Beyond verbal aspects, Indonesian students also relied on nonverbal communication, including facial expressions, smiles, eye contact, and body gestures, to establish and strengthen social relationships with Malaysian students. As a result, interactions became smoother and more harmonious. The study also found that Indonesian students developed several adaptation strategies, such as language adjustments, observing local communication styles, and leveraging social support through campus communities. Moreover, Malaysian students' perceptions of Indonesian students were generally positive, viewing them as friendly, polite, and easy to socialize with.

Overall, this study highlights that the success of intercultural communication among Indonesian students at UiTM is influenced by their linguistic flexibility, ability to interpret cultural contexts, and openness to differences in values and social norms. These findings suggest that cross-cultural communication adaptation goes beyond merely mastering the language; it also involves understanding local cultures, behaviors, and norms in order to create effective and harmonious interactions.

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