



***LOCAL CITIZENS INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION WITH
REFUGEES IN PEKANBARU CITY, INDONESIA***

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By

WULANDARI HAPPY

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Science**

June 2019

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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Chief Supervisor : Abdul Mua'ti @ Zamri Bin Ahmad, PhD
Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

This study aims to explore the interpersonal communication of Pekanbaru City local citizens with refugees around them. This research conducted to find out the motives, the behaviors and the local's preferences when communicate with refugees. The result of the study is expected to contribute on Indonesian government discussion of designated island to accommodate refugees who are live and will come to Indonesia. So, this study believes that there should be any thorough research about the local citizen acceptance toward the issue. Because at the end of the day, refugees who come to a host country will affects the local society in their life.

However, the lack of study on host community and refugees in Indonesia especially based on the local citizens' point of view do not fulfilled specific data of them while this study believes that the variable from each area has to be particular because having various cultures could lead local citizens to different behaviors on dealing with social dynamics. Therefore, this study used phenomenology in qualitative to gain specific data from local citizen's experiences when communicating with refugees. By studying the interpersonal communication between local community and refugees thoroughly and putting the experience into a pattern or concept may contribute to a government and any related institution for future strategy to enter and-convey a plan to a group of people so it could be more efficient and targeted.

Data is collected by using semi-structured interview and observation on five suitable informants based on purposive sampling. The framework analysis is used for data transcription while discourse analysis is used for data from observation. As a result, the first objective which is the motive of communication has found that local citizen communicates purposely for inclusion, to show friendliness, and to sell certain items as they see refugees as their potential customers. The second objective which focus on the

communication behavior, informants seen to have prominent behavior such as high understanding, tolerance and committed to avoid problems in their communication with refugees. Then, the third objective resulted in language barrier and lack of understanding in honorific usage as the disruption aspects while understanding and familiarity work as supportive aspects.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KOMUNIKASI INTERPERSONAL ANTARA WARGA TEMPATAN DENGAN PELARIAN DI BANDAR PEKANBARU, INDONESIA

Oleh

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka komunikasi interpersonal warga bandar Pekanbaru dengan pelarian di sekeliling mereka. Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengetahui motif, tingkah laku dan keutamaan tempatan apabila berkomunikasi dengan pelarian. Hasil kajian ini, diharapkan dapat menyumbang kepada pembahasan kerajaan Indonesia tentang pulau yang akan ditetapkan untuk menampung pelarian yang sedang dan akan datang ke Indonesia. Oleh kerana itu, kajian ini mempercayai bahwa perlu ada penelitian menyeluruh mengenai penerimaan warga Indonesia terhadap isu tersebut. Ini kerana di kemudian hari, isu pelarian akan memberi kesan kepada masyarakat setempat dalam kehidupan mereka.

Walau bagaimanapun, kekurangan kajian terhadap komuniti tuan rumah dan pelarian di Indonesia, terutama berdasarkan pandangan penduduk setempat tidak memenuhi data khusus mereka. sementara kajian ini percaya bahawa pembolehubah dari setiap kawasan perlu khusus, kerana mempunyai pelbagai budaya boleh membawa warga kepada tingkah laku yang berbeza dalam menangani dinamika sosial.

Tambahan pula, kajian ini menggunakan fenomenologi secara kualitatif untuk mendapatkan data tertentu dari pengalaman warga tempatan ketika berkomunikasi dengan pelarian. Mengkaji komunikasi interpersonal antara masyarakat setempat dan pelarian serta meletakkan pengalaman menjadi corak atau konsep, boleh menyumbang kepada kerajaan dan mana-mana institusi yang berkaitan untuk strategi masa depan, untuk memasuki dan menyampaikan rancangan kepada sekumpulan orang supaya ia dapat lebih cekap dan disasarkan. Data dikumpul dengan menggunakan kaidah wawancara separa berstruktur dan pemerhatian pada lima informan yang sesuai berdasarkan persampelan bertujuan. Analisis rangka kerja digunakan untuk data transkripsi dari wawancara sementara analisis wacana yang digunakan untuk data dari pemerhatian.

Hasil objektif pertama menunjukkan warga tempatan berkomunikasi dengan kemasukan, ramah dan untuk menjual barangan tertentu kerana mereka melihat pelarian sebagai pelanggan berpotensi mereka. Objektif kedua adalah tingkah laku komunikasi. Informan dilihat mempunyai tingkah laku yang menonjol seperti pemahaman yang tinggi, toleransi dan komited untuk menghindari masalah dalam komunikasi mereka dengan pelarian. Kemudian, matlamat ketiga menghasilkan penghalang bahasa dan kurang pemahaman dalam penggunaan kehormatan sebagai aspek gangguan sementara pemahaman dan kebiasaan bekerja sebagai aspek sokongan.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

There is a discussion in the Indonesian parliament regarding the plan to establish a designated island as a solution for the Indonesian government towards the third country situation which today has reduced the number of their receipts for resettlement of state refugees.

The third state, such as the US (Lind, 2018; Golshan, 2018; Mark and Gal, 2018; Cohen and Labott, 2018; Alvarez, 2018), Australia (Karp, 2018; Pascoe, 2018) and German (Benček and Strasheim, 2016; Jäckle and König, 2017), significantly reduced the number of refugee acceptance with their particular reasons, making the transit country such as Indonesia has to deal with the number of refugee populations without being able to be directed to the third world country (Taylor, 2018).

Suggestion emerged from the representation of politic parties, community and humanitarian organization in Indonesia (Astunggoro, 2017) and experts from a non-governmental organization who has the same idea (*PKS*, 2017; *Pengamat*, 2015; *Pulau*, 2015; *Pemerintah*, 2015; *RI*, 2015), in addition with Indonesia previous experience on 1970's-1990's when accommodated Vietnam War refugees on Galang Island in Batam, makes this policy more likely to be implemented.

In the parliament, they discussed in state scope capabilities such as security, law, administration, bureaucracy, and management including the ability of staff available for this matter. Where this study positions itself to contributes from a communication point of view.

As communication is the carrier of culture and social relationships (Kim and McKay-Semmler, 2013), identifying people's communication would have the government to have substantial steps when entering the society to convey the policy to the community.

This study believes hosting refugees is not a simple plan. It is about mitigating groups of people (local society and refugees) with different values, cultures, and custom into one area. It should be understand that the government position in this matter is the mediator of both sides. Means, it should be able to facilitate and mediate both sides reasonably. If the government does not understand how the community's interpersonal communication comprehensively, then how it is going to implement this function. Moreover, by the history from the previous study in another country, this issue is sensitive enough to potentially lead onto new problems for a country.

In that sense, the result of this study expected to provide a necessary knowledge for the government or related authorities by putting the local citizens communication motives and behaviors into a concept that potentially help the government or the relevant authorities to enter society, so roles and efforts can be made more relevant and targeted efficiently.

1.2. Problem Statement

This study is necessary because to contribute with an insightful suggestion to the government, the lack of exploration studies on host community and refugees in Indonesia, do not fulfilled specific conditions of them especially based on the local citizens' point of view, which this study believes it has to be particular from each area. Since Indonesia with its various cultures could affect the behavior of the local in facing social dynamics.

Previous studies about the life of local citizens with refugees around them are from Makassar city in Sulawesi (Gabiella and Putri, 2018) and Cisarua in West Java (Ali, Briskman and Fiske, 2016). While there are thirteen cities in Indonesia pointed by the government to accommodate refugees, then there are other ten cities wait to be studied.

Indonesia is a country with various cultures adapts by its local and until this present moment the island for the establishment is not decided yet. The possibility is, it will open a new island or choosing from the nearby island from the pointed cities. So that, it is compulsory for any future research, Indonesian government, and interested authorities in designated island, to gather information and variable according to the area so they could get the relevant picture and enter the local to convey the message in the most appropriate way. In addition, the relevant variable could be tested for future research in focus on the readiness or acceptance of the local towards refugees to Indonesia.

Further, it is essential to gain sight from a host point of view. Because Carassa and Colombetti (2015) stated, one-sided recognition of the speakers' intention does not suffice. A study needs to concern on the other side to have genuine communication. The effect of the communicative act is not necessarily limited to the audience as it may also involve the speaker. That is why this study focuses on the Pekanbaru citizens as the host for the refugee as one of those 13 cities. After it is a government to a government and institution to institution politics. It will leave the issue on the local society, where they would interact with refugees in their daily. Having refugees exist in local's environment right now and study it, the result would also be considered as prediction for predicting strategy for social treatment by the government and predicting social problems that may occur.

Finally, there was no commotion or problem related to this matter in Indonesia especially in Pekanbaru city. However, there is a discussion about designated island since 2015 which possibly ignite a dynamic in the society. In order to read the possibility of the

situation, further research is necessary in Indonesia. However, the lack of study to suit the diversity of Indonesian becomes an obstacle, which means variables from the specific data needs to obtain, then that is the reason why this research pursued.

1.3. Research Questions

From the statement of problems and background of the research study, three questions raised. These questions are directed to discuss the issues about interpersonal communication within local society and refugees with the following questions:

1. What are the motivations Pekanbaru City local citizen have in communicating with a refugee?
2. How does the communication behavior between local citizens toward refugees in their daily conversation?
3. What are the aspects that can disrupt or support the local citizen's willing to engaging in communication with refugees?

1.4 Research Objective

The general objective of this research is to discover local citizens interpersonal communication of local citizens towards refugees in Pekanbaru City, Indonesia. To achieve the main objective of this study, following specific objectives defined:

1. To determine the motivations of Pekanbaru local citizen in communicating with a refugee.
2. To gain a qualitative understanding of the local citizen communication behavior toward refugees.
3. To discover which aspects that can disrupt or support the local citizen's willing to engage in communication with refugees.

1.5. Significance of Study

In the fact that Indonesia government is in a discussion about implementing the policy, this study is very in line and will be very helpful to be taken into consideration during the discussion. Since this study uses the qualitative method, the researcher believes the results will be profound that the roots of the problems can be found and allow it to implemented in other problems.

Figuring out the community situation is essential for a government, not only because it is an obligation as a government, but it is as well beneficial in profit and loss point of view. Commotion occurred between society and the government countries because the government almost certainly makes decisions without involving society sight on that,

including the case where the government accepts refugees as it is willing to have a role in a global level, but without its society consent, it could be an issue.

According to the Ministry of National Development Planning of the Republic of Indonesia, due to the demographic bonus, Indonesia is going to be the most potential nation until 2035. In that sense, any possible view to enhancing Indonesia on a global level is needed. By having a role in refugees matter, it has long-term benefits for Indonesia to be known worldwide and by studying it, it will strengthen this goal wisely and accurately.

Later, this study of how Indonesian treats and behaves on refugee will openly contribute as a consideration to government policy on how to treat its society, on how to have a role in a global level by involving the community, and bring out the excellent image of the Indonesian intercultural communication act and openness toward new phenomena, and foreign issues. Indeed, this study will be beneficial for the government mainly to deal with the social issue in society.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

As can be inferred on the problem statement section, this study would like to discover the fundamental of the communication between host and refugees in the host area. In order to fulfill that intention, this study helped by qualitative method with the phenomenological approach to discover, find, and focus on gaining host experience who lives side by side with refugees.

There were several limitations happened along the study. As this study used purposive sampling, requirements for suitable informants and the willingness of the potential informants would sort numbers of local citizen who joined this research. Pekanbaru city was selected under the reason of this city is one of the 13 pointed city which accomodate refugees in Indonesia. Moreover, researcher as the local but not indigineous to the research area, really benefit this study in the aspect of access and familiriaty to the research environment in the same time still maintain the objectivity toward informants.

Five informants helped this research and there were three refugees involved as well. However since they want to keep their privacy, any documentations of them like pictures or videos could not be obtained in this research. They are really tryin hard to keep their privacy if not with the local citizen, they may not want to give statement to support the data of this research.

In data transcript, researcher had to cancel the use of computer application for organizing data since it dirrupted the data analyzing process. The computer need to be fixed several times and it deleted the data that have been input before into the application as well, so

considering the time constraint, researcher relied on manual data transcript and data organizer such as self-managed papers onto several folder and paper maps.

Further, in the process of communication with the local and obtaining their experience into English for this research purposes, the researcher didnot use translator service. There are aspects such context, expression, and intention that researcher try to keep, so instead the researcher did it by herself since she was present at the moment and she was able to understand the words of the local better.



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