



Communication Accommodation of South Sumatra Students in Intercultural Communication at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta

Rizka Fitriana¹, Yanti Haryanti²

^{1,2}Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Sukoharjo, Indonesia

Email: ¹1100214242@student.ums.ac.id, ²yanti_haryanti@ums.ac.id

Abstract

This study discusses the communication accommodation process of students from South Sumatra in interacting with the local at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The background of this study is based on the differences in language, character, and social customs between the Javanese community and students from South Sumatra, which pose challenges in the process of intercultural communication. The purpose of this study is to understand the forms of communication adjustment made by students in facing cultural differences and the strategies used to adapt to a new environment. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with six informants who are students from South Sumatra from the 2021-2023 batch. The results show that students experience culture shock at the beginning of their studies due to differences in language and manners. However, through the process of communication accommodation, they began to adjust their speaking style, tone of voice, and social behavior in accordance with Javanese cultural norms (convergence), without losing their original cultural identity (divergence). This adaptation process had a positive effect on their ability to interact, increased social acceptance, and strengthened mutual respect between cultures on campus.

Keywords: Communication Accommodation, Migrant Students, Intercultural Communication, Culture Shock.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a diverse range of tribes and ethnic groups. Cultural diversity in Indonesia encompasses various aspects of life, such as knowledge, language, customs, arts, and traditional ceremonies. Cultural diversity is a cultural heritage that forms an important part of national identity (Rafi et al., 2023). The city of Solo or Surakarta is a region located in Central Java Province, Indonesia. According to a 2015 survey by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Central Java ranks second after East Java in terms of the lowest cost of living. This is certainly a consideration for students from outside Java who choose Solo or Surakarta as a place to study. One of these institutions is University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta, a private university located in Surakarta. Surakarta is a city that is quite popular among many people for continuing their studies, as Solo has a relatively low cost of living (Dewi et al., 2010).

Students from South Sumatra choose to migrate and study at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta (UMS) because it has good facilities. However, they also have to deal with cultural differences from their hometowns, which means that students must be able to adapt in their daily lives and blend in and understand Javanese culture. In a journal written by (Handayani & Yuca, 2018) entitled "The Phenomenon Of Culture Shock In First Year Students At Padang State University," it is explained that culture shock in students from other regions is caused by various factors related to cultural differences between their hometowns and their new environments, particularly in terms of language, speech patterns, food, and social interactions. This adjustment process is a significant challenge, especially for students from different cultures, which can cause difficulties in interacting and building social relationships in a new environment. The phenomenon of intercultural communication with migrant students in central Java province. Culture shock is evident in the form of differences in language and communication style, which is one of the cultural problems that can occur. The fact that students must study within a certain period of time creates opportunities for meetings and activities involving cultural contact (Firmanda et al., 2023).

Howard Giles theory of communicative accommodation explains several ways of adapting. One of the main aspects of this theory is that each individual has a choice regarding their attitude in communicating, either through convergence or divergence. Based on the experiences of students from South Sumatra, there are certainly many challenges they face in situations where they feel unfamiliar and confused in adjusting to the UMS environment. This is due to significant cultural differences in both language and customs. Culture shock, anxiety, and confusion about the new environment and culture are common initial reactions experienced by migrants or expatriates. Because of the various challenges they face, missionaries need to engage in cross cultural communication to assist in the adjustment process (Bau et al., 2024).

By understanding the process of communication accommodation, this study aims to determine how the process of communication, this study aims to determine how the process of communication accommodation is carried out by students from South Sumatra in establishing cultural interactions with their new environment. This study is important because it discusses the experiences of students from South Sumatra in adapting to Javanese culture at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta. Differences in language, culture, and communication styles pose unique barriers to intercultural interaction. Through this study, we gained an understanding of the accommodation process and communication strategies used by students to adjust. The results are expected to provide input for the university in designing orientation and social support programs for migrant students in their social and academic adaptation.

Theoretical review

Intercultural communication is inevitable in this era of globalization and increasing human mobility. According to Samovar in (Darmastuti, 2013), intercultural communication occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact and exchange meanings. Differences in symbolic systems, values, and cultural perceptions often become sources of misunderstanding in cross cultural interactions. Therefore, the success of intercultural communication greatly depends on the ability of individuals to understand the cultural context of their conversation partners and adjust their communication behavior accordingly.

According to Koentjaraningrat culture can be understood as the result human creativity, taste and intention that is manifested in ideas, behavior, and works that are part of social life. These values are acquired through a learning process, enabling humans to adapt their behavior and communication in accordance with local norms without having to abandon their original cultural identity. Intercultural communication serves as a guideline in the social interactions of each individual. Amidst the tide of globalization, understanding cross cultural communication emphasizes cultural differences and focuses on interactions between individuals, interpersonal communication, and group communication that reflect a persons behavior in the communication process (Yao, 2025).

The theory of communicative accommodation proposed by Howard Giles (1973) forms the main theoretical basis for this study. This theory explains how individuals adjust their communication styles when interacting adjust their communication style when interacting with others from different social or cultural backgrounds. This theory departs from the assumption that communication not only functions as a means of exchanging messages, but also as a tool for building social relationships, negotiating identities, and achieving social acceptance within a group (Zhang, 2018). According to Giles, communication adjustment occurs through several main forms, namely convergence and divergence.

1. Convergence is a strategy whereby individuals attempt to adjust their speaking style, word choice, intonation, or nonverbal behavior to resemble that of their conversation partner. The goal is to create social closeness and improve communication effectiveness.
2. Divergence is the opposite of convergence, which is when individuals maintain or emphasize the characteristics of their original groups communication as a form of cultural identity (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

In the context of students from south Sumatra studying ay University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta (UMS), convergence is evident in the students efforts to use Indonesia in everyday communication. Meanwhile, divergence occurs when south Sumatran students continue to use regional accents or local vocabulary when interacting with fellow of rejection of Javanese culture, but rather an expression of preserving their cultural identity and strengthening a sense of togetherness as fellow migrants.

This phenomenon can be explained through the social identity theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), which states that every individual has an urge to maintain their group identity as a source of social pride. In intercultural situations, individuals will try to balance the need to be accepted by the new group and the desire to continue to show their cultural characteristics (Tear & Reader, 2023).

In a journal (Bibi & Hamida, 2024) entitled “exploring communication patterns among international students in Indonesia: a study using communication accommodation theory,” it is emphasized that this theory originated from observations in communication situations, such as in interviews, where individuals tend to adjust their speaking style or mimic the interviewers behavior as a form of respect or an effort to build rapport. Meanwhile, research conducted by Putri, dkk (Global, 2020) entitled “communication accommodation behavior of out of town students at Jakarta state University using communication accommodation theory. The results explain the process of convergence and divergence in students adaptation to local culture. From these studies, it can be seen that the main focus is on interethnic communication adjustment in the context of society in general. This study is different because it specifically highlights the case of students from South Sumatra who must adapt to Javanese culture at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta. This focus fills a gap that previous studies have not addressed, as there have been no studies highlighting how communication accommodation occurs in daily interactions, academic interactions, and their adaptation process as a migrant group in a Javanese influenced campus environment. Thus, this study offers a new perspective on how communication accommodation takes place in a multicultural higher education context with a dominant local culture.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is used to understand social phenomena in depth through the perspective of the subjects being studied, focusing on the meaning, experience, and social context behind them (Cresswell, 2013). This approach allows researchers to describe the reality of communication among students from south Sumatra in intercultural interactions at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta in a natural and contextual manner. The research paradigm uses a constructivist approach, which assumes that social reality is constructed through individual interactions and experiences. In this paradigm, researchers play a role in understanding the meanings created by subjects based on the social and cultural contexts in which they live (Linclon, 1994).

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique used in research sampling to select participants who have certain characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The sample consisted of six informants who were students from south Sumatra studying at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta from 2021/2023 academic years who met the criteria required for the research, namely : 1). Students from south Sumatra who are studying at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta and have experience interacting with local culture, 2). UMS students from South Sumatra from the 2021 to 2023 batches, 3). The availability of students from South Sumatra to share their experiences while in the Javanese cultural environment. Data collection techniques were carried out through in depth interviews and participatory observation. In depth interviews were conducted in a semi structured manner so that researchers could explore experiences and meanings from the informant perspectives in a flexible manner while remaining focused on the research objectives. Meanwhile, observation was carried out to gain a contextual understanding of student communication interaction in real situations on campus (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The data analysis process in this study refers to the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (1994), which includes several main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. 1). Data reduction, at this stage, filter raw data from interviews and observations to select behaviors that indicate adaptation, such as language choices when speaking with Javanese friends, how they respond to cultural differences, or their strategies to avoid misunderstandings in conversation. This allows for greater focus on information relevant to the research topic of communication accommodation. 2). Data display: grouping findings based on several themes. For example, all data fragments related to “surprise at the language,” “confusion with the accent,” or feeling different from Javanese customs” are grouped under the theme of Culture shock. Data on self adjustment, such as imitating Javanese intonation, choosing Indonesian to be safe, or following the communication style of Javanese friends, is included in the accommodation strategies theme. 3). Conclusion behaviors, conclusions emerge after observing consistent patterns in the data presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the author presents data from interviews conducted with six active students from south Sumatra who are studying at university Muhammadiyah of Surakarta in the 2021/2023 academic year. The data shows that intercultural communication plays a very important role for south Sumatra students in accommodating communication processes when interacting with the local culture. The following is the profile information of the informants:

Tabel 1. Informant Profile

Nu.	Initial	Place of origin	Study program	Batch
1.	RF	Lahat	PBI	2021
2.	RKF	Perangai	Ilmu Gizi	2021
3.	NAA	Palembang	Ilmu Komunikasi	2022
4.	IS	Palembang	Ilmu Komunikasi	2023
5.	NTY	Pagaraalam	Ilmu Komunikasi	2023
6.	DSF	Martapura	PAI	2023

Culture Shock Experienced by South Sumatra Students

Students from south Sumatra who study at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta experience cultural differences and customs. When in a new environment, this causes various forms of culture shock as part of the initial adaptation process. Cultural differences often cause feelings of alienation, confusion, and even awkwardness when interacting with the surrounding environment. This was experienced by informants 1,2,and 4, who are students from south Sumatra enrolled in the 2021/2023 academic year.

“I experienced culture shock, especially in terms of language. Here, people speak softly, whereas in Sumatra they speak rather harshly. In addition, the food here tends to be sweet, unlike in my hometown where it is spicier, sourer, and saltier, I was also surprised that food here is much cheaper” (Informant 1, Class of 2021).

“when I first interacted with classmates from java, I often didn’t understand the language they used. Sometimes I would just smile or respond in Indonesian. Then there was also culture shock in terms of dialect. In south Sumatra, people are straightforward and to the point, and they often speak bluntly, but here (in Surakarta), the people are relatively refined and polite” (Informant 2, class of 2021)

“at first, I was surprised not only by the language but also by the food prices, which are quite cheap. For example, chicken rice here costs 10k, while in my are it’s 15k but the portion is smaller” (Informant 4, Class of 2023).

In this case, the experience of culture shock describes the cultural clash experienced by south Sumatra students when they first interacted with the local culture at UMS. However, despite causing culture shock, this experience became a starting point for Rantau students to undergo a process of communication accommodation in order to adapt to their new environment. This statements is in line with the findings of a study written by (Nugroho & Mareza, 2023). In a study written by (Nafa & Suhartono, 2024), it is explained that differences in language, food, and customs are the strongest forms of culture shock or cultural shock felt by rantau students.

Accommodation Strategies for Students from South Sumatra

In dealing with cultural differences, students from south Sumatra who study at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta implement various communication accommodation strategies in order to adapt to their new environment. These strategies include adjusting their speech patterns, language use, and ways of interacting with friends and the local community. In addition, students also try to reduce the use of strong regional accents or dialects so that they can be more easily understood by their conversation partners. They tend to use Indonesian to interact with others in their daily live on campus, but in certain situations they maintain their cultural identity through the use of regional terms. This form of adjustment is carried out so that communication runs smoothly without causing misunderstandings this was conveyed by informants 3 and 5.

“when I’m with my college friends here, I usually speak Indonesian so it’s not complicated and easy to understand. The thing is, when I use my south Sumatra accent, they sometimes get confused and ask me what I mean. But usually, when I’m hanging out with friends from south Sumatra, I still use the local language to speak the local language with fellow south Sumatra.” (informant 3, class of 2022).

“ when I’m on campus with my friends, I tend to use Indonesian more often because my south Sumatra accent is quite strong and my friends sometimes don’t understand me right away. So, to make it easier for them to understand me, I tone down my regional accent. But sometimes words from my region slip out, especially when I’m telling a casual story, hehehe. I guess it’s more of a habit, and also so I don’t forget my identity, heheh.” (informant 5, class of 2023).

Students from south Sumatra also practice accommodation strategies through openness and a willingness to learn about local culture. For example by following the daily habits of the Javanese community, such as getting used to using Javanese simple conversations, adjusting to a more refined and polite style of communication, and adapting to social etiquette. This accommodation attitude makes it easier for them to be accepted in their new social environment.

As stated by one of the informants:

“besides on campus, my boarding house neighbors are close to me and they all speak very politely, so I try to understand their communication style. When talking to Javanese people, I make it a habit to respond using polite Javanese words such as “Nggih”, and “Monggo” so that the conversation feels comfortable and polite.” (informant 2, class of 2022).

A similar sentiment was expressed by another informant who tried to adjust his communication style

“when I first started college, I tried to adjust to how they communicated, what language they used, and what their accents were like, but most of them used Indonesian and informal Javanese. Overtime, I got used to using Indonesian and a little Javanese.” (informant 5, class of 2023).

In addition, accommodation is also seen in adjustments to everyday manners. As stated by the following informant:

“since I’ve been living in solo for a long time, I’ve learned a lot about the character of the people here, especially in terms of manners and how they speak softly and politely. I’ve also adapted to this over time, and it has become a habit for me now.” (informant 6, class of 2023).

The regional language of South Sumatra is used by the majority of informants to interact with their previous cultural environment. In this case, Javanese is often used by students when they are on campus and interacting with the local community. Students overcome culture shock or culture shock by applying communication accommodation strategies as a form of social adaptation. Based on Giles (1973) theory of communication accommodation, an individual tends to adjust their speaking style, intonation, and choice of words to communicate effectively. Students from South Sumatra adapt themselves through the use of Indonesian as a neutral language in daily interactions, reducing regional dialects or accents that have the ability to cause social awkwardness, and slowly trying to learn to use simple Javanese vocabulary. This is in line with research (Bibi & Hamida, 2024) which explains that migrant students in Indonesia tend to adapt their way of speaking and interacting to be closer to the local culture through convergence strategies as a form of acceptance in the social environment. Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted, several obstacles were found during the communication accommodation process.

Barriers in the Communication Accommodation Process

In the process of communication accommodation, students from South Sumatra do not always have a smooth experience. There are various obstacles they encounter when interacting with the local culture at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta. These obstacles often arise due to differences in language, communication style, and cultural values between the Javanese and South Sumatra communities.

As stated by one informant :

“ when I first arrived here, I had a really hard time understanding what people meant when they spoke Javanese. Sometimes my friends would mix Indonesian and Javanese when they talked, so I was often confused and could only smile so as not to misunderstand them.” (informant 3, Angkatan 2022).

Another informant also mentioned something else:

“sometimes in class, I don’t understand when the lecture or my friends use refined Javanese terms. I don’t understand what they mean, so sometimes I miss out on the conversation. I’m also sometimes afraid of saying the wrong thing and being considered rude.” (informant 4, class of 2023).

Based on the statements from the informants above, the most common obstacles encountered is differences in language and dialect, which cause misunderstandings in communication. In addition, feelings of inferiority and fear of being considered rude also hinders students from interacting more actively (Adli & Guy, 2022). Theoretically, this is in line with Giles (1973) view that differences in language and social norms can create “communication barriers” that hinder the convergence process. In this context, South Sumatra students need more time and social experience to understand the context of Javanese cultural communication and adjust their behavior more effectively.

In contrast, informant 5 explained that :

“ when my friends here talk to me, I often don’t understand, so I often ask my Javanese friend, “what does this mean?” sometimes I also ask the to use Indonesian so that u can understand what they mean. Because I talk with them so often, I’m starting to get used to some Javanese vocabulary.” (Informant 5, class of 2023).

The explanation above shows that South Sumatra students employ communication accommodation strategies to adapt to an environment dominated by Javanese speakers. These students often ask their friends to help them interpret Javanese conversations or vocabulary. After that, in depth interactions with friends who are predominantly from java encourage the adaptation process, so that over time they become accustomed to Javanese vocabulary.

Forms of Convergence and Divergence in Communication Accommodation

In the process of intercultural interaction, students from South Sumatra at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta demonstrated two main forms of communication, namely convergence and divergence. Both forms illustrate how Rantau students can adapt their communication style to a new cultural environment while. Convergence is evident when students try to adapt the communication style of the Javanese community. This is done so that communication can be effective, polite, and accepted by the surrounding environment. Students tend to adjust their tone of voice, choose words that are more refined and less harsh, and reduce the use of their distinctive south Sumatra accent so that they can be easily understood by the person they are talking to.

As stated by one of the informant:

“when talk with college friends who are originally from java, I like to use Indonesian and I automatically speak slowly and more politely, so as not to appear rude. But with friends who are also from south Sumatra, I like to use my native dialect, because it’s comfortable and more familiar.” (informant 5, class of 2023).

A similar sentiment was expressed by another informant who described how he adjusted his communication style:

“I like to try learn words like “monggo” and “nuwun sewu”, if there’s a word I don’t understand, I like ask to my friends to explain it’s meaning, but when I’m hanging out with friends from my village, I still use the local language because it makes me feel nostalgic and often reminds me of own language. (informant 2, class of 2022).

The statement shows that Rantau students not only adjust their language, but also understand the norms of politeness in javanese culture. This form of convergence helps them to be accepted in a new social environment and minimizes intercultural misunderstandings. Meanwhile, divergence occurs when students maintain their regional accents, expressions, or customs as a form of south Sumatra cultural identity. The phenomena of convergence and divergence experienced by these students are in line with Howard Giles (1973), theory of communication accommodation, whereby individuals attempt to adjust their communicative behavior to achieve social familiarity (convergence) as a form of group identity. Based on field findings, the researcher sees Giles theory as highly relevant to the context of South Sumatra students at UMS, especially does not only appear theoretically, but actually occurs in everyday intercultural communication practices. Meanwhile, divergence is evidents when students continue to use their distinctive regional accents when interacting with fellow migrants, which indicates an efforts to maintain theory original cultural identity in a new environment.

Some of the informants admitted that very indirectly slowed down their tone of voice, reduced their regional accents, and used Indonesian when interacting with local friends at UMS, so that the conversation would not feel awkward and would be easily accepted. In fact, some of them began to adopt simple Javanese vocabulary such as “nggih”, or “nuwun sewu” as a form of politeness towards the person they were talking to, especially in daily interactions. According to Giles, this process is in line with the concept of convergence where individuals adjust their communication style to strengthen closeness and reduce social distance. However, in this study, students from south Sumatra did not necessarily adjust by erasing their cultural identity. In certain contexts, when gathering with friends from the same region, they continued to use the dialect and language of their region. This shows a form of divergence, where students chose to maintain their cultural identity as part of their sense of belonging to their group of origin (Giles et al., 2023).

This divergence did not arise from a rejection of the new culture, but rather from a desire to maintain emotional closeness and a sense of solidarity with fellow students who were also away from home. In this case, it is in line with social theory, which explains that individuals tend to maintain their original characteristics in order to maintain a sense of belonging (Miguel & Santos, 2021). In other words, convergence and divergence occur actively depending on the social context. This illustrates that the communication accommodation process does not completely merge into the new culture but rather creates an effort to adjust and form a balance in maintaining identity as individuals originating from South Sumatra.

The Impact of Communication Accommodation Processes On Interaction And Acceptance In The UMS Environment

Thus, students from South Sumatra successfully overcame communication accommodation barriers. The communication accommodation process undertaken by students from South Sumatra had a significant impact on their social interaction at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta. After going through various adjustments in language, communication style, and social behavior, students began to experience changes in their comfort level when communicating, the ease with which they were accepted into new social groups, and the creation of harmonious interpersonal relationships with their surroundings.

As stated by one of the following informants:

“the more I get used to interacting using Javanese vocabulary and adjusting my communication style, the closer I become with my college friends. They often help me when I don’t understand the meaning of Javanese words, and they have started to understand and accept me, unlike in the beginning of college when I was still stiff and awkward.” (informant 1, class of 2021).

The above statement shows that the communication accommodation process carried out by Rantau students is gradual and increasingly effective over time. Students experience positive developments in the communication accommodation process through convergence strategies, namely adjusting their communication style to harmonize with their conversation partners. They are also becoming accustomed to using Javanese vocabulary, thereby making their relationships and social interactions with friends on campus more intimate.

A similar sentiment was expressed by the following informant, who felt an increased comfort in interaction:

“now, when I talk to my Javanese friends at college, it’s not as complicated and awkward anymore, because I understand some Javanese words, especially during group discussions, where I usually mix Javanese with Indonesian.” (informant 3, class of 2022).

From this quote, it can be seen that communication accommodation affects confidence in interacting, especially in academic situations such as group discussions. Understanding local communication norms make students from South Sumatra more fluent in participating and not feeling alienated.

In addition, several students from South Sumatra also feel a closer emotional connection with their local friends at University Muhammadiyah Surakarta, after they were able to balance their cultural identity with an accommodating attitude, as expressed by the following informant:

“even though I can now adjust to interacting with the local culture, using a mixture of language, I sometimes use my South Sumatra accent when joking with friends so they know it’s a characteristic of my region accent, but they actually like it, heheh.” (informant 5, class of 2023).

This statement confirms that the process of communication accommodation does not erase one’s cultural identity, but rather makes it accepted in a positive way by the environment. When students can balance convergence and divergence, they are not rejected but also appreciated for bringing their different cultures.

This reinforces Giles (1973) theory of communication accommodation, whereby an individual adjusts their communication behavior to achieve closeness and reduce social distance. In this study, students from South Sumatra successfully adapted to the Javanese communication culture, which is known for its politeness, and were thus well accepted in the social environment at UMS.

The Success of Communication Accommodation for South Sumatra Students

Students from South Sumatra who have successfully overcome several obstacles in the process of accommodating communication when interacting with the local culture at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta. The success of students’ communication accommodation can be seen from those who try to adjust their communication style, improve the smoothness of interaction, and be accepted in the new community.

without losing their cultural identity. Their involvement in the social and academic environment, accompanied by the creation of good interpersonal relationships between south Sumatra students and local students. As revealed in the interviews with informants 2 dan 4.

“For the past three years, I haven’t felt awkward or inferior because I was afraid of not being accepted, but now I’m starting to get used to blending in and my friends here like to invite me to play and join activities in solo, so I’m not as stiff as I used to be.” (informant 2, class of 2021).

“I feel it’s easier to communicate with my Javanese friends after learning some Javanese vocabulary. They also feel more comfortable talking to me, and sometimes I even act as a mediator when there is a misunderstanding between other friends.” (informant 4, class of 2023).

Students from south Sumatra face several obstacles when they first move away from home and attend University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta. These differences encourage south Sumatra students to undergo a process of communication accommodation and interact with the local culture. The success of the communication accommodation process of students from south Sumatra can be seen from their ability to gradually adapt to the local social and cultural environment without losing their cultural identity. This action shows a balance between adapting to the local cultural and maintaining the original cultural identity, which is in line with the views of Giles, Edward, and Walther (2023), explaining that divergence is not always rejection, but rather a form of affirmation of group social identity (Giles et al., 2023). When students from south Sumatra successfully overcome the obstacles of the communication accommodation process in interacting with the local cultures, they will indirectly adjust their communication style to that of native speakers, where students are accustomed to using Javanese to interact with local students, even if only a few words. The adjustment made in terms of language, communication style, and social interaction patterns have made them more confident when communicating with local students. Students easily blend in with friend from Javanese culture, demonstrating that the convergence process is running effectively. In addition, there has been an increase in social acceptance, with students from south Sumatra becoming involved in daily social activities. On the other hand, students are still able to maintain the distinctive characteristics of their regional culture as a form of positive divergence that is well accepted in the environment of University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta.

In their research, Mahdiyyani, Rahardjo and Sunarto (2021), also explain that successful accommodation is not only measured by the ability to adapt, but also by the emergence of a sense of comfort and emotional closeness between migrants and the local community. It also involves achieving a balance between adaptation efforts and the preservation of one’s cultural identity. Students from south Sumatra who are studying away from home maintain their regional accents and customs when they are among fellow students from other regions, but they can use polite language and expressions when interacting with Javanese students. This communication strategy demonstrates their ability to manage their social identity through a contextual blend of convergence and divergence. According to Giles, Edward, Walther (2023), successful accommodation occurs when individuals are not only acceptance into a new group but also continue to be valued for the uniqueness of their cultural identity. This study is in line the research by Bibi and Hamida (2024), which explains that successful intercultural communication is achieved when individuals can create social closeness without losing their original cultural characteristics. Thus, students from south Sumatra demonstrate successful communication accommodation, which is not only evident in their language and interaction skills, but also in their growing appreciation of cultural differences amid the cultural diversity at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand the communication accommodation process carried out by students from South Sumatra at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta in interacting with the local culture. The findings show that students experienced significant culture shock upon their arrival, especially in relation to differences in language and social norms. However, through the process of communication accommodation, students were able to adjust their speech style, intonation, and social behavior in accordance with Javanese cultural norms without losing their original identity. This process not only improved their interaction skills but also strengthened social acceptance and mutual respect between cultures on campus.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta develop a more comprehensive orientation program for new students from different regions. This program should include training on local culture and language, as well as provide a space for students to share their

experience and challenges. Additionally, stronger social support from seniors and the campus adjustment and accommodation. Thus, it is hoped that students from other regions can more easily adapt and establish harmonious relationships in the academic environment.

THANK YOU NOTE

The author would like to express his gratitude to Allah SWT for all the blessings, grace, and ease bestowed upon him, enabling him to successfully complete this research entitled “Communication Accommodation of south Sumatran Students in Intercultural Communication at University Muhammadiyah of Surakarta.”

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to his mother, who has always provided prayers, support, and encouragement in every step of this academic journey. The author would also like to thank Ms. Yanti Haryanti as the supervising lecture who has provided direction, guidance, and motivation throughout the research process, enabling the author to complete this scientific work as well as possible.

The author would also like to thank all the informants who have taken the time and shared their experiences during the interview process, so that this research could be completed in its entirety. The author would also like to thank his fellow students and everyone at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta who helped him directly or indirectly. Finally, the author hopes that this research will contribute to the development of communication science, particularly in the study of intercultural communication and communication accommodation in higher education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adli, A., & Guy, G. R. (2022). Globalising the study of language variation and change: A manifesto on cross-cultural sociolinguistics. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 16(5–6), e12452. <https://doi.org/10.1111/LNC3.12452>
- Bau, V. B., Bouk, P. H. S., & Satu, I. E. I. N. (2024). PENGALAMAN CULTURAL SHOCK DAN PROSES ADAPTASI MISIONARIS SERVARUM SPIRITUS SANCTI (SSpS) TIMOR DALAM KOMUNIKASI LINTAS BUDAYA. *JIKH: Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Humaniora*, 8(1), 1–10.
- Bibi, F., & Hamida, L. (2024). Exploring communication patterns among international students in Indonesia: a study using communication accommodation theory. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2397188>
- Cresswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches*.
- Darmastuti, R. (2013). *Minfullness Dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Yogyakarta: Buku Litera Yogyakarta.
- Dewi, S., Suci, P., Studi, P., Komunikasi, I., Ilmu, F., Dan, S., Politik, I., & Maret, U. S. (2010). *Promosi kota solo sebagai kota budaya*.
- Firmanda, M. A., Telasih, T. R., & Prathama, N. A. (2023). *Intercultural Adaptation Individu Kecamatan Bandar dengan Pendatang dari Host Culture yang Berbeda*. 1(2), 82–87. <https://doi.org/10.54090/pawarta.280>
- Giles, H., Edwards, A. L., & Walther, J. B. (2023). Communication accommodation theory: Past accomplishments, current trends, and future prospects. *Language & Communication*, 99, 101571. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2023.101571>
- Giles, H., & Ogay, T. (2007). *Accommodation Theory*. 293–310.
- Global, J. K. (2020). *AKOMODASI KOMUNIKASI MAHASISWA PENDATANG*. 9(2).
- Handayani, P. G., & Yuca, V. (2018). *Fenomena Culture Shock Pada Mahasiswa Perantauan Tingkat 1 Universitas Negeri Padang*. 6(November), 198–204.
- Linclon, G. &. (1994). *1994_Guba_Lincoln_Paradigms_Quali_Research_chapter.pdf*.
- Miguel, L., & Santos, D. (2021). *The Relationship between Social Identity and Foreign Language Learning Motivation: The Sustainability of Heritage Language Learners*.
- Nafa, A., & Suhartono, I. (2024). *Strategi Adaptasi Mahasiswa Rantau dari Berbagai Negara*. 4(1), 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.17977/10.17977/um070v4i12024p31-40>
- Nugroho, A., & Marezza, L. (2023). *Culture Shock Mahasiswa Rantau Sebagai Kelompok Minoritas*. 6, 269–277.
- Rafi, A., Hakim, N., Afifah, N., Yani, A., Nurlatifah, Y. H., & Depriya, M. (2023). *Pentingnya Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia di Lingkungan Kampus sebagai Identitas Nasional terhadap Persatuan*. 2(2), 232–242.
- Rahmawati, A., Halimah, N., Setiawan, A. A., Islam, P. A., Islam, F. A., Syekh-yusuf, U. I., & Purwokerto, U. M. (2024). *Optimalisasi Teknik Wawancara Dalam Penelitian Field Research Melalui Pelatihan Berbasis Participatory Action Research Pada Mahasiswa Lapas Pemuda Kelas IIA Tangerang*. 135–142.

- Tear, M. J., & Reader, T. W. (2023). Understanding safety culture and safety citizenship through the lens of social identity theory. *Safety Science*, 158(October 2022), 105993. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2022.105993>
- Yao, M. (2025). *Acta Psychologica The study of the effects of digital media applications in cross-cultural communication in the construction of cultural identity*. 258(July).
- Zhang, Y. A. N. B. (2018). *Communication Accommodation Theory*.