

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents research background, research questions, research purposes, research scope and research significances.

1.1 Research Background

Language becomes the most fundamental medium to communicate in social interaction for either oral or written communication. People use language to express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and other communication needs (Schmitz, 2012). By all chances, when interacting using language, people will simultaneously do two kinds of communication, namely: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The former is defined as the communication that is done using words (Schmitz, 2012), while the latter is defined as communication that is done by means of behavior such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact (Eunson, 2008).

Communicating using language is considered to be the action of generating meaning as the language system itself is stated to be comprised of symbols (Sinha, 2004). This means communication using language will involve the deciphering process of symbols that are used by interlocutor and addressee. In addition, the symbols meant here are not only delivered in the form of words that are either written or spoken, but also in the form of body language. As the result, when a person speaks or communicates with others, there is a tendency where the addressee may not fully understand the whole intention of the speaker due to the incapability of the addressee in associating the words

and gestures delivered by the speaker. For example, when a speaker wants to tell the addressee to tell a lie to the others, he will most probably say “There is no homework for today, right?” while raising either one of or both of his eyebrows. If the addressee is not aware of the speaker’s facial expression, he will most likely unable to confirm his statement and tell the truth instead. This example shows that non-verbal communication is highly needed to be considered when communicating using a language.

Moreover, it is highly admitted that to master a language is not an easy task. It is owing to the fact that language is also stated to be culture bound (Levine & Adelman, 1982) which means cultural background also influences the way native speaker of a language communicates using the language itself. Accordingly, as people coming from different cultural background communicate with each other, there is a high possibility that they suffer from miscommunication, which is heavily due to the unsuccessful non-verbal communication. For instance, to communicate while looking at the other’s eyes is considered polite in America or any western countries. However, in Java, such demeanor is considered to be rude and Javanese people tend to speak without constant eye contact. As the result, if both parties do not understand this difference, they will consider each other to be impolite.

At this point, it is safe to say that non-verbal communication holds a great proportion in determining how successful an interaction between two parties from different cultural background is. Considering this fact, learning non-verbal communication from different languages is as important as learning the verbal one.

However, according to Schmitz (2012), there are no non-verbal dictionaries that accurately defines each non-verbal signal from every region in the world. He further states that although many scholars and experts in non-verbal skill have made their efforts to catalog the rules for non-verbal communication to compose dictionary-like guides, the rules that they formulated are always tied relatively to a certain individual, community, and cultural context. Consequently, research on understanding non-verbal communication between different cultures can be stated to be an always intriguing research to be done in order to grasp the knowledge of effective communication using non-verbal signals in different contexts.

In relation to it, in the past few years many studies related to non-verbal communication have been conducted by several researchers. Some of them are Cai (2019) who has conducted a research entitled “Reflection of Cultural Difference of the East and the West in Nonverbal Communication”, Sutiayatno (2018) with his research entitled “The Effect of Teacher’s Verbal Communication and Non-verbal Communication on Students’ English Achievement”, Leavitt, Keegan and Clark (2016) who collaboratively conducted a research entitled “Ping to Win? Non-Verbal Communication and Team Performance in Competitive Online Multiplayer Games”, Dharmawansa, Fukumura, Marasinghe and Madhuwanthi (2015) with their research entitled “Introducing and Evaluating the Behavior of Non-verbal Features in the Virtual Learning”, and Akinola (2014) who has conducted a research entitled “The Use of Non-Verbal Communication in the Teaching of Council for Innovative Research”. Almost all of the aforementioned studies investigated about the use of non-verbal

communication in educational context, with the exception of study conducted by Cai (2019) which investigate non-verbal communication between American and Chinese people.

Unlike those studies, this proposed study analyzed and made a comparison of the non-verbal communication that is used by speakers from two different cultural backgrounds, namely: Balinese and German. There are several considerations of why Balinese and German are chosen. First, Bali is one of the most famous tourist destinations in the world and it is visited by many tourists from all over the world each year. This means the occurrence of communication between local people or Balinese people with foreigners are pretty high. Moreover, as more foreigners choose to stay for a long period of time in Bali, the chance of them to communicate with the Balinese are even higher. Next, German is chosen because most of tourists who visit and stay for longer period of time are German. Another consideration is because there is no research investigating the non-verbal communication between both aforementioned speakers yet. In relation to it, this research aimed to investigate, analyze and make a comparison of non-verbal communication between Balinese and German.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the explanation in research background, the research questions that can be formulated in this study are:

1. What are the similarities in terms of non-verbal communication between Balinese people and German people?
2. What are the differences in terms of non-verbal communication between Balinese people and German people?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on the research questions formulated before, the purposes of this study are:

1. To know, describe and analyze the similarities in terms of non-verbal communication between Balinese people and German people.
2. To know, describe and analyze the differences in terms of non-verbal communication between Balinese people and German people.

1.4 Research Scope

The scope in this study was limited only to compare Balinese people and German people in terms of non-verbal communication since Balinese could act as the representative of eastern culture and German as representative of western culture.

1.5 Research Significances

This research is expected to be able to give several contributions in terms of theoretical significance as well as practical significances for English Language Education, researchers, Indonesian Government, and Balinese People.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to give significant information and deeper understanding about non-verbal communication used by Balinese and German, especially in terms of the similarities and differences between both. Correspondingly, as comparison is made, it is expected that this study will add something new in terms of case study between western and eastern culture.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

1. For English Language Education

This study is contributed to English Language Education Department of Undiksha both for the lecturers as well as for the students who respectively teach and learn about linguistics. This study is hoped to be able to be used as an additional knowledge for the lecturer to make a further research on the same area. This research is expected to be able to lead into a variety of topic for proposal and can provide the students with new interesting topic of research.

2. For the Researchers

For other researchers, the result of this study can be used as a reference when the other researchers want to conduct the same research. This research will be good for researcher who has interest in cross culture understanding course. Since the focus of this research is just about non-verbal communication, other researcher can elaborate more into further topic related to this research.

3. For the Indonesian Government

The government can use the result of this study as an authentic file or document about the similarities and differences of Balinese people and German people in terms of non-verbal communication as an addition to culture preservation. This research will be good for culture preservation to add the collection of Wonderful Indonesia. It will lead to additional knowledge for the foreigner who wants to come to Indonesia and learn something from Indonesia.

4. For Balinese People

This study can be used by Balinese people as the way to preserve Balinese culture by publishing it in website of tourism to attract interest from the foreigner.