

The Use of Local Language as an Intercultural Communication Model in K-Pop Fanbase

Mutiara Syifa Amartya Rachman¹, Iis Kurnia Nurhayati²

^{1,2}Universitas Telkom, Bandung, Indonesia

syifastyles12@gmail.com

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic requires human especially in Indonesia to carry out Work from Home (WFH) and maintain distance between individuals. With the occurrence of WFH, resulting in human dependence on the internet. On the other hand, this dependence on the internet is really being used by the Kpop (Korean Pop) Industry to further strengthen its existence in Indonesia. This was marked by the official presence of the SM Entertainment representative office in Jakarta. SM entertainment then brought NCT in 2019 to take over the Indonesian market by presenting content about Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to discuss how NCT applies this intercultural communication to their market in Indonesia and how the role of the Indonesian language used by NCT can strengthen loyalty and enlarge its fanbase. The theory used in this research is the Intercultural Communication Model theory from Gudykunst and Kim. In-depth interviews were conducted using qualitative case study methods, which resulted in question indicators from the Intercultural Communication Model such as culture, socio-culture, psycho-culture and the environment. The results of the study stated that the Intercultural Communication Model according to Gudykunst and Young was applied in the communication between NCT and these fans. Culture, Socio-culture, and Psychoculture are the most effective approaches to communicate with Indonesian fans. NCT's communication through Indonesian culture and language also affects the tourism aspect which increases NCTzens as domestic tourists who visit places that NCT has visited while in Indonesia as the effect of their loyalty as NCTzens.

Keywords

intercultural communication;
culture; sociocultural;
psychocultural; environment;
NCT; SM entertainment



I. Introduction

Covid-19 struck the world in 2020, and all humans were forbidden from interacting directly because contracting and spreading the virus was extremely dangerous. As a result, the most effective ways to combat the spread of this pandemic are to implement Work from Home (WFH) and maintain distance. This WFH regulation forces humans to interact or conduct their activities remotely through sophisticated Internet. The Kpop (Korean Pop) industry, on the other hand, is capitalizing on this internet dependence to expand its presence in Indonesia. The official presence of the SM Entertainment representative office in Jakarta proved this. SM Entertainment is a well-known Kpop agency founded in 1995 in Seoul, South Korea by Lee Sooman. The SM Entertainment agency's concept is heavily influenced by technology and culture, with SM Entertainment effectively establishing itself in the United States, Europe, and Asia under the slogan "Culture first, Economy second," where SM Entertainment focuses more on the realm of cultural interests to lead

the way. - Korea's economy is improving, and their contribution to SM Entertainment's own economy is growing (SMTown, 2016). The outbreak of this virus has an impact of a nation and Globally (Ningrum et al, 2020). The presence of Covid-19 as a pandemic certainly has an economic, social and psychological impact on society (Saleh and Mujahiddin, 2020). Covid 19 pandemic caused all efforts not to be as maximal as expected (Sihombing and Nasib, 2020).

Despite the fact that there are many enthusiastic Kpop fans in Indonesia, SM Entertainment is the only South Korean leading entertainment agency that can open a representative office in Indonesia. SM Entertainment chose to build a representative office in Jakarta, Indonesia, at Mall FX Sudirman, which opened on February 4, 2019. "This is the Indonesian representative's office." More information will be provided by the representative office. So, if a company or television station wants to use our star, they can do so right here. "So, we prepared," Rubina explained to Kompas.com. TransCorp frequently invites SM Entertainment artists to their events, and SM Entertainment has formed a partnership with TransCorp. (Kompas, 2019)

SM Entertainment's establishment of a representative office in Jakarta has become a phenomenon in and of itself, as well as a significant step forward for the Kpop industry. Furthermore, SM Entertainment introduced NCT to the Indonesian market in 2019 by presenting content about the country. MTV's, Crystal Bell (mtv.com, 2018) stated that NCT The Korean Boy Group is made up of 23 SM Entertainment members. The NCT system is made up of several units, including the NCT U, NCT 127, NCT Dream, and WayV. NCT stands for "Neo Culture Technology," and its members come from a variety of countries and nations, including Korea, Japan, China, the United States, and Thailand. Thus, NCT can be described as a multicultural organization comprised of people from all over the world. Lee Sooman, the founder of SM Entertainment, devised a strategy known as "Culture Technology," which essentially is a strategy to introduce Kpop music to the rest of the world. They are employed as the modern extension of NCT's constant growth schedule of international performers. Furthermore, NCT is well-known for its global impact on music, business, and culture. Then, NCT announced its intention to enter the Indonesian market by creating Indonesian language learning content. The fans in Indonesia then known as NCTzens.

As time passes, the NCT boy group in Indonesia continues to gain fans in terms of music, merchandise, and even those who simply enjoy their content. NCT has become very popular in Indonesia because they frequently visit for concerts or are simply invited by Indonesian television shows, which elicits a lot of enthusiasm from NCTzens in Indonesia. NCT, aware of the enthusiasm and loyalty of NCTzens in Indonesia, frequently creates official content with Indonesian elements, as shown below:



Figure 1. *NCT's Content with Bahasa Indonesia*

The above description is an actual example of NCT attracting the attention of Indonesian NCTzens by using the Indonesian language. All of this Indonesian-language NCT content, including Learning Indonesian, Learning Indonesian Culture, and Communicating with Indonesian, brings NCT up to speed in terms of intercultural communication. Of course, this NCT move is an excellent way to enter the Indonesian market while maintaining the loyalty of Fans (NCTzens) in Indonesia. However, this intercultural communication phenomenon has both positive and negative consequences. NCT may face a variety of consequences if they take special measures to expand their fan base in the Indonesian market. Because of their extensive presence in Indonesia, NCT has become Brand Ambassadors for a number of Indonesian products, including BliBli, Click, and NuTea (NCT 127), Lemonilo, and Somethinc (NCT DREAM). As a result, this study will reveal how NCT uses intercultural communication in their Indonesian market, as well as how the role of the Indonesian language used by NCT can strengthen loyalty and expand its fan base.

Based on the issues raised above regarding the large amount of NCT content in Bahasa Indonesia, the role of Intercultural Communication between NCT and NCTzens in Indonesia has emerged. According to Samovar and Porter (2004;139-141), the function of language in culture serves two purposes. Language serves as a medium for transferring culture to future generations, and these functions are linked to the goal of communication. NCT's use of Indonesian, for example, makes it easier for them to communicate in both languages. According to the findings of this study, the use of foreign languages has a significant impact on marketing communication. NCT can also communicate with their international fans through an app called LYSN/Bubble, where they usually talk about their schedules or just small talk to keep the fans updated.

In this research, NCT fans are referred to as 'NCTzens.' The term 'NCTzens' refers to all fans as citizens of NCT (NCTizen), implying that they are also a part of the city. On June 12, 2017, the fans were officially dubbed NCTzens (Soompi, 2017). The philosophy of the name implies the meaning of citizens from various countries, as demonstrated by intercultural interaction among NCTzens. According to Jones (Quora, 2020), the United States and Korea have the highest number of NCTzens, with some being Korean-Canadians and Korean-Americans, followed by Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese, Filipino, and Thai.

NCT frequently promotes their products in foreign languages, as language is an important component of intercultural communication. Through the use of Indonesian by NCT, there has been a significant difference in album sales and sales of the products they

marketed as Brand Ambassadors, which previously sold around 600,00 album copies, can now become million - even triple million - sellers, with half of these sales coming from NCTzens Indonesia. The rapid growth of NCT Fans globally from their YouTube streamers since 2021, where the average of their YouTube streamers is NCTzens Indonesia, can be seen as evidence of the emergence of this phenomenon.

According to the explanation above, this study employs an explanation of William B. Gudykunts and Young Yun Kim's (2003). Intercultural communication model, in which the intercultural communication model of William B. Gudykunts and Young Yun Kim assumes two people who are equal in communicating, each as a sender and at the same time (decoding). Culture, social culture, and psychoculture all have an impact on each communication participant. This study examines how William B. Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim describe the phenomenon of NCT in Indonesian, and then examines how NCT communicates with its fans in Indonesian (NCTzens).

Therefore, the research is critical because it will help to learn more about how NCT understands the role of foreign languages used by themselves in the context of Intercultural Communication and marketing communication, as well as the impact on their sales. This research is also useful to academic circles and general readers because it demonstrates the role that NCTs played in promoting their products to persuade citizens to continue purchasing their products, which is NCTzens' loyalty, as well as the effectiveness of NCT in maintaining NCTzens' loyalty as fans and consumers, as well as the use of a foreign language in promoting their products through NCT's YouTube contents and their official shop website page, which sparked a lot of curiosity among NCTzens.

Several previous studies on the use of language in intercultural communication have been conducted, including a study of Kpop intercultural communication in China (Seong and Seong-Gyu, 2019) from Kyunghee University's Department of Applied Arts. Theoretically, this paper is founded on a detailed summary of the main message that K-pop spread to China between 1988 and 2018. As a result, an objective analysis of Kpop's overall spread in China was made. Previous studies and this research have some similarities and differences. The similarities between Jin Seong and Hong Seong - Gyu's research and this research are how K-pop became popular in both China and Indonesia, as well as how Kpop spread in the two countries using Intercultural Communication theory. Meanwhile, the distinction was emerging in its focus on Kpop in China as a phenomenon, whereas this study focuses on NCT and the use of Bahasa Indonesia in their content as an Intercultural Communication movement.

Then, Amelia (2018) of Mercu Buana University presents Intercultural Communication Behavior of Korean Pop (Kpop) Among Kpop Students in Jakarta. This study looks at the intercultural communication habits of Kpop fans in Jakarta. There are similarities and differences between previous studies and this study, with the similarities using an explanation of William B. Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim's intercultural communication model. The distinction is illustrated by discussing the behavior of Kpop fans in Jakarta in liking Kpop, whereas this study discusses the influence used by NCT in their content that uses Indonesian against Indonesian NCTzens.

In addition, the research about this intercultural communication and the local language also can be founded in Tahrir (2018) from Universitas Iqra Buru, Maluku. The research discussing the Role of Local Language in Intercultural Communication among Societies in Buru Island. The purpose of this study was to investigate the process and function of intercultural communication among Buru Island's societies. The study focused on the societies of Bassalale Village, which has a diverse cultural background. The

researchers used Miles and Huberman's model analysis, which consists of three components: data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. According to the findings, the role of the Buru language in the intercultural communication process occurred as a result of adjusting to another culture and attempting to understand the other's culture. Buru language plays four roles in intercultural communication: a) social identity; b) social integration; c) cognitive; and d) escape function. As a result, the local language served as an important unifier in a multicultural society. Despite the similarities in the role of the local language in the intercultural communication realm, this study differs from the previous one because it focuses on the role of Indonesian in intercultural communication as used by the South Korean boy group NCT to conquer the Indonesian market.

Based on the explanation above, this research about “THE USE OF LOCAL LANGUAGE AS AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION MODEL IN K-POP FANBASE” is required. This research is beneficial and important to conduct because it can be useful for the environment how NCT as a boyband from the SM Entertainment Agency makes a breakthrough in terms of intercultural communication. This research, which focuses on the Indonesian Language and Culture adopted by NCT in their programs, can be new knowledge and deserves to be studied.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Communication Theory

Communication is one of the most important aspects of daily life; by communicating, we can achieve the same meaning, expression, and opinion. Communication is made up of a sender and a receiver, both of whom have the right to absolute meaning, expression, and opinion. According to Sendjaja (1993:4), communication should be viewed as an activity in which no action or expression has full meaning unless defined by the communication participants involved. According to Berlo (2005: 18), communication is an atmosphere full of success if only the recipient of the message has meaning to the message and the meaning, he gets is the same as what was intended by the source.

According to the definition above, communication is the process of conveying messages verbally and nonverbally between a sender and a receiver who share the same meaning, expression, opinion, and purpose.

2.2 Communication Function

According to William I. Gorden (Mulyana, 2005), communication functions are divided into four categories: social communication, expressive communication, ritual communication, and instrumental communication. This is where social communication comes into play, including the formation of self-concept, self-existence statements, and survival. Expressive communication serves as a tool for conveying our emotions and ritual communication, which is a ritual activity that includes elements of communication such as birth, birthday, and engagement ceremonies. Instrumental communication seeks to inform, educate, and change attitudes.

2.3 Intercultural Communication

a. Definition of Intercultural Communication

Following the research taken, Communication and culture are concepts that cannot be separated, Intercultural communication can be interpreted as communication carried out by individuals or groups who have different cultural backgrounds. Humans as social beings

must interact with fellow humans with different racial, language, religious and social class backgrounds.

Stephen, Melodine, Diyako (2015) stated Intercultural Communication has typically been defined as communication between individuals from different national cultures. Bernard Saint-Jaques also said that Intercultural Communication is based on intercultural understanding in intercultural understanding cannot be realized without an objective and up-to-date knowledge of the notion of culture. As quoted by Shihabudin (2011: 38) that Intercultural Communication is understood as a difference in assessing social objects and events.

b. Intercultural Communication Model

Intercultural Communication Model according to Sereno and Mortensen (Daam Mulyana, 2001:121) says the intercultural communication model as an ideal description of what is needed for communication to occur. In this study, the intercultural communication model used is the intercultural communication model of William B. Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim as follows:

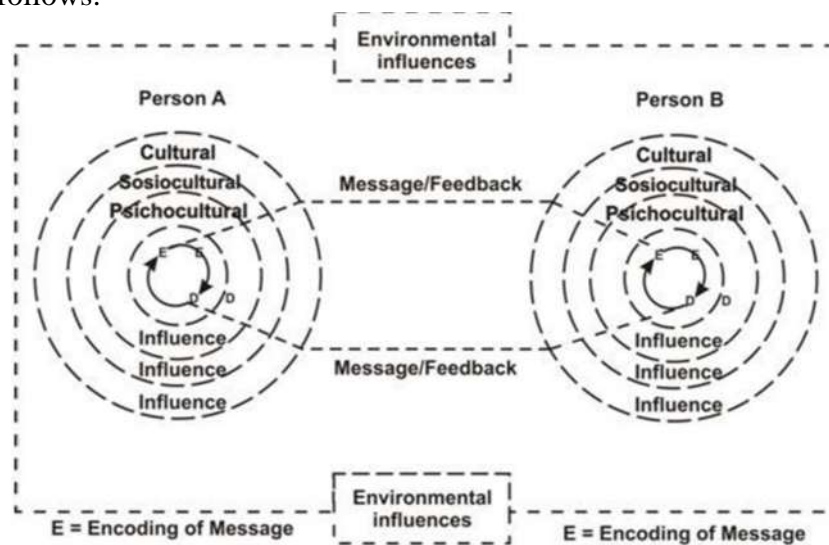


Figure 2. *Intercultural Communication Process Model William B. Gudykunst*

The position of the sender and receiver in this model is the same. Which Person A and Person B can include being a sender or a receiver. Gudykunst and Kim (1992:33) say an intercultural communication model shows that the process of encoding and decoding messages in intercultural individual interactions is influenced by conceptual influences consisting of (1) Cultural factors which include the relationship between values, norms, and rules. that affect human communication behavior which is influenced by individual culture (2) Sociocultural factors which include social ordering process that develops based on human interaction³ when behavior patterns become consistent over time, such as self-concept, outgroup, and ingroup patterns (3) Psychocultural factors which include a person's personal ordering process that provides stability to psychological processes, such as stereotypes, ethnocentrism, and prejudice (4) Environmental factors which include the physical environment and communication area, situational environment and conditions or background and purpose of the interaction, set environment and norms, environmental psychology includes perceptions of personal freedom and the use of time and potential environmental interactions.

c. Language in Intercultural Communication

In accordance with the explanation above, within the scope of Intercultural Communication there is an element of language used. Intercultural communication will be effective if the use of language is applied correctly. Differences in the way languages encode cultural and cognitive categories affect the way people think and this is known as the “Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis” (Sapir & Whorf, 2008). Intercultural communication involves several concepts such as cross-cultural communication, ethnicity and race, ethnocentrism, racism, and multiculturalism. These differences have given rise to many language variations in intercultural communication in Indonesia (Julijanti, 2010)

III. Research Method

In this research design, researchers employ a Qualitative Case Study, which is a method for explaining a specific problem, event, or situation. Students who are tasked with finding alternative solutions can use this method to develop critical thinking and find new answers to previously solved topics. Yamin (2007: 156).

In this study, researchers have access to theory and broad insight, allowing them to ask questions through interviews and thoroughly analyze and examine the object under study. The method used in the Qualitative Case Study was chosen by the researcher for the following qualifications. The purpose of the study is to determine the validity of the use of Bahasa Indonesia as an Intercultural Communication Model used by NCT and SM Entertainment when publishing their content and the Intercultural Communication Model they employ. Researchers want to conduct direct interviews and observations on NCTzens Indonesia and Telkom University's Intercultural Communication Lecturer.

IV. Result and Discussion

The researchers discovered a link between this research and the Intercultural Communication Model, which includes Culture, Socioculture, Psychoculture, and Environment after conducting interviews with the three informants. Of course, there are some who agree and disagree with the discussion of the interviews that have been conducted when conducting interviews with the three informants. The researcher will present the following findings from the interviews with the three informants:

4.1 Culture

The three informants acknowledged the existence of a cultural aspect in the Intercultural Communication Model, which is a variable in this study, where the use of Bahasa Indonesia that appears in some of their content is undoubtedly a cultural aspect. This finding was consistent with Tylor (1832-1917), who stated that culture is a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, science, customs, and other abilities and habits of humans as members of society.

Researchers have examined some of their content, many of which are set in Indonesia, with some even making batik. The three informants agreed with the discussion. This has a significant cultural impact because batik is one of Indonesia's cultures, and NCT has successfully introduced batik globally to perfection.

4.2 Socio-cultural

Socio-cultural is a system of values and mindsets in society that originates in the human mind that lives within it, resulting in the creation of various things such as art, belief, and customs that characterize a society.

The socio-cultural aspect that this study examines is self-concept. The emergence of impulsive behavior in which NCTzens Indonesia always wants to buy merchandise or albums issued by NCT and the desire of NCTzens Indonesia to become more disciplined individuals, consistent because NCT is like that, can be concluded where the three informants have answered interview questions well.

4.3 Psychoculture

This interview discusses stereotypes, which include the process of structuring one's personal self that gives stability to the psychological process. Following an in-depth interview, one of the informants agreed with the stereotype that Indonesian NCTzens are sometimes overly proud of the fact that NCT frequently uses Bahasa Indonesia in their content. Moreover, NCT frequently uses non-formal Bahasa Indonesia such as Mantul. Meanwhile, the other informant felt that the stereotype was inappropriate because it was not a negative thing.

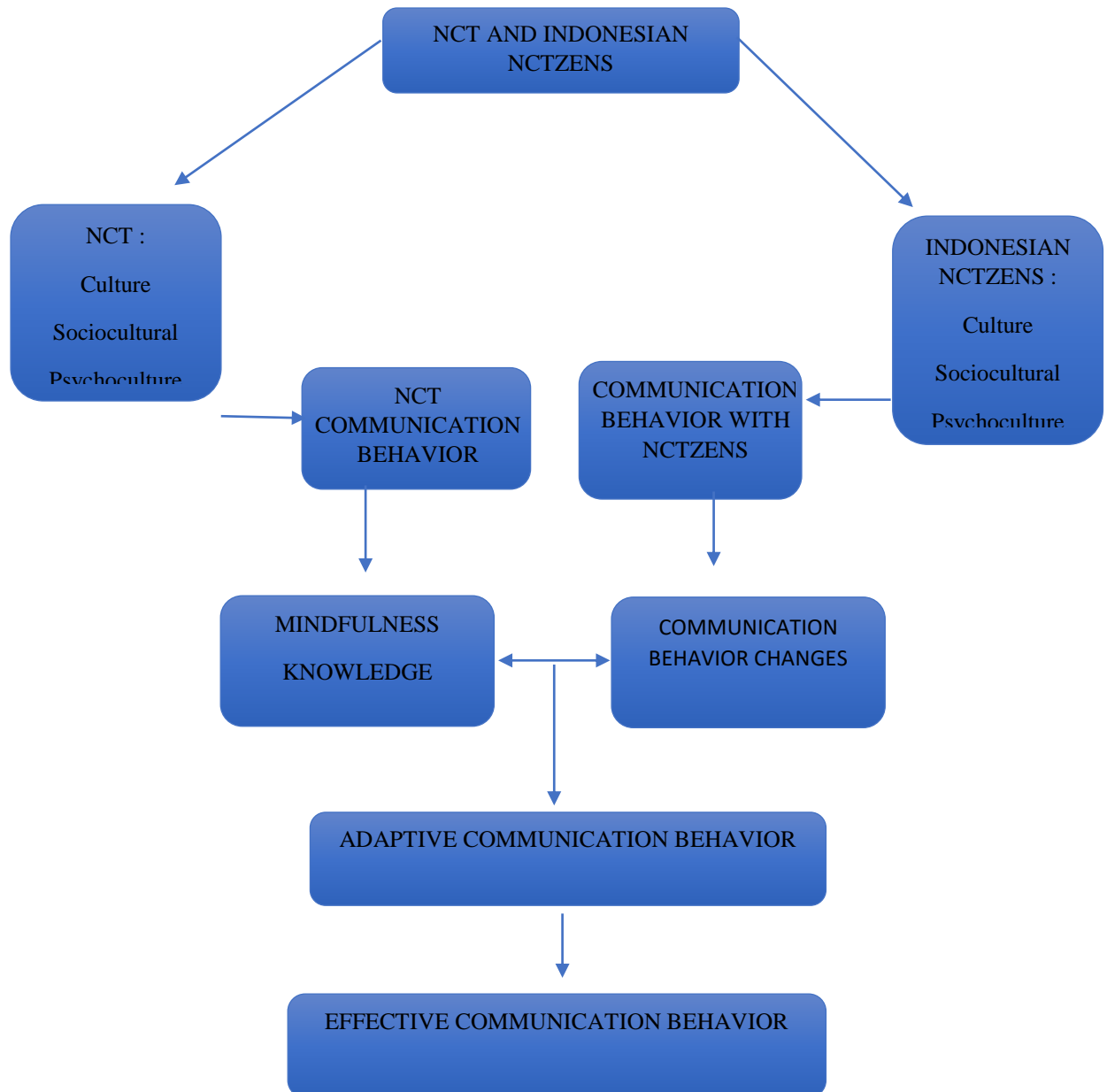
4.4 Environment

Environmental factors include the physical environment and communication area, as well as the conditions and background of the interaction. There are some NCT contents that use Indonesian that are set in Indonesia, such as at the National Batik Museum, Ancol, to Indonesian restaurants. In this case, the use of the background in Indonesia can boost tourism and the Indonesian economy because many Indonesian NCTzens will visit places that NCT has visited in Indonesia. Particularly if the location has been known for a long time. According to the responses of the four informants, the presence of NCT content set in Indonesia can increase tourism in Indonesia.

4.5 Intercultural Communication Model

Researchers can conclude from the results of interviews and analysis that NCT and NCTzens in this study are included in the Intercultural Communication Model, in which every Indonesian content they upload will include Cultural, Sociocultural, Psychocultural, and Environmental elements. NCT and NCTzens Indonesia developed an intercultural communication model. As with NCT and NCTzens Indonesia's mutual understanding of their respective languages.

Other supporting factors in the establishment of intercultural communication among Indonesian NCTzens from various regions in Indonesia, such as Key Informants and Supporting Informants in this study, where they are Indonesian NCTzens from various regions in Indonesia, can be seen.



The model in the chart above shows the communication pattern between NCT and NCTzens Indonesia when interacting and communicating. The communication process carried out by NCT with NCTzens Indonesia is adaptive and results in effective communication.

V. Conclusion

Interview findings, analyses, and theories were used to support the research discussion. As a result, the model of intercultural communication and communication behavior that appears when NCT uses Indonesian in their content, as well as its influence on Indonesian NCTzens, is as follows:

1. The Intercultural Communication Model used in this study examines the impact of NCTzens Indonesia's use of Indonesian on the following factors: (1) Culture; some of their content includes elements of Indonesian culture, such as the introduction of Batik

- and Indonesian cuisine. (2) Socio-culture, which is where Indonesian NCTzens form their self-concept, which is influenced by NCT's habits and behaviors, such as the consistent, disciplined, and enthusiastic attitude of NCT that is followed by NCTzens, as well as the development of the self-concept of Indonesian NCTzens to learn Korean because they believe that if NCT is willing to learn Indonesian well, then NCTzens Indonesia will do the same. (3) Psychoculture, with NCTzens from other countries imposing stereotypes on Indonesian NCTzens, claiming that Indonesian NCTzens are overly proud, which is false because it harms no one. (4) Because of the large number of Indonesian NCTzens who visit places that NCT has visited while in Indonesia, the environment with an Indonesian background can increase tourism in Indonesia.
2. Communication behaviors observed between NCT and NCTzens Indonesia is an adaptive communication behavior in this study, and it will continue to be an effective communication behavior between NCT and NCTzens.

References

- Crow, Teahlyn F. (2019) KPOP, LANGUAGE, AND ONLINE FANDOM: AN EXPLORATION OF KOREAN LANGUAGE USE AND PERFORMATIVITY AMONGST INTERNATIONAL KPOP FANS
- Crystall Bell, mtv (2018) <https://www.mtv.com/news/fosc2g/nct-127-guide>
- Gudykunst, William B. (2003) Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication. (Sage Publication)
- J. Lim (2017) <https://www.soompi.com/article/997249wpp/nct-announces-official-fan-club-name-well-nickname-fans-chosen-members> Seong and Seong-Gyu, (2019)
- Jin Seong & Hong Seong – Gyu (2019) A Study on Intercultral Communication of Kpop China Intercultral Communication of Kpop China
- Julijanti (2010) Bahasa Sebagai Medium Komunikasi Antarbudaya
- Martinis Yamin (2007:156) Desain Pembelajaran Tingkat Satuan Dosenan, Jakarta
- Mulyana, Deddy (2005:5-30) Ilmu Komunikasi: Suatu Pengantar Shihabudin (2011: 38) Komunikasi Antarbudaya
- Mumpuni, Eman W. T. S. (2015) STUDI KASUS DESKRIPTIF PADA KOMUNIKASI ANTARBUDAYA DI KALANGAN MAHASISWA SUKU BATAK DI UNIVERSITAS TELKOM
- Ningrum, P. A., et al. (2020). The Potential of Poverty in the City of Palangka Raya: Study SMIs Affected Pandemic Covid 19. Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal) Volume 3, No 3, Page: 1626-1634
- Riri Amelia (2018) Universitas Mercubuana, Perilaku Komunikasi Antarbudaya Korean Pop (Kpop) di Kalangan Mahasiswa/I Kpop di Jakarta
- Saleh, A., Mujahiddin. (2020). Challenges and Opportunities for Community Empowerment Practices in Indonesia during the Covid-19 Pandemic through Strengthening the Role of Higher Education. Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal). Volume 3, No 2, Page: 1105-1113.
- Sharfian, Farzad and Jamarni, Maryam (2013) Language and Intercultural Communication in The New Era, ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN LANGUAGE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
- Sihombing, E. H., Nasib. (2020). The Decision of Choosing Course in the Era of Covid 19 through the Telemarketing Program, Personal Selling and College Image. Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal) Volume 3, No. 4, Page: 2843-2850.

- Touhami, Batoul and Al-Bed Al-Haq, Fawwaz (2017) The Influence of The Korean Wave on the Language of International Fans: Case Study of Algerian Fans
- Tri Susanto Setiawan, Kompas (2019)
<https://entertainment.kompas.com/image/2019/02/08/181035310/sm-entertainment-buka-kantor-perwakilan-di-indonesia-apa-saja-isinya>
- Utami, Ima H., Wisadirana, Darsono., Nasution, Zulkarnain (2003) Analisis Model Komunikasi Antarbudaya: Studi Kasus Komunikasi Mahasiswa Papua dan Jawa di Universitas Brawijaya