

Communication Apprehension of Indonesian Students in Sekolah Indonesia Makkah

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Communication Apprehension;
Indonesian students; Sekolah Indonesia
Makkah; Saudi Arabia

Students at Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM), particularly those who are not proficient in the Indonesian language, face a significant challenge in terms of communication. Sekolah Indonesia Makkah is a school for Indonesian citizens who reside in Makkah. The President of the Islamic Republic of Indonesia established the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah in the Arabian Peninsula. This investigation pertains to the communication breakdown that was experienced by students of the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah. This event has the potential to enhance their academic performance, social interaction, and self-esteem. The purpose of this study is to identify strategies that can be implemented to address the communication crisis within the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah. This study employs the qualitative methods of case study research, which involves data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation. This study examines the strategies employed by educators to assist students in overcoming their challenges, as well as the experiences of students. The results of the study indicate that a supportive learning environment, the implementation of communication techniques, and positive reinforcement based on communication can effectively reduce students' anxiety regarding communication. This study contributes to the development of the theory of communication failure. In conclusion, the results of this study provide recommendations for educational institutions to develop a more inclusive teaching method that supports the growth of student communication, particularly in the context of classroom communication.

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate efficiently is important for a student to become an advanced generation in the future. In the next period, students must face learning situations that require them to be more independent, active, and have initiative in seeking information. Communication is done with care, purpose, and in line with the communicator's goals. Awareness here means that communication is carried out in a controlled mental and psychological state so that the goal is to achieve the desired results or effects of the communication (Hariyanto, 2021).

We acquire speaking, listening, and understanding both spoken and unspoken signs through learning, practicing, and observing (Ahmad, 2016). Communication skills are essential for getting a job, keeping it, and growing. Therefore, many leading companies prioritize communication skills when recruiting employees (Rao & Nattala, 2018). Effective communication is essential for globalization and global business growth (Ahmad, 2016). To improve communication skills, it is important to understand the different types of communication, find barriers, and make plans to overcome them (Rao & Nattala, 2018).

Developing speaking skills is crucial for achieving efficient communication. However, many students find it difficult to learn this skill because they often have problems when trying to speak a

foreign language. In today's increasingly competitive job market, every student needs to have the ability to speak English to overcome language barriers and perform better in presentations, writing essays, and discussing in class. Due to limited English skills, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students often avoid speaking English. Without a common language, the exchange of ideas does not occur normally. Language always involves word choice, which can occasionally result in miscommunication.

The Indonesian Overseas School Makkah, or better known as Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM), is the first educational institution established in Makkah. This school provides various levels of education, starting from kindergarten, elementary school, and junior high school to senior high school. Sekolah Indonesia Makkah is an educational institution established to meet the educational needs of Indonesian children in Makkah. There is a challenge that many students often face.

Indonesian schools abroad, especially in Mecca, are critical in teaching a sense of love for the homeland and culture to Indonesian students living abroad. By promoting nationalism, multicultural values, and Indonesian culture, schools enhance "Indonesianness" (Sriyanto et al., 2021). To counter radicalism, teachers are critical in shaping a sense of nationalism and culture in schools through their discipline, skills, and examples of good behavior. One of the steps taken by the Indonesian government is to place the values of Pancasila, the cultural traditions of the archipelago, and religious values in schools (Sofyan et al., 2022).

The transformation of madrasahs in Indonesia from informal groups to formal educational institutions has influenced Indonesian schools abroad. Schools play an important role in maintaining Indonesian identity, increasing cultural awareness, and instilling a sense of national pride in students living far from their homeland. The majority of Sekolah Indonesia Makkah students originate from Indonesian migrant workers working in Saudi Arabia, particularly women migrant workers. The good relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia have encouraged the two countries to frequently discuss ways to protect Indonesian migrant workers with the Saudi Arabian government to overcome the problems faced by Indonesian migrant workers there.

The Indonesian government, through its diplomatic representatives, continues to strive to discuss and address improvements in the protection and placement of Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. Indonesia's diplomatic efforts to protect migrant workers in Saudi Arabia resulted in an official agreement on February 19, 2014, in Riyadh, which aims to protect migrant workers there (Ismail, 2019). Furthermore, bilateral relations between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia continue to be strengthened through efforts to formulate policies related to the protection of Indonesian migrant workers (TKI) in Saudi Arabia. The Indonesian government continues to negotiate with the Saudi Arabian government regarding the formulation of policies for Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. Some of the Sekolah Indonesia Makkah students are children of migrant worker couples who are married to local Saudi citizens. This means that their children are not accustomed to speaking regular Indonesian.

2. Method

This study employs qualitative research methodology with a post-positivist paradigm to analyze the strategies employed by students to mitigate communication failures. Through the use of qualitative research, the researcher examines the subjective experiences of students, examining their context, emotions, and perceptions regarding their communication failures. We analyze the collected data thematically to pinpoint the strategic gaps arising from their experiences. The post-positivist paradigm was chosen because it can enhance the complexity of social reality that students experience, in which the process of communication is influenced by various social, religious, and psychological factors that are closely related. This challenge allows researchers to better understand the situation and create more effective ways to fix the communication problems, which aligns with the post-positivist goal of shedding light on complex social issues (Fischer, 1998; İslam Can, 2024).

The data collection techniques in the study consisted of in-depth interviews and literature review. To investigate the subjective experiences of pupils at the Indonesian Makkah School in

successfully overcoming communication anxiety, interviews were implemented as the primary methodology. Researchers have the option of conducting interviews in person or via telephone, which enables them to gather the opinions and preferences of each individual (Hyde, 2016). Online interviews were conducted using the Zoom platform, which enabled researchers to engage with respondents directly. The interview was semi-structured, which offers flexibility while still concentrating on predetermined topics. We selected this method because it effectively understands complex psychological and social dynamics, especially in unique cultural and linguistic contexts. Researchers guarantee the selection of suitable informants, preserve the credibility of the data, and establish a supportive environment to encourage students to open up about their personal experiences.

We implemented literature studies in addition to interviews to strengthen the conceptual framework and theoretical foundation of the investigation. Information was gathered from various scientific sources, including books, journals, articles, and research reports, that are pertinent to the study of communication anxiety, overseas education, and communication theory. This literature review serves as a foundation for the more critical and contextual interpretation and analysis of research findings, in addition to serving as a complement to field data. This study can offer a more comprehensive comprehension of communication anxiety reduction strategies in students in the Makkah Indonesian School environment by integrating primary data from interviews and secondary data from the literature.

3. Result and Discussion

The Dynamics of Communication Development in Indonesian Senior High Schools

This study demonstrates that the communication breakdown experienced by students at Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM) is the result of various internal and external factors. Students are often hesitant to accept themselves when they are required to sit at the back of the class, particularly because they are unable to make a complaint or receive negative feedback from their teachers and peers. Many of them have Indonesian migrant workers and family members who use Arabic in their daily lives, which makes Indonesian the second language they are least likely to use actively. This idiosyncrasy results in a psychological barrier that significantly hinders communication, particularly in formal contexts such as school presentations or questions. The challenges that students face are diverse, ranging from academic and interpersonal to even spiritual, although they are genuinely interested in the subject matter.

Students employ a variety of private strategies to deal with stress, including sitting at the back of the classroom, writing down important points before sitting, and taking breaks. The immediate environment also plays a significant role as an emotional stimulus. In the alternative, the teacher provides support through participatory and empathic teaching, such as by establishing a comfortable classroom environment, addressing critical issues, and offering guidance on student work. Although the majority of students are grateful for this method, a few others are experiencing difficulties due to the lack of supervision or the absence of a second teacher in the household. This indicates that, despite the implementation of individual and institutional strategies, their effectiveness is significantly influenced by the consistency of defense mechanisms among various entities, including families.

Effective and Strategic Communication Strategies

This study explores the concept of communication apprehension, which was introduced by McCroskey (1977). In this concept, communication apprehension is defined as a sense of apprehension or discomfort that arises when an individual is required to participate in various communication situations, including interpersonal, group, public, and private. Within the context of students Sekolah Indonesia Makkah (SIM), this development occurred as a result of their lack of proficiency in the active use of the Indonesian language, as a significant number of them employ Arabic in their daily lives. When the students' language abilities are inadequate, they begin to negatively evaluate themselves, resulting in a sense of impending rejection or rejection by others.

This condition is consistent with the belief that one's perception of their competence plays a significant role in the development of communication.

Additionally, the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1983) provides pertinent insights into the dynamics that students experience. This theory posits that in a postmodern world, individuals continue to experience greater anxiety and depression, particularly in the context of social interaction. The failure of Sekolah Indonesia Makkah students in the context of transnational education is not solely due to linguistic factors but also to the complex process of cultural adaptation. As a result, it is crucial to implement crisis management strategies that are emotional, cognitive, and social in nature in this instance.

From a strategic perspective, this study suggests that the combination of cognitive, affective, and social skills produces highly effective results. Students achieve cognitive development through the evaluation of their communication needs, a crucial process for the learning journey. Effective communication occurs through the act of listening, responding, or expressing oneself before engaging in a conversation. Family members and teachers, who provide a safe and supportive environment, also influence social strategies. The third phase of this project involves the development of an internal and external security system that is necessary to resolve the communication breakdown among students.

Teachers have a very central role in this anxiety reduction process. The Sekolah Indonesia Makkah teachers actively create a supportive and non-threatening school environment. The single most significant aspect of this strategy is the encouragement of students to participate in small groups prior to their formal entry into the upper grades, rather than solely focusing on their success. The teacher also adjusts the teaching method to the psychological needs of the students, including the use of team games and activities. This strategy has resulted in the establishment of a secure environment (safe space) that enables employees to more effectively perceive themselves in communication.

However, there are significant challenges associated with the consistent implementation of this strategy. One of the most significant is the teacher's psychological and intercultural training deficit. Not all teachers possess the capacity or experience to engage students with various language and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, adults play a minimal role in helping students develop communication skills in several instances. Several students have expressed that they do not have access to security or surveillance in their homes, which has resulted in an unoptimized eviction process. The effectiveness of the strategy that is employed is also influenced by the individual characteristics of the students, such as their age, previous experiences, and emotional state.

Therefore, it is impossible to systematically implement a strategy for managing communication crises. A holistic and collaborative approach is required, involving all stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, and the school community as a whole. This challenge must also be addressed in a comprehensive manner, not only as a response to the communication issue but as an integral component of the educational system. By doing so, schools such as Sekolah Indonesia Makkah can become inclusive educational environments that foster the development of students' communication skills in a meaningful way, not only as academic tools but also as social media that are significant to them in their future.

4. Conclusion

This investigation underscores the multifaceted nature of communication apprehension among students at Sekolah Indonesia Makkah, which is influenced by both internal psychological factors and external sociocultural dynamics. The significant barrier to effective classroom participation was the inability of many students to communicate proficiently in Indonesian, which was frequently the result of their upbringing in Arabic-speaking environments. This linguistic disconnect, in conjunction with low self-confidence and dread of negative evaluation, induces a cycle of anxiety that impedes students from actively participating in classroom discourse.

In-depth interviews, which were conducted using a qualitative research approach, demonstrated that students implement a diverse array of personal strategies to manage their anxiety, such as cognitive reframing, emotional self-regulation, and seeking support from peers. Teachers also play a critical role in creating a psychologically secure learning environment by utilizing participatory, empathetic teaching methods and recognizing effort rather than solely results. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these strategies is inconsistent and heavily reliant on broader systemic support, particularly from families and the institution.

The results support McCroskey's theory about fear of communication and Gudykunst's theory on managing anxiety and uncertainty, highlighting that communication anxiety in schools is not just a personal issue but also shows how ready the school is and the challenges of different cultures. Consistent implementation remains a challenge as a result of gaps in teacher training, limited parental involvement, and diverse student circumstances, despite the numerous efforts made at the individual and instructional levels.

Consequently, a comprehensive and collaborative strategy is necessary to alleviate communication anxiety among students in international educational contexts like SIM. It is imperative that not only students and instructors but also parents and school administrators collaborate to establish a learning environment that is both inclusive and supportive. Communication skills can only be effectively developed through a comprehensive approach, which is essential for personal growth, cultural integration, and future success in a globalized world, in addition to academic competencies.

5. Acknowledgement

The editors extend their gratitude to the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta for the publication of this journal. Researchers also extend their gratitude to Dr. Fajar Junaedi for his assistance in conducting this investigation.

6. References

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