



**INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AMONG STUDENTS AND YOUTH IN  
LABUHANBATU SELATAN DISTRICT**

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**Abstract**

The Indonesian nation is a nation whose society is heterogeneous, namely a society consisting of various ethnic groups, religions, languages, customs and others. Communicating to meet the needs of individual or group life, of course, interact with other ethnic groups as well as with other individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds, so on that basis the emergence of intercultural communication. This study aims to find out how the escalation of life that contains elements of cultural diversity, in this case focused on students and youth in an organization, namely the South Labuhanbatu Youth and Student Movement (GEPMA LABUSEL). Such as verbal and nonverbal communication messages, obstacles, and problems such as (conflicts) that are encountered in intercultural communication among students and youth in South Labuhanbatu. In addition, this study uses a qualitative research approach, namely, by using data collection techniques, reference sources for journals, books, and other data, then through interviews, observations, and documentation. From the results of the study, it was found that the ethnic groups in the South Labuhanbatu area had differences in terms of appearance, lifestyle, customs, ways of interacting, language/dialect. The need to pay attention to and change the orientation of the interaction process in intercultural communication in various levels of society, especially in the scope of students and youth such as the organization above at this time, is due to attitudes or behaviors that cause conflicts that hinder the communication process in determining certain rights or goals and of course minimize the sense of belonging. community unity.

Keywords: Communication, Culture, Students.

**Introduction**

Indonesia is an archipelagic country and is the fourth most populous country in the world. Besides that, Indonesia is also known as a pluralistic society, which consists of various races, ethnicities, religions, and different cultures in one system of government (Annur, 2020). Basically, humans always interact because they are social beings, in this case social interactions are established because of a reciprocal relationship between two or more people and the individuals involved in them who actualize their roles actively. One of the conditions for the occurrence of an interaction is through communication, this is an important thing in life because it supports the emergence of social interaction. Then communication is a series of processes of exchanging information from the communicator to the communicant, either directly or indirectly. The communication process aims to achieve mutual understanding between the two parties involved in the communication process. In the pluralistic life of Indonesian society, there is direct or indirect interaction between cultures, the occurrence of diversity encounters which are routines or habits that cannot be avoided. But something



that is constantly happening that will give birth to interaction. Most intercultural communication is influenced by cultural differences.

One of the important reasons to study intercultural communication is of course to be educational for students who are cognitive and affective which leads to awareness to create our own cultural identity. A social psychologist suggests, that in the study of intercultural communication begins as a journey to another culture from reality and ends as a journey into one's own culture. Living in another country broadens our horizons. It makes us appreciate the things you have, and it strengthens the family unit. You see your country from a different point of view. We learn not to expect things to be the same as "at home," but if we happen to come across something that reminds us of home, we really appreciate that and it makes us very happy (Suryandari, 2019).

In general, intercultural communication does not only occur in the community but also in education, youth, and organizations, one of which is in one of the student and youth organizations, namely the South Labuhanbatu Youth and Student Movement, which is a forum for students and youth in the South Labuhanbatu area. Students and youth in it consist of different socio-cultural backgrounds, both from the Toba Batak, Mandailing Batak, Javanese, Malay, Chinese, and several other ethnic groups. The purpose of the Students Gathering in one organization (GEPMA LABUSEL) is to establish communication, close and good relations between youth and students of South Labuhanbatu, and synergize to participate in efforts to develop Labuhanbatu Seltan towards a better area. In this GEPMA LABUSEL activity there is a process of interaction between students, both ethnic and with different ethnicities, the purpose of the interaction is to meet information needs.

However, in interacting directly or using media from two individuals with different socio-cultural backgrounds, misunderstandings often occur in the interpretation of meaning because each student has a different culture, which affects the effectiveness of communication.

## **Discussion**

From the results of the study, it was found that the ethnic groups in the South Labuhanbatu area had differences in terms of appearance, lifestyle, customs, ways of interacting, language/dialect. One of the differences that can be seen is the way of interacting or language, where the community is still thick with the style/dialect of its own ethnic characteristics, as well as students and youth participating in the culture. When there is an interaction in cross-cultural, of course, the layers of society still prioritize the characteristics of their own culture, both in terms of greeting, traditional activities, and kinship. But in the situation of intercultural communication, the majority of the people of South Labuhanbatu use a language from a blend of Mandailing and Malay languages, the reason is because based on the historical record of Budi Erwinsyah Nasution as Administrator of the South Labuhanbatu National Reform Forum (FPK) for the 2020-2024 period said that the early history of occupying the area Labuhanbatu Selatan is a Malay ethnic who is a former of the sultanate of Kota Pinang (1905-1946) which has jurisdiction from Asahan, Batu Bara, Bilah, Kota Pinang, Lampangayung, but the Malay land is from a migration from Angkola and Mandailing but blends in with the culture Mandailing because of tribal migration (Interview, Nasution, 2021). So that in this case from the past until now the immigrant tribes mingled with a blend of Malay and Mandailing language styles, if analyzed, this language is actually a language that is often encountered and people feel comfortable in using that language.



In this case, a similar incident occurred in the youth sphere, especially in the student organization and Youth GEPMA LABUSEL. But there are several cases that have occurred in the process of interaction in this scope. Which is the Javanese ethnicity who has an attitude identical to being gentle and so is the Chinese ethnicity which is minimal in the behavior of mingling with society. The Javanese often experience Cultural Shock in the process of interaction with the Mandailing and Toba Batak tribes, where there are significant differences in attitude orientation and language style. The Mandailing tribe is identified with a firm and hard attitude and a language style that is considered rude, while the Javanese have a friendly and gentle attitude and language. So in this case the Javanese always avoid and do not want to have long dealings with the Mandailing and Toba Batak tribes. Likewise with ethnic Chinese, because ethnic Chinese are difficult to blend in, often get discriminatory attitudes towards other ethnic behaviors.

Within the scope of the student and youth organization, namely GEPMA LABUSEL, problems often occur in the interaction process, which is communication in an intercultural context. In the structural management of GEPMA LABUSEL and the entire youth and student community who are part of the organization. such as the case above is due to the existence of the majority ethnic group that dominates the organization, so that they assume that they have more control than other minority ethnic groups.

Based on the problems above, it is necessary to pay attention to and change the orientation of the interaction process in intercultural communication in various levels of society, especially in the scope of students and youth such as the organization above at this time, due to attitudes or behaviors that cause conflicts that hinder the communication process in determining certain rights or goals. and of course minimize the sense of community unity. In Soekanto (2010: 58-62) social interaction is very useful for studying and studying many problems in society. Social interaction is also the key to all social life because without social interaction, it is impossible to live together (Lagu, 2016).

The interaction carried out by students and youth at the GEPMA LABUSEL organization is one of the phenomena that affects the process of intercultural communication in the verbal communication process, each ethnic group interpreting their experiences both in the community in general and in the campus environment. In carrying out the process of intercultural communication, knowledge is needed to understand each other's ethnicity, knowledge can be in the form of lifestyle, behavior, habits, to language and dialect. Language is a vehicle for interacting so that interactions run smoothly, it is necessary to have a common meaning in the communication process. It can be seen that each ethnic group has knowledge so that they are aware of the differences between these various ethnic groups, namely this has an impact on the interaction process where each ethnic group has a different language so that sometimes it interferes with the interaction process so that communication does not work effectively (Lagu, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Intercultural communication is a communication phenomenon where the participants have different cultural backgrounds and are then involved in a contact between one another, either directly or indirectly. From the results of the study, it was found that the ethnic groups in the South Labuhanbatu area had differences in terms of appearance, lifestyle, customs, ways of interacting, language/dialect. One of the differences that can be seen is the way of interacting or language, where the community is still thick with the style/dialect of its own ethnic characteristics, as well as students and youth



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