

Mediated Intercultural Communication Barrier in No Drama Zone! group

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ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to describe the mediated intercultural communication barriers in the No Drama Zone! group.

This study is a qualitative descriptive type of research, with case study method. By doing in depth interview and observation, researcher found two barriers that generates other barriers in the group's mediated intercultural communication. The two big barriers were: language and physical barriers. Language barriers in this group generated two barriers, emotional barrier and perception barrier. While the physical barrier generated two barriers, the time barrier and environment barrier. Each barrier had relation with the differences of cultural backgrounds and the computer mediated communication.

This research study can be used as foundation for research regarding the mediated intercultural communication with PS4 as one of the tools.

Keywords:

Case Study, Mediated, Intercultural Communication Barriers

Background

Nowadays people would communicate without seeing each other in person, through social media, such as *LINE*, *Path*, *Wechat*, *Whatsapp*, *Facebook*, and *Twitter*. Path is an app that is used for mobile messaging app to talk with other people (path.com/talk, 2015). WhatsApp is a cross-platform mobile messaging app, which allows people to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia and those phones can all send messages to each other because WhatsApp used the same internet data plan that people use for email and web browsing, there is no cost to message and stay in touch with their friends. In addition to basic messaging WhatsApp users can create groups, send each other unlimited images, video and audio media messages (whatsapp.com, 2015). LINE is an app that is used for exchanging free instant messages with friends whenever and wherever with one-on-one and group chats. LINE is available on all smartphone devices (iphone, android, windows phone, blackberry) and even on PC (line.me, 2015). In addition, people (gamers) would consider using Playstation 4 as social media. Playstation 4 is a console for playing online games or offline games. People will gather in a virtual party using Playstation 4 also known as

PS4. Using PS4, people from different countries can speak to each other and gather in a virtual party while playing. PS4 users use the Party function to chat via voice and text with up to seven of the user's friends and fellow players on the PS4 and PS Vita. PS Vita is a handheld console created by Sony Playstation. The Party function is available while using a game or other application, even if the other people in the chat are using different games or applications.

No Drama Zone! group was a small group of people from different countries and culture. In intercultural communication, two or more of the participants from different cultural backgrounds perform a symbolic exchange that is through verbal and non-verbal means (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p.39). Intercultural communication is complex, the barriers can arise from a variety of elements there, both from participants and the environment were involved in the communication process (Tim-Toomey, 2005, p.40).

This research focused on Mediated Intercultural Communication Barriers within the No Drama Zone group. According to Novinger there are three types of communication barriers: perception barriers, verbal barriers, and nonverbal barriers (2001, p.24-25). these three barriers are related. Verbal communication barriers and nonverbal communication barriers occurred due to differences in perception. Perception barriers in communication occurred because of the resistance of verbal and nonverbal barriers.

According to Fujishin (2013. p. 3) the minimum number of individuals needed to constitute a small group is three people. Two people do not make a group because their interaction is that of a couple, or dyad. In a dyad, one person speaks, the other listens and responds, and then the original speaker considers what is being said. No third individual witnesses the event or influences the interaction. A dyad normally encourages more self-disclosure, simply because no audience or third party is present.

The researcher found supporting data regarding Intercultural communication or Cross culture in Mark Ward's research (2010). Mark Ward's research (2010) stated that new players enter a game world lacking the cognitive models needed to accurately fill in missing information; to receive communications from the game and from other players that could be from different countries, and then swiftly make the mental shortcuts needed to arrive at culturally correct conclusions. The journal explained that game world can be considered to have its own culture and because people from different countries can interact and be considered intercultural communication, in-game communication can be considered intercultural communication. The differences between Ward's research and this research were, this research study focused on one specific group (No Drama Zone!) mediated intercultural communication. While Ward's research was more general in explaining new player joined society of the game world.

The question in this research was: how are the mediated intercultural communication barriers in No Drama Zone! group?

Literature Review

In this chapter the researcher used Chaney and Martin (2004, p.11) theory about verbal language that can become barrier in intercultural communication. This communication barrier will happen if the sender and the receiver use different language or words that the receiver doesn't understand. According to Crispin Thurlow, Laura Lengel and Alice Tomic (2004) Language in computer mediated communication is a symbolic system for creating meaning and is made up of sounds (or *phonemes*), letters (or *graphemes*) and words (or *morphemes*). These are in turn combined to form grammatical structures like sentences according to the rules (or *syntax*) agreed by any particular community of speakers. This is a marvelous thing in itself. Linguistic forms like sounds, letters, words and grammatical rules don't tell the whole story, however. Meaning isn't simply 'put together' this way.

Understanding what someone means when they say something requires more than recognizing the sounds and words they use, and even if people know the correct rules of grammar, there's no guarantee that those people understood the meaning. Instead, meanings are negotiated between speakers, and have to make careful judgments about context in order to decide what someone means. According to Novinger, language is a product of culture, and culture is a product of language, therefore the language reflects the culture itself (Novinger, 2001, p.45). Language is not only a technical code of communication, but also the nonverbal code of another characteristic feature of thought and behavior patterns of structure and methods of language used. In this part, the researcher added language in CMC because the researcher found that language was one of the most prominent barriers in this group.

Physical barrier in intercultural communication (Chaney and Martin) this communication barrier caused by time, environment, self need, and physical media factors. According to Crispin Thurlow, Laura Lengel and Alice Tomic (2004) in their book "Computer Mediated Communication ; Social Interaction and the Internet" Computer mediated communication (CMC) is a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in a particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes. One of the most interactive opportunities offered by the computer mediated communication is real-time (or synchronous) chatting with friends and with people you might never otherwise have met. Most people find this exciting and rewarding, although only in direct proportion to the time and effort they're prepared to invest in getting to know people and how the technical systems work.

Method

Research Conceptualization

In conducting this research, the topic that discussed was Mediated Intercultural Small Group Communication Barriers in No Drama Zone. The researchers adopted a qualitative approach in this study. As for the types of study, the

researcher used descriptive qualitative to analyze and present the data. In this study, the researcher used the case study method. Case study was research of phenomena as they occur without any significant intervention of the researcher. Becker (1970) explains that case study refers to a detailed analysis of an individual case supposing that “one can properly acquire knowledge of the phenomenon from intensive exploration of a single case” (p.75). The case study attempts, on the one hand, to arrive at comprehensive understanding of the event under study but at the same time to develop more general theoretical statements about regularities in the observed phenomena (Fidel, 1984).

Research Subject

The target of this research was the object of research, which was Mediated Intercultural Communication in No Drama Zone! group. This study wanted to provide thick description about Mediated Intercultural Communication Barriers within a small group. The subject of this research was the informants that are considered competent and directly involved in mediated intercultural communication within the group. Informants were chosen in order to obtain appropriateness information about the research, in which the researcher must decide who the informants are, then delegate tasks in accordance with the study. The informants have been asked to exchange ideas within the research, speaking, or comparing an incident revealed another subject (Moleong, 2004, p.132).

Informants that were selected by the researchers in this study are members of No Drama Zone! group as the parties that involved directly and implement mediated intercultural communication within the group. This informant selection techniques used purposive sampling technique, whereby informants selected are the ones that are considered most knowledgeable about the issues raised by researchers (Rakhmat, 2009). In this study, the unit of analysis was the people that are considered competent to be resources. Thus, the unit of analysis in this study is the NO Drama Zone! Group, according to Edwin Salvatore the group founder they have been together in this group since July 2014. The topic within this group revolves around games, showing pictures of favorite foods, pictures of themselves when they did exercise, personal life such as how they were treated within their families.

Data Analysis Technique

The target of this research was the object of research, which was Mediated Intercultural Communication in No Drama Zone! group. This study wanted to provide thick description about Mediated Intercultural Communication Barriers within a small group. The subject of this research was the informants that are considered competent and directly involved in mediated intercultural communication within the group. Informants were chosen in order to obtain appropriateness information about the research, in which the researcher must decide who the informants are, then delegate tasks in accordance with the study. The informants have been asked to exchange ideas within the research, speaking, or comparing an incident revealed another subject (Moleong, 2004, p.132).

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Data Findings, Analysis and Interpretation

In this part, the language barriers correlate with emotional barriers, because the language barriers in No Drama Zone! generate emotional barrier. According to Chaney and Martin (2004, p.11) emotional barrier is related with emotion or feelings of the receiver, if the receiver's emotion is not good then the communication barrier will be developed.

According to Edwin, the No Drama Zone! group was an international group due to their multi-nationality, members in this group used different languages such as Indonesian, Thai language, English, Tagalog and Japanese. The primary language that this group used was English. There was a member in this group who rarely spoke in English, most of the time he was using Indonesian language to communicate and only speak to Indonesians in the group. Edwin stated that members in No Drama Zone! group should have the courtesy to speak in English and he found it annoying if they did not speak in English. This statement was obtained from an interview with him,

“As much as possible I'd like for everyone to speak in English, because it is an international language and that you know... everybody should have understand it... especially if they are placed in such international context, but you know if some people might not do their best to speak in English... it's kind of... uhhh it's annoying... to be honest you know, others don't really understand your language, so you should at least you know uhh.. have the courtesy to make an effort to speak in English. Especially in this 21st century, you should update yourself on how to speak English. And if you cant speak in english for whatever reason, at least try to speak a little bit of English. But i know they are some people in the group, they don't want to speak in English and I don't understand why, and if they don't want to be a part of the group then I can't do anything you know, but I do believe that many of us already tell them of this irritation.” (Interview with Edwin Salvatore using PS4, October 17,2015).

Steve stated his annoyance toward the person who did not try to speak in English when speaking in this group through interview as well. During the interview he said,

“And about Jesse who’s not very active in the group, I think it’s because he felt awkward, like being pushed away from the community. You know how Novan always speak in Indonesian knowing it is an International Group ! And that’s also the reason for me not to join in what he come up with in a conversation, I don’t wanna add even more awkwardness”(interview with Steve Mulyadi, October 17,2015)



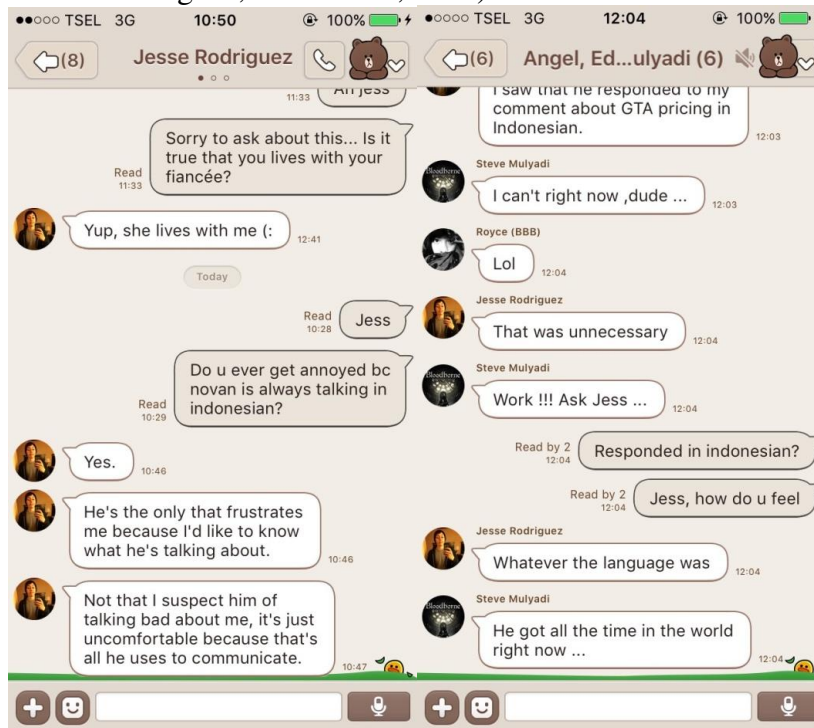
Picture 4.10, usage of language that caused barrier in the No Drama Zone!

The picture 4.10 was taken via LINE chat, it was the chat in No Drama Zone! group. Through the picture can be seen that Bracer was asking if anyone is willing to buy a game called Final Fantasy 15 when the game is released around 2016 to 2017. Novan replied her in Bahasa Indonesia by telling her that he will not be getting it because he did not like the game. According to Novan, the main character and his group seems like a boyband; then Novan was laughing. Steve felt awkward and he just said “that’s a ... uummm ...” Then, Edwin replied Novan by telling him that it was Bracer talking. It was a reminder that Novan should not use Bahasa Indonesia. Afer a while, Novan admitted that he forgot that Bracer cannot talk in Bahasa Indonesia. However he continued to always spoke in Indonesian and rarely used English when he replied to people who were not from Indonesia.

Jess and Bracer thought Novan as a very impolite person, Jess stated,

“He’s the only one that frustrates me because I’d like to know what he’s talking about. Not that I suspect him of talking bad about me, it’s just

*uncomfortable because that's all he uses to communicate. I saw that he responded to my GTA pricing in Indonesian. That was unnecessary, whatever the language was. **How the fuck could I carry a conversation with someone speaking a completely different language? It's like me speaking Spanish to you all and ONLY Spanish**"(interview with Jess Rodriguez, October 17, 2015)*

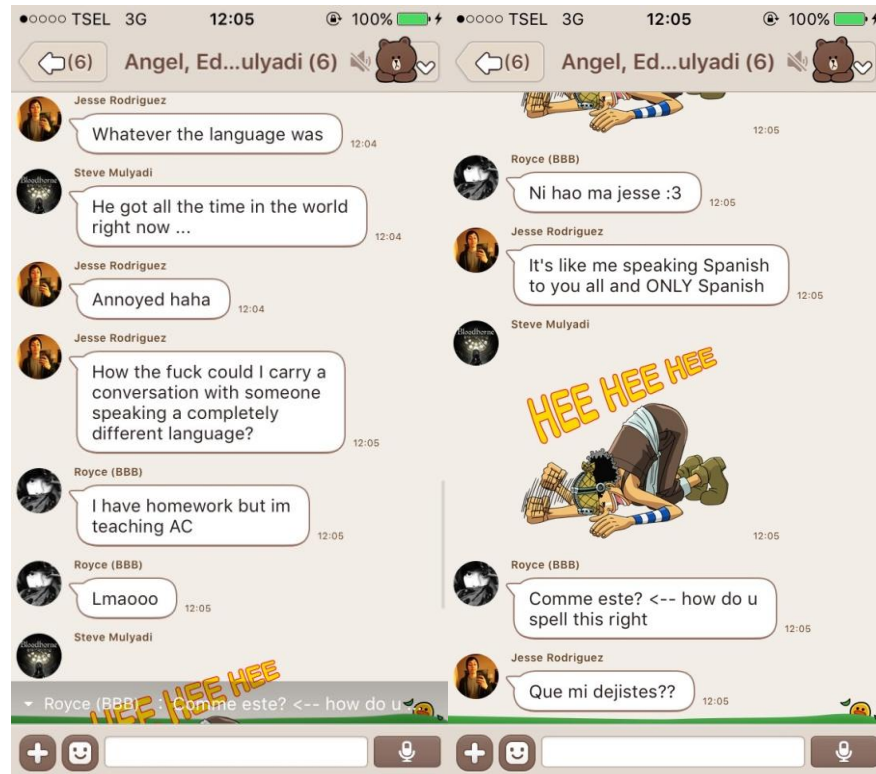


Picture 4.11, Jess disclosed his frustration regarding usage of language in the No Drama Zone! group

At the time, Jess was talking in the group in English and Novan replied him in Bahasa Indonesia. The researcher immediately asked Jess regarding how he felt, researcher often observed their group conversation and found that Novan almost never speak in English, even when he responded to Jess or Bracer's text. In the text above Jess stated,

"He's the only one that frustrates me because I'd like to know what he's talking about. Not that I suspect him of talking bad about me, it's just uncomfortable because that;s all he uses to communicate."

Jess confirmed that Novan always used Bahasa Indonesia to communicate in the group chats and in PS4 party.

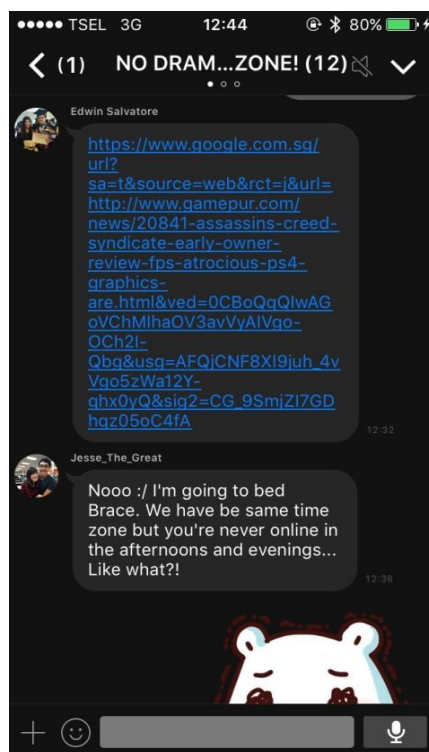


Picture 4.12, Jess disclosed his frustration regarding usage of language in the No Drama Zone! group

According to Bracer, it would be awkward when members of the group were talking in any language beside English. But should they talked in other language, Bracer would try to listen and pick up to words she can tell and tried to understand how it was constructed. For her it was a matter of being observant to learn beyond her own comprehension. That was how she could say “tailo”. Tailo was a cursing word in Indonesia, it was supposed to be “tai lu” and she also added that it was like learning culture but verbally (observation in PS4 party). Although Bracer tried to understand Novan’s behavior, Bracer did not get annoyed by Novan but she also stated that Novan was impolite or lack of proper behavior. This statement was obtained by interview with her,

“...Not really, I just find it improper... impolite or lack of proper behavior, well it’s not awkward. I mean I don’t mind, but in Jesse’s part or others who ain’t Indo... it’s just so disrespectful. It’s socially disruptive.”(Interview with Bracer, October 17, 2015).

According to Chaney and Martin (2004, p.11) physical communication barrier are caused by time, environment, self need, and physical media factors. In No Drama Zone! group the apparent communication barrier was time. Edwin, Steve, Bemz and Novan lived in the same time zone but Bracer & Jess did not live in the same time zone as the others that had been mentioned above, most of the member such as Edwin, Steve, Bracer and Jess could play together with the others during weekends. But bracer never played together with Jess although they were in the



same time zone.

was in the same time zone but never play together

In the picture above, Bracer was asking whether Jess was still online or not. Then Jess answer,

“Nooo :/ I’m going to bed Brace. We have be same time zone but you’re never online in the afternoons and evenings... Like what?!”

As the picture showed and stated, although Bracer and Jess were in the same time zone, they still have physical barriers in their communication. Jess and Bracer were never online at the same time unless there were other person sent them invites, such as Steve and Edwin. In this part Jess statement correlates with Chaney and Martin (2004) theory regarding the physical barrier in intercultural communication which was caused by the differences of time.

Conclusion

In this research, the researcher found that there were several things that can be described as barrier in mediated intercultural communication barriers in the No Drama Zone!. Mediated Intercultural Communication Barriers in No Drama Zone! group were divided into two, barriers that was generated by language and barriers that was generated by physical barrier. The first was language barrier, language was the most problematic barrier in this group, although this group used English as their primary language, there was a member who never uses English and kept using Bahasa Indonesia during conversations in both LINE group chats and PS4 party chats. In this part, the particular person generated the language barrier, and the language barrier generated emotional barrier. In this research study, aside from generating emotional barrier, language also generated perception barrier, perception barrier happened when a member laughed wit “wkwkwk” in the LINE group chat. “wkwkwk” is informal forms of laugh in

Bahasa Indonesia, a member who was Philippine descent thought that person was talking about *wakwak*, the vampiric hunting ghost.

Secondly, physical barriers in this group were divided into two, the time barrier and environment barrier. One of the examples of Physical barriers that was caused by time was when Bracer asked Steve to stream his game so Bracer could watch it. Steve agreed to her but told Bracer that he would not know whether Bracer still awake or not when he streamed the game. Steve lived in Indonesia, while Bracer lived in Canada. Night time in Indonesia is Daytime in Canada, if Steve streamed during night or early morning in Indonesia, Bracer will be either asleep or already at school. Although in Pixy Ferris' book CMC was supposed not to be limited by time, in this case the CMC was really limited by geographical and time space. The last thing was environment barrier in this group. Environment barrier happened when Edwin, Steve, Jess and Bracer tried to be in party and play together. Sometimes they got disturbed during intense match with other players. Edwin's father came in and start lecturing him about his life, Steve's boss children came to him and asked him to play with him which he must obey because Steve is working for the children's father and lives in Staff house (in high context communication identity is determined by work), Bracer got lectured too when her parents came to visit her.

Researcher suggest that No Drama Zone! group try to be more open to each other by translating the Bahasa Indonesia in the group, solving the language barrier by giving warnings to the member who did not use English in the group. For the time barrier, the No Drama Zone! group can solve this barrier by making appointments, like playing during weekends. For streaming problem can be solved by uploading the gameplay to Youtube and share the link to them.

For researchers that want to do a research study regarding mediated communication barriers in a group, they could use different method such as ethnography to provide a thick description of the mediated communication barriers.

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