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Intercultural Communication Ethics as a Control Mechanism for Cultural Homogenization Westernization and Asianization in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT :

The wave of globalization in the 21st century has had a major impact on patterns of communication and intercultural interaction. This process has given rise to the phenomenon of cultural homogenization, namely the standardization of values, lifestyles, and cultural orientations due to the dominance of global culture, particularly Western culture (westernization) and East Asian culture (asianization). This phenomenon has raised concerns about the loss of local cultural identity, which has long been a strength of Indonesian society. This article aims to analyze how cross-cultural communication ethics can play a role in controlling cultural homogenization resulting from Westernization and Asianization. This study uses a qualitative method with a literature study approach. The results of the study show that intercultural communication ethics play an important role in regulating intercultural interactions so as not to cause the domination of certain values. Ethical principles such as respect for differences, contextual awareness, empathy, and openness to dialogue can serve as filters in responding to foreign cultural influences. Thus, intercultural communication ethics can be an effective control mechanism in maintaining cultural diversity and strengthening national identity amid the tide of globalization.

Key words: *Communication Ethics, Intercultural Communication, Cultural Homogenization*

INTRODUCTION

Humans and culture are like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. Where there are humans, there is bound to be a culture in the area inhabited by those humans. Culture is influenced by humans' perspective on their living space and is deliberately created by humans themselves to fulfill certain demands of life. The nature of culture itself is regeneration, its mean that a culture is passed down from generation to generation so that it survives and does not become extinct. Each generation must have an awareness of cultural resilience, although it is possible that a culture will still undergo changes over time.

Globalization and technological developments have brought about significant changes in human life. Here we can see the birth of a new culture, commonly referred to as modern culture, as a counterpart to traditional culture. Modern culture originated in a specific country but is transnational in

nature, and most adherents of modern culture are young people who are tech- savvy.¹

Every culture, whether traditional or modern, produces certain products, and it is these products that will eventually be introduced and disseminated throughout the world. The movement of globalization and technological developments has made it possible for traditional and modern cultures in one region to be known by people in other parts of the world. Cultural owners can introduce and disseminate their culture through various technological advances. This introduction and dissemination can be considered successful if the culture is accepted by people in other cultures without any conflict..²

A new phenomenon has emerged in the era of globalization, which has long been dominated by Western culture, namely Hallyu or the Korean Wave as a form of Asian cultural globalization. Similar to Westernization, the Korean Wave spreads through popular culture such as films, TV dramas, pop music, fashion, and even language, food, and technology. Therefore, it can be said that there are currently two cultures that dominate global culture: Westernization, with its Western cultural values, and the Korean Wave, with its South Korean cultural values.³

When studying the concept of cross-cultural communication ethics, the problem arises when what is considered good or bad behavior, appropriate or inappropriate, polite or impolite in one culture often becomes a cultural concept that differs from or even conflicts with other cultures.

Methods

This paper uses a qualitative method with a literature study data collection technique, where data collection is carried out by compiling several literary sources as references for this study. Data and information were obtained from various scientific sources, such as books, journal articles, news, and other relevant sources available online and offline. The data and information were then analyzed qualitatively using the theoretical framework employed.

Result

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between people from different cultural backgrounds. Griffin argues: "The term intercultural communication is usually reserved for theory and research that compare specific interpersonal variables such as conversational distance,

¹ Gema Budiarto, "Dampak Cultural Invasi Terhadap Kebudayaan Lokal: Studi Kasus Terhadap Bahasa Daerah," *Pamator Journal* 13, no. 2 (2020): 183–93, <https://doi.org/10.21107/pamator.v13i2.8259>.

² Naeimah Alkharafi and Mariam Alsbah, "Globalization: An Overview of Its Main Characteristics and Types, and an Exploration of Its Impacts on Individuals, Firms, and Nation," *MDPI* vol.13(4) (2025).

³ Dinda Larasati, "Globalisasi Budaya Dan Identitas," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 2018.

self-disclosure, and styles of conflict resolution across two or more different cultures".⁴ All communication has the potential to be intercultural communication, because different backgrounds create cultural differences. Communication and culture are interdependent, and cultural differences also influence communication with our interlocutors. The existence of differences in background between individuals forces us to understand intercultural communication.⁵

Ethis in Intercultural Communication Practice

Ethics are moral standards that govern behavior, how a person acts and expects others to act. Ethics generally relate to judgments about behavior that is right or wrong, good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, useful or useless, and what should or should not be done.⁶

Ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means habit, morals, customs, feelings, values, norms, attitudes, ways of thinking, and teachings that serve as guidelines for an individual or group of people. Mike formulated five principles of cross-cultural communication ethics, namely: (1) recognition and respect; (2) affirmation/confirmation; (3) identification of things that are not well understood; (4) ecology or paying attention to the environment and context; (5) openness.⁷

All societies in the world have a culture, and one component of culture is values. Values are a reference or guideline that is held as a guide for the behavior of every member of a society or cultural group. Studying cross-cultural communication means that we study and compare other cultures, learning one or more about other cultural values.⁸

Global Cultural Homogenization

Cultural homogenization, according to globalists, is defined as the emergence of a new culture in society that becomes a global culture thanks to globalization. Existing cultures are becoming more similar due to the role of the global community and dominant groups.⁹ Homogenization assumes that globalization in contact with culture will produce a global culture in which there are similarities in values, norms, and other cultural products that are embraced, resulting in cultural standardization. Experts also mention that cultural globalization causes

⁴ Anita Febiyana and Ade Tuti Turistiati, "KOMUNIKASI ANTARBUDAYA DALAM MASYARAKAT MULTIKULTUR (Studi Kasus Pada Karyawan Warga Negara Jepang Dan Indonesia Di PT. Tokyu Land Indonesia)," *LUGAS Jurnal Komunikasi* 3, no. 1 (2019): 33–44, <https://doi.org/10.31334/ljk.v3i1.414>.

⁵ Yulia Segarwati Almadina Rakhmaniar, "Etika Komunikasi Bisnis Budaya Italia Pada Perusahaan Leo Vince Di Indonesia," *Linimasa : Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 3, no. 1 (2020): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.23969/linimasa.v3i1.2192>.

⁶ Almadina Rakhmaniar, "Etika Komunikasi Bisnis Budaya Italia Pada Perusahaan Leo Vince Di Indonesia."

⁷ Febiyana and Turistiati, "KOMUNIKASI ANTARBUDAYA DALAM MASYARAKAT MULTIKULTUR (Studi Kasus Pada Karyawan Warga Negara Jepang Dan Indonesia Di PT. Tokyu Land Indonesia)."

⁸ Alo Liliweri, *Makna Budaya Dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya*, Cet 1 (LKIS, n.d.).

⁹ Nickasari Hendytami et al., "Homogenisasi Budaya Dan Pengaruh Teknologi: Korean Wave Sebagai Budaya Global," *Jurnal Noken: Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 7, no. 2 (2022): 205–18, <https://doi.org/10.33506/jn.v7i2.1766>.

cultural fusion, known as the "*melting pot*." From a homogenization perspective, there is an increase in interconnectivity between countries and cultures, which contributes to the formation of a more homogeneous world that adopts Western values.¹⁰

Discussion

Cultural Homogenization Westernization and Asianization

In responding to globalization, pessimistic globalists, instead of believing that globalization can develop local cultures, consider that the rapid flow of globalization in this digital era makes cultures become homogeneous. The fear of cultural homogenization is quite logical, considering that the cultural onslaught from the US and East Asia through various media seems to create standards for a decent life, the necessity to be modern, beauty with certain features, beautiful music, delicious food, and so on. This cultural homogenization, which is Westernization or Americanization and Asianization, is due to the fact that the dominant cultures today mostly originate from the US, Korea, Japan, and China through their capitalist products.¹¹

Global capitalism uses pluralism as a means of constructing cultural uniformity or homogenization. Global producers of culture and lifestyle, such as the Asianization of popular culture (as seen in the "Korean wave" or "Japanese wave" phenomena), use subtle means to dictate and determine the tastes of most cultures and lifestyles in society today. Meanwhile, popular culture oriented towards Hollywood remains un ly unshakeable.

Tomlinson argues that global culture is deliberately shaped and developed in a more complex way through the spread of customs, product values, experiences, cultural practices, and ways of life from other regions. Developing countries that do not have large-scale technological control are the targets. These countries will be vulnerable to the influence of incoming cultures and values, which will be considered global values that must be applied in order to keep up with the tide of globalization.¹²

An example of Westernization as cultural homogeneity can be seen in the emergence of the American fast food restaurant McDonald's, which has become a trend throughout the world. McDonald's now has branches almost everywhere in the world. In addition, the fast food culture has also developed in other countries, such as Indonesia. Today, many restaurants in Indonesia serve fast food and adopt McDonald's style of service. This is proof of the assumption that globalization results in cultural standardization. In this case, Indonesian restaurants imitate

¹⁰ Larasati, "Globalisasi Budaya Dan Identitas."

¹¹ Ratna Cahaya Rina Wirawan Putri, "Identitas Dan Budaya Pada Masa Kini: Keuntungan Globalisasi Dan Ancaman Homogenisasi," *Ultimart: Jurnal Komunikasi Visual* 9, no. 1 (2018): 7–13, <https://doi.org/10.31937/ultimart.v9i1.733>.

¹² Hendytami et al., "Homogenisasi Budaya Dan Pengaruh Teknologi."

McDonald's concept and indirectly follow McDonald's standards.

The cultural homogeneity brought about by the Korean Wave is evident in fashion, particularly makeup. In recent years, Korean makeup looks and fashion styles have become popular among teenagers and young women, especially in Asia. Korean-style makeup has become popular because it is considered simple, fresh, and suitable for Asian women. Almost all teenagers and young women in Asia choose Korean-style makeup to enhance their appearance.¹³

When offering global entertainment, Westernization and Asianization also offer lifestyles, cultures, and values to young people, especially those who are anxiously searching for and building their identity. What we see in young people today, from clothing styles, hairstyles, body accessories, music performances, gathering at coffee shops, and so on, is part of a homogeneous lifestyle with global culture.¹⁴

Intercultural Communication Ethics as a Control Mechanism for Westernization and Asianization

Many codes of ethics appear as different ideas. This happens because they originate from different cultures. Attention to cultural ethical differences is by knowing what is appropriate and inappropriate to do according to each culture.¹⁵

When interacting with members of other cultures, it is not uncommon to have discussions about how to judge whether something is right or wrong for an individual, a group of people, or society as a whole. Some rules are ambiguous; for example, fighting is not allowed, but in other contexts it is possible. Another example is when looking at someone who is older; in one culture it is allowed, but in another culture it is considered taboo

In such cases, ethics help determine what can be done. Ethics provide guidance when faced with difficult moral choices. These choices become difficult because they conflict with what has been believed and is deeply rooted in everyday culture. Ethics refer to judgments that focus on the level of right and wrong, good and evil, and human behavioral obligations. The difference in ethical systems within a culture can be illustrated by, for example, a culture that approves of behaviors such as cannibalism, polygamy, or infanticide, while another culture condemns them. A difficult ethical dilemma arises when there is a conflict between two 'right' moral obligations that occur simultaneously.

Samovar et al. offer two perspectives on ethics in cross-cultural communication. The first is

¹³ Hildgardis M. I. Nahak, "Upaya Melestarikan Budaya Indonesia Di Era Globalisasi," *Jurnal Sosiologi Nusantara* 5, no. 1 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.33369/jsn.5.1.65-76>.

¹⁴ Bachruddin Ali Akhmad et al., *Komunikasi Dan Komodifikasi: Mengkaji Media Dan Budaya Dalam Dinamika Globalisasi*, Edisi Pertama (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014).

¹⁵ Liliweri, *Makna Budaya Dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya*.

the fundamentalist or moral absolutist approach. Harper explains this perspective as "the principle that ethics are universally applicable." Fundamentalists believe that there is a universal/absolute morality that applies to everyone, everywhere, regardless of cultural conventions. Brannigan develops this view by saying, "believing that there are definite and correct rules that are applied by everyone at all times. These rules form objective moral standards without exception." With this view, there is a universal morality that is applied by everyone at all times and everywhere, so that if people or cultures engage in practices outside of this universal moral concept, they are considered to be behaving unethically.

The second view is cultural or moral relativism. This view believes that ethical principles are related to culture and context and can only be applied to each culture. This view is explained by philosopher Gilber Harman:¹⁶

"Right and wrong are relative depending on a person's moral framework. What is morally right can be morally wrong in a different moral framework. There is no moral framework that objectively determines what is morally right."

Ethical relativism, according to Robertson and Crittenden, "is that ethical standards vary from one culture to another." For example, bribery or *bustarella*, which is an accepted and expected behavior in Italy, is not accepted in American culture. The cultural dynamics of ethical relativism cause ethical standards to be prone to change. Robertson and Crittenden believe that standards and norms everywhere are changing under the influence of globalization, especially with regard to economic behavior and employment.¹⁷

Wallerstein defines culture as an instrument that distinguishes the characteristics of one group from another. In line with this thinking, Anthony King defines culture as an articulation of the richness and diversity of humankind. Based on the two definitions of culture from these two experts, the element of difference is positioned as the central object of a culture¹⁸

Griffin, a communications expert from the University of Washington, states that studying culture is not only related to examining geographical areas or locations, tribes, or ethnicities, but more than that, it is about patterns of behavior, language, and customs that are inherent in the life of a community. Furthermore, culture is a social construct that contains a set of historical values that are implemented through rules, symbols, and ideas in the norms of community life.¹⁹

¹⁶ Kunal Anand, "Media as a Catalyst of Cultural Homogenization: A Threat to Diversity of Culture in the Era of Globalization," *Journal of East-West Thought* Vol 14, no. 2 (2024).

¹⁷ Larry A Samovar et al., *Komunikasi Lintas Budaya* (Salemba Humanika, 2010).

¹⁸ Joko Purnomo et al., *Globalisasi Dan Politik Pembangunan Internasional* (UB Press, 2017).

¹⁹ Juhanda J, "MENJAGA EKSISTENSI BUDAYA LOKAL DENGAN PENDEKATAN KOMUNIKASI LINTAS BUDAYA," *Sadar Wisata: Jurnal Pariwisata* 2, no. 1 (2019): 56, <https://doi.org/10.32528/sw.v2i1.1825>.

The theory of the class of civilization states that there will be conflicts between countries and different communities rooted in culture as a result of globalization. The basic concept of globalization is the development of international trade in goods and services. This theory reminds us of the need to select the type of cultural adaptation that needs to be chosen.²⁰ Westernization and Asianization have simultaneous impacts on the construction of Indonesian cultural identity. Westernization has given rise to individualistic and consumptive lifestyles, while Asianization has introduced modern collective cultural patterns packaged through East Asian entertainment and popular media (Hallyu, J-pop, C-drama). These two cultural currents have formed a new cultural landscape that often blurs the boundaries between local and global values. In the digital context, people tend to adopt dominant values that are perceived as "universal," when in fact they originate from a particular hegemonic culture. Cultural homogenization in Indonesia is complex because it is caused not only by the West but also by Asia, which has now become a new cultural force.

Intercultural communication ethics can function as a mechanism to control homogenization through four stages: (1) awareness of values, (2) critical reflection, (3) contextual adaptation, and (4) ethical communicative action. Individuals with high cross-cultural communication competence are able to navigate differences without losing their identity. This model places communication ethics as a moderating variable that connects the flow of cultural globalization and the sustainability of local identity. In other words, ethics becomes a moral filter in the process of cultural globalization.

Conclusion

This study concludes that cultural homogenization in Indonesia is the result of complex interactions between Westernization, Asianization, and the development of digital media. These two global cultural currents bring values and lifestyles that often dominate the local cultural space. However, through the application of cross-cultural communication ethics, cultural homogenization can be controlled to become a more reflective and productive process. Communication ethics serve as a moral and strategic filter, enabling Indonesian society to reinterpret global values in a local context. This study reinforces the idea that Indonesian local communication values can contribute to the development of a more inclusive global communication ethic. The integration of local ethical principles and international intercultural competence has the potential to create a hybrid communication model that preserves cultural plurality amid the tide of globalization.

²⁰ Dwi Ardiyanti, "Kebudayaan Dan Perannya Dalam Pembentukan Moral Menurut Perspektif Konstruktivis," *Jurnal PIR* Vol.1 No.1 (2016).

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