

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction of the research. There are several important points mentioned in this chapter. In this chapter, it provides background of the study, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research questions, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

Background of Study

Nowadays, there are many schools and universities which provide international programs and various students' exchange programs. Every year, variety of scholarships is offered by the universities to the students who have the willingness to study abroad. Besides, higher education has changed to become more international, and as can be seen at present, there are many international students who study abroad (Prayau, 2014). Regarding the information gained from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2014), there are approximately four million undergraduate students enrolled in foreign countries. Accordingly, Indonesia is one of the countries which have many international students studying in the institutional education.

For the majority of students who want to live in different cultures, their perceptions and behaviors are different. That way, they must find a way to learn and try to adjust themselves in order not to feel different from other people living in the cultural environment. Besides, the students who live in a new culture will gradually go through intercultural adaptation process which often causes problems including anxiety, stress, loneliness, and uncertainty in communicating with people of the culture. Based on the researcher's experience, international students faced many challenges of intercultural communications. Firstly, the students might face the difficulties in communication with

the local people because mostly, they do not understand the local language. Likewise, the students cannot communicate in English fluently because they have low English ability. Lastly, the students may feel shocking culture because they stay in an unfamiliar place. According to Bunat (2014), cultural shock is the situations that people feels anxious, nervous or confused after coming to the country with the new culture.

From the fact that the university has many international students coming to study abroad, intercultural communication is considered as a very important issue in the education aspect. Intercultural communication is the interaction between people from different cultures which come to live in the same society (Jandt, 2004). The most common problem of intercultural communication is individual perceptions of different cultures. The different cultural diversity of each individual will affect intercultural communication to the adaptation of international students who study in different countries. Therefore, the international students will have to learn about the various cultures as well in order to be able to live in the country destination for studying well. Additionally, intercultural communication must be a significant issue involved within international students. In the first period of entering the new country, international students have to adapt in the different environments (Bently, 2008).

In addition, in Indonesia, there are Thai international students to study in Indonesia in every year. There many scholarships to study Indonesia from the government, so many students are interested and want to study in Indonesia. In addition, there are many factors that make many Thai students interested to study in Indonesia because of the Indonesia is a neighboring country and the country is very interesting in matters of culture and language. Besides, Indonesia also has a good educational system, especially in Yogyakarta, it's the famous of the city education, so that's why that are

interesting to students. Certainly, studying in an unfamiliar country they may encounter with problems in adaptation, one of them is communication. The students may be of insufficient preparation or limited preparation that due to the problems in the early stages for the students, but over time they are able to adjust better.

In a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta, some students come from Thailand to study in the university. These international students may also face difficulties to adjust the new cultures as well as intercultural communication.

Based on the researcher's experience, most of Thai international students faced the difficulties in communication. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a research to investigate the intercultural communication among Thai international students. It is also important to know the strategies that Thai students used to overcome the challenge which comes as the crucial issue to help them adapting with new culture regarding the phenomena mentioned above.

Identification of the Problem

When the students came to the different culture, they needed to build relationships with local people both in education and daily life among the lecturers and friends. Following this, international students have to communicate with local people both direct and indirect interaction in the different environments. When Thai students come to study and live in the environment of Indonesia, they need to learn Indonesian culture. They also have to try to adjust themselves to be suitable to achieve their goal of graduation.

Based on the researcher's experience, there are many problems with international students' communication. Firstly, they do not understand the local language because some of the international students do not learn Indonesian language before coming to

Indonesia. Secondly, they have lack of the English language mastery. Following this, some of the international students cannot speak English well. There are many reasons why international students lack of English ability, for example, the students are not confident to speak English because of the different pronunciation, and they do not master numerous English vocabularies. When the students need to communicate with local people, they need to explain what they are going to do. For instance, when they need to buy something or communicate with domestic friends, they cannot communicate, but they have to use body language to deliver what they mean. Culture-shocked is also the problem which the students cannot communicate well. Based on the statement mentioned, it is necessary to explore the intercultural communication challenges of Thai international students and identify the intercultural communication strategies which might be used by them to encounter the challenges.

Delimitation of the Problem

For this research, the researcher only mainly focuses on investigating the intercultural communication strategies and challenges of Thai international students. Communication has an important role for the international students who take a part to study in overseas. Regarding the strategies and challenges faced by the international students in different culture. Besides, the researcher needs to know more about the international students' perceptions to interact with the local people for more than 3 months because they will have deep experiences living in the new country. The researcher is interested in studying the adjustment process and Thai international students' way to use Indonesian language to have a communication towards the context of education and society, culture and new environment. Moreover, based on the background of the study and statement of the problems explanation, the researcher will

only investigate the students of the private university in Yogyakarta who have experienced to study abroad. As the reason why the researcher only investigates Thai international students of Private university in Yogyakarta, the majority of Thai students achieve the scholarship in the university. Likewise, the participants are also easier to reach because the researcher is also Thai international student in this university.

Research Questions

To provide guideline for administering this research, the research questions are mentioned as follows.

1. What are the challenges of intercultural communication faced by Thai international students?
2. What are the strategies used by Thai international students to face intercultural communication challenges?

Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the intercultural communication challenges faced by Thai international students.
2. To investigate strategies used by Thai international students to face intercultural communication challenges.

The Significances of the Study

This research is aimed to give positive advantages for some parties such as lecturers, students, and other researchers.

For the lecturers. The researcher expects from this research that lecturers know and understand the students' difficulties in intercultural communication. Besides, the existence of this research is expected to help lecturers to gain knowledge about the

challenges and strategies of intercultural communication faced by international students at university level. That way, if the lecturers are able to understand the difficulties or the strategies of students, they can help to solve the problem of using the language to the students more easily. Additionally, this research can be useful for the teachers as a reflection of their teaching.

For the international students. This research reveals the strategies used to solve various challenges in intercultural communication of international students. Besides, the researcher expects that this research can help students know the kind of challenges which they might face in making communication with local people or others. Also, they are able to try other possible strategies towards the benefits of communication in the new environments.

For other researchers. From this research, other researchers can know the challenges and strategies of intercultural communication faced by international students at university level. This study provides information related to the general strategies used and the challenges of international students. Besides, the other researchers can use the findings of this research as the theoretical overview of further research on the same topic and might become recommendation of further research. In addition, it also reveals the strategies used by Thai students to solve those specific problems in adjustment in the country. Therefore, by conducting this research, it can also encourage the researchers to conduct the researches towards the challenges and strategies of intercultural communication faced by international students in depth related to the same area of this research.

Organization of the chapter

Chapter One

In chapter one, the researcher present of the introduction of this research. The chapter provides background of the study, statement of the problem, limitation of the problem, research questions, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

Chapter Two

Chapter two present the theory related to the intercultural communication. The chapter was discussing about the definition of term, including definition of intercultural communication and definition of communication. Also, this chapter discusses the importance of intercultural communication, the intercultural communication problems and difficulties faced by international students, and the strategies of intercultural communication used by international students. The researcher also puts the review of related studies.

Chapter Three

Chapter three present methodology used to collect the data. This chapter, the researcher explained how the data collected. There were several things discussed in this chapter, including research design, research setting, research participants, data collection method, data collection procedure, research instrument and data analysis.

Chapter Four

In chapter Four, the researcher presents finding and discussion. The finding related to the research question of this research. First finding was show the results of challenges of intercultural communication faced by Thai international students. The second findings show the result of strategies used by Thai international students to overcome intercultural communication challenges.

Chapter Five

Chapter five present the conclusion and recommendation of this research. The researcher provides about the background and then summarization of research findings. Besides, the researcher presented to recommend or suggest for teacher, international students and other researcher.