ABSTRACT

This study examines miscommunication faced by Iranians when they use their English knowledge in a foreign country like Malaysia and to recommend ways to overcome the problem. To investigate miscommunications that Iranians face in their real interactions, 12 Iranians who are postgraduate students in Malaysia are asked to describe their experiences of miscommunications. These Iranians had learnt English in Iran, which can be considered as either an EFL or EIL country, and later lived in Malaysia, an ESL country. The analysis of the study reveals two major sources of miscommunications, language and culture. Culture contributed 64% while language 36% towards the sources of miscommunication. Thus, culture made up about 2/3 of the sources of miscommunication between the Iranians and Malaysians of the study. Regarding language, there are four minor categories that contributed to language being a source of miscommunication. They are differing accent, low standard of English of Malaysians and Iranians, use of Manglish and the lack of English language knowledge. Three minor categories are identified as factors that contributed towards culture being a source of miscommunication. They are differing temperament and habits, differing expectations and different meanings accorded to body language. With regard to how Iranians can overcome the problems in cross cultural communication, it is recommended that Iranians have a good proficiency in English, know a bit of Malay and have some knowledge of Malaysian culture. The implications of the study indicate that the knowledge of cultural behavior reduces miscommunications. Also the respondents clarified that each variety of English is bound closely to the sociolinguistic conventions of its users. Therefore, if the goal is better communication, teachers should not only rely on classroom materials such as textbooks, but also to look for more authentic sources of information in real-life communication break-downs and their possible reasons

to enable learners to avoid cross-cultural misunderstandings in communication in the English language.

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini mengkaji salah faham komunikasi yang dihadapi orang-orang Iran apabila mereka menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris dalam negeri lain saperti Malaysia dan mencadangkan cara untuk mengatasi masaalah tersebut. Untuk mengkaji salah faham komunikasi antarabudaya yang orang Iran hadapi dalam interaksi sebenar, 12 orang Iran yang merupakan pelajar pascaijazah di Malaysia diminta berkongsi pengalaman salah faham komunikasi yang pernah mereka hadapi. Kesemua orang-orang Iran ini telah mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris di negeri Iran yang boleh dianggap sebagai sebuah negeri di mana Bahasa Inggeris jarang digunakan dan kini menetap di Malaysia.

Analisa kajian mengemukakan dua sumber utama salah faham komunikasi iaitu bahasa dan budaya. Budaya menyumbang 64% sementara bahasa 36% kepada sumber salah faham komunikasi. Dengan itu, 2/3 dari sumber salah faham komunikasi antara orang Iran dan orang Malaysia dalam kajian ini adalah dari faktor budaya. Mengenai sumber bahasa, terdapat empat kategori minor yang menyumbang kepada salah faham komunikasi iaitu aksen yang berbeza, tahap Bahasa Inggeris yang rendah di kalangan orang Malaysia dan Iran, penggunaan Manglish dan kurang pengetahuan Bahasa Inggeris. Tiga kategori minor dikenalpasti sebagai faktor yang menyumbang kepada budaya sebagai sumber salah faham komunikasi. Faktor tersebut adalah berlainan tahap kesabaran dan tabiat, berlainan jangkaan tingkahlaku dan makna berbeza yang diberikan pada bahasa badan. Mengenai bagaimana orang Iran boleh mengatasi masaalah berkomunikasi, dicadangkan orang Iran mempunyai kemahiran yang agak baik dalam bahasa Inggeris, mengetahui segelintir perkataan bahasa Melayu dan mengetahui serba sedikit tentang budaya orang Malaysia.

Implikasi kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pengetahuan tingkahlaku yang dipengaruhi oleh kebudayaan seseorang boleh mengurangkan salah faham dalam komunikasi. Juga, responden kajian telah menjelaskan bahawa setiap variasi Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan adalah berkait rapat dengan kovensi sosiolinguistik pengguna-pengunanya. Oleh yang demikian, jika tujuannya adalah untuk berkomunikasi dengan lebih baik, maka guru Bahasa Inggeris haruslah tidak hanya bergantung kepada sumber di kelas saperti buku teks tetapi perlu mencari maklumat yang lebih autentik tentang kegagalan berkomunikasi dan sebab yang mungkin menyumbang kepada masaalah tersebut agar pelajar boleh mengelak dari melakukan salah faham antara budaya apabila berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggeris.

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Table of Content **page**

Abstract……... iii

Malay translation of abstract…… v

Acknowledgment……..... vii

List of Tables…….. xi

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.0 Background of the Study…….. 1

1.1 Statement of the problem……. 3

1.2 Purpose of the study……. 4

1.3 Research questions…… 5

1.4 Significance of the study……... 5

1.5 Scope and Limitations…….. 6

1.6 Conclusion……. 7

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction……... 8

2.1 Culture……... 9

2.2 Language and Culture…….. 12

2.3 Culture in Foreign Language Learning……. 14

2.4 Malaysian culture and Language…… 16

2.4.1 Manglish…… 18

2.5 Iranian Language and Culture…… 22

2.5.1 Iranian Language…… 22

2.5.2 Iranian Society and Culture……... 23

2.5.2.1 Religion……. 23

2.5.2.2 Family Value…… 23

2.5.2.3 Public Behavior Vs Private Domains…… 24

2.5.2.4 Taarof (Iranian Politeness)…… 24

2.5.2.5 Meeting Etiquette…… 25

2.5.2.6 Gift Giving Etiquette…….. 25

2.5.2.7 Dining Etiquette……. 26

2.6 Speech Acts In Cross Cultural Communications…… 27

2.6.1 Methodological used in Cross-Cultural Communication and Speech Acts…… 30

2.7 Conclusion…….. 32

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction…….. 33

3.1 Participants……... 33

3.2 Instrument…… 35

3.3 Data Collection……. 38

3.4 Data Analysis…… 38

3.5 Conclusion…… 39

Chapter 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDING

4.0 Introduction…….. 40

4.1 Sources of Miscommunications……... 41

4.1.1 Language……. 43

4.1.1.1 Differing Accent…….. 44

4.1.1.2 Low-standard English of Malaysians and Iranians…… 46

4.1.1.3 Use of Manglish……... 47

4.1.1.4 Lack of English Knowledge……... 48

4.1.2 Culture…… 49

4.1.2.1 Differences in terms of Temperament and Habits…….. 51

4.1.2.2 Different Meanings Accord to Body Language 53

4.1.2.3 Difference in Expected Behavior……. 56

4.2 Ways for Iranians to Overcome Communication

Problems in Malaysia…… 59

4.3 Conclusion……... 63

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction……. 64

5.1 Addressing the Research Questions…….. 64

5.1.1 Question 1……... 64

5.1.2 Question 2……... 65

5.2 Implications…….. 65

5.2.1 A Glance at English Teaching Model in Iran……. 66

5.2.2 Cultural Aspects…… 67

5.2.3 Learner Training…….. 69

5.3 Conclusion…….. 70

References……. 72

Appendices

Appendix A

Open-ended Question List**…… 78**

Appendix B

Collected Question Lists from Respondents**…… 80**

List of Tables

Table 2.1

Common forms of Manglish**……** **18**

Table 3.1

Participants' Details**……** **34**

Table 4.1

Data from respondents regarding Sources of Miscommunications**…….** **41**

Table 4.2

Categories of Sources of Miscommunications**……** **42**