

# Low context communication foreign students from Lospalos - Timor Leste in organisasi Lospalos Uan Ukani Bandung

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## ABSTRACT

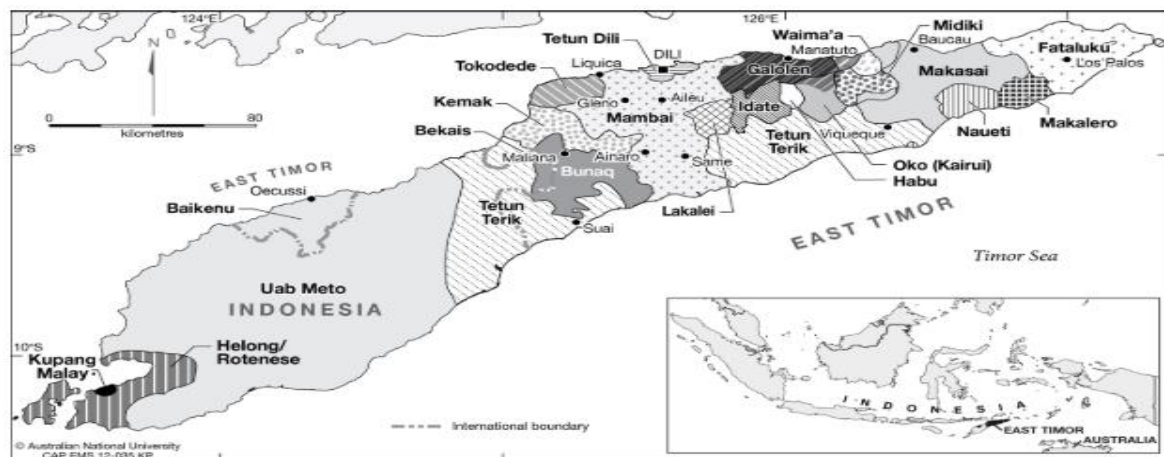
Organizasaun Lospalos Uan Ukani Bandung is an association of foreign students from Lospalos-Timor Leste studying in Bandung. Student members of this organization come from the city of Lospalos, Timor Leste. Their culture and language is fataluku which is a culture with high context communication. This study aims to determine the communication style of students who are members of the organization. The theoretical framework used in this research is Symbolic Interaction which examines the meaning that arises from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in the social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of what symbols and meanings can arise from interactions between humans in a small to a wider scope, such as groups, organizations or social communities such as what happened in Organizasaun Lospalos Uan Ukani. The method used in this research is qualitative-descriptive. The results of the study prove that the communication style of students from the Los Palos uan Ukani Bandung organization is a low context communication style that is different from the fataluku culture communication style which is classified as a high context cultural communication style. This difference is caused by the mixing of the multilingual communication students of the Los Palos uan Ukani Bandung organization.

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## 1. Introduction

According to United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, on 20 May 2020, Timor Leste was officially independent from Indonesia and recognized internationally as a country by the United Nations [1]. Since then, Timor Leste has had its own sovereignty in terms of governance and territory. Regionally, the state of Timor Leste consists of thirteen regional districts namely Aileu, Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro (Maliana), Cova-Lima (Suai), Dili, Ermera, Lautem (Lospalos), Liquica, Manatuto, Manufahi (Same), Oecusse (Ambeno), and Viqueque [2]. Of these thirteen districts, the city of Lospalos is a city located in the Lautem region. the division can be seen in the image below:



**Fig. 1.** The languages of East Timor (All maps produced by CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, made available under a Creative Commons SA BY copyright. (Source: Maxwell [3] )

The people of Lospalos city in the Lautem region use the fataluku language as their language of communication in their daily life, although a small proportion of the community still use Tetum and Portuguese [4]. According to Andrew McWilliam from the Australian National University, the fataluku language is the language of the fataluku culture which belongs to the same non-Austronesian language family as the Papuan New Guinea language [5]. In his research entitled *Austronesians in linguistic disguise: Fataluku cultural fusion in East Timor*, McWilliam explained that the fataluku language is communicated by around 35,000 native speakers who are members of a language community that is predominantly located in the Lautem region.

In addition, the fataluku language speakers are the dominant population group in the three easternmost regions of the country of Timor Leste, namely Tutuala, Fuiloro and Lautem: *...‘Contemporary Fataluku is expressed and reproduced by some 35,000 nativespeakers. They form the predominant linguistic community of Lautem district in far eastern East Timor. Lautem itself is composed of five sub-districts, and Fataluku speakers form the dominant population group in the three most easterly areas (Tutuala, Fuiloro and Lautem).. [5].*

The data in this study regarding the number of speakers in the Fataluku culture then experienced a significant increase. According to population census data in 2011, it was found that the fataluku culture is one of the four cultural groups living in the Lautem region (including makasae, naueti and makalero) with the largest percentage of speakers or speakers, namely 69% covering 48,900 people [6]. This increasing number of speakers is due to the number of births which are estimated to increase from 2007 to 2011.

According to the perspective of the Fataluku people, culture is an identity that describes the meaning of individuals having a definite existence in society [7]. In social terms, the relationship between kinship is the main important point, where this aspect is marked by the diversity of tribes which are projected on only one culture. The language that is believed by the community is a unifying "sign" of the Lospalos people centered on the fataluku culture itself.

Basically, the Fataluku language is a 'speech' instrument used by most people in Lospalos apart from the Iliomar and Luro sub-districts where their separate languages are used, namely Makalero and Makasae[8]. In addition, other regions such as Tutuala, Lorehe, Kom, and Lospalos are the largest speakers of the Fataluku language [9]. The people of Lospalos, especially the communicators of the Fataluku language, show their cultural identity more by interpreting the Fataluku language as a sign of collegiality compared to other language meanings [10]. When Lospalos people meet and speak outside the Lospalos area they tend to use the Fataluku language as a symbol of collegiality. Whether it is from Makasae, Makalero and Fataluku circles in general. This is revealed in the following table 1.

**Table 1.** Example of a Conversation fataluku language

No.	Fataluku Speakers	Conversation
1.	<i>Makasae</i>	<b>hai kina</b> /hello my friend, <b>lan e</b> /friends;brother, <b>elateni</b> /where are
2.	<i>Makalero</i>	you going?, <b>enica rau-rau</b> /How are you?, <b>purupale</b> / be careful
3.	<i>Fataluku</i>	

<sup>a</sup>. **Source:** processed by researchers

Fataluku cultural community in habits most of the Lautem area, in the easternmost region of the State of Timor Leste. Their language is called Fataluku, but there are also references that call it Dagada. The Fataluku language belongs to the Papuan language group, in contrast to the majority of other ethnic groups in Timor Leste which belong to the Austronesian language group. Therefore, this fataluku cultural language belongs to the non-Austronesian language group.

According to a linguistic perspective [11], Austronesian languages are spoken in southern Maluku, while Non-Austronesian languages, one of which is the Papuan language family, are used in northern Papua. On several islands which are included in the territory of the Kingdom of Ternate, the Malay language is used as a lingua franca by local people who speak the mother tongue Non-Austronesian. As a result of the use of an intermediate language, Market Malay was formed as a social language which prevailed throughout North Maluku. Here it is known that the root of the fataluku language does not actually come from Papua in general, but only covers the northern Maluku region. From the facts of this language family, in general, fataluku culture and language can be grouped into high context cultures [12].

The thing that underlies the grouping of fataluku culture into high culture context or high context culture because in the cultural realm in terms of territorial aspects, the communication styles of high and low context cultures are actually grouped according to communication habits in several countries and regions [13]. According Hall, cultures with high context communication styles include countries in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and several South American countries [14]. Meanwhile, cultures with low context communication styles cover most of the countries in North America and Western Europe. This is supportive, because regionally, Papua New Guinea is part of the Australian territory which is directly adjacent to Asia, regardless of the historical history of the regional language family [15].

In terms of education, the people of Lospalos: fataluku have the same vision as the overall vision of the state of Timor Leste, namely that they want the country's progress in the field of education which is still included in the post-independence development process. This was said by Burns in his research entitled Education in timor-Leste: Envisioning the Future [16], he says... : *'Timor-Leste is a small state that finally achieved independence in 2002. It has had to re-build an entire education system from a small base largely destroyed in the independence struggle'*.

This vision of development in the field of education is one of the reasons for the arrival of students from the Lospalos area, to various countries including Indonesia, to receive a better education, in order to gain experience and knowledge that is useful for their communities. In Indonesia, students from Los Palos occupy several cities according to the location of their lectures. These cities include Yogyakarta, Malang, Surabaya, Jakarta and Bandung. Especially in the city of Bandung, this student from Lospalos grouped himself into a student association organization which was officially an organization that had been approved by the city government of Lospalos-Timor Leste. This organization is called Organizasaun Lospalos Uan Ukani.

Organizasaun Lospalos Uan Ukani was formed and legalized on December 27, 2014 in Bandung City. The aims and objectives of the establishment of this organization apart from being a 'forum' for the Timor Leste student association in the city of Bandung, also uphold the unique objectives of instilling and fostering an identity in togetherness, developing and strengthening a sense of kinship, and fostering understanding of the organization itself. This organization, although specifically for the people of Lospalos when it was formed and legalized, has until now become a more open platform for the people of Timor Leste from other tribes and ethnicities who live in Bandung, as part of its mission to uphold a sense of kinship.

The name of the organization organization lospalos uan ukani is taken from the words fataluku language. Literally, the words in the sentence 'Organizasaun LosPalos Uan Ukani' as the name of

this organization, are derived from the cultural / ethnic language of Fataluku as one of the tribes that have long lived in Los Palos City, Timor Leste [17]. The word 'Organizasaun' means Organization, 'LosPalos' refers to the name Los Palos City, while 'Uan Ukani' means 'One Heart'. In Tetun language, Uan Ukani is synonymous with the word 'Fuan Ida' which also means 'One Heart'. Therefore, the overall pronunciation of the translation sentence is the One Heart Los Palos Organization. The meaning of the sentence used as the name of this organization is a sign of the high sense of togetherness and kinship in the body of the organization that is established in Bandung.

Student communication in this organization is influenced by cultural communication fataluku. This is evidenced by the use of fataluku language in communication between fellow students in organizations. Meanwhile, outside the organization, these students use Indonesian which is very standard with a very unique communication style. Its uniqueness lies in the diction and intonation used when communicating something, the way of conveying messages and the meanings contained therein. This encourages researchers to examine the communication styles of students in the organization which of course represent my fatal cultural communication style. In the research on the communication style of fataluku culture in students in this organization, the researcher rests on a popular analysis of the differences in communication styles in society put forward by Edward T. Hall, an anthropologist from the United States. According to Hall [18], culture can be classified into high context communication styles and low context communication styles.

This communication style is divided according to the characteristics attached to the language and the communication intentions used by the communicator. According to Hall, in low context communication, the meaning of messages is expressed through verbal messages explicitly both in writing and orally. In high context communication, messages are conveyed implicitly, the meaning is internalized in the person concerned, and nonverbal messages are emphasized more such as facial and hand movements [19].

In this study, the researcher wanted to know about the communication style and cultural context of Fataluku on the communication of foreign students from Lospalos-Timor Leste in the Lospalos Uan Ukani organization in Bandung. The research focus lies in the communication of students within the organization using the fataluku language and Indonesian in accordance with organizational habits. This study aims to determine the communication style of student members of the organization Lospalos Uan Ukani in Bandung, so that with this knowledge, it can minimize cultural shock when interacting with them.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study uses a symbolic interaction theory framework. this theory assumes that reality and facts are based and directed by symbols [20]. Symbolic interaction examines the meaning that arises from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in a social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of what symbols and meanings can arise from interactions between humans in a small scope to a broader group, organization or social community. The statement regarding the symbolic interaction is in line with what is stated in Aksan [21], who mentioned that:.. 'Symbolic interaction is one of many theories in social sciences. This theory claims that facts are based on and directed by symbols. The foundation of this theory is meanings. Symbolic interaction examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from the interaction between people?..'.

Jarome Manis dan Bernard Meltzer [20] put forward seven basic propositions in symbolic interaction, namely: Humans understand something through the meaning obtained from experience, human perception always appears using symbols; Meaning is learned through interactions between humans and meaning emerges from the exchange of symbols in social groups; All social structures and institutions are based on interactions between people; Human behavior is not only influenced by events, but by his own will; The human mind contains internal conversations, which reflect that he has interacted; Behavior is created in interactions with social groups.

Symbolic interaction theory is influenced by social structures that form or cause certain behavior, which then forms symbolization in social interactions [22]. Symbolic interaction theory requires that each individual be proactive, reflexive, and creative, interpreting, displaying unique, complex, and

difficult to interpret behavior [23]. Symbolic interaction theory emphasizes two things; First, humans in society can never be separated from social interactions. Second, the interaction in society manifests in certain symbols which tend to be dynamic in nature [24].

This symbolic interaction theory is relevant to the context of research on the communication styles of students from Timor Leste in the Uan Ukani Bandung Organization because students within the scope of the organization interact in their daily lives both internally and externally with native students. The interaction process raises observable symbols in the form of open communication patterns, language, accents, and most importantly non-verbal communication using hand gestures and facial expressions as has been obtained in previous research by Pereira[25], which states that: "... Timor Leste students in interacting with their environment through verbal language such as Tetum, Portuguese and Indonesian and verbal communication such as facial expressions, hand gestures and others".

### 3. Method

In this study, a research methodology should be needed as a scientific way to obtain data that will be used for research purposes. The method used in this research is a qualitative-descriptive method[25]. through data descriptions before going to the field, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions based on primary and secondary data collection. The components in this study include the composition of the results and the researcher's preparations regarding the communication style of fataluku culture and the communication style of students from Lospalos-Timor Leste in the Organisasiun Lospalos Uan Ukani Bandung, as well as the multilingual mixing that occurs as a result of the interaction of these students with other students in Bandung. The data collection techniques in this study were observation and interviews. What the researcher observes is the communication of student members of the Los Palos ukani organization in organizational meeting situations. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with four key informants who were members of the organization, namely Sergi de Jesus, Martinus, Jacobus, and Aldino.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The initial assumption in this study, which involves the similarity of the fataluku cultural context and the student communication context of members of the Lospalos Uan Ukani organization in Bandung, is that there are similarities between the two, namely if the fataluku culture is a culture with high context communication [26], so the communication of students who come from areas with that culture is also the same, namely high context communication. However, the findings in this study contradict the researchers' initial assumptions. The difference lies in the communication styles observed by the researchers in the students' conversations in their daily lives.

Student members of the Lospalos uan ukani organization in Bandung, when communicating, they tend to use spontaneous sentences, directly touching the context of the conversation and explicitly conveying their verbal messages. Internally, in organizational meetings, students who are members of the organization will state directly and straightforwardly their disapproval and approval of the arguments given by the chairman when asking for an opinion on a matter. This was observed by researchers when observing one part of the conversation in organizational meetings (see table 2). Researchers see that in internal conversations in organizations when a meeting is in progress, the way students communicate within the organization tends to touch the level of low context communication style. This can be seen from the results of observations in conversations one and two above which show that students' communication styles are close to the characteristics that exist in low context communication styles according to Edward T. Hall who says:...'a low context communication, is just the opposite of high context, the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. And then, in low context communication, they say what they mean and they mean what they way..' [19]. The findings of the researcher were that in the communication process of students of the lospalos ukani members in Bandung, the statements they gave in arguing, actually did not contain jokes and there was no convoluted element in conveying the intent and purpose of the message conveyed. Unlike high-context communication styles, students' communication styles in this organization are 'to the point' in explaining the true meaning and meaning of their conversation [27].



**Table 2.** Observation of Conversations at Organizational Meetings

<i>Number.</i>	<i>researcher observation</i>	<i>Conversation</i>
1.	Conversation 1	<p><b>Chairman</b> "To strengthen the sense of kinship between us and students outside this organization, tomorrow there will be a futsal match at 4 pm on the YPKP campus field"</p> <p><b>Member 1: (implicit answer):</b> ' tomorrow I will not participate, because I am unable to '</p> <p><b>Member 2: (implicit answer)</b> yes, I will attend tomorrow</p> <p><b>Chairman: (implicit answer)</b> Then tomorrow those who cannot attend will immediately be replaced by their position today.</p> <p><b>Member 1:</b> okey, Thanks</p>
2.	Conversation 2	<p><b>Chairman:</b> 'Our Organization Meeting today has ended. Are there any questions?</p> <p><b>Member 1: (Implicit answer):</b> ' Next month some students will be busy with midterm exams, whether the next month's meeting will still be held</p> <p><b>Chairman: (Implicit answer):</b> ' The meeting schedule for next month will be shifted to the next month.</p> <p><b>Member 1: (Implicit answer):</b> yes sir</p>

<sup>b</sup> **Source:** processed by researchers

According to Hall [19], Low context and high context communication styles in a community in an area or region can experience changes caused by a shift in the culture of communication and the external mixing of communications from individuals who have just joined in it. On this basis, the researcher also found that the organizational journey of the Lospalos ukani organization in Bandung was inseparable from external influences in the realm of student communication. What is meant by external influence is the influence of the communication context style with students who have lived in England for work and then returned to continue their postgraduate studies in Bandung and entered this organization.

This is evidenced by the statement of one of the informants who has long lived in England. He says: *..I come from Lospalos, and my native language is fataluku. before I joined this organization, I had been living in England for a long time to work. In Bandung, I continued my studies at the postgraduate level. My way of communicating tends to be spontaneous and straightforward. This is due to my daily communication with friends in England. When I joined the organization, I was then faced with the adaptation process of communication among students who had just arrived from Los Palos. My way of communicating in sharing and in dialogue with them seems to be quite influencing them.. '.*

In sociolinguistic studies, It is said that cultural diversity and individual interactions in terms of communication can lead to multilingual mixing[17]. This is what happens and is felt by students who are members of the organization Lospalos uan ukani in their role as an organization that cannot be separated from interactions in verbal communication with students from different regions and cultures[29]. The difference in the communication style between the fataluku culture and the communication style of students who come from the city of Lospalos in the organization in the city of Bandung can be caused by this multilingual mixture[30].

From the very beginning, this organization was devoted to students who came from the city of Lospalos only with a cultural background and Fataluku communication, but because its establishment was based on the principles of kinship and openness, now they communicate with other students who come from areas with different ethnicities both from within Indonesia such as Java, Sunda, Nusa Tenggara Timur, Makassar and Medan as well as from outside Indonesia such as China, America, England, and Australia.

This statement is proven by the information provided by the other three informants, namely Sergi de Jesus, Martinus and Jacobus. they say that: *'We in this organization are always open to mingling*

*with students from other regions. We are very "welcome" to friends who want to join in our events and think all who come are our brothers. "*

The openness of the student members of this organization can have an impact on shifting and changing the style of communication they have had since their arrival in Bandung. Indeed, in this mixing process, according to the researchers' observations, only part of the communication context has changed, it is still open to further research on multilingual mixing in the Lospalos uan ukani organizational organization in Bandung.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded by the researcher that the communication style of student members of the Los Palos uan Ukani Bandung organization is a low context communication style. The communication style of students in organizations is different from the communication style of fataluku culture as a culture with high context communication which is the culture and native language of these students. This difference is the result of the mixing of the multilingual student members of the lospalos uan ukani organization with students who work abroad and students outside the organization.

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