

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1. Research Conclusion

This study aimed to discover how the groups used language to describe their cultural identities, and to see if such large cultural identities such as collectivism/individualism would be visible in the groups' responses. As seen below, the groups' did display the four aspects of culture under study, but did not always represent their prescribed cultural identities as expected from the literature review.

The responses from the ANES and INIS groups suggest the following conclusions see Table 1). First, concerning collectivism/ individualism, both the ANES and INIS groups used expressions that imply that society was composed of groups not individuals—a collectivist attribute. At the same time, however, the ANES group by using more negative words shows individualism. Second, regarding reverence towards old age, surprisingly, the ANES group displayed responses that are much more reverent towards old age than the INIS group who used expressions that are much more dark and pessimistic. Third, concerning low context/ high context communication, the ANES group displayed high-context attributes by focusing on speaking while the INIS group exhibited more low context similarities by emphasizing two-way communication. Lastly, regarding monochronic/ polychronic time management, the ANES groups displayed more monochronic attributes by focusing on time as critical and transitory, and the INIS group used a contradiction of

words concerning “time” and represented a mix of polychromic and monochromic values. However, by using the word “late” most often, it can be concluded that the responses were more polychromic. See table 13 below.

Table 13

Groups	Collectivism/ Individualism	Reverence towards Old Age	High-Context/ Low-Context Communication	Polychromic/ Monochromic Time Management
ANES	Collectivist	Yes	Low-context	Monochromic
INIS	Collectivist	No	High-context	Transitioning to be Monochromic

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Studying the relationship between the language and cultural identity of the ANES and INIS groups has raised some interesting questions for further research. At the same time, the research limitations within this study need to be identified. I will organize my suggestions for further research by first focusing on the research limitations I found within this study. Then I will focus on how to build upon my findings by suggesting areas for further research on each cultural identity under study: collectivism/ individualism, reverence towards old age, high context/ low context communication and polychromic/monochromic time management.

5.3 Research Limitations

Utilizing the indexicality and partialness principles of Mary Busholtz, it is possible to see the limitations within this study. First, with the indexicality principle, it is possible that the ANES and INIS participants approached the questionnaire in a formal way, and used words that are not in correlation with their true attitudes. For instance, since the ANES group emailed their responses directly to me, it is possible they were more cautious due to using a written document that could be saved vs. speaking informally with no written records. The same is possible with the INIS group even though they filled out the questionnaires by hand. Second, considering the partialness principle, this study can only be limited to the two groups under study and no one else.

Another limitation involves the groups themselves. The ANES group consisted largely of student workers at the Academic Skills lab at the University of Southern Indiana. These students represented different faculties but at the same time, represented high achieving students. The INIS group, on the other hand, represented the Faculty of Letters at Unika Soegijapranata University, a single faculty, and also represented a mix of high and low achieving students. Therefore, while this test is meant to study the differences between college students (age 18-25) in Evansville and Semarang, the student populations, faculty, etc. are different between the two groups. In the future, it might be better to focus on a wider student population of different faculties and achievement levels to gain a more accurate picture.

Next, it is necessary to consider if the words “society, old age, communication, and time” represented the cultural identifies under study. “Society” did adequately reflected attitudes towards collectivism/individualism to a degree. For a future study, using the words “group loyalty” might be better to see the real attitudes towards collectivism and individualism because “group loyalty” raises stronger emotions. “Old age” effectively addressed reverence towards old age, and also brought up some interesting results. “Communication” effectively addressed high-context/ low-context culture, and also raised issues concerning the importance of communicative technology with the INIS group. Lastly, “time” accurately identified polychromic/monochromic time management and too raised some interesting questions for further research.

5.3.1 Further research on Collectivism/ Individualism

Looking at how the INIS group’s most commonly used words describe “society” as overpopulated, further research could be conducted about the relationship between population density and language use. One way to begin would be to distribute questionnaires (orally or in writing) to more people of Central Java living in rural, urban, and suburban areas, and then to compare the responses of the populations. The same could be done by comparing more people of the American Midwest in rural, urban, and suburban areas. Also, as noted above, the word “society” could be changed to “group loyalty” because “group loyalty” is more

emotional, and could possibly gather more accurate attitudes concerning collectivism and individualism.

5.3.2. Further Research on Reverence towards Old Age

Due to the high amount of negative words to describe old age by the INIS group, more qualitative research could be performed on why the INIS group views old age so negatively. Interviewing the students who filled out the questionnaires would be one way to start. After gathering more data, it would be valuable to expand the demographics of the research by giving out the questionnaire (orally or in writing) to other college age people of Semarang, and to other college age people of more rural areas near Semarang. In addition to the questionnaire, it would also be valuable to briefly interview the subjects as well.

From my research, it seems that the negative attitudes to describe old age by the INIS group could be due to overcrowded living conditions in which multiple generations live in single households, or to the fact that attitudes towards retirement might be more negative in the INIS group. However, these are inferences only, and much more research needs to be done on the topic to gain a larger perspective on the issue. At the same time, if retirement did play a factor in the INIS responses, a broader question emerges: how do the expectations about the quality of retirement in different cultures affect language use towards old age.

5.3.3. Further Research on High-Context/ Low- Context Communication

Considering how the ANES group used twenty-four words directly related to speaking and talking to describe “communication,” and that the INIS group did not use “speaking” or “talking” once raises some very interesting areas for sociolinguistic research. For instance, how different cultures place importance on “expressing oneself,” and how is “expressing oneself” nurtured in different cultures, e.g. in education and families. More specifically, how is “expressing oneself” different or similar in the classrooms and households of Semarang, Indonesia, and Evansville, IN.

A different topic for research concerns the INIS group’s use of the word “phone” and things related to phones such as texting, specific brands of phones, etc. to describe communication a total of twenty six times. Since the majority of phone use group by the INIS is texting, a question emerges: what is the impact of texting (written communication) on the language of a traditionally oral culture.

5.3.4. Further Research on Monochromic/ Polychromic Time Management

Since the INIS group displayed contradictions and a sense of struggle in relation with “time,” more research is needed about if such a struggle exists. In particular, the ANES refers to “time” as being late vs. on-time. Since Indonesia is transitioning to a modern, scheduled society, it is possible there is a large conflict with the meaning of time, and more research in the form of interviews, questionnaires, and observation would be required. Also, more research could be done on why Indonesians view time more flexibly in general.