

# Acculturation Through Non-Verbal Communication In People Of Chinese Descendants In Kampung Kapitan Palembang, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and understand non-verbal communication that takes place in the Chinese community in Kapitan Village, Palembang, Indonesia as a form of acculturation with the local community. The research method was carried out by means of ethnographic communication, the researcher conducted participatory observations, interviewed 6 informants and lasted for 6 months effectively. The results show that the non-verbal communication aspect has its own variations, both those who still use the procedures in their home regions in China and those who have undergone adjustments in certain parts, such as language rhythm, clothing, shaking hands, symbols, in ritual traditions, as well as forms of settlement. The conclusion of this study shows that aspects of non-verbal communication are at an important level for cultural acculturation between ethnic Chinese descent and local communities.

**Keywords:** Acculturation, Culture, Non-Verbal Communication, Chinese ethnicity

## Introduction

Non-verbal communication activities in people of different cultures are often a point of concern. This is because of language differences, so the non-verbal side becomes an area to be observed. In some cases, communication disorders often occur in this aspect which is causes an ineffective communication (Tiechuan, 2016). For example, knowledge of non-verbal communication becomes important in the learning process. In a case in a school in Zimbabwe, teachers often ignore the non-verbal aspects that are mastered by their students. As a result, learning becomes ineffective and actually keeps students away from ideal knowledge (Muchemwa, 2013).

The problem of non-verbal communication also occurs in many Chinese communities in various places. This can be seen

from Chinese are known to be widely scattered in various other areas which is intensity of encounters between different cultures is very possible (Hoon, 2019). In the case of ethnic Chinese encountering the American community, the cultural barriers are evident. Americans tend to communicate face-to-face, whereas Chinese are more polite which is they don't look into their eyes (Ri, 2018). Differences in cultural aspects are important to observe because in communicating, prevailing habits are very influential. As with shaking hands, for the Chinese, shaking hands tightly is an indication of a friendly and friendly attitude towards others and a desire to say goodbye. This is clearly different from other community groups (Cai, 2019), such as in Saudi Arabia, where handshakes are limited to touching and even touching the left and right cheeks (Al-Qaderi et al., 2017).

The relationship between ethnic Chinese and local communities, especially in Indonesia, it must be said, is not going well. In many places, conflicts are found which show problems that have never been resolved. This is happening not only now, but since the government regime took place, the relationship seems like a latent danger that could emerge at any time (Hoon, 2006). During the Dutch colonial administration, the position of ethnic Chinese descent tended to benefit from the policy of division of levels in society, where Chinese groups along with other foreigners (Indians, Arabs) were made second-class groups. This also continued during the Soekarno government era (Sahasrad, 2019). Meanwhile, during the New Order government under Suharto's leadership, minority political policies put the position of ethnic Chinese in a tight and increasingly difficult position. The prohibition of using Chinese names and speaking Mandarin are two policies that "require" Chinese people to become Indonesian (Hoon, 2019; Kurniawan, 2020). In the end, this condition causes ethnic relations of Chinese descent to always have a gap with society. They also have to make adjustments to the existing conditions, so that they can still exist in society. Besides that, conflict is very easy to happen, even though the cause of conflict is not because of them. Such as the 1965 conflict and the 1998 conflict which placed ethnic Chinese as targets (Aryodiguno, 2019; Suryadinata, 2014). While during the reformation era, the government of Abdurrahman Wahid implemented a political policy of equality and openness, ethnic Chinese descent got the same position and was given the same treatment. So, they started to get involved in various sectors that had been banned, such as entering the political sphere.

Interestingly, the position and relationship of ethnic Chinese descent, in the community, did not changed significantly. Historical heritage is difficult to erase so that their unity with the local community still does not appear prominent. (Aryodiguno, 2019; Hoon, 2006; Sahrasad, 2019). The most

prominent and the most obvious signs are the inherent non-verbal aspects, such as face shape, eye shape, settlement, worship and other social activities. This of course is related to identity that is difficult to avoid because they are attached to daily activities (Makmur et al., 2018; Roslidah & Komara, 2017).

For the Chinese community in Indonesia, non-verbal behaviour is something very fundamental. Moreover, this community has been in Indonesia for a long time even before the Srivijaya era (7th century AD) (Lim & Mead, 2011; Bottenberg et al., 2010). This means that the existence of Chinese people has actually been going on for a long time and should have formed a separate blend. The length of the intensity of the meeting, logically will form its own link and create inter-ethnic assimilation. In this situation also included assimilation which is the context of the communication that takes place, especially the non-verbal aspects.

Why is the non-verbal side important? Communication psychology research scientist Albert Mehrabian confirmed in his research that in the process of communication between humans, 55% is actually non-verbal communication, 38% vocal including rhythm and sound, 7% verbal, especially words (Mehrabian, 2017; Tiechuan, 2016). Meanwhile, if you look at the condition of the existence of the Chinese ethnic in Indonesia, even though they have been in this area for quite a long time, their existence still often leaves problems. Conflicts between indigenous people and residents of Chinese descent often occur (Makmur et al., 2018; Wu, 2016). The symbols that show the existence of Chinese citizens are still quite clear and that then makes the difference between Chinese citizens and indigenous people still stand out.

In the Palembang, which is the oldest city in Indonesia, the presence of ethnic Chinese is also very strategic. The existence of this city is built on the interaction between ethnic groups, especially with the Chinese. This

cannot be separated from the reality that the presence of ethnic Chinese descent has existed since the city was not founded (Adiyanto, 2006; Suryadinata, 2014). The oldest residential area of the Chinese itself is in Kampung Kapitan, which is the initial area where the Chinese community settled on the mainland. Previously, this ethnic group only inhabited the waters above the Musi River and was often referred to as “Cino Rakit” (Aziz et al., 2020). The Chinese built raft houses that float on the Musi River, the main river that divides the city of Palembang.

During the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, the Chinese community was allowed to build houses on the mainland. This was inseparable from the good relations between the Chinese and the Palembang Sultanate at that time. Then a leader was appointed in charge of regulating and managing the activities of Chinese citizens (Agumsari et al., 2020). Their first leader was Tjoa Kie Tjuan as well as the founder of the settlement. Tjoa Kie Tjuan was then succeeded by his son named Tjoa Ham Lin, who was then given the label Kapitan by the Dutch colonial authorities at that time. It was Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin who later built the house permanently and played a major role in fostering relationships with local residents (Adiyanto, 2006). This area which was managed and regulated by Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin was later called Kampung Kapitan. His current position is in the 7 Ulu Village area, Palembang City.

However, gradually there was a migration of Chinese citizens living in Kampung Kapitan to other areas, either around Palembang or other areas in Indonesia. Kampung Kapitan which was actually the initial area of Chinese settlement in Palembang is starting to be abandoned, and at this time, in 2022, there are 12 Heads of Families who still live in this area. Kampung Kapitan is now inherited by the 7th descendant of Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin. The main relic that is still visible today, as well as a symbol of the Chinese presence in Palembang is the Kapitan's house.

The house, which was built during Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin in 1881 AD, has a mixed Chinese, European and Palembang architecture, still standing strong and since 2005 has been named a Cultural Conservation by the Palembang City Government.

The scatter of Chinese ethnicity in other areas, especially in the city of Palembang, can be seen easily, especially from the form of settlements that are clustered and do not seem to blend in. This is the main characteristic of Chinese citizens in various regions, not only in Palembang (Adiyanto, 2016). A condition that indicates that the relationship between ethnic Chinese and local residents is still distant. However, specifically in Kampung Kapitan, the existence of a community of Chinese descent actually shows a fundamental difference. They mingle, build settlements, social activities that are integrated with local residents. It is very difficult to distinguish between the houses of Chinese people and local residents. Many aspects show the assimilation that occurs, starting from the developed tradition, the language used, social relations, and the most prominent is the assimilation through non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is inherent in daily habits, body movements, clothes used, dominant colours, and rhythm in speaking.

In societies with different cultures, it is usually difficult to assimilate in non-verbal aspects. Although other aspects have been said to be integrated, the non-verbal side is usually still a cultural barrier and differentiator (Eunson, 2015). This is because the non-verbal side is integrated with daily habits, has been built up in the history of the community itself and later even becomes an ethnic identity. For example, the habit of kissing the cheek for people of Arab descent when meeting other citizens (Ajami, 2016), or the habit of bowing down for Japanese people when meeting other people, and so is the habit of looking into the eyes when talking among Americans.

In order to understand how the acculturation takes place in Kampung Kapitan, especially on the non-verbal side, the theory of Symbolic Interactionism (Blumer, 1986) becomes the main benchmark. The symbols included in the non-verbal side are everything that is formed by the community itself, created in the process of communication. The meaning of each symbol depends on the agreement in the community (Blumer, 1986). The interaction process itself is part of the intercultural communication mechanism which then forms the identity of the community. The theory of ethnic boundaries (Freedman & Barth, 1970) is then used to see how ethnic boundaries occur, where there is a tendency for ethnic groups to maintain their respective identities by showing their cultural symbols (Freedman & Barth, 1970). The area of non-verbal communication will be included in the symbols that become the ethnic identity, especially in the community of Chinese descent in Kampung Kapitan.

The two theories above, namely Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnic Boundaries are used as analytical tools to direct the phenomena being discussed. The research question posed is how non-verbal communication takes place as a form of assimilation of ethnic Chinese descent in Kampung Kapitan Palembang. This main question is further elaborated into more detailed questions, namely, what non-verbal communication symbols are interpreted by people of Chinese descent and local communities, and how these non-verbal symbols are able to become glue between residents even though these symbols become identities for each of them.

### **Research Methods**

This research was conducted using a qualitative method and an ethnographic approach to communication. Researchers were directly at the research site for about 3 months, observing community activities in Kapitan Village, participating in some of their activities, and interviewing research informants as many as 6

people. Observations that are seen are social activities, ways of communicating, community responses to the symbols that are interpreted, as well as non-verbal methods used by the community, both by residents of Chinese descent or local residents. For interviews, addressed to community leaders, ordinary community members. The interview material emphasized aspects of public knowledge about the existence of each ethnic group, the history of the origin of the region, the community's understanding of the symbols of ongoing communication, and the process of assimilation that took place. The results of the study were then analysed by means of ethnographic communication. This analysis was carried out since the beginning of the research, where the researcher began to reduce the data, group the data, interpret each data, and then confirm with relevant theories and the results of other previous studies. After all the analysis is complete, the research conclusions are drawn up.

### **Result and Discussion**

Kapitan village, which is located in 7 Ulu Village, Palembang city, is a very strategic area. Its position is in the centre of the city and on the edge of the Musi River, the main river that divides the city of Palembang. Palembang itself is the oldest city in Indonesia and in the past, during the 7th century AD, was the centre of the Srivijaya kingdom which ruled throughout Southeast Asia (Yenrizal, 2018). Besides that, as an old city and part of a great civilization, this area is also a meeting place for various ethnic groups from other countries. Ethnic Arabs and Chinese are the most prominent in addition to ethnic Malays as local residents (Bottenberg et al., 2010). No wonder this city is also considered a historic city and has a high cultural heritage, especially if you read the traces of civilization in Indonesia (Adiyanto, 2006). Therefore, inter-ethnic encounters, especially in terms of communication, are unique and at the same time play a major role in the acculturation process.

The results of this study indicate that in the community of Chinese descent who live in Kampung Kapitan, the use of non-verbal communication that is typical of the Kapitan village community takes place. This non-verbal aspect takes place in daily life, and some symbols have actually been adjusted to the context of the local community.

Each symbol in non-verbal communication does not want to lose their identity. An identity is embodied in the communication process and the symbols used (Freedman & Barth, 1970). This seems to emphasize that identity is part of culture and is manifested in non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication and culture have a clear relationship, namely; that culture is invisible, omnipresent (everywhere) and can be learned. Non-verbal communication also has the same quality. The invisible aspects of culture and non-verbal communication use phrases such as “silent language” and “hidden dimensions” (Hall, 1997).

Such a reality, in Kampung Kapitan also occurs, where non-verbal communication linked to each culture becomes a unity. The symbols of non-verbal communication that take place in the process of intercultural communication in Kapitan Village can be identified in the following ways. First, the colour red. Red is a colour that is commonly found in the Kampung Kapitan area, especially in residential areas of Chinese descent. For

Chinese citizens, red is a separate identity. The meaning attached to this colour is the meaning of luck and prosperity. This meaning is the same as the meaning that applies in the Chinese region itself (Q. Huang, 2011). This was later also preserved and evident in the ornaments in the houses of Chinese residents in Kampung Kapitan. This colour appears in the lanterns and banners used. Every resident who visits can clearly understand and know that it is a community of Chinese descent. In this case, there is no change or difference in the meaning of the colour red in China as the origin of the Chinese ethnicity with that which applies in Kampung Kapitan. The colour red in China is still used in the Kapitan village community.

Second, Chinese architectural ornaments. This ornament looks like a house building style, especially the roof of the house which has a typical Chinese architecture. The captain's house itself is a combination of three cultural elements, namely Palembang, which can be seen from the style of the building with the characteristic of the pyramid house model as a model of the original Palembang house. Then is European architecture which is seen from the use of large concrete pillars with carvings like European buildings, especially the Netherlands. Next is the roof model with a pointed tip that shows the typical Chinese style. The description of the captain's house can be seen in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Kapitan's house with a blend of three architectures

Source: research documentation, 2022

In addition to the roof model, the captain's house also shows Chinese characteristics in the carvings and other decorations in various corners of the house. The age of the house and various carvings has reached 141 years from the beginning of its establishment in 1881 AD until now in 2022. This shows that this combination has been initiated and designed since the beginning of the house was founded (Adiyanto, 2006). All of these are the most obvious non-verbal symbols as a sign that this area was an early Chinese settlement in Palembang. The combination of architecture in the captain's house is the most obvious non-verbal symbol, which shows that there have been adjustments from the start with the local culture. The house built by Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin is clearly different from the structure and model of traditional house buildings in China itself (Zhang, 2017).

Third, knick-knacks of worship. The captain's house from the past until now has been used as a meeting place for residents of Chinese descent in Palembang. At the beginning of its establishment, this house became the office and center of the administrative activities of Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin. Recently, especially after Tjoa Ham Lin's death and Indonesia's independence, the captain's house changed its function as a place of worship for residents of Chinese descent. Many residents of Chinese descent who visit to carry out religious rituals such as praying and praying. Therefore, nowadays the captain's house is equipped with all the trinkets of worship, such as agarwood or incense wood, cemeteries, prayer altars, red candles, and statues of gods. Entering the captain's house, you will immediately see the completeness of this worship. All residents in the captain's village can already know this and understand very well that this house is a place of worship and is always visited. These knick-knacks of worship have similarities with those

of the Chinese community elsewhere (Bujard, 2008). This cannot be separated from the fact that the rituals performed are not merely considered as a religious belief, but are a tradition developed from the ancestors. The explanations from Ko Godek and Ko Mulyadi confirm this. The most prominent form of acculturation related to these worship trinkets is the use of the captain's house as a center of worship. The knick-knacks may be the same, but the location of worship using the house is typical in the captain's village. Elsewhere and in China itself, the completeness of this worship is in a temple or house of worship (Cohen & Wolf, 1978). It is very rarely placed in private homes, except for one family worship. While in the captain's house, it becomes a place of worship for everyone, open to the public.

Fourth, a slurred accent and tongue. This is typical for residents of Chinese descent. In language, a prominent characteristic is the pronunciation of the language with a slurred-sounding tongue rhythm, which is less able to pronounce the letter R and has a distinctive rhythm. This condition is typical of Chinese citizens, so it is very easy to know that they are citizens of Chinese descent. This includes non-verbal communication even though it follows the verbal language used. In this context, the way of speaking ethnic Chinese descent has similarities with non-Chinese citizens, especially the Palembang ethnic. The native language of Palembang also cannot pronounce the letter R, just like people of Chinese descent. Information from research informants stated that the speech style of the Palembang people who could not pronounce the letter R was not due to physical or language factors, but the habits inherent in a language. This habit is very possible because of Chinese influence in Palembang, which indeed in the structure of the Chinese language does not recognize the letter R or does not mention the letter R clearly (Wang & Chen, 2020). This also causes ethnic Chinese descent to tend to speak slurred or not clearly mention R. The slurred way of speaking can be said to be a form of adjustment for

Chinese citizens in Indonesia, especially in the captain's village. This is a consequence of the prohibition experienced by Chinese citizens during the new order, namely they are not allowed to use Chinese in their daily lives (Hoon, 2006). Due to the structure of the original Chinese language which does not have the letter R, it is carried over in everyday language in Indonesia, especially the village captain.

Fifth, skin colour. Yellowish white skin is a characteristic of the skin colour of Chinese people, which is different from other residents. Palembang residents themselves actually also have a lot of white skin colour, which in history actually says that it is a genetic factor that comes from mixed marriages with ethnic Chinese as well. The analysis is that in the past many Chinese citizens intermarried with Palembang residents (Hardi & Yuniati, 2021), so that many of their descendants now have white skin. However, there were no Chinese citizens with dark or black skin, all of whom had almost the same skin colour, yellowish white. Therefore, this becomes the non-verbal side of communication, because it becomes a marker for other citizens.

Sixth, shorts. Clothing shorts can actually be worn by anyone. However, in Kapitan Village, the ethnic Chinese descent, at least this is evident from Ko Mulyadi, Ko Godek, and Ko Gatot. They always wear shorts every day, sometimes combined with a t-shirt or shirt. During the research process, researchers always found research informants, especially residents of Chinese descent, wearing shorts. The use of clothing like this seems to be a characteristic, and for local residents it shows that the Chinese community is known for being relaxed and casual. This relaxed attitude was also shown by Ko Godek, who sometimes only wore shorts and a singlet shirt when receiving guests. For him it is a habit and comfort, although for guests a little uncomfortable. In fact, something different was found in non-Chinese residents, where they rarely wore shorts. They generally wear trousers or use a slipcover. The slipcover

itself is also a characteristic of non-Chinese citizens, where Chinese people have never been seen wearing a slipcover. The slipcover itself is a typical Indonesian men's clothing that is identical to Muslim and ethnic Malays (Sumait et al., 2020). Both of these, wearing shorts and slipcovers become a non-verbal side that gives a clear marker between the two ethnic groups.

Seventh, the use of koko clothes and caps. This characteristic is inherent in non-Chinese citizens or local residents. This feature is actually a sign for Muslims. Because local residents are generally Muslim, wearing clothes like this is a sign that they are not citizens of Chinese descent, even though there are actually Chinese people who are Muslim. However, in general, this is a sign that the wearer of koko and cap clothing is a non-Chinese citizen, even if they come from ethnic Chinese, there will be confirmation beforehand to ask about their ethnic origin. Judging from history, actually koko clothes are clothes adopted from Chinese culture. The term "koko" refers to the call for Kakak (koko) in Mandarin. This can be seen in the traditional clothing of Chinese men, who indeed use clothes such as koko clothes, especially the fighters or martial arts experts in China (Perry & Lee, 2017). In this context, it can be said that there was an adoption of Chinese culture in terms of clothing in local communities in Indonesia, especially the captain's village.

Eighth, pagoda. The captain's house which has a yard area of up to 100 m<sup>2</sup>, is a public space for the surrounding community. Residents usually gather and children play in the yard. In the centre of the courtyard is a small pagoda 1.5 meters high. A pagoda is a tower-shaped building that is commonly found in Chinese houses of worship who adhere to the Confucian belief, usually attached to the existence of a temple. The pagoda in the captain's courtyard was built in 2001 with the assistance of the Palembang city government and in collaboration with Bank Indonesia. When the captain's house was first built, there was no pagoda. The existence of a pagoda later

became a characteristic and a marker that the area was a settlement or ethnic area of Chinese descent. If all this time the only marker was the captain's house, then the pagoda became an integral part of the captain's house. In this case, the function of the pagoda is only as a marker, not part of a religious ritual. But by looking at the existence of the pagoda, this has become a non-verbal side that tells people that there is a Chinese settlement there.

Ninth, the place of offerings for the Old God Pek Kong. This location is something that is identical to the beliefs of the Chinese people. Tua Pek Kong is actually one of the many gods who are believed in the Chinese tradition with Taoism understanding. According to a developing story, Tua Pek Kong is the God of Prosperity or prosperity (Fallis, 2013). He is actually an ordinary human who came from China to Sumatra and Malaysia (including Singapore). Then he became a teacher and became a place to ask local residents. His friendly figure and giving lots of advice made him liked by the people and then after he died, the Chinese people believed him to be a god (Chia, 2017). This belief continues to grow, so that in many places special places of worship are established to ask for blessings from Dewa Tua Pek Kong. Including in the captain's village, small buildings were also erected at two main points around the village. This location is made separately, separated from the residents' houses. At certain times, Chinese people will come and offer prayers. They also place food as offerings to help deliver prayers. The location and procession of offerings to Dewa Tua Pek Kong is very open and can be seen by other residents, therefore this is another icon that indicates that in this area there are special Chinese settlements. Local residents also do not mind and assume the existence of this offering place is normal. They are also used to seeing Chinese people placing food and praying for Tua Pek Kong.

Tenth, lanterns. Lantern is a kind of decoration made of red paper with a dominant round shape. In these lanterns are usually

placed lights that will make the lanterns shine brightly when turned on. In the captain's village, these lanterns are often found, especially in the captain's house. The existence of lanterns is a separate sign that this is a house and an area inhabited by the Chinese community. In various Chinese traditions, it is known that the use of red lanterns is a symbol of prosperity and prosperity. The existence of these lights is a sign that people want a safe, prosperous and prosperous situation (Fang, 2015). The custom of this lantern is then maintained by the Chinese community. This is also a sign that where there are red lanterns, there is a Chinese community. The use of lanterns is a tradition that developed in mainland China and was later brought to Indonesia. It can be said that this is an identity that is deliberately maintained and does not change. Lanterns will usually be more and more installed on religious holidays such as Chinese New Year and Sin Cia. This is the same as the tradition in China as the area of origin (Fang, 2015).

Eleventh, shake hands by holding both hands in front of the chest. Usually someone who meets other people will shake hands by shaking hands. This is a habit in Indonesian society, where every meeting they usually shake hands by shaking hands (this changed during the Covid 19 pandemic where there was a recommendation not to touch physically). However, in people of Chinese descent, there is a different habit, namely every time they meet each other, this greeting is in the form of holding both hands in front of the chest and bowing slightly. This is the same as the expression of respecting the interlocutor. At certain moments, this will be followed by sayings according to the day being commemorated. For example, when celebrating Chinese New Year, bowing and holding hands will be followed by the words "Gong Xi Fat Choi."

Researchers found this immediately during the Chinese New Year commemoration in Kapitan Village. Researchers visited Ko



Godek's house. The host greeted the researcher by holding both hands while bowing. There is no physical contact, distance but facing each other. Researchers also saw that everyone who came was treated the same, especially fellow citizens of Chinese descent.

The way of shaking hands is quite unique and clearly is typical of citizens of Chinese descent (Cai, 2019). When Chinese citizens communicate with non-Chinese citizens, they do not shake hands, but still shake hands as usual for other residents. This is common practice they apply and continue to be maintained to this day. Ko Mulyadi's explanation did say that this is a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation.

"Indeed, we have always been like this, when we meet, we hold our hands on our chests and bend down a little. It's actually a teaching from Chinese citizens wherever they are, a habit. It means to respect the interlocutor. But this is only for fellow Chinese citizens, when dealing with non-Chinese citizens, shake hands as usual."

It is clear and this can be said to be a non-verbal communication mechanism for citizens of Chinese descent. The main meaning in this method is an expression of respect for others (Cai, 2019). But this method is only for fellow Chinese citizens of the same age or older parties, not for children. The difference is only in children. While the younger to the older, and vice versa, keep doing the same thing.

In this case, it appears that there is a form of equality in communication between the young and the old. This is different from the Malay way of shaking hands, which usually when the young greet the old, they do a hand kiss or sungkem. This method is intended to show respect from the young to the older, if not kissing hands or sungkem, it will be considered disrespectful or rude. On the other hand, among Chinese people, this expression of respect is conveyed the same way, from the young to the old or vice versa.

Twelve, hair and eye shapes. The main characteristics for residents of Chinese descent are straight hair and slanted eyes. During this research as well as observations in other areas, none of the residents of Chinese descent had curly hair or larger eyes. All of them had straight hair and slanted eyes. This is actually a genetic factor believed to have come from the Mongoloid race. The Chinese ethnicity itself comes from the Mongoloid race (Fei, 2017). In contrast to non-Chinese citizens, especially Palembang residents, many of them have curly or curly hair, as well as the shape of the eyes, not all of them are slanted. However, there are also local residents who have straight hair and slanted eyes, but the quantity is not much. In general, the most obvious difference is the two elements.

In summary, the non-verbal aspects of cultural communication among the people in the captain's village, especially between ethnic Chinese and other residents, can be seen from the following table:

Table 1. Symbols on non-verbal communication in Kampung Kapitan

No	Non Verbal	Makna	Bentuk Akulturasi
1	Red colour	A special sign that means welfare for citizens keturunan Tionghoa	Same as custom in China, something new for locals
2	Chinese architectural ornament	Chinese Identity	The combination of three elements, namely Chinese, Palembang and European, something new for local residents

3	trinkets of worship	Chinese identity and religious system	Same as in China, but there is something new in using the captain's house as a place of worship
4	Slurred speech and tongue (rhythm)	Typical of Chinese descent and influenced by local residents	Adaptation to the local language, and local residents adopt the habit of slurring the letter R
5	Skin color	Show identity of Chinese descent or not	Genetic factors, but intermarriage occurs with local residents so that many local residents have the same skin as Chinese descent
6	Shorts and gloves	Typical of Chinese ethnicity and non-Chinese citizens	Adjusting to the conditions of local residents, not traditions in China. Local identity gloves
7	Wearing koko and cap	Local people and usually Muslim, even though the koko clothes are from the Chinese tradition	Local residents adopted Chinese clothing, namely koko clothes, as a Muslim identity. But residents of Chinese descent don't wear koko clothes
8	Pagoda in the yard	Chinese Identity	The same identity as in China, the legacy of Taoism. New for locals
9	Tua Pek Kong offering place	Chinese Identity and Religious System	Same identity as in China, Taoist heritage, offering to gods
10	Lantern	Chinese identity and meaning of salvation	Same as custom in China, new thing for locals
11	Holding hands on chest when meeting	Greetings to China	Same as tradition in China, maintained, but new for locals
12	Hair and eye shape	Chinese have straight hair and slanted eyes, local people can be curly, curly, straight and not slanted	Genetic factors, intermarriage occurs, but straight hair and slanted eyes become Chinese identity

Source: Analysis of research results, 2022

All of the above elements are aspects that have their own meaning, so they can be categorized as non-verbal aspects in the community communication process in Kapitan

Village. However, not all non-verbal aspects are attached to verbal communication. This means that this non-verbal aspect is interpreted as all symbols that develop in the Kapitan

Village community and then have certain meanings between them. The meaning of this element will affect the communication process they do and become very important in human interaction (Samovar et al., 2002). It can blend in with anything, although in some ways it can be very symbolic. Especially in the context of interpersonal communication, the non-verbal side plays an important role. The symbols that are milling about in the context of communication between the Chinese people and local residents and then mutual understanding occurs, basically there is a meeting interaction and mutual acceptance. It appears the power of symbols which can then bridge the occurrence of fundamental collaborations (Blumer, 1986). These symbols are in the interactions that occur and the people of Kampung Kapitan have been able to show them in their communication.

In the perspective of symbolic interactionism, it is emphasized that humans use symbols to give meaning. Humans use symbols not only in interacting, this symbolization may last for generations (Budrevicius, 2013). Humans can produce a variety of symbols, be it sounds, signs on paper, statues, body movements, colours, and so on to convey ideas or feelings and even to seek information (Blumer, 1986).

In this case, non-verbal communication in the people of Kampung Kapitan is attached to the cultural fabric that is formed and takes place. What is understood and happened in Kapitan Village is part of a process of cultural acculturation that has occurred over the years. This is in line with the idea that culture is communication and communication is culture (Miike, 2002). Humans study cultural views and patterns in communication. When interacting with other people, humans understand the beliefs, values, norms and language and culture that exist (Wood, 2008). Every interaction and relationship that occurs in the people of Kampung Kapitan is essentially a fabric of intercultural interactions that develop. Everything can evolve and change. Conditions

like this are also found in other communities, where openness and the ability to accept differences, especially from the non-verbal side, are the keys to the harmony and effectiveness of the communication that occurs. The most important thing is to package and manage the existing cultural sensitivity so that it can be eliminated and adjusted (Abu-Arqoub & Alserhan, 2019).

It can also be understood that in the ongoing non-verbal communication process, there are processes that indicate certain adjustments, both in the Chinese community and local residents. This condition also applies to other communities, that adjustment is part of a strategy that reduces the degree of cultural principles and beliefs so that interactions take place more easily and fluidly (Y. Huang, 2011). In the end, ethnic identity is maintained. These ethnic groups are formed because of the characteristics determined by the group itself, and then form its own pattern in the process of interacting with each other (Freedman & Barth, 1970).

The interweaving of symbols in non-verbal communication, which is shown in the community communication process in the captain's village, especially between residents of Chinese descent and the local community, shows the process of assimilation between the two communities. Table 1 shows that there are elements in Chinese culture and traditions which then blend and adapt to those in the local community. Conversely, there are elements in the habits of the local community which actually adopt from the Chinese tradition.

Ana (45 years), a local resident who was appointed as a staff at the captain's house as commander, said that the habits of the Chinese people in the captain's village were already intermingled and took place in people's daily lives. According to Ana, these symbols are understood as something that has been brought and become certain characteristics. Like worship trinkets, Chinese characters, statues of gods, are something that the Chinese

consider to have brought, and that has never been a problem. It was also said by Abah Kunyit (65 years old), that from the beginning they were used to and always interacted with existing conditions. They are used to the colour red, used to the lanterns, seeing Chinese people praying and other processions. All of that is daily life which is then interpreted as a characteristic by local residents.

The interpretation as above also applies to the Chinese community. As stated by Uu' or Heriyamin (67 years old), the oldest Chinese descendant, that for the Chinese community, from the start, they have indeed mingled and seen the existence of the local community. This village was indeed founded by Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin, but around the area and location occupied by local residents. Therefore, according to the message from Tjoa Ham Lin himself, as conveyed by Ko Mulyadi and Uu', indeed, it has been taught from the start so that they can adopt the habits and characteristics of local residents. The most prominent thing is the symbol of the captain's house which adopts local architectural styles, not pure Chinese, even though this house was built in 1881 AD.

Referring to the symbolic interactionism approach, it is clear that the meaning of Chinese is the meaning that appears in the non-verbal symbols that exist in society (Blumer, 1986). The verbal side does play a role, especially communication using the Palembang language, but the dominant people's daily life is the non-verbal aspect that appears in everyday life. The non-verbal aspects that stand out and are interesting are indeed aspects that show the unity of the Chinese community with the local community. On the other hand, this is also related to ethnic identity which is maintained even though there are adjustments (Barth, 2007). The ethnic identity of the Chinese and the local community is still visible, even though it later became a separate form of assimilation.

## Conclusion

The symbols of non-verbal communication that take place in the process of cultural communication in the Kapitan village community, there are at least 12 symbols. These symbols are the use of red as the distinctive colour of the Chinese community, Chinese architectural ornaments seen in the captain's house, worship trinkets, slurred accents and tongues for residents of Chinese descent, skin colour, the use of koko and cap clothes, pagodas on the the yard, where Tua Pek Kong offerings, lanterns, holding hands when meeting as a style of shaking hands, as well as the shape of hair and eyes. Each of these elements is then interpreted and also produced in the communication process. There are also adjustments from each culture to some symbols so that their shape changes.

Each non-verbal symbol looks capable of being the glue in social relations between each ethnic group. People can accept and understand that every symbol of communication is something brought from their respective cultures. This is inseparable from the teachings of Kapitan Tjoa Ham Lin to always position himself as part of the local community as evidenced by the captain's house building, and that is passed on to the next generations.

What is in the captain's village can also be traced to other ethnic contexts in different places, that there is a tendency for each ethnic group to mix themselves with the local culture, especially the non-verbal side. But there is a possibility that the form will be different or vice versa, assimilation does not occur because the non-verbal side is maintained in the original form and is not allowed to be adjusted. Another study is needed to strengthen this argument, as well as being an important basis that ethnic assimilation cannot be separated from the existence of non-verbal aspects.

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