

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the era of increasingly advanced globalization, intercultural communication skills are an important aspect that every student must have. With intercultural communication skills, students will have the ability to interact with individuals who have different cultural backgrounds. In line with that, the motivation to learn of Indonesian students is also increasing and global. Based on data obtained from GoodStats.id regarding the countries in Asean with the most students studying abroad, Indonesia is ranked second with 59.224 students. This data proves that the interest and motivation of Indonesian students to seek knowledge is not only limited to the domestic environment, but also includes the international level where they can gain cross-cultural experience. The existence of globalization in the modern era today allows Indonesian students to be more motivated in gaining experience and exposure to international education (Fedolina & Saptandari, 2024).

Of the many countries in the world, Hungary is one of the favorite destinations for Indonesian students to study. This is proven by the number of Indonesian students in Hungary which is increasing every year. In 2024, there are 78 Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational and IISMA Undergraduate programs studying at the University of Pecs for one semester in 2024 (iisma.kemdikbud.go.id.) Not only that, the number of applicants from the IISMA program to the University of Pecs also shows a very high number, with 662 applicants for the undergraduate program and 185 applicants for the vocational program. This figure shows the great interest of Indonesian students in making Hungary a destination country for them to study.

By having the opportunity to study abroad, Indonesian students can not only increase their knowledge and insight, but also have the opportunity to build friendships and relationships with international students. According to Marciniak et al. (2019), there are several benefits of participating in an international student exchange program, such as increasing self-confidence and adaptation skills in a new environment, becoming more open-minded and understanding of other and diverse culture, developing foreign language skills, and broadening knowledge of

a discipline in a different educational system and cultural environment. The motivation and interest of Indonesian students to gain cross-cultural experience can be channeled through participation in a student exchange program. Essentially, the Student Exchange Program is a program that allows students to study for 1-2 semesters at renowned campuses located around the world. The student exchange program not only offers the opportunity to study abroad at renowned campuses, but also provides participants with the opportunity to go on international trips, take language courses, and have the opportunity to participate in activities outside of academics that aim to increase experience, knowledge, and social skills (Fedolina & Saptandari, 2024).

In addition to enriching academic experiences and developing in different educational environments, the opportunity to improve cross-cultural understanding, expand international networks, experience different cultures, and expand the possibility of getting better career prospects in the future are the reasons why many Indonesian students are interested in participating in student exchange programs.

As an initiative to expand opportunities for Indonesian students to study abroad, the Indonesian government and many universities in Indonesia have opened many student exchange programs abroad for Indonesian students. For example, the Communication Science study program at Diponegoro University Semarang has an International Undergraduate Program which has a mandatory program for its students to participate in a student exchange for one semester. The student exchange program in the Communication Science Department at Diponegoro University is divided into two, namely participating in a student exchange at a partner university, or participating in a student exchange program at a campus that is not a partner campus of Diponegoro University, or in other words, participating in a student exchange program independently.

In addition to initiatives from universities in Indonesia, the Indonesian government also provides support for Indonesian students to be able to participate in student exchange programs through the IISMA (Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards) program. Nadiem Makarim as the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology said that the opportunity to study abroad is not only about academics, but also about enriching cultural experiences. Reported from (Kemendikbud, 2021), IISMA is a scholarship program sponsored by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to finance Indonesian students to be able to

participate in student exchanges at renowned universities around the world, one of which is the University of Pecs in Hungary. The University of Pecs, one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in Europe, attracts students from all around the world, offering a truly diverse learning environment.

In 2023, there are two student exchange programs attended by Indonesian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary. The two programs are IISMA (International Student Mobility Awards) which is a scholarship program from the Indonesian government and the Study Abroad Program opened directly by the University of Pecs in Hungary. There are a total of 53 Indonesian students participating in the student exchange program at the University of Pecs in Hungary, each consisting of 39 students from the IISMA Vocational program (Kemendikbud, 2024) and 14 students from the study abroad program. Based on the results of personal communication between the author and the Student Exchange program participants in the University of Pecs back in 2023, these 53 Indonesian students come from various universities. The universities of origin of these Indonesian students consist of the University of Indonesia, Brawijaya University, Diponegoro University, Sursya Institute of Technology, Airlangga University, Sebelas Maret University, Malang State Polytechnic, Nahdatul Ulama University of Surabaya, Tonggak Equator Polytechnic, Bengkalis State Polytechnic, Padjajaran University, Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, and Gadjah Mada University.

In the continuation of the Student Exchange program at the University of Pecs in Hungary, Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program and those from the study abroad program have different study programs, where students from the IISMA Vocational program are required to take part in an internship program at NGOs in the city of Pecs. With this mandatory internship program, Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program not only have good academic provisions, but also have a direct opportunity to enter the world of work abroad. On the other hand, Indonesian students from the study abroad program do not have an internship program, but they are free to choose courses and faculties as a place to study. These 14 Indonesian students are spread across various faculties and study various courses from the many faculties at the University of Pecs, such as Architecture Engineering, Business and Economics, Psychology, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Law. With the freedom to choose faculties and courses, Indonesian students from the Study Abroad program have the

opportunity to explore their interests and learn new knowledge that they do not get in Indonesia.

Although there are differences in the study program between Indonesian students from IISMA Vocational and Indonesian students from the Study Abroad program, they all have the same experience in terms of forming interaction process where they engage in an intercultural communication between the local Hungarian students and the other International students studying in the University of Pecs in Hungary. With Intercultural Communication competence, Indonesians students have the ability to interact with individuals that has different and diverse cultural background from them. Additionally, Intercultural Communication competence allows them to exchange knowledge about each other's culture, as well as gaining cultural mutual understanding among students in an international academic environment (Stepanovienė, 2011) This interaction and communication process are formed from the results of classroom learning that usually combines Indonesian students into one group with Hungarian students and so that interaction and communication are created. Not only from the results of learning in class, the interaction and communication process also occurs outside the classroom, where Indonesian students participate in events organized by other students that aim to get to know each other. From participating in these activities, Indonesian students can form a long-lasting friendship with Hungarian students.

Broadly speaking, Intercultural Communication can be interpreted as a form of global communication because it focuses on the form or process of communication that occurs between individuals with different cultural backgrounds. When the intercultural communication process takes place, misunderstandings can arise between individuals due to differences in cultural background and language limitations (Andersen et al. 2006; Barnett and Lee 2002; Philipsen 2002). Language limitations and differences in cultural background make it difficult for students to adapt to the environment in the host country. This difficulty in adapting is certainly also experienced by Indonesian students where they have to face many differences such as diverse cultural differences, language, norms and rules, education systems, social classes, beliefs, and many others. When moving from one country to another and faced with many differences, it is not uncommon for students to feel confused because they have to deal with things that are very different from what they usually face in their home country. The result of this confusion can be called culture shock.

The results of a study conducted by Anom and Mayagita (2021) showed that Indonesian students studying in Budapest, Hungary experienced a variety of culture shocks when they first arrived in Europe, such as food, extreme weather differences, language barriers, challenges that must be experienced when in public places, to the characteristics of local residents who are very different. This is in line with the point that the researcher highlighted, namely that the differences in language make it difficult for Indonesian students to adapt to local Hungarian students. The difficulties experienced by Indonesian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary are then the reason why the interaction and communication process is hampered. Other studies also show that international students studying in non-English speaking environments tend to experience higher levels of culture shock due to language barriers (Wang & Hannes 2014). This creates a gap experienced by Indonesian students in the process of intercultural communication stages and interaction patterns with local Hungarian students

In other studies, participation of local Hungarian students with international students also tends to be low and local Hungarian students are not easy to approach, which can hinder the process of adaptation and social integration of international students in their new academic environment (Kovacs & Kasza, 2018). This is in line with interpersonal communication that the author experienced with several Indonesian students from the IISMA Vocational program and also from the Study Abroad Program, where they stated that there were many difficulties and confusions that they experienced when they first arrived in Pecs, Hungary. These Indonesian students had difficulty in socializing and interacting with local Hungarian students and residents because of language barriers and major cultural differences. The points mentioned by the Indonesian students are in line with Furnham's (2007) opinion which states that living in foreign cultures will experience many problems such as experiencing racial discrimination, feeling difficulties due to language barriers, experiencing economic pressure, feeling alone, difficulty in accommodation, and dietary restrictions.

The large differences in culture and language between Indonesia and Hungary make Indonesian students have unique obstacles in terms of communicating and interacting with local Hungarian students. This can happen because not many Hungarian citizens or local students are fluent in English so Indonesian students have to learn Hungarian vocabulary to be able to interact with local citizens and students. Because of this difference, Indonesian students find it difficult to simply shop, ask for directions, ask, or ask for help from local citizens and

students. This difference in language has the potential to greatly affect the quality and process of social interaction and communication with local Hungarian students, making it somewhat difficult for Indonesian students to build social relationships.

Research that discusses more deeply about the stages of intercultural communication and the interaction patterns of Indonesian students in an international academic environment is very important to be conducted because it can explore more deeply how Indonesian students adapt to an environment that contains various cultures in it. The stages of intercultural communication include the adaptation process experienced by Indonesian students when trying to navigate cultural differences in their interaction process. On the other hand, the patterns of interaction that occur between Indonesian exchange students and local Hungarian students will shed light on how intercultural relationships are formed and how Indonesian students face communication challenges that arise in multicultural situations. With that in mind, this study will discuss more deeply about the influence of stages of interaction and communication patterns that occur between Indonesian students and local Hungarian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary on social dynamics.

## **1.2 Research Problem Statement**

In the global higher education contest, intercultural interaction is one of the important aspects for international students who are studying abroad, including Indonesian students. With the differences in culture, language, norms, and patterns of social interaction between Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Student Abroad) and local Hungarian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary, communication challenges arise. With communication challenges, Indonesian students then experience difficulties in the process of adapting to different stages of intercultural communication. Due to differences in culture, language, norms, and interaction patterns, Indonesian students also experience challenges in terms of adapting to the stages of intercultural communication with Hungarian students at the University of Pecs, Hungary.

Of course, these difficulties in adapting affect the stages of intercultural communication as well as patterns of interactions between Indonesian students and Hungarian students. Therefore, the primary research question addressed in this research is;

1. What are the stages of intercultural communication as well as the interaction phases that Indonesian exchange students experience during their communication process with their Hungarian local students at the University of Pécs in Hungary?"

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are to;

- a. To examine the stages of intercultural communication as well as the patterns of interaction that Indonesian Exchange students experience during their communication and interaction process with Hungarian local students at the University of Pécs in Hungary.
- b. To dig deeper on how Indonesian Exchange Students in University of Pécs in Hungary navigate intercultural adaptation, recognising the difficulties they encounter in various intercultural settings, and analysing the parallels and discrepancies in their interaction styles with local Hungarian students.

### **1.4 Research Significances**

#### **1.4.1 Theoretical**

This research will further develop the Integrative Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation by exploring its application to the intercultural interactions that happen between Indonesian Exchange Students who are studying in Hungary, a non-English speaking country. In addition, the findings of this study have the potential to contribute to future research in the field of culture shock and intercultural competence, improving the field of intercultural communication.

#### **1.4.2 Social**

By describing the challenges that Indonesian Exchange Students face his research is expected to provide suggestions for future researchers that can be used as a reference for other research with the theme of intercultural communication and adaptation.

#### **1.4.3 Practical**

The findings of research can be a guide for future Indonesian Student Exchange Programs like IISMA or any other programs in increasing their support for Indonesian students that are going to study in countries where English is not their first language. Moreover, the findings can also help universities increase their strategies in language and cultural integration for their international students.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

### **1.5.1 Research Paradigm**

For this research, interpretive is applied here as the research paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is a social framework that has a goal to understand how an informant interprets experiences or events that they experienced. Moreover, interpretive research paradigm also has an objective, which is to delve deep into informant's experiences or phenomenon, understand their own perspectives, and then understand the meaning of said events or phenomenon according to each phenomenon. Thus, as a researcher, author needs to be able to understand deeply and interpret both the mental and emotional status of the answers that the informant gave (Smith & Osborn, 2014)

Phenomenology explores how one gains insight into the world around them through direct experience, or how one acquires knowledge (Creswell, 2007). This approach delves deeper into one's own life experiences. The combination of interpretive and phenomenological approach will help the researcher to explore and examine both similarities and differences in participant's experiences. In light of the information presented thus far, the author applied phenomenological approach to explore and understand the experience, of Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO Awardees and Study Abroad), how they feel, as well as how they put meaning to a phenomenon.

### **1.5.2 State of The Art**

Numerous studies were used as a guidance for the researcher while conducting this research. The first study is titled "Challenges in teaching international students: group separation, language barriers, and cultural differences" written by several authors from Lund University in 2013. This study focuses on how international students adjust to communication in academic settings, especially in the UK. The study's primary goal is to investigate the difficulties faced by international students navigating academic environments and connecting with local students as a result of linguistic and cultural limitations. Through questionnaires and interviews, the researchers gathered information from international students about how they adjust to the social structures and academic norms of the host culture.

This research that focuses on Indonesian exchange students at the University of Pécs, Hungary, is significantly enhanced by the research conducted by researchers from Lund

University because this research illustrates that communication dynamics between local and international students are significantly affected by linguistic and cultural barriers. The results provide essential insight into how these challenges influence social interactions as well as academic ones. This research will utilise this study to examine how Indonesian students specifically navigate communication and interaction patterns in a comparably diverse environment by understanding the challenges shown in their research, thereby underscoring the significance of linguistic and cultural diversity. This research will distinguish itself by analysing both academic and non-academic social interactions, while the Lund University study focusses solely on the academic challenges faced by international students in general. The differences between Lund University study and this research lies in the fact that this research examines the communication styles of Indonesian students and their interactions with Hungarians, while the Lund's research focusses more on the general dynamics of the classroom.

The second study is titled "I feel self-conscious about my accent: International students' communication challenges in the higher education context," which was published in 2024 by Morady Moghaddam, M. This study aims to investigate the communication difficulties encountered by foreign students attending Iranian colleges, with an emphasis on how linguistic and cultural disparities affect their interactions with one another in the classroom. Five communication issues were identified by the researcher through surveys and interviews with international students: poor teacher rapport, cultural differences, lack of confidence, linguistic hurdles, and inefficient teaching methods. According to the participants, these difficulties affect participation and efficient communication in educational environments. According to this study, these difficulties have an impact on their capacity to interact with peers in the area and their involvement in scholarly conversations.

This study offers valuable background for my research by analysing the influence of international students' communication challenges, specifically concerning accents, on their relationships. It recognises self-consciousness and linguistic challenges as two primary impediments to effective interaction with peers and professors in social and academic settings. This study's findings provide essential context for analysing how these challenges affect overall social integration in manners that extend beyond linguistic barriers. While both studies address the communication barriers faced by international students, the scope of my research

differs. Moghaddam's study primarily concentrates on higher education and the academic environment, specifically highlighting linguistic impediments to class participation. Conversely, my research broadens the perspective to examine the social interaction patterns of Indonesian students alongside their academic interactions, considering their adaptation to their Hungarian peers. Moreover, my research posits that these communication patterns are significantly affected by linguistic barriers and cultural norms. Consequently, whereas Moghaddam's research illuminates linguistic obstacles, my work expands the discourse to include cultural disparities, so providing a more comprehensive analysis of students' social and academic adaptation.

The third study was carried out in 2016 by Nurjannah Mutiara Gayatri and Nur Adhini at the State University of Semarang. The cross-cultural adaptation of international students from Kyrgyzstan and Turkey was investigated in this study, along with important aspects of their experiences such as emotions, social life, local culture, and health. The results showed that while the students initially encountered many difficulties because of language and cultural barriers, they eventually adjusted and assimilated into Indonesian society, making friends with local students and learning about Indonesian social mores and customs. This research is relevant to my study on Indonesian students in Hungary because it also focuses on how international students manage cultural and linguistic challenges when living in a foreign country. The key aspect of both studies is the adaptation process—how students navigate new environments, particularly in terms of communicating and interacting with local and international peers. This research offers valuable insights into the communication barriers that can occur in cross-cultural settings and highlights the process by which students eventually overcome these barriers, which is central to my investigation into Indonesian students' interactions with their Hungarian peers.

With an emphasis on Indonesian students specifically, this fourth study is titled “The Adaptation Process Of Intercultural Communication Of Mercu Buana University Students In Student Exchange Programs” conducted by Rahmadya Putra Nugraha in 2020 investigates how Indonesian students that is studying abroad adjust to their new culture. Similar with this research, this study employ a qualitative approach with the phenomenology method. This study emphasises important issues, especially those related to language barriers, since Indonesian Students frequently find it difficult to comprehend regional accents and dialects, making it

more difficult for them to communicate with peers from both local and foreign countries. Because Indonesian Students may find it difficult to make friends in their new environment, these difficulties can cause Indonesian Students to feel alone. However, Indonesian Students can eventually adapt and reach a point of integration and acceptance where they start to feel more at ease in their new cultural setting. This study is relevant to this research because it looks at the communication difficulties Indonesian students encounter while engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds. The finding of this study supports the argument of this research which argues that language and cultural obstacles affect Indonesian students' interactions with their Hungarian Students.

Nugraha's findings on culture shock and linguistic differences that obstruct communication enhance the author's understanding of the dynamics of intercultural communication adaptation. Both studies investigate intercultural adaptation; however, Nugraha's research focuses on Indonesian students inside Asia scope, while this research analyses them in a European context. Unlike Nugraha's study, this research investigates the impact of cultural and linguistic barriers on social interactions and academic adaptation. This comprehensive perspective on academic and social flexibility differentiates this research from Nugraha's institutional emphasis.

The fifth study is titled "International Students in Indonesia: A Study on Academic and Socio-Cultural Adjustment," written by Yulia Hapsari and Hamamah in 2019. The objective of this study is to explore the adjustment experiences of international students in a university in Indonesia. According to the study's findings, sociocultural elements may differ from those in their own country, and social and academic lives both on and off campus may require adaptation. These disparities turn into inevitable outcomes that could jeopardise the effectiveness of their study. According to this study, language remains the primary barrier that international students face during the assimilation process. Many of them do not give much thought to the significance of learning the language of the host country, even though the majority of them understand the value of English and are confident in their ability to use it to survive in their academic and sociocultural lives.

The study indicated that academic pressures, linguistic obstacles, and cultural disparities significantly influenced overseas students' adaptation meanwhile this research indicates that linguistic and cultural norms in communication and involvement provide challenges for Indonesian students studying abroad, especially in Hungary. This research examines the

adaptation of Indonesian students in Central Europe with their Hungarian peers, whereas Hapsari and Hamamah's study focusses only on the adaptation of overseas students to Indonesian culture. This broadens Hapsari and Hamamah's study beyond Indonesia, incorporating academic life and broader social context.

The last study is titled “How the Experience of Living Overseas Sharpened Indonesian Student’s Intercultural Communication Competence Through Student Exchange Program at the University of Pécs” written by Kayla Kanaya Faza in 2024. The primary objective of this study is to enhance the intercultural competence of Indonesian students to the Hungarian culture. This study examines several facets of intercultural communication competence, adaptation processes, and the problems faced by Indonesian exchange students. This research builds upon this study by assessing communication and interaction dynamics between Indonesian exchange students and Hungarian students, in contrast to prior studies, like Faza's, which emphasised the significance of cultural adaptation and communication development within a singular host culture. This expanded focus tackles the difficulties inherent in international situations and offers a novel viewpoint on the challenges Indonesian students encounter in adaptation. The present study offers a distinctive viewpoint by examining both the social and academic aspects of these cultural interactions—specifically, how cultural, linguistic, and normative disparities influence routine communication. Consequently, my research expands upon Faza's work and offers a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural communication within a multicultural classroom.

This study focuses on the development of the Intercultural competence of the Indonesian students by engaging with the Hungarian culture. The existing body of research explores various aspects of intercultural communication competence, adaptation processes, and the challenges faced by Indonesian exchange students. While previous studies like Faza's have highlighted the importance of cultural adaptation and communication development within a single host culture, my research expands this framework by investigating communication and interaction patterns with Hungarian peers. This broader scope addresses the complexities that arise from multicultural environments and adds a new dimension to the understanding of adaptation challenges faced by Indonesian students. This current research contributes a fresh perspective by studying not just the academic impact of these cultural interactions but also the social dimensions, particularly in how cultural, linguistic, and normative diversities influence

everyday communication. Therefore, my study builds upon the foundation laid by Faza's work while offering a more comprehensive view of intercultural communication in a diverse academic environment.

### **1.5.3 Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation was developed by Young Yun Kim on 1976. This theory sheds lights on the process of adaptation of an individual (international students, immigrants, and refugees) to the new cultural environment on their host country. Moreover, this theory also explores the different ways of how individuals (international students, immigrants, and refugees) adapt when they move to a place with different culture than their own country, both emotionally and behaviorally. Individuals in this theory are believed that the process of adaptation is not linear, where they will experience stress in their first encounter to the new culture, but gradually will feel comfortable and a functional members of the host society.

There are five key factors that Young Yun Kim acknowledge in this theory, which are;

a. **Stress-Adaptation-Growth-Dynamic:**

The focus of this theory is exploring the process of an individual's adaptation to the new culture in their host country, which includes the anxiety or stress due to the difference in culture, how they adapt to the new environment, and how they achieve full adaptation through the experience. This process is not easy to achieve, as individuals need to make sure that their original cultural identity and the host culture are always interacting.

b. **Communication and Competence:**

This theory believes that in order to achieve a successful adaptation is that an individual has the ability to effectively communicate in the new cultural context. Mastering the language of the host country, socializing and forming relationships with the locals, and recognizing the cultural norms of the host country is called host communication competence, which individuals need to develop.

c. **Acculturation and Deculturation:**

Kim propose that there is acculturation (the process of learning the culture of host country and adapting to it) and deculturation (the process where individuals let go of their own culture that is not relevant in their new cultural environment to be able to adapt) in the

cross-cultural adaptation process. Both acculturation and deculturation is important for individuals to be able to effectively function in the host community.

d. Factors that Influence Adaptation:

This theory classifies several factors that influence the success of adaptation, which includes;

1. The characteristic of the individuals: This includes the personality of the individual, their age, and their education.
2. Ethnic proximity: This includes the similarity between the culture in host country and the original culture of the individual.
3. Social and communication environments: This includes the chance of an individual to interact and socialize with the members inside the host country and its culture.

e. Stages of Adaptation:

Adaptation according to Kim is step-by-step process, where Individuals will experience honeymoon stage, culture shock, adjustment, and integration process into their host country's culture. Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation will serve as a clear framework in this research to explain how Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Study Abroad Students) adapt to able to communicate and interact with their local Hungarian peers. Moreover, this theory will also help to understand the stages and phases of communication, as well as interaction patterns between Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Study Abroad Students) and their Hungarian peers by putting the focus on host communication competence and the stress-adaptation-growth cycle. Lastly, it also focuses on how the differences in culture and the closeness between ethnic will affect the interaction and communication process.

This study additionally employs the Intercultural Communication Theory (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003) to examine the communication patterns established in the interactions between Indonesian and Hungarian students. This theory highlights the significance of recognizing the distinctions in communication between high-context (Indonesian) and low-context (Hungarian) cultures, which influence the encoding and interpretation of messages by both parties. This study discusses how Indonesian students, accustomed to indirect communication, must adapt to Hungarian students who engage in

more open and direct communication. Consequently, this theory establishes a basis for comprehending the dynamics of intercultural communication in both formal and informal interactions.

## **1.6 Research Assumptions**

The assumptions of this research is that Indonesian Exchange Student (Study Abroad and IISMAVO 2023 Awardees) in Hungary experience various stages of intercultural communication and interactions when communicating or interacting with local Hungarian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary that is affected by the cultural, language difference, cultural norms, and the diversities between Indonesia and Hungaria.

## **1.7 Operationalizing the Concept**

In order to understand the stages of intercultural communication as well as the phases of interaction that Indonesian Exchange students experience during their communication process with their Hungarian local students at the University of Pécs in Hungary, below are the operational concepts that will be applied in this research;

### **a. Intercultural Communication**

Intercultural Communication will serve as the core of this research, where it will focus on the communication process that occurs between Indonesian Exchange Students (IISMAVO and Student Abroad Students) with their local Hungarian students studying at the University of Pecs in Hungary. In this research, the concept of Intercultural Communication will be analyzed by the researcher to understand how Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary combat the differences that occurs in many aspects, including norms, customs, languages, culture, communication style, social rules, and many others while interacting with someone that comes from different background than them. The differences in communicating such as informal/formal communication, direct/indirect communication, and communication styles will also be included as concepts that will later describes the communication challenges face by Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary.

## **b. Stages of Intercultural Communication**

This concept explains about the stages that Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary experience during their process of adaptation to the differences in culture in order to become more culturally sensitive and eventually develop intercultural communication skills. There will be six types of stages that will be applied in this research;

1. Denial Phase: This is the first phase that is experienced by Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary, where they are unaware to notice the differences in culture. In this stage, Indonesian Exchange Students may isolate themselves from people with different background and stick with the people in their own group because they have little interest in Hungarian culture.
2. Defense Phase: This is the second phase after the denial phase where Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary started to notice the differences in culture but they tend to see it negatively because they are uncomfortable with the Hungarian cultures or practices. Because of this, they may express frustration or anger towards Hungarian cultures/practices and may feel that their own culture is superior.
3. Minimization Phase: After defense phase, Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary started to acknowledge the differences in culture but they does not really pay attention to it because they view it as “not a big deal” which then can lean to misunderstanding between two groups.
4. Acceptance Phase: During this phase, Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs started to realize that Hungarian culture along with other diverse cultures from other international students has unique and different values, norms, and even communication styles. Because of this, they started to be more open to learn about the differences. They may also start to become curious about Hungarian traditions and start to match and adjust their communication styles to fit into the cultural expectations.
5. Adaptation Phase: In this stage, Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs are actively adapting to the new environment by matching their communication styles and behavior to be able to fit in better with the Hungarian students and Internasional students.

6. Integration Phase: In this last stage, Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs have successfully combat the differences in cultures/norms/customs. Because of this skills, Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs are able to interact and communicate with people that have different and diverse cultural background than them. Moreover, they also may blend aspects of both Indonesian culture with other cultures, allowing them to keep their own beliefs and culture but also interact with different and diverse culture smoothly.

### **c. Patterns of Interaction**

This concept explains about the experiences of Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary on how they try to communicate and formed a social relationship with Hungarian students at the University of Pecs in Hungary. In multicultural context, patterns of interaction can be classified into two types (Gudykunst & Kim (2003);

1. High-context interaction: The pattern of interaction in this type prioritizes indirect communication and putting non-verbal cues in the context of the situation into priority (normally can be seen in countries with a collective culture like Indonesia).
2. Low-context interaction: The pattern of interaction in this type prioritize explicit, direct, and verbal communication (normally can be seen in countries with individualistic culture like Hungary)

In this research, the patterns of interaction between Indonesian exchange students and local Hungarian students can be classified into two types;

1. Formal interaction: Interaction that occur during teaching period inside the classroom, group work, academic project, or professional setting. In formal interaction, Indonesian students often faces difficulty in terms of interacting and communicating with local Hungarian students because of the differences in their communication styles, where Indonesian tend to be more indirect and Hungarians that are more direct. According to Hofstede (2001), the differences that occur in culture such as between individualism and collectivism, can have

a great effect to how students interact in formal context, which includes how they make decisions and solving problems in group.

2. Informal interaction: Interaction that occur in student clubs, organizations, and other social setting. In this case, Indonesian students are most likely to interact and form a relationship with their Internasional peers or organizations than with the Hungarians social groups. According to Ting-Toomey (1999) in Face Negotiation theory, collectivism individual tends to emphasise social harmony in casual encounters, whereas people from individualistic cultures place greater emphasis on authenticity and self-expression.

By clarifying these interaction patterns, the study hopes to provide a thorough understanding of the dynamics of relationships between Indonesian and Hungarian students, within formal and informal settings, as well as identify the adaptation strategies they employ to overcome cross-cultural challenges.

## **1.8 Research Method**

### **1.8.1 Research Approach**

In this qualitative study, the phenomenology approach will be applied. In general, the phenomenology approach is used in a study to help researchers understand various social phenomena that exist in society. Phenomenology itself is a research approach that has a goal to understand the world through the lived experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology does not only focuses on describing an events, but also on how they interpret meaning, perceive, describing an experience, and make meaning of those experiences. Moreover, phenomenology focuses on questions that are directly related to the meaning of the phenomenon being studied by researchers (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). In this study, researcher is aiming to deeply explore the phenomenon of Student Exchange and how Indonesian Exchange Student in University of Pecs in Hungary interpret the experiences and navigate the challenges and adaptation that arises from intercultural communication experiences from their Student Exchange program experience.

## **1.8.2 Research Subjects**

The subjects for this research are;

- A. Indonesian Exchange Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary (IISMA Vocational Students and Study Abroad Program
- B. Hungarian local students studying in University of Pecs in Hungary.

## **1.8.3 Type of Data**

Qualitative Data is the type of data for this research. Interview transcripts, data from observation, and textual data are included and used for this research.

## **1.8.4 Sources of Data**

### **1.8.4.1 Primary Data**

This study uses primary data, where information is obtained directly by researchers from first hand (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017;130), where in-depth interviews with Indonesian Exchange students and local Hungarian students studying in University of Pecs in Hungary were conducted so that it will help researchers to better understand the stages of intercultural communication and patterns of interaction between Indonesian Exchange students and International Students at the University of Pecs in Hungary.

### **1.8.4.2 Secondary Data**

This research will also use secondary data, where the data sources in this research will be obtained from previously existing sources (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017;130), such as previous journal and article results, references and citations to books, and any other relevant sources.

## **1.8.5 Data Collection Method**

In qualitative research, in-depth interviews are going to be conducted in order to get informations needed. In-depth interviews can be defined as interactions that are conducted by researcher in order to find out what the interviewee knows about an issue, find out and record what that person has encountered and thinks about it, and find out and note what relevance or interpretation it might have (Arthur et al., 2012). In order to acquire the helpful informations that is needed, In-depth interview requires asking the interviewee open-ended questions to get a more elaborative explanation from the research subject.

### **1.8.6 Data Analysis Technique**

The data analysis technique that will be used in this study is Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretive Phenomenological data analysis technique aims to understand how individuals comprehend their life experiences. IPA is suitable for this research because the author is examining the personal and subjective experiences of Indonesian Exchange Students in University of Pecs in Hungary handle intercultural communication. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is employed to better understand the lived experiences of Indonesian exchange students in Hungary through an analysis of their own reflections and adaptation processes. IPA is especially appropriate for this research as it enables the researcher to transcend mere description and instead investigate how students perceive, emotionally react to, and interpret their intercultural communication experiences. This study examines, using comprehensive interviews, both the external problems encountered by students and their internal cognitive and emotional processes as they manage cultural differences (Smith, 2008, as referenced in Frost, 2011).

According to Smith (2008, as cited in Frost, 2011), in the data analysis process using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, there are four stages consisting of;

a. Reading and Re-reading

In the first stage, the researcher will convert the audio recording of the interview into a written interview transcript. The researcher will read and understand the interview transcript to be able to deeply understand the participant's experience. Not only that, the researcher will also listen to the participant's answers from the interview recording continuously in order to better understand and comprehend their experience.

b. Initial Notting

After the researcher feels that he has understood and comprehended the transcript results from the participants, the next thing is to make initial notes by providing notes containing the author's understanding of the participant's transcript (explanatory notes/comments). By making initial notes (notes), the researcher tries to interpret the experiences of the participants.

c. Developing Emergent Themes

The next stage of adding explanatory comments/notes to participants' answers is to determine the energetic themes that emerge from the explanatory comments/notes that were previously created by the researcher.

d. Searching for Connection Across Emergent Themes

After obtaining hundreds of energetic themes from the previous stage, these themes were then sorted and grouped into superordinate themes which helped researchers to determine the most prominent and important aspects of these hundreds of themes.

e. Moving to the Next Case

After finding the subordinate theme, the researcher will repeat the first stage to the fourth stage for the next participant. This process is carried out until all transcripts have been successfully analyzed. This stage is a preventive step taken by the researcher to prevent mixing information from participants.

f. Looking for Pattern Across Cases

After all the transcripts from the participants had been successfully analyzed, the last thing the researcher did was to examine and select which patterns stood out the most.

### 1.8.7 Data Quality

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability are the test methods that will be applied for this research to ensure that the data collected is accurate and high qualities.

- a. **Credibility:** To ensure that the data collected in this research highly represents the view and opinion of Indonesian Exchange students and that the data can be trusted is by applying member checking method. This is done by confirming and making sure that the results of interviews and observations done with the participants (Indonesian Exchange Students) in University of Pecs Hungary highly accurate by asking the participants to do cross-checks or to ask for feedbacks.
- b. **Transferability:** The result of this research can be used and applied in a wider context, allowing it to be studied or applied by international students in other countries and universities.

- c. **Dependability:** Consistency in data is important for this research, both data that were collected from Indonesian Student Exchange students or International students in University of Pecs in Hungary. The data in this research are all collected in the same way for both parties (through in-depth interviews).
- d. **Confirmability:** The data collected in this research is bias-free, collected from the participants not from the researcher's subjective interpretation.