

Communication Phenomenon in the Divorce Process of Interpersonal Relationships in Donggala Regency

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine communication phenomena in the divorce process in interpersonal relationships in Donggala Regency. This study used a qualitative case study approach. The informant selection technique used purposive sampling. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews and direct observation. Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification were used for analysis. The results indicate that communication experiences consist of (a) interaction methods, where both partners interpret the behaviors they see and hear; (b) meaning-making, where they are more cautious in expressing their opinions and think twice about finding a new partner because they don't want to be hurt again by the same behavior; and (c) displaying several symbols such as loving themselves and their children more, maintaining distance from new acquaintances, speaking only sparingly, not easily disclosing previous marital problems to anyone, and prioritizing the nuclear family, namely children.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage or marriage is a form of worship that is bound by a noble covenant (*mitsaq ghalizh*). In marriage there are theological aspects, namely marriage as worship and legal aspects that are in accordance with religious provisions and following the laws and regulations of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 Article 1 it is explained that "marriage is an innate bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a household; a happy and eternal family based on the One Godhead (Masri, 2024). A happy family is something that is very coveted by married couples, when father, mother and child carry out their roles well such as fathers who take care of and earn a living for the family, mothers who support their husbands in raising families and children who obey the orders of their parents.

A household is said to be prosperous and happy if it has achieved success in its life, both material and spiritual. In Islam, the household begins in a marriage based on religious sharia so that it forms a small family consisting of husband, wife and children. A harmonious family is a dream for every individual in building a household. As a miniature citizen, a family is the core for the growth process of citizens (Masri, 2024). Good citizens start from a small family that is happy in a marriage.

Harmony in the family can be realized if there is associative communication, such as making social rules in groups where family members come together to create a good pattern of cooperation (Siregar, et al. 2023). However, on the other hand, if the communication becomes non-associative, conflicts will arise such as divorce caused by internal factors, namely differences of opinion and different life orientations between married couples and external factors in the form of things that can damage the relationship between husband and wife, such as the presence of a third person triggered by the will of the husband or wife who has an affair because they want to remarry or are not satisfied with their own partner (Suratno & Sri, 2023).

Regarding the divorce rate, in recent years Donggala Regency has been in the top five. In 2021 it was fourth with a total of 482 cases or 12%, in 2022 it was in third place with 562 cases at 14% and in 2023 it was fourth with a total of 403 cases at 11% (<https://sulteng.bps.go.id/>). The high divorce rate in Donggala Regency makes each victim experience various communication phenomena, depending on the factors that cause the divorce. The communication phenomenon is related to interpersonal events or events where both provide each other with stimulus and response, namely between a husband and wife who have gone through the divorce process.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Phenomenological Theory

Phenomenology comes from *phenomenon* which means visible reality. And *logos* means science. So phenomenology is a science oriented to obtain explanations from apparent reality. Phenomenology seeks to seek an understanding of how humans construct important meanings and concepts within the framework of intersubjectivity (our understanding of the world is shaped by our relationships with others) (Kuswarno, 2009:2). Phenomenology

assumes that people actively interpret their experiences and try to understand the world with their personal experiences (Littlejohn, 2009:57).

The phenomenological approach is a qualitative research tradition rooted in philosophy and psychology, and focuses on one's internal and conscious experiences. The phenomenological approach to the study of personality is centered on individual experience – his personal view of the world (Atkinson, in Abrar, 2015). The phenomenological approach uses a subjectivist mindset that does not only look at the problem of a visible phenomenon, but tries to explore the meaning behind each symptom (Kuswarno, 2009:7).

Communication Experience

The experience of family communication carried out through transactional communication involves the exchange of perceptions and expectations between family members which are then manifested in the behavior displayed by individuals. Communication in a transactional perspective examines how individuals interpret the behavior of their communication partners, verbally and nonverbally (Mulyana in Heryadi & Silvana, 2013: 96). Expectations about roles and relationships in marriage shape behavior in the interaction and communication of married couples, parents and children, as well as with the parents of the husband/wife. Therefore, how these role expectations are interpreted, communicated, and managed, it is important to create a fit between expectations and behaviors displayed.

Every event experienced will be an experience for the individual. The experience gained contains a certain information or message. This information will be processed into knowledge. So that various events experienced can increase individual knowledge. The communication experience referred to in this study is something experienced by individuals and related to the community aspect, including the process, symbol and meaning produced, as well as its encouragement to the action of communication experience in couples with different income is one of the focuses in this study (Abrar, 2015).

Interpersonal Communication

Widyanisa, et al. (2018) explained that interpersonal communication always includes two main elements, namely the content of the message and how the content of the message is said or done verbally or nonverbally. These two elements should be considered and carried out based on consideration of the situation, condition, and state of receiving the message. According to Dead, Barnlund (Harapan and Syarwani, 2014) describes interpersonal communication as "the behavior of people in face-to-face meetings in informal social situations and focused interactions through the exchange of reciprocal verbal and nonverbal cues."

METHODOLOGY

Types of research

The research uses qualitative methods. Bogdan and Taylor stated that qualitative methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words from people and observed behaviors (Murdiyanto, 2020). The data is about the phenomenon of Communication in the Divorce Process of Interpersonal Relationships in Donggala Regency.

Research Subject

The subjects of this study are informants selected through *purposive sampling*, which is a sampling technique with certain considerations. Certain considerations referred to here are, the person who is considered to know the most what we expect or maybe he is a ruler so that it makes it easier for researchers to explore the social object/situation being studied (Sugiyono, 2015). The informants in this study are husband and wife couples who have been married for less than 5 years 2 people, over 10-15 years 2 people and over 20 years 2 people.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection technique in this qualitative research is divided into two, namely:

1. Observations

Observation according to Soemitro in Subagyo (2011) is a form of systematic observation of social phenomena with a focus on psychic symptoms. The goal is to record data on the phenomenon of Communication in the Divorce Process of Interpersonal Relationships in Donggala Regency.

2. In-Depth Interviewing

The researcher uses a planned-unstructured interview method where the researcher does not use a systematic format or standard rules but the guidelines used in the interview are only in the form of outlines of the problems to be asked (A. Muri, 2014). Interviews were conducted with husband and wife couples in the divorce process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis according to the view of Miles and Huberman is cited by Subagyo (2011) that it consists of three flows of activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn/verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marriage is a sacred bond for two people who have been legal based on religious rules and legal rules that apply in this Indonesian country. The marriage that is lived by the two people has certainly been agreed upon based on a commitment that is agreed upon jointly even though it is not unclear, such as not committing verbal and physical violence in the household, not cheating, respecting each other, understanding the situation, attention and so on. According to Oktarina et al. (2015:76) explained that marriage is an innate bond

between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the aim of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on the One Godhead. With the existence of a marriage bond, the purpose of the marriage bond is to achieve a family that is sacred, full of affection, virtue and mutual support, building, fostering, and maintaining kinship relationships. The implementation of marriage requires a marriage institution that regulates the relationship between husband and wife juridically and religiously so that the relationship is legal according to religion, law, and does not violate the norms of customary law that prevail in society.

Affection is part of the obligation by the husband to his wife and vice versa. Affection should also be given to children who are also part of the nuclear family. If the affection in a family has been lost, it is certain that the household will be destroyed, separation occurs and sacrifices many things ranging from time, material, thoughts, feelings, to the treasure that is so precious is children. To be able to apply *kaish sayang* well, it is necessary to implement effective interpersonal communication where husband and wife give each other a response in accordance with the stimulus sent. Basically, in a household, as the saying goes, love should not be one-sided, love should be balanced between husband and wife. The balance of love can be found in the communication process through interpersonal relationships. Widyanisa, et al. (2018) explained that interpersonal communication always includes two main elements, namely the content of the message and how the content of the message is said or done verbally or nonverbally. These two elements should be considered and carried out based on consideration of the situation, condition, and state of receiving the message. According to Dead, Barnlund (Harapan and Syarwani, 2014) describes interpersonal communication as "the behavior of people in face-to-face meetings in informal social situations and focused interactions through the exchange of reciprocal verbal and nonverbal cues."

The exchange of verbal and non-verbal cues carried out by husband and wife couples is expected to make the relationship more harmonious so that a household that exchanges affection is fostered. However, on the other hand, if the agreed commitment is violated so severely without showing conscious behavior, then the process of separation is often carried out or called divorce.

Divorce is an action taken by a husband and wife when they do not find a solution to the problems faced in the family. Divorce that occurs in a married couple relationship is caused by internal factors and external factors. The internal factors referred to here are differences in opinions and different life orientations between married couples and external factors in the form of things that can damage the marital relationship, such as the presence of a third person triggered by the will of the husband or wife who has an affair because they want to remarry or are not satisfied with their own partner (Suratno & Budiyo, 2023).

Many people think that divorce is not a solution, but based on the researcher's frugality, for now divorce is the only solution if the problems faced in the domestic relationship are very heavy. There are many news spread in *the online* media just because there is pressure from external parties not to divorce,

so the wife ends her life by suicide or is killed by her husband. So it is not wrong to say that divorce is the solution.

There are many factors that cause husband and wife couples to divorce, including due to parental intervention in children's domestic affairs, interventions that also make parents verbally insulting and husbands who are more protective of parents and use domestic violence against pregnant wives. Furthermore, other factors due to the economy, infidelity, not being able to respect each other and inability to manage emotions during fights. Tragic events experienced by victims in domestic relationships are not only physically damaging but also psychological conditions can be stressful. The life journey experienced by a divorced husband and wife will provide a dynamic of diverse communication experiences with each other. Every event experienced will be an experience for the individual. The experience gained contains a certain information or message. This information will be processed into knowledge. So that various events experienced can increase individual knowledge (Abrar, 2015). The knowledge gained by every divorce victim can certainly be a life lesson to be more careful in behaving and behaving.

According to (Hafiar, 2012) communication experience consists of several components that are interrelated with each other, namely (a) Interaction. In the findings of this study, to be able to establish a relationship between husband and wife, the initial interaction carried out was by dating and matchmaking. In the process of this interaction, they gave each other a positive interpretation so that they agreed to proceed to a more serious stage, namely marriage. In the domestic relationship that is lived, the husband and wife couple continue to interact with each other, which then both provide interpretations of the behavior seen and heard. Of course, not only positive, but in this study so many negative things were interpreted that it caused the two to divorce.

A communication experience resulting from the interaction between individuals is a message that produces a process of various meanings through certain symbols. Communication experiences will be categorized by individuals through the characteristics of the experience based on the meaning obtained where the experience refers to something experienced and the phenomenon experienced will be classified into certain experiences. A statement that describes that each experience that a person has different characteristics with the texture and structure that exists in each experience (Putri & Tina 2022)

(b). Meaning, in communication activities, a person will get meaning. Past communication experiences can influence the way they think about setting goals and making decisions in the future. The behavior shown by divorce victims is certainly very diverse, they are more careful in expressing their opinions, thinking repeatedly to find a new partner, because they do not want to be hurt again by the same behavior. Life learning in the past is used as a life stimulus so that it can be interpreted well for a life that is smooth by not being rash in deciding something simple and complex. Be careful in speaking and be careful in trusting others, and love your family more, namely your beloved child. It is also part of the meaning in a communication event that has been experienced before.

(c). Symbols, in translating meanings, one will express them by using words, signs, and gestures or what is commonly called symbols. In this study, the experience of communication related to symbols is seen from the way they behave, such as loving themselves and their children more, keeping a distance from new people, talking enough, not easily expressing household problems to anyone and prioritizing the nuclear family, namely children. People who are injured are generally more upset and can develop well compared to those who become perpetrators by wasting their spouse and showing harsh words in marriage which of course results in conflict.

According to Scanzoi in Fathia, et al. 2023, that areas of conflict in marriage include several issues. Problems that often arise are finances (problems and their use), children's education (for example, number of children and discipline cultivation), friendship relationships, relationships with extended families, recreation (types, quality and quantity), activities that are not approved by the spouse, division of labor in the household, and various kinds of problems (religion, politics, sex, communication in marriage and various kinds of trivial problems) (Fathia, et al. 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the research, it was concluded that divorce experienced by a husband and wife in Donggala Regency was an interpersonal event with the use of messages that could damage the marital relationship, such as physical insult, economic factors, Domestic Violence, in-laws' intervention, infidelity, disrespect, *slient treatment* and does not give attention in the form of affection. The life experiences that have been obtained are part of the communication experience consisting of:

- (a) The way to act by giving each other positive interpretations so that they agree to proceed to a more serious stage, namely marriage. In the domestic relationship that is lived, the husband and wife couple continue to interact with each other, which then both provide interpretations of the behavior seen and heard. Of course, not only positive, but in this study so many negative things were interpreted that it caused the two to divorce.
- (b) Producing meanings related to the behavior shown by divorce victims is certainly very diverse, they are more careful in expressing their opinions, thinking repeatedly to find a new partner, because they do not want to be hurt again by the same behavior. Be careful in speaking and be careful in trusting others, and love your family more, namely your beloved child. It is also part of the meaning in a communication event that has been experienced before.
- (c) Showing several symbols, which can be seen from the way they behave, such as loving themselves and their children more, keeping a distance from new acquaintances, talking enough, not easily expressing previous household problems to anyone and prioritizing the nuclear family, namely children. The injured person is generally symbolically motivated to get up and can develop more.

FURTHER STUDY

Further studies are recommended to expand the scope of this research by involving a larger and more diverse sample across different regions, cultures, and social backgrounds. Comparative studies between Donggala Regency and other regions could provide deeper insights into how cultural norms, religious values, and local communication patterns influence interpersonal dynamics during the divorce process. Additionally, future research may adopt longitudinal approaches to examine how communication patterns evolve before, during, and after divorce, offering a more comprehensive understanding of relational changes over time.

Moreover, subsequent research could integrate mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to measure the impact of specific communication factors—such as conflict management styles, emotional expression, and mediation processes—on divorce outcomes. Exploring the roles of third parties, including family members, religious leaders, and legal mediators, may also enrich the analysis of interpersonal communication phenomena. Such studies would contribute to the development of more effective communication-based interventions aimed at reducing conflict and supporting healthier post-divorce relationships.

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