
LEARNING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AND ITS URGENCY FOR STUDENTS IN TIMOR LESTE

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Indonesian has a very important role because it is related to Indonesia's position in the world arena which is increasingly important. In entering the global era and with the opening of the labor market in Indonesia, opportunities are wide open for foreigners to enter various jobs. Teaching Indonesian for East Timorese students has different characteristics than teaching Indonesian for native speakers of Indonesian. Learning Indonesian as a foreign language is built and developed specifically in accordance with the characteristics of foreign students who study it. Indonesian has become a means of conveying information as well as a means of reflecting the culture of its speakers. By understanding and studying Indonesian in depth, East Timorese students can get to know the culture and patterns of life of the Indonesian people more closely. Language can be a bridge of communication for nations of different countries and cultures. In an effort to develop more established intelligence and personality for East Timorese students, enrichment of cultural insight in the international scope needs to be done. The most strategic cultural enrichment can be done through language lecture activities, one of which is Indonesian language lectures.

Keywords: learning, Indonesian language, students, Timor Leste

LEARNING INDONESIAN FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Teaching Indonesian as a foreign language is not only carried out abroad but also carried out in Indonesia (Suyitno, Susanto, Kamal, & Fawzi, 2017). Hoed (1995: 1) states that the teaching of Indonesian as a foreign language in Indonesia is not just born, but is the result of a spirit among a number of interested people and lovers of Indonesian culture, who aim to master the Indonesian language and understand Indonesian Culture. This enthusiasm was also felt by universities in Indonesia, namely the need to organize Indonesian teaching as a foreign language. A number of universities that organize the program include Gajah Mada University, Padjadjaran University, Christian University of Satya Wacana, State University of Malang, University of Indonesia, and several private universities. Formally, the teaching of

Indonesian as a foreign language was implemented in Indonesia since 1972 (Mulyono, 1991).

Lately, the teaching of Indonesian as a foreign language in Indonesia has a very important role, because it is related to Indonesia's position in the world which is increasingly important. In entering the global era and with the opening of the labor market in Indonesia, opportunities are wide open for foreigners to enter various jobs. This encourages them to learn Indonesian so they can communicate better with officials, colleagues, employees, or the general public in Indonesia (Sammeng, 1995).

Teaching Indonesian for foreign students has different characteristics from teaching Indonesian for native speakers of Indonesian. Indonesian foreign students are a foreign student who has a cultural background that is different from the language culture he learns. In addition, most Indonesian foreign students in Indonesia are mature students. In accordance with this reality, Wojowasito (1976: 38) explains that the most important difference between teaching Indonesian as foreign language and teaching Indonesian in general is (1) Indonesian as foreign language does not integrate children into their environment, (2) Indonesian as foreign language is almost learned in adulthood or when someone has mastered a number of structures from his first language, and (3) Indonesian as foreign language is processed outside his own system, from systems that are usually completely different (Wojowasito, 1976: 38).

In learning languages, adult students are different from children's students. These differences are caused by many factors including age, cognitive ability, attitude, motivation, and personality (Ellis, 1986). With these differences, Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) suggest that adult students progress faster when compared to children. However, the progress is only related to morphology and syntax, not for pronunciation. In line with this opinion, Oyama (1976) conveyed the results of his research, which explained that (1) the beginning of learning age does not affect the order of language acquisition, (2) the beginning of learning age affects learning speed, and (3) duration of exposure and early learning age affect the level of success. Strengthening the findings of these studies, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) suggest that adults seem to progress faster than children in the field of morphology and syntax, at least at the beginning of

the learning period. In the end, children are more successful than adults in acquiring language, although not always faster.

In connection with the above opinion, Krashen, Tracy, and Terrell (1983) show that adults excel at the speed of acquisition at an early stage because adults get more understandable input, are able to regulate periods of silence, and have broader general knowledge. Meanwhile, the final advantage of children in the acquisition of the second language is because of attitudinal factors, especially the strengthening of the attitude filter in the period approaching puberty. However, it does not rule out the possibility that there are also adult students who can finally reach the ability to approach native speakers.

Foreign students who study Indonesian come from various countries and have diverse academic backgrounds. They have a language and cultural background that is different from the Indonesian language and culture. In addition, they also have a varied background in Indonesian language knowledge and skills. The learning styles and strategies also vary and depend on their respective cultures.

Learning Indonesian as a foreign language is built and developed specifically in accordance with the characteristics of foreign students who study it. Learning programs, the substance of Indonesian language materials, learning media, and learning strategies are specifically designed to make foreign students interested and motivated to learn Indonesian. Learning materials and learning practices that have a high frequency in fulfilling Indonesian language communication needs are important factors that color the variety of Indonesian as a foreign language. Cultural topics needed by foreign students in language life in the community are important materials that need to be considered in the selection of teaching materials for Indonesian.

Foreign students who learn Indonesian have their own culture, making it possible for cultural diffusion. Cultural diffusion can be a source of problems for language learners if they lack cultural understanding and cannot accept cultural differences. Therefore, in learning Indonesian as a foreign language, great attention to learning management to avoid cultural conflict is needed. By quoting Lentz's opinion (Sharma and Jung, 1985), it can be revealed that language students with international insight have different characters from language learners who only have national

insights. Indonesian foreign students have the following characteristics: (a) not prejudiced against people from other countries, (b) not very antagonistic to ethnic and racial groups, (c) more enthusiastic about liberal and social views, and (d)) more sympathetic to people in unfavorable circumstances. Meanwhile, Smith and Rosen (Sharma and Jung, 1985) revealed that individuals with only national insight are narrow-minded and tend to show resistance to others.

In language learning, cultural background is an important factor that must be considered by language teachers. Cultural differences are closely related to learning styles and how they communicate. In terms of intercultural communication, there are many studies that examine patterns of communication between countries, between ethnicities, and between races (Chitty, 2010; Sharifian, 2010; Panggabean, Murniatia & Tjitra, 2013). In fact, Karomani (2017) has reviewed communication between communities in the same culture. All of these studies show that culture is an important factor in communication activities.

INDONESIAN LANGUAGE: THE GATE TO ENTERING INDONESIA

Law number 24 of 2009 article 44 (1) mandates that "the Government improves the function of Indonesian Language into an international language in stages, systematically, and sustainably". What is meant by "international language" is a language used as a means of communication between nations. By quoting the opinion of Deputy Head of Asian Languages and Cultures (ALC), who also came from the Association of National Institute of Education Singapore Professor Hadijah Bte Rahmat, Zubaidah (2013) revealed that the Indonesian language has the opportunity to become an international language association accompanying English. That possibility can be realized because currently 400 million Indonesian speakers are spread over 156 countries. Under these conditions, the Indonesian language has a great opportunity to become an international social language.

Language and culture have a very close relationship. There is a theory that says that language is part of the scope of culture. There is also a theory that says that

language and culture have an equal relationship with the same high position. Masinambouw (1985) explains that language and culture are two systems that are "attached" to humans because culture is a system that regulates human interaction, while language or culture is a system that functions as a means of sustaining the facility (Chaer, 1995: 217--218). Language and culture have a very close bond that is likened to a coin, namely one side is a linguistic system and the other side is a cultural system (Silzer: 1990 via Chaer, 1995: 218). The close relationship between the two systems, speakers of different languages view the world differently as long as the language they use is different (Wardhaugh, 1986: 212--213).

Indonesian is a cultural and communicating vehicle for Indonesian people. Indonesian people have Indonesian language and use it in the lives of individuals and communities in a national and state community. Through Indonesian, the Indonesian people develop their culture and build their communities and enhance the positive image of their culture to the international community. In this case, the Indonesian language became a means of delivering information as well as a means of reflecting the culture of its speaking community. By understanding and studying Indonesian in depth, other nations can find out more about the culture and patterns of life of the Indonesian people. Language can be a bridge of communication for nations of different countries and cultures. To build a positive image in the lives of other peoples, the language used in community communication needs to be well understood and mastered.

In the act of communication, a language speaker must adhere to cultural norms. Language procedures must be in accordance with the norms that live in society, the place of life, and the use of the language. Language behavior or also called language ethics has a close relationship with the selection of language codes, social norms, and cultural systems that apply in one society. This language ethic will "regulate" (a) what we must say at certain times and circumstances to certain participants regarding the social and cultural status of the community; (b) what kinds of languages are most reasonable for us to use in certain sociolinguistic and cultural situations; (c) when and how we use to turn to talk and interrupt other people's conversations; (d) when we must be silent; (e) how our sound and physical qualities in speaking are (Chaer, 1995: 226--227).

Mastery of Indonesian by foreigners is able to enhance the positive image of a nation in cultural communication in Indonesia. This is based on the fact that the ability to understand and communicate in Indonesian will make it easier for foreigners to adapt to the culture and environment of Indonesian society so that they can get to know Indonesian culture properly. By learning languages, foreigners can know the 'world' of the language society they are learning, both about social, cultural and political conditions in the community. Indonesian is the gateway to entering the "world" of Indonesia or the main means for foreigners to understand society and culture in Indonesia. Learning Indonesian basically also learns to understand Indonesian nation civilization (<http://64.203.71.11/kompas-cetak/0707/19/humaniora/3698504.htm>, accessed January 5, 2008).

LANGUAGE MASTERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELF POTENTIAL

Language has an important role in personality development. A mature person is a person who has adequate understanding and insight related to self-needs in facing environmental demands. A person's personal maturity will appear on their behavior in social interaction, namely interaction in communication. The amount of one's knowledge will be seen in the number of languages they master. Therefore, the more languages mastered by someone, the more knowledgeable they will be about the ins and outs of the life of the people who own the language.

Language acquisition is one of the efforts in developing intelligence, character, and personality. People who master the language actively, both oral and written, will be able to express their understanding and abilities systematically, logically, and acceptably. Academically, mastery of the language is a marker of the ability to organize one's character from someone who is related to the potential thinking power, emotions, desires, and expectations. Academic language skills can further be expressed in various forms of academic assignments, such as writing articles, making project proposals, writing reports, and making job applications.

People who master the language well are able to understand the concepts, thoughts, and culture of others from the speakers of the language. This ability will be able to encourage someone to establish their character and personality through a

synergistic thought process with the community that owns the language. In this context, someone will be able to develop new concepts based on the experiences and new experiences that they have gained. This has an impact on the competence of someone who becomes more intelligent and creative in utilizing the situation, stimulus, and new experiences that he has gained.

Good language competence supports a person's potential to be more creative in their work. Mastery of language which is supported by personality and high moral allows everyone to constantly explore and develop the socio-cultural potential that surrounds them. This competency enables a person to have a high sensitivity to utilize the wealth of culture, art, science and technology, and natural wealth to become a new source of creativity. The impact is that they become more intelligent, personable, and able to make this nation quality without losing its cultural roots.

In an effort to develop more established intelligence and personality for East Timorese students, enrichment of cultural insight in the international scope needs to be done. The most strategic cultural enrichment can be done through language lecture activities, one of which is Indonesian language lectures. Through lectures in Indonesian, students are provided with Indonesian language skills which are also indirectly taught mindset, communication patterns, and patterns of politeness in Indonesian. Thus, students will be more familiar with the communication culture and academic culture of the Indonesian people. This understanding is an important provision that can facilitate academic communication for students who will conduct research or continue their studies in Indonesia.

As a personality developer, lectures in Indonesian are directed at the ability to speak good and right. In carrying out its functions, the Indonesian language lecture is intended to (a) develop scientific communication skills in various oral and written media, (b) develop academic abilities, (c) develop various attitudes, such as scientific attitudes, paradigmatic attitudes in developing thinking patterns, and the learned attitude in actualizing their learning outcomes, (d) developing language intelligence, (e) developing personality especially creating new creativity related to experience, knowledge, potential, and new situations it faces, as well as the ability to express it, (f) developing interpersonal communication skills and nations so as to strengthen their

personal development, and (g) foster intercultural identity and appreciation so as to strengthen nationalism.

PEDAGOGICAL NORM OF LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR FOREIGN SPEAKERS

One of the problems in learning a foreign language is the gap between the first language and the target language to be learned. This often occurs because of a lack of knowledge of the target language by foreign students. In general, it can be said that the further the gap, the more difficult the learning process is; and the closer the gap is, the easier the learning process will be. This is in line with Grabe (1986) 'statement that the problem of learning foreign languages arises as a result of linguistic and sociocultural differences from the first language and target language. In a situation like this, the use of the right approach and the selection of functional teaching materials have a very important role in determining the success of the learning process of Indonesian as a foreign language. Therefore the use of authentic material (authentic-materials) will greatly help students, especially those who do not know the target language at all (Heritaningsih, 2007).

Differences in the language and culture of foreign students often cause complexity in the selection of Indonesian language material to be taught. In mastering the second language and understanding the culture of the target language, the learning strategies of foreign students are strongly influenced by the first language and the background of their native culture. The differences in language and culture are often the cause of difficulties and errors in learning a second language or a foreign language. From this opinion, it can be said that the acquisition of a second language and understanding of the culture of the target language are characterized by the inclusion of the first language in the target language spoken and the existence of cultural interference in language behavior (note Ellis, 1986). In this condition, language instructors must be careful and wise in choosing more varied material using more creative learning strategies.

Language learning depends on the needs of students. To meet the needs of these students, language learning needs to be done informal learning activities in the

classroom and real communication activities in the community. Through a variety of learning activities, language learners can obtain more complex language experiences. Language students not only master language knowledge but can also transfer their language knowledge in real communication in the community. Multilingual development is manifested as 'translingual' (García & Li Wei, 2014) or 'translingual practice' (Canagarajah, 2013).

Foreign students who study Indonesian have diverse learning goals. In general, they learn Indonesian in order to be able to speak Indonesian fluently and get to know Indonesian culture closely. Indonesian language fluency is needed by them because (a) they take a program about Indonesia at their original university, (b) they will conduct research in Indonesia, (c) they will work in Indonesia, (d) they will research Indonesian problems, and (e) they will stay in Indonesia for a long time. The description of the learning objectives has implications for the preparation of learning materials that are suitable for that purpose. Meyer & Benavot (2013) implicitly state that educational goals, including language learning goals, are often controlled by student needs or the needs of partner institutions.

Understanding learning goals is an important factor that needs to be considered in the selection of teaching materials. In this case, the organizers of the Indonesian language education program have the authority to determine the right material to be taught to students. Comprehensive consideration of student needs is a major problem in language learning. In such cases, the practice of the institution's first program of cooperation, vision, and mission (which sends students) is an important factor for making decisions in determining the direction of language learning policies (Byrnes, 2012). Language learning often faces challenges when there are differing perceptions among inexperienced practitioners (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2011).

In developing learning material, instructors need to understand the principles of planning teaching materials to be developed. The principles of designing the learning materials include (1) determining the activities that will be carried out by the teacher, the implementation of learning time, and the strategy for implementing learning, (2) determining to learn objectives (3) developing alternative learning strategies, (4) analyzing important information supporting learning activities; and (5) drafting

programs and informing the draft to interested parties (compare Sagala, 2003). Furthermore, Rosyada (2003) explained that in order to create a good learning plan and that supports an effective and efficient learning process, teachers need to understand the elements of learning preparation, which includes analysis of student needs, goals to be achieved, various strategies that relevant, and correct evaluation criteria. Shambaugh, as quoted by Sanjaya (2009) explains that through learning planning activities, teachers can analyze and meet the needs of foreign students in learning Indonesian.

The variety and complexity of language teaching materials need to be adapted to the competencies and cultural backgrounds of foreign students who study them. For foreign students, Indonesian is a second language or a foreign language because the language is learned after they master their first language. In the language learner, a system of culture, language potential, and learning styles have been developed that strongly influences their patterns and strategies in mastering the target language they are learning (Leung & Scarino, 2016). For this reason, several principles that need to be considered in determining language teaching materials are (a) adequacy: able to meet their learning needs, (b) practical: potential to be trained through learning practices, (c) authentic: used in real communication in the community, and (d) functional: able to develop competencies to practice in understanding patterns and developing understanding of Indonesian.

There are several aspects that need to be considered in choosing language learning materials, namely (1) aspects of learning objectives, namely for the sake of whether students learn languages: whether for mere communication, research, translation, or for special interests relating to the profession or assignment - its duties, (2) aspects of practicality and communicativeness descriptively, not normative BI-based (grammar-based), (3) facilitation aspects, referring to quantity and productivity that facilitate Indonesian-language creativity, (4) flexibility aspects, (5) aspects meaningfulness, and (6) aspects of diversity. Duff (2008) explains that the criteria that need to be considered in the selection of learning materials are conformity between the level of student ability, goals to be achieved, and interests or preferences of students. Therefore, to plan learning materials that guarantee students have language literacy

skills, the development of teaching materials that are in accordance with student characteristics, learning goals, and learning needs to be developed.

The development and structuring of language teaching materials need to be adapted to the needs and level of ability of the students. Language material developed in language learning must be able to meet the needs of students to communicate naturally, both now and in the future and communication (Slattery, 2003).

In language learning, the introduction of grammar material is an important part. This is intended to develop the ability of Indonesian foreign students towards the use of correct and acceptable language, learning that utilizes grammar training is needed. This grammar training is intended to equip students about using the correct structure of the Indonesian language. Ghabool, Edwina, & Kashef (2012) explain that the difficulties of foreign students in learning languages, especially in writing, are related to the use of correct grammar, which includes grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and some other basic aspects of writing.

CONCLUSIONS

Most people in Timor-Leste are able to speak Indonesian, even though they need to be strengthened compared to taking education in other countries which requires them to learn from scratches such as learning English and Portuguese. The quality of higher education in Indonesia is not much different from universities abroad including in Asia, Europe, America, and Australia. Even some major universities such as Gajah Mada University, University of Indonesia and the Bandung Institute of Technology have been able to compete and enter the World Class University ranking based on 2017 webometric. Education in Indonesia is still relatively cheaper than taking part in education in countries such as Europe, America, and Australia. The people of Timor-Leste have many cultural similarities with Indonesia when compared to the people of countries such as Europe, America, and Australia. This makes students from Timor-Leste more quickly adapt to the Indonesian environment and society and avoid cultural shock which often causes the learning motivation of foreign students to decline.

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