

Cultural Engagement in Teaching and Learning Foreign Language

Rustan Santaria

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo

Email: rustan_santaria@iainpalopo.ac.id

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the foreign language learning in Indonesia, starting at the junior high school level from grade one to tertiary level. But it does not show development and progress and meaningful effectiveness. This research applies the method of autoethnography. Data collected through the retrospection of the author's personal experience and the narrative expressions of the experiences of others were analyzed using descriptive - qualitative methods and techniques. The results of the analysis of this study indicate that although education and learning of foreign languages have a long duration in Indonesia, they do not show satisfactory results. The reason is that foreign language learning is assumed to be mere knowledge. Not a practical skill that requires cultural experience taught in the target languages. Therefore, it is recommended that education policymakers and teachers in Indonesia should make various efforts to consider the component of practical skills in the use of foreign languages in the form of cultural engagement.

Keywords: *cultural involvement, learning strategies, foreign language.*

A. Introduction

It needs to be questioned whether someone who wants to communicate fluently using a foreign language should study linguistics first, in this case, the study has spoken grammar, or simply learn how to communicate by trying to use the language he imitates from the language user community or teacher. However, it does not mean that grammatical knowledge should be ignored but needs to be considered and harmonized with the need for communicative achievement as a functional objective of language. Language learning is not just knowledge but more than that, language is a skill that has the function of transferring culture, in this case, language functions as a medium to express ideas, knowledge, feelings, perceptions, and attitudes towards the interlocutor or reader. This article attempts to describe the strategic position of involving cultural factors in foreign language learning. From the author's observations during becoming a foreign language education and learning practitioner, it can be revealed in this paper that cultural involvement is an alternative teaching communicative language that can trigger the acceleration of language acquisition and the accuracy of speech act for students of foreign languages.

B. Research Methodology

Data collection and analysis in this study used the autoethnography method. The autoethnography method is a method that seeks to systematically reveal (graphy) the facts of personal experience (autho) and cultural experiences (ethno) of a writer or a researcher as well as the experiences of other persons as stated and quoted by Ellis et al. (2004), and Holman Jones, (2015), explains that "Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno). "Likewise, what they quoted from Spry, (2001) that this approach is a reliable and challenging method for conducting research on personal experiences or reviewing the experiences of others". "(This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others." ... A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. "As a method, autoethnography combines the characteristics of ethnography and autobiography. When writing an autobiography, a writer tries to selectively recollect his experience and then pour it into written form. Similarly, a writer can also conduct interviews or obtain documents or data from other people's experiences such as notes, photos, journals, recordings, or diaries as a separate part to be written into an article of autoethnography, so that autobiography and ethnography are both processes and products that describe past experiences.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Realities of Foreign Language Learning in Indonesia

A person's communication ability is determined by his ability to manage the cultural phenomena of a language that he uses with the assumption that linguistic knowledge of a language does not guarantee a person's fluency in communicating effectively in a certain language or foreign language user community. Take one example a decade ago, there was a professor of linguistics in the city of Mammiri Wind, Makassar, once in a linguistics lecture at the UNHAS Postgraduate Program, he frankly stated that although he had lived for a number of years in the city of Ujung Pandang he had absolutely not able to communicate fluently in the Makassar language. But in theory, there are irregularities because apart from being a linguist, there is no question about linguistic analysis. In addition, he was a longtime resident in the Makassar language user community.

However, there is one thing that is forgotten, whether he feels the need to be involved culturally in the Makassar language user community or not. That is, to have the maximum ability to communicate using a language that requires mental involvement in the realm of the spoken language culture. Of course, it will come true if someone has a high desire or interest to use a particular language. In addition, there is another thesis put forward by James Shewmaker. This data is the result of the author's notes when attending the lecture of James Shewmaker, a lecturer writer for the Sociolinguistics course at the Postgraduate Program at Hasanussin University Makassar in 1996. He revealed that language would not develop if humans were not cultured and vice versa culture would not develop if the language did not develop. Thus, it is time for the foreign language learning paradigm to be changed to emphasize more affective and psychomotor aspects and involve the cultural factors of language learning compared to the cognitive aspects, in this case, excessive emphasis on grammatical knowledge.

Benjamin Lee Worf, through his Worfian Hypothesis, concluded that the environment and the thoughts and places of language users determine the differences in the meaning of the expressed language. Indonesian language learning for foreign language users or conversely the pursuit of foreign languages for Indonesian language users must also if we consider the above hypotheses relevant then we cannot ignore the context of Indonesian culture or vice versa. However, the discussion of culture in learning Indonesian for foreign language users or learning foreign languages for students who use Indonesian has not yet reached a strategic position. In this paper, the issue of cultural involvement in learning Indonesian for students who use foreign languages or learning foreign languages for students who use the Indonesian Language is deliberately raised to trigger further discussion. One thing that is considered often forgotten in learning Indonesian for foreign language users or Indonesian language learning for foreign language users is the cultural factor for certain foreign language users or the culture of foreign language users is a foreign culture for Indonesian language users. Students learning Indonesian for foreign language users or learning foreign languages for Indonesian sometimes experience cultural

conflicts when they are involved in situations or new cultural situations or learning foreign languages. Of course, this is natural, often even considered necessary for all people in their efforts to master Indonesian or vice versa for foreign language students.

Here the author wants to express a reality that is seen in the experience of learning Indonesian in Perth, Australia, in a private school. The school included Indonesian subjects in its curriculum. The same thing applies to several High School levels there. Even at the elementary school level students have begun to be introduced to other foreign languages such as Japanese and Chinese. The thing that caught the attention of the writer was that, although the teacher was a Singaporean, the props displayed were full of a room measuring about 7 x 10 square meters, specifically for Indonesian language lessons, but cultural objects displayed on the cabinets, tables and walls classrooms besides a number of computer units, all with Indonesian nuances. This fact is the result of the author's observations and interpersonal communication with a Singaporean Indonesian language teacher at South Perth Senior High School, WA Australia, in 2006. On the other hand, immigrant elementary school students who have just arrived in Perth, Western Australia follow their parents, in the process of learning English, they are not emphasized on how the language is learned but how language is used in the form of cultural procession practices for example how the teacher invites (not just teaches) them to count, jump, paint pictures or color paintings, cook, dance, sing, party, play sports, go sightseeing, say hello, apologize, praise, ask questions, respect the opinions of friends, give advice, discuss, then lent a picture book from school to read at home according to their level of ability.

Another example that draws the attention of the writer who can become an Indonesian language learning technique for foreign language users and is a good enough model to be a role play such as how foreign students sell herbal medicine in Indonesian language users or play a role as a sweeper on the streets. This same model has been shown on national private television in Indonesia. The entertainment element will seem to encourage student learning. And vice versa foreign language students for Indonesian language users can play a role in the form of drama if they do not visit the native language user country of a particular foreign language. For the context of Indonesian culture, educators and students will find it difficult to draw a line of understanding of Indonesian culture because, in this context, there are those who consider that Indonesian culture itself has no form. Indonesian culture is only the culture of each tribe in Indonesia. Indonesia is not only Java, Manado, Batak, or Bugis. This makes it a bit difficult for educators and students in learning Indonesian for foreign speakers. No need to bother to define this Indonesian culture. What is important to note in this case is the direction of thought and practice of the daily behavior of Indonesian people which ultimately shapes the terminology and concept of 'Indonesian culture'. Some people also consider that culture cannot be taught in language learning. So why does the cultural component need to be undone and discussed in culture on learning Indonesian for foreign speakers or learning foreign languages for Indonesian users? The answer is brief: we have never fully tried to teach culture, but to raise awareness of Indonesian culture or awareness of foreign cultures of

the target language: everything related to Indonesia or certain foreign cultures, becomes important and strategic if foreign languages are to be taught more effectively and have a level of accuracy use of higher languages

2. Cultural Component

Students' awareness of learning foreign languages for Indonesian language users or learning Indonesian for foreign language users about Indonesian culture will greatly assist students in actualizing themselves correctly in the context of using Indonesian or foreign languages in the opposite context. One classic example that is often used is the questions: where are you from, where are you going? What age are you? how much is the salary? already married? How many children? etc. which often causes students to be surprised by the Indonesian curiosity of other people's business. On the other hand, in the culture of foreign language users, especially in English, things like this are taboo in being disclosed to interlocutors who are not yet known. Furthermore, the following tuturan (speech) was rated as exceeding the limits of reasonableness: "wow, they are very fat and their children are cute" which has a positive meaning in Indonesia but instead contains negative connotations in the concept of western culture. Questions in the first group and praise speeches in the second group should be understood as part of the language function that must be explained in a cultural context and cannot be directly translated into the language used by students just like that. Not infrequently encountered a variety of complaints about how much Indonesian curiosity in interfering with other people's affairs (intervention), in the context of communication using the Indonesian language. This shows how minimal the discussion of cultural factors in learning Indonesian for foreign language users or conversely learning foreign languages for Indonesian language users. In such a context, as implied in questions and speech, cultural factors can be introduced to students, at least as a cultural record, where the teacher can touch on problems such as this and can even begin on the first day of Indonesian language learning for foreign language users or otherwise learning Foreign languages for Indonesian users begin, for example through the topic of greetings. Indonesian language learning curriculum and syllabus for foreign language users or foreign language learning for Indonesian language users, Indonesian language learning needs to be included in this cultural factor as a complement to Indonesian language learning for foreign language users or vice versa foreign language learning for Indonesian language users and on the side, Other teachers should also have knowledge and experience about Indonesian culture. Likewise, foreign language teachers must master certain cultural forms of foreign languages as the target language they teach. In the context of involving and understanding culture in learning Indonesian in foreign language users, it has become an annual conference in a neighboring country, Australia.

In 2005, a conference attended by practitioners of Indonesian education and learning in Australia including Indonesian language teachers from various schools, colleges, and military, gathered at Curtin University to discuss how the role of Indonesian bridges the political and cultural system between Indonesia

and Australia when the relationship between the two countries is tenuous. The Keynote Speaker, Wimar Witular, a former spokesman for the presidency of the Republic of Indonesia, in his speech, revealed a distinctive nuance of Australian cultural nuances, he said: "I came to Australia yesterday" - "I didn't come to die" [read: today] The expression made the participants laughed and the seminar room full of conference participants became noisy. This shows how strong the distinctive culture of a language is to be involved to attract attention while being an effective medium in transferring communication messages in a language. This data is the author's notes at the International Conference on "Bridges" Crossing Bridges by the 8th AISLE (Australian Society of Indonesian Language Educators) held at CUT (Curtin University of Technology), Western Australia in 2005. Conversely, if the speech is not yet popular to foreigners of English [Australia] would be difficult for them to understand that it turns out that the way Australians differ from other nations in the pronunciation of speech or sounds in certain languages, such as the phrase 'today' is pronounced 'to die', meaning 'death'. In this paper, the writer proposes the inclusion of cultural components in four parts namely:

1. Knowledge about Indonesia or other countries

A brief history, system of government, geography, tradition, and religion, can be delivered with a seminar or short lecture. These cultural components are open to students of all levels. Both the teacher and the curriculum development staff and syllabus should determine the time and sequence, as well as the duration of time for learning about this knowledge about Indonesia. This factor does not appear to be lively, but with effective and creative learning methods and techniques, the material is interesting, can be presented with interesting methods and techniques, for example by means of fun research (research with games). In this activity, students compete to do library research via the internet about Indonesia or a foreign country as the target language for a certain time, for example (1-2 hours). In this case, the teacher's job is to direct and give specific questions about the material being taught. Learning knowledge about Indonesia can be done with interesting methods and techniques, where students unconsciously they use the language being studied or the target language.

2. Cultural Records

In a context like this culture, cultural factors can be a focal point in language learning. But with further search, this factor can be taught with interesting methods and techniques. Learning material covered can be made in stages, starting from the easiest (for example, greeting) to the more difficult (for example, making an appointment). Cultural factors related to the issue of practicalities can be incorporated into language practice activities.

3. Cultural Discussion

Cultural factors related to real-life can be given to students at the basic level or to skilled level students. The language used is entirely Indonesian or vice versa foreign language. Indonesian language learning is no longer focused on grammar training but has led to a broader context, taste, content. Here also

discussed the meaning of the connotation of words, style of language, which requires interpretation and cultural reasoning. Authentic material can be obtained from newspapers or newspapers, television news recordings related to events in Indonesia, radio programs, and in the process of communication for example in activities, sermons, lectures, or lectures), language studies (newspapers, magazines, academic reports, literary works, etc.), book reviews (official report). Comparison of cultures (the culture of foreign students and Indonesian students) is something that is quite interesting to review in this context.

4. *Cultural Research*

Research activities are better carried out by students learning Indonesian for foreign language users or conversely learning foreign languages for Indonesian language users at higher levels to strengthen their Indonesian language in language content, students conduct research related to culture on a broader scale: political culture, the role of culture in the context of human rights and democracy, comparison of Indonesian culture, foreign culture, with student culture, including cultural attitudes. Students are assigned, for example, papers on matters relating to a foreign culture or Indonesian culture. The skills and objectives to be achieved through this assignment include understanding written and spoken discourse, delivering ideas in a formal-academic context, research activities, and presenting papers at scientific forums as a choice of learning strategies.

Furthermore, Florence D. et al (2018) explain that choosing a learning strategy will greatly affect the achievement of learning objectives that have been set - "Choosing the right learning strategy will greatly affect the achievement of the learning objectives that have been set." In an effort to make culture a driving force in the learning process, Muhammad Soleh Hapudin (2019: 128) explained that the success of character education management cannot be instant, but should go through a consistent culture process, if the school culture has been running, then the character of students, educators, and educational staff will be formed by themselves. Likewise, of course, the same will apply in the process of civilization in foreign language students. In the process of civilizing a particular context, learning needs to involve students in the form of demonstrative or performance. In this connection, Malasari (2019: 31) concluded that the application of the demonstration method in natural science subjects can improve the learning outcomes of Grade V of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Yaminas Loppe students in Luwu Regency. Demonstration methods are not only needed in the process of science students but also the use of demonstration methods in language students' needs to be applied.

D. Conclusion

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that cultural factors have not been much revealed in learning Indonesian for foreign language users or conversely learning foreign languages for Indonesian language users. Techniques for conveying cultural factors in Indonesian language learning

classes for foreign language users or foreign language learning for Indonesian language users are still isolated, even though the strategic potential for involving cultural factors is so great role as a guide that students have high cultural sensitivity. The component of cultural involvement can also improve language skills and language skills more precisely and accurately.

Finally, what is needed in foreign language learning by involving cultural factors is to develop approaches and learning strategies and adjust the curriculum and arrange a syllabus based on the order of the level of students' skills.

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