

HOW FOREIGN STUDENTS LEARNT 'BAHASA INDONESIA' AS SECOND LANGUAGE

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Abstract: Foreigners who learn 'Bahasa Indonesia' in Indonesia actually learn Indonesian as a Second Language in the real-world settings. They practice Indonesian in Indonesian-speaking culture so that they expect to improve their Indonesian proficiency in a conducive language environment. In this paper, the writer would like to investigate why and how the foreign students learn it at Ubaya Language Center in Surabaya, Indonesia for about one semester. As a matter of fact, a language is also a part of culture, therefore, when they learn the Indonesian cultural activities, they might also learn the Indonesian language through cultural exposure. Based on his overall survey findings, the participants or the foreign students learning Indonesian at ULC had some reasons, such as chance for working career, for travelling, and for improving the language competence. They also used the Indonesian skills in their daily lives. This conducive language environment, their motivation and strategies in learning Indonesian in Indonesia would also enhance the success of their language learning.

Keywords: communicative competence, foster, how to learn, linguistic environment

INTRODUCTION

It is interesting to know why and how foreign students learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian) as a Second Language at Ubaya Language Center (ULC) Surabaya. Before they decided to learn Indonesian in Indonesia, they might learn Indonesian as a foreign language in their country where Indonesian is not their dominant language so the students had limited exposure to Indonesian - speaking culture (OUP, 2011). Foreign students that wanted to learn Indonesian at ULC Surabaya, Indonesia had more practical and pressing needs. They needed a lot of cultural context and guidance as well as the actual language instruction so they would be able to use the Indonesian language skills in real-world settings (Lake, 2013). At ULC Surabaya, the foreign students that learnt Indonesian might join in Indonesian for speakers of other languages (ISOL). In this paper, the writer would like to investigate why some foreign students wanted to learn Indonesian in Indonesia and how they learnt it to improve their Indonesian. For that reason, a survey was conducted to look for some findings on their learning process of ISOL.

Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (ISOL)

ISOL is a program for learning Indonesian to speakers of other languages in Indonesia. ISOL programs are generally based on particular Indonesian

learning methods and language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Foreign students that learn Indonesian in Indonesia commonly want to foster their Indonesian proficiency in conducive linguistic environment. They widely use Indonesian in their everyday communication. They not only use Indonesian as the language of instruction at the campus but also might communicate with people outside their classroom or campus. Indonesian is the dominant language around them and learning Indonesian is a matter of daily survival. They may not worry about grammar right away but need to learn basic survival skills in real - Indonesian settings. As a matter of fact, a language is a part of culture, therefore, when they learn the Indonesian cultural activities, such as Indonesian songs/dances/arts, they might also learn the Indonesian language. They need a lot of cultural context and guidance so they will be able to use the Indonesian language skills in real-world settings (Lake, 2013). That's why ISOL students not only learn Indonesian in classroom but also do some Indonesian cultural activities to foster their Indonesian learning.

Moreover, ISOL students that took the Indonesian course at Ubaya Language Center, Surabaya were those that got a Darmasiswa scholarship program, conducted student exchange at the University of Surabaya and also other foreigners who worked and studied in Indonesia. Darmasiswa Indonesian scholarship program was a scholarship program offered by the Indonesian government to foreign students from countries which had diplomatic relationship with Indonesia to study 'Bahasa Indonesia' and Indonesian culture for one year scheme or six months scheme. Participants of Darmasiswa Indonesian scholarship program could choose one of 45 different universities located in different cities in Indonesia. One of them was the University of Surabaya (Ubaya) in which the writer would like to share their learning process as ISOL.

Successful Factors in ISOL

Some students are easy to succeed at language learning but others are not. There are some factors that predict success in language learning. Learning a foreign or second language like *Bahasa Indonesia* also has some factors that predict success in Indonesia language learning. Sadtono in Limantoro (2016) states that some factors in predicting success in Indonesian Language Learning for speakers of other languages are intelligence (=being quick to grasp knowledge due to the degree to which a message can be understood), language aptitude (=the natural ability to learn a language), motivation, perseverance (=the learner's willingness to spend time in learning), and other factors, such as interest, learning strategies, learning style. However, intelligence only accounts for 20% of variance in predicting success in ISOL; whereas language aptitude 33%, perseverance and motivation 33%, and other factors 14% (Sadtono in Limantoro, 2016). As a matter of fact, some factors like intelligence and language aptitude are innate while some other factors like motivation, perseverance, and others basically depend on the learners, the teachers/instructors, and learning instruments/aids and linguistic environment.

Motivation in learning ISOL

Motivation is one of important factors in learning ISOL that determines a person's desire to learn a foreign language like *Bahasa Indonesia*. There are two

types of motivation: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. Foreign students who have instrumental motivation want to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* for certain instrumental goals, such as getting a job, passing an examination, reading foreign newspapers/books, better position/status. Furthermore, foreign students who have integrative motivation want to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in order to communicate with Indonesian people who speak it. In other words, they are attracted by the culture of the Indonesian Community. Susanto (2018) also finds out that motivation is a very important and effective factor in language learning.

Previous Studies

There are also other researches relating to learn a foreign language in different matters. Suyitno et al (2017) find out that BIPA (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* = Indonesian for foreign speakers) students have used various learning strategies depending on the types of the learning tasks, individual factors, and the learning environment. Suparsa et al (2017) also highlight the importance of effective learning methods to teach Indonesian as a foreign language. Watson (2013) explains how to assess gains in language proficiency, cross-cultural competence, and regional awareness when studying abroad. Defina and Sundari (2016) also find out that Korean learners study Indonesian mostly because of the demands of the job in Indonesia. It can be categorized as instrumental orientation. Moreover, Aksenova et al (2015) also mention that there are many ways to motivate students to learn a foreign language in tertiary level of education, such as authentic materials, games, and creativity.

Reasons for learning foreign languages

There are many different reasons for learning languages. such as for academic purpose, for professional purpose/ job demands, for cultural studies, for survival and living purpose, for travelling, for fun, and so on. In this part of findings, the writer would like to explain the respondents'/ foreign students' reasons for learning *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia (particularly when they study at Ubaya Language Center, Surabaya).

METHOD

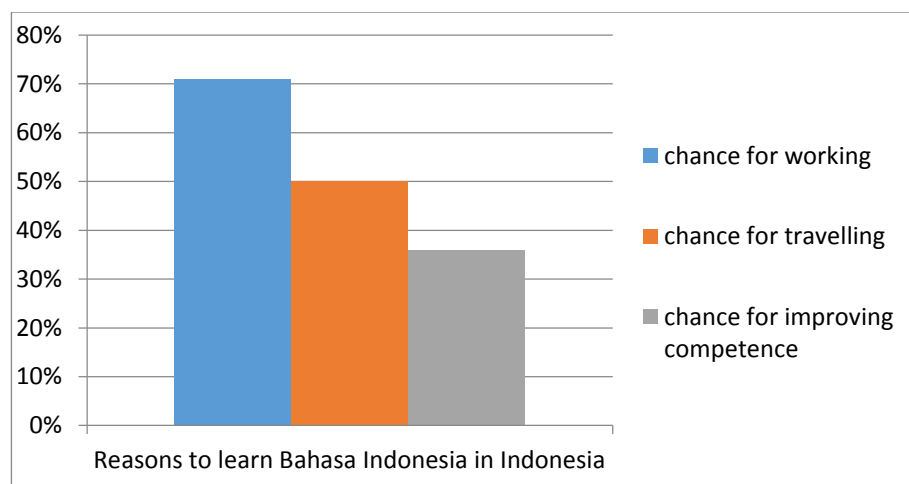
In this paper, there were fourteen participants of this survey. There were twelve participants who got Darmasiswa Indonesian scholarship program for a six-month scheme and there were two others who took exchange student program. all the fourteen participants learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* at Ubaya Language Center Surabaya. And their ages were at the range of twenty to thirty-four. They were ten female students (71%) and only four male students (29%). They were also from different nationalities - Chinese (5 students), Korean (2 students), Slovakian (2 students), Japanese (1 student), Cambodian (1 student), German (1 student), Hungarian (1 student), Malagasy (1 student). All respondents used more than one language that is from three languages to seven languages. They could speak three languages (6 persons/ 42%), four languages (2 persons/ 14%), five languages (4 persons/ 28%), six languages (one person/ 7%), and seven languages (one person/ 7%). All of them learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* as their foreign language. Half of the total respondents had learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia for 3 months while the others had learnt it for four to eight months.

In this survey, the writer used questionnaires with some short time of interview within the participants. First, he explained the survey objectives to the participants and then also asked them to fill out the questionnaires. There were two main questions of the survey: why they learnt Indonesian in Indonesia and how they learnt it. Second, the writer collected and analyzed the data of the survey. He also interviewed some participants that gave certain unclear responses for clarification by meeting them via appointments or by talking on the phone. And the writer would like to explain the results of the survey by using percentage to know the tendency. In addition, he also presented some participants' translation from English to Indonesian to know their competence in Indonesian as well as their significance to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this part, the writer would like to discuss some important findings to respond two major questions: why and how foreign students would learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia (particularly at Ubaya Language Center Surabaya). Based on the results of the questionnaires, the writer got some findings on why the participants would learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia in the following bar chart:

Figure 1: Why did foreign students learn Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia?



The participants' reasons to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia were as a chance for working/ career (71%), for travelling to Indonesia (50%), and for improving their communicative competence on *Bahasa Indonesia* (36%). Based on these findings, the majority of the participants (71%) learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* as their instrumental motivation to have the chance for working or for their business career. Half of the participants (50%) were also attracted to Indonesian culture and used it for travelling to Indonesia. Therefore, they needed to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia in order to use / practice it in Indonesia as their tourist destination. And only less than half of them (36%) learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia because they had integrative motivation on learning it. They wanted to improve their skills in *Bahasa Indonesia* by learning and using *Bahasa Indonesia* as a Second Language in their daily life exposure.

Moreover, some participants would also explain their significance to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia by using their own English and Indonesian statements in the following table:

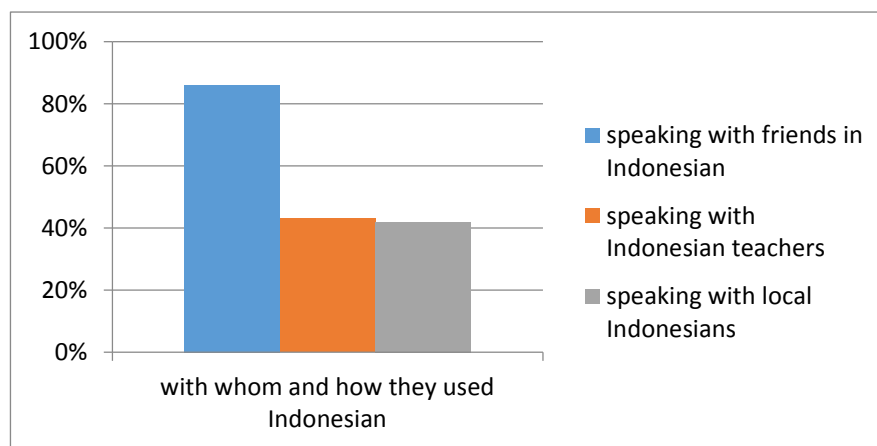
Table 1: Their significance to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia

Original countries of the participants	Significance to learn <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> written in English	Significance to learn <i>Bahasa Indonesia</i> written in Indonesian
A participant from Malagasy	"On the one hand, learning Indonesian to me it's very interesting and useful for everybody, if I may be want to live in here for my study or for my work and not only with that, but also like I said before when I want to visiting another Island, Indonesia to have many place so It's important to master it and I can have an opportunity to speak quickly."	" <i>Pertama, belajar Indonesia untuk saya, baik sekali dan menarik, lalu dipekerjakan untuk semuanya. Jika saya mungkin ingin tinggal di sini buat belajar atau bekerja mau mengunjungi pulau lain, di Indonesia juga adalah banyak tempat jadi, sangat baik orang yang mempunyai kekuasaan pada itu.</i> "
A participant from China	"Because the world is becoming more and more connected dan people from all around the world will cooperate with each other in everything."	" <i>Orang-orang sudah menghubungi dengan yang lain sekarang. Dan banyak orang datang ke Indonesia untuk berwisata, belajar, dan lain-lain jadi kalau berkomunikasi dengan baik harus belajar Bahasa Indonesia.</i> "
A participant from Slovakia	"I like learning Indonesian but as I started only 3 months ago, I'm still learning and can speak a little. However, I am able to use it while travelling, e.g. in shop, streets, airports, even have small talk with Indonesian about family, their work, etc."	" <i>Saya suka belajar Bahasa Indonesia. Saya mulai tiga bulan lalu karena berbicara sedikit saya pakai bahasa di toko, bandara, jalan, dan berbicara dengan orang Indonesia.</i> "
A participant from Japan	"After graduation, I have joined a construction volunteer team. I want to engage in relief efforts and subsequent reconstruction in this country, with many natural disasters such as an	" <i>Sesudah kuliah, saya ikut bangunan volunteer. Saya mau bantuan orang Indonesia yang menghadapi bencana karena Indonesia sering ada gempa bumi dan</i>

	earthquake or tsunami in the same way as Japan. In order to carry out those activities. I'd like to learn Indonesian's language as a means of communication with the local people."	<i>tsunami seperti Jepang. Kalau mau membantu orang Indonesia saya harus berbicara bahasa Indonesia untuk kominikasi."</i>
A participant from Cambodia	"I want to use it for any job"	<i>"Aku mau pakai bahasa Indonesia untuk kerjaku."</i>

Further, the writer got some findings on how the participants would learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia in the following bar chart:

Figure 2: How did foreign students learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia?



First, most participants (86%) practiced to use *Bahasa Indonesia* during their study in Indonesia especially with their friends at the campus. They could also communicate in English if they did not know the Indonesian words they wanted to express. They were also asked to use *Bahasa Indonesia* as much as possible. They also joined some cultural activities, such as batik-making, Indonesian traditional musical instruments like *kolintang* and *angklung*, some traditional dances, and others with local Indonesians. It meant they had to communicate with local people in *Bahasa Indonesia*. It was known that they learnt the Indonesian language by doing some Indonesian cultural activities. As a matter of fact, the language is the core part of the culture, therefore, they could improve their *Bahasa Indonesia* by using it in their daily exposure in order to acquire their *Bahasa Indonesia* as a second language learning. And their linguistic environments of their language learning might be inside the campus/ the class where they learnt and did some activities or outside the campus where they socialized with others and local people.

Second, many participants (43%) also learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* from their Indonesian lecturers/ teachers in the classroom setting or outside the class. In class,

most of them (79%) had to repeat the Indonesian expressions given by their Indonesian teachers as their learning strategy. And the Indonesian teachers could become their model in learning *Bahasa Indonesia*. In classroom settings, they learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* through Indonesian modules for learning Indonesian to speakers of other languages in Indonesia and many other ways, such as Indonesian language games, films, songs, newspapers, story books, and other learning materials.

Third, many others (42%) also used *Bahasa Indonesia* when they had to communicate with local Indonesians for some purposes, such as when buying some meals at the canteens/ restaurants/ food stalls, when talking with taxi drivers, when talking with some people in the boarding house/ apartments, and others.

In addition to the survey results, less than half of the participants (43%) used *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia at least 5 hours a day but more than half of the participants (57%) used *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia less than 5 hours a day. Further, most of them (93%) did not feel nervous to speak Indonesian. Furthermore, most of them (71%) enjoyed learning *Bahasa Indonesia* because of their teachers and friends. They also thought that learning *Bahasa Indonesia* was easy (36%) and very easy (14%) but the half of them thought learning *Bahasa Indonesia* was quite difficult (50%). And most of them (71%) mentioned that listening skill in *Bahasa Indonesia* was the most difficult one out of the language skills.

Moreover, the participants/ these foreign students usually used their mother tongue when communicating with their friends from the same country, and English when talking with their friends from different countries. And they usually used *Bahasa Indonesia* when talking with their Indonesian students and teachers/lecturers. The writer also saw some participants/ foreign students talking with their Indonesian teacher in an informal way. It showed that they were not afraid of using their daily Indonesian as a means of communication in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Foreign students who learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia had some reasons, such as chance for advancement in their professional lives (chance for working), having attracted to Indonesian culture for travelling/for fun, and using Indonesian for their study, and so on. As a matter of fact, they had an opportunity to visit and study in Indonesia, for example at the university of Surabaya because of the exchange student programs or *Darmasiswa* Indonesian scholarship program. The foreign students who decided to learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia had either instrumental motivation or integrative motivation. And motivation, perseverance and other factors (like learning strategy) account for 47% of variance in predicting success in learning Indonesian for speakers of other languages (ISOL). This survey results could be used as the preliminary feedbacks/ inputs for the stakeholders of the exchange student programs or *Darmasiswa* Indonesian scholarship program, such as the learners of ISOL, the universities and the Department of Education of Republic of Indonesia that had the exchange student programs or *Darmasiswa* Indonesian scholarship program, and other researchers who would like to investigate the further in-depth case study.

Next, there were 14 foreign students as participants from 8 different nationalities that learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* as a second language at Ubaya

Language Center Surabaya, Indonesia. They were 12 respondents who got *Darmasiswa* Indonesian scholarship program in a six-month scheme and 2 respondents who took exchange student program. In this survey, the writer used questionnaires to ask two main questions - Why and how they learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia. When asked about why they learnt *Bahasa Indonesia*, the participants replied that majority of them (71%) needed it for their career/work, half of them (50%) needed it for their fun/hobby/travelling, and some of them (36%) wanted to improve their communicative competence on *Bahasa Indonesia*. When asked about how they learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia, most participants (86%) practiced to use *Bahasa Indonesia* during their study in Indonesia especially with their friends at the campus. Many participants (43%) also learnt *Bahasa Indonesia* from their Indonesian lecturers/ teachers in the classroom setting or outside the class. In class, most of them (79%) had to repeat the Indonesian expressions given by their Indonesian teachers as their learning strategy. And many others (42%) also used *Bahasa Indonesia* when they had to communicate with local Indonesians for certain purposes.

Moreover, when foreign students learn *Bahasa Indonesia* in Indonesia, they actually communicate *Bahasa Indonesia* as a second language so they have extensive daily exposure to Indonesian speaking culture. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the dominant language around them. They will be able to use the language skills in real-world settings. They live in linguistic environment and use *Bahasa Indonesia* in their daily lives. They speak the primary language of the country (*Bahasa Indonesia*) and are able to take care of the necessities of their daily lives. Their strong motivation and right strategies in learning Indonesian in Indonesia would also enhance the success of their language learning.

Educational Implication

Based on the findings above, the writer would like to share some educational implication in order to foster the *Bahasa Indonesia* communicative competence of the foreign students who study it in Indonesia. First, they really need motivation (instrumental + integrative), perseverance (sufficient practice), and learning strategies, and other successful learning factors to enhance their communicative competence. Second, their linguistic environment would be conducive and effective when they try to live in total Indonesian immersion. It means that they have to speak Indonesian totally or at least most of the time, do some Indonesian cultural activities, such as singing some Indonesian songs, going shopping or going to the supermarkets, and other activities that improve their four Indonesian skills, structure, and vocabularies. Therefore, fun or cultural activities that enhance their Indonesian communicative exposure on the Indonesian culinary, art, dance, songs, and travelling would be important to do in Indonesia. Third, their Indonesian teachers are actually not only their Indonesian teachers/lecturers that facilitate learning in class but also their Indonesian friends or people who speak Indonesian with them every day. They need to practice speaking with those who support their Indonesian learning. It is ideal if they have good Indonesian counterparts (bodies) that help support their daily Indonesian learning practice. They really need to have Indonesian friends and communicate with them in Indonesian as their dominant language so that Indonesian becomes their daily means of communication and dominant language for living in Indonesia.

Therefore, learning Indonesian as a Second language for foreign students is a long process that needs daily exposure of using Indonesian in various cultural activities to gain Indonesian communicative competence.

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