

THE INTRODUCTION OF INDONESIAN CULTURE IN BAHASA INDONESIA CLASS FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES BY USING THE CULTURAL COMPONENTS AT ISI YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

Learning Bahasa Indonesia becomes a new trend for speakers of other languages. They need to learn it for having good communication skill and because of some purposes. The speakers of other languages who come to Indonesia for different purposes, then, also would like to learn and understand the Indonesian culture and its unique characteristics. Therefore, one of the important steps to introduce bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture is started from bahasa Indonesia class for speakers of other languages. This program is intended to help them have more understanding in both bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture. Moreover, this program is supposed to give answers for some questions and the learners' needs in the process of learning bahasa Indonesia and Indonesia culture.

The paper discussion focuses on the cultural components and the cross-cultural understanding in bahasa Indonesia class for speakers of other languages. Moreover, this paper also analyzes the common problems happened in the class and how they are solved in order to succeed the process of learning the language and culture. How to introduce and convey the cultural components in bahasa Indonesia class, and how to give the important values for the learners to have better understanding in knowing the Indonesian characteristics through the process of learning bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture are other questions which are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: cross-cultural understanding, cultural components, bahasa Indonesia, Indonesian culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture for speakers of other languages has been tremendously increasing nowadays. People from other countries come to Indonesia for different purposes. They need to learn it for having good communication skill and because of some purposes, such as to do a scientific research, learn Indonesia and its people, have a project in Indonesia, develop the relationship between their country and Indonesia, and many more. In spite of the fact that Bahasa Indonesia is being well accepted by them, it is the government and educators who can provide friendly facilities and environment for them. Therefore, by learning Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture, they would become parts of our warm hospitality to speakers of other languages in Indonesia.

The speakers of other languages are supposed to have good adaptation to any different points of view, background, social life, language and culture, and so forth. In other words, they should learn the language and culture, know the society well, and adapt with anything related to the country they live in. Therefore, there is a great way

to introduce Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture through Bahasa Indonesia class. Bahasa Indonesia for speakers of other languages is intensively developed to answer all problems that may occur during the introducing process of learning Bahasa and culture.

The government has launched the program to help and facilitate learners from other countries in learning bahasa Indonesia as well as Indonesian culture. The program, named *Bahasa Indonesia Bagi Penutur Asing*, is supposed to actively support the successfully guidance to speakers of other languages who need better understanding and knowledge on Indonesia thoroughly.

The paper aims to discuss how to introduce and convey the cultural context in bahasa Indonesia class and how to give the important values for the learners to have better understanding in knowing the Indonesian characteristics through the process of learning bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Culture and Language

Learning bahasa Indonesia in Bahasa Indonesia Class for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), has been introduced to meet their needs to any basic information through the language and culture. Below is the basic understanding on the language and culture.

There are some definitions of culture that have been proposed by experts and writers. According to Spradley and McCurdy [8], culture is defined as a system of symbols that allows us to represent and communicate our experience. Meanwhile, Bates and Fratkin [1] say that culture is transmitted via our symbolic communication system that we call language. Symbols that we can perceive with our senses stand for something else and simplify the task of communication [8]. By symbols, people can communicate the variety of experiences to others. The language is a system of cultural knowledge used to generate and interpret speech. Moreover, language enables people to communicate what they would do, to organize their experiences into abstract categories, and to express thoughts never spoken before [1]. From the definitions above, cultural knowledge can also be discussed that it is not only transmitted through the language, but it is also produced by the language. People can communicate to others by the language to develop culture. In other words, knowing the language helps people to understand the culture better.

By knowing the definitions of culture and language, we can completely understand that both culture and language can be mutually connected and related. A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language. However, culture becomes highly important in learning the language because it is tightly connected to each other.

Foreign people who are interested to learn new language and culture of others come to a new place or country, they will experience a cultural shock. This tendency might happen where the language, culture, customs, and beliefs are different to their own. It is a feeling of disorientation of someone who may experience when thrust into an unfamiliar cultural setting [1]. It happens when they are suddenly cut off from their customary practices and familiar ways of doing things which may cause stress and anxious. In addition, Peter [6] defines culture shock as a form of anxiety that results from the loss of commonly perceived and understood signs and symbols of social intercourse. When the learners experience culture shock, then there occur a number of defense mechanisms, such as repression, regression, isolation, and rejection. Having been failed of defense, they become disoriented, afraid of, and alienated from the things that they know and understand. Moreover, Brown [2] says that culture shock is one of the four successive stages of acculturation. The first stage is the period of excitement and euphoria over the newness of the surroundings. The second stage, culture shock emerges as individuals feel the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into their own images

of self and security. The third is recovery in which culture stress comes up. It is some problems of acculturation which are solved while other problems continue for some time. And the fourth is acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence that has developed in the culture. Knowing that the stages of acculturation might be helpful for the teachers to completely understand about culture shock, then, they can motivate learners with some approaches to do how they should perform in the classroom and how they develop their culture awareness.

One other thing that is well accepted for those who experience culture shock is by having culture adaptation. It is needed to solve particular problem and as the source of unanticipated changes or new problems which may occur [1]. The learners can take advantages of whatever resources are available to them at a particular time for the following consequences. By adapting to new things which are different to their own, the learners are supposed to have commitments that have altered their negative judgment or mind setting into acceptance.

B. Teaching Culture and Language in Bahasa Indonesia Class

The teaching and learning process in *BIPA* class should be supported by teachers' accommodation, techniques, and methods in which they can actively support the learning process in the classroom. Teachers and students should get involved in this process that the successful learning and teaching can be achieved, especially when the teachers transfer knowledge to students who have different background and culture. This process is well accepted and a challenge since teaching is a part of education and there is a link between education and culture. The culture of a society determines the form and content of its educational processes. Through education the productivity of a nation's citizenry is improved, and by stimulating and developing intellect and creativity education can promote the development of culture [5]. Since culture is lived and experienced in a process of social progress and cultural continuity, the changes may occur. The changes are found in what people actually do and in what people think about their culture. Therefore, through education the teachers can take part in this process by introducing Indonesian culture without leaving a concept that foreign people who learn bahasa Indonesia have their own culture to be appreciated. The teacher should also have critical thinking and point of view that they are not different but they have their own perspectives, symbols, interpretations, values, and feelings of belonging to their country that might be shared to others to be understood.

Speakers of other languages who learn Bahasa Indonesia sometimes get difficulties in understanding Indonesian culture since they experience “culture shock”. They do not know what Indonesian culture is and even the teachers are trying hard to define it. Bundhowi [3] says that culture cannot be taught, but what teachers are supposed to do is trying to build the Indonesian culture awareness. Everything related to Indonesia can be discussed thoroughly in and outside the class. However, the teachers can develop the syllabus and lesson plan in which the culture discussion is one of the important things for the learners. By designing the acceptable and applicable ones, the process of transferring information, that is bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture.

Learning the Indonesian culture is also learning the language. By learning Indonesian culture, the learners are invited to know and understand many expressions and language functions commonly found in daily conversation of Indonesian people have. It is not surprisingly noted that sometimes the learners are getting frustrated and have wrong interpretations when they know there are many different expressions and language functions to their own. Therefore, it is the teachers and the syllabus designers’ job to design a very clear discussion about the culture and the language so that there will be good mutual relationships among the teachers, learners, and Indonesian people in cross cultural understanding.

BIPA program is supposed to assist the speakers of other languages in learning Indonesian culture through bahasa Indonesia because it has been used as a lingua franca, which becomes a means to describe, discuss, and think about the whole pictures of Indonesian culture. Therefore, bahasa Indonesia class for speakers of other languages will implicitly contribute to the learning of Indonesian culture and cross-cultural understanding since there are some cultural components that are connected directly to the learning of bahasa Indonesia.

Furthermore, Bundhowi [3] also states the teaching methods on cultural components introduced to speakers of other languages who learn Bahasa Indonesia. They are as follows:

1. Knowledge about Indonesia

The topics of Indonesia geographic, governmental system, Indonesian history, religion, and customs can be given either in the classroom or in the local seminar. The teachers and the curriculum designers can select and make priorities which topics should be discussed. By giving such topics, the learners are assumed to be more interested to know Indonesia much better. The teachers can develop many activities covering those topics so that the learning process is more fun and dynamic.

2. Cultural Notes

In the teaching syllabus, cultural notes are a part of the learning materials to be discussed. Once the teachers explain the language components, the cultural notes are given. Cultural notes can be taught in such a way from easy to more complicated ones. The teachers make cultural notes and are ready to explain them. The problems may occur when the learners find many differences which might be compared to their own culture. For example: the topic of Introduction. The cultural note is about the concepts of respecting older people and social partnership found in Javanese culture that those who are older or in term of respecting should be called by “Mas” and “Mbak”; “Pak” and “Bu”.

3. Culture Discussion

This topic is relevant to learners whose Bahasa Indonesia has already been in advance level. The teaching-learning process does not focus to grammar understanding but focus to contextual learning. The teachers can select teaching materials which are suitable for their level of competence. Any sources from magazines, newspapers, news on TV, and any related topics such as visiting to interesting places in Indonesia, Indonesian food, and many more can be used for discussion. Therefore, they know that Bahasa Indonesia can be used in communicating process, such in talk-show, seminar, lecture, literature study, and many more. Furthermore, the discussion will point to comparing the learners’ own culture and Indonesian culture.

4. Cultural Research

To comprehend the learners’ language competence, the research on many aspects they want to discuss is suggested. Anything related to culture discussion is opened to facilitate the learners on comprehending the content of the language. The learners are invited to do a research in which their language skills and competence are directly used. The learning objectives of this research are comprehending verbal and non-verbal speech, conveying ideas in formal educational field, doing either library or experimental research, and presenting the paper in a scientific forum. By doing the research, the learners are expected to get what are not found and known before they do it. Furthermore, the learners’ negative point of view, perceptions, and opinions about Indonesia before are positively changed.

Those cultural components are very important for the learning process of bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture in *BIPA* class. The teacher, then, uses them as the guidelines in designing materials to teach bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture in the class. Some considerations are taken to select which components are actively used and can support the introduction of Indonesian culture to speakers of other languages.

Burden and Byrd [4] state three basic teaching functions that can be applied in Bahasa Indonesia

for speakers of other languages class. They are as follows:

1. Planning

Planning involves teachers' decisions about student needs, the most appropriate goals and objectives, the content to be taught, instructional strategies, lesson delivery techniques, instructional media, classroom climate, and student assessment. It will be decided before the teaching-learning process takes place. Therefore, the teachers should be able to select which materials and methods can be used so that the learning objectives can be achieved. The teachers should also be ready with topics to be discussed which can influence the learners' comprehension on Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture.

2. Implementing

Implementing involves the actual enactment of the instructional plans concerning lesson delivery and assessment. The teaching activities that support the language skills to be implemented in the classroom include presenting and explaining, questioning, listening, monitoring, giving feedback, and demonstrating. By doing those activities, the teachers can monitor the learners' achievement, the learning process, the learners' behavior, and the significant changes toward the learners' goals in learning Bahasa Indonesia and culture.

3. Assessing

Assessing involves determining the level of learner learning. Many aspects of assessment are determined during the planning phase when instructional goals and content are identified. By giving the assessment, the learners' achievement can be measured, and the teachers' expectations on the success of teaching-learning process can be seen. In Bahasa Indonesia for non-native speakers' class, the assessment can be in the form of written test, writing composition, mini research, oral presentation, and also discussion.

III. DISCUSSION

This paper aims to give answers to problem formulations and also to analyze the common problems happened in the class and how they are solved in order to succeed the process of learning the language and culture. There are two problem formulations that can be answered in this paper. First, how to introduce and convey the cultural components in bahasa Indonesia class. And second, how to give the important values for the learners to have better understanding in knowing the Indonesian characteristics through the process of learning bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture.

A. How to Introduce and Convey the Cultural Components in Bahasa Indonesia Class.

ISI Yogyakarta has carried out and applied the program supported by Ministry of Education and Culture to assist speakers of other languages who learn bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture into a special condition, that is through *BIPA* (bahasa Indonesia for speakers of other languages).

BIPA aims to accommodate and facilitate the foreign people who study at ISI Yogyakarta for the short-term program or for the exchange program between two universities to know and understand bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture. As a university which focuses in conveying and transforming knowledge of arts and culture, ISI Yogyakarta is providing them facilities to comprehend their basic understanding on bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture.

Introducing the cultural components in bahasa Indonesia class for speakers of other languages need good cooperation between teacher and learners since they should be involved in every aspects of the teaching-learning activities. *BIPA* at ISI Yogyakarta provides syllabus and teaching materials in which they can accommodate the learners need to understand and know bahasa Indonesia as well as Indonesian culture. Therefore, the syllabus is made for supporting the introduction of Indonesian culture. Each meeting is designed to give better understanding on Indonesian culture and cross-cultural understanding. Some cultural components used in *BIPA* class are knowledge about Indonesia, cultural notes, and culture discussion. Those three components are suggested since most of *BIPA* learners at ISI Yogyakarta are in beginner and intermediate level. The cultural research as another cultural component is not applied in the class.

By supporting the implementation of those three components, the learners are supposed to have better understanding on Indonesian culture. Besides having theories about bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture, the learners should participate in the teaching learning process. Below are the examples of cultural components found and applied in *BIPA* class of ISI Yogyakarta.

1. Knowledge about Indonesia

The topic of Yogyakarta: discusses about Yogyakarta as the tourism destination and city of education, the history of Yogyakarta, Keraton, and Jogjanes' customs. Videos, pictures, and additional reading texts are used to support the learning process.

2. Cultural Notes

The topic of showing time and schedules: discusses more about cross-cultural understanding.

Western countries: invitation of a meeting at 9 a.m., and the participants come on time.

Indonesia: invitation of a meeting at 9 a.m., and some of the participants may come late more than half an hour. Consequently, the meeting starts late.

3. Culture Discussion

The topic of Indonesian Food: discusses about some popular traditional food in Indonesia.

Yogyakarta: gudeg, bakpia, oseng-oseng, and so fort. Videos, pictures, pot-luck party, and cooking class can actively support the learning activities.

The cultural components basically can give more contribution to the successful learning process, however, it is the teacher who play the important role in this condition since the teacher is as the facilitator and mediator to engage learners and Indonesian culture.

B. How to Give the Learners' Important Values toward the Indonesian Characteristics through the Process of Learning Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian Culture

Teaching is an activity designed to facilitate the process of learning by providing the desired information, by arranging circumstances, activities, and opportunities that are likely to promote skill and knowledge acquisition, and providing the necessary guides to keep the process of learning on the desired track [7]. Since there are many changes in situation and learners' need, the effecting teaching is needed.

Being teachers is not just teaching learners, but also conveying information. Teaching Bahasa Indonesia in a classroom needs some approaches and methods to be applied. It is the teacher who has better understanding of the learners' needs to find and select the most appropriate ones to be implemented in the classroom. However, the teachers should commit to the successful of language teaching and learning so that the expected results and class objectives can be well obtained.

The teachers of Bahasa Indonesia for non-speakers of other languages should consider some basic principles to teaching and understand the purposes of the teaching process. Since the learners are coming from different country that also have different background and culture, the teachers should be ready to have enough knowledge of cross cultural understanding and the language as well.

In order to create a good condition for the teaching-learning process, therefore, some basic principles to modern teaching have been identified. Brown [2] proposes ten principles of language learning or teaching which can be used to give the learners' important values toward the Indonesian characteristics through the process of learning Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian Culture. They are as follows:

1. The first principle of language learning or teaching is to lower inhibitions in which teachers can involve their learners to play guessing and communication games; do role-plays and skits; sing songs; use group work; laugh together and share fears in small groups. By doing these activities,

good environment of learning and fun learning process in the classroom can be achieved. In Bahasa Indonesia class for speakers of other languages, those activities can be applied as long as they can accommodate the learners' needs to understand and enhance their communicative competence. For example: learners sing *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* as a traditional song in which it also invites learners to play the game of this song together.

2. The second principle is to encourage risk taking. While teaching-learning process takes place, it would be a better action if teachers praise learners for making efforts to try out language; use fluency exercises where errors are not corrected at that time; give outside-of-class assignments to speak or write or otherwise try out the language. These activities can influence the students to be more active to use the language as well as to be aware of using the language in active communication. The teachers can give them work-sheets or activities in which they should have interaction to local people so that more practices can be obtained. For example: the learners are invited to go to traditional market nearby in which they should practice how to go shopping and do bargaining. The teacher assists them by giving more freedom to them in exploring the language.

3. The third principle is to build learners' self-confidence in which teachers should tell the learners verbally and non-verbally that teachers believe in them; have them make lists of their strengths, of what they know or have accomplished in the course. As we know that learners are from different countries and have different background as well, they also need good support from teachers to develop their language competence. For example: each meeting of the learning process is designed to invite learners' participation, such as: presenting their findings, practicing the dialogue in front of the class, and so fort.

4. The fourth principle is to help learners develop intrinsic motivation. To help learners become more interested in learning Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesia culture, it is the teachers work to help them develop their intrinsic motivation. The teachers can tell them about the natural beauty of Indonesia, thousands of ethnic groups living in Indonesia, pluralistic society, and many more. By doing it, the learners can have motivation to learn Indonesia and there will be significant development of their language competence as well.

5. The fifth principle is to promote cooperative learning; teachers can do that by directing learners to share their knowledge and culture; playing down competition among them; getting the class to think of themselves as a team; and doing a considerable amount of small-group work. Cooperative learning is supposed to build learners' self-awareness that they need to cooperate with each other in order to develop their potentials and knowledge. For example: the competition of creating and making a traditional children's toy.

6. The sixth principle is to encourage learners to use right-brain processing. As we know that the human right-brain supports the language development and has potential storage for language as well, therefore, teachers should use movies and tapes in class; have the learners read passages rapidly; do skimming exercises; do rapid “free writes”; do oral fluency exercises where the object is to get learners to talk (or write) a lot without being corrected. By giving the learners these activities, the learners’ language competence can increase and they are able to use good language both orally and written. For example: learners are invited to fill in the blanks on song lyrics while they are listening to Indonesian song.

7. The seventh principle is to promote ambiguity tolerance, in which teachers should encourage learners to ask questions to teachers and each other what they do not understand something; keep their theoretical explanations very simple and brief; deal with just a few rules at a time. Since the learners learn Bahasa Indonesia, therefore these activities can make them receive and acquire Bahasa Indonesia more easily. And they do not get frustrated when they find difficulties in learning Bahasa Indonesia.

8. The eighth principle is to help learners use their intuition. Teachers should help them to use their intuition by praising them for good guessing; not giving explanation of errors – let a correction suffice; and correcting the selected errors, preferably just those that interfere with learning. Using intuition can help the learners understand and be aware of their language errors so that they will produce and use correct Bahasa Indonesia. For example: the teacher gives learners a game in which the learners should guess what the thing is hidden in the box.

9. The ninth principle is to get learners make their mistakes work for them. In order to make them know their language mistakes and let them produce the correct ones, teachers should tape-record learners’ oral production and get them to identify errors; let them catch and correct each other’s errors; not give them the correct form; encourage them to make lists of their common errors and to work on them on their own.

10. Finally, the tenth principle is to get learners get their own goals. Every learner has his/her own target of learning to achieve the goals, the goals of learning the language can be achieved if other elements of learning process like community, objectives, and teachers, support their process of learning the language. In the classroom, teachers should encourage or direct learners to go beyond the classroom goals; have them make lists of what they will accomplish on their own in a particular week; get the learners to make specific time commitments to study the language; and give “extra credit” work.

Those principles basically can be applied to the teaching-learning process as far as they are suitable,

can be implemented, and match with curriculum and syllabus, learners’ current needs, and learning objectives. The principles as proposed by Brown, actually, are needed in Bahasa Indonesia class and good for the success of the teaching-learning process in the classroom and can contribute to show the important values of Indonesian characteristics for learners to be understood so that the mutual cultural understanding among Indonesia and other countries is well supported.

IV. CONCLUSION

BIPA is assumed as a potential program for foreign people who want to learn and understand bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture. By following the BIPA class, the speakers of other languages are actively engaged with Indonesian culture. Therefore, it is the syllabus and material designer, and BIPA teachers to promote and facilitate the learners’ needs in understanding Indonesian culture through bahasa Indonesia class.

The cultural components are regarded to bring positive values and significant changes to the learners’ understanding on Indonesia and its culture. Therefore, they are also very beneficial to promote the partnership programs between Indonesia and the learner’s original country so that there will be more opened discussion on the following programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper is fully dedicated to my family who always stands by me and gives support to accomplish it. My gratitude goes to ISI Yogyakarta which has already facilitated me in taking part on this seminar. Hopefully, there will be further research to accomplish this paper. And last but not least, a special thank also goes to ICERI committee for giving me good opportunity to present my paper in the conference.

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