

# The Teacher as the Important Role to Teach Culture and Language in *Bahasa Indonesia* Class for the Non-Native Speakers

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**Abstract**—Learning *Bahasa Indonesia* becomes a new trend for non-native speakers of *Bahasa Indonesia*. 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 order to master *Bahasa Indonesia*, the learners should also understand Indonesian culture and their own culture so that there will be a positive influence to the teaching learning activity. The influence of a teacher is also needed to introduce the learners to cross cultural understanding. By knowing and understanding one's own culture and the other cultures around the world, the learners are expected to get good and positive point of views and attitude. The teacher plays an important role to the success of teaching learning activities in the classroom. How the teacher brings them into better understanding is discussed in this paper.

**Keywords**—culture; language; teacher

## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning *Bahasa Indonesia* for non-native speakers has been 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 so that learning *Bahasa Indonesia* and Indonesian culture are parts of our warm hospitality.

For non-native speakers, being foreigners are not easy. 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 starting from *Bahasa Indonesia* class. *Bahasa Indonesia* for non-native speakers is developed to answer all problems that may occur during the introducing process of learning *Bahasa* and culture.

*Bahasa Indonesia* teachers are supposed to have good language competence, communicative skill, and cross cultural understanding since there might be culture shock for foreigners. The teachers should be ready for those who experience it because there will be serious problems for

them which will influence their point of views and judgment toward the local people, language, and culture. Therefore, it is the teachers' role to bring successful guidance on learning *Bahasa Indonesia* and culture so that there will be high motivation and expectation after the learners of *Bahasa Indonesia* get what they expect to.

The paper will discuss how teachers play an important role to the success of learning *Bahasa Indonesia* and culture in *Bahasa* class for non-native speakers and how they teach them.

## II. DISCUSSION

### A. Culture and Language

There are some definitions of culture that have been proposed by experts and writers. According to Spradley and McCurdy [10], culture is defined as a system of symbols that allows us to represent and communicate our experience. Meanwhile, Bates and Fratkin [2] 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 [10]. 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 [2]. 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.

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.

When foreigners come to a new country or place where the language, culture, customs, and beliefs are different to their own, there will be a cultural shock. It is a feeling of disorientation of someone who may experience when thrust into an unfamiliar cultural setting [2]. 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 [8] 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 [4] 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 [2]. 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*

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 [7]. 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 they have their own culture to be appreciated. The teacher should 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.

Foreigners 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 [5] 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 the and outside the class. The teacher can develop the syllabus and lesson plan in which the culture discussion is one of the important things for the learners.

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.

Burden and Byrd [6] state three basic teaching functions that can be applied in Bahasa Indonesia for non-native speakers' 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.

Furthermore, Bundhowi [5] also states the teaching methods on culture components introduced to non-native speakers 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 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' 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.

#### *C. Teachers' Role in Bahasa Indonesia Class for Non-Native Speakers*

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 [9]. 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-native speaker 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 [3] proposes ten principles of language learning or teaching which are well accepted. 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 for non-native speakers' class, those activities can be applied as long as they can accommodate the learners' needs to understand and enhance their communicative competence.

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.

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 background, and they also need good support from teachers to develop their language competence.

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.

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.

7. The seventh principle is to promote ambiguity tolerance, in which teachers should encourage learners to ask question 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.

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.

Knowing that teachers play an important role to the teaching-learning process for non-native speakers who learn Bahasa Indonesia, below are the teachers' role in Bahasa Indonesia class. They are as follows:

#### 1. as facilitator

The teachers should exactly know about the learners' characteristics and needs. They are not just teaching Bahasa Indonesia but also giving better understanding about culture and its related domain. Since cultures are dynamic, complex, and changing [1], therefore, the teachers should be careful in discussing this topic in class. Moreover, the teachers should help the learners to understand the complex characteristics of Indonesia and Indonesian people in order to prevent them from developing new stereotype. The discussion must be mediated by a consideration of their culture which may differ from Indonesia in significant ways.

#### 2. as controller

The teachers are controllers of what will happen and what should do during the learning process [3]. They determine what the learners do and predict many responses coming from the learners. When the interaction between learners and teachers takes place, the teachers must create a climate in which the learners have freedom to express what they want to and have spontaneity to perform their language competence. It is the teachers' job to control any possible and impossible things which might happen in the class. Everything seems to be questioned by the learners since they have curiosity about Indonesia and its culture. Therefore, the teachers as controller should know what should be discussed and which is not for class, and how to explain it without leaving out their nationalism.

#### 3. as resource

The teachers are also as resources of any information about Bahasa Indonesia and the culture. The learners may take the initiative to come to the teachers asking and

arguing about anything. It is the time when the teachers give them chances to proceed new information and knowledge so that the continuum of directive and non-directive teaching is well applied. Being independent learners is also needed by the learners in terms of seeking new information, learning new language, and adapting with local culture.

### III. CONCLUSION

The teachers in teaching Bahasa Indonesia and culture for non-native learners play an important role since they put the teachers' guidance to learn Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian culture higher. Therefore, the teachers can be the learners' facilitator, controller, and resource of information. It can be noted here that the teachers do not merely teach them but also introduce culture awareness and cross cultural understanding. In giving new information and selecting the topics discussed in the class, the teachers should consider some aspects for teaching and also have good understanding about Indonesian culture and other cultures as well.

By discussing how to teach Bahasa Indonesia for non-native speakers and how the teachers play the important role, it is the homework for curriculum designers, government, and educators to have better plans and strategies for developing the program for non-native speakers so that they come to Indonesia more enthusiastically and have better perceptions and points of views. Through learning Bahasa Indonesia, the foreigners are also expected to know Indonesian culture and people better than before.

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