

ADULT SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY OF A STUDENT FROM GUINEA BISSAU (WEST AFRICA) WHO LEARNS BAHASA INDONESIA AS HIS SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The world migration is an interesting issue to be discussed. Reflecting on the recent phenomenon, world migration makes the people become the world citizen. Indeed, it is challenging the people to be more aware of cross cultural understanding because they have to live in a place where the culture is totally different from theirs. One key to face the challenges of becoming world citizen is to be able to communicate with a lingua franca used in a specific setting. This study aims to investigate how a student from Guinea Bissau (West Africa) learns Bahasa Indonesia as his second language when he studies in Indonesia. This study was conducted by doing an in-depth interview with the subject used notes and video recording. The results show the relevant influence of first language to his second language acquisition and the settings of language learning exposed the subject to effectively communicate in L2 and also gets corrective feedbacks when he makes grammatical mistakes or errors.

Keywords: World Migration, Cross Cultural Understanding, Second Language Acquisition

ABSTRAK

Migrasi dunia merupakan suatu isu yang menarik untuk didiskusikan. Berkaca dari fenomena masa kini, migrasi dunia membuat manusia menjadi warga negara dunia. Tentu saja, hal ini menantang manusia untuk semakin menyadari pemahaman lintas budaya karena mereka hidup di tempat di mana budayanya sangat berbeda dari budaya asal mereka. Salah satu kunci untuk menghadapi tantangan menjadi warga negara dunia adalah mampu berkomunikasi dengan bahasa pengantar yang digunakan di tempat tertentu. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi bagaimana seorang mahasiswa dari Guinea Bissau (Afrika Barat) mempelajari Bahasa Indonesia sebagai bahasa keduanya ketika dia melanjutkan studi di Indonesia. Studi ini dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan subyek, menggunakan catatan dan rekaman video. Hasilnya menunjukkan pengaruh relevan dari bahasa pertamanya terhadap pemerolehan bahasa keduanya dan tempat pembelajaran bahasa mengarahkan subyek untuk berkomunikasi secara efektif dalam bahasa kedua dan juga subyek mendapatkan masukan yang mengoreksi ketika dia membuat kesalahan gramatikal.

Keywords: Migrasi Dunia, Pemahaman Lintas Budaya, Pemerolehan Bahasa Kedua

INTRODUCTION

In this globalized world, people are easily migrating all around the world and seemingly there is no clear boundaries among countries in the world. There are many factors contributing the migration and one of them is social factor. This factor leads people the people to migrate to have a better life. Recently, the phenomenon of international students who travel around the world to continue their study is undeniably viral all around the world. The international students continue their study to have a bright future because when they graduate, they can have a promising career in life ahead. Most of the universities in the world welcome the international students by providing them with a specific program so that they can get used to a new environment. This is a good start for the international students to understand the new culture that they will face some years ahead.

Even though the diversity challenges of the complex world are great, we can still have many promising opportunities. Communicating with people from diverse cultures can lead to a lot of advantage such as healthier communities; increased international, national, and local commerce; reduced conflict; and personal growth through increased tolerance (Neuliep, 2009). The success of intercultural communication is affected by the understanding of other cultures (Brown & Lee; 2015). Building intercultural awareness nowadays is very important because the people always communicate with other people from different cultures in their daily basis. As a result, good intercultural communication can create healthy relationship among countries in the world.

Living in a new environment is not an easy task. The people need to make many kinds of adjustment and adaptation due to the new culture that they have not experienced before. Some misunderstandings and cultural shocks possibly happened during the adjustment and adaptation period. Moreover, conflicts may raise during this period if we reflect on the case of migrants from North Africa and Middle East who migrate to some European countries. One key factor which contribute to such kind of conflicts is the communication factor. If we can communicate well, we can eliminate the source of conflicts. When people fail to understand others' cultures, they fail to act contextually. As stated by Mukminatun (2009), Adi, Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF) teacher who went to Goff's Harbour, New South Wales (NSW), Australia, once feeling upset when his host-mother offered him to have "tea time". He was almost angry by saying: "What? Tea again? I drank a cup of tea in the morning, then two at school, one more as I got home and now again? Please, I can't have anymore. Can I have water?" In fact, his host mother explained that tea time means having dinner. Adi was really embarrassed.

Andrade (2006) states that international students face difficulties in English, the official language where they live to study and other aspects of living overseas. Additionally, a lot of international students could integrate quite well to their new environment but for some of them, the condition could quite stressful and hard (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992). As language teachers, we should be aware and concern about the presence of international students in our country. We also need to

find the best ways to allow them have fruitful time of learning cultural values of the host countries and also be well integrated in their academic sphere.

Studying overseas can open wider opportunity to succeed in the future. In one hand, becoming international students in one hand can be very enjoyable because we can have more experiences and benefits rather than learning inside the country. On the other hand, it can be very difficult because they get to adjust and integrate to a whole new system. The challenges faced by the international students are quite complex that is why they need to work hard to be integrated academically and culturally. Understanding the international students' adjustment process is related to intercultural education. Adaptation and adjustment process in a new environment can be both stressful and enjoyable.

The international students who continue their study abroad have their own academic and cultural system that they bring with. Both academic and cultural system should adjust and adapt with the academic and cultural system in the countries where they continue their study. International students may have to learn new language, custom, habit, way of life, etc., that are totally different to their home countries. The university and the society should aware to the needs of the international students to be well integrated in the new environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This paper mainly deals with the theory of SLA stated by Krashen (1981): "Language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language--natural communication--in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding." In this case, learning a language when we are in adult age is nothing but the same as when we are in our early age, learning our mother tongue. However, the context and detail is totally different regarding to the range of age. The people who want to learn a second language should be an active learner because they need to expose themselves in a new culture with different ways of life and ways of conveying messages.

Recently, the education world integrates the concept of 6 C's of Education in 21st century learning. 6 C's is the acronym of some skills that the students should master, which are: Think Critically, Communicate Clearly, Work Collaboratively, Embrace Culture, Develop Creativity, and Utilize Connectivity (www.infogram.com). It is essential to prepare students for increasingly complex life and work environments in the 21st century. All aspects in 6 C's are intertwined and interwoven to deal with the challenges in 21st century.

Every language learner surely faces hindrances and barriers in learning a new language. It is a normal process that the learners should cope with. Surely, the overseas students have more challenges than the local students due to their ability in adapting academic atmosphere. Thus, research about all obstacles faced by the international students will be a good tool for the internalization of a campus and could

help them have a better experience in their study (Bauerschmidt, 2015). Moreover, international students have many diversities: differing languages, religious orientation, traditions, politics, world view, and cultural constructs of reality (Ozbay, 1993).

Moreover, language is considered as one problematic issue on the international students' academic adjustment. Moreover, Peruci & Hu (1995) state that international students have to deal not only with academic challenges, but also with new customs, languages, food, living arrangements, social life, etc. Ramsay et al. (1999) state that one big problem that the international students experience is to understand the content of the lecturers either their own linguistic abilities or the speed at which the lecturers are talking. The international students also experience problem in understanding their professor and classmates because of the accent or rate of their (Zhang & Zhou, 2010). The result of the study on non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) students at an Australian university conducted by Mulligan & Kirkpatrick (2000), they conclude that 10% of the participants understand their lecturers very well, but almost 25% of them did not understand the lecturers at all.

The objective of the study is to investigate how an international student integrates culturally, academically, and learn the lingua franca of the country where the study takes place. The results of the study are expected to help the language teachers teach the international students more strategically and objectively. Not only for the teachers, the results of this study can be a good tool for those who have contacts with the international students, like language learners and education institutions, to be able to be a good host for the international students and can usher them to adapt and adjust in a new environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted by doing an in-depth interview with the subject. The subject is Mardoqueu A.I Mamadu (25 years old). He is an international student who studies Information Technology particularly computer science in Merdeka University of Malang. He came to Indonesia in 2013. He is a native Guinea Bissau who speaks Creole language as his mother tongue. This study was conducted in the writer's house. The writer first contacted the subject to ask for his consent. Before conducting this research, the writer asked some general questions related to the research. After the subject agreed to be interviewed, the writer made an appointment to do an interview.

The instruments of this study include the interview guide which contains the list of questions and video recording. The video recording was taken during the interview with the Mardo. Also, the researchers wrote down some important data on the field notes. This study was conducted by applying semi structured interview, the questions that the writer asked to the subject can be flexible following the flow of the interview. Thus, below are the list of research questions as the guidelines of the whole interview session:

- 1) What kind of cultural differences that you experienced when you first came to Indonesia?
- 2) How do you solve the cultural shocks?
- 3) How do you learn Bahasa Indonesia? (Listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- 4) What is the most effective source for you to learn Bahasa Indonesia?
- 5) What are the challenges that you experience in learning Bahasa Indonesia?

The researchers did the data analysis based on the result of the data that the researchers got from the research instruments. The research data is in the form of video recording. The researchers sorting the transcription by doing data reduction. The data reduction process transferred the literal transcription of the interview into the form of the summary of the interview to answer the research questions stated above. The researchers sorted out the main point of the interview and write it down as the research data. The research data gathered was focusing on to know how the research subject integrate in a new environment and learn its official language. The researchers Eventually, after data analysis the researchers moved to the last step of the research which is drawing conclusions. Drawing conclusion is the final step of this research. At this step, the researchers gets and states the answers of the questions that are asked before conducting this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Mardo experienced some cultural differences particularly in the aspects of greetings. The greetings in Guinea Bissau can be given by only saying “hi” and it is more informal. But here in Indonesia is more formal because he has to shake hands using his right hands. He once used his left hand when he gave money to the driver of public transportation, then his friend said that here in Indonesia you need to give and receive something by using your right hand. Even though Mardo experience some cultural differences, he has some friends that guide him to know more about the culture in Indonesia. Mardo learns Bahasa Indonesia in informal settings without attending any formal classroom teaching and learning activities which can help him to have both better Bahasa Indonesia proficiency as well as the cultural knowledge.

Creole Language and Bahasa Indonesia are not really different one another because both languages have similar pattern and systems, for instance having no gender, no strict grammar rules, etc. There are some vocabularies that similar to one another, i.e “meja, bangku” etc. It is in line with the arguments stated by one of my Indonesian colleagues who has travelled to Guinea Bissau. He said that it is easy for Indonesians to learn Creole language because it has mostly the same patterns and systems with Bahasa Indonesia. If we reflect on the historical perspective, the similarity of both languages cannot be separated because both countries have ever been colonized by Portugal. Hence, there are many loan words derived from the Portuguese in both languages. Moreover, Mardo said that Creole language is 70%

similar to Portuguese language. The knowledge of Mardo's first L1 helps him to understand his L2 better.

As stated by Krashen (1981; 68) "The topic of "first language interference" has had an unusual history in secondlanguage acquisition research and practice. For many years, it had been presumed that the only major source of syntactic errors in adult second language performance was the performer's first language (Lado; 1957), and a great deal of materials preparation was done with this assumption in mind (Banathy, Trager, and Waddle; 1966). Subsequent empirical studies of errors made by second language students led to the discovery, however, that many errors are not traceable to the structure of the first language, but are common to second language performers of different linguistic backgrounds (e.g. Richards; 1971, Buteau; 1970).

Mardo learned Bahasa Indonesia for the first time when he was in Guinea Bissau. He learned only the basic of Bahasa Indonesia, like the way to introduce himself, one week before he went to Indonesia. Indeed, it was not enough for him. When he arrived in Indonesia, particularly Surabaya, he began to have a lot of exposure in learning Bahasa Indonesia. However, he thinks that the time in Surabaya was not effective for him to learn Bahasa Indonesia because he still used English when he communicates with the people there. After spending time for one month in Surabaya, his friend asked him to go Aimere, a small town in the island of Flores.

The time in Aimere was very effective and efficient for him to learn Bahasa Indonesia because he was in the setting that he cannot speak no other language except Bahasa Indonesia to the people there. Three weeks in Aimere was very helpful for Mardo to get a lot of exposure in learning his second language because he did it with children age 5-7 years old and when he made mistakes, the people would give him corrective feedbacks. In this case, Mardo experienced a lot of second language exposure. The basic idea is that Mardo has to get into contact with the target language, to get 'input' (Klein & Dimroth, 2003) or be 'exposed' (Chiswick & Miller, 1995) to the target language respectively. Both models differentiate between formal and informal learning settings. Formal situations are the various institutionalized educational opportunities (e.g. language courses). Informal learning settings refer to 'natural' learning situations like in everyday situations or through the media. It is important to note that the kind as well as the intensity of this contact is relevant for the L2 acquisition process. Mardo gets effective language exposure both in formal and informal settings.

From Aimere, he went back to Surabaya and then to Malang to continue his study in Merdeka University of Malang. From the first up to the fourth semester, Mardo used English to study. Started from the fifth semester up to now, Mardo began to use Bahasa Indonesia as a means of communication in the classroom. At this stage, Mardo started to develop his writing skills in Bahasa Indonesia. The use of technology also helps Mardo in learning his second language. For instance, when he chats through some platforms of social media on smartphone, he learns a lot of how to read and to write. Chun (2016; 102) states that: "Technology can be used to facilitate various SLA processes and skills; technologies can enable new methods and

approaches to learning and teaching and technology can help with the development of one's identity." In terms of speaking, Mardo communicates with his friends by using Bahasa Indonesia and when he made mistakes, his friends will give him corrective feedbacks.

What Mardo has experienced is in line with the assumption of information processing approach suggested by McLaughlin (1987):

*(1) Second language learning is the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill. (2) Complex skills can be reduced to sets of simpler component skills, which are hierarchically organized. (3) Learning of a skill initially demands learners' attention, and thus involves **controlled processing**. (4) Controlled processing requires considerable mental "space," or attentional effort. (5) Humans are limited-capacity processors. (6) Learners go from controlled to **automatic processing** with practice. (7) Learning essentially involves development from controlled to automatic processing of component skills, freeing learners' controlled processing capacity for new information and higher-order skills. (8) Along with development from controlled to automatic processing, learning also essentially involves **restructuring** or reorganization of mental representations. (9) Reorganizing mental representations as part of learning makes structures more coordinated, integrated, and efficient, including a faster response time when they are activated. (10) In SLA, restructuring of internal L2 representations, along with larger stores in memory, accounts for increasing levels of L2 proficiency.*

Mardo considers the communication with his friends is the most effective source for him to learn Bahasa Indonesia. Like it or not, Mardo has to speak Bahasa Indonesia and his friends are very helpful for him because they always give corrective feedbacks when Mardo makes mistakes. Mardo also has a habit to watch television in the evening for one up to two hours. This is also a good source for him to enrich and expand his knowledge in Bahasa Indonesia.

The challenge that he faced during learning Bahasa Indonesia mostly he experienced on the first one month in Indonesia. First time living outside his home country was very stressful for him. He even wanted to go back to Guinea Bissau. But the fact was he has to continue his study and keep fighting no matter so many challenges that he faced. The more he tried to communicate, the more he gets used to the language. In fact, when he communicates his friends in Guinea Bissau and his family, they support and motivate Mardo to keep going forward on his study. The encouragements from his friend and family make Mardo becomes more confident to continue his study in Indonesia. Moreover, Mardo considers that he needs about one year long to learn Bahasa Indonesia so that he can confidently and fluently communicate with others in Bahasa Indonesia.

Challenges in learning a new language can help the learners to find their best way to learn a language because learners find the best solution in the midst of the problems. When language learners find the best way to learn a language, they can be

more motivated and encouraged in following teaching and learning process. Andrade (2006) points out that the international could build meaningful and fruitful relationships with both domestic students and other international students from all over the world. It could help them to succeed in their academic sphere and also their career in the future. Moreover, a research on international students conducted in UK shows that the international students help each other emotionally and academically through psychological encouragement and practical academic help (Montgomery & McDowell, 2008). Not only among the international students, the domestic students also help the international to be well integrated academically and culturally.

CONCLUSION

This postmodern era leads people to easily migrate to all over the world to pursue a better life and bright future. Education is one factor which influence the people to move to other countries to continue their study. To be able to survive in a new environment, people need to communicate with the lingua franca used in a specific place. Reflecting on the case of Mardo from Guinea Bissau, he moved to Indonesia to continue his study and hoping to get a prominent future career when he come back to his home country. When he continues his study in Indonesia, he needs to learn Bahasa Indonesia and understands the culture of Indonesia as well. He may face a lot of challenges in a new environment which he has not ever experienced before. However, by the positive encouragement from his friends and family he succeeded conquer all the obstacles that hinder him to achieve a bright future. Mardo gets a lot of benefits in acquiring Bahasa Indonesia as his second language because he is in the setting that allows him to have a lot of exposure to the target language. Corrective feedbacks from his friend is a good tool for him to enhance his second language proficiency.

Before coming to Indonesia, it is better for Mardo to be prepared with the knowledge of Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia, the culture of Indonesia, and the education of Indonesia, specifically at Unmer. When the international student already in Indonesia, it is suggested for them to attend BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing) class provided by the reputable institutions where they can learn both the language and the culture of Indonesia. It is suggested for the international students to practice Bahasa Indonesia proportionally so that they can understand the communication inside and outside the classroom. International students also can use many learning materials provided in the library, in their study programs, etc. Whenever the international students face problems, they can share it to their classmates, the lecturers, and their academic advisors. Also, it is better if the lecturers have more knowledge related to the international students by giving them more time to introduce themselves. If possible, the lecturers can have a private meeting with the international students before the semester begins to get more data about the international students.

It is expected for the university to provide tutors for the international students to help and assist the international students to adjust and integrate with the academic of the university. The tutors also can help the international students to get more exposure in learning Bahasa Indonesia by providing them outside class activities which can help enhance their language and cultural knowledge. The activity can be done through visiting international schools, going to tourism spots, live in projects with the local people in rural area, playing games, etc. Furthermore, as Bauerschmidt (2015) states, the university which have the international students should develop sources of support for them which contains the beneficial structure of an academic program, leisure and sport activity, the peer-pairing program, workshops and seminars, the support provided by family, partners, friends, and the academic and counselling support.

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