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THE APPLICATION OF CULTURAL TEXTS AS AN AUTHENTIC MATERIAL IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE FOR FOREIGN LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the impact of the application of cultural texts as an authentic material in Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners (BIPA). It indicates that after learning story texts, the foreign learners have some improvements in speaking. In addition, generates their strong motivation to learn Indonesian since the messages and objectives in the text could be easily comprehended. The upshot of this paper is that Indonesian cultural texts could highly assist students to overcome their learning gaps and are beneficial to be used for learning materials.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia enjoys the distinction of having several geographical conditions, nature treasures, characteristics of the population, natural resources, and cultural arts. All these aspects are important for national prosperity. However, the attempts to make should not be confined to the management but include the global introduction of these natural treasures. One of them is the plethora of cultural arts through the use of cultural texts in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. It is such an undeniable fact that the researchers have analyzed numerous cultural texts which reveal direct correlation with the pillars of life in a society.

BIPA handbooks were classified into the cultural elements, body gestures, physical distance, eye-contact, contiguity, social customs, social values, religions, livelihood, arts, time usage, courteous acts, hospitality (greetings and politeness), compliment, mutual assistance, and courtesy (euphemism). These classifications provide foreign learners with abundant sources of learning materials. All these sources are possible to manage and develop for social

welfare and prosperity. The management and the development of natural wealth serve as the strength to compete with other countries especially by improving the outstanding human resources. The Regulation of Ministry of Education and Culture (No. 27 of 2017, paragraph 1) emphasizes that the improvement of human resources refers to the equalization of related sciences in bilateral, regional, or international levels.

Efforts to fulfill the equalization and to anticipate the challenge of globalization have been recently made to improve the quality of education and training in regional, national, and international levels. This effort embodies what has been mandated in the Indonesian Qualification Framework (KKNI), to realize the quality of human resource sectors by enforcing national education and training, applicable to Indonesian language teaching. This activity is truly exigent to implement since the global challenge and competition for national or international manpower are just ahead. Quality improvement may lead to stronger competitiveness.

Indonesian Language for Foreign Learners (BIPA) is a concerted attempt to improve quality of student language skills. Teaching Indonesian language to foreign learners in a non-formal learning environment aims to support Indonesia government program of Indonesian language learning for foreign learners.

Indonesian language as the unifying language has experienced remarkable development not only in its internal sectors (vocabularies), but also in its external sectors, and thus becoming well-known in several countries. This indicates its remarkable position in both national and global interactions. At the national level, Indonesian language is the primary medium of instruction in various learning and training activities. For education, Indonesian language has been regulated in Law No. 24 of 2009 especially in article 29 paragraph (1). The law requires every foreign speaker to be able to speak Indonesian language.

This condition may motivate them in the learning process as numerous foreign learners from Japan, America, Europe, and other Asian countries were learning Indonesian language in several Indonesia universities. They learnt it as second language for academic and practical business. In academics, they learnt to improve their knowledge about Indonesian historical cultures; meanwhile, in practical purpose, they learnt Indonesian for communication, especially for those working in several foreign companies. To build a good relationship, they, as investors, need to master the language for better communication skills and more effective cooperation.

Warsono & Budiyanto (2019, p. 3) argued that learning motivation could arise from learner's needs as human needs are greatly influenced by their feelings or willingness. Such kind of motivation leads us to improve our superiority and competition to achieve our best quality (Al-Mudhayan et al., 2019, p. 67). Therefore, BIPA foreign students' needs internally generate their necessary learning motivation. However, lack of learning textbooks severely constrains their teaching-learning process. This posed an enormous problem the instructors frequently encountered.

This paper proposes cultural texts for use as one of the authentic materials in learning Indonesian as a foreign language. It is prominent since instructors are necessitated to introduce regional cultures to BIPA students by providing them

with not only linguistic material but also Indonesian culture. Their mission is to develop nation culture in open-mindedness to bring a brilliant fusion with others (James, et al., 2019, p. 9).

Apparently, the foreign students brought their own customs of lifestyle, behavior and language to Indonesia. BIPA program allows its students to learn and practice speaking Indonesian in the way the local people do and gain deep knowledge about local culture to improve their ethics. It relates more to good or bad human acts in their words and deeds (Dharmojo, 2005, p. 40). As they express themselves to speak fluently in the beginning, cultural expressions with good moral, educational and religious values should be delivered as early as possible to help them become accustomed to trouble-free adaptation in the social life. In addition, Authentic cultural texts comprise both beneficial grammatical-lexical and social contents for those with limited Indonesian vocabularies. This enables them comprehend sociocultural contents to complete their Indonesia grammatical and lexical comprehension.

One of the first hurdles BIPA instructors to overcome is limited number of textbooks. This left a wide gap between the need of teaching materials and foreign language learners since it may unconsciously affect the teaching-learning process.

Foreign learners may repeatedly make mistakes while learning any second language due to several factor including the influence of mother tongue, the lack of language users, and the imperfect language teaching (Setyawati, 2010, pp. 15-16). In addition, inadequate teaching materials could make another burden for instructors to effectively teach the students. Various cultural texts are the ultimate solutions for this main problem.

Practically, communicative and integrative teaching approaches would complement the use of this cultural texts for more successful teaching-learning activities. The communicative approach prioritizes learners to use Indonesian for their active communication in daily life context. Meanwhile, the integrative approach requires the students to involve in activities inside and outside the classroom, either in structured assignments or social interactions. This enables student assimilation with the surrounding community to facilitate their learning practice.

Arsjad (1988, p. 3) stated that learning Indonesian language is inseparable from four aspects (competences) of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, in reality not all students show their mastery of those aspects at a time. Listening and reading include receptive language activities while speaking and writing include productive language activities. While learning cultural texts, students gain unlimited access to those competences. In addition, cultural texts are meant to produce more attractive and beneficial learning materials for foreign learners to perceive Indonesian culture rich in diversity, heritage, and local traditions. Saddhono (2012, pp. 177) added that Indonesian culture, art, culinary, tourist objects presents particular attractiveness for any purposes. These typical Indonesia identities may provide students with more interesting learning materials since they need to be more familiar with not only the language but also other aspects.

In addition to Indonesian language, Indonesian culture takes up a considerable portion in BIPA learning process, thus cultural texts could facilitate the students to better understand Indonesian language and culture, and corroborate

one another. According to Koentjaraningrat (1980, p. 217) mentioned seven elements of culture for BIPA teaching materials. They are language, livelihood, organization system, daily equipment and supplies, art, knowledge, and religions. For example, urban legends compiling abstract and unpredicted ideas are considerably important for alternative solutions of the unavailability of BIPA learning textbooks as some of the students learning Indonesian language to continue their studies in Indonesia and to explore Indonesian society and culture.

Indonesian language is in popular demand for those learning the language to comprehend interpersonal communication skills, to understand its scientific concept, and to learn Indonesian cultures from all aspects.

Custom refers to second embodiment of culture since it contains how human beings act and interact based on their social behaviors or rules. Its concreteness makes it highly possible to study and document. For authentic BIPA learning processes, Gorontalo's cultural texts (e.g., bedtime story) could be adopted for learning materials.

METHODS

This study made use of descriptive methodology as Jun, et al. (2019, p. 33) used. The data were qualitatively described by words rather than mathematical or statistical numbers. This method reveals qualitative information in detailed description to explain characters, situations, symptoms, or phenomena by not only collecting the data but also analyzing and interpreting the data (Sutopo, 1996, p. 8). Besides, conceptual method as used by Noor, et al. (2019, p. 81) suggested to make several books as references. Thus, this paper includes journals for its references.

Sudaryanto (1993, pp. 133-140), and Mahsun (2005, pp. 90-94) emphasized that observational method includes recording technique and anecdotal records technique (taking notes). For data collection, this paper used observational method (recording and note-taking), and interviews method by asking questions. This research participants were divided into two categories. Four participants are as informants of cultural texts, and three participants are as samples of BIPA learners (one of them was a wife of a native, and the rest were foreign students from America conducting research in Gorontalo (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Names of Participants

No.	NAME	ORIGINS	OCCUPATION
1.	D. K. Usman	Gorontalo	Pensioner (A Functionary)
2.	Mustapa Hasan	Gorontalo	Farmer (A Functionary)
3.	Akuba Yusuf	Gorontalo	Farmer (A Functionary)
4.	Imran Supu	Gorontalo	Farmer (A Functionary)
5.	Herman Didipu	Gorontalo	BIPA Instructor
6.	Naoko Sakinaga	Japan	House Wife
7.	Colleen Alena O'Brien	America	BIPA Student
8.	Russel Barlow	America	BIPA Student

RESULT

The interview results revealed that participants found difficulties at the early stage of studying due to the lack of textbooks. Adopting local cultural texts for

authentic materials, such as bedtime stories, could handle this problem. At the learning process, participants were interested in *Lahilote*, a Gorontalo urban legend, as it tells daily life experiences. The students read the story repeatedly improving their vocabularies, pronunciation and reading comprehension. The inadequate teaching materials BIPA instructors complained could be completely solved by adopting cultural texts such as legends, local cultural texts, traditional ceremonies, and other cultural assets.

One cultural text to adopt is a bedtime story. It comprises several different stories. Presented one after the other, it provided underlying participant's motivation through reading activities. It made a modest contribution since every single story delivers different messages; thus, enriching their vocabularies.

One of language aspects performing a central role in the application of cultural texts is reading. Learners were directly exposed to the stories as it involved several stages including pre-reading, reading, and post-reading.

In the pre-reading stage, the texts were not distributed since the instructors read them for the students. The instructors explained a text to discuss studied and gave general topic descriptions, while students were carefully listening. This stage is the basis of all reading materials as before conducting the reading stage, the instructors explained the topic. Initially, they asked students about general information and wrote them on the board to ease students to remember.

In the reading stage, instructors distributed the texts and asked the students to read and comprehend the context. They wrote difficult vocabularies and asked the instructor their meaning. The instructors explained the definition of words and their synonyms. They had prepared several questions for group works of two or three students. To answer the questions, the students set up a discussion within the group. Then, the instructors asked each one of them the results. If there were a role play to practice, they casted lots to determine who would play the role.

In the post reading stage, the students wrote a name card for themselves, for example:

- a. - What is your name :
 - Address :
 - Siblings :
- b. - My name :
 - My address :
 - Siblings :

Beginning from this simple text, a bedtime story like *Lahilote* could be presented by improving some context-related questions after reading the story, such as:

- a. What does *Lahilote* like?
 b. What does *Lahilote* dislike?
 c. Who is *Lahilote*'s wife?

This strategy, involving all students' active participation, drew students' attention. For intermediate and advance students, they need to use higher reading materials to practice their interpretation of words or sentences since they have more vocabularies. At this stage, each student presented one single text. Then, the instructors asked them to write a story or a report about text they have read.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of data analysis and discussions conclude that cultural texts, such as bedtime stories, could improve foreign student's speaking ability as their vocabularies were gradually enriched. All cultural value in the stories could encourage them to read the text repeatedly allowing them to extend their vocabularies. In addition, urban legends highly will fill the learning gaps for foreign learners and improve their language skills since they conveyed: (1) togetherness to carry out a lofty ambition of human beings; (2) beautiful words, good manners, ethics, and gentleness; (3) cultural expressions of politeness, hospitality, moderate value, respects, benevolence, and friendliness; and moral values (hardworking, and responsibility). To sum up, cultural texts are beneficial for BIPA instructors to apply for their extensive teaching-learning materials.

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