

The Application of Technology in Intercultural Language Learning: International Students Program at a University in Yogyakarta

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Abstract—As a part of global movement and digitalized technology in this 21th century, massive interaction of different people from different cultural background becomes an integral system of life. Though English plays role as a global language for a number of years, learning other foreign languages in intercultural perspective is essential to overcome unnecessary intra –person and interpersonal conflicts when interacting with different people from variety of cultural backgrounds. However, intercultural language learning cannot be successful without utilization of technology. Hence, this study presents how the international students (BIPA Program) learn Indonesian language in intercultural perspective with application of technology. The study focuses on two research questions, first how do students apply technology to learn Indonesian language in intercultural perspective? Secondly, what is the importance of technology in intercultural language learning? This study involves seven international students from different countries; these students have been studying Indonesian language and culture for one year. They were selected purposively. The study used open ended questioners and interview as instruments of data collection. The data were qualitatively analyzed and the results show that students are successful in learning Indonesian language in intercultural perspective as result of utilization of technology. With technology, learners could move from ethnocentric stage to ethnos relativism stage in intercultural competence. However, most of the students apply technology in learning Indonesian language without reflecting to their own culture. Therefore, the results imply that technology plays a vital role in intercultural language learning. Moreover, the teachers and students may focus more on the application of technology to reflect learner’s culture and target language culture rather than relying only to target language’s culture. Applying technology to both cultures makes the intercultural language learning more effective.

Keywords—*intercultural language learning, technology in Intercultural perspectives.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Intercultural Language Learning

As the rapid and dynamic interaction of different people with different cultural background increases in this global era, intercultural communicative competence is highly demanded. Intercultural communicative competence is the ability to interact with people from different cultural background appropriately and effectively in all social contexts using foreign language [1]. Thus, Intercultural

language learning becomes vital for making learners intercultural communicative competent. Learning foreign language in this perspective makes learners to become the mediators between their own culture and the culture of the target language [2].

Bennett, *et al.* in [3] described the two stages in intercultural competence, the beginning is ethnocentrism which is the tendency to view ones` own culture as the central to reality and followed by ethnos-relativism the conscious awareness that all behaviors exist within a cultural framework including one’s own. Hence, intercultural language learning is very essential for the students to move from ethnocentrism towards ethnos relativism. Therefore, despite the use of English as a lingual franca for more than 7.5 loudspeakers [4], it is very crucial to learn as many foreign languages as possible in intercultural perspective to be intercultural mediators and communicate appropriately and effectively and avoid intercultural conflicts in the 21st century multicultural global community.

Intercultural language learning in foreign language context does not mean foreign language learners’ study foreign language and its culture as a body of knowledge solely, but rather it involves transformation of the learner in the process of learning. The learners transform from linguistic and cultural positioning and develop intercultural identity, and as a result of engagement with another culture, the boundary between self and others are explored, resolved and redrawn [5]. Byram in [2] explains the term “intercultural mediator” to refer to the person who is intercultural competent as result of intercultural language learning orientation. The learners need to be mediator between their background culture and the culture of the target language. He also differentiated between intercultural mediator and bicultural person, the first involves the transformation of learners in attitude, knowledge, skills and cultural awareness while the bilingual only knows more than one culture.

Intercultural language learning approach is the base of in Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning context. This perspective harmonizes linguistic competence, social linguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence. If intercultural language learning is implemented effectively in foreign language context, learners will become intercultural

competent and intercultural communicative competent. Byram in [1] distinguishes the two terms with the description that intercultural competence is the ability of people to interact in their own language with people from another country and cultural background and it comes as a result of knowledge, interest, relating and discovery. While, intercultural communicative competence is the ability to use foreign language in interaction with different people from different cultural background and being able to negotiate the meaning in different social context is highlighted.

B. Technology in Intercultural Language Learning

In the intensive interaction of different people with different cultural background in this global era, the role of technology is highlighted. Consequently, intercultural language learning as a demand for foreign language learners to become intercultural communicative competent in this 21st century needs the application of technology for its effectively implementation. Through the application of different technological media such as WhatsApp, email, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, twitter, and television to mention the few, the students get information about different culture in the world. [6] explain that the information from different technological media is an input for noticing, comparing and reflection of different cultures including the student's culture. Ravieyan, *et al.* in [7] explain that technological media enrich information about culture and the students become aware as they notice new elements of culture. Hence, there is improvement of intercultural language competence based on Byram's model of intercultural communication [2].

Also, while [8] emphasizes on new information, [9] expand the explanations describing that the information got from technological media act as a source of knowledge of awareness of their own beliefs, attitudes and their own culture. They add that the students gain lexical knowledge and cultural practice knowledge which prevent them from fossilization. The point of intercultural awareness is supported by [10] who argue using the research they did to children learning foreign language in intercultural perspective with application of technology. They also argue that currently, most of children enjoy learning different culture through the use of technology.

Knowledge of reflection of the student's culture from the technological media being very important for intercultural language learning, [11] claims that the cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and cultural competence for student's language and target language from technological media are very important for intercultural language learning. And [12] concludes that technology is essential because we can get the cultural knowledge of self and others. This knowledge is very important because it reduces wrong perceptions, stereotyping and discrimination.

This interwoven relationship between technology and intercultural language learning in this 21st century has not been discussed by many researchers particularly in Indonesian context. Therefore, this study focuses on application of technology in learning Indonesian as a foreign language in intercultural orientation by international students

(BIPA Program). Particularly, the study seeks to respond the following two questions.

- a. How do students apply technology to learn Indonesian language in intercultural perspective?
- b. What is the importance of technology in intercultural language learning?

The rest of this paper is organized as follow: Section II presents literature review. Section III describes material & methodology of this research. Section IV presents the obtained results and following by discussion. Finally, Section V concludes this work.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on the analysis and discussion different studies related to application of technology in intercultural language learning. The section is subdivided into two subsections with respect to the following research questions; How do students apply technology to study language in intercultural perspectives? and what is the importance of technology in learning language in intercultural perspectives. The section ends with discussion of the intercultural model used by the researcher.

A. Application of Technology in Intercultural Language Perspective

There many studies related to application of technology in intercultural language learning for example Lee and Markey [9] conducted a research on learner's perceptions of online intercultural exchange through web 2.0 technology. Spanish and American used telecollaborative projects though twitter, blogs and Broadcasts for intercultural language for a semester. The study used mixed method the results showed that students gain cultural knowledge from native speakers, but they became more aware with their own beliefs and attitudes towards their own culture and other's culture changed. They raised knowledge of cultural norms and practices, increased lexical knowledge and minimized fossilization and acquire native sound discourse. Hence, the students recommended having more time for cultural exchange by interaction to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

Also, [13] gives a good example of the group ICT tasks which involved Higher Order Thinking Skills. The students learning Japanese in Australia read an article about different global issues in Japan, after an online discussion with different peers' groups in Japan. They created a Japanese video to explain their views on those contemporary issues and the video was uploaded to YouTube to be commended by students from Japanese universities. The students were happy as they received the comments from native speakers about the way they expressed themselves and acted verbally and none verbally in the video. Therefore, the implementation of intercultural language learning was well done.

B. The Importance of Technology in Intercultural Language Learning.

1. Technology Provides the Forum for Learners to Engage in Real Context of Intercultural Language Learning

After gaining the intercultural knowledge from technological media, the learners engage in the actual interaction with people of different cultural backgrounds. [14] states that collaboration on line integrates the intercultural content studied in class with the reality in actual sense. This is what is called moving beyond the textbook by [6] who explain that technology is important for providing materials which make learners interact in intercultural language learning. Through technology the students will be able to communicate in real situation since it is not sufficient to gain intercultural knowledge without being involved in real intercultural communication. [15] also adds that at this global era technology is one of the aspects which facilitate the interaction of people with different cultural background. Similarly, [16] emphasizes on engaging in actual intercultural communication rather than engaging in intercultural exchange by using cultural products. [17] explains that technology provides unlimited context for interaction of learners with the target language uses, the author gives examples such as greeting with native speaker of the language, apologizing, expressing gratitude and many others.

Similarly, [18] and [19] expand that technology plays a great role in intercultural language learning by improving intercultural communicative competence as it exposes the learners to engage in comparing the pragmatics of their own language and the target language. Blommaert mentions pragmatics acts like, how to apologize, request, disagree expression and different registers as among the essential aspects involved as technology is used in intercultural language learning while Chun's emphasis lies online exchanges play a great role in development of intercultural communicative competence and pragmatics in general.

Also [20] emphasizes on the role of technology through his report that students who attended intercultural language learning through technology developed the ability to communicate with others, openly flexible with tolerance.

2. Technology Enhances Changes in Attitude in Intercultural Perspectives.

During interaction with the native speakers through different technological media, students change their attitudes towards their own culture and the culture of the target language. Su in [21] explains what happened to Taiwan students after interacting with English speakers through media. The students modified some of the elements of their culture after self-reflection, changed their own culture, their original hypothesis about English culture, change their misconception and stereotypes, respect their cultural differences and diversity and change from ethnocentrism views to ethnorelativism. Changing stereotypes attitude as result of technological interaction is also explained by [18]. Similarly, reflection of the student's culture by using technology has been pointed out by [23] Fang [23] and S [20]. However, while [20] explains about tolerance as one of the results of reflection [22] pointed out appreciation of their own culture and change of perception of their cultural identity as among the outcome of engaging in technology in intercultural language learning. Moreover, [24], [25] reported in their findings that the students changed their

thinking and attitude after interaction with the native speakers though digital technology and participation in telecollaboration.

Generally, technology is very essential in intercultural language learning since without it, intercultural language learning will not be implemented effectively. However, [2] gives an alert that though technology has a positive impact towards intercultural language learning still the learners should handle technology with care since it can mislead, some of information is exaggerated and some information and news shown have no realistic with the real cultural practice, it is just because of labeling or misinterpretation. Hence critical analysis is needed when interpreting the technological media in the intercultural language learning.

Therefore, the use of technology can facilitate intercultural language learning to great extent since it brings the authenticity of the learning process.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Participants

This study used seven international students who studied one-year course of Indonesian language and culture as foreigners in one of the universities in Yogyakarta. The students have different cultural backgrounds. They come from different countries in Asian and African continents. The countries are Mali in West Africa, Rwanda and Burundi in East Africa, Turkmenistan in Central Asia and Nepal in Southern Asia.

B. Sampling

The participants were purposively selected from BIPA program since they have different cultural backgrounds and they study Indonesian language as a foreign language in intercultural perspective.

C. Instrument

The data were collected through open ended questionnaires and semi-structured interview.

D. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively using interactive model; data condensation, data display drawing and verifying conclusion [27]. The research applied Byram model of intercultural competence [1] [2] principles and processes of intercultural language learning [6] and intercultural sensitivity model [3] to analyze the data.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in tables and explanation Qualitatively following the research questions.

A. How students apply technology in studying Indonesian language in Intercultural perspective

TABLE I. DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES APPLYING TECHNOLOGY IN STUDYING INDONESIAN IN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Student	Responses
S1	Social media WhatsApp, listening songs on YouTube, power point presentation in class
S2	Google translation, online dictionary, Youtube songs and

	video, TV watch film, WhatsApp communication
S3	power point presentation, google translator, YouTube, using WhatsApp groups, using internet
S4	Google translation, searching information in internet, presenting cultural projects, sharing information with Indonesians about their culture and language.
S5	To interact with Indonesians using media, watch video in YouTube
S6	Using on line dictionary, google translation, watch video in you tube, listen some news in RRI
S7	using YouTube to watch video, using google internet to get different information about culture and languages, creating groups in WhatsApp discussing and exchange culture ourselves and with teachers, visiting some website to get more information about culture example; winosotnobatikjogya.website, we use internet to make cultural projects

Table I shows different learning activities which apply technological media in studying Indonesian language in intercultural perspectives as responded by seven international students. These activities involve lower and higher order thinking skills. They also involve macro skills such as listening, reading, writing and presentation of Indonesian culture and the student's culture by comparing. Macro skills and higher order thinking activities are emphasized by [6] as essential in intercultural language learning. Moreover, [13] also shows the positive findings of applying ICT projects in intercultural language learning as shown by these activities.

B. How Students Apply Technology to Exchange their Views about their Cultural Backgrounds

TABLE II: SHOWING TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIA USED BY STUDENTS TO STUDY INDONESIAN LANGUAGE IN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

No	Media	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
1	WhatsApp	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	YouTube	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	Facebook	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
4	Google translate	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
5	Online dictionary	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
6	Radio	x	x	x	x	√	√	x
7	Instagram	x	x	x	x	x	x	√
8	projector	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
9	Google	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
10	Video recording	√	√	x	x	x	x	x

The Table II above shows that, all students use WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Google translator, projectors, google download while most of them use online dictionary and very few use video recording radio Indonesia and Instagram in the learning process. These findings imply that technological media are very essential in intercultural language learning. The findings are also supported by [6] who suggested these technological media as very important in intercultural language because they act as input for noticing, comparing and reflection of different cultures. Also, the author classified the information media and social technological media, from the findings google, YouTube, online dictionary and radio can be used to provide

information about culture while WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and video recording can be used for interaction and exchange of different cultural backgrounds. Hence, technological media are essential in intercultural language learning regardless of the physical interaction between the international students and Indonesian in their daily activities.

TABLE III: IMPORTANCE OF TECHNOLOGY IN STUDYING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE IN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Student	Responses
S3	helps to learn Indonesian language and culture very fast, Sources of information to get different materials related to Indonesian language and culture
S4	Technology facilitates studying Indonesian language and culture, works are done quickly, performance in language and culture becomes better, simplify socialization with Indonesians
S6	Technology helps to exchange ideas with friends from different cultural background through chatting
S7	It makes easy to get information about culture, helps to present my culture, exchange assignment with teachers.

From the Table III above, four students explained different points on the importance of technology in intercultural language learning. Their responses can be summarized as technology for intercultural information getting, simplifying interaction and collaboration of people with different cultural background and reflection of student's culture in learning process. Technology for intercultural information getting is supported [6] who explained that information from different technological media is for noticing, comparing and reflection in intercultural language learning. Moreover, [9] support that information from technological media is a source of knowledge of awareness of the student's beliefs, attitude and their culture. Also, [15] and [17] affirm that technology is very important for interaction of people from different cultural background and it brings unlimited context for interaction. Thus, without technology intercultural exchange cannot take place effectively since noticing, interaction and reflection in the process of learning cannot take place effectively.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings we presented, we deduce that technology and intercultural language learning cannot be separated in actual implementation in this globalized and digitalized era. Though the international students interact often with native speakers of Indonesian language physically, still they needed more time to learn Indonesian in intercultural perspective using different technological media. However, for the purpose of its effective implementation we suggest the teachers to use these media to make students reflect their cultural background and their identities as they learn Indonesian culture rather than sticking to teach them Indonesian culture solely

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