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IMMERSION PROGRAM IN TEACHING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE FOR THAILAND STUDENTS AT SANGGAR KAMPUNG INDONESIA, TULUNGAGUNG

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Abstract: This study is intended to explain the implementation of the immersion program in teaching Indonesian language for Thai learners at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung specifically focused on what kind of immersion program and activities are implemented and What Indonesian cultures are introduced as well as how they are to the Thai students learning Indonesian at the Sanggar. The data were obtained from 25 subjects using participation observation, interview, and documentation, and analysed qualitatively following steps of data reduction; identification, classification and coding, data display, and data verification and conclusion. The finding showed that. First, immersion in teaching Indonesian language for Thai students at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia is classified as adult immersion, total immersion, and two-way immersion. In addition to that various teaching and learning activities were implemented in the Sanggar including among others socio-drama, interviews with village officials, visiting schools and universities, and language travelling. Second, the teaching of Indonesian culture for Thai students encompasses both cultural values and cultural products in the form of artistic works.

Keywords: *immersion, Indonesian, language, culture*

INTRODUCTION

The large area of the country, the abundant islands and natural resources, big number of people, and various ethnic groups and cultures, makes Indonesia have a strategic position among ASEAN countries and other countries in the world. This strategic position of Indonesia, according to Sammeng (in Suyitno, 2010) brings into increasing number of people who learn Indonesian and culture. More and more foreigners are interested in learning Indonesian and culture in order to be able to communicate better with the officials, colleagues, employees, and the Indonesia people in general. Therefore, Indonesian Foreign Language Teaching methodology is highly needed.

The Indonesian language belongs to the family of the Malay language. Collins (2014), a Professor of Ethnic Study, states that the Malay language is an international language since it is spoken by a large number of people from Kalimantan, Sumatera, Semenanjung Malaya, Java, Filipina, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Badudu (1988) and Moeliono (1989) states that Indonesian language is originally a Malay language with adoption of some local languages and foreign languages. It is not fair to say that Indonesian language is different from Malay language. In fact, according to Susanto and Rofiuddin (2014) Indonesian language is learned in 13 universities in USA and 30 universities in Australia. ASEAN countries, namely, Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, and China also teach Indonesian language



at their schools. This could be an indication according to Susanto and Rofiuddin (2014) that Indonesian language would soon be used as an official language of ASEAN countries in the ASEAN Community.

Many teachers argue that the most practical and effective foreign language learning is to come and live in the countries where the people speak the target language in their daily life. To be able to speak English, learners ought to live in the English-speaking countries. To be able to speak Indonesian language, learners ought to stay in Indonesia for some period of time. Several studies have shown that learning a foreign language from native speakers by hearing and direct practice is more effective than to start by learning grammar.

Language is culturally bound. Language and culture are intertwined to such extent one may not survive without the other. It is impossible for a teacher to teach language without teaching culture. The relation between language and culture is deeply rooted (Leveridge, 2008). Language is rooted in culture and culture is reflected and passed on by using language from generation to the next. Therefore, learning a language involves the learning of its culture. In other words, teaching a language is also teaching the culture of the language.

Immersion is a method of learning a second or foreign language (L2) where the target language becomes a medium of learning process in the classroom. Since initially the program is for language learning, this program is also known as *language immersion*. This program, was first applied in Canada in 1960's. Then, adopted widely in America since 1980's. There are some reasons why America adopted language immersion; the competition of global economic, the rising number of second language learners, and the success of the prior program in Canada. Now, language immersion is widely adopted around the world. Immersion is classified based on the age of learners, the use of target language, and learners first language (L1) (Anonim, 2010). Based on the age of learners, immersion is classified into (1) early immersion, between the ages of 5-6 years; (2) middle immersion, between the ages of 9-10 years; (3) late immersion, between the age of 11-14 years; and (4) adult immersion; between the age of 17 upwards. Based on the use of target language, immersion varies from (1) total immersion, (2) partial immersion, (3) content-based foreign languages in elementary schools (FLES), and (5) Foreign Language Experience (FLEX). Viewed from learners first language, immersion is classified into (1) submersion and (2) two-way immersion.

Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung ran an immersion program for students from Thailand. In 2015, there were 14 students participating in the program. Language immersion at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung was carried out by placing two learners in a foster family for three weeks. This paper is intended to explain the implementation of the immersion program in teaching Indonesian language for Thai learners at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung specifically focused on what kind of immersion program is implemented including the activities designed for the program. What and how the Indonesian cultures are introduced to the Thai students learning Indonesian at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia.



Language Teaching in Indonesia⁴

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language and taught as a compulsory subject in secondary and tertiary education with the main objective to provide the students with the ability to read English textbooks on their related fields or not engaged directly to the real communication (Suharmanto, 2003: Broughton, 1978). However, Schmidt (1995), stated that language first needs to be noticed then to be acquired. In other words, when language learners have noticed something, they are more likely to acquire it if they meet it again. There is support in the literature for the hypothesis that attention is required for all learning. Learners need to pay attention to input and pay particular attention to whatever aspect of the input (phonology, morphology, pragmatics, discourse, etc.) that learners are concerned to learn (Schmidt, 1995).

As a result of this point of view, the different Educational Departments have decided to establish, as the main purpose of the EFL teaching, the development of the four skills covering listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the implementation of this approach has not been trouble-free as many teachers insist on asking their children to understand every single word they listen to or read, or expect their pupils to write or speak without making the mistakes normally found in the process of acquiring any language (Cabrera, 2002).

METHOD

This study is a case study intended to describe the phenomena of learning Indonesian at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung. The subjects of the study included the lecturers, the learners, and the foster family reaching the total of 25 persons. The data collected using participation observation, interview, and documentation were analyzed qualitatively under the following steps: data reduction; identification, classification and coding, data display, and data verification and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Language Immersion was implemented in the teaching of Indonesian at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung. In an interview, the president of Sanggar Kampung Indonesia, stated:

"...teaching language and culture at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia is language immersion program... He convinced: ..."language immersion program is by far the best and the fastest way to learn foreign language. Therefore, I design this immersion program in teaching Indonesian language and culture to Thai learners."

The language immersion implemented at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia is adult immersion since the participants of the program were the students at the age of 21-25 years old. The fact that the students lived with their foster families during the program clearly indicates that Sanggar Kampung Indonesia used the so call complete immersion or total immersion. During the program Indonesian was used as the medium of communication in the learning process. This situation was further emphasized by the fact that no one in the program spoke Thai, the native language of the learners, except the learners themselves. This situation imposed learners to try to understand the target language used by native speakers. In such a way, a complete immersion makes learners easily master the target language in a relatively short period of time (Anonymous, 2010).



In addition to the total immersion program the study also found that various activities were designed in the teaching learning process including socio-drama, interviews with village officials, visiting schools and universities, and language travelling. Watono, the coordinator of language program, said:

"...this is the third year of teaching Indonesian language to Walailak students. We conduct some language activities such as socio-drama, interviews with village officials, visiting schools, and visiting some places of interests."

These activities were the same as what was reported by Jazeri and Susanto (2013) in their research. These various learning activities were intended to provide the students with the language exposure with the language and culture so that they can have maximum experience in using the language in the real cultural context.

Teaching Culture at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia

Learning Cultures at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia Tulungagung included two categories, namely cultural values and cultural works of art. Culture in the form of values at Kampung Indonesia was introduced in the first meeting as well as integrated into the learning of language skills. As usual, all learners and all lecturers and peer tutors met together in the main hall of Sanggar Kampung Indonesia for introduction. In this meeting, the president of Sanggar Kampung Indonesia explain the agenda of the program related to the learning Indonesian language and the culture. In this meeting, the president also explained some cultural values of what is allowed and what is not allowed (dos and don'ts) to be carried out in Indonesia, especially in the village where they live. In the occasion, president stated:

"...teaching language should be accompanied by teaching culture since language is culturally bound."

What he said was in line with Seelye (1994), Hertiningsih (2007), Leveridge (2008), and Suyitno (2010) that teaching language and culture should be integrally designed. Learning a new language is also learning a new culture. Thus, a teacher of language is also a teacher of culture. Soli, one of foster families, said:

"...during their stay in his family, Haleemah (Supansa Thawaetean) and Najma (Nooljina Yanai) learned some table manners"

While Watono informed:

"...within three weeks program, learners join Jaranan dance performance and visit Barong Gung to learn how to make batik."

In addition, Maya (Pennapa Ekapun) in the farewell party stated:

"... Terima kasih yang tulus juga kami sampaikan kepada Bapak dan Ibu dosen yang mengasuh kami di Sanggar Kampung Indonesia. Banyak ilmu dan pengalaman yang sudah (di) berikan selama kami di Sanggar Kampung Indonesia. Selain belajar bahasa Indonesia, Kami diajak (meng) kunjungi kantor desa, sekolah, dan tempat-tempat wisata. Kami diajak bermain Jaranan dan (mem) buat batik. Kami juga diajak (meng) kunjungi Gunung Wilis, Taman Mangrove, Pantai Prigi, dan Goa Lawa. Kami semua sangat senang sekali. Kami tidak akan (me) lupakan kenangan indah selama tiga minggu di Sanggar Kampung Indonesia. Sekali lagi kami ucap (kan) terima kasih."



The above presented quotations seem to indicate that there were two kinds of cultural values, namely (1) the values prevailing in a foster family and (2) values prevailing in rural communities introduced to the Indonesian learners at the Sanggar. Values prevailing in a foster family were politeness and table manners. While values of rural communities were respect to older people, greeting, working together, friendship, and good manners in speaking and acting. While cultural works of art taught and trained to Thai learners at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia were *Jaranan dance* and *batik*. *Jaranan dance* is one of popular traditional arts in Tulungagung. *Jaranan dance* reflects two blended human characters: the good and the evil (Revina, 2015). Besides *Jaranan dance*, Thai learners were also trained to make *batik*, a traditional cloth painting of Indonesia.

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that, first, teaching Indonesian language at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia for Thai learners is a mature and full immersion. Second, to teach Indonesian language and culture, Sanggar Kampung Indonesia implement some language activities such as socio-drama, interviews with village officials, visiting schools and universities, and language traveling. Third, Indonesian culture, both in the form of values and works of art, has become an integral part of teaching Indonesian language at Sanggar Kampung Indonesia.

Based on the above conclusions, the author suggests that in order to master Indonesian language and culture in a short period of time, teaching Indonesian as a foreign language should be designed as full immersion program and that language and culture should be learned in an integrated way. Learning Indonesian language is also learning Indonesian culture. Therefore, teaching Indonesian language to foreigners, should involve teaching of Indonesian culture as well.

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