

**A Pilot Study:  
Empowerment on Learning *Bahasa Indonesia* in India**  
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*Abstract*

The paper aims to convey the motive of Indian students learning *Bahasa Indonesia* in both Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia. Since India as multilingual country, it is very important then to know and see person to person's motives on studying foreign language especially *Bahasa Indonesia*. Through this program directly or indirectly leads students to pay more attention of Indian students getting to know Indonesia. The unit of analysis is a text as the answer of interview prepared by the writers as a means of collecting data. The participants or interviewees are twelve students. Meanwhile, the analysis focuses on three issues such as motive of learning *Bahasa Indonesia*, how to empower the students through *Bahasa Indonesia*, and difficulties on learning *Bahasa Indonesia*. There are three findings of the study. First, the motive of learning bahasa is rational, ideological, and extra-rational. Second, the way how to empower students is by teaching culture instead of language itself. Last, the students have the same difficulties on learning Bahasa Indonesia such as; pronunciation, standard and nonstandard words or expressions, and the method of teaching bahasa.

*Keywords: Pilot Study, Empowerment, Learning*

## **A. Introduction**

One of the biggest multi-lingual countries in the world is India. As a multilingual country, India has many varieties of language both as vernacular and national language similar as Indonesia. Indians have been using more than one language simultaneously and the influence of one language to the others could be seen in almost all the languages in the form of loan words. The States in India have never been linguistically homogeneous. There has been always some forms of multilingualism, between languages or dialects or both. At present there is not a single State or Union Territory that is monolingual. For example, the state of Haryana. This state may be divided into six or more linguistic or dialectal regions. There is an accepted standard dialect of Hindi that is recognized and used as the official language of the state.

These situations are continued and developed not only in term of social and cultural life but also in academic atmosphere. Nowadays India is already having a career focussed higher study system where foreign language is also included one of the most desired streams as it is directly linked with the multinational companies coming to India, tourism, academic collaborations, translations and interpretations. Also they play a very important role in enhancing country's export-import business. For instance, at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) there is a School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies (SLL&CS) which carries out learning and teaching process of foreign languages such as, Urdu, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Germany, France, Spain and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Besides, the language is taught at the Embassy of the Republic Indonesia for those who have no time to study regularly in JNU or for students outside of JNU.

The students studying there have various social and cultural background that will influence the achievement of learning it. Some students have got jobs already such as librarian, security, professional dancer but for others don't have it yet. Therefore, its very pertinent to understand an individual's interest as why he or she should opt *Bahasa Indonesia* as one of their career making tools. The study is then very significant to explore why do they learn *Bahasa*

*Indonesia* at JNU and the Embassy. So this paper aims to convey the motives of learning and teaching a language especially *Bahasa Indonesia* and how to make students more powerful during learning it.

## **B. Theoretical Framework**

There are two fundamental terms to comprehend this study; empowerment and learning. *First*, empowerment is the process of increasing the spiritual, political, and social strength of individual and communities. Empowerment also includes encouraging and developing the skills. It refers to accelerate and also to develop the self identity, access to knowledge and information's, ability to shnage, capacity building, increasing self confidence and esteem and realising pontentials (Selvam and Murthy, 2012:205). *Second*, the word learning in this paper means to both learning and teaching situation. Rahman (2002:38-40) argues that the term learning is similar as demand for learning a language. When people are willing to learn a language, they demand it. On the other hands, teaching processes are as the response toward the demand. Learning a language is as a market regulation like supply and demand.

He also explains that there are four reasons why people learning or teaching a language. Those are rational, resistance, ideological, and extra-rational. *First*, he asserts that rational means people learn a language is due to empower one's self by acquiring the potential to obtain employment. *Second*, resistance is the teaching or learning of one's ethnic language in order to oppose the power of a language supremacy. *Third*, ideological reason signifies learning language as the transmission of ideas, values, and perception of reality which create or influence one's world view through language teaching, especially language texts. *Fourth*, extra-rational is purely gratifies one emotionally. In short, people are willing to learn languages other than their own instruments for the fulfillment of economic or social goals' but this does not happen without their feeling a sense loss, of alienation from their roots of betrayal (Laitin 1992:32).

Another perspective to understand why people learning a language is that language a social fact or social semiotic (Halliday,1994). Since they live in any society they won't be able to neglect the role and existance of a language. People do social activities like transactional and interactional acts to fulfill or meet of their need in their life with the language as well (Brown and Yule, 1992:12). By learning language is also as means of access to the sources of power. In accordance with Anderson (2006:21), there are some various sources of power as wealth, social status, formal office, organisation, weapons, popuation and so forth. People still believe that one of the ways to gain the source of power is through mastering a language especially foriegn language. It is due capable to expand the acess of reaching the power.

## **C. Methodology**

This study is a pilot study of the descriptive qualitative research. This means as a small-scale set of observations undertaken to decide how and whether to launch and improve a full-scale project of learning and teaching of *Bahasa Indonesia* in India. The methods of collecting data used are interview. Sugiyono (2012:231) says that the interview method used is to get preliminary data and over come the limitation of the participants. The participants of *Bahasa Indonesia* class are six students of the Embassy class and twelve students at JNU. He further suggests the criteria of composing questions for interview such as; asking experience, opinion, feeling, knowledge and emotion. Based on the criteria, we designed eight questions that should be answered by the students. The interview is semi-structured interview, the interviewer has general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it, but does not enter interview with list of predermined questions (Nunan, 1992:149). Data analysis are done by using Miles and Huberman model; data reduction, data display, conclusion/verification (Sugiyono 2012:232).

## D. Data Presentation & Discussion

Generally the situation of the students learning *Bahasa Indonesia* both at JNU and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in India will be described and analyzed as follows:

### 1. Data Presentation

The data are taken by the researchers through semi-structured interview and consist of nine questions. The answer of questions is elaborated in detail in the discussion section but the questions are formulated in data presentation section in the following:

- a. *Do you like learning any language?*
- b. *Do you like learning Bahasa Indonesia?*
- c. *Why do you like learning Bahasa Indonesia?*
- d. *After mastering/knowing Bahasa Indonesia very well, what will you do further in the future?*
- e. *Do you have some ideas/suggestions to make learning-teaching Bahasa Indonesia more interesting?*
- f. *What do you think? There more and more students from India willing to study Bahasa Indonesia at higher education especially Jawaharlal Nehru University.*
- g. *What do you think? If Bahasa Indonesia will be official language of ASEAN.*
- h. *Do you have some difficulties of learning bahasa Indonesia?*

### 2. Discussion

At this section, we will discuss the answer regarding the above questions and classify them orderly as presented below:

#### a. Experience and Opinion

Surprisingly most students state that they didn't enjoy learning *Bahasa Indonesia* when the learning and teaching processes focusing on word by word or text oriented. In contrary, they need to know more information about culture and have a contact with Indonesian community or people during the class session. They are very happy if there is a native speaker and conducive environment of learning bahasa. Some of their statements will be presented below:

Question (5):

*Do you have some ideas/suggestions to make teaching bahasa Indonesia more interesting?*

Answer (5):

*...Bahasa could be more interesting in learning with some cultural performances and with music. It should be more practical than reading a book....*

*...Teacher should be native Indonesian because learning language is not only need to learn but we have to learn everything about Indonesia like songs, movies, friends with Indonesians and talk with Bahasa Indonesia...*

*...Students could be invited to volunteer in any conference, meeting or in the embassy itself so to shape their listening and speaking skills...*

#### b. Feeling and sense

To know the motives of learning Bahasa Indonesia, the students are given several questions. Most students say that they want to make a good career by mastering it. This reason is categorized as rational. There are seven students who explicitly realize their feeling that they want to get a job as at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in New Delhi. Other two students are going to find a job at Indian company in South Africa. Rest of students asserts that they love to exposure their thought with Indonesian people and as a passion on learning language (ideological and extra-rational). The data is deliberated as follows:

Question (2&3):

*Do you like learning Bahasa and why do you learn Bahasa Indonesia?*

Answer (2&3):

*... Yes of course. There are many reasons behind my interest in learning Bahasa Indonesia; (a) learning new language always excite me, (b) since Bahasa Indonesia is becoming an important language in the countries of South East Asia, I believe one should have some knowledge about bahasa, (c) the people of Indonesia is quite unique and beautiful. They are calm and warm hearted which make a big reason for my initerest (d) learning bahasa makes me feel like one of them...*

*...Yes I do like learning Bahasa Indonesia, as we all know that it is one the fast growing languages in the world. It is one of my favourite language...*

*...Yes I would like to learn Bahasa Indonesia because there are two things. First where I am working, it is a required as an official language. Second, learning Bahasa Indonesia is quite interesting. It is not only because of profession but also passion...*

### c. Knowledge

To explore the students' understanding of *Bahasa Indonesia*, we composed five questions. They reply their point of view regarding their personal information of *Bahasa Indonesia*. There are two fascinating issues of it; the phenomena are increasing number of students eager to study *Bahasa Indonesia* at JNU and possiblity of Bahasa Indonesia as official language of ASEAN. These will be presented below:

Questions (1,4,6,7&8):

*...do you like learning any language?...*

*...after knowing bahasa, then what will you do further?...*

*...what do you think if bahasa becomes an official language in ASEAN in the future?...*

*...what do you think if there more and more Indian students learning bahasa at JNU?..*

*...do you have difficulties of learning bahasa? If yes, then could you mention them!...*

Answers (1,4,6,7&8)

*All students say yes for question number one and they want to visit Indonesia after knowing Bahasa Indonesia (question number 4). It makes sense because more and more people speak Bahasa Indonesia. The students have similar difficulties on learning Bahasa Indonesia. They have problems on pronunciation, the method of teaching and to distinguish formal and informal words of Bahasa Indonesia.*

## E. Conclusion

Based on the data presentation and analysis above, it could be concluded as follows:

1. The students' motive of learning Bahasa Indonesia is rational, ideological, and extra-rational reasons.
2. To empower the students compentence on mastering Indonesian language and acces for job opportunity, the students need more contact, culture perfomances, and native Indonesian teacher during the learning and teaching process.
3. Most students feel that learning bahasa Indonesia is exciting but at the same time they have some difficulties in three areas such as; pronunciation, formal and informal word or expression, and the method used on teaching and learning process.

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