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Hybrid E-learning Media Application to Increase Local Cultural Understanding in Indonesian Learning for Foreign Students

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Abstract

The Indonesian language is attractive to other nations as it increases their understanding of the local culture. This is proved by the fact that Indonesian has been studied as a subject in 450 universities across the world since 2015. This phenomenon indicates that the need to learn the Indonesian language should receive an immediate response. The response to this need was realized through research using the action research method and the application of hybrid media e-learning. The study found the following: (1) that the application of hybrid e-learning media can improve the understanding of local Indonesian culture for foreign students; (2) that among the elements of Indonesian local culture, the elements of artifact presentation in hybrid e-learning media are most easily understood by foreign students; and (3) that Indonesian social culture is an elusive element for foreign students.

Keywords: hybrid e-learning, Indonesian, local-cultural

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1. Introduction

A nation will be famous and has a high profile when its national language is used by other countries in the world. The Indonesian language is a means of international communication and it is also a fact that foreigners learn Indonesian for communication media and diplomacy, thereby broadening knowledge about Indonesia and the understanding of its cultural treasures. In connection with this, problems arise assembled different cultures in international students studying Indonesian [1]. The progress of the Indonesian language is evidenced by the fact that many people from various countries learn the language. They will be motivated to continue learning. International speakers need to be focused on communication among speakers, namely external

speakers and native speakers in the learning environment. That is why they must prepare themselves to communicate among speakers from different cultures.

Therefore, teachers also need to media for teach the local cultural understanding for foreign students. Previous research found that teachers need hybrid e-learning media. So the purpose of this research is to find whether there is an increase in the understanding of foreign students of Indonesian local culture after learning with the help of hybrid e-learning.

Understanding the local culture is a requirement for someone to be able to socialize with the local community [2]. People socializing in Indonesia need to understand local Indonesian cultural treasures. In this regard, Geertz explained that in Indonesia, there are more than 300 ethnic groups who speak 250 different languages and have different local cultural characteristics [3]. Cultural understanding can be categorized into three categories: translation understanding, interpretation understanding, and measurement understanding [4]. Understanding cultural treasures, which is included in the translation category, is understanding in its literal meaning, bear meaning for and implement principles existing in cultural treasures. The interpretation category of cultural treasures can be seen from someone's understanding in connecting the most simple parts with the later known parts or connecting several parts of events with the following events, distinguishing primary elements from secondary elements in cultural treasures.

In line with the aforementioned statement, Ellis stated that these cultural treasures can be classified into three: translation, interpretation, and extrapolation [5]. The meaning of translation here is not only the transfer of a message from one language to another but also from an abstract concept to a model, a symbolic model that makes it easier for people to learn. Local culture is an essential element in learning a language [6], as demonstrated by the research finding that the gap in local culture understanding of students learning the Irish language is clearly linked to the positive attitude and low level of courage in using the language. Students who understand the local culture well show a better and more holistic understanding than those who do not understand the local culture. An understanding of local culture also helps students to maintain a positive attitude during the language learning process.

Language and culture are closely related. Language is the means of cultural expressions. There is not a single piece of knowledge of a cultural product that is delivered efficiently except through the medium of language [7]. Thus, language is the absolute supporting element of all human knowledge. With language, a nation's culture can be delivered all over the world, preserved, and passed down from generation to

generation. Williams explained that language and culture are related in three specific ways: that a language used by a community is a reflection of their whole culture; that language is a part of the culture or one of culture's elements, and that language is a condition of culture [8]. This means that language is the foundation for the establishment of various complex structures that are parallel with other cultural elements [9]. Learning a language means learning the local culture of this language. Therefore, local culture becomes the main component for people who are learning the language. So in learning this language and culture, foreign students need media. Hybrid e-learning media is the right tool.

Hybrid e-learning is a medium that combines face-to-face learning with online learning. In addition, hybrid e-learning means a mixture or a combination of learning. Thorne describes hybrid e-learning as a form of e-learning that integrates innovative advances in information technology in the form of online learning with effective participant interaction and participation [10]. Bersin defines hybrid e-learning as a combination of multiple or different forms of training in a single unit of learning [11]. Based on these views, hybrid e-learning is a combination of traditional learning characteristics and online learning.

This combination involves aspects of electronic media, including web-based learning, video streaming, and synchronous and asynchronous audio communications with traditional learning [12]. The process of organizing this hybrid e-learning requires a learning management system (LMS), which serves to regulate the management of learning. This is also often known as a course management system (CMS), generally a web-based CMS, which will run on a web server and can be accessed by participants through a web browser. The servers are placed in a university and are accessible from anywhere by the learning participants by utilizing the Internet connection. Efforts to apply interactive media to provide an understanding of local culture in the learning of Indonesian for foreign speakers technically adapt the integrative learning approach. Related research results have been disclosed by Buckley [13].

2. Methods

The method of this research was qualitative research. This qualitative research employed the strategy of classroom action research [14]. Furthermore, Burns and Whyte explain that a classroom action research is a process by an individual or a group of people that expect a change in a specific situation or certain condition from a test procedure that comes to a conclusion that is accountable and applicable in the

implementation [15, 16]. Moreover, Bogdan and Bicklen confirm that an action research is a systematic process of collecting information or data planned for social change, and McNiff states that an action research is a way to bring people toward advancement, by involving them through democratic collaboration and participation [17, 18].

This research involved 32 foreign students at a language development center. The research was conducted from February to April 2017. In the implementation of the research, there were two cycles. The research was designed using the model of Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of: (1) planning; (2) acting; (3) observing; and (4) reflecting [14]. These four actions belong to one cycle and the cycle ends if the determined indicator or success criteria are accomplished. The techniques used for data collection were: observation of the learning process; interviews to gather opinions from some of the respondents; a test to discover students' cognitive scores; and document analysis to analyze supporting files. The data validity was derived from triangulation of the data source, method, and informants, while the data were analyzed using the techniques of qualitative data using critical analysis technique and qualitative comparative descriptive.

3. Results

This study was conducted in two cycles. Based on the data obtained from cycle 1 and cycle 2, it is known that the implementation of hybrid e-learning media increases foreign students' interest and ability in understanding Indonesian local culture at the Language Development Center Sebelas Maret University, in Indonesia. The assessment of the learning process was undertaken through observation during the learning process and interviews with teachers and students. Students' activity increased when compared to the pre-cycle period: There were only 11 students, or 35%, who learned actively at that time, while in the first cycle this increased to about 15 students or 53%.

The improvement in students' local cultural understanding also increased in each cycle implemented: In the pre-cycle period there were 11 students, or 34%, who passed the minimum mastery criteria; then in cycle I this increased to 26 students or 81%. Reflection at the first cycle can be known based on the interviews with teachers and students, the thoroughness of students' local cultural understanding was still low, and did not reach the expected target of 85%. Students still had difficulties in choosing the dictions about Indonesian social culture. Therefore, the research was continued into cycle 2.

In cycle 1 at the problem statement stages, students were asked to work in groups to identify the problems in the images; in fact, the students were not able to talk constructively with their group mates. Students tend to be selfish and less cooperative in identifying problems in the images given by the teachers. Furthermore, at the data collection stage, students were drawing their own conclusions, which means they had not been able to cooperate with their group mates as was expected by the teachers using hybrid e-learning media. Students only wrote down their local Indonesian culture understanding individually based on the image that had been displayed by the teacher.

In the second cycle, students were heterogeneously grouped together and then the teacher displayed the image with a higher degree of difficulty than the deep material presentation in hybrid e-learning in cycle 1. Furthermore, the teacher was at the problem statement stage where the students were asked to write down the problem in each of a series of pictures shown in e-learning programs. Thus, the cooperation between the students in each group was more intense; moreover, the students were able to arrange the diction in accordance with the theme on the image displayed by the teacher.

The results of student activity in cycle 2 increased significantly: In the first cycle, 18 students, or 56%, learned actively and this increased to 28 students or 88%. The ability to understand local Indonesian culture also increased significantly: In the first cycle, 26 students, or 81%, fulfilling the minimum mastery criteria and this later became 31 students or 96%. The percentage of the increase was due to several factors. In cycle 2, the learning strategy was more focused on how students communicated and cooperated actively in their group. In addition, in cycle 2, the teacher provided local cultural understanding exercises. Displaying a more difficult series of images in the hybrid e-learning and giving the students the task of writing down every problem in the images encouraged the students to ask each other questions and made them talk with their group mates actively.

Hybrid e-learning media is a learning method presenting a concept or material that is not in the final form or a fixed concept but requires foreign students to identify what they are inquiring about, to gather information on their own, then shape what they understand in a fixed form. Therefore, from that process, they can find new knowledge about Indonesian local culture. But understanding Indonesian social culture is difficult for students. The results of the research in two cycles are related to the following studies.

Foreign students' understanding of Indonesian culture is varied. This variety of understanding is caused mainly by the students' lack of understanding in terms of

Indonesian social culture. Social culture is related to social behavior and the application of real-life behavior [19]. Social behavior is the main obstacle for students who study overseas. According to Timmermans, Boer, and Werf, such social culture is an evaluation or reaction of feeling [20]. This feeling reaction is represented as the habitual application of Indonesian people's social behavior. This is what the foreign students who study in Indonesia need. What occurred within the research setting is that some of the foreign students were favorable toward the social behavior of Indonesian culture.

Students' motivation to adapt really depends on how many opportunities they have to get to know the local culture. According to Gudykunst et al., socialization and encul-turation are the basic forms of basic human behavior expression, and these are inter-nalized to study the characteristics of the local culture surrounding the language being learned [21].

To be able to overcome the obstacle, the solution is to develop positive interaction with the local people or build empathy or sympathy toward the local culture [22]. This is often known as 'familiarity'. This means that foreign students adapt to learning the Indonesian language by becoming familiar with the local culture, which is described in hybrid e-learning media.

4. Conclusion

The conclusions of this research are as follows: (1) The application of hybrid e-learning media can improve the understanding of local Indonesian culture for foreign students. (2) Among the elements of Indonesian local culture, the elements of artifacts pre-sented in hybrid e-learning media are most easily understood by foreign students. (3) The social culture of Indonesia is an elusive element, so in this research, a second cycle is conducted to apply the media of e-learning to foreign students with a view to understanding the local culture of Indonesia perfectly.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this research.

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