

The implementation of multicultural education in German language learning

Wilma Akihary, Patrresia S. Apituley

Study Program of German Language Education, Pattimura University, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural education in a diverse cultural society is one of the important aspects to be addressed in order that it is not viewed as a threat in the current era of education 4.0. This research aims at examining the implementation of multicultural education in German language learning, especially in the Aufbaustufe A2 course. The samples of this research were second semester students of class A in the Study Program of German Language Education with the total of 20 students. The instruments used in this research were questionnaires, interviews and document review. The data of the results of the questionnaire, interviews, and document review were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The results of this research show that students are aware of their existence and also the existence of other students who have different cultural backgrounds. In addition, they respect their own culture even though they are also open to learning and understanding German culture.

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Corresponding Author:

Wilma Akihary,
Study Program of German Language Education,
Pattimura University.
Jl. Ir. M. Putuhena, Unpatti Campus Poka, Ambon 97233, Indonesia.
Email: wilamq@yahoo.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Today the industrial revolution (IR) 4.0 is developing rapidly and influencing all fields including education. The education 4.0 develops students to utilize new technologies that can help them improve according to the changes in society [1, 2]. Therefore, the curriculum needs to be revised by adding five competencies that must be possessed by students, namely critical thinking skills, creative and innovative, communication skills, cooperative and collaborative, and self-confidence [3]. In education 4.0, students need to learn to interact with people from various parts of the world. Thus, students should have the communication skills and should be professional in their fields. This also means that learning in the era of education 4.0 provides a learning experience to live in a community using the students' best skills [4]. World Economic Forum [5] identifies that the coordination skill with other people is one of the 10 skills in 2020. Therefore, it can be said that education 4.0 also highlights the ability to interact and to collaborate in multicultural communities.

One approach that can be used by teachers in accommodating cultural diversity in the classroom is multicultural education. Multicultural education is an education system that manages ways to convey the education concepts, a set of principles, values and practices of life of all races and ethnic groups of the students [6-8]. Banks [9] asserts that the purpose of multicultural education is to help individuals as learners to understand themselves in depth by seeing themselves from other cultural perspectives, and introducing other cultures and ethnicities to these individuals. Therefore, Misco [10] adds that in multicultural education, teachers play an important role in designing multicultural learning, so that learners feel comfortable in cultural diversity.

Several researches on the implementation of multicultural education have been conducted. Mayo [11] concludes that the transformation of multicultural curricula in higher education institutions can help all stakeholders, such as faculties, students and universities as a whole, to produce multicultural literate human resources, so that they are ready to live and work in the global generation. The research by Campbell-Whatley et al [12] shows that a higher education institution will continue to experience growth in the number of students from different cultural backgrounds, therefore universities need to be committed to ensuring that each faculty is equipped with multicultural education to respond to the diversity of students. This research also proves that multicultural education has a positive effect on faculties, students, and stakeholders of universities. Gay [13] adds that multicultural education is an integral part of improving student academic success regardless of their skin color, and preparing all young people to become democratic citizens in a pluralistic society.

Today's classroom learning consists of students who have different cultural backgrounds. The difference in the students' cultural background will certainly affect the way they act and think. Therefore, lecturers should be able to accommodate the students' cultural diversity in their classes. Nyoni [14] adds that multicultural education provides equality for the minority students. These students can understand the dominant culture, so that they can acculturate to the dominant culture.

Learning from the social conflict incident that occurred in 1999, multiculturalism in Maluku province is one of the aspects that need to be addressed, so that it is not seen as a threat but as a cultural richness that must be maintained in the community. This will have an impact on learning, especially foreign language learning, as found in the Study Program of German Language Education, Pattimura University. The students of Study Program of German Language Education with various ethnic and religious backgrounds learn German, which is the second foreign language in Maluku. Cultural clashes that occur between these can lead to conflict. For this reason, multicultural education is used as an alternative to realize national life in a multicultural frame [15]. Based on this explanation, this research aims at examining the implementation of multicultural education in German language learning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative research to explore the cultural diversity of students during German language learning, especially in the Aufbaustufe A2 course. The population of this research was the second semester students of the Study Program of German Language Education with a total number of 60 students. The samples used in this research were 20 students of German Language Education Study Program Class A in the second semester. The samples were determined using purposive sampling technique with heterogeneous cultural criteria.

Several research instruments were used to collect the research data. The instruments were in the form of a questionnaire sheet, interview guidelines, and a document review to analyze the extent to which the implementation of multicultural education was achieved by students. Data analysis in this research was carried out using descriptive analysis. This analysis began with reducing data, selecting and simplifying data, and focusing on the data obtained from questionnaires, interviews and documentation, and then presenting the data in the form of graphics, and finally drawing conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Student responses based on their region of origin and the mastery of regional languages

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, it was found that the second semester students of the Study Program of German Language Education came from various regions in Maluku as shown in Figure 1a.

Recognizing and respecting oneself, in this regard, towards self-identity as well as local language is very good. However, Figure 1b shows this is inversely proportional to their mastery of regional languages. Only 15% of the students master their regional languages actively, while the remaining 85% do not master their regional languages. This occurs due to several reasons: 1) the language used as an active means of communication among students is Ambon Malay; 2) most of their parents also do not use the regional language at home; 3) regional languages are not taught at schools. Similar research results were also found by Renganathan [16] that indigenous language in Malaysia was not used as a communication tool in schools, but it only functioned as an identity marker for indigenous communities. The language used in schools was Malay and English. Robinson [17] adds that languages are not just a communication tool. However, language also signifies one's identity. Local languages and local cultures as the identity of the people of a region are inseparable. Thus, if the local languages are in the brink of extinction, the local cultures are also in danger of dying out.

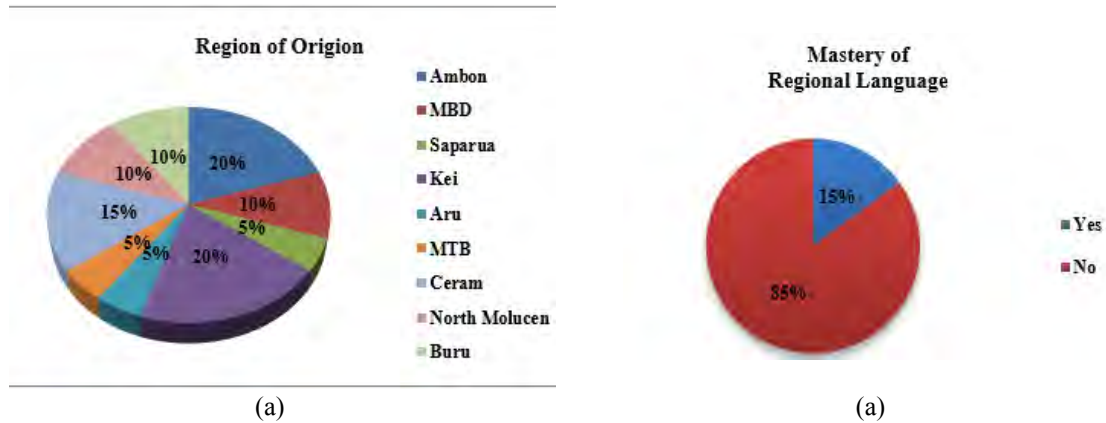


Figure 1. Student responses based on their region of origin and mastery of regional languages

In national language politics, regional languages are given the main attention, given that regional languages have functions as (1) symbols of regional pride, (2) symbols of regional identity, and (3) a tool to connect within families and local communities, regional languages function as (1) to support the national language, (2) the language of instruction in schools, (3) a tool to develop and to support the local cultures [18]. Thus, regional governments should appreciate the attention toward regional languages, in this case the regional government of Maluku, so that the self-defense with the identity as of the child of Maluku region with its regional language does not die out. Regional languages are also referred to as indigenous languages. That indigenous languages can be learnt through special courses that work with indigenous communities or flexible programs, because indigenous languages are inheritance of elders. Thus, it is expected that the academy provides resources for learning indigenous languages, provides the opportunities for students to learn indigenous languages, and ensures the formation of "Indigenous Language scholars" [19].

3.2. Student responses regarding eating manner

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews related to eating manner, it was found that each student had different eating manners as shown in Figure 2.

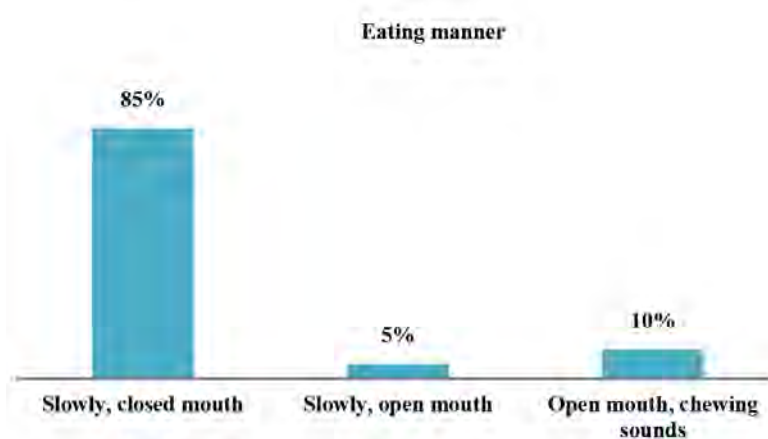


Figure 2. Student responses related to eating mann

Figure 2 shows 85% of the students stated that they usually ate slowly with their mouth closed, only 5% of the students ate slowly with their mouths open, but 10% of the students stated that they felt comfortable eating with their mouths open with chewing sounds. Students understand the eating manner in German culture, for example sitting at a dining table and eating with spoons, forks and knives. When chewing, the mouth is closed and no chewing sounds. The research by Rodríguez-Arauz et al [20] shows the importance of considering culture as a major factor in attitudes about eating. In this research, it was found

that 100% of the students knew the eating manner in German culture. They would use this manner when they were among Germans, or when they were in Germany. However, when the students were eating together with their friends, they felt comfortable to eat with their usual eating manner. For example, 90% of the students ate using their hands while folding their legs on a chair, or sitting cross-legged on the floor.

3.3. Student reactions toward different eating manners and kinds of food from respondents

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, it was found that each student had different reactions toward eating manners and kinds of food as shown in Figure 3.

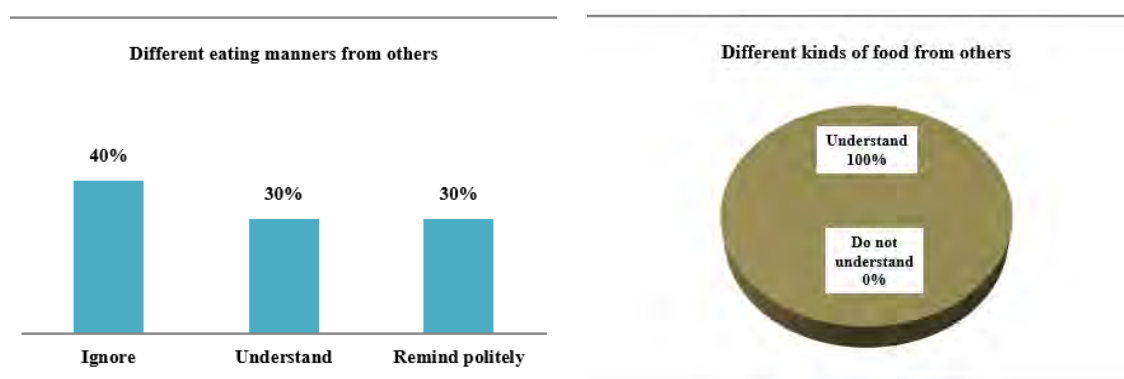


Figure 3. Students' reactions towards different eating manners and kinds of food from the respondents

Responding to the differences among students, it was found that; 40% of the students ignored it, 30% of the students understood it, and 30% of the students would remind their friends politely or humorously when they thought their friends' eating manner disturbed others. Meanwhile, 100% of the students understood when their friends ate different kinds of food as shown in Figure 3. The Non-Muslims were very understanding when their friends could not eat a particular of food because they thought it was *haram* (forbidden/unlawful food). For the Muslims, the food that can be eaten is not tolerated because it is related to faith. Meanwhile, Fadzlillah [21] adds that in Islamic law, Muslims emphasize on the importance of the sources of food to be consumed. The Non-Muslim students also understood this, even they would also remind their Muslim friends not to eat the forbidden food. The awareness that he is a Muslim, and that his friends are also Muslims makes them look after each other, tolerate each other, and not force their friends to eat the forbidden food (*haram*). Based on the research conducted by Drake [22], everyone has their own feelings about food, some people like some kinds of food and do not like some other kinds of food. Such attitudes toward food help define who we really are. Similar research results were also reported by Eddyono [23] that when students were in a foreign country or place, they became more aware of *halal* food (permissible/lawful food). Food is part of following the 'rule' of being a 'good Muslim'. The importance of *halal* food was also felt by non-Muslim students. Nurrachmi [24] adds that the awareness of consuming halal food does not only come from Muslim communities but also non-Muslim communities. This is because *halal* products are thought to be safer. Regardless of belief/religion, food can bring cultural values, identity, personality, social class, lifestyle, gender, and ethnicity, and even food is a lens for analyzing the structure of society [25-27]. Chen [28] adds that food can also be a powerful tool for acculturation or assimilation of minority cultures.

3.4. Student responses toward dressing manners

Based on the obtained data, it was found that 100% of the students were aware of the different ways of dressing among them. In their opinion, this difference was normal as shown in Figure 4.

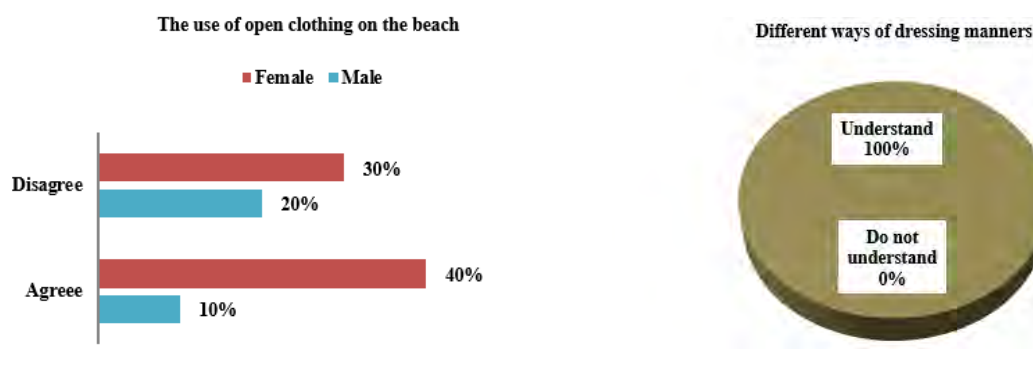


Figure 4. Students' responses to different ways of dressing manners and the use of open clothing on the beach

In the theme "*Kleidung und Wetter*" students learnt the seasons and the dressing manners in Germany. Germany has four (4) seasons, namely *Frühling, Sommer, Herbst* and *Winter*. The summer is the Germans' favourite season. They realize that the summer provides them the chance to experience warm sunlight. Therefore, during the summer, they do not hesitate to sunbathe on the campus yard while reading or doing their assignments. And on the beach, they enjoy wearing two-piece or one-piece swimsuits.

For the discussion related to this theme, dressing manner such as wearing swimsuit is an option that represents the identity of that person. The understanding about swimsuit for both the Muslim and non-Muslim students has similarities. Wearing one piece or two pieces of clothing is tolerated for "bule" (people from other countries), and it is considered inappropriate for Indonesians. Even the Muslim and Non-Muslim students do not approve of Indonesians wearing these swimsuits. In their opinion, the good clothes to wear in beaches are sleeveless shirts and shorts. Even then it has been categorized as open clothing to them. From the data in Figure 4, it was found that 40% of the female students and 10% of the male students agreed to wear open clothing on beaches, while 30% of the female students and 20% of the male students did not approve of wearing open clothing on beaches. For them, the eastern identity needs to be maintained. For the Muslim female students, they realize that the hijab is important because it is their identity. Thus, they will still wear hijab even when they are on the beach as their identity, and they will not open it (except at home) for other purposes. This attitude is as what has been stated by Higgins in Handayani et al [29] that self-awareness is the first step to understand oneself and to determine whether someone needs to change the existing patterns of behavior to be more effective. For this reason, Khoeriyah et al [30] adds that maintaining culture and noble values as manifested in individual character is needed, because through culture and values we gain our personal identity in the midst of multiculturalism. Therefore, Hua [31] adds that studying cross-cultural concepts does not mean to understand the cultures of other countries, but it facilitates students to become cross-cultural speakers who are able to accept differences without making conflicts, but still have the awareness to maintain their cultural identity.

The same results were also reported by Morgana et al [32] that language teaching also teaches about cultures, so that students must be sensitive to the essence of cross-culture. For example, when a teacher (writer) teaches English in class, he or she has to teach and facilitate students to become Indonesian speakers who understand English culture, so that these cross-cultural students care about the nuances of multiculturalism. Therefore, according to Setyawati et al [33], the attitude of respecting differences among human beings is tolerance among humans, accepting differences as normal event, and not violating other human rights. Tolerance implies a willingness to accept reality from different opinions about the truth believed.

3.5. Student responses toward multicultural education and the reasons for the implementation of multicultural education

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, it was found that multicultural education needs to be applied in learning as shown in Figure 5a.

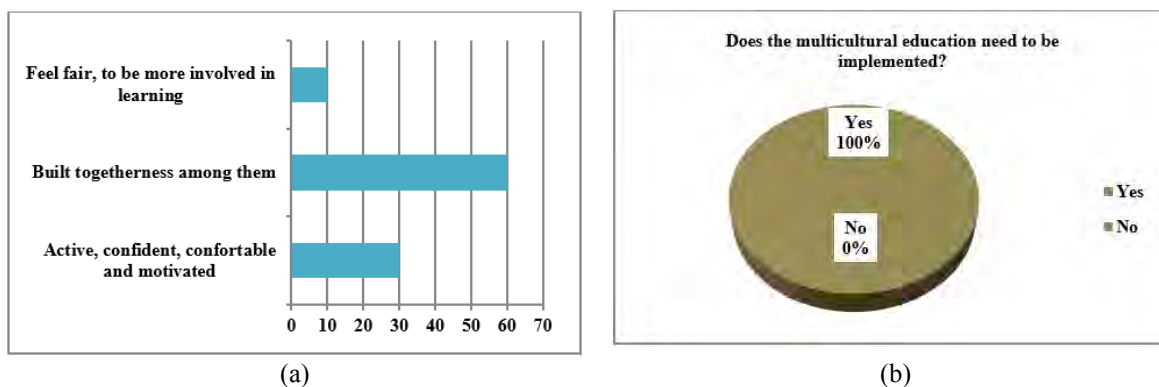


Figure 5. (a) Students’ responses toward the importance of multicultural education, (b) the students’ responses toward the reasons why the multicultural education needs to be implemented

Figure 5b shows he students argued that the multicultural education needed to be implemented because multicultural education made them feel fair because they were not neglected, and even it gave them the opportunity to be more involved in learning (13%), the students became more confident, active, comfortable and motivated (26%), and most importantly, this multicultural education built togetherness among them (60%). Similar research results were also reported by Shannon-Baker [8] that multicultural education is very important to be implemented in interdisciplinary schools. This is based on the life experiences of students and teachers, and it develops the understanding of theories and concepts based on the reality of life. The research by Kim [34] shows that multicultural learning is carried out through three multicultural understandings, namely describing and learning culture, norms, language, the uniqueness of each individual as a whole; critical empathy which is reflecting ourselves into other people; and promoting individual thinking into shared thinking by opening our mind to accept other people’s views and being able to adapt to a combination of thoughts.

3.6. Student responses toward the awareness of the integration of multicultural education in learning

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, it was found that the students’ awareness of the implementation of multicultural learning in the Aufbaustufe A2 course was as much as 80% as shown in Figure 6.

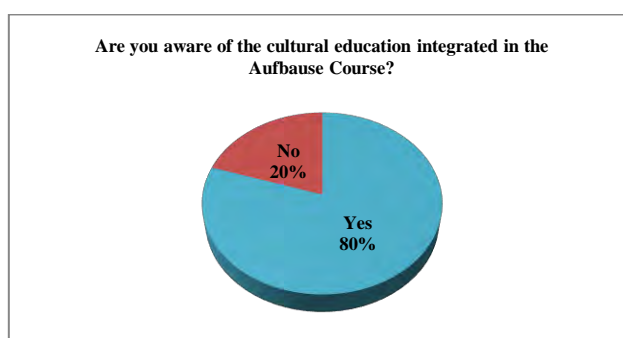


Figure 6. Student responses toward the awareness of the integration of multicultural education in A2 aufbaustufe course

According to the students on Figure 6, multicultural education integrated in a course builds up their self-confidence to be themselves and to interact with each other, and especially it builds togetherness among them. The same results were also reported by Nakaya [35] that the implementation of multicultural education could overcome ethnic conflicts which occurred in Kalimantan, Indonesia. Based on the social identity analysis, this research recommends that multicultural education be implemented along with civic education that changes with the times.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions, it is concluded that multicultural education can be implemented in German language learning, especially in the *Aufbaustufe A2* course. This is because multicultural education can build togetherness among students, students become more confident, active, comfortable, and more involved in learning, and they feel motivated to interact with others and feel appreciated.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



Wilma Akihary is one of the lecturers in the Study Program of German Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pattimura University. Bachelor of German Language Education was achieved at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, State University of Manado (1988-1994). In 1997 she continued her study at the Postgraduate of the Sam Ratulangi University, got a Masters in Linguistics in 2000. In 2010, she attended S3 education at the Postgraduate Program at the State University of Malang in the Indonesian Language Education Doctoral Program. Her career as a Lecturer began in December 2002.



Patresia S. Apituley is one of the lecturers in the Study Program of German Language Education Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pattimura University. Her Bachelor of German Language Education was achieved at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, State University of Manado in 1986 and got her Master degree in Language Education at the Postgraduate of the State University of Jakarta in 2003. She joint Patimura University as lecturer from October 1988 until now.