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The Obstacles on Learning European Communication at Foreign Language Course in Malang Raya

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Communication inevitably becomes an essential part of interaction among people in every part of the world. Foreign Language Course provides opportunities for those who need to improve their foreign language skills like English, French, and German. However, this course finds some obstacles to the learning process like different curriculum, teaching technique, the background of the target language, pattern, as well as its culture. This research aims to dig out the learner's obstacles and solutions in learning European language on communication at a foreign language course in Malang Raya. As the number of participants who put their interest more in learning European language course is growing, this research applied descriptive quantitative method by taking the population from the learners of European foreign language courses with purposive sampling. Meanwhile, the instrument used was a questionnaire, and it was analyzed by using the percentage formula. The finding shows that the obstacles to learning European communication consist of linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles, whereas the solutions done are various.

Keywords: communication, European foreign language, foreign language course, learning foreign language, obstacle

Introduction

As a developing country, Indonesia cannot live alone in the world but it needs interaction and cooperation with other countries. A language is needed as a means of communication. That is why it is needed to learn a foreign language as transferring knowledge and technology. In fact, in the process of learning a foreign language, it might be found the obstacle in leaning communication as different background, pattern and culture. Therefore it is needed to dig out to make learning communication in foreign language success by revealing the solution from the learners as well as giving feedback for the teachers to make teaching learning foreign language in foreign language course better.

Language is used as a means of communication because it can connect people from all parts of the world. Lefrancois (2000) believed that language is the use of arbitrary transmission of messages from one individual or organism to another. Besides, language has its characteristics, patterns, and also functions as well as its culture; thus, communication, language, and culture cannot be separated. Culturally, different communication patterns are a common cause of misunderstanding and can be a source of discomfort in the cross-cultural situation (Tomain & Stempleski, 1993). As language is essential in communication, people learn not only in formal education but also in non-formal education like foreign language courses as many foreign languages are

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provided, such as English, French, German, Korean, Mandarin, Japanese, and English as well as Arabic.

Communication here means speaking. It is one of the important skills in learning language by creating and using information to connect the others. The goal is to be able to produce and express words or sentences as communication is the delivery of language through the mouth by creating sounds using many parts of the body such as lung, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth, and lips (Al Nakhalah, 2016). It means that communication is more complicated and it involves more than just pronouncing words; being able to communicate fluently is really needed in order to create good conversation, convey the good idea, share knowledge and express feeling. It is in line with Chaney in Kayi (2006) that communication means to produce some words to express ideas. It is a process of building and sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts. Further communication means the creative process, an active interaction between speaker and learner that involves thought and emotion (Underwood, 1997). Communication consists of mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary). It is the ability to use the right words in the right order with correct pronunciation, function (transaction and interaction) knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relation building) and also the social cultural rules and norms. It is an ability to understand how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what and for what reason.

Communication Obstacle

There are many factors that trigger obstacles in communication among EFL learners such as the learners, teaching strategies, the curriculum, and the environment (Rabab'ah, 2005). Further, Juhana (2012) mentioned several psychological factors that cause obstacle in communication, which are fear of making mistake, shyness, anxiety.

Some strategies and activities can promote learners in leaning communication ability inside and outside the classroom. For example by using a funny technique in teaching communication, to arouse learners' interest in learning communication such as drama, story-telling, game or sing a song but the most important is to promote learners' learning communication interest by giving motivation such as giving punishment and reward in teaching and learning activities. Further, Adhikari (2010) proposed several ways to overcome learners in managing communication obstacles such as providing opportunities to speak in and out of the classroom, join foreign language clubs, and use communication as preparation and stimulus. Further, Adhikari also suggests integrating communication skills into all phases of teaching, planning communication activities appropriately, and increasing weightage to communication skills. Lowering inhibition and demystifying the teacher's role, thinking in advance how to manage the classroom best, meaningfully welcoming noise in the classroom, following the task-based model rather than the traditional presentation practice production model, and promoting learner autonomy are some other suggested strategies to minimize learners' communication problems.

Regarding the purpose of learning a foreign language in a foreign language course, the aim is to master these languages either English, Germany, Arabic, Japanese, French, Mandarin, as well as Korean learners especially to increase the ability to speak (Hartiningsih, 2013) as an evidence to measure students' competence in a language (Zyoud, 2016) and also being able to orally communicate the language as well as mastering its four language skills (Oradee, 2012).

In the teaching learning process, it might be found the handicaps like large classes and time (Melendez,

Zavala, & Mendez, 2014), the learners, teaching strategy, environment, curriculum (Rabab'ah, 2005), different background of learners' comprehension as coming from various educational background. Therefore, this research was conducted to figure out the solutions to those various issues, especially in the learning of language of European countries such as English, Germany, and French.

Based on the background above, the research problems in this research are as follows: (1) what obstacles are found in learning communication at a foreign language course in Malang Raya? And (2) how do the learners overcome the obstacle found in learning communication at a foreign language course in Malang Raya?

Method

This research employs a descriptive quantitative research design because the researcher describes the learner's obstacles in learning communication at a foreign language course in Malang Raya especially the kinds of obstacles and the solution in foreign language course in Malang Raya.

Population and Sample

The participants of this research are the learners of foreign language course in Malang Raya and occupied purposive sampling as the total number of population is a lot. The sample is the learners who learn a foreign language course in Malang Raya in 2019 from April to June. The reasons for using purposive sampling are: first, the total of the learners is not known; second, time of learning foreign language is not like university as semester, having short time to learn as it is going to use; and the last is that Kursus Bahasa Asing University of Muhammadiyah Malang taken a sample as KBA UMM provides many foreign languages such as Arabic, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin. The participants are 47 learners consisting of 6 English, 26 French, and 15 German learners.

Research Instrument

To collect the data, a questionnaire was applied for the learners in a foreign language course which consists of closed and open questioners. The questionnaire is about teachers' and the learners' communication obstacles in teaching and learning communication at a foreign language course.

Data Collection

The data are mainly taken from the result of questionnaire. There are some steps applied in collecting the data. They are designing questionnaire, distributing questionnaire to the learners in learning communication at the foreign language course and collecting the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The procedure of analyzing the data was following the procedures such as tabulating data from the questionnaire, coding the data by using percentage, analyzing the data to find out the answer of the statement of the problem, writing the result of the research descriptively and the last, drawing conclusion.

Findings and Discussion

The Foreign Language Course/KBA provides opportunities for students to sharpen their foreign language skills. The focus of this study is to figure out obstacles of learning foreign language especially on European foreign language courses like English, French, and German. The results of the study are listed below:

The Learners' Obstacles on English

Based on the questionnaire given to the English learners in Foreign Language Course, the data are presented below:

Table 1

The Learners' Obstacles on English

Obstacles	Number of learner	Percentage
Grammar	2	33.3%
Pronunciation	3	50.0%
Afraid of being left on material	1	16.7%

Table 1 provides information about the learners' obstacles in learning communication in English language. Data analysis performs that there are three obstacles of learning English. The dominant factor is pronunciation (50%) and the lesser dominant factors are grammar (33.3%), and afraid of being left on the material (16.7%).

Regarding pronunciation issues in learning English, it is shown that there are four reasons of students lacking pronunciation ability: they are not accustomed to the language (33.3%), letters and pronunciation differ (33.3%), less memorizing (16.7%), and new vocabulary (16.7%).

Students also felt that grammar became their issues as some problems of memorizing the formula (33.3%), the use of formula (33.3%), implementing the grammar into sentences (16.7%), rarely being used (16.7%). Besides, students also felt to be left behind on material, and to manage the time between working and join the English course (100%).

The Learners' Obstacles on French

Based on the questionnaire given to the French learners in Foreign Language Course, the data are presented below:

Table 2

The Learners' Obstacles on French

Obstacles	Number of learner	Percentage
Pronunciation	4	15.3%
Grammar	15	57.7%
Vocabulary	7	27.0%

Table 2 shows that the learners' obstacles in learning communication on French language were formed into three aspects; they were grammar (57.7%), vocabulary (27.0%), and pronunciation (15.3%).

Six reasons are identified in the students' difficulties in pronunciation. Obstacle on pronunciation shows the reason of obstacle on pronunciation in learning French communication.

Table 3

The Learners' Obstacles on German

Obstacles	Number of learner	Percentage
Grammar and vocabulary	7	46.6%
Pronunciation	7	46.6%
Afraid to make mistake	1	6.8%

Table 3 shows that the learners' obstacles in learning communication on the German language are three. The most dominant factors are grammar and vocabulary (46.6%) and pronunciation (46.6%) while the least

dominant is afraid to make mistake (6.8%).

Pronunciation becomes other issues because of six reasons: the students' habit in speaking Bahasa Indonesia (26.6%), different letter (20%), different vocabulary with Bahasa (6.6%), something new (26.6%), confused between English and German (13.2%), and less study (6.6%) while the reasons of vocabulary are new (13.2%) and vocabularies are gender-based (81.8%).

After facing the obstacle in learning European languages such as English, French, and German, the solution is also found to overcome the obstacle.

The Learners' Solution on English

The learners' strategies to overcome pronunciation's problems were four; those were: kept trying (50%), got used to speak (16.7%), studied harder (16.7%), practiced (16.7%) while the solutions of grammar obstacle in learning English for communication are two in solving the obstacle: managed to memorize (50%), and kept on practice (50%) whereas the solution of being left for the material was in managing time to work and to join the course (100%).

The Learners' Solution on French

Three strategies are identified to overcome pronunciation problems. Those are repeating to pronounce (53.8%), watching videos (26.9%), and listening to songs (19.2%). Meanwhile, the solutions on vocabulary in learning were seven; those were: memorizing (38.4%), reading article (7.6%), asking friend to speak with (11.5%), repeating material (11.5%), and studying (30.7%) whereas the solution of learning grammar obstacles are: memorizing tense (50%) and practicing in making sentence (50%).

Dealing with feeling afraid, it was found that 10 out of 26 students (38.4%) were afraid of making mistakes. The solutions found that they asked the teacher (40%), self-determination (20%), and making more confident (40%).

The Learners' Solution on German

To overcome problems in learning German, the students were often to practice (66.0%), listen to songs (13.2%), use Google translate voice (6.6%), look at dictionary (6.6%), and watch YouTube (6.6%). In addition, the solutions on vocabulary in learning German communication are five; those are: memorizing (46.6%), asking a friend (26.6%), often practicing (13.2%), studying step by step (6.6%), and changing phone setting (6.6%). To avoid anxiety, the solutions were more learning (26.6%), more practicing (53.2%), making accustomed (6.6%), and trying to speak (13.2%).

Discussion

Based on the findings about problems and solutions of learning the European countries' language, some issues have been found so far, like pronunciation, grammar, vocabularies, afraid of being left on material and afraid to make mistake (e.g. anxiety). The pronunciation, grammar, and vocabularies belong to linguistic obstacle, while afraid of being left on material and afraid of making mistake were categorized as non-linguistic obstacle as Oflaz (2019) said:

> One of the factors hampering the speaking process is the anxiety state of students. A student who thinks they will make mistakes in classroom activities or while talking to a person speaking that language experiences anxiety at a certain degree. They get anxious, even become afraid prior to speaking activities. (p. 70)

This study has found some new findings regarding obstacles on learning foreign language learners, like the dominant obstacle on English learners is pronunciation (50%) which was different from Machmud and Abdulah's (2018) findings that they state that anxiety has become a major problem for students when asked to speak in a speaking class; whereas Heriansyah's finding (2012) shows that common obstacle is vocabulary. This is supported by Melendez et al. (2014) that learners' challenge to master speaking was because it is not their mother tongue language that limits them to master and acquire the vocabularies. On the other hand, students found more difficult on grammar when learning about some Asian languages like Arabic (58.8%), Japanese (87.5%), and Korean (55.6%). Meanwhile, Mandarin has a high percentage of obstacle in pronunciation of 66.7% (Hartiningsih, 2019).

Obstacles on afraid of being left on material and afraid to make mistake occur in learning a foreign language. It is in line with Sayuri (2016) that in verbal dialogue, shyness, nervousness, feeling afraid to make mistake, not knowing the way how to pronounce certain words are possible problems that could hinder students to speak. This belongs to the non-linguistic obstacle.

Relating to the non-linguistic obstacle such as afraid of being left on material and afraid to make mistake, they are contradictory to self-confidence as Brown (2001) said about learners' belief that they can do the task. In fact, they do not have self-confidence yet that is why they are afraid of being left on material, moreover afraid to make mistake. Moreover in mastering European foreign languages, learners are not only learning to master the way to communicate steeply, but also learning its cultural customs, values and ways of thinking, feeling and acting. To cope with that, they have some ways in solving them, such as memorizing the vocabularies and looking up the meaning in the dictionary for vocabularies, practicing a lot in solving the grammar, and listening to video or music for pronunciation.

Conclusions

The finding shows the obstacles on learning the European foreign language especially the habit of communication which consists of linguistic and non-linguistic obstacles with its suggested solutions. One of the problems that arises dominantly on European foreign language is the pronunciation where most of the learners get difficulties on this matter. This is because they are not accustomed to using the language and the influence of learners' cultural backgrounds makes them speak more on Bahasa Indonesia rather than the target language they are learning. Indeed, to overcome learners' problems in foreign language learning, it will also depend on their cultural background and their learning style.

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