

## **Foreign Language Beliefs and Behaviors of English Speaking Communities'**

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**Abstract.** The aim of this paper is to report the observation findings of foreign language beliefs and behaviors among three communities of English speaking communities' specific of their cultural identity. The study used descriptive qualitative design since the author wants to describe the phenomenon happened in this study. Three English speaking communities were taken as the data; first, Krimit WhatsApp group conversation; second, a private WhatsApp conversation between two non-native speakers; third, a classroom talk. Those data were taken from the author's cellphone, then the chats were exported, transcribed and analyzed well through their beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity. The findings of the present study indicate that the awareness of using English pattern in two communities needs to be more highlighted, while the other community revealed the cultural matter in the form of expressions. Therefore, teachers' and educators' big effort in decreasing this issue is crucially needed.

**Keywords:** *foreign language, beliefs, behaviors, cultural identity*  
using English to participate English speaking

### **1. Introduction**

Foreign language is a language that naturally existing in one place or country. It is also a language which is not spoken in the native country of the person referred to. Particularly in Indonesia, English is playing the role as foreign language since it has Bahasa Indonesia as the first language (L1). When an English speaker lives in Indonesia, s/he can say that Bahasa Indonesia is a foreign language to him or her. Thus, Indonesian learners learn English as the way the original language is. Starting from four skills in English; that are listening, reading, speaking, writing, the element is also taking crucial part; vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation.

Learning English as a Foreign Language is not easy. Since Indonesian people are non-native English speakers, both teacher and student should consider the proficiency in

classroom. It makes the aims of teaching English for non-native English learners emphasize on communicative competence.

In actual fact, Indonesian learners are difficult in achieving those English skills since they have different perspectives to the target language. From the perspective of grammar, it is difficult to put on their mind that modal is followed always by base form. Most of Indonesian learners are still confused in using the verb in sentence. See the example;

**Sorry ... may it is make  
uncomfortable..**

**(source: WhatsApp group Appendix 1)**

Indeed, their beliefs about foreign language are still confusing by their first language since the grammar of Bahasa Indonesia is

not as complex as English. What is called Predicate in Bahasa Indonesia has different form to what it is in English. This phenomena is still happening even English has been learning in Indonesia since centuries. On the other hand, Altan (2016) argued some people believe that the ability of acquiring foreign language is a special "gift" that some people have and that most people do not have. It is kind of problematic issue that is still going on at present time. If beliefs about foreign language learning are widespread, then foreign language teachers must consider that learners will always bring these beliefs with them when they enter foreign language classroom. Therefore, teachers should spend some time helping learners getting rid of this problematic issue in order to get more effective language learners.

Although beliefs necessarily so determined behavior but it can have some impact on behavior. It is in line with Verma (2005:6), she stated that

"Attitude can be defined as a set of beliefs developed in a due course of time in a given socio-cultural setting. It is studied that positive attitude facilitates learning."

Thus, what learners can achieve depends on what their beliefs are. The more positive their beliefs, the higher competency they have.

Based on previous discussion, the present article aims at reporting the observation findings of foreign language beliefs and behaviors among three communities of English speaking communities' specific of their cultural identity. The findings will hopefully give enlightenment to teachers or educators since the research of this matter is not much.

### **Foreign Language**

Foreign language is any language that is not natively spoken in a particular region or by a particular person. Usually, many countries have more than one official language or contain significant populations that speak their own languages. Foreign language instruction is often required or strongly encouraged in primary and secondary education. Because of this, there are also numerous methods in language teaching.

English in Indonesia is generally taught as a foreign language. What is meant by "foreign language" in the field of language teaching is different from the 'second language'. Foreign language is a language that is not used as a communication tool in a particular country where the language is taught. While second language is a language that is not the primary language but became one of the language used in general in a country. For example in Singapore, English is a second language since mass media, communication, and conversation used in this country mostly is English. While foreign language is usually taught as one subject in the school with the goal of communicating as well as master four basic language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

Learning foreign language is more than just a boost to your CV or handy for travelling. It will make you smarter, more decisive and even better at English. (Anne Merrit, 2013). Further she says that in physiological studies, it has found that speaking two or more languages is a great asset to the cognitive process. You can be smarter by learning and speaking many languages. Speaking foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognize, negotiating meaning, and communicate in different language systems. This skill boosts your ability to negotiate meaning in other problem-solving tasks as well.

### ***Beliefs***

Belief is the state of mind in which a person thinks about something to be true. It develops through facts. Therefore, understanding Indonesian learners' beliefs has become crucial element in developing foreign language proficiency because identification of beliefs could help learners understand themselves and others as well as adapt to the world around them (Pajares:1992 in Sabry:2012). In addition, Cohen and Dornyei (2002) concluded that certain beliefs about language learning have significant effect on learners' motivation to learn the target language; for example, unrealistic beliefs regarding the amount of time required to become proficient in a second language could obviously result in frustration. Recently, Rad (2010) and Dornyei (2005) found that learners' beliefs and viewpoints influence not only the way that they attempt to learn English but also the method that will be used by them.

Thus, the beliefs of Indonesian learners' needs to be highlight mostly in education field; primary and secondary level, dealing with English is as foreign language.

### ***Cultural Identity***

Cultural identity refers to a person's sense of belonging to a particular culture or group. In this area, people normally internalize the beliefs, values, norms, and social practices of their culture and identify themselves with that culture. The culture becomes a part of their self-concept (Lustig, 2013).

When we deeply define this "cultural identity" term, it comes from "culture" and "identity". Culture is the values, beliefs, thinking patterns and behavior that are learned and shared and that is

characteristic of a group of people. It serves to give an identity to a group, ensures survival and enhances the feeling of belonging. Moreover, identity is the definition of ones-self. It is a person's frame of reference by which he perceives himself. Identities are constructed by an integral connection of language, social structures, gender orientation and cultural patterns. In sum, there is a complex relationship between culture and identity. Cultural identity is self-identification of a group of people in a certain community. It brings whoever s/he is when s/he communicates with others delivering ideas.

Therefore, the present article reports the findings of the following question:

1. How is the foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of Krismit whatsapp group conversation?
2. How is the foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of private whatsapp conversation between two non-native speakers?
3. How is the foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of classroom talk?

## **2. Method**

The research used descriptive qualitative design since the author wants to describe the phenomenon happened in this research dealing with foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity. Three English speaking communities were taken as the data; first, Krismit whatsapp group conversation where the participants of this group are teachers of Krista Mitra High School. The author joins the group as well but she did not do the conversation very often; second, a private whatsapp conversation between two non-native speakers. It is between the author and Mathilde, the volunteer from France hired

by PGRI University of Semarang within six months. The conversation was held due to the speaking classes that they handled together; third, a classroom talk of one favorite senior high school in Semarang. Only on the third data where the author was as an outsider. Those data were taken from the author's cellphone. Then the chats were exported, transcribed (for the third data) and analyzed well through their beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity.

In order to make the research reliable, then the author discussed her initial interpretation with one of her colleagues in PGRI University of Semarang who is a Professor with the expertise in research. The discussion included the data source and technique of the data. Then, the results of this study were based on his comment, revision and suggestion.

### **3. Finding and Discussion**

The findings of the study are described below:

1. The foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of Krimit WhatsApp group conversation.

Krimit is the nick name of Krista Mitra, a high school in Semarang located nearby PRPP Semarang. English is not the primary language in this school, indeed, but it has English class in each grade. Thus, the teachers who have duty teaching this class must have good English language proficiency.

The background shows the cultural identity of this group. Consider these chats:

- A: Friends .... English Course activation will start tomorrow. Is it right? But. For next Saturday we will cancel it again  
B: Yes right! Tomorrow will start..We cancel it bcas of anniversary of gki

bringin celebration? "Is it right?" is used to make sure that A's statement is true whether the English course will start tomorrow or not, but the use of question tag is not applicable in English. In the perspective of grammar, how they apply future tense is already correct but their English is not an applicable one. They just translate Bahasa Indonesia directly to English. For example;

A: So if not monday..is tuesday

B: Ok, we change it on monday

A: Okay ms..thx

C: It seem on Monday , 31 Oct meeting about BPJS.

D: Yes, thats true. You need to reschedule

B: Upsss I forget it

Their daily language speaking is Bahasa Indonesia, it reflects the way how they arrange spoken sentences in English.

"So if not monday..is Tuesday"

*"Jadi kalau tidak senin ya Selasa."*

"It seem on Monday , 31 Oct meeting about BPJS."

*"Kayaknya senin, 31 Oktober rapat tentang BPJS."*

Consider another example;

"Ms Erna..better we consul yo ms felish..bcas back to our first deal if saturday we cant cose..we will changw on monday or tuesday.."

*"Bu Erna..lebih baik kita konsultasi ke Bu Felish.. karena kembali ke kesepakatan pertama kalau sabtu tidak bisa kursus..kita akan ganti senin atau Selasa."*

It is seen that some of them lack of grammar. They translate Bahasa Indonesia directly to English without considering the pattern of the target language. Both of the examples above is the evidence of the speaker omitted the use of subject and verb

(mostly to be), also preposition. As followed is another example of this issue  
"Maybe ur lunch in my desk ....."  
The correct sentence must be this way;

"Maybe ur lunch **is on** my desk ....."

Another example of the preposition issue;

"Ms sukma... may we take a course **at** wednesday? Because I teach Cullinary every tuesday.. thank u.."

The following is the examples of both grammar and preposition issues;

"Sorry ms Erna, **im wrong give** appoligize **for** me."

"Not me .... Ms. Erna **teach** cullinary xtra ma'am. I cant cook well."

"Sorry ms, because our lesson **is finish on** 2 pm..."

"**In** next week I can on Friday."

"Pak tikno absent today"(No Verb)

2. The foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of private whatsapp conversation between two non-native speakers.

What is meant by two non-native speakers is the author (Indonesian) and Mathilde (France). This private conversation happened because they need to make some agreement dealing with classes that they conduct together. English is not the first language for both of them, but Mathilde comes from France in which it has Western culture. Consider this example;

A: Good afternoon, I have few questions about the class tomorrow Do you know in which room ?

How do you want me to conduct the class? I mean do they just have to present their dialogues in groups or do I need to do a formal class?

Thank you for your help.

Have a great day ☺

B: Good afternoon, the material will be unit 2 just exactly when u conducted my previous class

For both speakers are understand English very well, thus this conversation does have lack in any perspective dealing with the pattern of English. Therefore, the author highlighted the expressions used by the speakers dealing with their culture. Western culture is different to Indonesian's in the perspective of greeting and wishing the best for others.

"Have a great day ☺"

This is the expressions that Indonesian culture does not have any; it is proved when the speaker B did not reply this expression at the same way.

It is shown again in the following example;

A: Hi Good morning.. yesterday i texted you saying that the class was at 610 then i corected 603 But my students said that you didn't come And i asked them to see bu indri then she said you couldn't make it So i assume you did not know that you have another acitivity to do at the same time because u texted me at 1pm yesterday asking what room the class is.Didn't you?

B: Good afternoon, so yesterday was very confusing for me. I was un Bulan Bahasa Event's rehearsal at 1pm. I passed on stage around 2:20pm. Then miss Laily asked me to stay longer because I needed to try on some costumes for today's performance.

So at 2:30pm, I didn't have any response from you yet (network problem, I recieved them at 6pm actually) and I asked Miss Indri to call you and after 5 minutes she came back telling me that there will be no classes all day because of the rehearsal, so I thought it was news from you and the

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students were not waiting for me. I'm sorry again for this misunderstanding.

A: That's okay.. if i knew that you had rehearsal i would tell to my students.. so it was misunderstanding..thanks for your explanation..

B: But if I knew they were waiting for me I I would leave the rehearsal to doing the class with them also. The really confusing thing was that a lot of Semester 1 students were still there until 3:30pm so I thought your class was still at the ballairoom too.

Oh you deserve some explanation 😊

The expression that the speaker A used is kind of unfriendly and awkward, whereas the way how the speaker B treated others is different to what Indonesian people usually do. The speaker B also tries very hard to keep promises she made. See the example;

A: Good evening.. how are you? Are you still in UPGRIS? Because last thursday we were waiting for you.. i'm sorry for not let you know about this..

B: Hello, I'm sorry Thursday I had a report to do for my school I prevent Mr Dias but usually when you are doing the class you don't need me and because I didn't have any text to confirm that you needed me I thought I didn't have to come. Sorry for the misunderstanding !

3. The foreign language beliefs and behaviors specific of their cultural identity of classroom talk. The classroom talk was come from one classroom observation. The learning session was video recorded then was carefully transcribed. Every talk

T	Good Morning.
Ss	Good Morning Sir.
T	How are you today?
S	I am Fine.
S	I am So hot.
S	Hot hot hot.
T	What's your ...your activity before... Before ..the class?
Ss	Sports.
T	Sports.
	How do you say in English?
Ss	fan..... [Sweat]
T	Saya sangat sumuk... in English?
Ss	I feel so hot. You feel so hot.
Ss	(laughing)
T	I feel so syumuk... syumuk ...
Ss	(laughing)
T	I feel so sweaty
Ss	Sweaty

produced was transcribed including pause, laughter, phrases or utterances in Bahasa Indonesia. Thus, the cultural identity among teacher (T), student (S), and students (Ss) can be seen on the following example;

It is seen that English is not the language that is always spoken by the students in the English lesson. This conversation happened in the beginning of the activity. It happened that way before the teacher told them to speak English during the lesson. See the conversation below;  
The students also lack of English pattern;

S	What disadvantage of the finger print scanner?
S	what is the example how using finger print?

T	Now You are speaking with your friend sitting beside you. No Indonesian at all or... I kill you
Ss	Nooooooooo(oooooooooh)
T	Okay, Now. Are you speaking in English?
S	Inggris nih.
Ss	(students laughing). Kill. Kill. Kill him sir! [no...]
T	So I said like this. today is English...no English lesson. English study... So I would like you to speak English all the time
T	(Xs) ...from nine until at the end of the class...until you go out from here...

From the examples, the students are known that they lack in the perspective of grammar. Their awareness of using English during the English lesson is also limited.

T	So. Discuss with your friend what the song that you are going to sing
S	(the students who are standing in front of the class singing and dancing)
S	Goyang Caesar
S	Buka sitik josses [hawek hawek]
T	Okay... look at this one text!

It is seen that in the students' mind, English is only something that should be learned but no need to be applied.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The foreign language beliefs and behavior specific on the cultural identity of the English speaking communities seem to have proven that it depends on the prior knowledge that the participants have. It means different participant rising different beliefs and behavior. The findings of the present study indicate that the awareness of using English pattern in two communities needs to be more highlighted, while the other community revealed the cultural matter in the form of expressions.

The first group got difficulties in applying correct English patterns. They got difficulty in recognizing the subject and verb also the preposition. The second community did not get any difficulty in using English pattern since they acknowledge English very well. The issue was about the culture in using such expressions of doing good communication (e.g. "have a nice day"). The last group, that was a classroom talk, got difficulty in making English sentence correctly. The students mostly lack in the form of verb. The crucial issue addressed in this group is that they frequently speak in English during English lesson. When the teacher encouraged them to do so, they were about to speak in Bahasa Indonesia or even Javanese. Therefore, teachers' and educators' big effort in decreasing this issue is crucially needed. Starting to make English as the habit in the classroom is the appropriate first step to do. By making English as the habit, learning correct pattern and applying good expressions in English become an easy activity to do.

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