DISCOVERING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEALING WITH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0 CHALLENGES

Endang Sulistianingsih[1], Mursyidah Dwi Hartati[2], Susi Darihastining[3]

[1,2]Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, Central Java, Indonesia
[3]STKIP Jombang, East Java, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Email: endang.sulistia@gmail.com

Abstract

Industrial revolution 4.0 is an era where information technology regards as a human life base. This era will also disrupt various human activities, including the fields of science, technology, and art, without exception in the field of education. Industrial Revolution 4.0, which is an expansion of the digital world to various sectors, must be prepared with manifold approaches to accommodate our next generations to be able to keep up with the current era. Several skills need to be prepared, one of which is the mastery of English from an early age (Second Language Acquisition), also a more innovative learning system in higher education such as adjusting the learning curriculum and increasing students' ability in mastering English as second language acquisition.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, Industrial Revolution 4.0

A. Introduction

Technology has shifted many things, made disruption moving fastly, and made everything we know outdated and obsolete. This obsolescence is widespread, yet it turns into a dilemma since the old one does not disappear at all. In the beginning, what shifted this civilization was also technology. Industrial revolution 4.0 has become fascinating topics to be discussed among various educators. Industrial revolution 4.0 is an era where information technology regards as a human life base. This era will also disrupt various human activities, including the fields of science, technology, and art, without exception in the field of education (Suwandi, 2018).

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Teachers in tertiary institutions are expected to be able to provide students the essential skills needed to face the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as technical ability, creativity, and innovative problem-solving. If it is realized, Industrial Revolution 4.0 is related to numerous variables and demands complex responses, then the responsibility borne by teachers is not effortless. This responsibility should be seen by teachers as a challenge that must be fulfilled. Students in the digital era, the 4.0 revolution, have very different characteristics from the era when educators or teachers lived in his/her day. Prensky states that the generation born in the digital era is a digital native, which means, since birth they have been covered by a variety of digital equipment such as computers, video games, digital music players, video cameras, cellphones and various types of devices which are typical of the digital era (Prensky, 2001).

Industrial Revolution 4.0, which is an expansion of the digital world to various sectors, must be prepared with manifold approaches to accommodate our next generations to be able to keep up with the current era. Several skills need to be prepared, one of which is the mastery of English from an early age. English is the most commonly used Germanic language throughout the world. Since the beginning of the middle ages, English has been spoken as the first language of the majority of the population in various countries, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and several Caribbean countries and has become the official language in nearly 60 sovereign states. English is currently used by 1.75 billion people worldwide. Besides, at this time many multinational companies use English as the main communication language in conducting business to build strong communication between teams in various countries.

According to the results of a study conducted by an institution that prominently pays attention to education issues, Education First (FE) about English language skills, Indonesians are far behind Singapore, and even still inferior to Malaysia and the Philippines. Based on the data from the research, it was found that the English proficiency index of Indonesia in 2018 dropped from the previous year, i.e. from rank 39, it was down to rank 51. This means that from the level of intermediate proficiency, it dropped to the level of low proficiency. The ability to master (proficiency) English of Indonesian people is ranked the lowest on average in Asia, compared to Singapore in rank 3, then the Philippines ranked 14, Malaysia ranked 22 and Vietnam ranked 41 (https: //www.ef .co.id).

This fact proves that there is still a lot of burden and assignments that must be completed by the related stakeholders. The English proficiency of a country's citizens will determine the nation's global competitiveness. By having the ability to speak, write and negotiate effectively in English at the international level, the nation or country will gain competitive advantages. One way to improve English language skills is to improve the process of acquiring a second language (Second Language Acquisition).

B. *Second Language Acquisition Understanding*

According to the Great Indonesian Dictionary, which is abbreviated as KBBI (1997: 77), foreign languages are languages belonging to other nations that are mastered, usually through formal education and which are not considered as sociocultural in their language. In this case, the intended foreign language is English. The linguists think that the first language child's development is a special process (Richards, 1985).

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers to the study of how students learn a second language (L2) additionally to their first language (L1). Although it is referred to as Second Language Acquisition, it is the process of learning any language after the first language whether it is the second, third or fourth language. Therefore, any other language apart from the first language is called a second language (SL) or also referred to as a target language (TL). To distinguish between Second Language and Foreign Language, The Collins Dictionary defines Second Language as the language that a person learns after his or her native language and Foreign Language as a language that is used in a country other than one's native country (2013). There are different ways to acquire second or foreign languages. It can be in a formal way as in a classroom environment or informal way such as when the learner picks up the language by being a culturally active participant of the society. This can be done by attending school in the target country, watching local television, listening to the radio or/and reading newspapers in L2.

C. *Second Language Acquisition Strategy in Tertiary Education*

To implement second language acquisition, particularly English in higher education, a fun teaching strategy is needed, for instance: **Constructivism Approach**

Constructivism is the foundation of thinking used in contextual learning. The notion argues that knowledge is built by humans gradually and the results are expanded through a limited context and it is not acquired abruptly and all at once. Knowledge is not a set of facts, concepts, rules that are ready to be acquired and remembered. Humans must construct knowledge and give meaning through real experience (Sugandi, 2004). This is consistent with the opinion of Cox and Zarrillo (1998) that for constructivism learning activities are

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active activities for students. Students look for the meaning of what is learned. The search for meaning is carried out by adjusting new concepts and ideas with the existing frame of mind. Therefore, students learn to experience themselves in making hypotheses, testing hypotheses, solving problems, looking for answers, describing, researching, dialoguing, holding reflections, expressing questions, expressing ideas, etc. to form new constructs.

By employing a constructivist approach, there will be a transfer of knowledge. For example, a learning approach by performing *learning by doing* will encourage students to become critical, reflective, invasive and productive human beings. Besides, the constructivist approach allows students to be able to think actively. This approach allows the assessment system through numerous sources, not only through exams but can be through observations performed by students or classroom activities. The constructivist approach also opens access for students to express questions, solve problems, and think critically. For lecturers, this approach enables them to provide constructive teaching, writing and speaking.

The method used in constructivism learning is as follows. (a) large group learning, (b) small group learning, (c) syndicates, (d) triads, (e) structured assignments, homework assignments, (f) independent assignments, and (g) seminars. The large group method is perfect for topics that can be studied by students themselves. They work in groups. Each member studies one aspect of the problem in depth before meeting with other members in his/her syndicate, solving problems together intensively. Small group learning methods usually consist of four to six students; they express their opinions on certain content before finally concluding. Some students lack the courage to speak in groups of that size. As a way

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out, lecturers need to occasionally form a "triad", which is a group of only three students. With such small group students, inevitably, students will be couraged to speak.

D. *Second Language Acquisition Challenge in Tertiary Education*

The challenges faced in teaching second language acquisition in higher education are:

1. Lecturer

One of the challenges is the lecturer, particularly new lecturers. The new lecturers commonly encounter difficulty during the teaching process, especially teaching in English. Because teaching in English in college, it might be new to them. Pedagogic, emotional maturity, the length of time required for teaching preparation requires less trivial preparation. Lecturers are teachers in tertiary institutions. As a teacher, lecturers have multidimensional functions, because of the nature of their roles as educators (parents), instructors (coaches), leaders (managers), producers (servants), mentors (facilitators), motivators (stimulators), and resource persons (researchers), (Tampubolon, 1999). However, what the lecturers face in reality is extremely different. The demands to carry out functions as lecturers always experience obstacles. Therefore, the role of lecturers in lecturing activities is not optimal therefore it becomes a challenge for teaching English in tertiary institutions. The lecturer function described above cannot be fully implemented by the lecturer.

2. Materials

Also, the fact reports that some commercial textbooks/textbooks in English that are available in the market do not fit the needs of different learners in each tertiary institution, each academic year, and each class (Anthony, 1997). Also, the content offered and presented

is imbalanced. For several majors or study programs, the English version of the textbooks is available and easy to find since the target market is considerable. For instance, Economics, Law, Agriculture, and Medicine textbooks are easy to find compared to History and Indonesian Literature study programs. However, alternative textbooks are still rare.

3. Student

Students, in any kind of setting, play a role as an agent of change. However, in reality, students are passive. They only memorize what they learned and rarely perform a discussion. According to Rooijkkers (2007), some major reasons why students could not complete their study are as follows: (1) student has low interest in reading; (2) student rarely performs group discussions; (3) student has low critical thinking; (4) student is passive and tends to only memorize, and (5) student-only study to pursue grades and diplomas instead of acquiring an understanding. This indicates that the challenges faced by students are language skills, both oral and written. In terms of oral language skills or spoken communication, students are at a low level of critical thinking. They are too passive and rarely conduct a group discussion. Whereas, one of the goals of English language teaching in tertiary education is encouraging students to actively communicate. For instance, the lecturers expose the students to certain speaking activities such as speech and discussion to express student's ideas and opinions.

E. Conclusion

The challenges of the industrial revolution 4.0 must be responded quickly and appropriately by all parties, especially in the field of education to be able to increase the competitiveness of the Indonesian young generations during global competition. Several

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fundamentals need to be prepared including a more innovative learning system in higher education such as adjusting the learning curriculum and increasing students' ability in mastering English as second language acquisition.

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