

**DOMESTIC-INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH MODEL TO ENLARGE THE ROLES OF CHINESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION TO SUPPORT INDONESIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Indonesia-China relations is growing in last decade and Chinese language learning is one of the structure. Chinese language learning spread out in term of number of institute and learners beyond ethnicity in Indonesia. This growth, has big potential to enhance Chinese language learning out of its core learning as language, to the cooperation with other institutes. This article focuses to the opportunity to enlarge the roles of Chinese language learning in Indonesia through collaborative research between Indonesian and Chinese researchers. It is important in the context to support Indonesia-China bilateral relations, particularly to strengthening mutual understanding among society in two countries through publication of research which covers both academic and non-academic communities including publication in Bahasa Indonesia and Chinese so it could be accessed by general public. Chinese language learning has important role not only in the context of language learning but also as important tool for common activity in two countries.*

**KEYWORDS:** Chinese Language, Research, Cooperation, Collaboration, People-To-People (PtoP)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia-China relations has been growing in the last ten years. The relations increase significantly after two governments signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2005. This agreement covers three main pillars, the cooperation in politics and security, economy and social-culture (Liji, 2012). In the political and security cooperation, both governments create many common activities to strengthen political trust and cooperation to face common challenges like terrorism. While in economy, two governments also held some meetings to discuss investment and trade from two countries. In this field, the roles of business persons from both countries are important since they are practicing business activities. Government focuses to create policy to support the economic ties, and business persons focus on the implementation. While in social and culture, two countries also agree to strengthen cooperation in education, culture and tourism. They agree to open scholarship opportunities to students in two countries, and create some activities like students and culture exchanges. They also held culture performances to increase mutual understanding at the people level. In the social and culture pillar, the role of people becomes important. One of the activities in this pillar is Chinese language education which was already re-opened in post-reform Indonesia in 1998.

The strengthening of Indonesia-China relations does not mean that there are no problems inside. There are four problems in Indonesia-China relations, or the challenges. First is the historical aspect. There are political events in Indonesia and China which give negative perceptions from people in two countries. In Indonesia, Indonesians are still influenced by the 1965 coup d'état by

Communism is still sensitive and a forbidden ideology in Indonesia. While in China, the term

*Cina s Tiongkok*

years created protest from Beijing and the anti-Chinese riot in 1998 also construct negative perception toward Indonesia. Second, international influence. When China is rising, not all of

responses when they view the revive of China economy will give positive impact and should be viewed as opportunity than threat. But, in another side, some countries view China economy

Third, cultural aspect. One of challenges in Indonesia-China relations is culture differences particularly in the context of character of Indonesian society as muslim and China as non-muslim society. Fourth is perception toward Chinese Indonesians. Liang Liji (2012) noted that in the context of strategic partnership agreement between Indonesia and China based in three interdependency factors. They are the Indonesia-China relations, China-Chinese Indonesian relations and Chinese Indonesian-other Indonesian ethnic relations. In the context of the relations between Chinese Indonesians and China, there are some perceptions like as China representation (Liji, 2011), represent aggressor character of China (Weinstein, 1976), China supporter (Storey, 2013), related with

not be solved by the government explanation only but it need objective and equal explanation for people and by the people.

According to those issues, the cooperation in the context of social and culture becomes more significant. If in politic security and economic relations, the roles of government is dominant, particularly it related with policy, but in the social-culture cooperation, the role of public or people to people relations is important. It need improvement and enhancement in people relations to decrease negative perception and strengthening countries relations. Actually, Indonesia and China have good foundation to strengthening their relations. First, historically, Indonesia-China already connected since hundred years ago, even before they became modern state. Second, since Indonesian government allows the Chinese language learning, it create opportunity to learn China. In another side, Indonesian government also provide BIPA Scholarship for foreign students, include Chinese, to learn Indonesian language and culture and also the establishment of Indonesian studies in some Chinese universities are also a good point. In this context, language becomes important tool to learn the people and culture from each countries.

This article discusses about the important roles of Chinese language learning in Indonesia to strengthening people relations between Indonesia and China. It does not discuss details of language learning as linguistic aspect but more the the aspect of that core like the roles out of language learning like collaborative research between Indonesian and Chinese researcher.

### **Language and Diplomacy**

Language is important aspect in human life. Language is not only as communication tool, but it show the civilization and culture of human. Language has internal function as communication tool among society member, and externally, as the study about the society it self. In the context of International Relations study, language also has function not only in practically as communication tool, but it also as a power where politically defined as the capability to influence other. According to Hans J Morgenthau, there are nine basic powers of the state (Morgenthau, 2010). They are geography, natural resources, industry, military, people, national character, moral national, diplomacy and government quality. When Morgenthau defined power in material factor as hard power, Joseph

S Nye views power in another context as the capability to influence without violation and repression. Then, it called the soft power (Zahran and Ramos, 2010). In this context, the cultural aspect becomes important as a tool to develop the soft power. Moreover, in many cultural aspect, language also as important tool. Language becomes important in diplomacy particularly in negotiation among states both in explicit and implicit context (Nsoon, 2013).

The world history shows how language support national power, and also how important it to connect states with different culture. In some countries, language becomes important tool to introduce the culture to people in other countries. They establish institution to handle this business like UK with British Council, Japan with Japan foundation, US with American Corner, France with Culture et Cooperation Linguistique, Germany with Goethe Institute and China with Confucius institute (Effendi, 2015). Those institutions were established to introduce their country and culture to the other countries and language learning is the important program. So, it is normal if those institutions, the language learning as core program and they also connects and take attention to local language learning institutions by held some special course for language teacher, students and event special program like short course in home country.

Language learning as mentioned above aims to increasing the communication capability of foreign speaker. However, in the international politics context, the capability means in specific

understanding of the people. third, language capability also as tool to enhance people to people relations. Language learning also has important role to develop positive image of the state (Effendi and Lidong, 2016). In this context, in international relations study, then it called public diplomacy. Public diplomacy actually focuses to the roles of public in diplomacy activities (Rachmawaty, 2016). In this type of diplomacy, the activity is not only created by diplomat but also involving public as actor and target. Therefore, culture, include language inside, could be a power of the state since it can be used to introduce and in the highest level it used to influence

familiarity, appreciation, engagement and influence (Leonard, 2002). In the context of language in public diplomacy, it has important roles to introduce the country and accessed by public. The assumption is that more people learn language of a country, indirectly, more opportunities for people to learn and understand culture and people of that country. language has unique power when its position that often viewed non-politics and relatively accepted easily by people in other country.

Chinese language has potential and power as mentioned above. First, Chinese language is the most language spoken in the world. Second, Chinese language is one of five official language

language becomes language of trade. According to those three factors, learning Chinese is not only related with China only, but also as communication tool in international trade and politics

The question then is, how about Chinese language learning in Indonesia? How does Indonesian responds to Chinese language learning and place themselves not as target but also tool to strengthening Indonesia-China relations equally. In this context, the four level of public diplomacy should be viewed equally between two countries. In the familiarity level, Chinese language is not only as tool to introduce China to Indonesian, but also to introduce Indonesia to Chinese. In second level, Chinese language is not only to attract Indonesian but also to attract Chinese to Indonesia. It should also happened in next two levels. The next question is how does Chinese language learning in Indonesia gain those purposes? Of course, first thing has to do is

the changing of point of view from one side to two sides. It means, placed Chinese language is not only in one way to Indonesia, but vice versa. The Chinese language learning or course focuses to language aspect, but it does not mean that there is no chance to spill over to social, culture and even political aspect. This article tries to offer a collaborative research model to enhance the non-language roles of Chinese language learning in Indonesia for strengthening Indonesia-China relations. The second aspect is the enlargement the roles not only focuses to language institute but also involving other institution although they do not have direct relations with Chinese language.

### **Domestic-international collaborative model to strengthening indonesia-china relations**

When discussing about the research in language framework, the main topics are related with language. But, it also has opportunity to spillover to other research field. There are some research field which are potentially could be collaborative with language research such as politics, sociology, anthropology, economy and cultural studies. The main idea in this article is the collaborative research between Chinese language learning with other field above as an enlargement role to support Indonesia-China relations.

There two dimensions in this collaborative research, domestic and international. Domestic means the cooperation or collaboration in research between scholar and researcher in Chinese language learning with other scholars and researchers in other field in Indonesia. The collaborative research team from different background will cooperate in specific research topic and collaborate to find specific research result. For example, researcher of international business who want to understand Chinese business culture and philosophy. Although he/s has knowledge in business strategy but limited to access and read Chinese literature and philosophy. Researcher with Chinese language background will fill up this gap and they can work together for best result. Another example is when a researcher with international relations background can cooperate with his/her Chinese language research partner to do research to c  
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by President Joko Widodo. There are many research topics that potentially can be conducted by collaboration between Chinese language research with other field. In other side, this domestic collaborative research can also done by Chinese researcher in China.

While the international dimension means, the cooperation between Indonesian and Chinese research. Since, the few number of Indonesian researcher who can speak Chinese, and lack of Chinese researcher who can speak bahasa Indonesia, the collaborative research is the best solution. The international collaborative research should be the extension of domestic collaborative research model. Like domestic model, the international model also has many potential topics. In this context, Chinese language education has important roles although there is no direct relations with language research topic.

This research collaboration or cooperation is important in some aspects. First, the result is important not only in academic context but also to enhance mutual understanding of people in two countries. Particular research in social and humanities have important roles in this context. Second, the result also opens wider access when it publish in both Bahasa Indonesia and Chinese, and even in English. By publishing the result in Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese or English, it can be read by reader from Indonesia, China and other countries. Third, when almost all of researcher are lecturer, the knowledge and information from the research can be share or disseminated to their students. Fourth, the result may potentially as policy recommendation for government in two countries.

There is a basic condition for collaborative research. The most important is how the mindset and joint view toward collaborative research. It needs consciousness and willingness to have a common activity and little bit leave the sectoral field of research to wider aspects such as common ideas and purposes. It means, in the academic context, research focus is very important for research as the identity. The good researcher is the researcher with specific research focus and mastering it deeply. However, it doesn't mean close the opportunity to take collaboration with other researchers who have different research focus. There is an opportunity to create field sharing between two or more researchers with different backgrounds. In Indonesia, the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Research and Higher Education has a special research program called International Research Collaboration program. It is a good program and opportunity for Indonesian researchers to take collaborative research with Chinese researchers. Once again, it is not for academic purposes only but there is another purpose to enhance mutual understanding and develop positive perceptions among peoples in two countries.

## CONCLUSION

Chinese language learning is one of the important aspects in Indonesia-China relations particularly in social and cultural cooperation. Chinese language learning gives opportunities to know each other between Indonesian and Chinese. Furthermore, Chinese language learning also has opportunities for research collaboration out of its language focus.

Indonesia and China have many phenomena that are interesting to be explored by researchers from two countries. Researchers should collaborate to study those phenomena and result in many scientific articles which will not only be read by the academic community but also non-

through this collaborative research will be objective since it follows academic standards and will give wider impact. From this research it is possible if in the Indonesian and Chinese universities will be established some research centers focusing in Indonesia and China studies which will contribute to strengthening mutual understanding of the people in two countries.

In this context, Chinese language has an important and strategic position, because the Chinese language learning would be more comprehensive and it is possible for Chinese language learners to be researchers to enhance bargaining positions when they graduate. The institution, lecturer and students could cooperate with some institutions which have intentions to study Indonesia (in China) and China (in Indonesia) but they have problems in communication and cultural understanding. In the wider context, it could widen the opportunities for Chinese language graduates out of their traditional jobs as teachers, translators and staff in companies.

The mutual understanding between Indonesian and Chinese about each country is an important issue. Important because the best cooperation in government level will be a face problem when the peoples do not support it. If there are still negative perceptions among the peoples, it will give impact to the trust level, and the trust is the mutual understanding, it needs to enhance people-to-people relations where the Chinese language learning program could play an important role. Finally, the Chinese language learning is not only to learn the language but also about culture and every aspect of human life both in Indonesia and China. To gain the purpose, the cooperation among researchers in different backgrounds and both in domestic and international levels is one of the best ways.



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