LANGUAGE AND CHILD LEARNING IN COVID-19: COMPARATIVE PENTAHELIX ANALYSIS BETWEEN UNITED NATIONS AND INDONESIA'S POLICIES

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Abstract

Covid-19 has affected both language and child learning in Indonesia. With the majority of the rural communities in Indonesia lacking access to the internet, there have been many challenges faced by the stakeholders in empowering Indonesia's educational process amid the tech and logistical difficulties. The United Nations through UNESCO recommended the UNESCO Education Covid-19 Response Framework as one of the main guidelines for member states to adopt. However, Indonesia's policies are considered insufficient to grasp the people-oriented solutions and fail to connect the rural-urban nexus of human security and development. This article is using the penta-helix model and human security concept to compare the UN-recommended practices and the policy implementation to support language and child learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This article concludes that multi-stakeholder engagement and regional development need to be more efficient in utilizing the available resources in contextualizing human security concepts. The penta-helix model analyzed the multi-stakeholder role in or outside the public-private partnership and SDG-related human development plan. This article also concludes on the policy recommendation learning from other ASEAN member states' best practices in overcoming systemic and structural challenges domestically and or internationally intertwined with language and child learning.

Keywords: development, human security, language learning, pentahelix, stakeholder

Introduction

The measurement of human development index and quality of life is always intertwined with educational issues as part of its consideration in determining the livelihood of a certain population. There are several definitions that can be considered to perceive the interchangeable terms of quality of life. First is the matter of perception, where quality of life is dependent on the characteristics of a person's life meets the demand embraced within it (Andrasko, 2013). Second is the matter of objects, where the quality of life can be measured if it is verified with the normal

day-to-day life of a person (Theofilou, 2013). In regards to education, the access, quality, and the outcome of an education is always incorporated as part of a big data in policy making related to development. The current state of globalization is still using the same traditional assumption on their development and economic agenda, which is by referring to the GDP as the benchmark of policies (Bakhouche, 2019). However, one must understand that GDP is no longer a mere index to measure economic growth as children's education is the underlying factor on how future economic growth will be projected. This is intertwined with the narrative where education benefits are the means of investment in human capital (Becker, 1964).

The conjunction between education and economic growth seemed to be more tangible with the imminent economic crisis, although the crisis may not be in the long term, still the countries have to direct their labor to increase productivity and innovation. The research result from Odit et al (2010) concluded that educational attainment did support the notion of economic growth, where innovation and improvements of human capital improves the industrial output (Odit, Dookhan, & Fauzel, 2010). Therefore, educational sustainability needs to be preserved by any necessary means anytime during and outside of a crisis situation. During the health crisis, the learning process shifted into virtual platforms, and this requires an extensive availability of internet connection for its smoothness. With lower class families unable to purchase internet access or because of the remote living location, the absence of teaching in day-to-day life affects the academic achievements of lower class families (Chen et al, 2011).

During health crisis that require massive social movement restriction, direct conventional learning process has to be switched to virtual mode. This kind of virtual education requires extensive resource on both infrastructure, networks, and tech skills to operate the gadgets smoothly. The term "distance learning system" was coined and it became popular especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Previous research argued that distance learning separates students and their educators – and every activities are being conducted through the various methods of ICT (Chun, Kern, & Smith, 2016). However this situation exacerbated the lower-income students, especially those who are residing in rural areas whereas internet services and tech infrastructure are not sufficient compared to the urban students (Fowler, 2020). Computer assisted learning process may catalyze innovation and significant impact for the educators to prevail over the crises (Arroyo et al, 2020), although the changing practice of conventional learning triggers capacity building for learners' competencies (Beatty, 2003) – it is different with the elementary, kindergarten, and those language learners.

School closures became one of the consideration for governments to mitigate the spread of the disease and to prevent the high rates of infection which could potentially lead to the overwhelming burden that could disrupt the healthcare facilities, and also to acknowledge that children tend to be more vulnerable to be infected and it will expose larger communities at risk of getting infected. Institution closures and suspension of direct learning process will still poses challenges although the infrastructure and enabling environment might seem to be supportive. Those challenges are: (1) Accessibility to online distance learning to refugees, displaced and migrant children population, which are vulnerable the most and needs to be catered in order to assure they receive good quality and practices of learning process even during the crisis; (2) Students who lived in rural areas and indigenous

people tend to live with limited infrastructure and still adopting conventional old curriculum methods should be addressed as a national education contingency plan amidst the pandemic; and (3) Limited human resources, lack of connectivity, and lack of funding become the main challenges when imposing remote learning programs on students who live in rural areas.

Quality Child and Language Learning: A Literature Review

When it comes to child and language learning, we need to pinpoint that certain factors are obliged to be taken into further discussions. Research conducted by Ishimine et al (2010) argued that the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) should be understood with the connected model of relationship between curriculum and quality, the quality itself is divided into the connected structural and process quality. The definition of structural quality is aspect(s) that can be provisioned as the prerequisites of child learning standards (Howes, et al., 2008). Process quality itself is defined as the quality measurement that should be regarded during the interaction between the educator and the learner and alongside with their relation with peers that will be seen as the indicator of their educational outcome (Pianta, et al., 2005). Therefore, the model of a quality ECEC is something that is dependent on the curriculum and process quality as a direct relationship from the structural quality, and both of these curriculum as the standard and the process quality are connected to each other. The interaction from the structural quality, curriculum, and process quality will then become a host the interaction among peers and teachers will determine the child learning outcome, and this will be reflected in the structural quality as the prerequisites (Ishimine, Tayler, & Bennett, 2010). Furthermore, the correlated impacts from the structural quality as the standard and educational prerequisites will determine the adjacent process quality and the learning outcome, and this will determine the fate of the educational institution. Why is this so? We need to see further that according to McCartney and Taylor (2009), the children who are attending a high quality institution will achieve better on its academic and non-academic achievements rather than the opposite (Dearing, et al, 2009).

Pentahelix Analysis and Learning Policies: Connecting the Dots

The implementation of governmental policies in any sector requires a multi stakeholder engagement, either from the public or private entities. These stakeholders are viewed as the individual or group subject(s) that are motivated and or directed certain matters to pursue organizational targets as the achievement of their engagement (Freeman, 1984). These stakeholders then collaborate/ doing their own set role to achieve certain objectives like policies, debates, and etc. According to the penta helix model that is being discussed by numerous literatures and scholars, they argued that penta helix uses the government, think-tank and knowledge sector, institution that oversees it, society and community, and the industry that manufactures the products. This model allows innovation and comprehensive analysis in deconstructing the role of each stakeholder in an open innovation model compared to the triple and quadruple helix models (McAdam & Debackere, 2017). This research elaborates on how pentalax analysis in conclusion can allow the learning policies to be innovated with a multistakeholder approach according to each role and preset objectives.

Method

This research employs qualitative analysis through literature reviews gained from the internet-based and document-based research. This allows the paper to be elaborated on the research questions in analyzing the penta helix perspectives of child education and language learning in Indonesia. This paper employs a more analytical qualitative elaboration on the macro aspects of the contentions in this research.

Findings and Discussion

Distance Language and Child Learning: The Dilemma and Opportunities

There are many researchers that have been discussing the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the learning process. First off, this paper will discuss the characteristics of language learning. Fundamentally, language is learned since a human was born and its getting important during their early toddler age and progressing when they get older (Grady & Cho, 2011). Learning either first or foreign language are still dependent on the surrounding environments and it's being shaped by the prior first language a child/ individual has learned before (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Language and child learning is something that needs extra attention and a precise holistic approach on its deliberation, we need to understand that even a face-to-face teaching process of child and language learning already has its own challenges. The challenges here majorly is on the question whether the process quality and its outputs can be measured through academic and extracurricular achievements. Educators and the peers have to understand each other in the learning process, where students need to determine how the materials affect their understanding and how it can be developed for future benefits (Derakhshan, 2015). Therefore, when it comes to teaching language and child learning, aside from its extra care – the crucial point is that teaching children and language requires more practice and exposure to the real life daily interactions (Khan, 2011). The dilemma is, teaching language and children will be harder in the environment with limited practical exposure, especially during Covid-19 pandemic where social restrictions also applied to the education sectors.

In regards to child learning, we need to see that asynchronous learning might work with a more mature learning ethics and full consciousness from a growing mindset. This is hard for a kindergarten or elementary student with a different early mindset that might not be as 'mature' as their older peers. Self-paced learning works if the learner achieves all key performance indicators on their academic assessment and relies on their independence to explore more. However, child learning requires more fruitful connections between peers and teachers which can't be replaced by something that is geographically and physically far (Moore, Dickson-Deane, & Galyen, 2011). And this might impose new challenges owing to the fact that a balanced proportion between short and long term mixed learning can't still be guaranteed in many member states for its implementation. While on the other hand, distance learning itself may still pose a challenge in regards to its curriculum alignment with more rigorous demands and standards in an online learning platform. Additionally, even though the language learner and children can still practice the application of the theories and expected learning outcome through distance learning, there are still numerous challenges to its application that seems to be inevitable (Ahmad, 2016).

The aforementioned dilemma can be refrained if the parents, peers, and or guardian of that particular student are able to recreate an exact environment where practicing language and educating children with tangible actions takes place. However, each individual has its own set of peers, parents/ guardians, and social conditions that might not be suitable for being the expected precondition that embraces the best practices. However, a study found that amid the various capabilities of the peers/ parents/ and or guardians – a student can have their own bonding time with their superior or peers in alleviating learning challenges through a more personal approach (Bhamani, et al, 2020). Data from the World Bank (2020) concluded that a school/ educational institute closure of 1-2 months might contribute significantly to public health safety, however students with extraordinary circumstances might feel this as a prolonged nightmare during home-based learning (World Bank, 2020).

United Nations Recommendations on Child and Language Learning

The United Nations did concern member states' active engagement in preserving the tracking of sustainable development goals' achievements. The mandate of each government to carry out quality education for their future generation is mandated by the United Nations through the indicators contained in the SDG No. 4 of quality education. International cooperation and foreign assistance to the member states is needed to preserve that said objective, and the collaboration between public and private actors are needed to pursue a higher qualified education with standards and embracing the value of knowledge society (Suharsaputra, 2015). The research is also synergized with the arguments that cooperation and harmony between the education stakeholders are potential and may yield positive impacts on the development of academic quality (Breen & Hing, 2001). Hence, the cooperation between member states and the international entities are needed not to intervene or dictate member states, but to recommend the best practices that are in line.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has published and circulated their recommended guidelines to every of their member states globally. The largest effort is the deployment of UNESCO Covid-19 Education Response through the Global Education Coalition that unites 175 countries in achieving educational sustainability (UNESCO, n.d). The global coalition highlights collective actions in 3 main contexts: (1) educational connectivity; (2) teacher's empowerment; and (3) closing gender gap in education process (UNESCO, n.d). Currently, UNESCO shifts their focus from the worldwide monitoring of school closures to the priorities of global teacher and student vaccination and to ensure that each national vaccine rollout scheme are being applied flawlessly (UNESCO, 2021). This depicts that UNESCO is ready to encourage its member states in reopening schools partially and administering vaccine to achieve herd immunity. The deprived children and other learners can't be held any much longer, this is because distanced learning format might threaten the students through domestic violence and malnutrition still haunts the Least Developing Countries (LDCs) and rural children with limited infrastructure (Sheikh, et al, 2020).

Although school reopening policies in member states might be experiencing rejection from the worried parents, UNESCO anticipated it through the publication

of COVID-19 Response- Remote Learning Strategy formulated by UNESCO to ensure that all responses are precisely adopted learning from the past study cases. The framework highlights the following efforts: (1) developing a continuous remote learning system that caters the different availabilities of digital gadgets and accesses; (2) designing a new concept of learning that minimize the use of internet for those with limited access and promoting remote upskilling practices; (3) enabling multi actor training, capacity building, and trial and error to achieve the success in remote learning and its problems; and (4) monitoring and evaluation that assess adoption rates and effectiveness based on the students assessments and tactical adjustments (UNESCO, 2020).

Aside from the setbacks, the changes and disruptions brought by Covid-19 to the world has urged international entities like UNESCO to move forward and foster innovative collaboration nexus. These disruptions which have led to global closure of educational institute physical learning processes has demanded UNESCO to foster the collaboration and assistance towards the most vulnerable and disadvantaged member states in facilitating the remote learning process during the pandemic. The disparities of home learning are tangible in LDCs with the example of 90% from the total students in Sub-Saharan countries did not have adequate access to computers and 56 million of population in Sub-Saharan African countries did not have access to any networks which leave the students no options to continue their education processes (United Nations News, 2020).

However, aside from the disruptions and impact, from this crisis, UNESCO has the opportunity to expand the horizons into new opportunities to rethink the overall goals, roles, substances, and the implementation of education in long term means to counteract future crisis that may occurs by the inclusive multi-sectoral approaches to overcome all potential and future challenges that may disrupt the education again. UNESCO also highlighted that during a crisis, it is important to empower collective measures and share the best practices from anywhere around the globe to promote and be more prepared for the alternatives that might be considered during the crisis to sustain the education process.

The response framework itself was initiated by UNESCO, where any organizations could take part in promoting the perseverance of online distance learning amidst the pandemic. UNESCO endorsed organizations and education service providers working together with the ministry of education in each member state. Aside from that, UNESCO also appoints, observes, and recommends the best practices of online home learning to member states who are experiencing school closures by Covid-19 by facilitating joint meeting among minister of education, promoting the hi-tech, low-tech, and no-tech approaches to provide evidence-based solutions to address the key problems of Covid-19 online learning (UNESCO, 2020).

UNESCO also conducts mapping measures to identify the regional challenges and researching potential partnerships that could be utilized by promoting and proliferating UNESCO surveys to understand the status quo and pressing matters that needs to be resolved by member states by implementing the framework by UNESCO in order to maintain sustainability and connectivity between students, teachers, and institutions on preserving the online home distance learning measures amidst Covid-19 pandemic through the UNESCO on national education responses; UNESCO Chairs on higher education; UNESCO-ILO on

technical and vocational education and training; Global Survey on staff development and training in the context of COVID-19 pandemic; UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank on distance learning responses; Regional UNESCO-UNICEF on early children education workforce in Asia and the Pacific as the stakeholders to sustain the mutual partnership and strategic trust within the United Nations system (UNESCO, 2020). UNESCO also fosters the dialogue through Covid-19 ministerial dialogue in order to sustain the information sharing efforts to promote collaboration and cooperation between member states in addressing school closure, online learning, and preparation for school reopening. UNESCO also implemented its UNESCO Response-Remote Learning Strategy with 3 main solutions: (1) developing multi stakeholder support to continue sustainable assistance to the educators in developing countries; (2) designing the new concept of learning to promote capacity building and the peers' upskilling; and (3) engaging trial and error to assess the progress with the collaboration of stakeholders (UNESCO, 2020).

It can be concluded UNESCO policy recommendations are comprehensive and suffice the involvement of all stakeholders within helices within the penta helix framework in achieving innovation and resolving the past loopholes. However, the implementation of the policy is a different matter, a research argued by Needles (2005) argued that implementing international educational standards depends on the technical knowledge of the professional actors involved, standards on its assessment, and the enforcement rules. The research also concluded that developed countries may find it hard to accept international recommendations, while the developing countries will prolong their consideration to implement from their resources and capabilities (Needles, 2005).

Indonesia's Penta Helix Analysis on Language and Child Learning Policies

Indonesia is the largest country in the world with the most populous rural areas as the distribution of income varies from one region to another. In regards to education policies, the three main fundamental domains of Indonesia's educational frameworks are affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domain (Mispani & Jannah, 2021) – in which these domains are being balanced by the policy paradigm of Indonesia itself (Tajuddin, 2018). The education-related policies in Indonesia faces one major challenge when it comes to child and language learning during Covid-19 pandemic, which is the issues of accounting the standards into local practices with diverse situations.

During Covid-19, Indonesia adopted its remote learning and other education-related measures through the RPJMN 2020-2024 that caters the education policy guidance in the plan No. 4 as one of the pillars. Not only the RPJMN, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture also implemented the SE 15/2020 which calls for the implementation of distance learning and the maximization of learning sources from government-owned platforms on the internet. However, the flow of data and popularity of its platform is still nothing compared to the larger media platform. The plan stated that educational services will be preserved during the pandemic and support matching opportunities between the learners and relevant offers like job, internship, and other capacity building. On the other hand, in regards to language learning and children teaching – Indonesia through the Ministry of Youth and Sports conducted a capacity

building workshop and training for the startups running in education to offer a more legitimate and target-oriented services.

On public authorities, penta helix analysis provides that the government as the decision maker is the key pinnacle actor in directing the navigation of the nation's education plan. The public policymakers on this subject facilitates ecosystem to synergize innovation as its culture and this ecosystem will catalyze discussions, actions, and interaction to build harmony among actors (Halibas, Sibayan, & Maata, 2017). As one of the responsible stakeholders for the policy making, monitoring, and evaluation the government of Indonesia

On the community aspects, the concept of community participation is divided by three contentions which are the : (1) political contentions, where the engagement from community will affect public policies and its related concerns; (2) social supports to ease and assist the burden and overcoming challenges; and (3) ensuring the participation of the civil society actors (Chamidah, et al, 2020; McConnell & Hart, 2019). Community is the central helices on this analysis as it will navigate themselves to open new issues and or potential opportunities that could be explored for the betterment of education. Indonesia as the 4th largest country in the world does upheld a democratic vision on the achievement of the national development agenda. Due to its vast areas that requires a localized administration of the learning and educational policies, the decentralization of education policies are important in improving a school-based Management (Jalal & Supriadi, 2001). Although this kind of decentralization is not directly attached to child and informal learning institutions, we need to understand that local school and official institutional policies influenced the practices. Again, the role of community is important in education development as the community's voice is important for the democratic government of Indonesia to consider into account (Parker & Raihani, 2011).

In the media, this paper will just focus on how the media could catalyze a precise and unbiased info demic to support awareness, and also promoting research publication done by the academics in regards to the best practices and analysis of policies regarding children and language learning. Media should also support the publication of government efforts, uncovering the truth and real issues to be viral for the government and civil society to be resolved. Media on the other hand is also being used by the learner for their source of research and building perception or perhaps practicing their related study into a concrete tangible manner. Media according to Pratama and Yusro (2016) also has the role in education to support students and children independent learning process as the media shows a flexible spaces that the learners can adapt more easily (Sakkir, Dollah, & Ahmad, 2020).

On business, the current Merdeka Belajar framework allows the businesses in the education sector to develop the services that the government could not provide to its people, however as part of the moral obligation – the affordability should be matching with its platform rationale and economic situation. Merdeka belajar allows students including the language learner to explore opportunities relevant to their study (Abidah, et al, 2020). Although most language learners may use the informal education pathway in learning a new language, this isn't only targeted to them – but also to the people in formal education who are learning linguistics. Business has the momentum from the free learning process to support and triangulate possible issues when the government can't.

Conclusion

The redefinition of educational policies in child and language learning is imminent as the collaboration of peers and the nexus of digital transformation in education is now proven with the pandemic. This paper also concludes that the government is no longer the central entity and multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed to address concerns and implement evidence-based policies. Quality education is a must and now mixed methods in on and off site learning needs to be considered as a human security agenda and capital quality is a thing to be prioritized while maintaining health protocols. The school reopening framework which emphasized on the decisive role of stakeholders (from parents until governmental level) through intensive consultations which were aimed to prepare for the schools reopening by implementing careful consideration, adjustment of technicalities, prioritizing health and safety protocol, and adopting multi-channel coordination to cope up with the new normal conditions in post-pandemic era. From these mechanisms, the government will play a central leading role to sustain these efforts to address all possible scenarios.

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