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## Indonesian Polyglots: Lived Experiences of Adults Learning Languages Online and Beyond the Classroom

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### Abstract

Learning languages independently can be more accessible in today's online environment. Polyglots, who are speakers of more than three languages, take advantage of this online learning environment to learn even more languages in Indonesia. Using transcendental phenomenology, the researchers interviewed these adult learners on their lived experience with online platforms for learning languages not traditionally spoken or used in daily life in Indonesia. Researchers found that the polyglots reported learning many foreign languages through interactive resources, receptive resources, social media, and authentic resources. Importantly, they held positive attitudes towards online learning platforms and their experiences left them with feelings of helpfulness, enjoyability, even bravery. In many cases, these polyglots often used freely available online resources to learn their foreign languages successfully. Implications include the idea that their language learner experience coupled with online opportunities can lead to successful language learning experiences.

### Keywords

polyglots, languages, Indonesia, adult learner, transcendental phenomenology

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# **Indonesian Polyglots: Lived Experiences of Adults Learning Languages Online and Beyond the Classroom**

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Learning languages independently can be more accessible in today's online environment. Polyglots, who are speakers of more than three languages, take advantage of this online learning environment to learn even more languages in Indonesia. Using transcendental phenomenology, the researchers interviewed these adult learners on their lived experience with online platforms for learning languages not traditionally spoken or used in daily life in Indonesia. Researchers found that the polyglots reported learning many foreign languages through interactive resources, receptive resources, social media, and authentic resources. Importantly, they held positive attitudes towards online learning platforms and their experiences left them with feelings of helpfulness, enjoyability, even bravery. In many cases, these polyglots often used freely available online resources to learn their foreign languages successfully. Implications include the idea that their language learner experience coupled with online opportunities can lead to successful language learning experiences.

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Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity, including various languages that are spoken all over this archipelago country. According to Aziz (2003) and Zakaria (2016), the people are mostly bilingual because they speak a local language alongside the national language of Indonesia. Meanwhile, an international language, like English, is not spoken for daily communication. Rather, it is just a subject taught at an educational institution. Moreover, other foreign languages, such as Hindi, French, Russian, Japanese, and so forth, are less commonly taught and learned by the people there (Noprival, Rafli, & Nuruddin, 2019). Even though these languages are not often used for daily communication in this kind of environment, many people still need these languages for a variety of reasons. We explored the lived experiences of polyglots in learning languages through online resources because language proficiency is often important for academics, language teachers, language educators, and many other people working in the fields of language education and we were interested in learning more about the process of becoming a language learning for multiple languages.

In many cases for language learning, autonomy is often listed as a factor in mastering a foreign language (Lamb, 2004). For polyglots looking to learn a language not found near them, most of their language learning choices require a higher level of autonomy. This autonomy is often linked to the individual learners and their need to reach a specific level of

proficiency. (Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Skehan, 1991; White, 2008). In fact, there are a growing number of examples of successful autonomous language learning experiences (Bown, 2009; Krashen & Kiss, 1996; Lamb, 2007; Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002). In the recent past, many learners used a variety of materials to support their self-directed learning. Some of these materials included videos, modules, books, film, social media, and so forth (Benson, 2001). In today's environment, there are a number of additional options available with digital technology.

Digital technology nowadays provides language learning resources to be more accessible for autonomous language learners and give them the language support they need (Chik & Ho, 2017; Golonka et al., 2014; Thorne, Sauro, & Smith, 2015). To a great degree, it makes it easier for language learners to regulate themselves in learning (McLoughlin & Lee, 2010), particularly in an informal learning context. In addition to this concern, Lai and Gu (2011) stated "the power of technology for language learning may best be realized and maximized outside the language classroom." Moreover, it is also possible for language enthusiasts to learn more than one language through empowering digital technology. Additionally, the use of educational technology can have a positive effect on language education (Dooly, 2018). However, due to a large number of online language learning resources, the question might be raised by novice language learners on how to locate, source, use or create online language learning resources (Chik & Ho, 2017). The answer may vary for such of a question; however, learning from polyglots employing online resources is one of the ways to answer this question, since they have experience in learning many languages.

So far, there is a great amount of literature focused on exploring online learning and language learning (Golonka et al., 2014; Harrison & Thomas, 2009; Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin, 2010; Nic Giolla Mhichíl, Appel, Ó Ciardubháin, Jager, & Prizel-Kania, 2015; Palfreyman, 2006; Yunus & Salehi, 2012). However, less attention has been paid to the language resources employed by polyglots. For this study, we discuss the details and insights from the lived experiences of seven polyglots in Indonesia who attempted to learn foreign languages online. These learners already mastered a number of languages traditionally spoken and/or taught locally. However, they sought to gain proficiency in languages not commonly spoken or taught locally, which included English, Arabic, Russian, among others. As language learners and language researchers, we interviewed them to learn more about what makes these polyglots successful in learning foreign languages.

### **The Context of the Researchers**

Following a transcendental phenomenological design, Moustakas (1994) recommended providing autobiographical information from which the topic in focus emerged. In the case of our focus on polyglots, we are polyglots with a variety of experiences learning languages. Some of us learned our languages through traditional classrooms at different points in our lives. In other cases, we learned these languages using computer-assisted language learning (CALL) that have recently included online tools. Many of us learned the languages spoken around us and each of us studied a language or languages not commonly found in the communities in which we live. For example, De Felice studied Spanish and German, which were spoken in some form within the United States. However, he also studied the Nahuatl language in classrooms in Mexico as well as through virtual means (De Felice, 2008, 2012a, 2012b; DeFelice & Janesick, 2015). Besides learning languages, he has also much teaching experiences. He has two decades of experience in the areas of language teacher development, applied linguistics, and language teaching and learning. In addition, Noprival had experiences in learning three different languages, English, Arabic, and Hindi. He formally learned English starting in middle school; however, he was first introduced to English when he was in

elementary school. Around the same time he began studying English, he was exposed to Arabic in an Islamic middle school for three years. Later in his academic studies, he was exposed to Hindi when he did a masters degree in India for two years (During this time, he also used English in daily communication). Currently, he is one of English teaching staffs at one of private higher educational institutions in Indonesia. For Rafli, he speaks five different languages: Kerincinese, Minangnese, and Indonesian for his native languages while he also studied English and Arabic through a variety of traditional outlets. His language ability is in line with his job. He has been teaching in the department of language education in one public University in Indonesia for 45 years. Lastly, Nuruddin speaks Javanese and Indonesian. For foreign languages, he studied English and Arabic in formal educational institution, which were commonly learned in Indonesia. Speaking of his profession, he is as an associate teaching Arabic at one public university in Indonesia. By engaging in a discussion of our interest, passion, and even curiosity, we are also taking steps aimed at helping us achieve epoche (Moustakas, 1994), which is a phenomenological expression whereby we proceed without suppositions, prejudgments, or preconceived ideas of the lived-experiences for our participants. We discuss our methods in greater detail in the next section.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

We chose to investigate the lived experiences of polyglots who studied foreign languages in Indonesia using a transcendental phenomenological approach. Because our primary interest was in their experiences online, and we have engaged in language learning online, we chose this approach to help us become more familiar with their time spent learning through a variety of tools and applications. We also chose this method because we were interested in exploring the participants' lived experiences and their challenges with learning yet another language not commonly taught or spoken in their community. We employed Moustakas (1994) to help us focus on lived experiences and we employed his modification of data analysis procedures laid out by van Kaam. Furthermore, Moustakas (1994), a phenomenologist, stated that the essentials of a phenomenological study are to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon and to explore in-depth accounts of experiences and their meanings from participants' personal words, descriptions, and reflections on the phenomenon. Following Moustakas through the Vam Kaam modifications led us to write up a description of that included the meaning and essences of the experiences of these seven polyglots.

We sought to learn more about the experience of polyglots learning foreign languages in Indonesia. Through phenomenology, we explored their lived experiences that mostly included their exploration of language learning resources. Our guiding research was "what is the lived experiences of polyglots in learning foreign languages through online resources?" We attempted to explore a gap in the multilingual learning experience, especially relating to the marriage of technology and language learning used by polyglots. Given the lived experiences for the authors, we anticipated the language learning journey for languages not commonly taught or spoken in Indonesia would rely heavily on the use of technology to access language learning resources. As such, our focus followed closely with the lived experiences shared by the authors and the study participants.

The authors have a strong interest in exploring polyglots' experiences in learning many foreign languages through the online resources. Since we were interested in exploring the lived experiences of polyglots, a transcendental phenomenological study was the best method for conducting this research. Ultimately, we decided to do this study as an attempt to provide

information for language learners who are studying extensively a variety of foreign languages through online learning resources.

With our focus on polyglots, we sought “a unified vision” of their experiences (Moustakas, 1994, p. 55), especially as it related to their need to learn using online tools. In this study, we focused on one overarching question: What are the lived experiences of polyglots in Indonesia learning foreign languages online? This question may help us contribute to our knowledge of language learning online, specifically as it relates to highly experienced learners attempting to access languages not commonly available to them. As language teachers, we were also interested in what these learners can tell us about the ways in which we engage our own students in our classrooms as well as online. While not a direct focus of this study, we nonetheless looked for implications that would be pedagogically focused for language learning.

### *Participants*

Our participants are polyglots in Indonesia who, as language learners, are a specialized group that possess experiences and specific knowledge capable of addressing our research interests. In particular, the participants selection was based on: (a) those who have mastered at least three foreign languages, (b) those who have had experience in utilizing online language learning, and (c) those who were available to be interviewed many times. Although we focus on digital technologies employed by polyglots in learning many foreign languages, we did not evaluate the polyglots and their language proficiency. We also did not evaluate how successful their learning was. Rather, we aimed at exploring their experiences in language learning, which often led our participants to discuss their exploration of online language learning resources to learn languages not commonly taught or spoken in Indonesia.

We have organized a brief description of each participant relating to their multiple language ability (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Participants' background information*

No	Names	Gender	Mother tongue	Foreign languages
1	Afiz	Male	Indonesian	English, Arabic, French, and Hindi
2	Amal	Male	Gayonese (one of the local languages in Indonesia)	Arabic, English, and Hindi
3	Idip	Male	Bengkulunese (one of the local languages in Indonesia)	English, Arabic, and Hindi
4	Nurul	Female	Javanese (one of the local languages in Indonesia)	English, Arabic, and Hindi
5	Tono	Male	Javanese (one of the local languages in Indonesia)	English, Hindi, German, French, and Dutch
6	Udin	Male	Indonesian	English, Italian, and French

7	Yoyo	Male	Musinese (one of the local languages in Indonesia)	English, French, and Russian
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All participants in this study acquired at least three foreign languages; inevitably, they speak either the national language or the local language as their mother tongue. These polyglots had various experiences in learning foreign languages. Some of them studied the languages in a formal educational institution. For example, Udin studied English since he was in junior high school. In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject in this level of education, nonetheless, English also may be taught at the primary level as an additional subject. Meanwhile, those who did their studying in a school affiliated with the Ministry of Religious Affairs were also instructed in instructed in Arabic and English. For instance, Nurul learned these two languages in one Islamic boarding school in East Java. Additionally, the polyglots studied foreign languages in informal education. Tono, for example, took a French course after school. Some of the participants learned foreign languages through an immersion process. For example, Yoyo lived in Russia for three years and now he can speak Russian well. Another common way to acquire foreign languages was through autonomous learning, often through the use of online learning platforms. It is important to note that the history behind becoming polyglots are combination of all these experiences, including the process of formal education, informal education, immersion, and independent learning.

We ensured our participants knew that their participation was totally voluntary and their statements would be treated confidentially. Although an Institutional Review Board (IRB) process is not common in Indonesia, we followed commonly accepted practices in line with research ethics. For instance, we concealed the names of people, places, and research sites through the use of pseudonyms to protect the rights and the privacy of participants.

### ***Data Collection***

We collected data through semi-structured interviews using digital recording. We used Indonesian language during the data collection. In this study, the first author transcribed the data and translated them into English. The interviews involved “prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses” (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 246). Before the actual interviews, we contacted each of the seven participants via WhatsApps message to establish a mutual date and time. We really appreciated all the participants involved in this study for their willingness to be interviewed repeatedly to gain more data and clarify previous data that they had given. Creswell (2007, p. 201) stated “qualitative researchers strive for understanding, that deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with participants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings.”

### **Trustworthiness**

We used trustworthiness to ensure the findings of our study reflected our participants’ lived experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We followed established phenomenological procedure through (a) utilizing semistructured interviews, (b) collecting demographic surveys, (c) using external reviewer, (d) reviewing audio-recorded transcriptions many times, and (e) reviewing literature (Fusch & Ness, 2015). As part of the focus on trustworthiness, we shared the interview transcriptions with the participants to check what we had recorded and transcribed matched with their standpoints (Koelsch, 2013).

Even though we have conducted research in accordance with standard procedures, we are aware that this study still has some limitations. First, we relied on the participants to indicate their level of proficiency across the multiple languages they speak. As their lived experience focused on the idea of being polyglots while also using digital resources in learning many languages, we did not assess their proficiency levels or their language learning outcomes.. In addition, our participants described the online language learning resources they were employing, however the efficient use of online language learning resources may vary depending on a user's abilities and their frequency of use.

### Presentation of Data

We used Moustakas' (1994) steps for the data analysis of this phenomenological study and we employed the spreadsheet analysis technique from De Felice and Janesick (2015) to implement the Moustakas' procedures. For most of the analysis, we maintained a delicate balance between the language of our participants and that of our readers. We interviewed the participants using Indonesian, conducted a number of the following steps in Indonesian while providing translations throughout the process, and we completed the final synthesis using a blend of Indonesian and English. All excerpts and examples contain the original language along with its English translation. The following sections detail the process.

### Horizontalization

We conducted this step by reviewing all the interview transcriptions. In this excerpt, we listed each expression relevant to our research question. Herewith the example of horizontalization taken from one of the participants, Nurul.

**Table 2**

#### *Horizontalization*

Date	Line No.	Participant	Complete Transcription
Feb. 15	112	Noprival	<i>Bisakah saudara gambarkan pengalaman anda tentang sejauh mana penggunaan internet sebagai sumber belajar? (Could you describe your experience how did you employ internet in learning foreign languages?)</i>
Feb. 15	113	Nurul	<i>Baiklah saya suka Facebook dan YM...saya menggunakannya, saya menambahkan penutur asli bahasa Inggris di pertemanan di akun Facebook dan Yahoo Messenger untuk bersosialisasi secara Virtual Um...kemudian saya mengobrol dengan mereka. Ini cara saya mempraktekkan bahasa Inggris saya, hal ini benar-benar membantu..., ya seperti itu, Ok. (Well I like Facebook and YM...I use them, I add native speakers of English on my Facebook and Yahoo Messenger account as a friend for virtual socialization account Um....then I chat with them. This the way I practice my English...Frankly speaking, it is really helpful...Yes like um, Okay.)</i>

### Reduction and elimination

We removed overlapping, repetitive, vague and irrelevant statements given by the participants. An example is included below from Afiz.

**Table 3**

*Reduction and elimination*

Date	Line No.	Participant	Complete Transcription
08 July	115	Noprival	<i>Kemudian media apalagi yang saudara gunakan?</i> (Then what's the other the media you are using?)
08 July	116	Afiz	<i>Ya, saya selalu mempraktekkan bahasa Arab dengan tetangga saya. Tempat tinggalnya tidak jauh dari saya, ...jadi...I bertemu dia setiap hari jumat [setiap mau berangkat sholat jumat]</i> (Yeah, I always practice Arabic with my neighbour. His apartment is not far from mine, ...so...I meet him every Friday [Friday prayer time])

We eliminated statements like this one because, while it is focused on language learning, it does not address online language learning. We removed this statement and many others like it since they were not relevant to our research question.

### Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents

After establishing a list of categories, we combined similar categories into themes relating to online language learning resources employed by polyglots. We identified four themes in this study, including:

- Interactive learning resources (e.g., Duolingo, Book2)
- Receptive learning resources (e.g., BBC, VoA, Goole Translate, Youtube, Everyday Thai Application)
- Social media (e.g., VK, FB, WA, Yahoo Messenger)
- Authentic material resources (e.g. film, Youtube, online news)

We provide an example of how we clustered expressions into these themes:

#### Social media

Nurul: *Baiklah saya suka Facebook dan YM...saya menggunakannya, saya menambahkan penutur asli bahasa Inggris dipertemanan di akun Facebook dan Yahoo Messenger untuk bersosialisasi secara Virtual Um...kemudian saya mengobrol dengan mereka. Ini cara saya mempraktekkan bahasa Inggris saya, hal ini benar-benar membantu..., ya seperti itu, Ok.* (Well I like Facebook and YM...I use them, I add native speakers of English in my Facebook and Yahoo Messenger account as a friend for virtual socialization account Um....then I chat

with them. This the way I practice my English...Frankly speaking, it is really helpful...Yes like um, Okay.)

*Tono: Untuk memperbaiki kemampuan bahasa Spanyol dan Bahasa Jerman, saya menggunakan WhatsApp, saya sering melatih keterampilan bahasa saya dengan penutur asli bahasa tersebut...melalui media ini, saya punya banyak teman dari berbagai belahan dunia hal ini membantu saya mempelajari bahasa mereka (to improve my Spanish and German by using WhatsApp...I frequently practice my language skills with their native language [chatting with his friends]... through this media, I have many friends from over all the world at the same time I can learn the languages)*

*Yoyo: Setelah saya tahu ada media sosial yang bernama VK ketika saya sekolah di Rusia, saya mendaftar untuk mengikutinya. Sehingga saya bisa praktek bahasa Rusia baik dengan penutur asli bahasa Rusia maupun dengan mahasiswa internasional yang juga sedang belajar di Rusia. Saya saya suka menggunakan media ini, dan sangat bermanfaat untuk praktek bahasa Rusia (After I know there is a social media platform named VK when I studied in Russia. I registered to join it. I learn and practice my Russian both with native Russian and international students studying in Russia. I enjoyed using it a lot, it was really helpful to practice Russian language)*

Since this stage of analysis required final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application of validation, we blended together this step with the prior step in our analysis spreadsheet.

### **Individual textural description**

The individual textural description deals with how the phenomenon was experienced texturally by the participants. We provided an example of individual textural description from Amal below.

Amal had experiences in learning Arabic, Hindi, and English. He felt that many kinds of online learning resources to facilitate his learning. One of the online resources that he employed is Youtube, especially to learn English. “ Karena latar belakang pendidikan saya adalah ekonomi, saya selalu menonton Youtube tentang kuliah ekonomi di Universitas Harvard” (Since my educational background is economy, I usually watch in youtube about the economic lecture in Harvard University. Through this method I got knowledge of economy as well as my English improved), Amal reported.

### **Individual structural description**

Having established the individual textural description for each participant, we then constructed an individual structural description that "provides a vivid account of the underlying dynamics of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). We provided an example of individual structural description from Tono.

The emergence of technology brings transformative language learning venues and resources, including learning foreign languages. Since language needs to be

practiced, the interactive learning resources can facilitate the learners to communicate virtually with their teachers, peers, native speakers, or those who have the same language learning interest. In this case, Tono shared his experience regarding learning through *Duolingo*. This website is really enjoyable to learn foreign languages, especially German, French, English, and Dutch. Moreover, he can practice foreign languages virtually. Importantly, this language learning website is freely used by him.

### ***Composite textural-structural description***

After establishing individual structural description, we combined the textural and structural description for each participant. The purpose of this step is to construct the essence of the participants' experience, incorporating the developed categories and themes (Moustakas, 1994). An example is taken from one of the participants, Yoyo.

Yoyo said his experience about one of the social media platforms that he uses frequently once he was intent to learn Russian. He used VK, a social media platform commonly used in Russia. Basically, social media can be categorized as an interactive learning resource; nonetheless, it is not intentionally created for language learning. However, some forms of social media hold great potential for language learning, since people can adapt to use any kind of social media. "*Setelah saya tahu ada media sosial yang bernama VK ketika saya sekolah di Rusia, saya mendaftar untuk mengikutinya. Sehingga saya bisa praktek bahasa Rusia baik dengan penutur asli bahasa Rusia maupun dengan mahasiswa internasional yang juga sedang belajar di Rusia. Saya saya suku menggunakan media ini, dan sangat bermanfaat untuk praktek bahasa Rusia*" (After I know there is a social media platform named VK when I studied in Russia. I registered to join it. I learn and practice my Russian both with native Russian and international students studying in Russia. I enjoyed using it a lot, it was really helpful to practice Russian language). Through this kind of social media, he felt that he enjoys learning through online socialization with the people speaking Russian. He believed that using VK media was helpful as a learning resource, especially to practice the Russian language. Actually, VK is originally from Russia, that is why many people in Russia employ this social media.

### ***Synthesis of Meaning and Essences of the Experience***

We aimed this phenomenological study at exploring the lived experiences of polyglots learning foreign languages through online resources. Based on data analysis, we found the synthesis around the final themes that emerged in this study were (a) interactive resources: calming anxiety and practicing anywhere, (b) receptive resources: learning implicitly, but it is helpful, (c) social media: it is beyond the virtual socialization, and (d) authentic resources: learning explicitly, it is enjoyable.

*Interactive resources: calming anxiety and practicing anywhere.*

The emergence of such technology brings transformative language learning venues and resources for foreign language learning. As language enthusiasts, the polyglots felt that they need to be practice languages they have learned. Through the interactive learning resources, these tools can facilitate communication virtually with their teachers, peers, native speakers, or

those who have the same language learning interest. In this study, the participants stated that they use the interactive learning resources designed especially for language learning. “*Untuk mempraktikkan secara langsung kemampuan bahasa asing saya, saya mengakses [www.book2.de](http://www.book2.de). Website ini memungkinkan kita untuk mempraktekkan bahasa asing secara virtual. Saya merasa tingkat kecemasan saya berkurang dengan menggunakan media daring seperti ini*” (To practice directly my foreign languages, I access to [www.book2.de](http://www.book2.de). This website enables us to practice foreign languages virtually. I have a lack of anxiety to practice foreign languages once using this tool). Another interactive learning resource employed by the participant was using *Duolingo*. As the participants, “*Saya menggunakan Duolingo untuk mempraktekkan bahasa asing [German, Perancis, Inggris, dan Belanda] yang saya pelajari. Website ini sangat cukup menyenangkan dan gratis untuk diakses*” (I use *Duolingo* to practice the languages [German, French, English, and Dutch] that I have learned. This website is really enjoyable and it is free to access.) It is interesting to note that the participants believed interactive learning resources really supported their effort in learning foreign languages. Implicitly, a remote place is not the problem to practice any foreign languages to be learned. With technology, the distance can be bridged through virtual communication for language learning purposes. More importantly, practicing foreign languages virtually could calm language learner’s anxiety.

*Receptive resources: learning languages implicitly, but it is helpful.*

Receptive learning resources only provide language learning resources that can be used by the learner through reading, watching, writing, and listening, without virtual interaction. In this study, the polyglots stated that they felt that these resources could boost their foreign language ability. *Google translate*, for example, all participants admitted that they all used this website to search the meaning of vocabulary. Particularly, *Google Translate* provides many options of languages to be learned lexically, even it also can be used as a translation tool for long texts. For instance, “*Saya menggunakan Google Translate untuk belajar bahasa Inggris, terutama untuk menemukan arti kata. Alat ini cukup membantu membantu* (I used *Google Translate* to learn English, especially to find the meaning of the words. It was helpful).” The next resources are the website page of language learning. “*Saya menggunakan website belajar bahasa Inggris BBC dan VoA untuk memperbaiki bahasa Inggris saya. Kedua website ini cukup bagus untuk belajar bahasa Inggris*” (I employ BBC and VoA learning English websites to improve my English. These two websites are good for learning English). Another online receptive tool is *Youtube*, “*Saya menonton Youtube to belajar bahasa Inggris, ada banyak pilihan video edukatif yang dapat dimanfaatkan untuk belajar bahasa Inggris melalui media ini*” (I watch *Youtube* to learn English, there are so many educated videos in this media sharing platform). For participants and mobile assisted language learning, they used tools to learn languages like Thai. “*Saya menggunakan aplikasi telepon genggam pintar, namanya Everyday Thai. Saya menggunakannya untuk belajar bahasa Thai, hal ini cukup membantu*” (I use a Smartphone application, that is *Everyday Thai*. I used this tool to learn Thai, it was helpful). The participants felt that these kinds of online learning resources were valuable as learning support. Also, the polyglots were familiar with using *Google Translate*, a language learning website (e.g BBC, VoA), *Youtube*, and language learning applications (e.g *Everyday Thai*). Those online resources were truly supportive for them to learn languages implicitly.

*Social media: It is beyond the virtual socialization.*

Basically, social media can be categorized as an interactive learning resources; nonetheless, it is not intentionally created for language learning. However, some forms of

social media hold great potential for language learning since people can adapt to use them. Social media was a fruitful learning resource to help independent language learning. “*Saya suka Facebook dan YM...saya menggunakannya, saya menambahkan penutur asli bahasa Inggris dipertemanan di akun Facebook dan Yahoo Messenger untuk bersosialisasi secara Virtual. Kemudian saya mengobrol dengan mereka. Ini cara saya mempraktekkan bahasa Inggris saya, hal ini benar-benar membantu*” (I add native speakers of English in my Facebook and Yahoo Messenger account as a friend for virtual socialization account ...then I chat with them. This the way I practice my English).

The use of social media, especially WhatsApp, is a useful tool for learning a language. “*Untuk memperbaiki bahasa Spanyol dan bahasa Jerman, saya menggunakan WhatsApp...saya sering mempraktekkan keterampilan kedua bahasa ini dengan mengobrol dengan teman saya penutur asli. Saya memiliki banyak teman di berbagai penjuru dunia, dengan itu saya bisa belajar bahasa mereka*” (to improve my Spanish and German, I used WhatsApp...I frequently practice my language skill with their native language speakers [chatting with his friends]... through this media. I have many friends from all over the world at the same time I can learn the languages).

For learning languages like Russian, social media was a tool for accessing native and nonnative speakers in authentic contexts. “*Setelah saya tahu ada media sosial yang bernama VK ketika saya sekolah di Rusia, saya mendaftar untuk mengikutinya. Sehingga saya bisa praktek bahasa Rusia baik dengan penutur asli bahasa Rusia maupun dengan mahasiswa internasional yang juga sedang belajar di Rusia. Saya saya suku menggunakan media ini, dan sangat bermanfaat untuk praktek bahasa Rusia*” (After I know there is a social media platform named VK when I studied in Russia. I registered to join it. I learned and practiced my Russian both with native Russian and international students studying in Russia. I enjoyed using it a lot, it was really helpful to practice the Russian language).

*Authentic resources: learning languages explicitly, it is enjoyable.*

Authentic material refers to the materials which are basically not prepared for language learning purposes, but they can be used for language learning (Kamariah, Husain, Atmowardoyo, & Salija, 2018). Some examples of online services are magazine articles, advertisements, films, songs, videos, and so forth. Nonetheless, they can contribute to language input for language learners. The polyglots engaged with a variety of authentic materials in learning foreign languages. “*Karena latar belakang pendidikan saya adalah ekonomi, saya selalu menonton Youtube tentang kuliah ekonomi di Universitas Harvard*” (Since my educational background is economy, I usually watch *Youtube* about the economic lecture at Harvard University. Through this method I got knowledge of economy as well as my English improved). Some polyglots enjoyed reading online news articles to enhance English. “*Saya suka membaca berita BBC di internet [versi bahasa Inggris], media ini cukup membantu memperbaiki bahasa Inggris saya terutama peningkatan kosa kata*” (I like reading BBC news articles [English version] on the internet, it improved my English, especially vocabulary). Another online media that the polyglots used to learn foreign languages is live streaming television. “*Dulunya saya selalu menonton siaran berita pada TV online siaran langsung, seperti program BBC Hindi. Kegiatan seperti ini dapat meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa Hindi saya, terutama kosa kata.* (I used to watch news on live streaming TV through internet access, like BBC Hindi program. This activity really enhanced my Hindi skills, especially my vocabulary).

Similarly, the use of digital media lead to feelings of increased abilities with the foreign languages. “*Saya menonton film Hindi di internet, saya suka sekali dengan waktu yang saya ma saya bisa juga belajar bahasa Hindi*” (I watched Hindi films on the internet, I often do it

since I like it very much. At the same time I learn Hindi as well). These polyglots employed authentic materials in learning foreign languages. Many polyglots used online sites like the BBC.

There are a number of important conclusions we draw from this phenomenological view of language learning online. First, these polyglots felt more comfortable once they started employing the interactive resources (virtual practice) in their language learning. In fact, many reported the calming benefits of this type of language learning, which led to much less anxiety for them. Most importantly, their anxiety was also lowered because they could use these kinds of tools to practice and learn languages remotely. Another conclusion is that the polyglots thought that the receptive resources were very helpful tools, even though learning seems monotonous since the resources were only designed for language learning. In contrast to the receptive resources, the polyglots felt that social media was a valuable resource even though it is not intentionally designed for language learning. Through these tools the learners did not only have many friends for virtual socialization purpose, but also for learning. Lastly, the polyglots enjoyed learning through the use of authentic resources. They felt that they were not learning languages because they were just doing what they would always do in normal daily activity, like watching films, watching the news, and reading online newspapers. We found it interesting to note that very few of the learning resources employed by the polyglots were exclusive. In fact, these polyglots used quite a lot of online learning materials that were freely available and accessible to the public. Such access was essential in their journeys to become proficient in languages not widely available to them.

In most cases, the polyglots were very active users of social media in their daily life. For example, they used Facebook, Yahoo Messenger, WhatsApp, and VK to learn languages. The polyglots believed that using social media is not only for virtual socialization purpose, but also for learning or practising foreign languages. Other ways of learning came from the use of authentic materials via platforms like *Youtube* since there is a lot of real-world activities shared on this media-sharing platform. Even though in a particular context *Youtube* could be categorized as a resource which is intentionally designed for language learning because there are many videos shared about language learning. For our purposes, we found digital tools like Youtube could fall under two themes (receptive and authentic resources).

Reading online news was a common approach for our polyglots with many mentioning sites like BBC for English language content providers. Today, this website is not only in English version but also other languages are available. Many of the participants also watched news on live streaming TV through internet access to reinforce their foreign language ability. While many of these sites often required a laptop, Smartphone or other handheld device, a number of polyglots also used television programming in their language learning journey. Many of them have confirmed that they watched either news program or films. In other words, the fact that they enjoyed learning about current events is a way to naturally enhance their foreign language proficiency. Our polyglots reported that, at times, they were not learning foreign languages, instead, they were engaging in a routine and joyful daily activity like viewing a film or reading up on the latest current events.

For future research, we hope to explore how the experiences of polyglots may be different from that of a language learner who is embarking on their second language. In many cases, learners like these have difficulty with the language learning process. We would like to explore what knowledge and experience these polyglots have that gives them the ability to learn multiple languages. We are especially interested in how they learn languages not used near them. As we reported, these polyglots not only reported successful learning experiences online, but they also found them enjoyable and interesting. This positive attitude deserves a deeper look. As Nurul said, “*Iya disitu saya develop conversation, develop gaya bahasa saya pada saat chatting*” (I developed conversation, developed my language style while chatting).

She found chatting so engaging that she often added new friends to her online groups. Each friend became another source of input for her language learning experience. She said “Kadang ada juga bule yang mengajak media sosialnya untuk *discuss something* gitu berbahasa Inggris. Jadi saya coba menyusul gitu” (Sometimes there are English-speakers Westerners who invite me their social media to discuss something so speak English. So I tried to catch up). Her chatting was not only focused on discussion. Other times, she even found friends who would comment on poetry. These kinds of learning experiences are just one more example of positive language learning experiences, which we hope to explore more in future work with polyglots.

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