

# Potpourri in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

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# Forewords

The spread of knowledge can be accomplished through various formats and media. It can be spread through the writing of articles, book chapters, monographs, and books.

This book is actually a compilation of various articles presented in various occasions and purposes. However, all the articles found in this book talk about the same thing, that is, the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL). Since the articles do not discuss TEFL deeply and widely, just in the surface, that is why it is named as potpourri of the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL).

The purpose of compiling the articles become a book among others are: (1) to keep and preserve the articles scattered in different files more safely in one published book, and (2) to disseminate the ideas for those who are interested in the teaching and learning English as a foreign language business.

Hopefully, this book gives benefits for anyone who cares on the teaching and learning English in general and especially for Indonesian English teachers and students.

Banjarmasin, March 2022  
Prof. Dr. Abdul Muth'im, M.Pd.



# **Embedding the Teaching of Foreign “Culture” in the Teaching of Foreign Language**

## **Introduction**

It is generally believed that learning language is inevitably associated with the learning of culture of the people in which the language is used. This is especially true when one learns his or her native language (L1). A Banjarese child, for instance, in addition to learn his or her L1, i.e. Banjarese, also has to learn Banjarese culture simultaneously. So does a Makassarrese child. Beside learning Makassarrese language, at the same time, he or she also learns Makassarrese culture. Interestingly, the growth of one's ability in his or her L1 goes along with the growth of the culture of his or her community. This means that the child is not only able to use his or her L1 correctly and fluently, but he or she also knows how to use the language in relation to who, where, and when the language is directed appropriately. Based on this phenomenon, the following question is then worth of asking “Can Indonesian learners be successful in acquiring FL and its culture as succesfull as when they are acquiring their L1 and its culture?”.

This paper tries to answer the above questions and find possibilities of embedding English culture through the teaching of English language.

## How a child acquires his or her L1

“How does a child acquire his or her L1 successfully?”. Many hypothetical answers can be put forward. However, in my opinion, what Lenneberg (1981) describes might be the most comprehensive one. According to him, a child develops his spoken language through stages. *At the completion of 12 weeks*, when the adults talked to him and nodded at him, a baby smiles. This is followed by squealing-gurgling sounds usually called *cooing*. *At the completion of 16 weeks* baby responds to human sounds more definitely. He turns his head and his eyes seem to search for speaker. Occasionally he produces some chuckling sounds. *At the completion of 20 weeks*, he begins the vowel-like cooing sounds to be interspersed with more consonantal sounds; to be common with labial fricatives; spirants and nasals; though all vocalizations he produced are very different from the sounds of the mature language of the environment acoustically. *At the completion of 6 months*, the production of cooing changes into babbling resembling one-syllable utterances. Neither vowels nor consonants he produces have very fixed recurrences. Most common utterance sound he produces is somewhat like *ma, mu, da, or di*. *At the completion of 8 months*, he reduplicates frequently; the intonation patterns he applies become distinct and the utterances can signal emphasis and emotions. *At the completion of 10 months*, vocalizations he produces are mixed with sound-play such as gurgling or bubble-blowing. It appears that he wishes to imitate sounds, but the imitations are never quite successful. He begins to differentiate between words heard by making differential adjustment. *At the completion of 12 months*, he replicates identical sound sequences with higher relative frequency of occurrence and words (*mamma or dada*). Signs of understanding some words and simple commands emerge (e.g. *show me your eyes*). *At the completion of 18 months*, he has definite repertoire of words-more than three, but less than fifty. He is still much babbling, but several syllables intricate with



intonation pattern. There is no attempt to communicate information and no frustration for not being understood. He can produce words that may include items such as thank you or come here, but there is little ability to join any of the lexical items into spontaneous two-item phrases. His understanding is progressing rapidly. *At the completion of 24 months*, he has vocabulary of more than 50 items (some children seem to be able to name everything in environment). He begins spontaneously to join vocabulary items into two-word phrases and all phrases appear to be his own creations. His communicative behavior and interest in language definitely increase. *At the completion of 30 months*, his new vocabulary adds with every day words very fast. There is no babbling at all, and his utterances have communicative intent. He will be frustrated if he is not understood by adults. His utterances consist of at least two words many of which have three or even five words. His sentences and phrases have characteristic child grammar, that is, they are rarely verbatim repetitions of an adult utterance. The intelligibility is not very good yet, though there is great variation among children. He seems to understand everything that is said to him. *At the completion 3 years*, he has vocabulary of some 1000 words of which about 80% of utterances are intelligible even to strangers. Grammatical complexity of utterances he produces is roughly that of colloquial adult language, although mistakes still occur. *At the completion of 4 years*, the language he produces is well-established, and if deviations from adult norm occur, these tend to be more in style than in grammar.

How can this amazing development happen? No one really knows how it is going on. Even, as far as I know, the experts in second language acquisition, do not know for sure either. Seeing the process of the development of L1 within a child, I assume that there must be something inherent and built in within a human child - a very sophisticated device that can record, process, save, and retrieve language. It might be this

sophisticated apparatus that many experts in language acquisition call as Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The fact that any normal child, as long as he or she is not deaf and dumb and does not suffer from speech defect, who is able to communicate at the age of 4 or 5 in his or her L1 may legitimate this assumption.

Other thing that can be learned from how a child acquires his or her L1 is that the role of language milieu, especially the adults, in helping the child develops L1 is very important. For instance, though they know that the child cannot communicate as well as they do, they always talk to the child. Even, sometimes they accompany their talk with physical signs and gestures. As his or her capability in communication is very limited, in responding to the adults' talk, the child tries to accomplish his or her communication needs in a way which is in his or her own capacity. Turning his or her heads and eyes, producing chuckling sounds, cooing sounds, babbling, reduplicating, imitating sounds, differentiating words heard, replicating identical sounds sequences, beginning to join vocabulary items into two-word phrases spontaneously, producing sentences which is characterised by child grammar are some of the examples of the ways a child communicates with adults. Through this gradual development, a normal child of human being finally understands everything said to him or her, and is able to produce an unlimited well-established language. It is this facility that might be called by Krashen and Terrel (1987) as exposure.

Concerning about the relationship between LAD and exposures to the language Kadarisman (2009) writes, "the LAD hypothesis is proposed as a probable answer to the logical problem of language acquisition. Linguistic development in the young mind proceeds step-by-step manner. The LAD is equal to Grammar Zero ( $G_0$ ). As it is exposed to language use

surrounding the child, the following process occurs:  $G_0 \rightarrow G_1 \rightarrow G_2 \rightarrow G_3 \rightarrow \dots G_n$ . This means exposure to language data triggers or activates innate principles within the LAD, making  $G_0$  develop into  $G_1$ ,  $G_2$ ,  $G_3$ , etc., and finally into  $G_n$ .  $G_n$  is adult grammar or linguistic competence”.

“What happens to a child who was formerly not deaf and dumb when he or she was born but did not get enough exposures to the language?”. Can he or she still acquire the ability to communicate in the language? The case of Genie may give initial answer to this question.

Genie as reported by Fromkin et al. (1981) “was girl of thirteen years, nine months. At the time of her discovery and hospitalization (in 1970) she was an unsocialized, primitive human being, emotionally disturbed, unlearned, and without language”. What had happened to her? They continued their report, “There is evidence that from about the age of twenty months until shortly before admission to the hospital Genie had been isolated in a small closed room, tied into a potty chair where she remained most or all hours of the day, sometimes overnight. A cloth harness, constructed to keep her from handling her feces, was her only apparel of wear. When not strapped into the chair she was kept in a covered infant crib, also confined from the waist down. The door to the room was kept closed, and the windows were curtained. She was hurriedly fed (only cereal and baby food) and minimally cared by her mother, who was almost blind during most of the years of Genie’s isolation. There was no radio or TV in the house and the father’s intolerance of noise of any kind kept any acoustic stimuli which she received behind the closed door to a minimum. Genie was physically punished by the father if she made any sounds. According to the mother, the father and old brother never spoke to Genie although they barked at her like dogs. The mother was

forbidden to spend more than a few minutes with Genie during feeding”.

Genie was a normal baby. This was the report given by the hospital. Why couldn't she speak at that age? The reason is apparent. In addition to psychological problem she had, she was completely not exposed to the language. There was no meaningful sound exposed to her from radio or TV. Besides, all the members of the family never spoke to her with the language they used at home. All these conditions happen in a very long time. Consequently, she did not have the ability to speak.

### **How culture is embedded in L1**

As stated earlier that the growth of L1 goes along with the growth of the *culture* by which the language is used as means of communication. Since, in accordance with Tang (1999), “by speaking the language, therefore, one automatically (to a greater or lesser extent) aligns oneself with the culture of the language”. Tang then argues that “language itself is already culture”. The question is “how can this culture be integrated in language, and how can the language used reflect the elements of culture of the community?”.

Before answering the question let us pay a close attention on how is culture defined. It seems that there is no single definition available. Apparently, in accordance with Balwin et al. (in Levy, 2007) there are more than 300 definitions about culture. However, for the purpose of our discussion, I will just quote some of them here. For instance, Hobby (2004) defines culture as “what we *agree* to be *right* and what we agree to be *true*”. In quite similar definition, Kaikkonen (1997) defines culture as “a *common agreement* between the members of community on the *values, norms, rules, role expectations and meanings* which guide the *behaviour and communication* of the members. For Levy (2007) “culture is everything you *believe* and everything you *do* that

enables you to *identify* with people who are like you and that *distinguishes* you from people who differ from you". Hinkel (2001:443) on the other hand, writes, "... Culture may find its manifestations in *body language, gestures, concepts of time, hospitality customs, and even expressions of friendliness*".

From the above definitions, some important points can be highlighted here. First, the term culture implies that there must be a *common agreement* among the members. Second, there are some norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings applied and tight all the members of the community considered as true and right. Third, culture becomes guidance for all the members of community in conducting behavior and in the way they communicate. Lastly, culture is manifested in various manifestations and expressions.

Common agreement does not develop in a day and becomes part of one's life. According to Levy (2007), "our cultural orientation begins at birth". This means that, as in the process of acquiring L1, the process of reaching common agreement must go through long process and through continuous practices, too. Only through these processes and practices, common agreement is finally reached by each and among individuals in the community. Once the common agreement is reached, it becomes norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings of the community. Consequently, every member of the community should respect this common agreement and should abide to it. If not, the member of the community violating this common agreement may be categorized as against his or her culture. This is because when one becomes a member of the culture, he or she is not only by notionally agreeing to its practices, or simply by participating in them, but by being accepted by the membership (Levy, 2007).

What norms, values, rules, role expectations and meaning that are applied and tight all the members of the community?".

Almost unlimited. For example, it is a common agreement for Indonesian people that talking to older persons such as parents or teachers must be different from the way they talk to their peers of the same age. Talking to older people should be polite both in term of the manner and in term of the word choice. Whereas talking to the peer of the same age does not necessitate the two conditions.

Body language and gestures in communication also function as the manifestation of culture. For instance, when one is speaking and the listener nods his or her head up and down, this is commonly understood as a sign of agreement. However, when the listener repeatedly shakes his or her head to the right or left or vice versa, it is commonly agreed by all members of the community as a sign of disagreement. Waving hand towards his or her body is commonly understood as a request of approaching closer to the speaker. How can all these become a common agreement among the members of the community. Through long processes and continuous practices.

Concept of time is also developed through long processes and continuous practices before it becomes culture. The words indicating times such as the following: “*nanti* (later), and ‘*besok*’ (tomorrow), etc. are two examples which indicate our common agreement that in term of time, we are flexible, not as rigid as may be applied by and in other countries. ‘*Nanti*’ (later) is a concept of time that ranges from a few seconds after this time until unlimited range of time in the future. The word ‘*besok*’ (tomorrow), though it is more specific than ‘*nanti*’, it still has uncertainty because it may mean in the morning, it may also mean in the afternoon, and it still may mean in the evening.

When someone drops by to his or her neighbour and coincidentally the family, he or she visits are having lunch, for instance, it is a common agreement in the culture for the hosts family to offer him or her to have the meal together with them.

They are not expected to say “let us finish our meal first, and I’ll meet you after that”. If they do this, the family may be said as not being hostiled to their neighbour. For the neighbour, there is also a common agreement among the community to refuse the first offer, though he or she is really hungry and the food served teases his or her appetite. Only after the third offer he or she is expected to accept the offer. Otherwise, if he or she accepts the offer in the first time, he or she may be categorized as impolite.

Additionally, visiting neighbour without telling him or her in advance is a common practice in our culture. On the contrary, if someone tries to get permission in advance by saying, for example, “May I come to your house at 4 o’clock this afternoon?”, this request seems weird and strange for most of the members of the community. This is because of their common agreement that such kind of request is usually extended for certain occasion only such as when a family of a boy wants to propose a girl in the other family for their son. In general, the neighbour visited may not feel disturbed either.

Asking someone known or unknown with this question “*Mau ke mana, pak/bu?*” (“Where are you going, sir/mam?”) for some people in western culture may be understood as interfering his or her personal business. In Indonesian context, however, it indicates the opposite. Asking this question either the known person or the unknown one shows that he or she is friendly to others. In contrast, if he or she does not do this, he or she may be labelled as unfriendly. So, actually he or she does not really care where the person is going to. The question he or she raises is actually not a real question that needs answer. It is just a piece of cultural expression to show that he or she is friendly. Nothing to do with the interference of someone’s business.

Paying someone’s meal without the permission of the person paid is also a common practice in Indonesian culture. In the culture of other community this practice may be understood

as an insult in the sense that the paid person is not able to pay his or her bill. In Indonesian culture, however, this practice, it is especially true in my home town, is understood as an indication that he or she is culturally well-behaved. The person paid is expected not to refuse this because if he or she does and say, "Don't bother, I have money", because this response may mean as indication of arrogant and disrespect good intention of others. Sometimes, he or she does not know who has paid for his or her bill. It is the cashier who usually tells who the person is. Someone whom he or she has known before.

### **How to Acquire EFL and its Culture**

The best way to acquire English and its culture, in my opinion, is of course by living in the English-speaking countries for quite long time. By living in the countries, the learners are not only exposed to English language, but at the same time they are also exposed to English culture. The longer time they stay there the more aspects of language and culture they will be exposed to and understood. However, the idea of living in the English-speaking countries is of course beyond our capability to accomplish. The majority of Indonesian students develop their English proficiency through the process of learning, not through the process of acquisition.

What is the difference between of these two modes of developing language proficiency? According to Krashen and Terrel (1987), what is meant by acquisition here is when learners develop their language proficiency by using it for real communication. In this mode, language is developed in a similar way a child develops his or her L1. He or she just "picks up" the language subconsciously. So, the knowledge of the learner toward his or her language is implicit. In learning, however, the learners develop their English proficiency consciously through formal teaching. What they learn more is the formal knowledge



of language. As the result, they know a lot about the language, but when comes to the application in real communication situation, mostly they face problems.

English in Indonesian system of education is one the compulsory subjects that should be learned by Indonesian learners. Officially, it is started in junior high school (SMP/MTs). In junior high school (SMA/MA/SMK), the learners are obliged to learn English for another three years. In some colleges or universities, English is considered as one of the compulsory subjects that the students should learn at least for one or two semesters. This means that the total number of length Indonesian students spend in learning English is around 6 or 7 consecutive years.

However, since the new language learned is very much different from their L1 (native language) as well as their L2 (Indonesian language), learning English result in difficulties for most of Indonesian learners. The system of sound, grammar, and vocabulary of this language seems so strange to most of the ears, tongues and minds of Indonesian learners. As the result, they get trouble in developing proficiency in this new language. This condition is worsened by the fact that the chance to be exposed to the new language is very limited. The only place for the learners to be able to be exposed to English is at school, or more specifically, in classroom. Outside this context the chance to be exposed to English is very rare.

The condition as described above may cause the motivation of the learners to learn English decreases because they think that without acquiring English language they still can survive in life. In relation with this Sadtono (2009) argues "... Indonesian as language is already strongly established in all disciplines and all walks of life making Indonesian reluctant to learn a relatively difficult foreign language and its benefits are remote for the majority of people. Indonesian as a tool of

communication is sufficient to satisfy their primary, secondary, even tertiary needs. In other words, the linguistic environment is not conducive. As the result, as revealed by some research, learning outcome of English is far from satisfactory.

The results of some research conducted to investigate students' competence in the four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing may become the proves of this unsatisfactory. In reading area, for instance, Susilawati (2008) in her research on the ability of the 7<sup>th</sup> semester students academic year 2008/2009 in finding meaning inferred from a reading text revealed that the highest percentage of students ability was at moderate level (46,15%) or 18 students of the total number of students, i.e. 39 persons. There was no student who had very good ability level, 5 students (12,83%) were in the category of having good ability, 14 students (35,90%) were in the category of having bad ability, and 2 students (5,21%) were categorized as having very bad ability.

In the area of writing the unsatisfactory result is also found. For example, Roni (2006) who conducted a study on the students' competency in writing descriptive paragraph uncovered: 40% of the students had problems in terms of topic sentence, 35% of them had problems in diction, and 25% of the subjects had problems in description. I believe that the ability of students learning other areas of language skills, i.e., listening and speaking is not far from the other two previously mentioned.

In the area of the components of language, the results of some studies show quite similar findings. For instance, a study carried out by Astasari (2009) in her study on grammatical errors found in students' narrative writing found out that the highest frequency of errors was omission (41,51%), the second highest frequency was malformation (35,50%), the next highest frequency was addition (21,74%), and the lowest frequency of error was disordering (1,3%). Agustini (2007) in her study on the

ability of the second year students in using simple past tense academic year 2007/2008 found out that 61% of the students had very bad ability. Other study conducted by Fitri (2009) found out that there were many problems faced the English Department students in using conditional sentence.

If the effort of developing English language proficiency is in an unsatisfying condition, how can we expect that the acquisition of English culture be successful. At least, the failure in acquiring English language makes the effort to understand its culture as part of the learners' life is more complicated. Yet, in accordance with Tang (1999) "language is not dead, it is alive, and as such can never be divorced from the culture that produced it and the people who speak it halfway across the world". Can English culture be integrated in English language?

Before answering the above questions, it might be a good idea to know that English used around the world is not a single and uniform English, known as *Englishes*. According to B. Kachru (1985a in Kachru and Smith, 2008) in general, there are at least three kinds of English used in three different circles, namely: (1) the Inner-Circle, (2) the Outer-Circle, and (3) the Expanding-Circle. The three categories are then elaborated as follows:

- *The Inner-Circle* represents the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the regions where it is used as a primary language (including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand).
- *The Outer-Circle* represents the regions of the world formerly colonized by Britain and USA. In these regions English has been adopted as an additional language for international purposes of administration, education, law, etc (e.g., India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore).

- *The Expanding-Circle* includes the areas in which English is primarily used as a medium of international communication (e.g. China, Europe, Japan, Korea, the Middle-East).

Referring to the kinds of English used in those circles, it is clear then that English in Indonesia is not a primary language as it is used in UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. English in Indonesia is not used for international purposes in administration, education, law, etc. Either, as it is practiced in India, Nigeria, the Philippines and Singapore. English in Indonesia belongs to the Expanding-circle because it is primarily used just as a medium of international communication.

In the events of international scope, the language used is of course is a “neutral” English as the medium of communication. What I mean by neutral English here is the English which is used by the majority of educated people, such as doctors, teachers, etc. In other words, the English used should be standard English in which participants from different language backgrounds and various cultural backgrounds will not misunderstand the message conveyed.

### **Embedding Culture of FL through the Teaching of FL**

As claimed by many linguists that learning language means learning culture of the language too. However, since English has been widely used all over the world, embedding English culture in the English which is learned outside the English-speaking countries seems to be serious problem. The problem derives from the fact that English used all over the world is not only of one kind. According to Kachru and Smith (2008), it is currently estimated that the number of English users outside English speaking countries, that is, in the Outer-Circle and in the Expanding-Circle, reaches approximately 800 million people compared to the English used by those living in the

English-speaking countries (in the Inner-circle) the number of English users is only around 300 million.

There must be solutions to overcome this problem. One of them, as suggested by Hinkel (2001) is by providing learning materials which are assumed to be able to build cross-cultural awareness. Providing learning materials may be done by just adopting the available materials, or by selecting from the available materials and adapt them to school context, or, if it is possible, by self-creating the teaching materials. However, selecting learning materials, let alone creating the materials by oneself, which contain cultural value is of course not easy. This is because of the fact that the majority of English teachers in Indonesia learned their English also from English teachers who had never gone and stayed in one of the English-speaking countries either. The importance of providing the materials that builds cross-cultural awareness is important because manifestation of the influence of culture on language use are very common, materials for teaching cultural concepts and implications can be easy to create.

The other solution that is assumed to be able to overcome cultural gap between L1 and its culture and FL and its culture is by having the students to attend Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU). This kind of project has been conducted by Genc and Bada (2005) in Cukurova University Turkey. Four questions were asked to the students (1) whether CCU contributed to any of their language skills, (2) to which skill the course contributed most? (3) whether the course helped them raise awareness about both their own target and cultures?, (4) whether their attitude towards target culture changed at the end of this course?

The result of the study reveals that a culture is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession. The result was there was

a significant similarity between students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class as argued by some experts in the field was observed. Regarding the benefits of learning about culture, attending the culture class has raised cultural awareness in ELT students concerning both native and target societies.

## Closure

Theoretically, learning language means learning culture too at the same time. This means that when one is learning English, he or she is simultaneously learning English culture too. However, since Indonesian learners are mostly not born in English speaking countries, the development of students' culture in English does not completely go along with the development of their English. Some nuances of local language and local culture embed in English language they produce which may not represent English culture. To minimize this gap, two solutions are worth of trying: (1) providing learning materials that are assumed to be able to build cultural awareness, and (2) having the students to attend Cross-Cultural Understanding course.

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# Facilitating the Teaching of English through the Teaching of Arts

## Introduction

The idea of teaching language in general and especially in teaching English through different subject matters and various programs is not new. It has long been practiced among language teachers around the world for decades. Different names are used for such kind of teaching program. For example, as mentioned by Sadtono, in the United States the program is called Languages Across Curriculum (LAC), in Australia it is called Language for Understanding Across the Curriculum (LUAC), and in Europe and some other countries it is called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), whereas in Indonesia it is called English Across the Curriculum (EAC) (Sadtono, 2010).

To the implementation of this program, various responses were given. Some were pessimistic, some were optimistic with conditions, and some others were fully optimistic. Sadtono from Ma Chung University, Malang, for instance, is one of the experts who is doubtful about the efficacy of the program. He analogizes the teaching of EAC as an uphill battle. For him, to get success in the teaching of EAC, two ideal major components: the teachers' English proficiency and the students' English proficiency should match. If the ideal situation is not possible, the English of the teachers would be awfully difficult (Sadtono, 2010).

For Agustien from State University of Semarang (UNES) who worked for SEAMEO-RELC, Singapore, the success of EAC in Indonesian schools is still a dream. She argued, "when the academic curriculum is encoded and conveyed in a language

rather than what the pupils use in community, the challenge is greater". She concluded that the challenges of EAC in Indonesian context cover the following: (1) for many, Indonesian language is a second language in the sense that Indonesian is not their mother tongue, so that when entering schools, the students are expected to develop their communicative competence in Indonesian to the level that enables them to participate in the community they live in and to pass the national exam, (2) on top of developing Indonesian as their second language, students are expected to learn English as the language of schooling, and (3) although the introduction of English is meant for developing communicative competence, people who send their children to English speaking schools also expect that their children will learn the curriculum content to a level that enables high school graduates to enter English speaking universities abroad (Agustien, 2010).

Situmorang and Tjandrarini, two teachers from SMP Santa Agnes Surabaya, perceived EAC optimistically. For them, EAC is beneficial for students. They argued that the teaching of EAC could result in good success in students' learning. This was proven by the result of their experiment. They claimed: "To our experiences in classes 7 and 8, Science and Mathematics results which are held in English have improved significantly and only 12.5% failed (5 of 40 pupils) compared to 30% (12 of 40 pupils) when held in Bahasa Indonesia" (Situmorang and Tjandrarini, 2010). In addition, EAC is not only beneficial for students but it is also advantageous for the teachers. In answering her research question on how the science teachers used the language in the classroom when presenting the concepts of science in English, Rakhmawati, who conducted research on the language use of science teachers in presenting science using English at Godwins Elementary School in Surabaya discovered that the science teachers ... showed a good performance in presenting the science concepts (Rakhmawati, 2010).

With the above pictures in my mind, I write this paper. I believe that the teaching of English may be carried out and can be facilitated through the teaching of arts.

### **The Inspiration from Arts**

This paper is partly inspired by our talk with a vice principal of a public elementary school in Chiangmai, Thailand, when we had a job travel to monitor our students practicing teaching in Thailand some time ago. In our talk she was asking whether it is possible for Lambung Mangkurat University to send music teachers **and** well as sport teachers who could teach music and sport using English for Thai elementary school students. The other inspiration comes from the fact that the teaching and learning of EAC in some schools in Indonesia indicates some degree of "success". Why can the teaching and learning English in Indonesia not be facilitated through the teaching of arts.

What can be learned from arts education? According to Eisner, the arts (1) teach children to make good judgment about qualitative relationship, (2) teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than answer, (3) celebrate multiple perspectives, (4) teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with the circumstance and opportunity, (5) make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know, (6) teach students that small differences can have large effects, (7) teach students to think through and within a material, (8) help children learn to say what cannot be said, (9) enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling, and (10) in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important (Eisner, 2002).

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as cited by Boyd (2000) listed some contribution contributed by arts education. They are: (a) it develops the full variety of human intelligence, (b) it develops the ability for creative thought and action, (c) it educates feeling and sensibility, (d) it explores values, (e) it enhances understanding of culture changes and differences, and (f) it develops physical and perceptual skills.

The results of some research on the characteristics of arts education have already indicated their efficacies. For instance, NEA ARTS reported that recent research conducted by James Catterall (2003) found that we were not just learning dance, music, theatre, and visual arts—he discovered that students with access to in-school arts instruction performed better academically, participated more actively in extra-curricular activities, and were more likely to pursue higher education. This is in line with the result of study conducted by Winner and Hetland as quoted by Rushlow (2007) which found that “students are actively involved and excited about learning, and teachers and students alike enjoy coming to school. The arts create a positive and inviting learning environment—resulting in higher attendance rates and fewer dropout rates”. Eisner added, while the teacher of spelling is not particularly interested in ingenuity of response from students, the arts teacher seeks it. Besides, the arts celebrate multiple conceptions of virtue. Furthermore, they teach that there are many ways to see and interpret the world and that people can look through more than one window.

There are some types of arts through which English teaching and learning can be carried out. Davis (2008) suggests that arts education can be applied in different names or bases. They are arts based, arts infused, arts included, arts expanded, arts professional, and arts extras. [9]

In *arts based*, the arts supply the content for what is learned, serve as a model for teaching, learning and assessment, and provide a window through which non-arts subjects are explored. In *arts infused*, the arts are infused into the curriculum, artists or works or arts are brought from outside in to enrich whatever is going on in arts and non-arts classes or activities. In *arts included*, the arts are situated among students' required courses and are taught, respected, and allotted time with the same regard as non-arts courses. In *arts expanded*, education in the arts takes students outside of school into the larger community. In *arts professional*, the impression of professional arts educational opportunities abound are given. In *arts extras*, arts as non-academic extras are reserved for in-school space and time outside of the daily curriculum.

### **Teaching English through drama**

Drama, in accordance with Moore, is the act of using the imagination to become someone or something other than oneself Moore (2004). For Hu (Vicky), drama is a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance (Merriem-Webster, as quoted by Hu (Vicky), 2011). Of course, in ESL/EFL context teaching English through drama is not meant teaching acting and performance skills. Instead, its objective is to teach core curricular areas using drama.

What is the use of drama in the teaching and learning language? Maley (2005) as cited by Zyoud listed some points which support the use of drama in a language classroom. They are: (1) it integrates language skills in a natural way, (2) it integrates verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication, thus it brings together both mind and body, and restores the balance between physical and intellectual aspects of learning, (3) it draws

upon both cognitive and affective domains, thus restores the importance of feeling as well as thinking, (4) by fully contextualizing the language, it brings the classroom interaction to life through an intensive focus on meaning, (5) the emphasis on whole-person learning and multi-sensory inputs helps learners to capitalize on their strength and to extend their range. In doing so, it offers unequalled opportunities for catering to learner differences, (6) it fosters self-awareness (and awareness of others), self-esteem and confidence; and through this, motivation is developed, (7) motivation is likewise fostered and sustained through the variety and sense of expectancy is generated by the activities, (8) there is a transfer of responsibility for learning from teacher to learners which is where it belongs, (9) it encourages an open, exploratory style of learning where creativity and the imagination are given scope to develop. This, in turn, promotes risk-taking, which is an essential element in effective language learning, (10) it has a positive effect on classroom dynamics and atmosphere, thus facilitating the formation of a bonded group, which learns together, (11) it is an enjoyable experience, (12) it is low-resource. For most of the time, all you need is a 'roomful of human beings' (Zyoud, n.d.).

According to Dowdy and Kaplan, drama or dramatic activities can be used in ELT to: (a) integrate concepts, skills and ideas from various subject areas, including social studies, mathematics, science, and literacy, (b) gain an understanding of real world events from the past and the present, the individuals who shaped these events, and the individuals who may influence them in future, (c) develop reading comprehension skills by entering the world of a text through role playing, interacting with others, visualizing events, concepts, and information, and dramatizing the experiences of fictional characters and real-life individuals, (d) produce written works in a variety of contexts for different audiences that demonstrate increasing technical skill, self-defence, and effective

management of multimodal and electronic texts, (e) discover and scrutinize ethical aspects of social issues such as equity, social justice, citizenship, civil rights, bigotry, bullying, and other forms of antisocial behavior and their reversals from various points of view, (f) generate and use spoken, written, visual, and multimodal texts that demonstrate increasing fluency in the way of vivid description, sensory details, and effective persuasive and self-reflective writing, (g) understand and develop compassion for others' representations of ideas, values, beliefs, experiences, and life conditions—from literary characters and challenged individuals to historical figures, (h) acquire critical thinking skills in terms of examining, questioning, and perhaps challenging social practices and the language, actions, and beliefs that drive these practices, and investigating and evaluating texts concerning their manner of representing certain people, groups, and notions of reality, (i) gain social skills through group problem solving, listening to differing views, respecting, weighing, and perhaps acting on another's proposals, and expressing empathy and compassion, and (j) develop appreciation for the art of drama and theater (Dowdy and Kaplan, 2011).

What drama activities that can be used in the teaching and learning a language. Concerning this, Zyoud (n.d) proposes the following: mime, role-play, simulation, and improvisation.

### *Mime*

Mime, in accordance with Dougill, is defined as “a non-verbal representation of an idea or story through gesture, bodily movement and expression” (Dougill, 1987). It helps develop students' power of imagination and observation and can also be quite simply “a source of great enjoyment” with students tending “to be very enthusiastic about this aspect of drama (Hayes, 1984). Savignon claims that the mime helps learners become comfortable with the idea of performing in front of peers

without concern for language and that although no language is used during a mime it can be a spur to use language (Savignon, 1983). Rose argues that it is a great way of reinforcing memory by means of visual association, and recall of language items is assisted whenever an associated image is presented (Rose, 1985). Ur argues that mime can generate language use where explanation is required-teacher's instruction and the discussion of the students - if the mime involves pair work or group work, learners normally find it easier and more motivating when they have to accomplish a task (Ur, 1981).

### ***Role Play***

Livingstone claims that role play can also help recreate the language students used in different situation, the sort of language students is likely to need outside the classroom (Livingstone, 1983). Venugopal argues that role play involves being an imaginary person usually in a hypothetical situation and sometimes in a real one (Venugopal, 1986). Richards claims that role-play involves a situation in which a setting, participants and a goal problem are described (Richards, 1985).

### ***Simulation***

Jones calls a simulation as case study where learners become participants in an event and shape the course of the event (Jones, 1980). Jones defined simulation as "a reality of functions in a simulated and structured environment (Jones, 1982). The function of simulation in accordance with Smith is to give participants the opportunity to practice taking on specific roles and improvising within specific situations on the assumption that with practice the participants will play their roles more effectively when situations involving similar skills occur in real life. A simulation activity provides specific situation within which students can practice various communication skills like asserting oneself, expressing opinions, convincing others,



arguing eliciting opinions, group-problem solving, analyzing situations and so on (Smith, 1984).

### ***Improvisation***

Improvisation, in accordance with Landy, is defined as an unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous set of action in response to minimal directions from a teacher, usually including statements of whom one is, where one is and what one is doing there. The focus is thus on identifying with characters, enacting roles and entering into their inner experience of imagination and fantasy (Landy, 1982). For Hodgson and Richards, improvisation is defined as spontaneous response to the unfolding to unexpected situation (Hodgson and Richards, 1974). McCaslin argued that the focus of improvisation is on helping learners to discover their own resources from which their most imaginative ideas and strongest feelings flow, participants gain freedom as self-discipline and the ability to work with others develops (McCaslin, 1990). In implementing improvisation, Zyoud reminds us that before the improvisation is begun the teacher or the instructor has to involve the establishment of a context which serves to inform the participants where they are and what they are expected to portray in their inter-relationships with other characters. Since this is an unscripted, unrehearsed drama exercise, the participants are at liberty to make their spontaneous contribution as the play unfold (Zyoud, n d).

### **Teaching English through music**

It is believed that music is a language that can be enjoyed by anyone anytime anywhere. In other words, it is a universal “language” of human beings. According to Bridgewater, music provides opportunities to promote: (1) spiritual development through developing pupil’s awareness of the power of music to

take the listener out of the commonplace and helping pupils use music to express and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings; (2) moral development through helping pupils exercise responsibility in the choices and decisions they and others make as part of the creative process, valuing their own and others' work and recognizing the effect of music; (3) social development through helping pupils share music-making and develop a sense of social cohesion, recognizing the value of different contributions and their own responsibility to support and enrich the work of others, and recognizing the need for different roles in group performance; (4) cultural development through helping pupils recognize how music influences and reflects the way people think and feel, relating music to the time and place in which it was created and performed, and through analyzing, evaluating and reflecting on music from contrasting and identifying how and why some aspects change or stay the same (Bridgewater, 2014) .

Arts Education Partnership (2011) found that music education equips students with the fundamental abilities to learn, to achieve in other core academic subjects, and to develop the capacities, skills and knowledge essential for lifelong success.

Music education prepares students to learn in enhancing fine motor skills, preparing the brain for achievement, fostering superior working memory, and cultivating better thinking skills. It also facilitates student academic achievement in improving recall and retention of verbal information, advancing math achievement, boosting reading and English language arts (ELA), and improving average SAT score. Music education develops the creative capacities for lifelong success, too, in sharpening student attentiveness, strengthening perseverance, equipping students to be creative, and supporting better study habits and self-esteem.

In addition, Bridgewater claims that music provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of: communi-

cation through presenting music to different audiences and discussing and sharing ideas with others; application of numbers through recognizing pattern, sequence, order and rhythmic relationships; ICT through using a range of ICT to compose and perform music; working with others through taking different roles and recognizing and supporting the different contributions of others in groups and ensemble work; improving own learning and performance through appraising their own work, recognizing the need for perseverance, developing the ability to use time effectively, and increasing their ability to work independently; problem solving through achieving intentions when composing and presenting performances to different audiences and in different venues (Bridgewater, 2014) .

In term of the contribution of music in English teaching and learning, Bridgewater (2014), claims that music encourages children to listen carefully for specific purposes and to articulate responses. Singing song develops children's language skills by focusing attention to rhythm, rhyme, diction and meaning. By working with others in a musical setting, children develop their ability to communicate ideas effectively.

### **Teaching English through dance**

Dance, in accordance with McGreevy-Nichols and Scheff, (as cited by Crowe, 2006) is a movement created and executed to satisfy a need. It can be stylized, done to music or not, tell a story or not, create images, use space, define moods, create and channel energy. Cone and Cone claims that dance provides children with means to express and communicate what they really feel and know about themselves and the world (as cited by Crowe, 2006). Fegley added that utilizing dance as part a more holistic approach to teaching can create increased motivation and engagement for students. Awareness and use of the findings

imply that teachers can be successful in supporting student learning Fegley (2010).

## Conclusion

From the discussion so far I come to the conclusion that though the teaching and learning English is doubted to result in good result by some people in the context of Indonesian education, it still gives room for the hope to result in better result. I agree with what Eisner believes that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than answer, there are multiple perspectives, that in complex forms of problem-solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with the circumstance and opportunity, and the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know.

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# Teaching Language and Culture through Literature

## Introduction

The main function of language is as a means of communication. As a means of communication, language can be used to fulfil different kinds of communication purposes. According to Finocchiaro (1989), the functions of language in communication may be intended to fulfil one of the following purposes: (1) personal, (2) interpersonal, (3) directive, (4) referential, (5) meta-linguistic, and (6) imaginative purposes.

When a language is used to express one's opinion, needs, thoughts, desires, attitudes, etc. it fulfils the purpose of *personal* communicative function (e.g., *For the improvement of my thesis, I need more advice from my advisors*). When the language is used to maintain good social relations with the individuals and groups such as the expression of praise, (e.g., *You look gorgeous in your blue shirt*), sympathy, (e.g., *I'm sorry to hear your dad passed away*), joy at other's success, (e.g., *Congratulation for your promotion to be the general manager in your office*), inquiries about health, etc., (e.g., *How are your parents*), it is used for the purpose of *interpersonal* function. When it is used to control the behavior of others through advice, (e.g., *You'd better go to the doctor*), warnings, (e.g., *Watch your step*), requests, (e.g., *Will you help me carry this box for me?*), persuasion, (e.g., *If I were you, I would invest my money in this business*), etc. this function is called *directive*. When it is used to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or in the culture, (e.g., *What's this? What*

*will you do tomorrow?*) it is called *referential*. Finally, when it is used to talk about language, (e.g., *What does culture mean?*) it is called *metalinguistic* function.

## **Communicative Competence**

In order that one can accomplish his or her communication tasks properly he or she should have competence in communication. Communicative competence, in accordance with Savignon (2001) may be developed through practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative contexts and events. For this purpose, communicative competence necessitates the communicators to have: (1) grammatical competence, (2) discourse competence, (3) sociocultural competence, and (4) strategic competence. Further, Savignon (2001) elaborates the four competences as the following.

### *Grammatical competence*

Grammatical competence refers to sentence-level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological feature of a language and to make use of these features to interpret and form words and sentences

### *Discourse competence*

Discourse competence is concerned not with isolated words or phrases but with the interconnectedness of a series of utterance, written words, and/or phrases to form a text a meaningful whole. Included in this competence are coherence and cohesion. Coherence is something to do with the relation of all sentences or utterances in a text to a single global proposition.



Cohesion, is local connections or structural links between individual sentences, called by Halliday and Hasan (1976 in Celce-Murcia, 2001) as cohesive devices.

### *Sociocultural competence*

Socio-cultural competence extends well beyond linguistic forms and is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry having to do with the social rules of language use. Sociocultural competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of interaction.

### *Strategic competence*

Strategic competence is related to the strategies used in an unfamiliar context, with constraints due to imperfect knowledge of rules or limiting factors in their application.

## **Cultural Misunderstanding**

Misunderstanding in communication may arise any time. This may be experienced not only by the interlocutors who do not have the same language background but it may also occur among the interlocutors of the same language. The possibility of misunderstanding to occur is greater when one communicates in a new language. Among the four communicative competences that is crucial is something to do with sociocultural competence. This is because it is related to the use of language in relation to the culture within one society.

As stated earlier that the growth of language goes along with the growth of the *culture* by which the language is used as means of communication. Tang (1999) argues that by speaking the language, therefore, one automatically (to a greater or lesser

extense) aligns oneself with the culture of the language. Tang then argues that language itself is already culture. The question is “how can this culture be integrated in language, and how can the language used reflect the elements of culture of the community?”.

In accordance with Balwin et al. (in Levy, 2007) there are more than 300 definitions about culture. However, for the purpose of our discussion, only some are quoted here. For instance, Hobby (2004) defines culture as what it is *agreed* to be *right* and what is agreed to be *true*. In quite similar definition, Kaikkonen (1997) defines culture as a *common agreement* between the members of community on the *values, norms, rules, role expectations and meanings* which *guide the behaviour and communication* of the members. For Levy (2007) culture is defined as everything is *believed* and everything *done* that enables someone to *identify* with people who are like him and that *distinguishes* him from people who differ from him. Hinkel (2001:443) on the other hand, writes, “... Culture may find its manifestations in *body language, gestures, concepts of time, hospitality customs, and even expressions of friendliness*”.

From the above definitions, some important points can be highlighted here. First, the term culture implies that there must be a *common agreement* among the members. Second, there are some norms, values, and rules of conduct considered as true and right. Third, culture becomes guidance for all the members of community in conducting behavior and in the way they communicate. Lastly, culture is manifested in various manifestations and expressions.

Common agreement does not develop in a day and becomes part of one’s life. Levy (2007) claims that our cultural orientation begins at birth. This means that, as in the process of acquiring L1, the process of reaching common agreement must go through long process and through continuous practices, too.

Only through these processes and practices, common agreement is finally reached by each and among individuals in the community. Once the common agreement is reached, it becomes norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings of the community. Consequently, every member of the community should respect this common agreement and should abide to it. If not, the member of the community violating this common agreement may be categorized as against his or her culture. This is because when one becomes a member of the culture, he or she is not only by notionally agreeing to its practices, or simply by participating in them, but by being accepted by the membership (Levy, 2007).

What norms, values, rules, role expectations and meaning that are applied and tight all the members of the community?". They are applied in almost all aspects of life. For example, it is a common agreement for Indonesian people that talking to older persons such as parents or teachers must be different from the way they talk to their peers of the same age. Talking to older people should be polite both in term of the manner and in term of the word choice. Whereas talking to the peer of the same age does not necessitate the two conditions.

Concept of time, for instance, is developed through long processes and continuous practices before it becomes culture. The words indicating times such as the following: "*nanti* (later), and '*besok*' (tomorrow), etc. are two examples which indicate our common agreement that in term of time, we are flexible, not as rigid as it may be applied by and in other cultures. '*Nanti*' (later) is a concept of time that ranges from a few seconds after this time until unlimited range of time in the future. The word '*besok*' (tomorrow), though it is more specific than '*nanti*', it still has uncertainty because it may mean in the morning, it may also mean in the afternoon, and it still may mean in the evening.

When someone drops by to his or her neighbour and coincidentally the family, he visits are having lunch, for instance, it is a common agreement in the culture for the hosts family to offer him to have the meal together with them. They are not expected to say "let us finish our meal first, and I'll meet you after that". If they do this, the family may be said as not being hostiled to their neighbour. For the neighbour, there is also a common agreement among the community to refuse the first offer, though he is really hungry and the food served teases his appetite. Only after the third offer he is expected to accept the offer. Otherwise, if he accepts the offer in the first time, he may be categorized as impolite. Additionally, visiting neighbour without telling him or her in advance is a common practice in our culture. On the contrary, if someone tries to get permission in advance by saying, for example, "May I come to your house at 4 o'clock this afternoon?", this request seems weird and strange for most of the members of the community. This is because of their common agreement that such kind of request is usually extended for certain occasion only such as when a family of a boy wants to propose a girl in the other family for their son. In general, the neighbour visited may not feel disturbed either.

Asking someone known or unknown with this question "*Mau ke mana, pak/bu?*" ("Where are you going, sir/mam?") for some people in western culture may be understood as interfering his or her personal business. In Indonesian context, however, it indicates the opposite. Asking this question either the known person or the unknown one shows that he is friendly to others. In contrast, if he does not do this, he may be labelled as unfriendly. So, actually he does not really care where the person is going to. The question he raises is actually not a real question that needs answer. It is just a piece of cultural expression to show that he is friendly. Nothing to do with the interference of someone's business.

## **Communication across cultures**

Misunderstanding sometimes may occur among the communicators though they are coming from the same cultural background, let alone if they are coming from different cultural background. Indonesian students who were born and most of their life time is spent in Indonesia and learn English in Indonesia, for instance, may have the biggest chance to cause misunderstanding for the native speakers of English. The same misunderstanding may also be caused by English people with English cultural background learning Indonesian language. It is inevitable then that misunderstanding may occur if two people coming from different cultural background communicate each other.

Since language and culture develop simultaneously it is assumed that the best way to acquire English and its culture is by living in the English-speaking countries for quite long time. Al Tamimi (2012) argues that when it comes to learning a new language there can be no substitute for actually living in a country where this language is spoken. By living in the countries, the learners are not only exposed to English language, but at the same time they are also exposed to English culture. Garcia (2008) argues that learning culture implies constant preparation and disposition, seen as needs, to solve individual collective vital situations. Novak (2008) claims that a strong culture is a system whereby members of an organization are aware of the informal rules of how they are to act most of the time. It is assumed that the longer time they stay there the more aspects of language and culture they will be exposed to. With this, the learners can develop not only their English proficiency but also English culture. It is in this respect that the teaching of literature may play its role in bridging the gap between the acquisition of language and the acquisition of culture.

## **The Role of Literature**

Literature, in a general sense, is understood as all books, articles, etc on a particular subject; it may also be defined as any printed information produced by people who want to sell something or tell about something, or it can also be meant as any books, plays, etc. that people think are important and good (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2010). In a more specific term Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary (2009) defines literature as writing that has lasting value as art.

Why is literature suggested to be used to bridge the gap between the acquisition of language and the acquisition of culture? There are some claims about this. For instance, Duff and Maley (in Al Tamimi, 2012) pointed out that literature offers universal themes which are relevant to students' own experience. Other claim expressed by Lazar (in Al Tamimi, 2012) who states that literature stimulates the imagination of students and develop their critical abilities. Collie and Slater (in Hişmanoğlu, 2005) claim that exposure to literary works helps students expand their language awareness and develop their language competence. It provides them with specific examples of how language is used. Collie and Slater (in Hişmanoğlu, 2005) mention some advantages of teaching literature in relation to the teaching of language and culture. They are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal enrichment. Further, the four reasons are elaborated as the following.

### *Valuable Authentic Material*

Literature is authentic material. This is because of the fact that most literary works are not created mainly for the purpose of teaching a language. Its authenticity may be compared to the other samples of authentic materials such as travel timetables,

city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles. As they read literary texts, the students become familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings provided for native speakers.

### *Cultural Enrichment*

Though the ideal mode of increasing their understanding the culture of which the target language learned is living in the country, the possibility to realize this is quite small, literary works, such as novels, plays, short stories, etc. can facilitate understanding how communication takes place in that country. A literary works reader can discover the way the characters in such literary works see the world outside, i.e., their thoughts, feelings, customs, traditions, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave in different settings. In short, literature is believed to be the best complement to other materials that are used to develop the foreign learners' understanding into the country whose language is being learned.

### *Language Enrichment*

Through literature, a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items are provided. Many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of text, are familiarized for the students familiar. The syntax and the discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas which develop and enrich their own writing skills are learned. As the result, students will become more productive and adventurous when they begin to perceive the richness and diversity of the language they are trying to learn and begin to make use of some of those potentials themselves.

## *Personal Involvement*

Literature may also be advantageous in involving students' individual involvement in what they are reading. Once the students read a literary text, they begin to inhabit the text. They are drawn into the text. This is because of the insight that understanding meanings of lexical items or phrases becomes less significant than pursuing the development of the story. The enthusiastic spirit of the students to find out what happens as events unfold via the climax, the feeling of being close to certain characters and the sharing of emotional responses may become the crucial factor that make students feel to be involved in the story.

In addition to the four main reasons discussed above, Hişmanoğlu also quotes what Maley (in Hişmanoğlu, 2005) stated. Literature is a potent resource in the language classroom because it has the following characteristics: (1) universality, (2) non-triviality, (3) personal relevance, (4) variety, (5) interest, (6) economy and suggestive power, and (7) ambiguity.

Hişmanoğlu (2005) claims that one of the main functions of literature is its sociolinguistic richness. The use of language changes from one social group to another. Likewise, it changes from one geographical location to another. A person speaks differently in different social contexts like school, hospital, police station and theatre, i.e., formal, informal, casual, frozen, intimate styles). The language used changes from one profession to another (i.e., doctors, engineers, economists). Universality is the themes literature deals with are common to all human beings in different cultures despite their different way of treatment, such as death, love, separation, belief, and nature.

To wrap up our discussion of why literature is suggested to be used as a means of teaching language and culture, Hill (2007) claims that literature has the power (1) to make us more human, to help us see the world from inside the skin of persons



very different from ourselves; to live more lives than the one we have; to try on various roles, (2) to develop compassion and insight into behavior of ourselves and others, (3) to show us the past in a way that helps us understand the present, (4) to move us in ways that facts, statistics, and history texts can never do (or rarely do), (5) to develop imagination; to help us entertain ideas we never could have had; to interpret and translate our experiences, to shape our world, and to enlarge our imagination, and (6) to take us out of ourselves and return us to ourselves as a changed self; to enlarge our thinking while educating our hearts.

## **Conclusion**

Theoretically, learning language means learning culture too at the same time. This means that when one is learning English, he or she is simultaneously learning English culture too. However, since Indonesian learners are mostly not born in English speaking countries, the development of students' culture in English does not completely go along with the development of their English. Some nuances of local language and local culture embed in English language they produce which may not represent English culture. The teaching of literature is believed to be able to bridge between the two realms. Through literature students are expected to be able to acquire target language proficiency and to nurture target culture competence with equal quality.

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# The Challenge of Teaching Speaking Skill in EFL Context

## Introduction

Teaching and learning a foreign language are usually understood as teaching and learning language skills covering listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the language. The Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096 of 1967 as the legal basis for the teaching of English in Indonesian education system (as quoted in Tirtopramono, 1970) clearly stipulated this. It is reasonable then that all English curricula that have been implemented in Indonesia (the English Curriculum of 1975, the English Curriculum of 1984, the English Curriculum of 1994, the English Curriculum of 2004), and the English Curriculum of 2006, which is being implemented at present, keep on focusing on the development of the four language skills. The ultimate goals are: the students will be able to understand native speakers of English well when they speak or write in the language, and when the learners speak or write in English native speakers will understand them well too.

However, the hope is not always hand in hand with reality. Complaints on the result of learning English in Indonesia is still heard. For instance, after reviewing some research reports such as Alisyahbana's (1990), Sadtono's (1983), and a survey conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Priyono came to the conclusion that the unsatisfactory results of the teaching EFL have been widely recognized in Indonesia (in Priyono, 1997:17).

In line with the above conclusion, Sadtono (1997), a professor of language education from Ma Chung University at Malang, comments:

Teaching English in formal schooling in Indonesia is like flogging a dead horse. There are too many obstacles to overcome by the classroom teacher, and many of the obstacles are beyond the teacher's capability to surmount, such as limited number of hours, class size, the price of supplementary reading materials, etc. The social situation is not particularly conducive to learning English, as English is not spoken in society. It is true that TV programs are in English, but the subtitle makes the listener read it instead of listening to dialogues (p.14).

This paper focuses only on the teaching speaking skill in an FL context: the problems faced and suggestions to overcome them. The consideration to raise this topic is inspired by the writer's experience when interviewing the new students enrolling in the English department in my university. When they were asked why they chose English as their choice, almost all of them gave the same answer: they wanted to develop their ability in speaking English well - as if the ability to speak in English seems to be the ultimate goal for most learners learning English. When further asked why they wanted to have good ability in speaking English some of them answered they wanted to get better job; some others say that they wanted to be tourist guide; still some others answered that they wanted to study abroad, and so forth.

Nevertheless, when they have already been accepted and become students of English, only a small number of students seriously tried to develop their speaking ability in English by always trying to speak in English either with his or her classmates or the teacher. The rests, the majority, seemed to be reluctant to speak English. When they were asked why they did not speak English, one of the answers was surprising. They said

that they had no friends to speak to. If what the students confessed was true, I think, they face a very serious problem, that is, their opportunity to get exposures to English becomes more and more limited. Yet, speaking skill "... is almost always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker", argues Lazaraton (2001:103). It is through this interaction with other students and teacher in the classroom or/and school environment the learners will get exposures in English. Who will be responsible to provide this comprehensible input?

### **The Role of Exposures in English**

As stated earlier that one of the disadvantages of teaching and learning English in FL context is that the exposures to English experienced by the students are very limited. This is especially true for the teaching and learning speaking. The only place they get the exposures in English is mostly in their classroom, and the person who is supposed to constantly provide exposures in English is their teacher. Outside classroom context, the possibility of getting exposures in spoken language in English is very small. Yet, exposing the learners to the language they are learning is a prerequisite in giving them comprehensible inputs. Harmer (2003) in this context argues that a vital ingredient in the learning of any language [and also skill] is, of course, exposure to it. Expecting foreigners coming to this area to be willing to speak in English with the students does not always happen smoothly. It seems that they prefer to try to communicate in Indonesian language - however bad it is.

In L2 context, according to Brown (2001:116) "...the classroom target language is readily available out there." However, in FL context, the learning materials and the learning activities are not readily available; they must be created and provided. That is why Rivers suggests (1980) students to be given the opportunity, throughout their years of study, to

develop greater and greater skill in encoding their thoughts in ever more complicated patterns of the foreign language. This is supported by Brown's (2001:116) argument "... efforts must be made to create such opportunities." The question is: Who will provide this comprehensible input?

In line with the above arguments Harmer (2003) encourages that, ideally, English teachers are placed to provide comprehensible input since we know the students in front of us and can react appropriately to them in a way that a course book or a tape, for example, cannot. We know how to talk as just at the right level so that even if our students do not understand every word we say, they understand the meaning of what is being said. If this can be provided and facilitated, "... the opportunity to use the language they study for real communication purpose" (Krashen and Tracy, 1984:17) will be widely opened.

### **Handling Lower English Classes**

English speaking classes in lower level should be well managed. This is important because the success in building speaking skill in lower classes becomes a very good basis for building speaking ability in the next levels which involve more complicated and sophisticated language structures and topics. What is meant by lower English classes here are: beginners and intermediate level.

Beginning learners, in accordance with Brown (2001), are characterized as students who have little or no prior knowledge of the target language. For beginners, the emphasis of teaching English might be best directed in developing their receptive aspect of the language, not in the aspect of productive. In other words, the focus of teaching and learning English in this level is comprehension. Comprehension, as defined by Dictionary of

Linguistics and Phonetics is “the ability to understand and interpret spoken and written language.”

There are some reasons why English teacher should pay more attention to this group of students. Brown (2001:99) in the same book argues that:

- in communicative language teaching, the teacher becomes a central determiner in whether students accomplish their goals,
- the students' capacity in and retaining new words, structures, and concepts is limited,
- in an FL situation, some negotiation might be possible in the NL, allowing for a small amount of student control,
- it is important not to let your classes go to excess in the use of the students' native language.
- beginning students are highly dependent on the teacher.

That is why, according to Brown (2001), in teaching students of this level the teacher should consider the following factors: students' cognitive learning process, the role of the teacher, teacher talk, authenticity of language, fluency and accuracy, student creativity, techniques, listening and speaking goals, reading and writing goals, and grammar.

Of course, the ability to comprehend and interpret spoken as well as written language does not appear automatically. It develops step by step and grows through continuous process. Krashen and Terrel (1984) claim that language acquisition can only take place when a message which is being transmitted is understood”. One of the best ways to develop students' comprehension in my experience is Total Physical Response (TPR).

As the name implies, TPR is a technique of teaching English that “consists of giving commands to students and having them actually act out what the teacher says. Since the students are not forced to produce responses in the target language, they are able to focus their entire attention to comprehension” (Krashen and Terrel, 1984). Because this technique emphasizes on the use imperative sentences that need physical response as an answer, the teacher can manipulate various kinds of English language items to trigger students’ understanding. More specifically, Asher, the founder of this technique, (1977 in Brown 2001) noted that children, in learning their first language, appear to do a lot of listening before they speak, and that their listening is accompanied by physical responses (reaching, grabbing, moving, looking, and so forth).

The TPR classroom, then, is one in which students do a great deal of listening and acting. Asher (1974 in Omaggio, 1986) summarizes three key ideas that underlie the Total Physical Response Method:

1. Understanding of the spoken language must be developed in advance of speaking.
2. Understanding and retention is best achieved through movement of the students’ bodies in response to commands. The imperative form of the language is a powerful tool because it can be used to manipulate students’ behavior and guide them towards understanding through action.
3. Students should never be forced to speak before they are ready. As the target language is internalized, speaking will emerge naturally (p. 73).

Intermediate level, on the other hand, is described as students who have progressed beyond novice stages to an ability to sustain basic, communicative tasks, to establish some minimal



fluency, to deal with a few unrehearsed situations, to self-correct on occasion, to use a few compensatory strategies, and generally to "get along" in the language beyond mere survival. Though the ability of the students in this level is better than the ability of students in beginners' level, they still need the help of their teacher in developing their speaking skill. According to Harmer (2003), there are four techniques that may be useful in helping students to develop their speaking skill: PPP, ARC, OHE/III, and ESA. Technically, Harmer describes each of the procedures as follows.

PPP stands for Presentation, Practice, and Production. In this procedure the teacher introduces a situation which contextualises the language to be taught. The language, too, is then presented. The students now practice the language using accurate reproduction techniques such as choral repetition (where students repeat a word, phrase, or sentence all together with the teacher 'conducting'), individual repetition (where individual students repeat a word, phase, or sentence at the teacher's urging), and cue-response drills (where the teacher gives a cue such as *cinema*, nominates a student by name or by looking or pointing, and the student makes the desired response, e.g. *Would you like to come to the cinema?*)

ARC stands for Authentic use, Restricted use, and Clarification. The basic premise here is that most language in the classroom can be described as either A, R, or C. Thus, communicative activity will demonstrate 'authentic' use, whereas a drill, jazz chant, elicited dialogue or guided writing, for example, will provoke restricted use of language by students. Finally, Clarification language is that which the teacher and students use to explain grammar, give examples, analyse errors, elicit or repeat things.

OHE/III stands for **O**bserve (read or listen to language), which will then provoke the students to **H**ypothesise about how the language works before going on to

**E**xperiment on the basis of that hypothesis. Such a description is close to the III of McCarthy and Carter (1995) where they show students examples of language like the transcripts of conversations (**I**llustration); they then give them discovery activities and questions about the language – for example *How would you rewrite this spoken language formally?* (**I**nteraction) as a result of which, through such a noticing routine, students will grasp new facts about language (**I**nduction).

ESA stands for **E**ngage. The point here is that unless students are engaged, emotionally, with what is going on, their learning will be less effective.

**S** stands for **S**tudy and describes any teaching and learning element where the focus is on how something is constructed, whether it is relative clauses, specific intonation patterns, the construction of a paragraph or text, the way a lexical phrase is made and used, or the collocation possibilities of a particular word.

**A** stands for **A**ctivate and this means any stage at which students are encouraged to use all and/or any of the language they know. Communicative activities, for example, are designed to activate the students' language knowledge: so too are reading and listening activities when students are doing it for interest and general understanding (pp.82-84).

## **The Quality of English Teachers**

In order to be able to accomplish what have been suggested above, qualified English teachers should be available. However, from the available data it is found out that Indonesia lacks of qualified teachers. Based on the data released by the Department of National Education, in academic year 2006-2007, there were 624.726 teachers teach in SMP. Among those teachers, those who were considered qualified were 487.512 (78.04%), and there were 137.214 or around (12.94%) who were still considered as not qualified. These teachers were distributed in public schools and private schools. In public school there were 414.503 teachers. As many as 332.276 teachers (80.16%) were categorized as qualified teachers and 82.227 teachers (19.84%) were categorized as un qualified. In private schools, the qualified teachers were 155.236 persons (73.84%) and unqualified teachers were 54.987 persons or 29.16. In SMA, the lack of qualified teachers also occurred.

The total number of SMA teachers all over the country was 285.818 persons. As many as 215.722 teachers (75.48%) were categorized as qualified teachers. The rests, as many 70.096 teachers (24.52%) were categorized as unqualified teachers. In public schools, out of 157.995 SMA teachers, as many as 127.651 persons or 80.79% were categorized into qualified teachers and as many as 30.344 teachers or 19.21% were categorized as unqualified teachers. In private schools, the number of SMA teachers was 127.823. As many as 88.071 teachers or 68.90% were categorized as qualified teachers. Whereas as many as 39.752 teachers or 31.10% were categorized as unqualified teachers (Muth'im, 2010).

In language teaching, a good [qualified] language teacher in accordance with Brown (2001:430), should have four characteristics, namely: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities.

Why should an English teacher have technical knowledge? Why should an English teacher have pedagogical skills? Why should an English teacher have interpersonal skills? And, why should an English teacher have personal qualities. What do they cover?

A good language teacher who has technical knowledge, in accordance with him, understands the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse; comprehensively grasps basic principles of language teaching and learning; has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English; knows what it is like to learn a foreign language; understands the close connection between language and culture, and keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/ workshop attendance.

A good language teacher must also have pedagogical skills. This means that he has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language teaching; understands and uses a wide variety of techniques; designs and executes lesson plans efficiently; monitors lessons as they unfold and makes effective mid-lesson alterations; perceives students' linguistic needs effectively; gives optimal feedback to students; stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom; uses appropriate principles of classroom management; uses effective, clear presentation skills; adapts textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids creatively; creates brand-new materials when needed innovatively, and uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests.

A good language teacher should also have interpersonal skills. This means that he is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions; enjoys people; shows enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor; values the opinions and abilities of students; is patient in working with students of lesser ability; offers challenges to

students of exceptionally high ability; cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers), and seeks opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues.

Finally, a good English teacher must possess personal qualities, too. This means that he is well-organized, conscientious in meeting commitments, and dependable; is flexible when things go awry; maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching; sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth, and maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards.

### **The Role of Teacher in Classroom**

In language learning, the role of a teacher is to help his students to be able to communicate in the language. In other words, a language teacher has the obligation to facilitate his students to understand spoken and/or written language when other people talk or write to him and to be understood when he speaks or writes to someone – in this case in English.

In facilitating the students to acquire English some principles must be born in mind by the teachers. According to Krashen and Terrel (1984) these principles are: comprehension precedes production, production is allowed to emerge in stages, the students are not forced to speak before they are ready, speech errors which do not interfere with communication are not corrected, syllabus consists of communicative goals, and lowering the affective filter of the students.

The first principle, i.e., comprehension precedes production implies that before a teacher asks a student to produce language utterance the first thing a teacher is supposed to do is helping the students to understand the utterance. In other words, a teacher should make his/her learners comprehend the piece of language

he utters. This is likely to happen if the teacher uses the language in the classroom.

The second principle, that is, production is allowed to emerge in stages, and the third principle, that is, the students are not forced to speak before they are ready, should be understood as a warning for the teacher who is not patient enough to expect his/her students to produce English without waiting for a situation which is coined by linguists as 'silent-period.'

The fourth, the fifth and sixth principles, in my opinion, have the purpose to raise the students' feeling of success in learning. Raising the feeling of success is important in learning language because once a student feels that he/she succeeds in it, his/her motivation will also increase. Many studies show the significant. For example, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) as reported in Annual Review of Applied Linguistics discovered that there is relationship between motivation and learning achievement. In the long run, the feeling of success can make and raise the learners' self-confidence – two positive affective aspects of learning.

In relation to the way of increasing students' self-confidence, Donyei (2001) in Patil (2008) suggests the following strategies:

1. Teachers need to foster the view that competence is not static condition but ongoing process. Thus, learners come to think that growth is gradual but sure.
2. They need to provide regular experiences of success in the classroom.
3. They need to give opportunities to the learners to contribute meaningfully. When students feel that they contribute, they will feel more interested.

4. They need to praise the learners for their contribution and progress. An occasional word of encouragement will elevate their spirits and level of motivation.
5. They need to make the classroom climate less stressful. Learning gains momentum when the classroom situation is relaxed, friendly and homely.

## Conclusion

From the discussion above it is apparent then that the main challenge in teaching English speaking skill in the context of FL is the exposures. Students do not have enough exposures to the language except in the classroom and mainly from their English teacher. That is why it is imperative for English teachers to provide the exposures for the students. In relation to this, qualified English teachers are badly needed. This is a big challenge that should be faced English teachers in Indonesia.

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# Reformation in Teachers' Recruitment in the Effort of Developing Teachers' Professionalism

## Introduction

Some people are optimistic that the quality of Indonesian education at present is good enough. They base their view on the fact that the percentage of students who pass in UN in every level of education every year is increasing. Nationally, for instance, the passing rate of UN this year is above 90%. They argue that this is a valid indicator to claim that the quality of Indonesian students is really good. However, some others are still pessimistic. For them, the quality of Indonesian education is "not really good". They argue that the increasing percentage of students who pass UN in all levels of education every year cannot become basis of justification because UN itself still contains a number of controversies.

If it is related to the achievement attained by our students on three school subjects: mathematics, natural sciences, and language in the world level the pessimistic opinion may not be groundless. The results of research carried out by PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) on these three subjects in 2009 uncovered that the highest-level Indonesian students could reach was only level 3 (out of 6 levels). Whereas, the study conducted by TIMSS (*Trends in International Mathematics Science Study*) on mathematics and natural sciences conducted in 2007 and 2011 revealed that around 95% of Indonesian junior high school students could only reach intermediate level (among five levels) (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013). These two studies may become a justification for the above claim.

Yet, it is generally agreed that mastering mathematics, natural sciences and language are three essentials facilities students should have in order that they can enjoy their lives. By having adequate mastery on mathematics students will be able

to solve their basic calculation problems in their daily life, such as: addition, subtraction, multiplication, or/and division. They will also be able to calculate the total number of what they are buying and calculate the amount of change they will get if the amount of money paid is bigger than the amount of the staffs bought. Not only that, mastering mathematics will also help someone to carry out more complicated arithmetic problems such as predicting or estimating.

By mastering natural sciences people will understand the principles, the nature and the application of natural sciences. In biology, for instance, students will be introduced with various Indonesia flora and fauna, the way to preserve and the advantages they may benefit from those natural resources. In chemistry, they will be introduced with the way of using apparatus and the right techniques in observing and measuring physical volume for the purpose of scientific studies. In geography, the students will be able to understand the dynamic of 'planets in universe' as well as its influence on life.

By mastering language, especially a foreign language like English, the students will be able to accomplish various kinds of communicative purposes. They will be able to express their emotions, needs, thoughts, desires, or attitudes as well as to clarify or classify ideas in their mind. By using the language, they will be able to establish and maintain good social relations with individuals and groups. By using the language, they will be able to control the behavior of others through advice, warnings, requests, persuasion, suggestions, orders, or discussion. By using the language, they will be able to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or in the culture, to discuss the present, the past, and the future. By using the language, they will be able to talk about language, and by using the language they will be able to manipulate the language creatively in rhyming, composing poetry, writing, or speaking (Finocchiaro, 1989).

The data presented above inevitably lead us to a tentative conclusion: there must something wrong with our education. The question is, "What is wrong with it?"

## The Quality of Indonesian Education

It is not easy to point out any single cause of the decrease of the quality of Indonesian education. There are a number of possible answers to this question. What Wetson (2008) found could be the answer. Wetson, for instance, mentions two issues: deployment and mismatch. Based on Wetson's report that there was no overall shortage of teachers in JSS but teacher deployment was uneven, with the result that some districts and schools have excesses and others shortages of staff. This is supported by another report published by UNESCO in 2012 which revealed that 68% of urban primary schools have too many teachers, while 66% of remote primary schools have shortages. Regarding the mismatch, Wetson (2008) reported that there was a considerable mismatch of teachers, where teachers have to teach a subject for which they are not qualified. Moreover, the share of pre-primary teachers with at least a diploma range from 60% in Banten to only 1% in Maluku.

However, since students' learning is for most part influenced by the intervention of teachers, students' achievement may not be separated from the teachers' competence. The result of UKA (*Ujian Kemampuan Awal, Assessment of Teachers' Initial Competence*) and UKG (*Ujian Kompetensi Guru, Assessment of Teachers' Competence*) held by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2012 may be the answer. In the first assessment, the mean score obtained by the teachers was 42.25. Whereas, the mean score obtained in the latter was 45.82 (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013). These two means scores were apparently lower than the passing grade of UN (*Ujian Nasional, National Examination*). The low-level mastery of the students on those subjects and the low level of teachers' competence are believed to be correlated. In other words, students' achievement is correlated with teachers' professionalism. That is why developing teachers' professionalism is a must.

## Developing Teachers' Professionalism

Teaching is a profession, not just a job. That is why teaching profession, as other professions such as doctor, engineer, painter, sculptor, and the like, cannot and may not be done by anyone whose bases are just spirit and readiness to be teacher, let alone if the reason is because of there is no other job vacancy available. Teaching profession should be done by someone who has special training or a particular skill, often one which is respected because it involves a high level of education (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). It is no wonder then that this kind of person is called a professional.

Similarly, teaching profession should be done by a professional teacher. A professional teacher, in accordance with Hamalik (2004), should master the principles of education, be able to plan teaching and learning program, be able to manage classroom interaction, master various kinds of teaching method, be able to assess students' achievement objectively, be familiar with the function and program of counselling service at school, be familiar with school administration management, and be able to comprehend and translate the results of research in the field of education for the purpose of teaching improvement.

This paper tries to focus on the first principle of education, that is, mastering the principle of education. Every generation may hold certain principle of education. In contextual teaching and learning (CTL), Suyanto, et al. (2001) mention seven principles of education: constructivism, enquiry, questioning, learning community, modelling, authentic assessment, and reflection.

*Constructivism* is a principle that lets learners construct their own sense of meaning from new experiences based on prior knowledge. So, prior knowledge plays an important role in learning because it is that prior knowledge that facilitates learning. It invites 'the schemata' of the existing knowledge or experience into being. Rumelhart (in Spiro, 1980) claims that "Schemata are employed in the process of interpreting sensory data (both linguistic and non-linguistic), in retrieving information from memory, in organizing actions, in determining goals and sub-goals, in allocating resources, and generally, in

guiding the flow of processing system. That's why it should become the basis for building and setting up new knowledge and skill.

*Enquiry* is a principle that begins the process of teaching and learning with observations and progresses to understanding a concept or phenomenon. According to Kellough et al. (1993), there are three levels of inquiry. The first level is where the problem identified by teacher or textbook, the process of solving the problems is decided by the teacher or textbook and the identification of tentative solution is resolved by student. The second level is the problem identification is done by teacher or textbook – the same as the first level, the process of solving the problem is decided by student, and identification of tentative solution is resolved by student. The third level of inquiry is: problem identification is done by student, process of solving the problem is decided by student, and identification of tentative solution is resolved by student.

*Questioning* is the principle of education that should be understood by a teacher. Ideally, it is the students who will ask questions a lot, because it is they who learn. However, this does not happen in most of our school classes. A number of reasons can be pointed out as the source. Brown (2001) argues that teacher's questions provide necessary stepping stones to communication.

*Modelling* is a principle that requires teachers on three things (1) to think aloud about the learning process, (2) to demonstrate how the teacher wants students to learn, and (3) to do what he wants students to do. The principle of modelling also requires teachers to demonstrate how the teacher wants students to learn. Other thing that is important in modelling is doing what is expected from the students to be able to do. In other words, the teacher should demonstrate how to do and what to do. Kellough et al. argue that students like demonstration, especially those that are performed by the teacher because he or she is actively engaged in learning activity rather than merely verbalizing about it (Kellough, et al., 1993).

*Learning Community* principle is believed that learning can be created better if a teacher is willing to speak and is willing to

share his ideas to others. Of course, the willingness to speak and share ideas includes the willingness to listen other people speak and other people share ideas. In addition, this principle of learning encourages learners to collaborate with others. Collaboration may occur between students and teachers, between students and students, between students and school, between English students with other students from other departments, etc. Moreover, it may also happen between school and factories, or between school and communities at large.

*Authentic assessment* is not different very much from any other assessment in the sense that it is intended to (1) evaluate and improve student learning, (2) identify student strength and weaknesses, (3) assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy, (4) evaluate and improve the effectiveness of curriculum programs, (5) evaluate and improve teaching effectiveness, and (6) communicate with parents and guardians and involve them in their children's learning (Kellough, 1993). So, authentic assessment is "the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant activities (O'Malley, 1996).

*Reflection* is the last principle. According to Chambers Essential English Dictionary (1995), reflection delivers from the word reflect which means thinking about something carefully. For the teacher, for instance, he or she can think about the objective(s) formulated and the achievement his students made. For a learner, reflection is also important. By reflecting, he can also make some notes on how he felt about the lesson that day, which part(s) of the lesson that he could understand and perform well, and which part of parts of the lesson that he could not understand and could not do the task(s) well. According to Johnson (2002) teaching and learning is hand-in-hand act and reciprocal process where one depends on and affects the other". So, the success of teaching and learning does not depend solely on the teacher nor the students. It depends on both of them.

## **Recruitment of Teachers**

To meet the requirements of professional teacher as discussed above a good system of recruitment of teachers is needed. However, at present, the recruitment of teachers seems to be very simple and easy. It is not much different from the recruitment of other PNS (civil servant) of non-teacher category in general. The applicants are just required to accomplish all the administrative requirements and then take a test. The test will be the same for all applicants no matter whether they apply for teacher position or for non-teacher positions. Generally, the applicants have to take written tests on Indonesian language, English, and general knowledge. For those who apply for non-teacher positions, the process of recruitment ends in this stage. However, for those applying for teacher position, if they pass the written test, they should have an interview. If all these stages can be accomplished successfully, they are considered to meet the requirements and have the right to be full teachers.

In case of teacher recruitment, such kind of process is not enough. This kind of recruitment will not enable to catch the real fish from the water. It might catch some fish but the fish caught is not the one which is really needed. The test might find future teacher whose administrative requirements meet the conditions stipulated by the committee. However, a fundamental question that should be answered is, "Can such kind of test find the real candidates of professional teachers?".

I believe that there must be a better way to select the candidates. For instance, in addition to the 'traditional' way of recruitment, the candidates can be asked to make a lesson plan (RPP) based on the curriculum implemented. Later, based on the RPP they made, they are asked to practice teaching in a real class. For this purpose, cooperation with other relevant institutes is a must. So, the consideration whether the candidates are suitable for the profession is not only based on the result of written test on the three areas, but it must also be based on their ability to program the lesson, and to perform teaching practice well.

Through this way, it is assumed that the candidates screened will be better compared to the present method which

merely relies on the result of written test. Some might disagree with this way. They argue that this kind of recruitment is not practical and not economical either. This method needs a great number of examiners and it takes quite long time too while new teachers are badly needed. One solution for this dilemma is by applying the model of teacher recruitment which had been implemented before our independence. At that time, the teachers recruited were categorized into five categories: (1) teachers graduating from an LPTK; they have full responsibility, (2) teachers without attending an LPTK and recruited through teacher examination, but they will get lower salary, (3) teacher assistant recruited through teacher assistant examination, (4) teachers doing apprenticeship, and (5) temporal teacher (Nasution, 1983).

### **Continuous development of teacher's professionalism**

In addition to a good system of teacher recruitment, continuous development of teacher professionalism must also be maintained. As a professional occupation, teacher's professionalism should be continuously developed and upgraded. This is because of the fact that knowledge, skills, and expertise in this profession are always changing and developed. New ideas, new concepts, new theories, new approaches, new methods and strategies of teaching are introduced. Teachers may not merely depend on what they have already got from their LPTK some years before.

Of course, the one who is mostly responsible for the development of teacher's professionalism is the teacher him/herself. To support their knowledge teachers should keep up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance. In the past, buying textbooks or attending conference or workshop that charges payment might be beyond the teachers' capability. This is because of the salary they got at that time was not enough to afford them. However, the situation is changing now. By the additional income they get from teacher certification, teachers may spare some amount of money for these purposes.

Attending meeting held by a group of teachers of the same field (MGMP) regularly is another worth doing to develop



teachers' professionalism. Through the meeting, a teacher may get solution of the problem he or she faces in his/her class from other colleagues. They may also learn new ideas, methods and strategies of teaching shared by other teachers.

Getting involved in workshop or training in the field is another appreciated effort to do. Regularly, the Ministry of Education and Culture holds workshop and training for teachers on related fields. However, since the number of teachers is so large while the fund is limited, not all teachers have the chance to get involved in this training and education. This weakness can be overcome by this strategy. Headmaster can assign the teacher(s) who attended the workshop or training to disseminate it to their colleagues. There are two advantages that can be benefited from this. First, it will train the teacher who attended the workshop or training to be more skilful in the field. Second, other teachers who do not have chance to attend the workshop or training will get the same benefit too, without leaving their students and family.

Other thing that should also be done, if is not yet, is making the role of headmaster more effective. Headmaster should regularly check if the teachers have made scenario of their lesson plan. And if it is necessary, once in a while he does incognito visit to a class to see a teacher teaching. In this occasion, he may find out whether what has been planned by a teacher is approximately executed or not. By doing this, I believe, in the long run, there will not be any more teachers coming into the class without any preparation.

Superintendent is the other part that is also responsible for the development of professionalism of teachers. One of the tasks of superintendent is to give guidance for the teachers to improve their teaching practices. To make supervision and guidance more effective, recruitment of superintendent should also be considered thoroughly and comprehensively. An ideal superintendent, should be selected from senior and experienced teachers, not from young and unexperienced ones. This is important to consider because a superintendent does not only deal with supervision business but also deals with psychological matters. Young and unexperienced superintendent might have

problem in supervising “old and experienced teachers”. Especially for eastern people like Indonesians, most of youngsters are still “*ewuh-pakewuh*” (feel uneasy) to give suggestion and guidance to old people though they know it is good for them.

## Closing

From the whole discussions I finally come to the conclusion that students’ learning cannot be separated from teachers’ professionalism. One initial step to select professional teachers is through a good system of teachers’ recruitment. Once professional teachers have successfully been chosen, maintaining, developing and improving teachers’ professionalism may not be stopped. Teachers’ professionalism should be continuously developed through various kinds of measures and activities.

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# Maximizing the Role of Pre-Service and In-Service Trainings in Improving Teachers' Professionalism

## Introduction

For some decades teaching profession might not have attracted youngsters to choose. This can be seen from the phenomenon that only a small number of high school graduates continued their study to teacher training and education institute (LPTK). If they then finally chose the institute as their place to study, not many of them chose it as their first choice. Only those who are categorized as the 'brave' high school graduates that really wanted to become teachers. The majority of high school graduates in that era tended to choose universities or colleges that offer courses preparing the students to get "promising" professions in the future such as doctor, engineer, accountant, etc.

However, as time goes by, the situation changes gradually but significantly. Youngsters are not hesitated anymore to choose IKIP, STKIP, or FKIP as their place to study. The indication of this change is shown by the increase number of high school graduates enrolling in the institutions in the last few years. Even, some universities, institutes, or colleges which were previously focusing on the study of non-teaching education programs begin to provide teacher training and education program in their institutions.

In one side, the phenomena of increasing number of high school graduates to study in LPTK and the spirit of non-LPTK to open teacher training and education program in their universities or institutes are pleasing. Both give a hope that the

quality of Indonesian teachers for some years to come is expected to be better. This is because the increase number of high school students enrolling in the LPTKs enables our government to choose the best teachers graduating from the institutions. The willingness of non-LPTK universities or institutes to open teacher training and education program will enable the high school graduates to choose the best institution which can educate and train them to be the best professional teachers.

Nevertheless, the phenomena also invite some kind of worries. What makes us worry is if the enthusiasm of those high school graduates enrolling in LPTK and the spirit of non-LPTK universities or colleges to open teacher training and education programs are not purely based on their motivation to become professional teachers, but based on other motives such as financial rewards and business interests. Such kinds of motivation in the long run will not give good impact for the quality of education in general and especially for the quality of teaching practices done by the teachers.

### **Profession and Professional**

Teacher is a profession, not just a job. Like other professions such as doctor, engineer, painter, sculptor, and so forth, teaching cannot be done by anyone whose bases are just spirit and readiness to be teachers, let alone if the reason is because of there is no other job vacancy available. *Profession*, in accordance with Hamalik (2004), is an *occupation or certain job that needs certain expertise, knowledge, and skill*. This is in line with the definition given by Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) which defines profession as any type of work which needs special training or a particular skill, often one which is respected because it involves a high level of education. Longman Dictionary of Current English (2010) also defines profession quite similarly as a job that needs a high level of education and

training. That is the reason why, Hamalik (2004) claims, that a teacher should (1) master the principles of education, (2) be able to plan teaching and learning program (3) be able to manage classroom interaction, (4) master various kinds of teaching method, (5) be able to assess students' achievement objectively, (6) be familiar with the function and program of counselling service at school, (7) be familiar with school administration management, and (8) be able to comprehend and translate the results of research in the field of education for the purpose of teaching improvement.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded then that a professional is a person whose profession is based on a particular skill attained in special training and/or education. A professional, in accomplishing his or her job, is supported by deep knowledge of certain field which can be attained only from appropriate educational institution, emphasizes on one expertise in certain field specific to that profession, and the level of capability and expertise is acknowledged by society. Teacher profession seems to meet all the requirements above. It is no wonder then that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia officially acknowledges teachers as one of the professions that deserves to get incentive in the form of a functional allowance as a reward. This is proven by the issuance of SK MENPAN No. 26/1989, article 1 and 2).

### **The Condition of Indonesian Teacher**

As discussed earlier that teaching profession is a profession that cannot and may not be done by everyone because it needs special skill attained in special training and/or education. Formally, in accordance with Education Act No. 19 on National Education Standard of the year 2005, Chapter VI about Educators Standard and Standard of the Officials of Education Affairs, Article 29, regarding (1) the qualification of kindergarten teachers (PAUD), (2) the qualification of SD/MI teachers, (3) the

qualification of SMP/MTs teachers, (4) the qualification of SMA/MA teachers, (5) the qualification of SDLB/SMPLB/SMALB, and (6) the qualification of SMK/MAK, it is stipulated that the minimum qualification for the teacher is Diploma IV or Sarjana degree (S1). The impact of this regulation is that those who formerly held DIII or/and BA do not belong to the category of qualified teachers anymore.

Based on the data released by the Department of National Education, in academic year 2006-2007, there were 624.726 teachers teach in SMP. Among those teachers, those who were considered qualified were 487.512 (78.04%), and there were 137.214 or around (12.94%) who were still considered as not qualified. These teachers were distributed in public schools and private schools. In public school there were 414.503 teachers. As many as 332.276 teachers (80.16%) were categorized as qualified teachers and 82.227 teachers (19.84%) were categorized as unqualified. In private schools, the qualified teachers were 155.236 persons (73.84%) and unqualified teachers were 54.987 persons or 29.16%. In SMA, the lack of qualified teachers also occurred.

The data also revealed that the total number of SMA teachers was 285.818 persons. As many as 215.722 teachers (75.48%) were categorized as qualified teachers. The rests, as many 70.096 teachers (24.52%) were categorized as unqualified teachers. In public schools, out of 157.995 SMA teachers, as many as 127.651 persons or 80.79% were categorized into qualified teachers and as many as 30.344 teachers or 19.21% were categorized as unqualified teachers. In private schools, the number of SMA teachers was 127.823. As many as 88.071 teachers or 68.90% were categorized as qualified teachers. Whereas as many as 39.752 teachers or 31.10% were categorized as unqualified teachers.

The lack of teachers seems to occur all over this country. Data reported from some regions may confirm this. From instance, *Disdikda* Bojonegoro reported that out of 6.824 teachers



in his region, the lack of teachers covers 1.664 persons (SI:13/6/2010). In Magelang, the lack of teachers reaches 456 elementary school teachers, said the head *Diskdikpora* Kabupaten Magelang (Suara Merdeka, 24 Juni, 2010). Even in Jakarta, the capital city of the Republic of Indonesia, the lack also happens in some schools. The headmaster of SMKN 57 reported that his school lacks teachers on adaptive subjects such as Natural Science, English, and Mathematics. To overcome this problem the school hires 10 temporary adaptive teachers. SMKN 29 Jakarta also suffers the same problem. Lacking of teachers in this school brings an impact on the capacity of each class in this school. Ideally, according to the principal of the school, the number of students placed in each class is 24 students. However, because of lacking teachers in his school, 36 students are placed in each class. In general, SMK (Vocational High School), according to the Director of Vocational High School of National Education Department, still needs 129.288 teachers (Pena Pendidikan, 8 July 2010).

From Banjarmasin, the head of public relation of South Kalimantan Province, reported that among 54.315 teachers in South Kalimantan, there are 21.117 teachers categorized as unqualified teachers (MI, 14 September 2008). From Samarinda, the number of unqualified teachers reaches 3.863 persons ([www/kaltimpost.co.id/07/06/2010](http://www/kaltimpost.co.id/07/06/2010)).

The lack of teachers is not the only problem faced by our education. The study conducted by Weston (2008) found the unevenness in teacher distribution. As the result, some districts and schools have excesses and others shortages of staff. Mismatch of teachers is another issue Weston found. This means that teachers have to teach a subject for which they are not qualified. For example, many madrasah teachers have a religion degree but are required to teach secular subjects. Many poor private schools, especially madrasahs, resort to hiring unqualified teachers.

## **Language Teacher Professionalism**

What are suggested by Hamalik above are the conditions that teachers in general should possess. Specific subject needs more specification. For language teachers, for instance, they should have more specific conditions. Brown (2001) in this case claims that good language teachers should be good in: (1) technical knowledge, (2) pedagogical skills, (3) interpersonal skills, and (4) personal qualities. He then elaborates these four characteristics as the following.

### *Technical Knowledge*

1. understanding the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse
2. comprehensively grasps basic principles of language learning and teaching
3. has fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English
4. knows through experience what it is like to learn a foreign language
5. understands the close connection between language and culture
6. keeps up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance

### *Pedagogical Skills*

1. has a well-thought-out, informed approach to language reading
2. understands and uses a wide variety of techniques
3. efficiently designs and executes lesson plans
4. monitors lessons as they unfold and makes effective mid-lesson alterations
5. effectively perceives students' linguistic needs
6. gives optimal feedback to students

7. stimulates interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom
8. uses appropriate principles of classroom management
9. uses effective, clear presentation skills
10. creatively adapts textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids
11. innovatively creates brand-new materials when needed
12. uses interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests

#### *Interpersonal Skills*

1. is aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural traditions
2. enjoys people; shows enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor
3. values the opinions and abilities of students
4. is patient in working with students of lesser ability
5. offers challenges to students of exceptionally high ability
6. cooperates harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers)
7. seeks opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues

#### *Personal Qualities*

1. is well organized, conscientious in meeting commitment, and dependable
  2. is flexible when things go awry
  3. maintains an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching
  4. sets short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth
  5. maintains and exemplifies high ethical and moral standards.
- (Brown, 2001:430).

## **Pre-Service Education**

Before one becomes a teacher, he or she should undergo a teacher training education, called pre-service education which is commonly managed by LPTK. In the LPTK they are educated and trained to be future professional teachers. Young, et al. (2001:1) argue: “teachers need to be experts in one or more specific subjects. They also must be prepared to effectively handle the challenges of a growing diverse population of students with a variety of multicultural, multilinguistic, and multiability needs. Teachers also are expected to manage the far-reaching changes that are taking place in and out of schools”.

Unfortunately, most pre-service training carried out so far, as revealed by Weston (2008) is largely theoretical, lacks a practical element and fails to prepare teachers to teach effectively. Tardif (2001) claims that within pre-service training, various disciplines within the science of education (the psychology of learning, the sociology of education, etc.) were supposed to bring theoretical, cultural and critical contributions to the knowledge of teaching and, more generally, of education. Once again, unfortunately, those disciplines are often still taught without relationship to practice, or even to the school system (p. 4).

In line with this claim Sembiring et al. (1981 as cited in Young, et al., 2001) found that teachers’ years of schooling do not affect student achievement. A report released by UNESCO in 2005 revealed that “teacher quality has been another constant challenge, and average numbers of qualified teachers remain low. Teaching and learning strategies employ fairly old-fashioned approaches to classroom instruction, and the total number of instructional hours in the school year is well behind international averages. The balance between what is required of teachers and is offered to them has a significant impact on the quality of their teaching and their capacity to implement effective literacy instruction (Young, et al., 2001).

In my institution, for instance, the ratio courses which directly give experience for students to the world of teaching practice PPL I, 4 credits. This course gives guidance for the students how to make lesson plan and practice it in a form of micro-teaching in class. PPL II, the students, under the guidance of school teacher and under the guidance of lecturer, practice teaching for about four months.

What have been done in the US to improve the quality of teachers especially beginning teachers might be worth of considering. Young, et al. (2001) give an example how Americans prepare their beginning teachers through a program which they call induction program.

- A mentoring/coaching component is an essential part of the program. Before school starts, the beginning teacher is assigned to a mentoring coach.
- There is always some type of professional development offered to the beginning teacher before the first week of the school year. The professional development offered could focus on one or more of the following: school culture, home-school connections, classroom strategies, classroom management, and stress reduction.
- A structure for modelling effective teaching during the beginning teacher's daily instructional time (e.g., one possible structure could be team teaching) is set in place as a natural part of the school day.
- A strong sense of administrative support evidence.
- Opportunities for beginning teachers to have observation visits in master teachers' classrooms are in place.
- Beginning teachers are provided with systematic ongoing professional development whereby the beginning teachers have an active role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the professional development process (p. 7).

## **In-Service Training**

As a professional occupation, teacher's professionalism should be continuously developed and upgraded. This is because of the fact that knowledge, skills, and expertise in this profession are always changing and developed. New ideas, new concepts, new theories, new approaches, new methods and strategies of teaching are introduced. Teachers may not merely depend on what they have already got from their LPTK some years ago. One of the ways to improve the quality of teacher professionalism is through in-service training. In-service training, as claimed by Hendayana (2008) should play an important role in updating teacher's knowledge and skills for continuous improvement in quality of education. Research conducted by Harris and Rass (2008) reveals that two interesting findings (1) content-focused teacher professional development is positively associated with productivity in middle and high school math, and (2) more experienced teachers appear more effective in teaching elementary math and reading and middle school math (p.1).

Of course, the one who is mostly responsible for the development of teacher's professionalism is the teacher him/herself. To support his/her technical knowledge as previously suggested by Brown, a teacher should keep up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance. In the past, buying textbooks or attending conference or workshop that charges payment might be beyond the teacher's capability. This is because of the salary they got was not enough to afford. However, the situation is changing now. By the additional income they get from teacher certification, teachers may spare some amount of money for these purposes.

Attending meeting held by a group of teachers of the same field (MGMP) regularly is another worth doing to develop teachers' professionalism. Through the meeting, a teacher may get solution of the problem he or she faces in his/her class. He or

she may also learn new ideas, methods and strategies of teaching shared by other teachers. As far as I know, this activity is fully supported by the *Dinas Pendidikan*. Some amount of fund is provided for this activity. So, the teachers do not have to worry about how to finance the activity.

Getting involved in workshop or training in the field is another appreciated effort to do. Regularly, the Department of National Education (now, the Ministry of National Education and Culture) holds workshop and training for teachers on related fields. This activity is sometimes held nationally, and sometimes it is held regionally. However, since the number of teachers is so large while the fund is limited, not all teachers have the chance to to get involved in this training and education. This weakness can be overcome by this strategy. Headmaster can assign the teacher(s) who attended the workshop or training to disseminate the knowledge or skills they got from their attendance to seminars or conferences in the field to their colleagues. There are two advantages that can be benefited from this way. First, it will train the teacher who attended the workshop or training to be more skilful in the field. Second, other teachers who do not have chance to attend the workshop or training will get the same benefit too.

### **Teacher Recruitment**

Between the process of pre-service education and in-service education there is another process which is not less important than the two processes. This process is teacher recruitment. I believe that the appropriate process of recruiting teachers results in better teacher than the inappropriate one. However, up till now, the way to recruit teachers does not seem to really reflect the fulfilment of teaching profession. Anyone can apply and become a teacher as long as the candidate has S1 diploma from an LPTK such as IKIP, FKIP, or STKIP. Even a graduate from non-LPTK, as far as he or she has Akta

Pendidikan (a certificate certifying that the holder has undertaken and passed a one-year-education in the field of teacher training and education), also has the right to apply in the recruitment. This is different from what had happened in the pre-independence era. Nasution (1983) described the situation that teacher profession was one of the most prestigious occupations so that although many people wanted to become teachers, but not all could do. There were strict prerequisites for it.

At present, however, recruitment for teachers seems to be very simple and easy. After the applicants accomplish all the administrative requirements, they then take a test. The test will be the same for all applicants no matter whether they apply for teacher position or for other positions. Generally, the applicants have to take written tests on Indonesian language, English, and general knowledge. For those who apply for non-teacher positions, the process of recruitment ends in this stage. However, for those applying for teacher position, if they pass the written test, the next step that the candidates should follow is to have an interview. If all these stages can be accomplished successfully, they are considered to meet the requirements and have the right to be full teachers. It sounds simple and easy, does it?

## **Supervision**

Other thing that should also be done is making the role of headmaster more effective. Headmaster should regularly check if the teachers have made scenario of their lesson plan. An if it is necessary, once in a while he does *incognito* visit to a class to see a teacher teaching. In this occasion, he or she may find out whether what has been planned by a teacher is approximately executed or not. By doing this, I believe, in the long run there will not be any more teachers coming into the class without any preparation. If all teachers make preparation before coming into



the class, beside their professionalism is developed, their students will also get benefit from this condition.

Superintendent is the other part that is also responsible for the development of professionalism of teachers. One of the tasks of superintendent is to give guidance for the teacher to improve his teaching practices. To make supervision and guidance more effective, I think, recruitment of superintendent should be considered thoroughly and comprehensively. An ideal superintendent, should be selected from senior and experienced teachers, not from young and unexperienced ones of which because of the administrative prerequisite they have the right and are appointed to be superintendent. This is important to consider because a superintendent does not only deal with supervision business but also deals with psychological matters. Young and unexperienced superintendent might have problem in supervising "old and experienced teachers". Though we understand that age is not automatically correlated with the professionalism in teaching. There are lots of cases in which young teachers are more creative and more dedicated compared to old teachers. Anyhow, psychologically, especially for eastern people like Indonesians, most of youngsters are still "*ewuh-pakewuh*" (a situation in which younger person/lower person in status or experience is unwilling to say something which might offend the person he or she talks to openly).

In addition to aforementioned, in order that the superintendent can give optimal supervision and guidance, it is recommended that the superintendent must be from the same field. This is also important factor for the development of teachers' professionalism. A superintendent coming from different field may have different vision from the teacher he observes and supervises. For example, superintendent whose educational background is in mathematics might have different criteria from the teacher whose background is in English in translating Basic Competency (KD) into Indicators and Learning

objective(s). As the result, the suggestion he gives might be implemented wrongly by the teacher or the teacher may disagree with the suggestion given by the superintendent and keeps on doing what he or believes is right.

## Conclusion

The quality of Indonesian education depends very much on the quality of the teachers it has. This implies that the more qualified the teachers Indonesia has, it can be expected that the result of education will be better too. On the contrary, if the quality of teachers is under standard, a good result of education may not be highly hoped. That is why it is expected that the process of educating future teacher in LPTK as a pre-service training, the process of teacher recruitment, and the process of in-service training for in-duty teachers will be well managed. Only in these ways the role of teachers can be maximized.

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# **Building Students' Character through the Teaching of Writing**

## **Introduction**

Though I do not have statistics of the crimes in this country, I believe that the quantity as well as the quality of crimes in Indonesia seem to increase every day. The prevalence of drug abuse, prostitution, trafficking, abortion, sexual harassment, sex intercourse before marriage, robbery, theft, corruption, etc. seem to increase every day. News from radios, newspapers, magazines, or televisions seems to confirm this claim. So far it is not known for sure yet why these crimes increase. Some people believe that all these crimes happen because of economic crises. Some others think that the crimes occur because of political pressures. Still some others argue that the crimes happen because of the incapability of government to implement law enforcement. Last but not least, there is other view claiming that the crimes happen because the people or the actors committed the crimes have very low commitment, and even, do not want to make good character at all as the primary guidance of all their thought, attitude, and actions. For, good character, in accordance with Lickona (1991 as cited in Vessels and Huitt, 2005) consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good – habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action).

## **Character Education**

In response to the above issues, the government of the Republic of Indonesia is now launching a form of education

which is based on character known as “character education”. This education is planned to be effective since this year and will be implemented in all levels of education either in primary, secondary, and tertiary and in all types of education no matter it is general school and vocational. The purpose of character education in Indonesia might be the same as the purpose of character education in other countries, i.e. to make students not only smart but also good (Purpel & Ryan, 1976 as cited in Vessels and Huitt, 2005). The question that soon raises is “Why Character Education?”

Before coming to the answer why character education is needed by Indonesian people, it might be useful for us to understand what is meant by character. Character in accordance with Berkowitz, et al. (2005) is, among others, defined as “the composite of those psychological characteristics that impact the child’s capacity and tendency to be an effective moral agent, i.e. to be socially and personally responsible, ethical, and self-managed” (p. 2). Whereas Boy Scout of America (2003) defines character as the collection of core values possessed by an individual that leads to moral commitment and action. From the definitions given, then, Character Education Partnership (CEP) defines character education as a *national movement* creating schools that *foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modelling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share* (as cited by Berkowitz, et al., 2005).

If we closely pay attention to the definition above, there are some important points that attract us to discuss further. First, character education is a *national movement*. This implies that all components of our nation should get involved in this program. It is irresponsible then to put the burden and responsibility of educating students’ character only on teachers’ shoulder. Parents, educators, politicians, government officials,

businessmen, etc. should also be responsible for this program. Of course the responsibility taken will not be in uniform. Each component of community can contribute something to the character education based on their roles.

Second, character education is intended to *foster ethical values*. What is meant by ethical values? According to Vessels and Huitt (2005) there are four ethical values to foster. They are: ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical motivation, and ethical action. Further, they elaborate the four ethical values as follow. *Ethical sensitivity* is defined as the perception of moral and social situations, including the ability to consider possible actions and their repercussions in terms of the people involved. *Ethical judgment* is understood as the consideration of possible alternative actions and the rationale for selecting one or more as the best. *Ethical motivation* is explained as the selection of moral values most relevant in the situation and the commitment to act on that selection. Whereas *ethical action* is elaborated as the ego strength combined with the psychological and social skills necessary to carry out the selected alternative.

Third, character education is intended to cater responsibility. Responsibility as defined by Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003) is something that is one's job or duty to deal with. The learner should be catered and nurtured to be responsible for anything he or she does either the job or the duty is for the sake of himself or herself, for his or her family, for his or her community, and for the whole nation. If one fulfils his or her job rightfully and properly, he or she deserves to get appreciation from the other(s). However, if one fails to perform his or her duty rightfully and properly, he or she is not trying to find fault and blame others. Instead, he or she is ready to be the one who should be blamed and critiqued by the public.

Fourth, character education is intended to educate students to care other people. Having the character of caring other people is as important as caring oneself. If he or she finds other people having no food, for instance, he or she will feel upset and try to find ways to help. If he or she finds that some children of the same age of his or hers, they will feel upset about them and try to help them whatever they can. If they find an old man or woman wants to cross a busy and crowded traffic, they will be willingly offering their hand to help. In short, caring other people means, among others, “to think that something is important and to feel interested in it or upset about it” (Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, 2003). This means that the learners may not neglect, ignore, or underestimate anyone or anything.

Fifth, character education necessitates *modelling*. This means that in order that the students are able to attain and internalize the values of good character within themselves a model of good character should be demonstrated. For example, if we want our children to be fair and honest, it is imperative then that a good model of fairness and honesty should be modelled by all components of nation. At home, they must be modelled by parents. At schools, they must be modelled by teachers. In political business, they must be modelled by politicians. In running government, they must be modelled by government officials, and the community at large, they must be modelled by the whole members of the community. So as with the other good characters, the commitment of all components of the community to do the good should be the priority. Without the availability of a model, it is doubted that the program will result in good result.

Finally, character education involves the *teaching of good character*. Though teaching good characters seems to be simpler than giving model of good character, teaching good character



intentionally and elaborately is still needed. According to Narvaez and Lapsley (no year), there are two strategies relating to this: “minimalist” strategy and “maximalist” approach. A “minimalist” strategy requires teacher educators to make explicit the hidden moral education curriculum and reveal the inextricable linkage between the best practice instruction and moral character outcomes. Second, the “maximalist” approach requires pre-service teachers to learn a tool kit of pedagogical strategies that target moral character directly as a curricular goal (p. 1).

Now we go back to the main question of this paragraph: why is character education necessary? Is there any evidence that character education fixes misbehaves or wrong deeds? The results of some research indicate positive effect of character education on students’ behavior. For instance, the research conducted in South Dakota from 1998 – 2000 by Walsh-Vetter, Moss and Wright (as cited in Bischaney, 2009) found the decrease in crime and drug use. They also found that more exposure students have to the program the better they behaved. Sweeny (2008) reports that between 1993 and 2003, the percentage of high school students who reported involvement in a fight (at school or elsewhere) declined from 42 percent to 33 percent. Other indication of the effectiveness of this program is also shown by other study revealed by Sweeny (2008:4), “the rate of in-school theft and the number of students who reported skipping school decreased from 1992 to 2003”.

### **The Essence of Character Education**

The essence of character education is actually teaching morality. What is morality? According to Damon (1988 as cited in Vessels and Huitt, 2005) morality is defined as (1) an evaluative orientation that distinguishes good and bad, (2) a sense of obligation toward standards of a social collective, (3) a

sense of responsibility for acting out of concern for others, (4) a concern for the rights of others, (5) a commitment to honesty in inter-personal relationships, and (6) a state of mind that causes of negative emotional reactions to immoral acts (p. 2).

We cannot imagine what will happen if one does not care about morality anymore. What will happen if one does anything he or she likes without considering whether it is good or bad; if the social standards agreed collectively by the society are neglected; if one does not care to others anymore; if one does not appreciate the rights of others; if one does not appreciate honesty anymore in conducting interpersonal relationships; and if one does not react negatively to immoral acts. The result might be CHAOS.

### ***Components of Character of Education***

As stated earlier that character education has the purpose to help the students to build good character covering: knowing the good, desiring to do the good, and doing the good. Developing character through knowing includes moral knowledge - both awareness and reasoning. For example, children must understand what honesty means and they must be able to reason about and interpret each situation, and then decide how to apply the principles of honesty. Developing character through commitment includes attention to moral motivation. Children must be committed to doing what they know is right. They must be able to understand the perspectives of others, to consider how others feel, and to develop an active moral conscience. Developing character through practice includes the development of moral habits through guided practice. Children need opportunities to practice the social and emotional skills necessary for doing what is right but difficult, and to experience the core values in their lives.

Building character, in some extent, is similar to building a house. However, in other extent it is different. The similarity is that both building a house and building character need something or materials to be put together and both need long process to create and develop. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003) defines the word "building" in two ways (1) to make something by putting bricks or other materials together", (2) "to create and develop something over a long period of time". In building a house the materials needed are concrete such as cement, sand, stones, bricks, etc. Building character, on the other hand, the materials needed are abstract. Instead, the materials essentially needed are in the form of core values. According to a guide book provided for Boy Scout of America (2003) the core values that are expected to be able to build children's character are: citizenship, compassion, cooperation, courage, faith, health and fitness, honesty, perseverance, positive attitude, resourcefulness, respect, and responsibility.

Each of the core values is explained as follows. Citizenship means contributing service and showing responsibility to local, state, and national communities; compassion is defined as being kind and considerate, and showing concern for the well-being of others; cooperation is defined as being helpful and working together with others toward a common goal; courage is defined as being brave and doing what is right regardless of our fears, the difficulties, or the consequences; faith is defined as having inner strength and confidence based on our trust in God; health and fitness are defined as being personally committed to keeping our minds and bodies clean and fit; honesty is defined as telling the truth and being worthy of trust; perseverance is defined as sticking with something and not giving up, even if it is difficult; positive attitude is defined as being cheerful and settling our minds to look for and find the best in all situations; resourcefulness is defined as using human and other resources to their fullest;

respect is defined as showing regard for the worth of something or someone; and responsibility is defined as fulfilling our duty to God, country, other people, and ourselves.

The implication of determining character education as the government's policy is that all levels of education and all kinds of education should base their teaching and learning process on character. The word "character" in accordance with the same dictionary is defined as the combination of qualities that makes someone a particular type of person. So, building character is actually a process of developing the qualities of human being through a long period of time. Character education is believed to be able to facilitate this process. Further implication is that all subject matters taught in schools should also be directed to build this character. This, as Sweeny (2008) claims "by cultivating good character in our children and ourselves, we strengthen our families, our communities and our world" (p. 3).

In conclusion, the generations expected to be born are those who know the good, desire to do the good, and do the good. In quite similar formulation, Boy Scouts of America (2003) states that character development involve at least three critical areas: know (thought), commit (feeling), and practice (behavior). Or, other words character education involves head, heart, and hand.

### ***Building Students' Character through Writing***

Writing as one of the courses taught should also play its role in the effort of building students' character. Character education is expected to enable the learners to know the goodness of writing, to cause them to prefer writing, and to encourage the learners to write again and again. In the context of writing course, there are two types of writing that are assumed

to enable the learners to build their character. They are expository writing and argumentative writing.

### *The meaning of writing*

Before we discuss the two types of writing in a more detail, it might be useful for us to discuss the essence of writing first. Lots of definition have been given by the experts. River (1968), for example, defines writing in different angles. If it is the act of putting down in conventional graphic form something which has been spoken, it is called **notation**. If the student is asked to discriminate various sounds, it is called **spelling**. If it involves students in grammatical exercises, the construction of simple dialogues, and uncomplicated translation exercises, it is called **writing practice**. And when it refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way, according to the graphic conventions of the language, it is called **composition**.

Byrne (1984), other expert, defines writing as the production of a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. For Troyka (1987), writing is understood as a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. Hammond (1989), on the other hand, defines writing as a complex task which requires everything from getting your spelling right to making your voice distinctive enough to be heard. From the definitions discussed above it can be concluded that writing intended in this paper is the way of expressing and communicating ideas through a written language which meets the graphic conventions of the language. The question is "How can writing be used as a means of building students' character?"

### *The Nature of Expository Writing*

Now, we come to the discussion of the nature of expository writing. An exposition, in accordance with Anderson

and Anderson (2003:122), “is a piece of text that presents one side of an issue”. This text is intended to persuade the reader (written text) or listener (oral text) by presenting one side of an argument. In order that the reader or the listener is persuaded, the argument put forwarded should be convincing. Anderson and Anderson (2003) claim that a good argument or persuasion should clearly express a point of view or thesis. The thesis includes what the writer hopes to prove, the subject of the text, a statement of what the writer believes, and the line of arguments.

Another way of presenting a good argument or persuasion suggested by Anderson and Anderson (2003) is by using generalizations or reasons to support the argument. They state that generalizations are statements that are given to support ideas. Since they are general in nature generalizations should be in the forms of common beliefs, broad statements - not specific examples, and not always 100 per cent correct (there may be exception to the rules).

The last way of presenting argument or persuasion as suggested by Anderson and Anderson (2003) is by using evidence to prove the generalizations or support the reasons. There are some choices recommended. The writer may use either one or the combination of the following: the result of research, expert opinions, or testimony (quotes).

It is agreed that a writer is at the same time also a reader. It is reasonable then that while he or she is writing, the writer should also be critical to what he or she is writing. For instance, he or she should ask himself or herself whether the generalization made true? whether a single case proves that other cases always happen? whether what he or she is writing telling the truth? whether he or she is exaggerating or stretching the truth; and whether the statements quoted are from real experts or just from quacks (Anderson and Anderson, 2003).

In the context of character building, a basic question can be raised: “What lessons that can be learned from this writing business? There are some advantages that can be profited from writing class. First, writing teaches the writer to be *able to present his or her ideas clearly* so that misunderstanding in the part of the reader can be avoided. Second, writing teaches a writer to become *cautious in making generalization*; without enough data he or she cannot make any generalization. Third, writing teaches a writer that he or she *may not tell a lie*. Fourth, writing teaches a writer *not to exaggerate beyond the truth*, and finally, writing teaches a writer to *show himself or herself as a real expert*.

### *The Nature of Argumentative Writing*

Argumentative writing is defined by Anker (1998) as writing that takes a position on an issue and defends it with evidence to persuade someone else of the position. Argument in general in accordance with Smalley, et al. (2001:281) involves, “one side gives an opinion and offers reasons in support of it, and the other side gives a different opinion and offers reasons in support of his or her stand”. Specifically for argumentative writing it is one kind of writing that attempts to change the reader's mind, to convince the reader to agree with the point of view or opinions of the writer. Therefore, (Smalley, et al., 2001), suggest that argumentative essay should be *highly persuasive* and *logical*.

There are a number of ways to support an argument: using facts, quoting the opinions of experts, and giving example. Among the three methods, showing the facts is believed to be the most powerful support. Facts, in accordance with Smalley, et al. (2003), include data that have been objectively proved and are generally accepted, such as historical facts, scientific data, statistics, and so forth. Quoting the opinions of the experts is also recommended to support an argument. An expert, in accordance with Smalley, et al. (2001), is a person who is particularly

knowledgeable about a topic because of his or her research, profession, or experience. While example, it is suggested to be typical to prove the case.

In the context of character education, writing course is expected to contribute to the ability of persuasion and talking logically. Having the ability of persuasion is very important in interpersonal communication. It is believed that asking someone to do something persuasively is more effective than asking someone to do something authoritatively or bossy, though the person we are asking to do is our subordinate or the official of the lower level.

Writing course is also believed to be able to cater, develop, and nurture one's logical properties. The logic of a piece of writing can be seen from the extent in which what is stated in the thesis statement and what is discussed in the following paragraphs. If what is stated in the thesis statement is thoroughly elaborated in the body paragraph(s), it can be claimed that the writing is logic. In contrast, if the paragraphs following the thesis statement do not thoroughly talk about the thesis statement, it can be said that the piece of writing is illogical.

Additionally, writing course may also contribute to the way students express their ideas. Since they are accustomed to convince and argue other people to change their minds or to accept the writer's ideas, they will be accustomed to using the result of research, the opinions of experts in the field, and the testimony of people who are successful in doing the job. The techniques of developing writing they have practiced so far teach them not to be irrational.

## **Conclusion**

From the discussion above, it can be said that building students' character may be inserted through the teaching of



writing course. There are some advantages that can be profited from writing class. First, writing teaches the writer to be *able to present his or her ideas clearly* so that misunderstanding in the part of the reader can be avoided. Second, writing teaches a writer to become *cautious in making generalization*; without enough data he or she cannot make any generalization. Third, writing teaches a writer that he or she *may not tell a lie*. Fourth, writing teaches a writer *not to exaggerate beyond the truth*, and finally, writing teaches a writer to *show himself or herself as a real expert*.

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# Cultural Misunderstanding as A Potential Source of Learning Language: “Where are you going, Mister?”

## Introduction

The main function of language is as a means of communication. As a means of communication, it can be used to fulfil different kinds of communication purposes. Finocchiaro (1974), for instance, lists six functions of language (1) personal, (2) interpersonal, (3) directive, (4) referential, (5) meta-linguistic, and (6) imaginative.

How does a language fulfil these functions? When someone wants to express his or her opinion, needs, thoughts, desires, attitudes, etc., he or she uses the language for the purpose of *personal* communicative function. When he or she uses the language to maintain good social relations with the individuals and groups such as the expression of praise, sympathy, joy at other's success, inquiries about health, etc. he or she uses the language for the purpose of *interpersonal* function. When it is used to control the behavior of other through advice, warnings, requests, persuasion, etc. this function is called *directive*. When it is used to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or in the culture it is called *referential*. Finally, when it is used to talk about language, e.g., “What does culture mean? it is called *metalinguistic* function.

## Communicative Competence

In order that one can accomplish his or her communication task properly he or she should have competence in

communication. According to Savignon (2001) this communicative competence covers (1) grammatical competence, (2) discourse competence, (3) sociocultural competence, and (4) strategic competence. Further, the four competences are elaborated as follows.

### *Grammatical competence*

Grammatical competence refers to sentence-level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological feature of a language and to make use of these features to interpret and form words and sentences

### *Discourse competence*

Discourse competence is concerned not with isolated words or phrases but with the interconnectedness of a series of utterance, written words, and/or phrases to form a text a meaningful whole. Included in this competence are coherence and cohesion. Coherence is something to do with the relation of all sentences or utterances in a text to a single global proposition. Cohesion, is local connections or structural links between individual sentences, called by Halliday and Hasan (1976 in Murcia, 2001) as cohesive devices.

### *Sociocultural competence*

Socio-cultural competence extends well beyond linguistic forms and is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry having to do with the social rules of language use. Sociocultural competence requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of interaction.

### *Strategic competence*

Strategic competence is related to the strategies used in an unfamiliar context, with constraints due to imperfect knowledge of rules or limiting factors in their application.

#### **When misunderstanding arises in communication**

Misunderstanding in communication may arise any time. This misunderstanding may be experienced not only by the interlocutors who do not have the same language background but it. The possibility of misunderstanding to occur is more open when one communicates in a new language.

#### **How culture is embedded in Language**

Among the four communicative competences that is crucial is something to do with sociocultural competence. This is because it is related to the use of language in relation to the culture within one society.

As stated earlier that the growth of Language goes along with the growth of the *culture* by which the language is used as means of communication. Since, in accordance with Tang (1999), “by speaking the language, therefore, one automatically (to a greater or lesser extent) aligns oneself with the culture of the language”. Tang then argues that “language itself is already culture”. The question is “how can this culture be integrated in language, and how can the language used reflect the elements of culture of the community?”.

Before answering the question let us pay a close attention on how is culture defined. It seems that there is no single definition available. Apparently, in accordance with Balwin et al. (in Levy, 2007) there are more than 300 definitions about culture. However, for the purpose of our discussion, I will just quote

some of them here. For instance, Hobby (2004) defines culture as “what we *agree* to be *right* and what we agree to be *true*”. In quite similar definition, Kaikkonen (1997) defines culture as “a *common agreement* between the members of community on the *values, norms, rules, role expectations and meanings* which guide the *behaviour and communication* of the members. For Levy (2007) “culture is everything you *believe* and everything you *do* that enables you to *identify* with people who are like you and that *distinguishes* you from people who differ from you”. Hinkel (2001:443) on the other hand, writes, “... Culture may find its manifestations in *body language, gestures, concepts of time, hospitality customs, and even expressions of friendliness*”.

From the above definitions, some important points can be highlighted here. First, the term culture implies that there must be a *common agreement* among the members. Second, there are some norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings applied and tight all the members of the community considered as true and right. Third, culture becomes guidance for all the members of community in conducting behavior and in the way they communicate. Lastly, culture is manifested in various manifestations and expressions.

Common agreement does not develop in a day and becomes part of one’s life. According to Levy (2007), “our cultural orientation begins at birth”. This means that, as in the process of acquiring L1, the process of reaching common agreement must go through long process and through continuous practices, too. Only through these processes and practices, common agreement is finally reached by each and among individuals in the community. Once the common agreement is reached, it becomes norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings of the community. Consequently, every member of the community should respect this common agreement and should abide to it. If not, the member of the

community violating this common agreement may be categorized as against his or her culture. This is because when one becomes a member of the culture, he or she is not only by notionally agreeing to its practices, or simply by participating in them, but by being accepted by the membership (Levy, 2007).

What norms, values, rules, role expectations and meaning that are applied and tight all the members of the community?'. Almost unlimited. For example, it is a common agreement for Indonesian people that talking to older persons such as parents or teachers must be different from the way they talk to their peers of the same age. Talking to older people should be polite both in term of the manner and in term of the word choice. Whereas talking to the peer of the same age does not necessitate the two conditions.

Body language and gestures in communication also function as the manifestation of culture. For instance, when one is speaking and the listener nods his or her head up and down, this is commonly understood as a sign of agreement. However, when the listener repeatedly shakes his or her head to the right or left or vice versa, it is commonly agreed by all members of the community as a sign of disagreement. Waving hand towards his or her body is commonly understood as a request of approaching closer to the speaker. How can all these become a common agreement among the members of the community. Through long processes and continuous practices.

Concept of time is also developed through long processes and continuous practices before it becomes culture. The words indicating times such as the following: "*nanti* (later), and '*besok*' (tomorrow), etc. are two examples which indicate our common agreement that in term of time, we are flexible, not as rigid as may be applied by and in other countries. '*Nanti*' (later) is a concept of time that ranges from a few seconds after this time until unlimited range of time in the future. The word '*besok*'

(tomorrow), though it is more specific than *'nanti'*, it still has uncertainty because it may mean in the morning, it may also mean in the afternoon, and it still may mean in the evening.

When someone drops by to his or her neighbour and coincidentally the family, he or she visits are having lunch, for instance, it is a common agreement in the culture for the hosts family to offer him or her to have the meal together with them. They are not expected to say "let us finish our meal first, and I'll meet you after that". If they do this, the family may be said as not being hostiled to their neighbour. For the neighbour, there is also a common agreement among the community to refuse the first offer, though he or she is really hungry and the food served teases his or her appetite. Only after the third offer he or she is expected to accept the offer. Otherwise, if he or she accepts the offer in the first time, he or she may be categorized as impolite. Additionally, visiting neighbour without telling him or her in advance is a common practice in our culture. On the contrary, if someone tries to get permission in advance by saying, for example, "May I come to your house at 4 o'clock this afternoon?", this request seems weird and strange for most of the members of the community. This is because of their common agreement that such kind of request is usually extended for certain occasion only such as when a family of a boy wants to propose a girl in the other family for their son. In general, the neighbour visited may not feel disturbed either.

Asking someone known or unknown with this question "*Mau ke mana, pak/bu?*" ("Where are you going, sir/mam?") for some people in western culture may be understood as interfering his or her personal business. In Indonesian context, however, it indicates the opposite. Asking this question either the known person or the unknown one shows that he or she is friendly to others. In contrast, if he or she does not do this, he or she may be labelled as unfriendly. So, actually he or she does not really care



where the person is going to. The question he or she raises is actually not a real question that needs answer. It is just a piece of cultural expression to show that he or she is friendly. Nothing to do with the interference of someone's business.

Paying someone's meal without the permission of the person paid is also a common practice in Indonesian culture. In the culture of other community this practice may be understood as an insult in the sense that the paid person is not able to pay his or her bill. In Indonesian culture, however, this practice, it is especially true in my home town, is understood as an indication that he or she is culturally well-behaved. The person paid is expected not to refuse this because if he or she does and say, "Don't bother, I have money", because this response may mean as indication of arrogant and disrespect good intention of others. Sometimes, he or she does not know who has paid for his or her bill. It is the cashier who usually tells who the person is. Someone whom he or she has known before.

### **Acquiring L1**

The growth of one's ability in his or her L1 usually goes along with the growth of the culture of his or her community. This means that the child is not only able to use his or her L1 correctly and fluently, but he or she also knows how to use the language in relation to who, where, and when the language is directed appropriately. This is especially true when one learns his or her native language (L1). A Banjarese child, for instance, in addition to learn his or her L1, i.e., Banjarese, also has to learn Banjarese culture simultaneously. So does a Makassarrese child. Beside learning Makassarrese language, at the same time, he or she also learns Makassarrese culture.

"How does a child acquire his or her L1 successfully?". Many hypothetical answers can be put forwarded. However, in

my opinion, what Lenneberg (1981) describes might be the most comprehensive one. According to him, a child develops his spoken language through stages. *At the completion of 12 weeks*, when the adults talked to him and nodded at him, a baby smiles. This is followed by squealing-gurgling sounds usually called *cooing*. *At the completion of 16 weeks* baby responds to human sounds more definitely. He turns his head and his eyes seem to search for speaker. Occasionally he produces some chuckling sounds. *At the completion of 20 weeks*, he begins the vowel-like cooing sounds to be interspersed with more consonantal sounds; to be common with labial fricatives; spirants and nasals; though all vocalizations he produced are very different from the sounds of the mature language of the environment acoustically. *At the completion of 6 months*, the production of cooing changes into babbling resembling one-syllable utterances. Neither vowels nor consonants he produces have very fixed recurrences. Most common utterance sound he produces is somewhat like ma, mu, da, or di. *At the completion of 8 months*, he reduplicates frequently; the intonation patterns he applies become distinct and the utterances can signal emphasis and emotions. *At the completion of 10 months*, vocalizations he produces are mixed with sound-play such as gurgling or bubble-blowing. It appears that he wishes to imitate sounds, but the imitations are never quite successful. He begins to differentiate between words heard by making differential adjustment. *At the completion of 12 months*, he replicates identical sound sequences with higher relative frequency of occurrence and words (mamma or dada). Signs of understanding some words and simple commands emerge (e.g., show me your eyes). *At the completion of 18 months*, he has definite repertoire of words-more than three, but less than fifty. He is still much babbling, but several syllables intricate with intonation pattern. There is no attempt to communicate information and no frustration for not being understood. He can produce words that may include items such as thank you or

come here, but there is little ability to join any of the lexical items into spontaneous two-item phrases. His understanding is progressing rapidly. *At the completion of 24 months*, he has vocabulary of more than 50 items (some children seem to be able to name everything in environment). He begins spontaneously to join vocabulary items into two-word phrases and all phrases appear to be his own creations. His communicative behavior and interest in language definitely increase. *At the completion of 30 months*, his new vocabulary adds with every day words very fast. There is no babbling at all, and his utterances have communicative intent. He will be frustrated if he is not understood by adults. His utterances consist of at least two words many of which have three or even five words. His sentences and phrases have characteristic child grammar, that is, they are rarely verbatim repetitions of an adult utterance. The intelligibility is not very good yet, though there is great variation among children. He seems to understand everything that is said to him. *At the completion 3 years*, he has vocabulary of some 1000 words of which about 80% of utterances are intelligible even to strangers. Grammatical complexity of utterances he produces is roughly that of colloquial adult language, although mistakes still occur. *At the completion of 4 years*, the language he produces is well-established, and if deviations from adult norm occur, these tend to be more in style than in grammar.

How can this amazing development happen? No one really knows how it is going on. Even, as far as I know, the experts in second language acquisition, do not know for sure either. Seeing the process of the development of L1 within a child, I assume that there must be something inherent and built in within a human child - a very sophisticated device that can record, process, save, and retrieve language. It might be this sophisticated apparatus that many experts in language acquisition call as Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The fact that any normal child, as long as he or she is not deaf and dumb

and does not suffer from speech defect, who is able to communicate at the age of 4 or 5 in his or her L1 may legitimate this assumption.

Other thing that can be learned from how a child acquires his or her L1 is that the role of language milieu, especially the adults, in helping the child develops L1 is very important. For instance, though they know that the child cannot communicate as well as they do, they always talk to the child. Even, sometimes they accompany their talk with physical signs and gestures. As his or her capability in communication is very limited, in responding to the adults' talk, the child tries to accomplish his or her communication needs in a way which is in his or her own capacity. Turning his or her heads and eyes, producing chuckling sounds, cooing sounds, babbling, reduplicating, imitating sounds, differentiating words heard, replicating identical sounds sequences, beginning to join vocabulary items into two-word phrases spontaneously, producing sentences which is characterised by child grammar are some of the examples of the ways a child communicates with adults. Through this gradual development, a normal child of human being finally understands everything said to him or her, and is able to produce an unlimited well-established language. It is this facility that might be called by Krashen (1987) as exposure.

Concerning about the relationship between LAD and exposures to the language Kadarisman (2009) writes, "the LAD hypothesis is proposed as a probable answer to the logical problem of language acquisition. Linguistic development in the young mind proceeds step-by-step manner. The LAD is equal to Grammar Zero ( $G_0$ ). As it is exposed to language use surrounding the child, the following process occurs:  $G_0 \rightarrow G_1 \rightarrow G_2 \rightarrow G_3 \rightarrow \dots G_n$ . This means exposure to language data triggers or activates innate principles within the LAD, making  $G_0$

develop into  $G_1$ ,  $G_2$ ,  $G_3$ , etc., and finally into  $G_n$ .  $G_n$  is adult grammar or linguistic competence”.

“What happens to a child who was formerly not deaf and dumb when he or she was born but did not get enough exposures to the language?”. Can he or she still acquire the ability to communicate in the language? The case of Genie may give initial answer to this question.

Genie as reported by Fromkin et al. (1981) “was girl of thirteen years, nine months. At the time of her discovery and hospitalization (in 1970) she was an unsocialized, primitive human being, emotionally disturbed, unlearned, and without language”. What had happened to her? They continued their report, “There is evidence that from about the age of twenty months until shortly before admission to the hospital Genie had been isolated in a small closed room, tied into a potty chair where she remained most or all hours of the day, sometimes overnight. A cloth harness, constructed to keep her from handling her faces, was her only apparel of wear. When not strapped into the chair she was kept in a covered infant crib, also confined from the waist down. The door to the room was kept closed, and the windows were curtained. She was hurriedly fed (only cereal and baby food) and minimally cared by her mother, who was almost blind during most of the years of Genie’s isolation. There was no radio or TV in the house and the father’s intolerance of noise of any kind kept any acoustic stimuli which she received behind the closed door to a minimum. Genie was physically punished by the father if she made any sounds. According to the mother, the father and old brother never spoke to Genie although they barked at her like dogs. The mother was forbidden to spend more than a few minutes with Genie during feeding”.

Genie was a normal baby. This was the report given by the hospital. Why couldn’t she speak at that age? The reason is

apparent. In addition to psychological problem she had, she was completely not exposed to the language. There was no meaningful sound exposed to her from radio or TV. Besides, all the members of the family never spoke to her with the language they used at home. All these conditions happen in a very long time. Consequently, she did not have the ability to speak.

### **Communication across cultures**

Misunderstanding sometimes may occur among the communicators though they are coming from the same cultural background, let alone if they are coming from different cultural background. Communicators - mode - message

### **How to Acquire EFL and its Culture**

The best way to acquire English and its culture is of course by living in the English-speaking countries for quite long time. By living in the countries, the learners are not only exposed to English language, but at the same time they are also exposed to English culture. The longer time they stay there the more aspects of language and culture they will be exposed to. However, the idea of living in the English-speaking countries is of course beyond our capability to accomplish. The majority of Indonesian students develop their English proficiency through the process of learning, not through the process of acquisition.

What is the difference between of these two modes of developing language proficiency? According to Krashen and Terrel (1984), in acquiring, learners develop their language proficiency by using it for real communication. In this mode, language is developed in a similar way a child develops his or her L1. He or she just "picks up" the language subconsciously. So, the knowledge of the learner toward his or her language is implicit. In learning, however, the learners develop their English

proficiency consciously through formal teaching. What they learn more is the formal knowledge of language. As the result, they know a lot about the language, but when comes to the application in real communication situation, mostly they face problems.

English in Indonesian system of education is one the compulsory subjects that should be learned by Indonesian learners. Officially, it is started in junior high school (SMP/MTs). In junior high school (SMA/MA/SMK), the learners are obliged to learn English for another three years. In some colleges or universities, English is considered as one of the compulsory subjects that the students should learn at least for one or two semesters. This means that Indonesian students spend around 6 or 7 years in learning English.

Since the new language learned is very much different from their L1 (native language) as well as their L2 (Indonesian language), learning English result in difficulties for most of Indonesian learners. The system of sound, grammar, and vocabulary of this language seems so strange to most of the ears and minds of Indonesian learners. As the result, they get trouble in developing proficiency in this new language. This condition is worsened by the fact that the chance to be exposed to the new language is very limited. The only place for the learners to be able to be exposed to English is at school, or more specifically, in classroom. Outside this context the chance to be exposed to English is very rare.

The condition as described above may cause the motivation of the learners to learn English decreases because they think that without acquiring English language they still can survive in life. In relation with this Sadtono (2009) argues "... Indonesian as language is already strongly established in all disciplines and all walks of life making Indonesian reluctant to learn a relatively difficult foreign language and its benefits are

remote for the majority of people. Indonesian as a tool of communication is sufficient to satisfy their primary, secondary, even tertiary needs. In other words, the linguistic environment is not conducive. As the result, as revealed by some research, learning outcome of English is far from satisfactory.

The claims and the complaints stated above are not groundless. The results of some research conducted to investigate students' competence in the four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing may become the proves. In reading area, for instance, Susilawati (2008) in her research on the ability of the 7<sup>th</sup> semester students' academic year 2008/2009 in finding meaning inferred from a reading text revealed that the highest percentage of students' ability was at moderate level (46,15%) or 18 students of the total number of students, i.e., 39 persons. There was no student who had very good ability level, 5 students (12,83%) were in the category of having good ability, 14 students (35,90%) were in the category of having bad ability, and 2 students (5,21%) were categorized as having very bad ability.

In the area of writing the unsatisfactory result is also found. For example, Roni (2006) who conducted a study on the students' competency in writing descriptive paragraph uncovered: 40% of the students had problems in terms of topic sentence, 35% of them had problems in diction, and 25% of the subjects had problems in description. I believe that the ability of students learning other areas of language skills, i.e., listening and speaking is not far from the other two previously mentioned.

In the area of the components of language, the results of some studies show quite similar findings. For instance, a study carried out by Astasari (2009) in her study on grammatical errors found in students' narrative writing found out that the highest frequency of errors was omission (41,51%), the second highest frequency was malformation (35,50%), the next highest



frequency was addition (21,74%), and the lowest frequency of error was disordering (1,3%). Agustini (2007) in her study on the ability of the second-year students in using simple past tense academic year 2007/2008 found out that 61% of the students had very bad ability. Other study conducted by Fitri (2009) found out that there were many problems faced the English Department students in using conditional sentence.

If the effort of developing English language proficiency is in an unsatisfying condition, how can we expect that the acquisition of English culture be successful. At least, the failure in acquiring English language makes the effort to understand its culture as part of the learners' life is more difficult. Yet, in accordance with Tang (1999) "language is not dead, it is alive, and as such can never be divorced from the culture that produced it and the people who speak it halfway across the world". Can English culture be integrated in English language? Or, what kind of English language that represents the culture of English?

Before answering the above questions, it might be a good idea to know how English is used in the English-speaking countries and outside the English-speaking countries. According to B. Kachru (1985a in Kachru and Smith, 2008) English is used in three categories, namely: (1) the Inner-Circle, (2) the Outer-Circle, and (3) the Expanding-Circle. The three categories are then elaborated as follows:

- *The Inner-Circle* represents the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the regions where it is used as a primary language (including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand).
- *The Outer-Circle* represents the regions of the world formerly colonized by Britain and USA. In these regions English has been adopted as an additional language for international

purposes of administration, education, law, etc (e.g., India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore).

- *The Expanding-Circle* includes the areas in which English is primarily used as a medium of international communication (e.g., China, Europe, Japan, Korea, the Middle-East).

From the categories, it is clear then that English in Indonesia is not a primary language as it is used in UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. English in Indonesia is not used for international purposes in administration, education, law, etc. as it is practiced in India, Nigeria, the Philippines and Singapore. English in Indonesia is primarily used just as a medium of international communication.

In the events of international scope, the language used is of course is a “neutral” English as the medium of communication. What I mean by neutral English here is the English which is used by the majority of educated people, such as doctors, teachers, etc. In other words, the English used should be standard English in which participants from different language backgrounds and various cultural backgrounds will not misunderstand the message conveyed.

The following sentences are some of the examples that contain local cultural value, of which they are not recommended to be used in international events:

- a) Excuse me, Sir. Can I see *Pak Effendi* today?
- b) As *Pak Ali* told us last week, .....
- c) I apologize for not informing *Bapak* everything related to my thesis.
- d) I have put my proposal in your box as *Bapak* told me to.

All the sentences quoted above are linguistically correct. Nothing wrong with them. However, those sentences come to their existence because the students do not fully implement their knowledge on English culture. In English language and culture,

when talking to the second person, the pronoun used should be YOU, without considering the social position of the person we talk to. On the contrary, the students apply Indonesian culture in their English language. The right one in accordance with English culture:

1. Excuse me, Sir. Can I see *you* today?
  2. As *you* told us last week, .....
  3. I apologize for not informing *you* everything related to my thesis.
  4. I have put my proposal in your box as *you* told me to.
- (Kadarisman (2009)

### **Embedding Culture of FL through the Teaching of L1**

As claimed by many linguists that learning language means learning culture of the language too. However, since English has been widely used all over the world, embedding English culture in the English which is learned outside the English-speaking countries seems to be serious problem. The problem derives from the fact that English used all over the world is not only of one kind. According to Kachru and Smith (2008), it is currently estimated that the number of English users outside English speaking countries, that is, in the Outer-Circle and in the Expanding-Circle, reaches approximately 800 million people compared to the English used by those living in the English-speaking countries (in the Inner-circle) the number of English users is only around 300 million.

There must be solutions to overcome this problem. One of them is by providing learning materials which are assumed to be able to build cross-cultural awareness. Providing learning materials may be done by just adopting the available materials, or by selecting from the available materials and adapt them to school context, or, if it is possible, by self-creating the teaching materials. However, selecting learning materials, let alone creating the materials by oneself, which contain cultural value is

of course not easy. This is because the fact that the majority of English teachers in Indonesia learned their English also from English teachers who had never gone and stayed in one of the English-speaking countries either. The importance of providing the materials that builds cross-cultural awareness is important because manifestation of the influence of culture on language use are very common, materials for teaching cultural concepts and implications can be easy to create.

The other solution that is assumed to be able to overcome cultural gap between L1 and its culture and FL and its culture is by having the students to attend Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU). This kind of project has been conducted by Genc and Bada (2005) in Cukurova University Turkey. They were six questions asked to the students (1) did this course contribute to any of your language skills, (2) to which skill did the course contribute most?, (3) did this course help you raise awareness about both your own target and cultures?, (4) did your attitude towards target culture change at the end of this course?

The result of the study reveals that a culture is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession. The participants in this study emphasized some kind of transformation in their thinking and listed six points as potential contribution of a culture class they receive. "the classes in language and culture aim at improving one's understanding of the language and the people who speak it conducted a research on the effects of the culture class. The result was there was a significant similarity between students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class as argued by some experts in the field was observed. Regarding the benefits of learning about culture, attending the culture clash has raised cultural awareness in ELT students concerning both native and target societies.

## **Closure**

Theoretically, learning language means learning culture too at the same time. This means that when one is learning English, he or she is simultaneously learning English culture too. However, since Indonesian learners are mostly not born in English speaking countries, the development of students' culture in English does not completely go along with the development of their English. Some nuances of local language and local culture embed in English language they produce which may not represent English culture. To minimize this gap, two solutions are worth of trying. They are: (1) providing learning materials that are assumed to be able to build cultural awareness, and (2) having the students to attend Cross-Cultural Understanding course.



# Responding to Cultural Differences in Language Learning

## Introduction

The main function of language is as a means of communication. As a means of communication, it can be used to fulfill different kinds of communication purposes. Finocchiaro (1989), for instance, lists six functions of language in communication. They are used to fulfil (1) personal, (2) interpersonal, (3) directive, (4) referential, (5) meta-linguistic, and (6) imaginative purposes.

How are these functions realized in communication? When the language is used to express one's opinion, needs, thoughts, desires, attitudes, etc. the language fulfils the purpose of *personal* communicative function (e.g., *For the improvement of my thesis, I need more advice from my advisors*). When the language is used to maintain good social relations with the individuals and groups such as the expression of praise, (e.g., *You look gorgeous in your blue shirt*), sympathy, (e.g., *I'm sorry to hear your dad passed away*), joy at other's success, (e.g., *Congratulation for your promotion to be the general manager*), inquiries about health, (e.g., *How are your parents*), etc. it is used for the purpose of *interpersonal* function. When it is used to control the behavior of other through advice, (e.g., *You'd better go to the doctor*), warnings, (e.g., *Watch your step*), requests, (e.g., *Will you help me carry this box?*), persuasion, (e.g., *If I were you, I would invest my money in this business*), etc. this function is called *directive*. When it is used to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or in the culture, (e.g., *What's this? What will you do tomorrow?*) it is called *referential*. Finally, when it is used to talk about language, (e.g., *What does culture mean?*) it is called *metalinguistic* function.

## **Communicative Competence**

In order that one can accomplish his or her communication tasks properly he or she should have competence in communication. Communicative competence, in accordance with Savignon (2001) may be developed through practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative contexts and events. For this purpose, communicative competence necessitates the communicators to have: (1) grammatical competence, (2) discourse competence, (3) sociocultural competence, and (4) strategic competence. Further, Savignon (2001) elaborates the four competences as the following.

### ***Grammatical competence***

Grammatical competence refers to sentence-level grammatical forms, the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological feature of a language and to make use of these features to interpret and form words and sentences

### ***Discourse competence***

Discourse competence is concerned not with isolated words or phrases but with the interconnectedness of a series of utterance, written words, and/or phrases to form a text a meaningful whole. Included in this competence are coherence and cohesion. Coherence is something to do with the relation of all sentences or utterances in a text to a single global proposition. Cohesion, is local connections or structural links between individual sentences, called by Halliday and Hasan (1976 in Celce-Murcia, 2001) as cohesive devices.

### ***Sociocultural competence***

Socio-cultural competence extends well beyond linguistic forms and is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry having to do with the social rules of language use. Sociocultural competence



requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of participants, the information they share, and the function of interaction.

### *Strategic competence*

Strategic competence is related to the strategies used in an unfamiliar context, with constraints due to imperfect knowledge of rules or limiting factors in their application.

### **Cultural Misunderstanding**

Misunderstanding in communication may arise any time. This may be experienced not only by the interlocutors who do not have the same language background but it may also occur among the interlocutors of the same language. The possibility of misunderstanding to occur is greater when one communicates in a new language. Among the four communicative competences that is crucial is sociocultural competence. This is because it is related to the use of language in relation to the culture within one society.

As stated earlier that the growth of language goes along with the growth of the *culture* by which the language is used as means of communication. Tang (1999) argues that by speaking the language, therefore, one automatically (to a greater or lesser extent) aligns oneself with the culture of the language. Tang then argues that language itself is already culture. The question is “how can this culture be integrated in language, and how can the language used reflect the elements of culture of the community?”.

Before answering the question let us pay a close attention on how is culture defined. It seems that there is no single definition available. Apparently, in accordance with Balwin et al. (in Levy, 2007) there are more than 300 definitions about culture. However, for the purpose of our discussion, I will just quote

some of them here. For instance, Hobby (2004) defines culture as what it is *agreed* to be *right* and what is agreed to be *true*. In quite similar definition, Kaikkonen (1997) defines culture as a *common agreement* between the members of community on the *values, norms, rules, role expectations and meanings* which *guide the behaviour and communication* of the members. For Levy (2007) culture is defined as everything *believed* and everything *done* that enables one to *identify* with people who are like him or her and that *distinguishes* one from people who differ from him or her. Hinkel (2001:443) on the other hand, writes, "... Culture may find its manifestations in *body language, gestures, concepts of time, hospitality customs, and even expressions of friendliness*".

From the above definitions, some important points can be highlighted here. First, the term culture implies that there must be a *common agreement* among the members. Second, there are some norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings applied and tight all the members of the community considered as true and right. Third, culture becomes guidance for all the members of community in conducting behavior and in the way they communicate. Lastly, culture is manifested in various manifestations and expressions.

Common agreement does not develop in a day and becomes part of one's life. Levy (2007) claims that our cultural orientation begins at birth. This means that, as in the process of acquiring L1, the process of reaching common agreement must go through long process and through continuous practices, too. Only through these processes and practices, common agreement is finally reached by each and among individuals in the community. Once the common agreement is reached, it becomes norms, values, rules, role expectations and meanings of the community. Consequently, every member of the community should respect this common agreement and should abide to it. If not, the member of the community violating this common

agreement may be categorized as against his or her culture. This is because when one becomes a member of the culture, he or she is not only by notionally agreeing to its practices, or simply by participating in them, but by being accepted by the membership (Levy, 2007).

The norms, values, and the rules of conduct agreed to be true and right by the members of the community are almost unlimited. For example, it is a common agreement for Indonesian people that talking to older persons such as parents or teachers must be different from the way they talk to their peers of the same age. Talking to older people should be polite both in term of the manner and in term of the word choice. Whereas talking to the peer of the same age does not necessitate the two conditions.

Another example is concept of time. Concept of time is also developed through long processes and continuous practices before it becomes culture. The words indicating times such as the following: "*nanti* (later), and '*besok*' (tomorrow), etc. are two examples which indicate our common agreement that in term of time, we are flexible, not as rigid as it may be applied by and in other cultures. '*Nanti*' (later) is a concept of time that ranges from a few seconds after this time until unlimited range of time in the future. The word '*besok*' (tomorrow), though it is more specific than '*nanti*', it still has uncertainty because it may mean in the morning, it may also mean in the afternoon, and it still may mean in the evening.

The next example is visiting neighbor. Visiting neighbour without telling him or her in advance is a common practice in our culture. On the contrary, if someone tries to get permission in advance by saying, for example, "May I come to your house at 4 o'clock this afternoon?", this request seems weird and strange for most of the members of the community. Their common agreement reminds them that such kind of request is usually

extended for certain occasion only such as when a family of a boy wants to propose a girl in the other family for their son. In general, the neighbour visited may not feel disturbed either.

The last example is asking someone known or unknown. Asking someone known or unknown with this question “*Mau ke mana, pak/bu?*” (“Where are you going, sir/mam?”) for some people in western culture may be understood as interfering his or her personal business. In Indonesian context, however, it indicates the opposite. Asking this question either the known person or the unknown one shows that he or she is friendly to others. In contrast, if he or she does not do this, he or she may be labelled as unfriendly. So, actually he or she does not really care where the person is going to. The question he or she is asking is actually not a real question that needs answer. It is just a piece of cultural expression to show that he or she is friendly. Nothing to do with the interference of someone’s business.

### **Communication across cultures**

Misunderstanding sometimes may occur among the communicators though they are coming from the same cultural background, let alone if they are coming from different cultural background. Indonesian students who were born and spend most of their lives in Indonesia and learn English in Indonesia, for instance, may have the biggest possibility to cause misunderstanding for the native speakers of English. The same misunderstanding may also be experienced by Indonesian people communicating with English people with English cultural background learning Indonesian language. It is inevitable then that misunderstanding may occur if two people coming from different cultural background communicate each other. This is because the nature of language (and also culture) appears in the individual’s life by means of a continuous interchange of meanings with another signification, claims Halliday (1998) as cited in Garcia (2008).

Since language and culture develop simultaneously it is assumed that the best way to acquire English and its culture is by living in the English-speaking countries since babies up to grown ups for quite long time. By living in the countries, the learners are not only exposed to English language, but at the same time they are also exposed to English culture. As Tang (1999) claims that by speaking the language one automatically (for a greater or lesser extent) aligns oneself with the culture of the language. Garcia (2008) argues that learning culture implies constant preparation and disposition, seen as needs, to solve individual collective vital situations. It is assumed that the longer time they stay there the more aspects of language and culture they will be exposed to. Mishra (2011) claims that man is a social being and his utterances are often shaped by socio-pragmatic factors. It is in this way the learners can develop their English proficiency through the process of acquisition. Unfortunately, the majority of Indonesian students and English teachers develop their English proficiency (and English culture) not through the process of acquisition but through the process of learning.

What is the difference between of these two modes of developing language proficiency? According to Krashen and Terrel (1984), in acquiring, learners develop their language proficiency (and its culture) by using it for real communication. In this mode, language (and its culture) is developed in a similar way a child develops his or her L1. He or she just “picks up” the language (and also the culture) subconsciously. And of course, this is only possible to happen if they learn English in the native country of English. It is in this way the knowledge of the learner toward his or her language (and culture) is implicitly acquired.

In learning situation, however, the learners develop their English proficiency consciously through formal teaching. The implication of this situation is that school, or more specifically,

classroom, becomes the most important place for the learners to be exposed to English language (with minimum awareness of its culture). Outside this context, exposures to English language (and culture) are beyond students' experience. They may know about the language, but when it comes to the application in real communication situation, mostly they face problem.

The problem lies on two areas. The first problem is that Indonesian language (as L1 of most students) is very much different from the target language they are learning L2. The system of sound, grammar, and vocabulary of this language seems so strange to most of the ears and minds of Indonesian learners. The second problems is that Indonesian culture also differs greatly from the target culture. The norms, values, believes, and rules of conduct which are valid and understood to be right in and by Indonesian learners are not the same as the norms, values, believes, and rules of conduct perceived by English people. As the result, if both people coming from different cultural backgrounds try to communicate it is possible that misunderstanding will occur.

The condition as described above may cause the motivation of the learners to learn English (for Indonesian learners) and to learn Indonesian language (for the non-Indonesian learners) decreases because they might think that communicating in a target language is so complicated and a potential of misunderstanding. For Indonesian learners learning English in Indonesia, they may think that without acquiring English language they still can survive in life. Sadtono (2009) claims that Indonesian as language is already strongly established in all disciplines and all walks of life making Indonesian reluctant to learn a relatively difficult foreign language and its benefits are remote for the majority of people. Indonesian as a tool of communication is sufficient to satisfy their primary, secondary, even tertiary needs. In other words,

the linguistic environment is not conducive. As the result, as revealed by some research, learning outcome of English is far from satisfactory.

### **Responding Misunderstanding in Communication**

If students' English language proficiency is not satisfying, the possibility of misunderstanding to occur is greater. The failure in acquiring English language makes the effort to understand its culture as part of the learners' life is more difficult. Tang (1999) argues that language is not dead, it is alive, and as such can never be divorced from the culture that produced it and the people who speak it halfway across the world. In relation to this, Novak (2008) states that for human the capacity to learn and reflect has become an advantage to survive over the living organizations in the planet. The question is, "Can English culture be integrated in English language?" Or, what kind of English language that represents the culture of English?

Answering the above questions does not seem to be easy especially if it is related to the kinds of English used all over the world. According to B. Kachru (1985a in Kachru and Smith, 2008) English is used in three global categories, namely: (1) the Inner-Circle, (2) the Outer-Circle, and (3) the Expanding-Circle.

- *The Inner-Circle* represents the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the regions where it is used as a primary language (including the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand).
- *The Outer-Circle* represents the regions of the world formerly colonized by Britain and USA. In these regions English has been adopted as an additional language for international purposes of administration, education, law, etc (e.g., India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore).
- *The Expanding-Circle* includes the areas in which English is primarily used as a medium of international communication (e.g., China, Europe, Japan, Korea, the Middle-East).

As seen from the above categories, English in Indonesia is not used as a primary language in the community as it is used in the inner-circle. If it were used as a primary language most aspects of English language and most aspects of English culture are assumed to be internalized much easier because the learners get the experience directly from the first-hand source. English in Indonesia is not used as the second language (L2) either in handling administration, education, and law either, as it is used in the countries that once had been under the colonialism of the Great Britain and USA. Instead, it is just used as a medium of international communication.

In international events such as in symposiums, conferences, and seminars, the English used tends to be formal and free of culture value. In daily communication, however, the language used tends to be informal and full of cultural values. That is why English language which is used in daily communication in Indonesia must be 'colored' by Indonesian culture. It is no wonder then those Indonesian learners learn English produce utterances which do not sound purely English.

The following sentences are some of the examples that contain cultural colour of Indonesian language.

- e) Excuse me, Sir. Can I see *Pak Effendi* today?
- f) As *Pak Ali* told us last week, .....
- g) I apologize for not informing *Bapak* everything related to my thesis.
- h) I have put my proposal in your box as *Bapak* told me to.

Syntactically, all the sentences are correct. Semantically, however, the meaning may be perceived differently by native speaker of English and by the learners. For the native speaker, sentence (a) may be understood that a student was getting permission from his lecturer (a man) that he/she wants to see somebody (*pak Effendi*, not the lecturer), while for the learner



the addressee, SIR is the same person, i.e. YOU. Sentence (b) may be understood by the native speaker as clarification that somebody (pak Ali) had told something to the students, whereas for the learner pak Ali here means YOU. Sentence (c) may be understood by the native speaker that a student was asking forgiveness from his lecturer that he/she did not inform everything to somebody (*bapak*) about his/her thesis, whereas for the learner '*bapak*' here means YOU. And sentence (d) for the native speaker may be understood that the student had already put his/her proposal as suggested by somebody (*bapak*), while for the learner '*bapak*' here means YOU.

Why did the students use (a) *Pak Effendi*, (b) *Pak Ali*, (c) *Bapak*, and (d) *Bapak* instead of using YOU to refer to the person intended? Those sentences came to their existence because the students did not implement their knowledge of English language and culture in the utterances. Instead, they partly applied their knowledge of English with Indonesian culture in them. In English language and culture, when talking to the second person, the pronoun used should be YOU, without considering the social position of the person we talk to. On the contrary, in Indonesian language and culture the way of addressing the second person and the choice of word depend very much on whom the person talks to. If the speaker speaks to a person of the same age or position, the word '*anda*', or '*kamu*' is alright. It is the same as pronoun 'you' in English. However, if the speaker speaks to somebody of higher position or older people, it is not polite to address the second person of older age or higher status with YOU. That is why the students apply Indonesian culture in their English language. The right one in accordance with English culture:

5. Excuse me, Sir. Can I see *you* today?
6. As *you* told us last week, .....

7. I apologize for not informing *you* everything related to my thesis.
8. I have put my proposal in your box as *you* told me to.

(Kadarisman (2009))

The same difficulty is faced by the English people learning Indonesian language when they produce Indonesian. I have experienced hearing this inappropriateness. At the occasion of ISLOJ (International Symposium on Languages of Java) which was held and hosted by Islamic University of Malang (UIN) on May 23 - 24, 2011, one of the steering committees, a linguist from the USA, in the opening ceremony, said, "*Kepada Pembantu Rektor Nomor 1, Kami Persilahkan*", instead of saying "*Kepada Pembantu Rektor I, Kami Persilahkan*".

What is interesting from the event is that the speaker, though he could speak Indonesian language well; even he also could speak Javanese, he did not seem to be able to differentiate the two utterances in term of their meaning. For him, the two sentences seemed to have the same meaning. Yet, they are significantly different. The first utterance, *Pembantu Rektor No. 1* implies that there is hierarchical order of 'Pembantu Rektor (Deputy Rector): Deputy Rector No.1, Deputy Rector No. 2, Deputy Rector No. 3 and/or Deputy Rector No. 4. Whereas in the second utterance, *Pembantu Rektor I*, (Deputy Rector I) does not indicate an order. It just refers to an occupation whose job and responsibility are different from Deputy Rector II, Deputy Rector III, and/or Deputy Rector IV.

Language and culture are like a hen and an egg. An egg is produced by a hen, and a hen is originated from an egg. Language is a product of culture and at the same time culture is nurtured and preserved by language. It is no wonder then why there are some 'entities' within a culture that can only be understood precisely if they are uttered in the language of that

culture. For instance, the word 'snow' in English is understood by Indonesians as merely 'salju'. Yet, in accordance with ABC-OF-SNOWBORADING the word 'snow' has many variants depending on the characteristics of each kind. It may be called 'snow', 'crust', 'crud', 'slush', 'powder', or 'ice'

The same difficulty may be experienced by English people who have never known different variants of 'padi'. The word they might have known to mean the thing is 'rice'. Yet, based on its characteristics, the stuffs originating from 'padi' may be called 'beras', 'nasi', 'bubur' and 'kerak'. For more information, please check Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan Nasional which was published by PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama (2008).

### **Embedding Culture of FL through the Teaching of L1**

As claimed by many linguists that learning language means learning culture of the language too. However, since English has been widely used all over the world, some aspects of culture in which English is used is inevitably 'influenced' by the culture of the speakers (as indicated by the above examples). Yet, as claimed by Kachru and Smith (2008), it is currently estimated that the number of English users outside English speaking countries reaches approximately 800 million people compared to the English used by those living in the English-speaking countries which is only around 300 million. This means that more 'non-English' cultural aspects contribute to English.

There must be solutions to overcome the problem of cultural misunderstanding. One of them is by providing learning materials which are assumed to be able to build cross-cultural awareness. Providing learning materials may be done by just adopting the available materials, or by selecting from the available materials and adapt them to school context, or, if it is possible, by self-creating the teaching materials. However, selecting learning materials, let alone creating the materials

which contain cultural value by oneself is of course not easy. This is because the fact that the majority of English teachers in Indonesia learned their English also from English teachers who mostly had never gone and stayed in one of the English-speaking countries either. The importance of providing the materials that builds cross-cultural awareness is crucial. Since the influence of culture on language use is very common, the materials for teaching cultural concepts and their implications are expected to be easy to produce.

The other solution that is assumed to be able to overcome cultural gap between L1 and its culture and FL and its culture is by having the students to attend Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course. This kind of project has been conducted by Genc and Bada (2005) in Cukurova University Turkey. The questions asked to the students were (1) did this course contribute to any of your language skills, (2) to which skill did the course contribute most? (3) did this course help you raise awareness about both your own target and cultures? and (4) did your attitude towards target culture change at the end of this course?

The result of the study reveals that attending cultural course is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession. The result was there was a significant similarity between students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class as argued by some experts in the field observed. Regarding the benefits of learning about culture, attending the culture class has raised cultural awareness in ELT students concerning both native and target societies.

## Conclusion

Theoretically, learning language means learning culture too at the same time. This means that when one is learning English, he or she is simultaneously learning English culture too. However, since Indonesian learners were mostly not born in English speaking countries, the development of students' culture in English does not completely go along with the development of their English. Some nuances of local language and local culture embed in English language they produce which may not represent English culture. To minimize this gap, two solutions are worth of trying. They are: (1) providing learning materials that are assumed to be able to build cultural awareness, and (2) having the students to attend Cross-Cultural Understanding course. (4587 words)

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# The Ability of EFL Students in Writing Argumentative Essay Using Comparison-Contrast Method of Development

## Background

Being able to write English well might be the hope of every student learning English. By having the ability, the learner has other option in term of medium of communication and in term of the target population to whom he/she addresses to. In other words, the ability to write in English will broaden the coverage of people he/she can likely to communicate to and will give him/her more channels of communication.

Unfortunately, it has been widely claimed by most Indonesian learners learning English that writing is the most difficult skill to develop. The difficulty does not only lay on how to organize ideas in coherent and unity mode, as it usually happens in all writing practices, but it also lies on the medium in which the message is conveyed. English as the medium of conveying ideas or messages from the writer to the reader is very much different from Indonesian language. The most apparent differences are in vocabulary, in grammar and in spelling. As the consequence, the problems the students face in writing in English become doubled.

In helping learners to support an idea or a topic of writing, a number of techniques such as (a) showing facts, (b) describing physical description, (c) giving examples, and (d) telling personal experience (Muth'im, 2009) have been taught and trained by English teachers. Additionally, some methods of

paragraph developments like (1) process, (2) extended definition, (3) *comparison-contrast*, classification, and (4) cause-effect (Muth'im, 2009) have also been drilled by writing teachers.

The result, however, is not satisfying yet. A number of researches that have been conducted may become evidence of this claim. For example, the study conducted by Roni (2006) on the students' competency in writing descriptive paragraph found 40% of the subjects had problem in terms of topic sentence, 35% of the subjects had problem in diction, and 25% of the subjects had problem in description. Another research carried out by Astarsari (2009) on grammatical error in students' narrative writing found out that the highest frequency of errors is omission errors (41.51%), the second highest frequency is error of misformation (35.50%), the next highest frequency is error of addition (21.74%), and disordering errors come as the lowest frequency (1.3%). Another research conducted by Fitriyah, et. al. (2007) discovered "... the errors can be categorized into three main types, i.e., interlingual errors of inference from the native language, intralingual errors within the target language, and inaccuracies in measuring and appropriating to the sociolinguistic context of communication.

Acquiring the ability to write is different from acquiring the ability of speaking. As long as one is normal in the sense that he/she is not deaf and dumb and he/she is born and raised in a given language milieu, he/she will surely be able to speak the language. However, there is no guarantee for writing ability. Writing is one of the language skills that should be taught for and trained. This is not only true for the second language (SL), but it is also true for students' native language (NL). Let alone writing in foreign language (FL) such as English the difficulty becomes more complicated. Since "writing is not simply a matter of how to write new things down in a new code, but it is the ability to use structures, lexical items, and their conventional



representation in ordinary matter of fact of writing” (Omaggio, 1986 in Zainuddin, 2004). That is why River (1986) suggests, “Unless the students trained systematically, some will never reach a high standard in composition in the foreign language”.

What is meant by writing? Lots of definitions of writing have been given by the experts. Rivers (1968), for example, defines writing in different angles. If it is the act of putting down in conventional graphic form something which has been spoken, it is called *notation*. If the students are asked to discriminate various sounds, it is called *spelling*. If it involves students in grammatical exercises, the construction of simple dialogues, and uncomplicated translation exercises, it is called *writing practice*. When it refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way in accordance with the graphic conventions of the language, it is called *composition*. For Byrne (1984) writing is defined as the production of a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. Troyka (1987), defines writing as a way of communicating a message to a reader for a purpose. Hammond (1989), on the other hand, defines writing as a complex task which requires everything from getting your spelling right to making your voice distinctive enough to be heard.

Essay is one form of communicating a message from the writer to the reader. It is a piece of writing several paragraphs long instead of just one or two paragraphs (Oshima and Hogue, 1983). While for Reid (1982) an essay is a series of paragraphs about one subject. The shortest essay at least consists of three paragraphs: (1) introductory paragraph, (2) body (content) paragraph, and (3) concluding paragraph.

To give a clearer picture of the three paragraphs, Reid (1982 in Muth'im, 2009) elaborates the three divisions as follow.

*Introductory paragraph* functions to guide or lead the reader(s) to what is going to be discussed in the essay. Its function is to

introduce the topic or idea that is going to be written in the whole composition. It consists of two parts: general statement and thesis statement. The use of this general statement is meant to introduce the topic of the essay and to give background information on the topic. Thesis statement, on the other hand, states specific topic and lists major subtopics that will be discussed in the body of the essay. *Body (content) paragraph* functions to state a topic sentence that is directly related to the thesis, and to support that topic sentence. *Concluding paragraph* functions to end discussion in the composition. In it the writer tells the reader(s) that he has completed the essay. This is achieved either by writing a summary of the main points discussed in the body of the essay or by rewriting the thesis statement in different words.

Writing product is usually categorized into four types (1) narration, (2) description, (3) exposition, and (4) argumentation. *Narrative* writing is a kind of writing having intention to narrate events; *descriptive* writing is a kind of writing having intention to describe person, thing, or feeling; *expository* writing is a kind of writing having intention to explain or clarify something; and *argumentative* writing is a kind of writing having intention to persuade other people to do or not to do something by the strength of the writer's argument.

At present, some teachers of writing shift their focus to the genres of writing. Genre in accordance with Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (1995) is "a particular style or type, especially of works of art or literature". According to Widiati (1997) the genres of writing that EFL students should learn, practice and master among others are "jokes, letters to editor, job applications, whether reports, and interviews". Brown (2004), on the other hand, categorizes the genres of writing into (1) academic writing, (2) job-related writing, and (3) personal

writing. Argumentative writing usually belongs to academic genre.

Comparison is a method of development that basically compares (show likeness) of two persons, places, and things that are usually considered different are alike in some ways. The opposite is true of contrast: the essay is written to show how persons, places, and things that are often considered very much alike are different in some ways.

There are two general ways to organize a comparison-contrast essay. The first is by discussing anything related to one subject point by point until it is exhausted, then followed by discussing the other one point by point until it is also exhausted. The second is by discussing the two subjects alternatively. For example, first the writer discusses one thing, and then he discusses the other thing. This is done until all the similarities or differences of the two are discussed thoroughly.

Based on the above discussion, this study is aimed at answering two questions. They are (1) how is the ability of the EFL students in writing argumentative essay using comparison-contrast method of development, (2) what writing problems do the EFL students have in writing English?

## **Method of Research**

The subjects of this study were the Mandiri class students of English Department of Teacher Training and Education Lambung Mangkurat University Banjarmasin who were taking Writing IV course. The number of students taking this course was 14 students and they all became the subjects of this study.

This course has 4 credit-semester units (SKS) with two meetings each week. There are two competencies that should be

developed in this course (1) the understanding of the essence of an essay, and (2) the ability to write different kinds of essays.

The instrument to get the data was writing test. The subjects were asked to write two argumentative essays. One essay should be developed by using comparison and the other one should be developed by contrast method of development. Then the essays were then analyzed by using ESL Composition Profile proposed by Jacobs, et al., (1981). This profile analyzes writing task on five components of writing. They are (1) content, (2) organization (3) vocabulary, (4) language use, and (5) mechanics. The detail range of score of each component and their criteria can be seen in appendix 3.

The total number of the five aspects is used to show the ability of students in writing. To find problems of writing argumentative essay using comparison-contrast development method, the researcher describes the errors made in each aspect by referring to the guidelines of analytic model of scoring. This score is then changed into score 10 – 100. The formula used is:

$$\text{Final Score} = \frac{\text{Obtained score}}{\text{Maximum score}} \times 100$$

## Results

The analysis of the writing assignments of the students on argumentative essays developed by using comparison and contrast methods can be read in the following tables.

Table 1  
The Result of writing on comparison and contrast

Subjects	Student's Identity	Comparison	Contrast
Student 1	A1B207200	71	72
Student 2	A1B207202	56	73
Student 3	A1B207219	74	76
Student 4	A1B206276	70	62
Student 5	A1B206297	65	57
Student 6	A1B207223	84	84
Student 7	A1B207208	79	72
Student 8	A1B207211	83	69
Student 9	A1B207206	84	71
Student 10	A1B207218	63	68
Student 11	A1B207210	84	75
Student 12	A1B207259	72	71
Student 13	A1B207217	77	69
Student 14	A1B207312	54	63
		1016, M = 72.57	982, M = 70.14

From the table above the result of the ability of the students in writing essay developed by using comparison and contrast method of development can be summarized as follows:

Table 2  
Summary of the ability of students in writing essay

Score	Comparison	%	Contrast	%
≥ 80	4	28.57	1	7.14
75 - 9,9	2	14.29	2	14.29
70 - 4,9	4	28.57	5	35.71
65 - 69,9	1	7.14	3	21.43
60 - 64,9	1	7.14	2	14.29
55 - 59,9	1	7.14	1	7.14
50 - 54,9	1	7.14	0	0.00
< 50	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	14	100.00	14	100.00

Based on table 2 above it is found out that the ability of the students in writing essay by using comparison and contrast method of development are: 4 students (28.57%) of the subjects

got score 80 or more for comparison and 1 student (7.14%) for contrast; 2 students (14.29%) got score between 75 - 79.9 for comparison and 2 students (14.29%) for contrast; there were 4 students (28.57%) who got score between 70 - 74.9 for comparison and 5 students (35.71%) for contrast; there was 1 student (7.14%) who got score between 65 - 69.9 for comparison and 3 students (21.43%) for contrast; there was 1 student (7.14%) who got score between 60 - 64.9 for comparison and 2 students (14.28%) for contrast; there was 1 student (7.14%) who got score between 55 - 59.9 for comparison and 1 student (7.14%) for contrast. Finally, there was 1 student (7.14%) who got score between 50 - 54.9 for comparison, but none for contrast.

The table also reveals that the mean score of essays developed by the method of comparison is different from the mean score of essays developed by contrast method. The mean score of the first essay is 72.57 and the mean score of the second essay is 70.14.

From the analysis on students writing on the components of writing it is discovered that most of the students had problems on them. The detail problems of each component of writing can be seen in the following tables.

Table 3  
The Ability of Students in Content

Score	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
30 - 27	Excellent to Very good	3	21.42
26 - 22	Good to average	7	50.00
21 - 17	Fair to poor	2	14.29
16 - 13	Very poor	2	14.29
	Total	14	100.00

From table 3 above it is found out that 3 students (21.42%) of students were categorized as excellent to very good in content; 7 students (50.00%) were categorized as good to average; 2

students (14.29%) were categorized as fair to poor; and 2 students (14.29%) were categorized as very poor in it.

Table 4  
The Ability of Students on Organization

Score	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 18	Excellent to Very good	0	0.00
17 - 14	Good to average	9	64.29
13 - 10	Fair to poor	5	35.71
9 - 7	Very poor	0	0.00
	Total	14	100.00

From table 4 above it is found out that there was no student (0.00%) was categorized as excellent to very good in organization; 9 students (64.29%) were categorized as good to average; 2 students (14.29%) were categorized as fair to poor; and 5 students (35.71%) were categorized as fair to poor, and there was none categorized as very poor in it.

Table 5  
The Ability of Students on Vocabulary

Score	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 18	Excellent to Very good	7	50.00
17 - 14	Good to average	7	50.00
13 - 10	Fair to poor	0	0.00
9 - 7	Very poor	0	0.00
	Total	14	100.00

From table 5 above it is found out that 7 students (50.00%) of students were categorized as excellent to very good in vocabulary; 7 students (50.00%) were categorized as good to average; and there was no one categorized as either fair to poor or very poor.

Table 6  
The Ability of Students on Language Use

Score	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
25 - 22	Excellent to Very good	0	0.00
21 - 18	Good to average	6	42.86
17 - 11	Fair to poor	8	57.14
10 - 5	Very poor	0	0.00
	Total	14	

From table 6 above it is found out that there is none (0.00%) of students were categorized as excellent to very good in language use; 6 students (42.86%) were categorized as good to average; 8 students (57.14%) were categorized as fair to poor; and none of students (14.29%) were categorized as very poor in it.

Table 7  
The Ability of Students on Mechanics

Score	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
5	Excellent to Very good	6	42.86
4	Good to average	7	50.00
3	Fair to poor	1	7.14
2	Very poor	0	0.00
	Total	14	100.00

From table 7 above it is found out that 6 students (42.86%) of students were categorized as excellent to very good in mechanics; 7 students (50.00%) were categorized as good to average; 1 student (7.14%) was categorized as fair to poor; and none of the students (14.29%) was categorized as very poor in it.



## Discussion

According to the Academic Regulation of Lambung Mangkurat University score 80 or above is equal with A and is categorized as *excellent*; score between 75 - 79.9 is equal with B+ and is categorized as *very good*; score between 70 - 74.9 is equal with B and is categorized as *good*; score between 65 - 69.9 is equal with C+ and is categorized as *fair*; score between 60 - 64.9 is equal with C and is categorized as *average*; score between 55 - 59.9 is equal with D+ and is categorized as *bad*; score between 50 - 54.9 is equal with D and is categorized as *very bad*, and finally score under 50 is equal with E and is categorized as *failure* or *the worst*.

Based on that regulation the result of students writing can be claimed as successful in the sense that among 14 students involved in the study, there were only 2 students (14.29%) who failed to reach the passing grade. The rests, as many as 12 students (85.71%) were successful in reaching the passing grade. Even, as many as 4 students got score 80 or more. This means that there were 4 students got A.

However, seen from the mastery of the course or lesson, the result of the mastery of components of writing does not seem to be satisfying. This is because of the policy of the institution in giving score to students achievement is based on the percentage of mastery. For example, if one student masters 80% of the course materials he or she has the right to get A. If a student masters 75% up to 79.9% of the learning materials, he or she has the right to get B+. If a student masters 70% up to 74.9% of the instructional materials he or she has the right to get B. If a student masters 65% up to 69.9% of the course materials he or she has the right to get C+. And if a student masters 60% up to 64.9% of the competence he or she has the right to get C, the minimal score of passing grade.

In addition, the mean scores of the two kinds of writing show 72.57 and 70.12 respectively. Why the mean score in comparison essay is higher than in contrast essay might be related to the topics they were assigned to write. In comparison essay, the students were asked to compare flower and girl for male students, and to compare bee and boy for female students. This topic seemed to interest students very much. For contrast essay they were asked to contrast English Department where they are studying now and the English Department of other institutions they now. The table also uncovers that in general the students were in good level (B).

The percentage of mastery enables the students not to have mastered the course materials completely 100%. This means that there are some percentages of instructional materials that are not mastered by the students yet. From the analysis of the results of students writing, it is discovered that the problems the students still had were in the aspects of (1) content, (2) organization, and (3) language use.

In the aspect of content, there were only 3 students (21.42%) who fulfilled the requirements of good essay in term of knowledgeable, substantive, thorough development of thesis, and relevant to assigned topic. Most of them, i.e., 7 students (50.00%) were categorized as good to average. The characteristics of these students are (1) they have some knowledge of the topic, some adequate range, have limited development of the thesis, their writing is mostly relevant to assigned topic, but lacks detail. Two students (14.29%) were categorized as fair to poor. The weaknesses of these students were (1) they had limited knowledge of the topic they were assigned to write, (2) the substance of their writing was little discussed, and (3) the topic was developed inadequately. The same number of students were categorized as very poor. The characteristics of the writing they produced are (1) they did not show their knowledge of the topic

they were discussing, (2) the writing they produced did not show the substance of the topic, and (3) the writing was not pertinent to the topic.

In term of organization, there was no student meeting the requirements of a good organization of an essay, in which (1) the expressions of ideas should be fluent, (2) the ideas should be clearly stated and supported, (3) the organization of ideas is well organized, (4) the sequence of ideas should be logical, and (5) the ideas presented should be cohesive.

The largest number of students, i.e., 9 students (64.29) were categorized as good to average. The problems of the students were indicated by (1) the writing was somewhat choppy, (2) the organization of writing was organized loosely though the main ideas still stood out, (3) the ideas were supported limitedly, and (4) the sequence of ideas was logical but incomplete.

Some students, i.e., 5 persons (35.71%) were categorized as fair to poor. The main problems of these students are (1) they could not express their ideas fluently, (2) the ideas they wrote were confusing and disconnected, and (3) the sequence and the development of ideas were organized less logically. Fortunately, there was none belonged to very poor group.

In term of vocabulary, most of the students did not seem to have significant problem. This is indicated by the data that 7 students (50.00%) reached the criteria of excellent to very good and 7 other students (50.00%) reached the criteria of good to average. This can be understood. The students involved in this study were the students who were in semester 5. They might have read a lot and their repertoire of English vocabulary have increased significantly since first semester. Some of the characteristics of the writing belonging to the first category are (1) they showed sophisticated range of vocabulary, (2) the choice and usage of word/phrase was effectively used, (3) the use of word showed the form of mastery, and (4) the register chosen

was appropriately used. While the characteristics of the second category are (1) they showed adequate range of vocabulary mastery, (2) though sometimes occasional errors in choosing words/idioms happened but these did not obscure the meaning.

In term of language use, none of the students could reach the criteria of excellent to very good. This category requires the students to be able to write effective complex construction, and to minimally make errors in agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns and preposition. In this component there were 6 students (42.86%) were categorized good to average. This means that the learners (1) were able to write effectively in simple construction, (2) when they wrote in complex construction minor problems were found, and (3) they made several errors in agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns and prepositions though these errors did not obscure the meaning. Mostly, i.e., 8 students (57.14%) fell into the category of fair to poor. This means that (1) they had major problems either in simple or complex construction, (2) they made frequent errors in negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions, fragment sentences, run-ons sentences, and deletion. Consequently, the meaning was obscured or confusing. Luckily, none of the students belong to very poor category. This category is indicated by the following (1) virtually no mastery of sentence construction rule, (2) their writing is dominated by errors, and as the consequence, (3) the writing does not communicate what the writer wants to accomplish.

In term of mechanics, the study shows that the students did not have significant problems either. Six students (42.86%) belonged to excellent to very good category. These students (1) could demonstrate their mastery of writing convention such punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing. Seven students (50.00%) belonged to good to average criteria. This

group of students occasionally made errors in the above points but they did not obscure the meaning. One student belonged to fair to poor criteria. This student made errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing frequently, and their handwriting was poor so that the meaning was obscured. Luckily, there was none belonging to very poor category which is characterized by (1) there is no mastery of writing convention, (2) the writing is dominated by errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing - in addition to poor handwriting.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the finding and the discussion above, it can be concluded that:

- 1) In general, the ability of EFL students in writing argumentative essay developed by comparison-contrast method of development is satisfying in the sense that among 14 students involved in the study 12 students (85.71%) ranging from excellent to average category could reach the passing grade (60 or more) stipulated by the Institution.
- 2) However, seen from the mastery of the five components of writing, that is, content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics the students still had problems, especially in content, in organization, and in language use. Among these three problems, the most serious problems they had were in organization and language use. None of them reached the level of excellent to very good in these two categories.

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# **The Use of English Variations as a Means of Communication and Interaction in Classroom**

## **English in Indonesia**

English is not the first language (L1) for Indonesians. It is not the second language (L2) either for them. Rather, it is a foreign language (FL). If English were L1 for the students, this language must have been used as the medium of communication and interaction among family members at home and among society members in daily life. Apparently, it is not. The language used as the medium of communication and interaction among family members at home and in daily life is student' vernaculars. So, the first language (L1) of Indonesian people is their local languages, such as Banjarese for Banjarese learners and Javanese for Javanese learners. If English were L2, it would have been used as a medium of instruction in schools and it would have been used as a medium of communication in formal events. In reality, it is not either. The language used as the medium of instruction for the whole subject matters in schools and in formal events is Indonesian language, not English. This means that there is no mathematics teacher teaches mathematics using English; there is no biology teacher teaches biology using English; there is no social science teacher teaches social science using English; and there is no official meeting in government offices held in English. So, the second language (L2) of Indonesian learners is Indonesian language.

Are the two kinds of languages (L2 and FL) essentially different? For some linguists, L2 and FL have the same meaning, that is, the language acquired and learned after one's native

language (L1). For some others, however, they are different. This can be seen from what Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1987) defines.

In North American linguistics usage, “foreign language” and “second language” are often used to mean the same in this sense. In British usage, a distinction is often made between foreign language and second language. (a) a foreign language is a language which is taught but it is not used as a medium of instruction in schools nor as a language of communication within a country (e.g., in government, business, or industry). English is described as a foreign language in France, Japan, China, etc. (b) a second language is a language which is not a native language in a country but which is widely used as a medium of communication (e.g., in education and in government) and which is usually used alongside another language or languages. English is described as a second language in countries such as Fiji, Singapore, and Nigeria”. (Richards et al. (1987).

Where and when then is English used in FL context? The only place that English might be used most is in classroom. I say ‘might be’ because in reality there are still many English teachers and learners use Indonesian language, and even local language or vernacular as the medium of instruction, let alone outside class. Outside class, there might be no one uses the language as his or her main means of communication and interaction. This implies that the person who is responsible most in providing English exposures to students in English is teacher English. Whatever variation the English he or she uses does not matter, it will be beneficial for the students. This paper discusses the following sub-topics: communication and interaction, Standard English and non-Standard English, teachers’ English, English for



communication and interaction in classroom, and learners' language.

### **Communication and Interaction**

The word 'communication' and 'interaction' in Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2003) are defined quite similarly. The purpose of communication is to share information with others by speaking, writing, moving one's body or using other signals. Whereas, interaction is intended to interact with (others) or react to (others). So, both in communication and interaction the communicants or the participants feel necessary to express various kinds of communication or interaction purposes. Finocchiaro (1989), in this case, at least lists six purposes: (1) personal purpose, i.e. to express one's emotions, needs, thoughts, desires, attitudes, etc., (2) interpersonal purpose, i.e. to maintain good social relations with individuals and groups – expressions of praise, sympathy, joy at another's success, enquiries about health, etc., (3) directive, i.e. to control the behavior of others through advice, warnings, requests, persuasion, discussion, etc., (4) referential, i.e. to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or in the culture, (5) metalinguistic, i.e. to talk about language, and (6) imaginative, i.e. to use language creatively in rhyming, composing poetry, etc. In short, we can say that communication and interaction is conducted because people want to share information with others by speaking, writing, moving one's body or using other signals.

### **Standard English and Non-Standard English**

In sharing information using English, the English used in communication and interaction is ideally Standard English. Though there is no agreement among linguists on what is meant

by Standard English, the definition given in Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics might be worth considering. Concerning this, Richards et al. (1987), in the same dictionary argue that this variety has the highest STATUS in a community or nation and which is usually based on the speech and writing of educated native speakers of the language. A standard variety is generally: (a) used in the news media and in literature, (b) described in dictionaries and grammars, and (c) taught in schools and taught in non-native speakers when they learn the language as a foreign language (p. 271). McArthur (2003:442, in Farrel and Martin 2009) identified the characteristics of standard variation of language as follow: (1) It is easiest to recognize in print because written conventions are similar world-wide. (2) It is usually by news presenters. (3) Its usage relates to the speaker's social class and education."

One of the important points of the above explanation is that most printed materials, especially books in the world are written in English. The proportion of books published all over the world are as the following: English (28%), Chinese (13.3%), German (11.8%), French (7.7%), Spanish (6.7%), Japanese (5.1%), Russian (4.7%), Portuguese (4.5%), Korean (4.4%), Italian (4.0%), Dutch (2.4%), Swedish (1.6%), and Other (5.8%). (Graddol, 1997). From the data it is clear then the number of books written and published in English is more than other books in written in other language, even in Chinese whose people is bigger than English people.

It is also important to note that there is difference between the two Standard English: American English (AE) and British English (BE). However, though they are slightly difference, both are still mutually comprehensible for the people coming from the countries and the people having their language orientation from the two countries. The areas of differences of the two kinds of Standard English cover: (a) spelling, (b) pronunciation, and

grammar and usage. (Darragh, 2010). Some of the samples of difference between the two kinds of Standard English are:

Areas of difference	American English (AE)	British English (BE)
Spelling	arbor, behavior, meter, theater	arbour, behaviour, metre, theatre
Pronunciation	<i>Fer-til, ste-ril</i>	<i>Fer-tail, ste-rail</i>
Grammar and Usage	Do you have some money? That was a real nice meal.	Have you some money? That was a really nice meal.

Standard English is mostly used by news presenters – radio news presenters or television news presenters. When learners listen to news presented in Voice of America (VOA) or British Broadcasting Company (BBC), for instance, they do not seem to have serious difficulty in understanding the news. This is because the pronunciation, the stress, the intonation, and the speed of speech the presenters use are not considered “strange” by the listeners. I have experience about this. Before I became a lecturer in my university, I worked for the Department of Public Work. One of my jobs was dealing with administrative affairs with the consultants who were all expatriates coming from: USA, United Kingdom, Italy, and China Taipei. All of the expatriates and I used English as the means of communication and interaction. From the communication and interaction with them I found out that understanding English used by the engineer from China Taipei was the most difficult one. Whereas, communicating and interacting with engineers from USA and UK were fairly easy. This might be because they are educated people who tend to use Standard English.

Standard English is also used by most of educated people. Understanding the English used by educated people seems to be easier too. Educated person tends to use Standard English. This might be based on the awareness that he or she will meet other

people from different countries with their different language and cultures background. By using Standard English it is assumed that other educated people coming from different language background and cultures will use the same variation of English that can be understood by anyone. I also have experience about this. One day, in a hotel lobby, in Seattle, I met a professor from Japan. He came to Seattle for an international conference on forestry and I came there for a short training on contextual teaching and learning (CTL). We then got involved in a conversation. We were delighted to have the conversation. What made us happy was a professor from Japan could understand an English teacher from Indonesia, and I could understand him fairly easy too.

### **Teachers' English**

As discussed earlier that most Indonesian English teachers are educated and trained in Indonesian colleges and universities by Indonesian lecturers, not in English speaking countries. As the result, the English they use is not Standard English, but their own English. Let me take my case. When I was in *madrasah tsanawiyah*, the same level of SMP, my English teacher was a Banjarese who had learned English from a native speaker of English in Saudi Arabia. Then, when I was in SMA, my English teacher was a Javanese who had got his MA in English in USA. Later, when I was in college, my English lecturers had more English language backgrounds. Some of them were educated in Indonesia and in UK; some others were educated in Indonesia and USA. Still, some others were educated in Indonesia and Australia, or New Zealand. The rests, were educated just in Indonesia. That is why when one of my students asked what kind of English I used, I got confused. I myself had never studied in one of English-speaking countries. My English, my pronunciation, my accent, my choice of words, my style of

speaking and writing, and the like are influenced by so many people. That is why I cannot claim whether my English is BE or AE. To be safe, I just call this variation of English as my own variation: Teacher's English.

This does not matter. We are not the only English teachers that might use non-Standard English. There are many more users of non-Standard English in the world especially those who belong to the Outer-Circle and Expanding Circle countries. Even, non-Standard English users outnumber the users of Standard English who mostly live in Inner Circle countries. Power (2005, in Sasaki et al. 2006) estimates non-native English speakers now outnumber native ones 3 to 1. Coskun (2010) states that the increase in the number of non-native English speakers in the world has led to the emergence of so many different varieties of English and has influenced some of the important issues related to English language teaching (ELT).

The most important thing is that an English teacher should keep on giving comprehensible input for his or her students. We as English teachers should believe that "all human beings can acquire additional languages..." In his other book (Krashen, 1989) claim that all human beings acquire language in the same way: not by learning grammar rules or memorizing vocabulary, but by understanding messages encoded in the language" (p. 70). From these two arguments it is clear then that the success and of the learners in acquiring target language depends very much on the quantity as well as the quality of exposures they get from the teacher.

### **English for Communication and Interaction in Classroom**

In the context of classroom communication and interaction, using Standard English might not be possible for most Indonesian English teachers. This is because the majority of

English teachers of Indonesia, as discussed earlier, are not educated and trained in English speaking countries such as USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and the like. The majority of Indonesian English teachers are educated and trained in local colleges and universities by Indonesian English teachers. It is no wonder then that their English is very much influenced by Indonesian language and Indonesian culture.

The inability of using Standard English may not discourage English teachers to keep on using English as the medium of instruction in class. In a foreign language context, like Indonesia, the role of teachers in helping students to develop and increase their skills and competences in English language is very crucial. This is based on the belief that “listening comprehension and reading are of primary importance in the language program, and that the ability to speak (or write) fluently in a second language will come on its own with time. Speaking fluency is thus not “taught” directly; rather, speaking ability “emerges” after the acquirer has built up competence through comprehension input” (Krashen and Terrel, 1984:32).

What have been described above become more important for beginning and intermediate level of learners. Beginning level students, in accordance with Brown (2001) are the students who have little or no prior knowledge of the target language. This is because of the phonological system, the orthographical system, the syntactical system, the lexical system, and the discourse system of English are far from their repertoire of language experience. Whereas intermediate level is described as students who have progressed beyond novice stages to an ability to sustain basic, communicative tasks, to establish some minimal fluency, to deal with a few unrehearsed situations, to self-correct on occasion, to use a few compensatory strategies, and generally to “get along” in the language beyond mere survival.

To help the learners acquire the language, the role of English teacher in providing comprehensible input is very important. What is meant by comprehensible input here is a “message the students understand” (Kristen 1989:25). There are some strategies that an English teacher can do in the effort of providing comprehensible input. One of the strategies is as suggested by Krashen (1984), that is, by using caretaker speech. Caretaker speech, in accordance with Richards et al. (1987) is a kind of simplified speech which is used when talking to children. The simplification is indicated by (a) shorter utterances than speech to other adults, (b) grammatically simple utterance, (c) few abstract or difficult words, with a lot of repetition, and (d) clearer pronunciation, sometimes with exaggerated INTONATION patterns.

There are some speeches that belong to caretaker speech. One of them is *foreigner talk*. Foreigner talk, in accordance with Richards, et al. (1987) is the type of speech often used by native speakers of a language when speaking to foreigners who are not proficient in the language. Some of the characteristics of foreigner talk are:

- (a) it is slower and louder than normal speech, often with exaggerated pronunciation
- (b) it uses simpler vocabulary and grammar. For example, articles, function words, and INFLECTIONS may be omitted, and complex verb forms are replaced by simpler ones
- (c) topics are sometimes repeated or moved to the front of sentences, for example: *Your bag? Where you leave your bag?*

The other form that also belongs to caretaker speech is teacher talk. This variety of talk is mostly used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching. In trying to communicate with learners, teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of FOREIGNER TALK and other

simplified styles of speech addressed to language learners. (p. 290).

### **Learners' Language**

In addition to the comprehensible input provided by the teacher in the form of teacher talk or foreigner talk, the English used by the learners in communication and interaction may also become another source of comprehensible input. Learners' language is sometimes called interlanguage. Richards et al. (1987:146), explain interlanguage as follows:

The type of language produced by second- and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. In language learning, the learners' errors are caused by several different processes. These include: (a) borrowing patterns from the mother tongue (language transfer), (b) extending patterns from the target language, e.g., by analogy (overgeneralization), (c) expressing meanings using the words and grammar which are already known (communication strategy).

Krashen argues that interlanguage is another form of simple input available to the second language acquirers is the speech of other second language acquirers. (Krashen, 2004:35). That is why in addition to keep on motivating themselves to always use English in classroom, teachers at the same time should encourage the students to keep on using English, though it is not like adult language. By this, an "atmosphere of English" may arise among classroom members: teacher and students.

### **Conclusion**

To end our discussion, I would like to remind English teachers here and all over Indonesia that we do not teach English in an English-speaking country. Our students do not learn English in an English-speaking country either. So, it is our responsibility to provide as many as comprehensible inputs for



our students so that they will get enough experience in English. Also, it is our responsibility to always encourage our students to use English, at least in classroom.

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# Understanding and Responding to the Change of Curriculum in the Context of Indonesian Education

## Introduction

The era of the implementation of SBC is ended by the implementation of the new curriculum, called the 2013 curriculum. As usual, when a new curriculum is launched reactions from various groups and sub-groups of community such as: education observers, non-government organizations (NGOs), politicians, parents, etc., arise. Unfortunately, the reactions seem to be mostly negative. They perceive that every time a new Minister of National Education and Culture commences his or her official assignments, there is a tendency to change or replace the curriculum being used. They also accuse that the reason of replacing the SBC with the 2013 curriculum is not clear. Other negative reaction is that they are doubtful of teachers' readiness to implement the new curriculum. Yet, the change of curriculum does not happen only this time. Before SBC was implemented some curricular such as the 1968 curriculum, the 1975 curriculum, the 1984 curriculum, the 1994 curriculum, and the 2004 curriculum had already been implemented in Indonesia. The reasons put forwarded by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia to replace the SBC with the 2013 curriculum are: the current global challenges, required competencies, current negative phenomena especially among young people, and discouraging perceptions among Indonesians regarding education (quoted by Hamied, 2014).

In response to the implementation of this new curriculum, it is suggested for all Indonesian teachers of all school subjects to understand the essence of curriculum in general and especially to understand the 2013 curriculum profoundly and comprehensively, and to continuously improve and maintain their professionalism as teachers.

### **Understanding the Essence of Curriculum**

Understanding the essence of curriculum is the first thing a teacher should to enable him or her to respond to the change of curriculum proportionally and professionally. Different experts define curriculum in different way. Richards (2001) defines curriculum as something that includes the processes that are used to determine the needs of a group of learners, to develop aims or objectives for a program to address those needs, to determine appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and teaching materials, and to carry out an evaluation of the language program that results from these processes. Finocchiaro (1989, p.205) defined curriculum as “the knowledge, information, skills, activities, materials, etc. which are included in the teaching of any subject”. Doll (in Prabawa and Ariatmi, 2002, p.78), defines curriculum as “... all the experiences which are offered to learners under the out spaces or direction on the school.

From the above definitions it can be concluded then that a curriculum essentially contains three basic components, namely, (a) the educational aim of the program (as the ends), (b) the content, teaching procedures and learning experiences which will be needed to achieve this objective (as the means), and (c) some instruments for assessing whether the educational ends have been achieved or not (as the assessment).

### **(a) Educational Objectives**

According to the Act No. 20 of 2003 regarding National System of Education of Indonesia, all education programs and activities are addressed for the sake of the attainment and realization of national objectives in the field of education. The objectives of national education, according to the act, are to develop the potentials of the students to become faithful and devoted human beings to God the Almighty, to have respectful morality, to be healthy, to be well-informed, to be skilful, to be creative, to be self-reliance, and to become democratic and responsible citizens.

In the system of Indonesian education, the national objectives are then hierarchically translated by the institutions that run program of education into institutional objectives, curricular objectives, and instructional objectives.

Each institution of education has its own curriculum with its own objectives. The curriculum of institution that runs a program of educating students to become lawyer or attorney is different from the curriculum of institution that runs a program of educating students to become doctor or nurse, so is the curriculum of institution that runs a program of educating students to become teacher is also different from the institution that runs a program of educating students to become engineer.

Within an institution of education, a number of subject-matters are taught for the students, such as national ideology, religion, Indonesian language, English language, sport, and so forth. English, for instance, is taught for Junior High School (JHS) students as well as Senior High School (SHS) students. Based on English curriculum of the 2004, the objective of teaching and learning English in JHS is to help the students reach a competency standard to communicate fluently and accurately in spoken or written English which is appropriate to its social context, whereas the objective of teaching English for SHS is to

help the students reach a competency standard to communicate fluently and accurately in spoken or written English by using appropriate modes of language.

Instructional objective is the last objective of education in the hierarchy. It is the objective which will be reached in and within one session of teaching and learning activities. In SBC this instructional objective is the attainment of what is called Competency Standard (CS) and Basic Competency (BC). Based on CS/BC, a teacher chooses the suitable instructional materials, uses the appropriate procedures of teaching and learning, and applies the right means of assessment.

## **Content, Teaching Procedures and Learning Experiences**

### ***Content***

The other important aspect of a curriculum that a teacher is supposed to understand is the content of the teaching materials. Understanding the content teaching materials implies that a teacher knows how teaching materials are selected, sequenced, and justified (Nunan, 2003). It is this selection, sequence, and justification of teaching materials which is called syllabus. Syllabus, in accordance with Krahnkle, “specifies the content of the lessons used to move the learners toward the goals” (Krahnkle, 1987:2). To determine the content of teaching materials, a number of questions may be asked as a guideline. For instance, “what kind of instructional material that is suitable with the objective”; “what kind of instructional material which is suitable with the level of students”; “what kind of instructional material that is suitable with certain skill of language”, or “what kind of instructional material which is suitable with certain function of language”.

The answers to those questions will lead to the kind of syllabus that will be used. Krahnkle categorized the kinds of language syllabus into six, namely: (1) structural (formal)

syllabus, (2) notional/functional syllabus, (3) situational syllabus, (4) skill-based syllabus, (5) task-based syllabus, and (6) content-based syllabus (Krahnkle, 1987). The six kinds of syllabus are then elaborated as follows.

*Structural (formal) syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content of language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures, usually grammatical, of the language being taught. *Notional/functional syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content of the language teaching is a collection of the functions that are performed when language is used, or the notions that language is used to express. *Situational syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content of language teaching is a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. *Skill based-syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content of the language teaching is a collection of specific abilities that may play a part in using language. *Task-based syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students want or need to perform with the language they are learning. *Content-based syllabus* is a syllabus in which the content or information is taught using the language the students are also learning (Krahnkle, 1987). So, in order to be able to choose the right and appropriate instructional material which is suitable with instructional objective, the ability to select and to grade the instructional material properly is a must. If the teacher does not have the ability, it is possible that instructional material chosen is not suitable with instructional objective.

### ***Teaching Procedures***

Understanding the teaching procedure is another important component of understanding a curriculum. In my opinion, teaching procedures are closely related with the approach, the method and the technique used by a teacher in fulfilling his or her job as a teacher. As it is understood that “an approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the

nature of language teaching and learning”, whereas “a method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material” and “a technique is a particular trick, strategem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective” (Anthony in Richards and Rodgers, 1986:15). Of the approaches, methods, and techniques which are very famous among English teachers are: Natural Approach (NA), Direct Method (DM), Audio-lingual Method (ALM), Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Total Physical Response (TPR).

### *Learning Experience*

This is related with what the learning experience the students should get involved in and how it is internalized. A number of questions may be helpful, for example, “Is the learning experience developed by involving the students in individual tasks, in pair, in group, or in unison?”; “Is learning experience developed by involving students in class activity or by involving students through outside activity?”; “Is learning experience developed through teacher centered instruction or is learning experience developed through students-centered activity?”. All these questions are useful in determining what kind of learning experience to be developed and how the learning experience can be developed. Of course, deciding a suitable learning experience for the students is not easy. Adequate knowledge and skill are needed by the teacher. Otherwise, the learning experience he or she offers may not reach its goal, that is, the objective of an instruction.

Though curriculum 2013, in accordance with Agustien, is different from the previous curriculum, the SBC, it still “adopts a Genre Based-Approach (GBA) which aims to develop the ability to communicate in both spoken and written language” (Agustien, 2014:14). To realize this objective, she recommends taking into account the five cycles proposed by Derewianka: (1)



building knowledge of the topic, (2) learning about the text type, (3) guided practice in using the text type, (4) independent use of the text type, and (5) reflecting on the text type and its use.

For the purpose of Indonesian teacher training, the cycles proposed by Derewianka above are simplified into four cycles, namely, building knowledge of the field (BKoF), modelling of the text (MoT), joint construction of the text (JCoT), and individual construction of the text (ICoT). In BKoF a teacher digs up his or her students' background knowledge about the text especially about its generic structure and its lexico-grammar. This is important because it is claimed that the students who have background knowledge of the unit or the topic taught will learn better than the students who do not have background knowledge (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

In MoT phase, the students either in pair or in group discuss the text they have and match the generic structure and the lexico-grammar of the text with the text discussed earlier. Every pair or every group, through the pair or the group representative presents the result of the discussion of his/her pair/group. Other pairs or other groups give their opinion to the presentation (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

Based on the model given by the teacher and pairs or groups presentation, the next step the students should do is making their own text in pair or in group (JCoT). The text they produce in pair or in group is then presented in front of the class. The students then discuss and assess the text whether it meets the characteristics of the text in term of its generic structure and in terms of its lexico-grammar by referring to the model they previously had (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

The last step the students should do is to create their own text (ICoT). This task is intended to check whether the knowledge and experience they have before is successfully

understood, whether the model shown and discussed give clear picture about the concept and whether the text produced by the pairs and the groups in class inspire him/her to create his/her own text individually. In other words, whether the learning experience they have had can be internalized by each student. The text one student produce is then presented and discussed in the class to get feedback from other students and the teacher (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2005).

### **Means for assessing educational objectives**

The other component of a curriculum a teacher should understand is knowing how to assess students learning. Assessment is a broad term that encompasses the general process of collecting, synthesizing and interpreting formal and informal data which provide comprehensive information about individual or group achievement over time. Assessment may be performed through testing and it may also be performed through non-testing technique such as observation of performance, portfolios, or interviews (Miller, 2008).

Testing is a formal assessment instrument used to judge students' cognitive ability in an academic discipline as well as to gather quantitative information about students' psychomotor performance and affective characteristics. There are two different categories of test items used in educational settings: objective and subjective. Objective items require students to select the correct response from two or more choices, whereas subjective test items require students to construct their own responses to test questions or statements rather than selecting from among several possible answers (Miller, 2008). Either one which is chosen, it should meet two conditions: valid and reliable. Harmer (2003) claims that a test is valid if it tests what it is supposed to test, and it is reliable if the result is consistent.

Whatever assessment is used the goal remains the same, that is, it is intended to (1) evaluate and improve student learning, (2) identify student strength and weaknesses, (3) assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy, (4) evaluate and improve the effectiveness of curriculum programs, (5) evaluate and improve teaching effectiveness, and (6) communicate with parents and guardians and involve them in their children's learning (Kellough, 1993, p.319-320).

### **Responding to the Change of Curriculum**

In order to be able to respond to the change of curriculum properly and appropriately, one thing that a teacher should keep in mind is: continuously developing and maintaining his or her professionalism. Without this awareness, it is quite hard to respond to the change of curriculum that is happening in Indonesian education recently properly and appropriately.

### **Teachers' Professionalism**

Teaching profession is not just a job. That is why teaching profession, like other professions such as doctor, engineer, painter, sculptor, and the like, cannot and may not be done by anyone whose bases are just spirit and readiness to be teacher, let alone if the reason is because of there is no other job vacancy available. In short it can be said that teaching profession should be done by someone who is specially trained or someone with a particular skill because it involves a high level of education. It is no wonder then that this kind of person is called a professional.

To become a professional teacher, for instance, one must undergo an education that prepares and equips him or her for that purpose. A professional teacher, in accordance with Hamalik should meet a number of conditions. He or she should master the principles of education, be able to plan teaching and learning program, be able to manage classroom interaction, master various kinds of teaching method, be able to assess

students' achievement objectively, be familiar with the function and program of counselling service at school, be familiar with school administration management, and be able to comprehend and translate the results of research in the field of education for the purpose of teaching improvement (Hamalik, 2004).

Why should a professional teacher master the principles of education? Though the principles of education for different levels of education applied in different regime and different era might not be same, mastering the principles of education is a must for a professional teacher. This is because they lay the philosophy of education, the philosophy of teaching and the philosophy of learning. By understanding the principles of education well, teachers will be able to do their profession professionally.

Why should a professional teacher be able to plan teaching and learning program? In other words, why should a professional teacher understand and be able to translate curriculum into a practical program of education well. A curriculum should become a guide line for a teacher in planning his or her teaching and learning program because it contains the ENDS of educational purpose of the programme, the MEANS to help students achieve the ends in the form of content, teaching procedures and learning experiences, and ASSESSMENTS, i.e., some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved (Richards et al. (1987).

Why should a professional teacher understand and be able to translate a curriculum, whatever the curriculum is, into a practical program is a must for a teacher. For example, present teachers who apply the SBC are requested to understand and be able to translate the objective(s) of the teaching and learning program nationally stated by our government in the form of CS and BC into indicators of learning and learning objectives. Based on these indicators of learning and learning objectives, the

teachers will then choose and select suitable instructional material, approach, method, and techniques which are believed to enable them to help their students to reach the objectives of teaching and learning. To check whether the instructional material chosen, the approach, the method, and the technique(s) implemented result in the maximum attainment of objective(s) of the teaching and learning program, a suitable means of assessment should be provided.

Why should a professional teacher be able to manage classroom interaction? As it is known that a classroom consists of a number of students whose personal backgrounds such as their learning capabilities, learning styles, and characters are never the same? In learning styles, for instance, there are at least three categories of learners: reception, construction, and co-construction (Watkins, et al., 2007). The first category of learners is concerned with quantity, facts and skills. This model of learning assumes that transmission of knowledge is from an external source (e.g., teacher). Emotional and social aspects are not attended to. In this view learning means being taught. The second category of students is those who are concerned with the learner's construction of meaning through discussion, open-ended learning, and making connection. Learning in accordance with this view is individual sense-making. The third category of students is those who are concerned with the learner's construction of meaning through interaction and collaboration with others, especially through dialogue. In this view, learning is understood as building knowledge with others. That is why a teacher should be professional in managing these differences, so that he will be able to help his students reach the objective(s) of teaching and learning program maximally. The purpose of managing classroom is to enable the maximum attainment of learning achievement. Students are unique with their own characteristics, learning capabilities, learning styles, etc.

Why should a professional teacher master various kinds of teaching method. Method in accordance with Richards and Rodgers (1986) is theoretically related to an approach, is organizationally determined by design, and is practically realized in procedure. However, as it is also known that different subject matter has its own characteristics. The method of teaching English, for example, is different from the method of teaching Mathematics or Physics. That is why an English teacher must be familiar with and be able to implement various methods of teaching English as mentioned earlier. More importantly, an English teacher, in addition to be familiar with those methods, should also know the characteristics of each of the methods and should know when they are implemented so that the objectives of learning can be achieved maximally.

Why should a professional teacher be able to assess students' learning achievement? Having this ability is as important as having the ability of choosing and selecting the appropriate instructional material, the implementation of suitable method, technique, strategies of teaching and the like. To check whether the objective(s) of teaching and learning using the chosen and selected instructional material, and the method, the techniques, the strategies implemented help students to reach the objective(s) of teaching and learning program, a right assessment should be provided. The assessment may take different form: test and non-test. In general, however, an assessment is administered to fulfil various purposes: to evaluate and improve student learning, to identify student strengths and weaknesses, to assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy, to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of curriculum programs, to evaluate and improve teaching effectiveness, and to communicate with parents and guardians and involve them in their children's learning (Kellough, et al., 1993). All the aspects should be assessed objectively. This means

that the result of assessment should really describe what students learn.

For a language teacher, in addition to have the above characteristics, he or she should also meet other conditions stipulated for a good language teacher. According to Brown, a good English teacher should be in good in four areas: technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities (Brown, 2007). These four characteristics are then elaborated as the following.

*Technical knowledge* requires an English language teacher to understand the linguistic systems of English phonology, grammar, and discourse; comprehensively grasp basic principles of language learning and teaching; have fluent competence in speaking, writing, listening, and reading English; know through experience what it is like to learn a foreign language; understand the close connection between language and culture, and keep up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance (Brown, 2007).

*Pedagogical skills* necessitate a language teacher to have a well-thought-out, be informed approach to language reading; understand and use a wide variety of techniques; efficiently design and execute lesson plans; monitor lessons as they unfold and make effective mid-lesson alterations; effectively perceive students' linguistic needs; give optimal feedback to students, stimulate interaction, cooperation, and teamwork in the classroom; use appropriate principles of classroom management; use effective, clear presentation skills; creatively adapt textbook material and other audio, visual, and mechanical aids; innovatively create brand-new materials when needed; and use interactive, intrinsically motivating techniques to create effective tests (Brown, 2007).

*Interpersonal skills* require a language teacher to be aware of cross-cultural differences and is sensitive to students' cultural

traditions; enjoy people, show enthusiasm, warmth, rapport, and appropriate humor; value the opinions and abilities of students; be patient in working with students of lesser ability; offer challenges to students of exceptionally high ability; cooperate harmoniously and candidly with colleagues (fellow teachers); and seek opportunities to share thoughts, ideas, and techniques with colleagues (Brown, 2007).

*Personal qualities* necessitate a language teacher to be well organized, conscientious in meeting commitment, and dependable; be flexible when things go awry; maintain an inquisitive mind in trying out new ways of teaching; set short-term and long-term goals for continued professional growth; and maintain and exemplify high ethical and moral standards (Brown, 2007).

### **Continuous Development of Teacher's Professionalism**

Of course, the one who is mostly responsible for the development of teacher's professionalism is the teacher him/herself. To support their knowledge teachers should keep up with the field through regular reading and conference/workshop attendance. In the past, buying textbooks or attending conference or workshop that charges payment might be beyond the teachers' capability. This is because of the salary they got at that time was not enough to afford them. However, the situation is changing now. By the additional income they get from teacher certification, teachers may spare some amount of money for these purposes.

Attending meeting held by a group of teachers of the same field regularly is another worth doing to develop teachers' professionalism. Through the meeting, a teacher may get solution of the problem he or she faces in his class from other colleagues. They may also learn new ideas, methods and strategies of teaching shared by other teachers.



Getting involved in workshop or training in the field is another appreciated effort to do. Regularly, the Ministry of Education and Culture holds workshop and training for teachers on related fields. However, since the number of teachers is so large while the fund is limited, not all teachers have the chance to get involved in this training and education. This weakness can be overcome by this strategy. Headmaster can assign the teacher(s) who attended the workshop or training to disseminate it to their colleagues. There are two advantages that can be benefited from this. First, it will train the teacher who attended the workshop or training to be more skilful in the field. Second, other teachers who do not have chance to attend the workshop or training will get the same benefit too, without leaving their students and family.

Other thing that should also be done, if is not yet, is making the role of headmaster more effective. Headmaster should regularly check if the teachers have made scenario of their lesson plan. And if it is necessary, once in a while he does incognito visit to a class to see a teacher teaching. In this occasion, he may find out whether what has been planned by a teacher is approximately executed or not. By doing this, I believe, in the long run, there will not be any more teachers coming into the class without any preparation.

School supervisor is the other part that is also responsible for the development of professionalism of teachers. One of the tasks of superintendent is to give guidance for the teachers to improve their teaching practices. To make supervision and guidance more effective, recruitment of superintendent should also be considered thoroughly and comprehensively. An ideal superintendent, should be selected from senior and experienced teachers, not from young and unexperienced ones. This is important to consider because a superintendent does not only deal with supervision business but also deals with psychological

matters. Young and unexperienced superintendent might have problem in supervising “old and experienced teachers”. Especially for eastern people like Indonesians, most of youngsters are still “*ewuh-pakewuh*” (feel uneasy) to give suggestion and guidance to old people though they know it is good for them.

## **Conclusion**

From the discussion above it can be concluded that the change of curriculum may be perceived as something very complicated that may result in frustration for most teachers but it may also be perceived as something new that challenges teacher to exploit his or her knowledge, skill and creativity to make teaching and learning more enjoyable and more productive. However, it must be born in mind that how to respond to the change of curriculum depends very much on the way it is perceived. Do we want to make complicated or do we want to make it simple? To conclude this paper let us say “Welcome the 2013 curriculum”.

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## About the Author

Abdul Muth'im was born on June 6, 1955 in the village of Mandiangin, Karang Intan sub-district, Banjar regency, Kalimantan Selatan province. He is the second child of the six children. He spent his elementary school in his village in Sekolah Rakyat for three years and graduated from the school in 1965. Because there were no higher grades in his school, he then continued his education in Sekolah Dasar Karang Intan. Due to the occurrence of the riot conducted by Indonesian Communist Party on 30 September 1965 known as G-30-S, he then transferred to Sekolah Dasar Negeri Merpati Sungai Ulin. In 1968 he graduated from the school and continued his education at Madrasah Islamiyah Hidayatullah Martapura. In 1974 he finished his education from the Madrasah. After graduating from the madrasah he did not directly continue his study to the university. Instead, he re-enrolled and became one of the students of SMA Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin for one year and graduated in 1975. Then, he continued his study to the English Department of FKIP Universitas Lambung Mangkurat and got BA degree in English Education in 1979. After some years, he then continued his study in the same department of the same university and got his S1 degree in 1987. He continued his master degree in 1991 and got his S2 Degree from IKIP Negeri Malang (c/o. The State Institute of Teacher Training and Education) in 1995. In 2009, he then continued his study in Universitas Negeri Malang (c/o. State University of Malang) and succeeded to accomplish his study in 2013 and got Doctor of Philosophy in English education. In 2017, he was awarded Professor in English education from the Government of Republic of Indonesia. So far, he has written more than 30 articles in English education and have been presented in different seminars, conferences, and workshops locally, nationally as well internationally. Also, up to the present time he has written five books concerning TEFL. The first book, *Developing Writing Skills: from theory to Practice* was published in 2007; the second book, *Issues on Language Teaching & Learning* was published in 2010; the third book, *Error Correction* was published in 2016; the fourth book, *Pengantar Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa* was published in 2020; and the fifth book which is you are reading now, *Potpourri in the Teaching English as a Foreign language (TEFL)* is published this year, 2022. Hopefully, all the books contribute to the development of the teaching and learning English as one of the foreign languages in Indonesia.

