

USING LOCAL TASTES IN ELT CLASSROOMS TO PROMOTE LEARNERS' NATIONALISM

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Abstract

This article aims at exploring the use of local taste in English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom especially for the elementary school students. Teaching English since elementary school has lots of advantages for the language learners. The students will be native like if they learn English as early as possible. Their pronunciation will be more native like rather than the adult because they have not exceeded the critical period. By using the local taste in teaching English, the students will be able to promote their local taste in international world. Promoting local taste towards international world is one of the efforts to increase the students' nationalisms.

Keywords: *local taste, English language teaching, nationalism*

1. INTRODUCTION

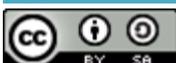
The development of a country depends heavily on the quality of the education. It is clear that education takes a very great contribution to develop the quality of human resources that become the foundation for a nation's growth. The national education is an education that is conducted as the implementation of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as the foundation of the nation. Besides, Indonesian cultures and the values of the religion are also the basic principles of the national education of Indonesia.

According to Nucci and Narvaéz (2008:5) education is a means which is widely used by teachers to influence and change their students' learning processes.

Therefore, it is crucial to look up what happens in the education system in Indonesia. A comprehensive analysis must be conducted to give great contribution to the development of quality of education in Indonesia which in turn will produce quality of generation in the future who bears the values of religion, nationalism, and culture.

This article will have a closer look on the policy regarding the teaching of English language in Indonesia, more specifically on the government's policy of deleting English subject from elementary school. This article will also discuss how to insert the Indonesian culture and values in order to prevent the sense of the Indonesian students'

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Published in: <http://ejournal.stkipmpringsewu-lpg.ac.id/index.php/smart>

Jurnal SMART: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.

nationalism. Gellner (1983) said that someone's nationalism or identity can be taught using culture communicatively.

2. Discussion

The government's policy regarding the deletion of English subject

The government of Indonesia in line with the curriculum 2013 has made a controversial decision to delete the English subject from elementary school curriculum. Some people support the policy based on two main reasons: the big burden due to so many subjects that have to be learnt and the concern of loss of nationalism especially their communication ability in *Bahasa Indonesia*. It is good at building the students' nationalism since their early age due to the fact that the students or children's sense of nationalism gradually decreases.

The policy, however, is debatable. In the context of children's cognitive development, language should be taught as early as possible because the golden period of children's language is between 6 to 13 years old. Moreover, the cognitive and creative process and the divergent thinking to learn a foreign language are on optimal condition when a child reaches 6 to 13 years old.

Therefore, it would be very advantageous when the elementary school students learn English. With the right method and techniques of teaching, the students will be helped to be able to develop their English well. The learning environment also must be fun, interesting and enjoyable. The students must regard English as a fun subject to learn. They do not need to learn patterns or memorize and remember difficult vocabularies. The most important thing is that they should learn the language without being forced and stressful.

Using local culture in English

Language Teaching Classroom

Local culture is not the same as global culture. Local culture is the term that is usually used to differentiate a culture of national culture (Indonesia) and global culture. The local culture is the culture of the people who occupy a certain region or area different from the culture of the people who are in the other places in general. Regulation No. 39 of 2007 article 1 defines the local culture as values system which are shared by the specific community groups in the specific area, which is believed to be able to meet the expectations of their people and in which there are societies' values

and attitudes believed to be able to meet their people lives.

In broader views, English as a means of international communication becomes the most important foreign language to learn in Indonesia. It is commonly agreed that everyone who would like to succeed internationally should master this foreign language. By mastering English, they will be able to participate and compete actively in the global world. Due to this fact, English becomes one of the most important subjects taught in schools. Most parents as well as teachers believe that English should be learnt since early age. This is the reason why English has been introduced not only since elementary school but also since kindergartens.

Nowadays, the international trend in foreign language programs are held in early stage and this trend is not only in Europe but also in the other countries around the world (Nikolov, 2009). According to Gonzales (1995) English is used by lots of people as an international communication mostly for the international diplomacy, scientific book writing, and in international business and trade. Further, Gonzales (1995) explains that “English becomes the most crucial language in financial and global financial transactions and the language of trade

negotiations and the medium of discourse of the international need as well”. This circumstance makes English more popular and becomes the international lingua franca which in turn promotes the spreads and developments of ELT in the expanding circle countries or non-English speaking countries (Woodford and Jackson, 2003).

Commonly the ELT classrooms are prepared to make its learners able to communicate effectively in English. To do this, English teachers have tried to motivate their students by using interesting various methods and techniques of effective English teaching. Some of them use songs and games in their ELT classroom and the others make use of graded readers in their teaching leaning process. The application of various methods and teaching techniques is aimed at preparing the students to be able to communicate well in English either in writing or orally.

Unfortunately, the government has made unpopular decision, namely by deleting the English subject from the curriculum of elementary school in 2013 curriculum. The deletion is based on some reasons which one of them is to prevent the students from the loss of sense of their nationalism. It is assumed that the teaching of English since

elementary school will only hamper the students' sense of nationalism. The main concern is that they will be inclined to study English rather than study *Bahasa Indonesia* as their national language. Besides, they will be more familiar with the western culture than the local or Indonesian culture.

This is based on the fact that English teachers often emphasize too much on foreign or the western culture in their teaching learning process. The teaching of English should not only discuss the foreign culture but also be accompanied by the explanation of local culture. Such a problem becomes the main concern in the current ELT practice in this country.

What English teachers do in their teaching process is commonly attempting to complete the goals of learning stated in the English curriculum. The teachers, unfortunately, are too busy to find the relevant materials without considering the local culture that may be useful to include in the teaching materials.

It is generally agreed that teaching English will not be effective without involving culture. Even, many believe that it is impossible to teach foreign language without teaching the culture. As we have understood that each sentence or expression – even

words – has direct correlation with culture – they need to be put in the cultural context of the language.

However, we should be careful in incorporating the culture in ELT classroom. We should not emphasize too much on the western culture when teaching English. We should as well incorporate the contents of local culture in the teaching material so that the students will not lose their sense of nationalism. Every English teacher needs to realize the importance of inserting local culture in ELT classrooms; otherwise they will only become the agent of new form of imperialism.

Unfortunately, the current ELT practice leads the students to understand foreign culture better than their own culture. In the extreme way, some students even regard the western or foreign culture as higher than their local culture. Some students even have very good understanding on the foreign culture. As a result, they become internalized in the students' daily life, so they use the foreign culture in their daily style.

The worst impact of teaching English is the possibility of loss of our own culture since the students do not have good understanding of it anymore. The valuable local cultural norms and

values will gradually vanish as the students like to behave in accordance with the foreign cultural norms and values. The students may do not know their own cultural identity any longer.

Every educator or teacher who is involving in the ELT practice should anticipate this problem. They must have the knowledge of foreign culture and begin to discuss the national or local wisdom or culture when they teach a second language in their teaching and learning process.

To have better understanding and application of using local culture in ELT classroom, we should clarify first the notion of 'culture'. According to Mesthrie, et al (2009) culture is the life guideline of culture members; their ideas, belief collection and customs which they learn, follow, transmit and share from generation to another generation. In this case, culture can be said as 'strategy or guidelines for living'. As the strategy for living, it limits the forms of human's behavior which are considered appropriate or acceptable in certain societies. From this definition it can be said that culture is inherited from one generation to another generation.

Inserting the national values in ELT classroom

The national values should be inserted in the foreign language especially English syllabus and incorporated in the teaching activities that form the students' character. For example, when the students are about to begin their class, they have to pray to the God as one of the implementations of *Pancasila* and religious values. Such activity internalizes the religious character both to the students and teachers. Giving tasks to students will internalize the value of responsibility. Such cultural values should be used by the teachers as the successful indicator in language teaching process conducted by the teachers.

The cultural values that need to be inserted in the syllabus (Hartono, 2012) to build students' excellent character are that follow:

Character Building

- a. possessing religious manner
- b. having self confidence
- c. complying with social rules
- d. respecting others
- e. having logical, critical, creative, and innovative thinking
- f. possessing autonomy
- g. possessing patriotism or national pride
- h. appreciating the works of others

- i. being responsible
- j. possessing healthy lifestyle
- k. being courteous
- l. possessing awareness of the rights and obligations of self and others
- m. being trustworthy
- n. possessing high discipline
- o. Hard-working
- p. being democratic
- q. being concerned with social matters and environment
- r. being curious
- s. having high passion to learn
- t. possessing the spirit of entrepreneurship

The integration of character education in ELT classroom has to follow the principles and processes of language teaching and learning. Vale, D., Scarino & McKay (1991) formulate the principles of language learning that integrate character education in learning a language process.

The principles that are allowed to be integrated into various activities that can build the students' characters are as follows:

- a. The learner-centered principle: The class consists of various individuals in terms of their cognitive, affective and social aspects. It is better that the class is divided into small groups based on their differences.
- b. The active involvement principle: Here, the students are taught to use English appropriately in accordance with the objective of learning.
- c. The immersion principle: The students will learn better in an environment exposed to various language. It involves teacher talk, another classroom talk. It needs audio and videotapes completed with written information.
- d. The focusing principle: to produce the ability of effective communication in limited time span, the students need to focus on the right times as well as the right strategies that can help them to deal with the language being learned.
- e. The socio-cultural principle: Language is not in vacuum condition. They are related to culture where the language is reflected. So, it is important to incorporate the cultural experiences in the process of learning.
- f. The awareness principle: The language awareness of the

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students is very important to get the access to a group of people, ideas, and way of thinking.

The basic concept of learning is not only passing knowledge to the students but also presenting the opportunity for them to build their own character. Although there are many factors influencing the construction of individual characters, character education is where the educators can contribute in developing the students' character. Character education should be integrated into all subjects including English. In arranging the objective of learning, it is important to give students a variety of activities that can build their characters. The activities can be inserted in all process of language learning. To integrate the character education in the activities of language learning, we need to integrate the principles of language learning in various activities.

Examples of integrating the national values into learning activities:

Example 1

Character building pillar: Trustworthiness (Are You a Trustworthy Person?)

The following are the key expression should be used in the process of learning:

I am a good person.

I am an honest person.

I don't like to lie. I don't like to cheat, I don't like to steal.

I always keep my promises.

I like to do the right thing, even it is difficult.

I am a dependable.

Example

Character building pillar: Respect (Are You a Respectful Person?)

The following are the key expression should be used in the process of learning

I like to respect other people.

I like to admire the others for their success

I like to treat people the way I want to be treated.

I don't like to hurt the others' feeling.

I don't like to insult people or make fun of them.

I don't like to ridicule or embarrass people.

Using local literature in ELT classroom

Local literature in a language class is very important and it has very important role. In general, literature can motivate and inspire the students to interpret their

emotions, thoughts and introspect within themselves. According to Brumfit and Carter (1986), literature is “an ally of language”. The method is certainly new because literature has been widely used as a means to teach language. In Grammar Translation Method, literature plays a significant role in foreign language classroom. Duff & Maley (2007) said that literature in teaching a language has to be understood, interpreted and practiced as a good writing and illustration sample of the grammatical rules in practice. Furthermore, literature is able to develop the students’ minds and make them how to think critically. In line with this, another expert Hadaway, et al (2002) propose that there are also other advantages of literature used in language teaching class. The first is language contextualization. For this case the students will be more familiar with the practice of language at different situation and conditions when reading literary texts. Secondly, studying through literature will help students consider the social factors embedded in literature.

The students are stimulated to increase their own experiences. Literature and language are related closely to each other, developing language basic skills in speaking,

reading, and writing. Literature is a rich source for the students’ activity in the classroom. To support this opinion, Collie and Slater (1990) have observed four main factors to consider when using literary texts for teaching language. The factors that should be paid more attention are enhancement of the culture, material genuinity, language elicitation and the participation of individu. The other additional factors that should also be considered are universality, non-triviality, creativity, interest, and variety.

Boas (1931) gives the limitation of literature as the record of experience which is interpreted by personality that is behind every book which the race preserved is a human being’s eager effort to produce meaningful life, to make beauty, to express suitable ideas and emotions, to create the men aware of themselves and their life they guide.

Because the core function of a language is to interact and communicate, so communicative conversational activities in a classroom will be the best way to learn a language. The use of local literary in ELT teaching learning process will provide the students chances to improve the students’ knowledge related to the local stories as well as use the English creatively. Besides, the students’ awareness of the language will also

improve. More importantly the students will be inclined to analyze texts more critically.

The main objective of using such literature in an ELT teaching learning process is to create a more creative classroom as well as improve the students' communicative ability about the local literary works. It is because in a classroom that uses literature in its teaching, the students must be involved – respond and react – emotionally or creatively.

ELT class has widely used literature as a teaching tool. The main aim of using literature in ELT process is to increase students' skill of critical thinking. Literary texts will help the students to open their critical ability because literature encompasses every human dilemma, conflict and solution. Literature has been proved to be rich source for learning language as well as motivating learners to be involved in the classroom activity.

In addition, the goals and objectives of using literature in English class are to make the students:

- a. find the joys in reading and understanding literature and realize new ways to understand the world surrounding them.

- b. respect the language aesthetic value.
- c. involve the students themselves with various texts and draw relationship between oneself, the texts and the world to develop the intellectual, emotional, socio-cultural and global skills and awareness.
- d. Articulate perceptive and analytical thinking when they discusses and write literary texts
- e. Discover and elaborate how the elements of various genres function in literary works to have particular effects; and
- f. Understand the importance of contexts where literary texts are written and comprehended (Ministry of Education of Singapore, 2013).

In teaching English using literature, there are some factors that should be paid attention for the English teachers in selecting the literary text in a foreign language teaching learning process. Those factors are language level, motivation, interest and culture. Literary text reading gives good effect for the students if the text being read is valuable, meaningful and interesting. The selection of the texts in accordance with the

students' real-life experiences, emotions and desires also has significant influence.

Furthermore, the difficulty of language level should also be considered. Using simple language in literary work actually can be used as a medium to make the students easier to understand the text of literary but this is not regarded as the very vital factors. The criteria that are regarded as more crucial are relevance, interest and appeal. Some other elements such as fun, interesting, pleasure and enjoyment can be used to help the students do the problem in linguistic domain in happy situation (Collie & Slater, 1990).

In addition, Obediat (1997) also said that literature has good impact in language teaching. He further said that teaching a language using literature will help the students gain ability in the target language, study various expressions (e.g., idiomatic expressions) to talk accurately and more smoothly and become more adaptive in learning a language. In addition, Custodio and Sutton (1998) also had analysed that literary work can provide the opportunity and chance for the students to criticize, investigate and ask. In brief, teaching language using literature can make the students have lots of authentic material references. If the students get such joyful materials, of

course, the students will be able to master the language at a higher grade (Elliot, 1990)

Therefore, local literatures will be very helpful in developing and increasing the students' positive critical thinking about their own literature because when they are studying local literary texts, the students also can analyze, draw inferences, synthesize and evaluate concepts and information in those literary texts. In the literature class, the students will get ample opportunity to engage in discussions, to express their own ideas. The ideas can be life, values, morals, beliefs, relationships, interests, like and dislikes and the style of writing – humorous or tragic. In literature class, students learn how to analyze texts based on logical reasoning.

We can say that language teaching is like bland food when literature is not used. It has been proven that the past generations had solid foundation in English because they learnt classical literary works written by great people in literature, like Shakespeare, William Wordsworth etc. The contemporary generations, however, do not have any exposure to classical literary works. This causes their intellectual growth and emotional growths are severely hampered.

To stimulate the students' interest in literary works, Duff and Maley (2007) has proposed some graded tasks that can be used. In this case, every student should proceed gradually from easy tasks to the hard ones. They stress the benefits of varying the problems of the tasks and the difficulty of the texts:

- a. Level 1, Simple text + low level task
- b. Level 2, Simple text + more demanding task
- c. Level 3, Difficult text + low level task
- d. Level 4, Difficult text + more demanding task

Such leveling is believed to be able to make the students more motivated and interested in learning. They will not think that English is hard and difficult to learn any longer. Besides, to make the ELT classroom more enjoyable and interesting for students, the language teacher can use literary texts genres varieties, like plays, novel, stories, poetry etc. It is stated that literary texts have good impact that can enrich the learners of language in the classroom and stimulate language acquisition by providing meaningful and memorable contexts for internalizing and interpreting the second or foreign language (Lazar,

1993). So, the language teacher is able to use the literary texts either in their original forms or in simplified versions. There have been many simplified English stories written specially for learners of other languages. In ELT classroom, various types of stories can be utilized such as short stories, novels, plays, or song lyrics. By using literary texts in classroom, the language basic skills of the students, like reading, speaking and writing are developed and increased.

Various Genres Teaching Benefits:

Poems in a language teaching

A poem is one of the significant genres to be used in the process of language teaching. The benefits of using poems in language teaching class are:

- a. Giving the learners various views about the practice of language;
- b. Encouraging the students for giving description and individual interpretation;
- c. Evoking the language learners' emotions and ideas both in mind and heart;
- d. Making language learners familiar about figurative language such as metaphor and simile;

According to Cubuku (2001), poems are motivating and interesting exercises for the learners of the

language. They have rhythmical elements that convey love, preference, hate, etc. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that the students are going to know the stress, juncture, pitch, and the rising and falling intonation of foreign language through reading poems.

Story in Language Class

One of the genres that is also able to be the media to teach the language is story. It is also regarded as one of the very important genres for language teaching because in the story there is also characters that symbolically play and authentically act for their daily habit. It means that story shows human's life style.

Stories in foreign language teaching have many benefits such as:

- a. Preparing the students as the language learners knowledge and attitudes in various habits;
- b. Providing a mystery and wonders that are interesting to follow;
- c. Improving the students' critical thinking skills;
- d. Causing the students feel convenience and free (Ariogul: 2001).

So, it can be said teaching language using short story has good influence in foreign language classroom (Sage, 1987).

Drama Performance in ELT Class

Performing Drama is also one of the genres in literature that can be used to teach language that enriches the language teaching source. Drama can be used as the strategy of language learning. Besides, drama also can be used to raise the awareness of the language learners towards the culture and language they learn. The instructors of language have chance to present the students' experience and their understanding (cited Sariqoban, 2004). The following are the advantages of using drama in ELT classroom:

- a. It can stimulate and promote the students' imagination and creative thinking;
- b. It can strengthen the students' listening skill;
- c. It can improve students' awareness and empathy of a language;
- d. It can develop the students educated self-concept;
- e. It can provide the teacher with update and good paradigm at their instruction;
- f. It can develop the students' creativity and communication skill;

- g. It can develop the students' competence levels by respecting their productive and receptive skills
- h. It can develop the students' newer opinion and thought,

Teaching English at elementary school has good advantages and impacts towards the students' proficiency in acquiring the language including English language. The child's nerves system to train and produce the language is better than the adults in general because their nerves system is still elastic. It is commonly said that the earlier age someone learns a foreign or second language, the better result they are acquiring the language they learn. The hypothesis of innatist analyzed that the child formulates a better innate capacity for developing their basic language structure through language acquisition devices (LAD) they have. Similarly, Bialystok and Hakuta (1999) stated that children or younger language learners are proved better than adults in a language learning because the children's brains are especially better organized for learning a language. Other opinions are also given by some other experts, Brumfit, et al (1991) who give the reason why children learn foreign language better than adults:

- a. Before puberty, the children's brain is more flexible and can adapt easily. Furthermore, the acquisition of languages is possible "without self-consciousness at their younger age".
- b. The child has little negative behaviour than adult towards second languages and cultures, and consequently they are much better motivated than adult.
- c. The language of the children is closely related to the real communication because it depends more on the immediate physical milieu.

Concept of Nationalism

Nationalism is the sense of pride and love to become a member of the certain state or nation. Someone feels that right or wrong is my country, they will always show their pride and love to their state using their performance and action. They take care to defend their state and nation when there is someone wants to attack their nation or state. Anderson (1983) said that nationalism formation is as the application and the implementation of the relationship between the citizens and their state.

After discussing the use of local taste in teaching learning process, it is

clear that introducing English language using local or national culture at primary school makes the students know earlier about English although in a very limited context. The students will get better psychological awareness than those who have not learned English since elementary school yet. Other benefit got from learning English is that students know the new world that full of the competition in technology and knowledge, so they need English to anticipate that competitive era without losing their nationalism.

3. CONCLUSION

Local taste literary work is very advantageous implemented in ELT classroom because it is inspiring, beautiful, eloquent, and memorable. Literary works represents universal human's life experiences such as love, friendship, hardship, happiness, sadness, life and death, sexuality, etc. Local taste literary work can increase the students' nationalism as well to promote local culture in international world. However, the students' language basic proficiency together with their critical thinking are developing by the use of the appropriate literary works in ELT classroom.

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