
LOCAL LEGENDS: EFL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT FOR INDONESIAN TEENAGE LEARNERS

JonnerSimarmata

English Educator of Batanghari University

jonnersiarmata@yahoo.co.id

Abstract

Recently, materials development has attained big attention from ELT practitioners. Teachers, materials writers, and even producers are now trying to create attractive materials because they think that attractive materials will bring about great success in EFL teaching. Tomlinson (2003) says that materials are anything (linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic) that facilitate learning of language. In Indonesia, the goal of studying English at schools is not only for developing communicative competence but also for building characters. One of the materials sources that can be used for both goals is literary work. However, when talking about literary work as EFL teaching materials, usually teachers and even commercial materials writers have tendency to use western works. Of course, I see no objection to this idea. However, local legends are also beneficial in EFL teaching especially when we correlate it with the two goals of EFL teaching to Indonesian teenage learners. In Indonesia, there are many legends. Usually, these legends are orally passed on from one generation to another. However, today many of them have been written in books. These legends, for sure, have values – educative or humanitarian – to be learned. As far as my concern, many legends have been used for language teaching materials especially for L1 classrooms. Only a few of them have been used for EFL classrooms. This paper discusses about how to use local legends as materials for EFL class in Indonesian context. Specifically, this paper will talk about a) the theoretical and practical reasons of why local legends are good for EFL materials, and b) teaching strategies that can be used to benefit from local legends for EFL students.

Keywords: local legends, EFL materials development, teaching strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Experts say that the goal of teaching language is to develop communicative competence (CC). CC is the ability to use the language in a communication event properly. Hence, the objective of teaching English to Indonesian students is to develop the students' competence in using English for communication. Politically, the government of Indonesia stipulates that the goal of teaching English as foreign language in Indonesian schools is to enhance the competitiveness of the people in the global setting. This is very important because almost all aspects of life such as business, politic, economy, trade, regional cooperation are conducted in English. It is reported that many Indonesian negotiators lose their chance of winning just because their English performance is quite low.

Indonesian government has stipulated that the goal of school education is not only to teach but also to educate students. Here to teach means to give the content knowledge while to educate means to build the characters of the students. In the curriculum it is said that there are four kinds of competences that the students must achieve after the school education. The four competence are spiritual competence, social competence, knowledge competence, and skill competence. The first two, by experts, are categorized as soft skills that will be obtained by students through the education process and the two latter are categorized as hard skills to be achieved through teaching and learning process.

The government also stipulates that every subject in schools is responsible for the four competences. Hence, the teaching of English to Indonesia students is not only to develop the English communicative competence described in the knowledge and skills competences but also to build the nation characters defined in the spiritual and social competences.

Materials development for EFL class, today, has been a hot issue in English teaching practices. However, many teachers seem to become confused about this. The reason is that, so far, teachers are already used to using materials that are already (commercially) provided for them in the

textbooks. Today, materials development call for teacher's creativity and innovation. The problem is that not all teachers are creative and innovative enough to develop materials on their own especially when relating to using literary texts.

So far, materials development has only been based on non-literary texts. However, if designed in such a way, literary texts can be beneficial to both teachers and students. This paper will discuss about how to use literary text or folktale in particular to be materials in EFL class in Indonesian setting.

2. BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES

2.1 Materials Development

Tomlinson (2003:p.2) says that materials development has three aspects. The first, materials development is a field of study that studies the principles and procedure of the design, implementation, and evaluation of language teaching materials. The second, materials development is a practical undertaking that involves the production, evaluation, and adaptation of language teaching materials. The third, materials development is a means of facilitating and deepening the personal and professional development of language teachers. This paper focuses on materials development as the production of literary text as teaching materials for Indonesian EFL adolescents learners. Tomlinson also says that materials are anything that facilitate learning of language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. They can be presented in print, through live performance or display, on cassettes, CD-ROOM, DVD or internet. In conclusion, materials can be texts (printed) or non-texts. Here, my focus is text materials.

Tomlinson claims that most language materials are in print (or texts). He also claims that most language materials are instructional. Instructional materials means those that are designed for the purpose of instruction. However, authentic materials can also be very beneficial in language learning. One kind of language materials for language teaching is literary texts, folklore in particular. However, not many EFL teachers have interest in developing literary texts especially folklores for EFL materials. They prefer to have non-literature since these are abundantly available in textbooks.

There are several considerations that teachers should make when selecting literary text for language teaching materials. First, they should be relevant to the need and wants of the learners. Second, they should be motivating to the learners. Third, they should have aspect of personal involvement. These three considerations are very significant for successful learning.

2.2 Communicative Competence

Language is for communication. Thus, the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence (CC). One theory about CC is from Hymes. Hymes (1972) describes that one who acquires communicative competence acquires knowledge and ability for language use with respect to: (1) whether or not something is formally possible (grammaticality); (2) whether or not something is feasible; (3) whether or not something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used; (4) whether or not something is in fact done and actually performed.

Based on Hyme's concepts, Canale (1983) proposed communicative competence which include (1) grammatical competence or linguistic competence which refers to the ability to use language correctly. This includes vocabulary, pronunciation, and sentence formation; (2) sociolinguistic competence which refers to the ability to use language correctly in specific social situation; (3) discourse competence which refers to the ability to use the new language in spoken and written discourse; (4) strategic competence which refers to strategies for effective communication.

Another theory of CC comes from Celce-Murcia, et.al (1995). They describe CC as a unified competence which comprises of (1) linguistic competence that refers to the ability of using the language correctly; (2) sociocultural competence that refers to use the language appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication; (3) actional competence that refers to the ability in conveying and understanding communicative intent, matching actional intent and linguistic form; (4) discourse competence that concerns the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structure, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text; (5) strategic competence that deals with the ability to use strategies for effective communication when vocabulary proves inadequate.

2.3 Teenage Learners

Harmer (2007) explains that the age of students is a major factor in a decision about what and how to teach. People of different ages have different needs, competences, and cognitive skills. For example, children can be expected to acquire a foreign language through play whereas adult learners are expected to understand abstract thought. Harmer also explains that teenage or adolescent learners, in language learning, make more progress than young learners because they have increased cognitive ability that allow them to benefit from abstract approaches to language teaching.

Adolescents have typical characteristics that EFL teachers should take into consideration when selecting materials and classroom activities. Adolescents are usually seen as problem students. Not everything always seem to be alright with them. However, they can be successful learners if they are personally involved. Adolescents seek for identity, self esteem, recognition from both teacher and peers.

2.4 Literature and Language Teaching

Defining literature has been problematic because there are many points of view involved (Musthafa, 2008). However, on this paper, literature is defined as the art of language. Hence, literary works may come out in various forms such as novels, shortstories, poems, fables, legends, song lyrics, and so forth orally or in written.

There are four reasons why a language teacher should use literary work in classes. First, literary work is authentic material because most works of literature are not fashioned for specific purpose of teaching a language. Second, literary work can be cultural enriching. Reading a piece of literary work is similar to traveling to the place where the literary work is set. It is true that literary work such as novels, plays, shortstories is created. But, it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social background can be depicted. So, by reading the literary work, a reader can discover way of life of the characters. Third, literary work is also language enriching. Despite the fact that literature is imaginative created, it is very contextual. Hence, individual lexical or syntactical items are more memorable. Fourth, literary work is personal involving. The development of the story, for example in the novel, play, or shortstories, can be exciting and enjoyable for students (Collie and Slater, 1987).

Literary work has always been interesting for EFL class because, basically, students love literary work. However, in selecting literary text for EFL class teachers must consider several things. First, the level of difficulty of both sentence structure and vocabulary of the text. In this case, EFL teachers should be very careful to select the literary work. If the level of difficulties of the literary work does not suit the students' ability, it will bring about problem for students to understand the literary work. In other words, if the text is too difficult, students will face difficulties in understanding the text. On the contrary, if the text is too easy, the learning will not be challenging for students. Even, students might lose their interest in learning. Second, students' interest and needs. In this case, teachers must not select the text at will. He must give it to the interest and need of the students. If the literary work is not of the interest or need of the students, they will have reluctance to join the class. Furthermore, students will immediately lose their motivation in learning as soon as they find that the literary work is not of their interest. In other words, the literary work will not be engaging for students. As already known, motivation is one of the significant factors in the teaching-learning process.

Literary texts come out in various forms. One of them is legend. Legend is also popularly known as folklore. Literary texts can be used as materials. According to Collie and Slater, there are four reasons of using literary text in EFL: (1) literary text is a valuable authentic material, (2) literary text is cultural enrichment, (3) literary text is language enrichment, and (4) literary text is personal involvement. According to Tomlinson, using literary text in EFL give four benefit because literary text: (1) inform learning about language, (2) provide experience of the language in use, (3) stimulate language use, (4) help learner to make discoveries.

There is a claim that literature has little practical application in language teaching. However, Moi in Tomlinson argues that literature qualities can contribute to language teaching by revealing the creative and expressive potential of language and giving learners access to new sociocultural meanings. The problem now is how to use literary text in language teaching classroom so that learners can take significant benefit.

USING FOLKTALES FOR EFL MATERIALS

3.1 Principles

In selecting literary work or folktales for EFL materials, teachers should consider these three principles. (1) the literary text selected should be relevant with the students' need and language level; (2) the literary text selected should be motivating to students; (3) literary text selected should be personally involving.

3.2 Procedure

Procedure is an ordered sequence of techniques (Harmer, 2007). I have chosen Malin Kundang legend for the purpose of this presentation. I chose this story because two reasons. First, this story is quite familiar to students throughout Indonesia. Second, this story has good moral lesson that students can learn. The teaching procedure of this story comprises of many steps. This lesson may take place for two or three sessions depending on the students' performance.

Step 1

Brainstorm with the students about family values that Indonesia people have to uphold. For example: '*We must respect parents.*' Why? and how? After that, show the students a picture of traditional house from West Sumatra and ask them where the building originates. Then, ask them if they can think of a legend from this province, expecting to answer: Malin Kundang. After that, ask the students what they know about Malin Kundang. Tell the students that today's lesson is about MalinKundang. Tell them also that from the story we can learn a lesson about family values.

Step 2

Read out the story (twice or three times) while students are listening. After that, present the statements below (on paper or through LCD if there is one). Then, read the story again while the students are to identify if the statement is true or false.

Say if the statement from the story is true or false

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Malin Kundang was from a poor family | T - F |
| 2. MalinKundang wanted to be rich | T - F |
| 3. MalinKundang became a rich person in another island | T - F |
| 4. MalinKundang refused his mother | T - F |
| 5. MalinKundang turned to stone | T - F |

Step 3

Present the story, then ask the students to read silently. After that, give the following comprehension questions.

Questions

1. What kind of family did MalinKundang come from, rich or poor?
2. How did MalinKundang's father make a living for his family?
3. How did MalinKundang family feel about his family condition?
4. What did MalinKundang do to overcome this problem?
5. What happened to MalinKundang after he left home for another island?
6. Why did MalinKundang turn to stone?

Step 4

Give the students vocabulary activities in various types: matching, puzzle, fill-in, etc.

Step 5

Pick out one of the sentences from the story denoting simple past with regular verb. Then, copy it on the whiteboard. After that, discuss with the students about the language feature. After that, let the students discover more examples from the story. After that, drill the class with this grammar point.

He lived with a poor fisherman family

Step 6

This step is the same as step 5. Pick out one of the sentences from the story denoting simple past with irregular verb. Then, copy it on the whiteboard. After that, discuss with the students about the language feature. After that, let the students discover more examples from the story. After that, drill the class with this grammar point.

People made an issue about his father's death.

Step 7

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Then ask every one in group to read the story silently again. After that, assign the groups to find out the moral lesson of the story. After that assign a student from each group to report to the class.

Step 8

Ask the students to stay in the same group. Then, ask each group to make a list of family values that Indonesian people must uphold. After that ask the students to do DCD (dynamic Circular Discussion) activity in which a student from each group is assigned to visit each group and read out the family values that he brings from his original group.

Step 9

Assign each student homework to read another legend and find out the moral lesson that is conveyed in the story.

3. CONCLUSION

Legend or folklore is one kind of the literary texts. Legend can be used as teaching materials in EFL classroom. Using this kind of literature in EFL teaching has two benefits. The first benefit is that this kind of literature can be an authentic teaching materials. Expert say that authentic materials has a positive impact on success of EFL learning because it can show learners how language is used naturally. The second benefit is that legend can be used to induce cultural values. As for Indonesian case, Education in which teaching English is included is not only to develop the hard skill but also to nurture the soft skills.

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Attachment

MalinKundang

Once upon a time, there was a young who lived in West Sumatra named MalinKundang. He lived with a poor fisherman family. His father went to sea to make a living for his family and never came back to home. People made an issue about his father's death. This issue made his mother anxious every day.

Several months later, his mother chose to forget about his father. She realized that she had to work hard. Unfortunately, she still didn't get enough money for her family.

Malin couldn't stand with his mother's suffering. He decided to go sailing and make money. He wanted to become a rich man so he could help his mother. At first, his mother didn't allow him to go. She was afraid Malin did not come back like his father did. At last, Malin got his mother allowance to go.

Several years later, Malin became a rich sailor. He had many ships and crews. He was married with a beautiful girl and had three children.

One day, ha had a business in an island which is his home town. In this island, he met an old lady. She hugged Malin very tightly. However, Malin scolded and pushed her. He realized that the old woman is his mother. But, he was afraid if his wife and children knew about his mother. So, he told the old lady to go away. He said his mother was from a rich family. Noticing about his son bad attitude, she was sad and angry. She prayed and said that Malin had to change into stone. MalinKundang even scolded her more.

After finishing his business, he went sailing back with his wife and children. On the sea, the sky instantly overcast. Heavy lighting and rain was falling. Their ship hit rocks and crashed. Malin swayed to the shore. The magic happened. He turned into stone like his mother wished. It was known as MalinKundang stone by people of West Sumatra.