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INTERCULTURAL ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract
Teaching of English now should also be incorporated with the intercultural knowledge of target language, including to young learners. It can make them aware of differences and similarities between their own culture and the culture of the target language. This study was a qualitative study which investigated how the intercultural teaching and learning was implemented to young learners in an English classroom in Karawang,West Java, Indonesia. The principles of Intercultural language teaching and learning proposed by Liddicoat & Scarino (2013) were used by the teacher in the activities. The data was taken by observing the teaching and learning process to 25 seventh grade students in the classroom that was done in four meetings and interviewing 6 sample of students to know their responses. The findings showed that the intercultural English teaching and learning provides more opportunities for young learners to be more active and critical toward other language and cultures as well as improve their English skills. Since they are still young, they still should be guided to understand the material well by the teacher. Finally, it is recommended to other teachers to implement intercultural English teaching and learning in teaching English to young learners.

Keywords: *Intercultural Teaching and Learning, English, Young Learners*

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching intercultural understanding has been commonly known in English language teaching. The knowledge about the target language culture becomes a central contextual factor that facilitates the success of learning a foreign language in contextual and meaningful way (Brown, 2000). In addition, intercultural understanding should be introduced to students in an early stage or young learners because it is an important concept to grasp during childhood. This understanding will create them as intercultural persons. The are children who can embrace and value the things that make each person or group of people different. However, it is important for teachers to understand who young learners are, it should be noticed that young learners are not adults miniature. Consequently, children should be treated relevant to their age especially when they are introduced about intercultural understanding. So, intercultural English teaching and learning to young learners should be suitable with their age. Besides, it also important to understand that young learners should strengthen their understanding about their own culture before learning the others. As Liddicoat et al. (2003) says that one the goals of intercultural language learning is understanding and valuing one's own language and culture. It is done before students are understanding and valuing one's target language and culture.

Moreover, it has been a problem in learning English which only emphasizes understanding of structures and patterns of language without understanding the cultural aspects which is considered important. This problem does not only arise from unimplemented curriculum-based intercultural approach, but there are also other factors such as teachers, textbooks, facilities and etcetera. On the other hand, the insertion of local cultural values in each text or English textbooks is also an important consideration to keep the students knowing the local culture (Sukarno, 2012). Therefore, as supported by Liddicoat and Kohler (2012:95) that "if language education is to achieve the goals of intercultural understanding thatsets for itself, it is important that the intercultural approach takes a central place in practice".Another crucial problem is derived from the English teachers themselves who do not quite understand the concept of the target language culture (Rodliyah&Muniroh, 2012). They usually do not know how to convey the cultural aspect of target language in teaching English. This misunderstanding

is a complex issue because a teacher is a primary source of information and a mediator in the classroom.As stated by Byram et al. (2002), a teacher does not need to know everything about the target culture, but his role is to help learners to understand how intercultural interaction takes place. However, to implement the method, a teacher must understand the basic concept of intercultural language learning itself as well as incorporate culture and knowledge of the target language.

Finally, this study tries to discover the intercultural English teaching and learning process to young learners including teacher and students' interaction and activities in the classroom. It is also to investigate the students' responses toward the teaching and learning itself. Thus, based on the background, there are two research questions that are proposed in this study:

a. How is intercultural English teaching and learning implemented to young learners?
b. What are the students' responses toward the teaching and learning process?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES
a. Understanding Language and Culture

Understanding language becomes more complicated since there are many aspects to take into account. One definition of language is a set of symbols shared by a community to communicate meaning and experience. The symbol may be sound or gestures (Jandt, 1998). Therefore, "language is not only the principle medium that human beings use to communicate with each other but also the bond that links people together and binds them to their culture" (Wahyudi, 2012).Furthermore, for Liddicoat et al. (2003), language is not simply structural, but social and communicative. Thus, it can be more complicated when someone learns a new language. It is caused by the complexity of the linguistic forms that get tangled with the socio-cultural aspects.This statement has been discussed further by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) who explain that the roles of language as three parts, namely language as a structural system, language as communicative system, and language as social practice. The discussion about language as communication is not always about transferring thoughts from one mind to another, but it is more complex because there are other aspects to be considered. Moreover, it is a complex performance of identity where the individual communicates not only information, but also a social person that exists in the act of communication (Sacks, 1975, in Liddicoat&Scarino, 2013). It can be said that language is not only a set of structure of words, but it is also used appropriately as communication in communities that includes socio-cultural aspects, so that the language can be accepted and understood by people.

In addition, Liddicoat et al. (2003) and SpitzbergandChangnonmore, cited in Deardorff (2009) specifically add that culture is a complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, practices, and lifestyle of the people, that complete a cultural group, as well as the artifacts they produce and the institutions they create. Besides, Nieto (2010:136) comprehensively defines culture as "the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and world view created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion". Furthermore, Byramand Grundy (2003:1) explain "culture in language teaching and learning is usually defined pragmatically as associated with a language being learnt". Thus, when learners learn a foreign language, they also learn the culture, especially the hidden part of culture as mentioned above. Sewell (1999:44) mentions that culture as practice is "a practical activity shot through with willful actions, power relations, struggle, contradiction and change". Culture in such a view is not a coherent whole, but a situated process of dealing with the problems of social life (Liddicoat&Scarino, 2013). Thus, culture is open to the elements that are diverse and contradictory, and different interpretations may be made of the same events by individuals who may be considered to be from the same culture.

b. Intercultural English Teaching and Learning

To discuss intercultural language learning, firstly we have to know the difference between cultural and intercultural learning. There is a main difference between a cultural and an intercultural perspective as stated by Liddicoat (2005) that a cultural perspective emphasizes the culture of the other and leaves that culture external to the learner, whereas an intercultural perspective emphasizes the learners' own cultures as a fundamental part of engaging with a new culture. Accordingly, intercultural language learning does not only formulate what it means to teach a language, but also

provides newer and richer ways of linking languages to other learning areas. In terms of learning, students engage in developing cultural competence from the beginning of their language learning (Crozet et al, 1999). Liddicoat et al. (2003) also add that intercultural language learning involves developing with learners and understanding of their own language and culture in relation to an additional language and culture.

Liddicoat et al. (2003) explain that at a global level the goals of intercultural language learning are as follows.
- Understanding and valuing all languages and cultures
- Understanding and valuing one's own language and culture
- Understanding and valuing one's target language and culture
- Understanding and valuing how to mediate among languages and cultures
- Developing intercultural sensitivity as an ongoing goal.

In addition, Liddicoat et al. (2003)and Liddicoatand Scarino (2013) develop a set of principles of intercultural language learning. The principles consist of five general principles of learning, which are also fundamental to teaching and learning languages. These principles are intended to guide the curriculum design and classroom interaction to promote effective intercultural language learning. The principles consist of 1) Active construction, 2) Making connection, 3) Social Interaction, 4) Reflection, and 5) Responsibility. Each principle is discussed in the following points.

1) Active construction; generally involves the purposeful and active construction of knowledge within a sociocultural context of use in learning activities. Learning also involves active engagement in interpreting and creating meaning in interaction with others, and continually reflecting on one's self and others in communication and meaning-making in variable contexts.
2) Making connection; learning is based on previous knowledge and requires challenges to initial conceptions that learners bring. It emphasizes to the ability to relate and view the connections between cultures.
3) Social Interaction; it recognizes that learning and communication are social and interactive that means we communicate with people around us by using language that constructs an interaction.
4) Reflection; it is fundamental to any teaching and learning process that focuses on interpretation. It involves learners having response and doing reflection of other cultures as well as concepts such as diversity, identity, experiences without stereotyping.
5) Responsibility; it is a principle that recognizes that learning depends on the learner's attitudes, dispositions, and values, developed over time.

c. Teaching Intercultural English to Young Learners

As it is stated before that intercultural understanding should be introduced to students in an early stage or young learners because it is an important concept to grasp during childhood. In teaching English to young learners, teachers' role is even more important. They would become the model for learners and most important they are in the position to design instruction. Teachers for young learners should be able to provide learning which is able to accommodate students' characteristics and needs. Furthermore, Fardini (2014) suggests that the materials and contents should be employed in order to make learners aware of the intercultural mainstreams, encourage them to compare and contrast foreign cultures with theirs. In addition, Gay (2000) suggests that books and videos can help teacher and students to make different cultures come alive, especially because of the visual aspect of the input. She adds that if students can visualize how other people live, they are more likely to understand different cultures. Knowing stories in books or watching movies about other groups of people will enable them to experience what is significant to cultures other than their own. This is important because increased awareness of different groups of people can help eliminate ethnic stereotypes and lead to greater acceptance.

Furthermore, introducing intercultural understanding to young learners is better and more effective by using media such as movies and magazines. Specifically, movies are enteraining. It is always fun and interesting to watch movies especially for children. As stated by Stewart (2006), movies use language so extensively in performing their cultural work, provide approximately language use in real life, and demonstrate practical application.Roell (2010) also adds that movies are

a great medium to use not only to practice English, but also to facilitate intercultural learning. Thus, students can also learn both language and culture of English in the movie. The teachers also should be careful in selecing a good and suitable media for students with their age. And they should guide the students as well as explain what happen in the movie. The most important thin is that students can be intercultural persons, that is a person who can be critical and not judge something different by their own perspectives. They are able to accept differences and do not always think if theirs is the best and others are wrong.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study was a qualitative study on how intercultural English teaching and learning is implemented to young learners at a Junior High School inKarawang, West Java, Indonesia. To obtain various data, observations of the teaching and learning process were conducted to explore teacher and students' activities as well as their behavior and attitudes. Interview was also done with 6 students as samples out of 25 students who participated in this study. It was done to know their responses toward the movie and the process of teaching and learning itself.The data for this research were analyzed through qualitative data analysis. In general, the data analysis was done in three phases of data transformation, that is, description, analysis, and interpretation (Wolcott, 1994 as cited in Marshall &Roosman, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Consequently, all data taken from different collection methods were described, analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data is presented and analyzed one by one based on the research questions. The first analysis is about the implementation of intercultural English teaching and learning to young learners and the second is about the students' responses to the teaching and learning process.

a. The implementation of intercultural English teaching and learning to young learners.
1) Active Construction

The principle of active construction was usually done in the beginning of a meeting. In this principle, the key point is to make students active and build their prior knowledge about the topic that has already known before. A teacher can do several activities such as selecting tasks that can make students interested in learning, asking students to speak up, or encouraging students to express their opinion. The teacher provided a topic about American Educational values, and used a movie as a media to be wacthed and discussed by students. Based on the observation, the teacher provided more times to students in making comments or formulating questions based on their prior knowledge or the information they have already known about American Educational values. The teacher did it before he started the main activities. It was done to know the students' understanding towards the topic that was discussed in the meeting. Although the students had watched the movie, in fact they also had their own perspetive about American Education from different sources such as other movies and mosly internet. Some of them believe that American Education is better in many aspects than Indonesian Education.

However, in active construction, the students should be encouraged to develop personal ways of responding to linguistic and culturaldifference. So from their prior knowledge, they may see what the teacher and students in America usually say and do during in the classroom and outside. They see that teacher and students are closer each other than are in Indonesia. They add that the students in America sometimes call the teacher with his or her first name. It is certainly a diferent habit and considered bad attitude in Indonesia. It some of different culture they can see form various sources that can be observable. They, probably sitll have many perspectives about American Education. However, the teacher did not directly give feedbacks about the students' comments so the students can analyzed their understanding when they watch the movie. The teacher instruct the students to at least analyzed some points when watching the movie, such as the teacher-students relationship and students' participation in the classroom.

2) Making Connection

Making Connection is the second principle of intercultural language learning. It is the principle that allows students to connect the new culture they learn with their local or home

community, in this case the culture of American education and Indonesian Education.In the second meeting, the students had finished watching whole movie at home and they began to discuss the movie in the classroom with the teacher. The activitiy began with the teacher's question about what the students had got from the movie based on the points that had already mentioned in the first meeting that is the teacher-students relationship, students' participation, and etcetera. But, the teacher firstly asked the students about what they see and experience in their local culture or Indonesia culture of education in general. It is an activity that can be done in making connection that the teacher begins tasks with understanding that learners bring from home or their local community; draw upon the diversity of their learners. It is also to encourage learners to observe, predict, compare, explain, integrate, inquire. A comment about students' participation is taken from a student that in Indonesia, students is often shy and afraid to be active in class, and another student said that student is too shy to ask anything although they really want it, they choose to be silent than be active. If they do not understand will not ask teacher and just wondering the material. They, then continuou to reveal that the term of students centered is used. It means that all students require to be active in teaching-learning process. The teacher is just as a supervisor and a collaborator.

Another comment is about the teacher-students relationship. A student gave his view about the difference of American and Indonesia teacher in having relationship with their students. Based on the movie, it is known that in America, students and teacher have a good relationship. They can be like a friend both outside and inside the class. Both of them share their own knowledge and sometimes students ask the teacher about his/her life. It means that there is not just the teacher who gives the knowledge, but the students can also do it. In the other side, in Indonesia, students are usually reluctant and afraid even they just talk with their teacher. After giving the students opportunity to tell their perpectives, the teacher then showedthe students how bridges between the two different cultures are made. It was done to make the students understand that there is probably no wrong things in both side because it is the matter of culture that can not be generelized from one point of view.

3) Social Interaction

The principle of social interaction more emphasizes learning activities on interaction and discussion with the use of English as the target language is learned. Students are encouraged to work towards reciprocal relationships with their friends. In the discussion they directly exploring more than one culture, conceptual systems, set of values, linguistic and cultural boundaries. They also can see their own and others' cultures in a comparative light. Furtermore, the teacher's role is vital because the teachers always valued and promoted discussion to each student. For example, still in the second meeting, the teacher divided the students into several groups that consisted of 3 persons and told them to discuss their understanding with their partners with their friends. After finishing the discussion, the teacher then asked each student to present the results of their discussion to the other groups. In this part, the role of the teacher was very important because the teacher patiently guided the conversation.

The teacher never questioned any mistakes from students or any poor speaking and pronunciation. Most importantly, the teacher also drawn upon multiple ideas, knowledge, beliefs, values, and behaviours from students. At last, every student is able to communicate and interact with others. It is important for them to be engaged to communicate the linguistic and cultural boundaries as well as the linguistic and cultural difference and similarity based on their understanding through the text that have discussed.

4) Reflection

In this principle, a teacher should allow time for students for reflection. The principle of reflection focuses on interpretation of students. Teachers should encourage the students to think critically and constructively toward the differences among cultures, especially American and Indonesian cultures of education. For example, the teacher explained his understanding about educational values in the United States. He mentioned the differences between American and Indonesian culture especially about teacher-students relationship. By doing such activities, the teacher can guide the students to interpret meaning behind a cultural story of the target language that is United States. As stated by Corbett (2003) that a teacher should encourage learners to be active analystsand

interpreters of culture (including their own). In addition, by discussing English text about a case from the other countries, the students could find differences of language or culture of the target language and its own culture. Thus, the teacher has always promoted reflection on linguistic and cultural concept.

Additionally, the teacher often encouraged the students to find differences and similarities were found as well as provide clear feedback and explanation to respond to the students' opinions or answers. The teacher ensured that students become active and critical in viewing a case among cultures they have seen in the text. The students even could ask the teachers about the stereotype of a particular culture. Then the teacher made his feedback about the stereotypes. On the other hand, with this reflection, during the class, the teacher also emphasized to the students to have sensitivity between cultures in which they always appreciated the difference. The most important one is that, the teacher firmly state to students that each student must still remember and maintain their own culture and see the other cultures regardless of other culture as a wrong.

5) Responsibility

It can be said that the principle of responsibility is rarely implemented in the classroom by the teacher. Responsibility is emphasized to be owned by the students where they have the attitude and responsibility as an intercultural speaker. The attitude of responsibility was more suited seen in their daily activities where they really blend in with the community and apply their responsibility to the people. During the observation, the teacher's role was quite good. Most activities on the principle of responsibility have also been carried out on the principle of reflection, such as fostering engagement with difference. The teacher also stressed the students to continue to learn, not only in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom at home with their friends or family. Finally, the teacher encouraged the students to be able to assess themselves before they can see and judge other people and other cultures right or wrong.

b. Students' responses to the teaching and learning process.

This section discusses the data from interviews. Six students involved the interviews represented as high, middle and low achievers. The following are the sample of students' excerpt in the interview that taken randomly from each student.

R : *Apakah kamu suka kalau di kelas ada diskusi mengenai antar budaya yang berbeda?* **(Do you enjoy when there is an interactive discussion about cultural differences in the classroom?**

Student 3 : *Saya suka sekali karena kita bisa belajar budaya kebiasaan orang lain sekaligus mediskusikannya dengan teman dan guru juga.*
(I really enjoyed it because we could learn the habits of other cultures as well discuss it with other friends and the teacher).

Student 6 : *Saya sangat suka, apalagi sekarang udah jarang ada diskusi, apalagi kita bisa ngobrol langsung dengan gurunya. Materinya juga membahashal-hal kehidupan sehari-hari jadi gak terlalu berat.*
(I really enjoyed it. In fact, there is no such a discussion. We couldalso talk directly with the teacher. The materialsdiscussed were also about everyday life activities, so it was not too difficult to understand).

R :*Apakah sekarang kamu mau mendengarkan serta menghargai pendapat orang lain walaupun berbeda?* **(For now on, do you want to listen and appreciate other people's statements although it is different to yours?**

Student 1 : *Tentu saja, karena setiap pendapat itu harus dihargai walupun mungkin berbeda dengan saya.*
(Yes of course, because every opinion should be respected, although it may be different with me).

Student 3 :*Iya. Setelah mengikuti perkuliahan ini saya jadi semakin sadar kalau kita harus bisa melihat pendapat seseorang itu dari berbagai sudut pandang, bukan hanya mementingkan diri sendiri saja.*

(Yes. After following this course I became increasingly aware that we should be able to see someone's opinion from different views. We do not become a selfish person.

There are two important points that are highlighted in this section, namely the students' responsibility to value the other cultures and the students' perspective towards the diversity and difference among cultures. In general, the students claimed that they have become intercultural persons and they do not judge other cultures are worse than their own cultures. They also believed that they more appreciate the diversity and differences in their environment. They think that the diversity is a good thing as long as it gives a positive impact to people and it does not disrupt the harmony of people. On the other hand, students' statements in the data interview also support that they have been responsible as intercultural persons. In conclusion, the students' responses above show that the teaching and learning that they have participated have met the objective of the intercultural language learning that creates them to be intercultural persons and intercultural speakers or mediators, as mentioned by Byram et al (2012), Corbett (2003) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013). It will create studentswho are able to deal withcomplexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping whichis accompanied by perceiving someone through a single identity.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research questions, there are two conclusions that can be taken in this study. The first, based on observation, the intercultural English teaching and learning provides more opportunities for young learners to be more active and critical toward other language and cultures. The teacher had a good role to successfully achieve the goal of this principle that was to make the students. However, students really still need to be guided by teacher to understand some materials so it can avoid misunderstanding about other cultures. The second, based interview, the students showed a greater interest in participating in the lesson. They said that learning English and its culture was interesting, and they experienced interesting activities to find new knowledge about language and culture. The most important thing was that they claimed that they had become intercultural persons as well as in the future. Finally, it is recommended to other teachers to implement intercultural English teaching and learning in teaching English to young learners.

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