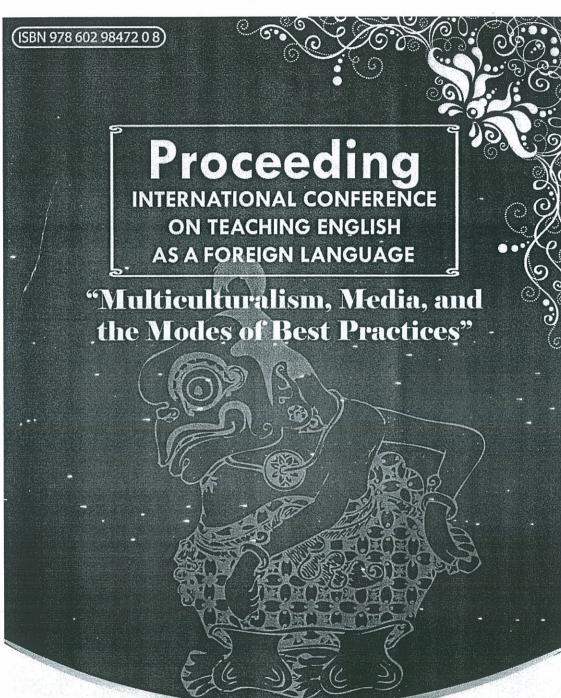




The 3rd COTEFL International Conference Fakultas Sastra Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto May, 2 - 3, 2011







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Multiculturalism, Media, and the Modes of Best Practices:

Proceeding of the 3rd Intrnational Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (COTEFL)

Editor

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Preface

"Multiculturalism, Media, and the Modes of Best Practices" is the theme of the 3rd International Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (COTEFL3) held at Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia on May 2-3, 2011. The aim of the conference is to address how the awareness of multiculturalism and the availability of the media can lead us, English language teachers, to the best practices in the teaching and learning of English.

Since the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of this new millennium, English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia has undergone changes. Formerly, it was common that the teaching of English was conducted only for the purpose of teaching English where an English teacher explained some language rules and then asked the students to do some grammatical, vocabulary, or pronunciation exercises. Nowadays, the situation is different. The practices of ELT in Indonesia have been influenced by various issues happening outside the field of ELT. This is evident from the topics presented in the conference. The theme "Multiculturalism, Media, and the Modes of Best Practices" has triggered the submission and presentation of a great number of topics on English language teaching and research, reflecting the changes in terms of types of materials, teaching and learning activities, instructional media, assessment, and how some other fields of study such as literature and translation can give insights to ELT practices. In addition, ELT practitioners and specialists have also been well-informed with regard to teaching English for learners of different ages.

This proceeding documents the papers presented in the conference. The papers compiled in this proceeding can be grouped into six major parts, although they are not necessarily presented in a particular order. These parts include: (1) The Teaching of English Language Skills, (2) Media in English Language Teaching, (3) Teaching English for Young Learners, (4) Culture and English Language Teaching, (5) Assessment in English Language Teaching, and (6) Literature, Translation, and English Language Teaching.

With the publication of this proceeding, I would like to thank the Dean of the Faculty of Letters of Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto, the chair of the organizing committee, all of the members of the organizing committee, the presenters of the conference papers, and all of the participants of the COTEFL3 who have worked cooperatively for a single goal, namely the success of the conference. It is expected that this proceeding will be beneficial for all parties, more particularly English language teachers, lecturers, instructors, and those who are interested in developing their knowledge and expertise in various topics of English language teaching and research.

Editor

Bambang Yudi Cahyono
Professor in Applied Linguistics at State University of Malang

Acknowledgement

The papers in this volume are presented at the 3rd COTEFL (Conference on Teaching English as A Foreign Language) held May 2-3, 2011 in Purwokerto, Indonesia. The International Conference is devoted to researchers, practitioners, developers, anybody who wants to share his/her thought in English teaching. At this 3rd chance we focus on the awareness of multiculturalism and the availability of media. Both are to help us studying the best practices in learning and teaching English.

The spirit to bring anybody from some nations together here is to foster further cooperation and exchange of ideas. As Allah says in Quran, Al Hujurat:13, "Ya ayyuha alnnasu inna khalaqnakum min thakarin waontha waja'alnakum shu'ooban waqabaila lita'arafoo inna akramakum'inda Allahi atqakum inna Allaha 'aleemun khabeerun' that means: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)." Translated into English by Yusuf Ali.

We would like to thank all of those who submitted abstracts for consideration, the referee for their invaluable contribution, and the members of the Organizing Committee for all their time and effort. We gratefully acknowledge support from all of you.

Finally have a nice stay in Purwokerto and have a fruitful conference!

Dean of Letters Faculty

Titik Wahyuningsih, S.S., M.Hum.

Table of Contents

Publicationi
Preface
Acknowledgementvi
Table of Contentsix
Language Learning for Intercultural Understanding By Prof. Anthony J. Liddicoat
Target Culture in English Language Teaching: Prospective English Teachers' Perspectives By Prof. Bambang Yudi Cahyono, M.A, Ph.D
Multiethnoculturalism and Democracy In Indonesia By Dr. Aris Arif Mundayat, M.A26
Enhancing Learner Autonomy in Research Project Work through the Internet, CLL, and C-R By Amporn Sa-ngiamwibool, Ph.D
Tense and Aspect in English: From Descriptive Grammar to Pedagogical Grammar for EFL Learners in Indonesia By Prof. Dr. Jufrizal, M. Hum
Developing Genre-Based Rubrics for Assessing Students' Explanation Texts By Refnaldi
Do Native English Speakers Need to be Qualified in Order to Teach English in Indonesia? By Rina Agustina, S.S., MApplLing TESOL
Poetry, Gender and Teaching: Building Students' Character through Multicultural Literature By Asih Sigit Padmanugraha64
Multiculturalism in ELT as the Weapon to Increase English Competence and Increase Local Cultural Awareness and Multiculturalism Tolerance for Preserving the World Biodiversity By Hj. Like Raskova Octaberlina, M.Ed
Cultural Substitution Strategy to Enhance Cultural Awareness By Harris H. Setiajid, Aluysia Vicka Tunjung Sari and Winda A. Djohar

Improving Students' Ability in Narrative Writing through Guided Question (GQ) By Sarwadi, S. Pd, M.Pd	238
Teaching English in Indonesian primary schools: The missing link By SanthyHawanti, S.Pd., M.Pd	245
Understanding Multiculturalism through Classroom Writing Activities By Sukarno	252
Promoting Multi-cultural Approach in English Language Teaching and Learning By Margana	258
Multiculturalism and Cross Cultural Understanding English as a Multicultural Communication Tools for All By Naomi Kawasaki	265
Discourse Play behind the English Use By Dr. Titis Srimuda Pitana, S.T., M.Trop.Arch	268
Teori Belajar Gestalt dan Aplikasinya dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris By M. Kharis	273
The Implementation of Self Talk Strategy to Improve The Student'Speaking Ability By Dra. Endar Yuniarti, M.Hum	280

Promoting Multi-cultural Approach in English Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

So far, there has been a change of a paradigm in the process of English language teaching and learning (ELTL) in Indonesia from transmission model to constructivism model. The change of the paradigm is due to the fact that students of any level of education are heterogeneous in nature in the sense that they come from different cultural backgrounds in terms of their English language proficiency, ethnicity, prior knowledge, social status, geographical backgrounds, students' characteristics, and the like. There is also an imbalance of English language proficiency between English teachers of secondary school levels and their students. This suggests that in the process of English language teaching and learning English teachers have to take into account students' insufficient ability or knowledge of the target language leading to carefully selecting the appropriate approach in order to minimize stress on the part of students. A multicultural approach can be one of the alternatives to be applied in ELTL in any level of education. It is an approach which attempts to accommodate students' needs instead of teachers' wants. This approach is aimed at facilitating students to successfully achieve the target language and use it in contexts by making use of their prior knowledge and experience about the target language. In support of the issue, Liddicoat (2002) lists some characteristics of the multicultural approach. They include (1) making use of students' knowledge of the language and the ability to use it, (2) socializing the culture of another group, (3) driving students to be familiar with their own language and culture through making comparison with the target language and culture, (4) directing students how to communicate in contexts, and (5) providing students with some ways to communicate across cultural boundaries. In reference to the above issues, the multicultural approach is the incorporation between language and its cultural and social contexts. This is based on the assumption that language cannot be separated from its social and cultural contexts (Liddicoat et al., 2003). In other words, the multicultural approach does not rely on the cognitive enrichment of the four macro-language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in relation to students' overall development of literacy skills as the traditional approach promotes. Use of the target language in contexts and the application of a learner-centered mode have to be highly emphasized in the process of English language teaching and learning.

Key words:

(1) Transmission Model, (2) Constructivism Model, (3) Multicultural Approach

A. Introduction

The recent dramatic increase of the awareness of the student diversity in terms of linguistic and cultural backgrounds drives English teachers and lecturers to rethink the application of the approach in English teaching and learning process from elementary school level to university one. This relies on the fact that students are heterogeneous in nature in the

sense that students come from different cultural backgrounds in terms of their English language proficiency, ethnicity, prior knowledge, social status, geographical backgrounds, students' characteristics, and the like. This suggests that in the process of English language teaching and learning English teachers or lecturers have to take into account students' insufficient ability or knowledge of the target language leading to carefully selecting the appropriate approach in order to minimize stress on the part of students.

So far, the approach of the transmission model applied by a great number of English teachers and lecturers in English teaching and learning process perform unsatisfactory results in terms of English proficiency both spoken and written forms. There are only few students who perform excellent use of English as found by the writer when he is involved in teaching English in some universities in Yogyakarta. Added to this, from year to year, students of state university of Yogyakarta and other universities show unsatisfactory score of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) which is less than 400 in average. This fact seems to be ridiculous as students have been studying English for 9 years that is three years at elementary school level, and 6 years in secondary school level.

In reference to the above issue, English teachers and lecturers have to make some efforts to figure out the problem. One of the efforts that can be conducted is seeking out the appropriate approach which accommodates students' needs and backgrounds as they are heterogeneous in nature. To do so, English teachers and lecturers may apply multicultural approach in their teaching as the application of the approach is believed to accommodate their students' need and diversity. This is based on the belief that language can be well acquired when the way of teaching and learning involves learners' cultural backgrounds. In addition, language plays a central role in transmitting the cultural codes, language forms and the messages. To do this, English teachers and lecturers have to incorporate both systemic knowledge and schematic knowledge when they are involved in English teaching and learning process.

With regard to the issue of the use of multicultural approach, this paper attempts to review the strengths of the multicultural approach in English language teaching and learning. To easily understand the main point of this paper, the writer systematizes his writing into two main issues which include (1) the notion of multicultural approach, and (2) a review of the transmission model or called behaviorism approach, constructivism approach, and multicultural approach used in English language teaching and learning. To end the discussion, some final remarks are made. Each is presented below.

B. Three Main Approaches in Teaching English

In teaching English, there are some approaches that can be applied by English teachers and lecturers. The approach can be transmission model or called behaviorism approach, constructivism approach, and multicultural approach. Each approach is applicable in the process of English teaching and learning depending on the belief of English teachers and lecturers and students' characteristics. Each is reviewed below.

The behaviorism approach is clearly reviewed by Demirezen (1988) who claims that there are at least five operating principles of behaviorism model. First, learning language should dwell on spoken rather than written because second language learners have to learn speaking before they learn writing and reading. Second, English language teaching and learning should promote a habit formation as language is primary controlled by the consequences of behavior. This leads to a belief that memorization should be promoted to learners in order to maximally acquire the target language. Added to this, second language learners have to focus on language

forms instead of functions. Brooks and Brooks (1993) claim that the behaviorism approach gives an emphasis on giving information and performance of the habits. Third, stimulus-response becomes the big issue in the behaviorism model as language learners tend to learn when they are given a stimulus. This implies that learners are the object of change not the agent of change. Fourth, reinforcement and reward are of great importance to establish learners' habits formation. Fifth, language learning can be the same for each individual. In other words, second language learners are equal in learning language.

The above approach is still applied by a number of English teachers and lecturers although criticisms are launched by many experts. The following presents the criticisms of the existence of the behaviorism approach. First, a great number of mistakes made by second language learners are not successfully explained as second language learners are creative in nature enabling them to create mistakes by making an analogy or generalizing the phenomena observed. Second, there is no clear explanation of the social influence of learning. Third, it is unlikely for learning to be the same for each individual as each learner is unique in the sense that the learners are linguistically and culturally different. Imitation seems to be applicable when the learners are in early childhood period. Fourth, learning English is too complex as it is influenced by intervening variables which cannot be traced from stimulus and response.

With regard to the above arguments, the constructivism approach is promoted to cope with the weaknesses of the behaviorism approach. The constructivism approach is defined as innovative way of teaching which is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners actively engaged in a process of meaning and knowledge construction rather than passively receiving information from teachers or lecturers. Learners play an important role as the agent of change. They are fostered to develop their critical thinking skills and to autonomously learn English. English Teaching and learning process is designed in interactive ways so that second language learners are able to construct the experience of language learning according to their own efforts. The mode of English language and learning should be learner-centered. Knowledge of is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of language development. classroom interaction, learners are encouraged to make use of their experiences to make hypotheses and generalization in reference to the evidences that they observe. Added to this, the constructivism approach is characterized by the following issues which include (1) using a process approach not a product one, (2) promoting learner-centered, (3) involving negotiation, (4) promoting interactive activities, (5) sharing power and control on the part of teachers and learners, and (6) creating a democratic atmosphere.

In support of the above claims, Fosnot (1989) lists four operating principles of the constructivism approach. First, learning depends on what learners already know. Second, new ideas occur as learners adapt and change their old ideas. Third, learning involves inventing ideas rather than mechanically accumulating facts. Finally, meaningful learning tends to occur through rethinking old ideas and bringing new ideas which conflict with old ideas. In support of the four operating principles, there are four assumptions of the application of the constructivism approach. First, knowledge is personal and subjective. This implies that multiple interpretations of events are valued and acknowledged. Second, teachers serve as facilitators who provide students with an authentic, student-centered and problem-based learning environment. Third, through promoting reflection, group discussion, and all other forms of thinking and interaction, second language learners are driven to build an understanding of the target language. To do so, English teachers and lecturers are encouraged to promote a variety group or peer activities. Fourth, judgment is delayed or given to community authority and negation.

In line with the above discussion, Piaget in Ellis (2004) asserts that learning is carried out by an active construction of meaning rather than by passive recipience. Further, he says that a state of disequilibrium (a state of conflicting old ideas with new ideas) is important in the process of English language teaching and learning because it triggers learners to achieve the equilibrium state by accommodating the new information to their old ways of thinking to restructure their present knowledge to a higher level of thinking. In reference to this, language classroom activities should be designed for the sake of dragging learners to be actively involved in developing their critical thinking to invent and construct new ideas. To do so, English teachers make attempts to create conducive environments which enable learners to construct their own understanding. For example, in teaching reading, English teachers or lecturers do not dwell on asking learners to read the provided texts followed by answering and checking comprehension questions. English teachers or lecturers provide learners with group work discussions to analyze the texts and make sense of the text with the use of their own understanding supported by the reasons.

In reference to the above discussion, Bae (2004: 5) presents the major characteristics of constructivism in contrast with the transmission model.

Table 1. Contrasting Paradigms: Constructivism vs. the Transmission Model

Issues	Constructivism	Transmission model
Epistemology	- personal & subjective	- impersonal & objective
	 (relates to prior knowledge not fixed (multiple perspectives are valued) impermanent descriptive 	 (not related to prior knowledge & experience) & experience) fixed (seeking one right answer) permanent prescriptive
Teaching	- teacher as facilitator	- teacher as supervisor
Learning	- collaboration/dialogue/ group discussion	- individual work
Assessment	not evaluative (judgment not involved or delayed)given to community authority and negotiation	evaluative (judgment involved)given to individual expert/ teacher

The above table performs that knowledge is seen as personal, subjective, and flexible in constructivism, while it is considered objective and fixed under the transmission model. Under constructivism, teachers serve as facilitators who provide students with an authentic and student-centered learning environment, while under the transmission model; teachers are seen as authoritative transmitters of knowledge. In the constructivist classroom, learning is carried out through a variety of group activities among students or through dialogues with peers or teachers, while under the transmission model, learning occurs mainly due to the teacher's lecture or guidance. Finally, constructivism believes that judgment should be avoided or, if necessary, given to community authority and negotiation, while the transmission model assumes that judgment is made mainly on objective criteria set by school authorities. Therefore, a constructivist approach is student centered, focusing on how students make meaning out of experience rather than on how well they memorize already constructed facts and generalizations.

In reference to the two above approaches, some criticisms are presented by many experts. The constructivism approach to some extent does not work for students who have insufficient English proficiency. Bae (2004) claims that second language learners who lack their social and linguistic competence tend to be reluctant to actively engage in the student-centered group activities. Nieto (2000) says that Asian students including Indonesian students are more used to learning language in isolation by memorizing the forms (grammar, vocabulary, and the like) than to working in groups or in pairs. Second language learners may feel uncomfortable in a classroom environment which is designed in informal way. According to McCarty and Schwandt (2000), the popular conception of active learners equal to high achievers and passive learners equal to low achievers to some extent seems to be misleading. They argue that learners who are passive in oral interaction can be successful learners in reading and writing. This implies that the use of constructivism approach should be rethought when it is applied for students who are categorized as limited English proficiency. In other words, English teachers and lecturers have to be aware of accepting the conflicting values and expectations of those students and to adjust their own values toward what constitutes good students. Such an issue is concerned with the use of multicultural approach in the process of English teaching and learning.

The term multicultural approach refers to an approach which gives an emphasis on accommodating students' different inventories of language, prior knowledge, experiences, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds from those of their mainstream peers. This is based on the belief that second language learners are heterogeneous in nature. Therefore, the English teaching and learning should be devoted to learners' needs considering the diversity of the learners in terms of linguistic, cultural, psychological, and social issues. Liddicoat (2002) states some characteristics of the multicultural approach which include (1) making use of students' knowledge of the language and the ability to use it, (2) socializing the culture of another group, (3) driving students to be familiar with their own language and culture through making comparison with the target language and culture, (4) directing students how to communicate in contexts, and (5) providing students with some ways to communicate across cultural boundaries. Further, Liddicoat (2002:5) notes "culture shapes what we say, when we say it, and how we say it from the simplest language we use to the most complex. It is fundamental to the way we speak, write, listen and read." In relation to this, language has a central role in the transmission of cultural codes; language forms and the messages conveyed by them provide cultural knowledge. Hence it is impossible to separate between language and culture. Consequently, the use of multicultural approach challenges language teachers to identify ways of properly incorporating culture into language learning and language into culture learning.

Liddicoat et al, (2003:50-54) offers five operating principle in applying the multicultural approach. They are (1) active construction, (2) making connections, (3) social interaction, (4) doing reflection, and (5) sharing responsibility. Active construction deals with exploring language and culture through active engagement and developing a personal, multi-faceted intercultural space. Making connections occurs when relevant bridges are built between home language/culture and target language/ culture, with existing knowledge positioned in light of new input. Social interaction is concerned with communicating across linguistic and cultural boundaries, identifying the boundaries and why they are built. Doing reflection involves engaging in critical, constructive analysis of linguistic and cultural similarity and difference; reflection on one's own intercultural behaviors' and naming one's own identity. Sharing responsibility drives learners to accept responsibility for contributing to successful communication across languages and cultures, and for the development of intercultural perspectives.

Added to this, Lundgreen (2009) states that with the use of multicultural approach in English language teaching and learning, English teachers and lecturers should deal with three types of competence which include communicative competence, cultural competence, and intercultural competence. The communicative competence embodies the knowledge of language (systemic knowledge), namely the macro language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and micro-language skills (lexico-grammar, pronunciation, and the like). Cultural competence refers to the knowledge of learners' own culture and of the target culture in the fields of everyday culture, popular culture, ideas, beliefs, perceptions, artifacts, customs, behaviors, and others. Intercultural competence in concerned with an understanding of a cross curricular general proficiency which includes adaptability, tolerance, accepting other views, empathy, flexibility, cultural awareness, stereotype, and others.

In line with the use of the multicultural approach, English teachers and lecturers are asked to do with need survey and need analysis before they make a contract of learning with their learners. With regard to the need survey and need analysis, they can design the appropriate syllabi which accommodate the diversity of learners. Also, they can select the appropriate materials, tasks, methods, techniques, media and others which are directed to cope with the diversity of the learners.

C. Final Remarks

In reference to the above discussion, it is evident that the use of multicultural approach is believed to facilitate learners to acquire the target language as it humanizes learners in the process of English teaching and learning. In addition, the multicultural approach is directed to accommodate the linguistic and cultural diversity on the part of second language learners. With the use of multicultural approach, second language learners can shape their intercultural awareness. This implies that English teachers and lecturers are encouraged to popularize the application of the multicultural approach when they are involved in the process of English teaching and learning. In addition, they have to make an attempt to provide various materials, various methods, media, and the like to accommodate learners' interests. Second language learners should be familiar with three types of competences, namely three types of competence which include communicative competence, cultural competence, and intercultural competence as reviewed above.

About The Author

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