

Research

MAKING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AS THE GOAL OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL INDONESIA: SOME THOUGHTS.

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Drawing on the phenomenon that English is now an international language and the fact that Indonesia is a multicultural country; this paper argues that there is a need to change the goal of English teacher education in Indonesia from gaining communicative competence (CC) into obtaining intercultural communication competence (ICC). By having the ICC, Indonesian EFL learners or the future Indonesian English teacher generally will be able to communicate successfully with people from other cultures without having to lose their cultural identity and promote their cultures to other English speakers. Particularly, this paper tries to discuss three subjects as follow: 1) Why is it necessary to change the goal of English teacher education in Indonesia? 2) What are the challenges and opportunities of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia? 3) How should the challenges and opportunities be employed as a means to reach the new goal? In order to answer the aforementioned questions, some previous studies and literatures are explored and reviewed, in particular previous studies related to English teacher education and language teaching in Indonesia. Finally, it is expected that this paper can provide a new insight for English language planners in Indonesia.

Keywords: intercultural, communicative, competence, English, education

การใช้ความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมเป็นเป้าหมายการศึกษาของครูภาษาอังกฤษในหลากหลายทางวัฒนธรรมในอินโดนีเซีย: ความคิดของชาวอินโดนีเซียบางกลุ่ม

บทคัดย่อ

เนื่องจากในขณะนี้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาสากลและจากเนื่องจากอินโดนีเซียเป็นประเทศที่มีวัฒนธรรมหลากหลาย บทความนี้ระบุว่ามีความจำเป็นต้องเปลี่ยนเป้าหมายการศึกษาของครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศอินโดนีเซียจากความสามารถในการสื่อสาร (CC) เป็นความสามารถในการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม (ICC) การสื่อสารแบบ ICC นักศึกษา EFL อินโดนีเซีย หรือครูภาษาอังกฤษอินโดนีเซียในอนาคตโดยทั่วไปจะสามารถประสบความสำเร็จในการติดต่อสื่อสารกับผู้คนจากวัฒนธรรมอื่น ๆ ได้โดยไม่ต้องสูญเสียเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของตนแต่ส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรมของตนต่อผู้พูดภาษาอังกฤษชาติอื่น ๆ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งบทความนี้พยายามที่จะอภิปรายสามอย่างดังต่อไปนี้: 1) ทำไมจึงจำเป็นต้องเปลี่ยนเป้าหมายการศึกษาของครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศอินโดนีเซีย 2) อะไรเป็นสิ่งท้าทายและโอกาสในการใช้ ICC เป็นเป้าหมายสำหรับการศึกษาของครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศอินโดนีเซีย 3) จะใช้ความท้าทายและโอกาสไปสู่เป้าหมายใหม่อย่างไร เพื่อที่จะตอบคำถามดังกล่าวข้างต้นได้มีการสำรวจและศึกษาทบทวนวรรณกรรมต่างๆ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการศึกษาของครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษและการสอนภาษาในประเทศอินโดนีเซีย หายสงสัยคิดว่าบทความนี้สามารถให้ข้อมูลเชิงลึกใหม่สำหรับนักวางแผนภาษาอังกฤษในประเทศอินโดนีเซีย

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Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural country which has been successful in making *Bahasa* Indonesia, the language of the elite which was only spoken by 2% of the population at the moment of Indonesia's independence, to be a lingua franca for more than 200 millions speakers with their heterogeneous cultural identities and backgrounds. Some researchers even say that it is a "miraculous success" (Woolard 2000), "a great success" (Bukhari 1996: 19) and "perhaps even the most spectacular linguistic phenomenon of our age" (Alisjahbana 1962: 1). Despite its successful language planning for making *Bahasa* Indonesia the national language, Indonesia has to face a continuous failure in helping its people to gain competence in English which is now a lingua franca in the world and increasingly being used in public domains of communication in Indonesia, e.g. education, business and entertainment. A number of researchers recognize the unsatisfactory results of the teaching of EFL in Indonesia (Alisjahbana 1990, Tomlinson 1990). According to

Mantiri (2004), the disappointing outcome is due to Indonesia's complex problems regarding its ELT: hardware problems (e.g., facilities, facilitators, and students) and software problems (e.g., policies, curriculum, and education system). In regard to the software problems, Bire (2011) states that there is a mismatch in the components of the objective, contents, methods and evaluation of eight Indonesia's English curricula. The mismatch surely affects Indonesian EFL students' English development and Priyino (2004) mentions that, "teachers and educators tend to identify the methodology as the scapegoat (17).

Besides the causes of ELT's failure in Indonesia that are mentioned above, this paper aims at presenting what might be another cause of Indonesia's failure in developing its people's English competence based on what teachers and students in MCU (Maranatha Christian Univeristy) have experienced. In MCU learners can study English in the English Department or D3 English Programme. These learners are from many places around Indonesia. In their classes they are taught and expected to gain a native-like competence with British or American accents; however, only few can gain the competence. Moreover, although both English Department and D3 English Programme are not an English teaching education institution, they provide some compulsory and elective courses related to English teaching education. Nearly 50% of their graduates become English teachers in kindergarten until senior high schools and some of them teach in some universities. Similar to their students, most of the teachers who teach in the English Department or D3 English Programme have a bachelor degree in English literature. Some of these teachers continue their study and gain a master degree in TESOL, applied linguistic, linguistic, or literature. There are two teachers that have a doctoral degree in linguistics. There are nine teachers who used to live in a community where English is used as a medium of communication. Only three teachers had a formal training for developing their intercultural competence and knowledge of World Englishes (WE) when taking their master degree. Thus, these facts entail that there is a need to analyze what might be the problem of ELT in MCU and also Indonesia and find ways to improve both teachers' and students' English competence so that they can be a competent English user of English as Lingua Franca.

Particularly, this paper tries to discuss three subjects as follow: 1) Why is it necessary to change the goal of English teacher education in Indonesia? 2) What are the challenges and opportunities of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia? 3) How should the challenges and

opportunities be employed as a means to reach the new goal?. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, some previous studies and literatures are explored and reviewed, in particular previous studies related to English teaching specifically in MCU and generally in Indonesia. Finally, it is expected that this paper can provide a new insight for English teachers in MCU and in all English teaching institutions in Indonesia.

Discussion

This part presents information a discussion to answer three subjects given in the previous part. In line with the rationale above, the discussion is divided into three parts, each of which will try to answer the questions mentioned in the introduction respectively. The first part presents a discussion on the necessary of the language policy makers to change the goal of English teacher education in Indonesia. The second part discusses the challenges and opportunities of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia. The last part contains a discussion on how the challenges and opportunities can be employed as a means to reach the new goal.

The need to change goal of English teacher education in Indonesia

Currently, English curriculum of both MCU and Indonesia adopts so-called communicative competence (CC) as its model of competence (Depdiknas 2003). Thus, the EFL learners in MCU and perhaps in other institutions in Indonesia are expected to gain an English native-like competence if they want to be considered successful. Although they do not plan to be an English teacher, the standard of success will likely remain the same.

With the likely fast increase in intercultural contacts between Asian countries nowadays as well as of the changing educational demands following technological developments and economics growth in the world, it appears that the goal of ELT in Indonesia which is CC is not relevant anymore and it will only create frustration among teachers and learners. It is like that since gaining CC or a native-like competence is a utopian goal for EFL and ESL learners. According to Altpekin, CC fails to reflect the lingua franca status of English and Widdowson (1998) states that "the language which is real for native speakers is not likely to be real for nonnative speakers" (cited in Altpekin 2002). In other words, CC should not be the

goal of English learning anymore in MCU and also in other English teaching institutions in Indonesia. There is an urgent need to have a new English learning goal that is reachable and its pedagogy can prepare learners 'to be both global and local speakers of English and to feel at home in both international and national cultures' (Kramsch and Sullivan 1996: 211).

Some researchers have proposed a new goal to replace CC. It is intercultural communicative competence (ICC). There is an array of ICC concepts. Some of them are, "intercultural communicative competence" also sometimes is referred to as "intercultural competence" (Arasaratnam 2005; Byram 1997; Parmenter 2003) or "global competence", "cross-cultural competence" or "intercultural sensitivity" (Greenholz 2005). Byram and his colleagues have developed one of the most influential approaches for the teaching of culture. Byram's intercultural communicative competence contains five types of competencies, which are called 'savoirs'. The first one is *savoir être*, related to attitudes and values which consist of curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures, and belief about one's own. The second one is *savoirs*, which refers to the knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction. The third one is *savoir comprendre* which is concerned with the skills of interpreting and relating. In other words, it refers to the ability to interpret a document or event from another and or event from another culture, to explain it, and relate it to documents of one's own. The fourth one, *savoir apprendre/faire* is related to the skills of discovery and interaction or the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. The fifth one, *savoir s'engager* is connected to critical cultural awareness and/or political education, which means having the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (1995: 57–66, 1997: 31–54). In addition, Byram and Fleming (1998: 9) define "the intercultural speaker" as "someone who has a knowledge of one or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has a capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared. According to Jaeger, the intercultural speaker has an active role when players in intercultural communication learn "to see, accept and respect each other as equal although different beings – different precisely in the way that their respective national/ethnic cultures define" (2001: 56). Therefore, should Indonesian

EFL learner have a new reachable goal which is ICC, they will become interculturally competent users of ELF who are also efficient and active interpreters of the utterances of their English-speaking interlocutors, both native and non-native English speakers.

The challenges and opportunities of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia

In regard to opportunities of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia, the main opportunity of making ICC as the goal for English education in Indonesia is to have a new reachable goal and leave the utopian goal which measures the success of the learner's performance to that of an ideal native speaker. By embracing ICC as the goal of English language education goal, it will give English educators an array of opportunities to English teacher education in Indonesia. They can create *intercultural learner*" who is linguistically adept (although not 'native speaker' proficient) who has skills which enable him or her to identify cultural norms and values that are often implicit in the language and behaviour of the groups he or she meets, and who can articulate and negotiate a position with respect to those norms and values" (Corbett 2007: 41). Besides, in their attempt to gain ICC, learners will have opportunities to confront their culturally constructed worlds and cultural assumptions while learning English and learn more about themselves. In other words, this intercultural learner does not have to sacrifice his/her own mother tongue and the culture associated with it but enriches them through the learning of other languages.

Regarding the challenges that might be faced in an attempt of making ICC as the goal for English teacher education in Indonesia, teachers' ICC might be the biggest challenge. In the study of Siregar (2010) fourteen tertiary English teachers in MCU acknowledge themselves as moderate intercultural learners who have more intercultural knowledge about rather than skills and attitudes for intercultural communication. These fourteen teachers do not represent the whole picture of English teachers in Indonesia; however, they are the real examples of what some or maybe most of Indonesian English teacher perceive about themselves. They are the product of a curriculum which goal is to gain CC. Thus, there is a big possibility that these English teachers and perhaps other English teachers in Indonesia still have a strong belief that the ideal or best goal of their students' English learning is a native like competence. Their belief will surely influence their teaching. Should this belief keep being passed on from teachers to their students, the ELT in Indonesia would likely have a continuous problem.

Therefore, there is a need for English teacher education in Indonesia to move toward a new reachable goal which is ICC.

Research studies indicate that the notion of intercultural competence in foreign language education has created new professional demands on foreign language teachers, as they need to equip themselves with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to attain the goal (e.g. Moran 2001). They play a major role in the cultivation of intercultural communication competence. In other words, it is necessary to start training teachers and pre-service teachers to develop their intercultural communication first before requesting them to develop their students' intercultural competence. It follows that, not only do the teachers' role have to be redefined, but, more fundamentally, they may also be in the position of having to adjust their own perspectives with regard to foreign language teaching and alter their teaching approaches. They have to start embracing an intercultural approach in their teaching. The approach itself is grounded on "a renewed understanding of the nature of cross-cultural encounters and a deeper understanding of the links between language and culture" (Liddicoat 1999 in Lo Bianco et al., 1999: 9). The approach can guide teachers to go beyond lists of "Dos and Don'ts". In other words, although it is important to provide learners with knowledge of foreigners' customs, habits, etc, it is more important to make learners respect and curious of other cultures. Giving only the knowledge of other cultures to learners can only foster the idea that foreigners have an array of odd as well as amusing customs and indirectly make them to forget that they might actually seem odd and amusing to an outside observer.

Another challenge is the modern technology. Kramersch (1991) points out how television creates the illusion of immediate mediation among cultures. Television presents programs and movies which often contain stereotypes of other cultures. Not a few teachers employ these materials when teaching cultures and end up stuffing their students with only stereotypes. Scollon and Scollon (2001) argue that stereotypes can have a positive effect on our attempts to understand other cultures since there is always an element of truth and accurate cultural observation in them. However, they also caution that in order to avoid the problem of oversimplification and stereotyping, 'the comparisons between groups should always consider both likenesses and differences, that is, they should be based upon more than a single dimension of contrast, and it must be remembered that no individual member of a group embodies all of his or her group's characteristics' (157). In other words, not only must teachers prevent learners from developing stereotypes into prejudiced views, but also make their learners understand that humans,

“are irreducibly unique and different, and that I could have been you, you could have been me, given different circumstances” (Kramersch 1996: 3).

The availability of textbooks containing varieties of cultures is also a challenge. Kumaravadivelu (2002) mentions that it is not easy to design intercultural lessons due to the scarcity of appropriate teaching materials. In Indonesian context, it cannot be denied that most of English books used in Indonesia are produced by native speakers of English. Thus, they tend to expose learners to cultures of English native speakers only and it is not adequate for the development of their intercultural competence.

Besides Indonesia’s geo-political context is also a challenge. When embracing intercultural communicative competence as the goal, it means learners’ place must be considered. “If learners live in a situation where they have no face-to-face interaction with native speakers of a language, their needs will be different from those who are in constant contact, as visitors or hosts, or those who mainly use the language as a *lingua franca*” (Robotjazi 2008: 255) Indonesia consists of five big islands and many small islands and learners who live in these islands have their own types of future communication needs contact.

Making use of the challenges and opportunities to reach the new goal

Being a large country, Indonesia has a big challenge in providing an array need of different learners. However, this challenge can actually become a priceless source to reach a new goal. Inviting learners to reflect on their heterogeneous background can be a good start to develop their intercultural sensitivity and awareness and a springboard to improve their intercultural competence in English. The learners can talk about the result of their reflection in English then explore and discuss matters concerning cultures of other English users. In addition, the study of Siregar and Henni (2010) among MCU’s EFL learners shows that the participants’ goal in learning English is not to gain communicative competence, but to gain intercultural communicative competence. This finding implies that there a mismatch between MCU’s ELT goal and students’ goal. This mismatch will be advantageous when applying ICC as a new goal.

Concerning the lack of textbooks containing intercultural components, teachers should try to see this challenge as an opportunity to use texts including local cultures and cultures of non-native speakers of English taken from internet, newspapers or other reliable sources. For example is teachers

can use Indonesian soap operas and Korean soap operas in their teaching and ask their students to reflect and discuss the representation of Indonesian and Korean people in English. From their reflection and discussion they can improve their understanding of their own cultures and other cultures. The lesson can begin with the reflection and discussion of Indonesian culture. Straub (1999) argues the cultural learning should start with learning students about their culture since it will raise the students', "awareness that they are members of a particular culture. By exploring their own culture, students acquire the vocabulary with which to describe values, expectations, behaviors, traditions, customs, rituals, forms of greeting, cultural signs, and identity symbols familiar to them." (3). Then, the more that they can articulate their own cultures, the more likely they are to recognise similarities and differences between Indonesian and other cultures. In addition, McKay (2002) emphasises the use of materials that include the learners' culture, the target culture, and international culture. She states that "the materials should be used in such a way that students are encouraged to reflect on their own culture in relation to others, thus helping to establish a sphere of interculturality" (p. 100). Therefore, teachers can still use textbooks containing British and American cultures but they need to give other materials consisting of learners' cultures and cultures of other non-native speakers of English. Besides, Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002: 24) states that, "...It is more important that learners acquire skills of analysis than factual information." In other words, teachers must not only focus on the cultural information included in their students' textbooks but they must focus more on development of the students' intercultural skill.

Conclusion

The paper has underlined the importance of making ICC as the goal of English education in multicultural Indonesia. By giving Indonesia learners of English with an opportunity to achieve a reachable goal which might help them become more efficient interpreters of the utterances of their English-speaking interlocutors, as well as users of English as a lingua franca. To meet this new goal, teachers of English should first be intercultural speakers themselves so that they will be able to guide and teach their students to become more proficient users of the ELF. Implementing the intercultural approach is a challenging, demanding task for the language teacher, who must possess at least some intercultural knowledge and almost none intercultural skills; therefore, having an intercultural training can be a start for educating English teacher who were "the product of CC". In classes of

future English teacher replacing some materials consisting of English native speakers' cultures with materials containing varieties of cultures (local cultures and English non-native speakers) can also be beneficial to develop learners' awareness and sensitivity of intercultural communication.

To end this paper I would like to make the following recommendations as to how English education in Indonesia could be developed in a more intercultural direction:

- The role of English as a lingua franca should be emphasised, and EFL teaching in Indonesia should aim at making the students cultural mediators and competent intercultural language users, rather than unsuccessful, deficient native speakers.
- The teaching of English should not be limited to teaching cultures of Great Britain, the USA and Australia and only based on the English native speakers' standards but it must be based on students' need or local need and it should prepare learners "to be both global and local speakers of English and to feel at home in both international and national cultures" (Kramsch and Sullivan 1996: 211)
- Teaching culture should not be stuffing students with massive cultural information but developing students' values and ways of thinking.

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