

DEVELOPING CRITICAL CULTURE AWARENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM FOR COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Normalela

English Education Department of IAIN Bukittinggi

Meilanie Zohra

English Education Department of IAIN Bukittinggi

e-mail: lelaaj9@gmail.com

Abstract

As the dramatic technology changes, interconnected community from different national, ethnic, and religious cultural background is something that cannot be refused in this globalization era. The question appeared by the phenomenal is what happens when people from different cultures interact between one another? The answer is of course there is a big possibility that the thing such as cross-cultural problems will appear. As students who learn English as their foreign language, this kind of problem is something that will be faced by them. Therefore, how to understand the culture of the native language is a salient thing to do in order to achieve the goal of the communication. Unfortunately, many teachers are not careful on this kind of thing and they just focus on teaching the pattern of the language. As a result, students will have a problem when they got to do the communication with the English native speakers. Increasing critical culture awareness is the solution to overcome this problem where this is also a major trend in EFL field nowadays. As Byram mentions why students should learn the culture of the target language is because the foreign learner should know the culture of the society in which the language is spoken. Hence, the objective of this paper is to propose the development of critical cultural awareness for the effectiveness of communication.

Key words: *Critical Culture Awareness, Foreign Learner, Communicative Effectiveness*

A. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a way for people to interact between one another. The way for them to communicate is by using language. Language is used to send and receive information toward one another. There are many languages that are used to communicate in this world and one of them is English. English is an international language that is used by many people to interact between one another. As a result, there is no doubt that English language is learnt by almost all countries in the world including those whose first language is not English or on another word is English is not their mother tongue. As students who learn English as their foreign language where the goal is to be able to do the communication in the target language, the main problem that they face is the uneffectiveness of communication. There are so many reasons why the communication can

be ineffective, and one of the reason is due to lack understanding of culture. When someone do the conversation between one another, they bring the essential thing that is culture that represent who they are. Language is an important part of culture where they cannot be separated. According to Tang in Chahak et al (2012) culture is language and language is culture. Hence this is important for teacher to not only teach about language but also to teach about the culture of the native language. By bringing the the culture context in classroom, it will be easier for students to understand about the English language that they learn. As Riyanti (1.27) stated that it is better to use the target language cultural context so that they can learn the language in its natural settings. Based on that, developing students critical culture awareness is an essential thing to do at class in order to avoid misunderstanding while doing the communication as the goal of learning process.

B. CULTURE

The term of culture in human's life is something prevalent known. Culture includes people, language, religion, social, education, economical, political, even technological. Generally, many country reflect the culture in difference forms and ways. For example Indonesian and American, both of them show a very significant divergence of culture. As we have known, both country differ by dressing custom, the way to talk, eating manner and many others. In other word culture is have by every region differently.

Generally, people have their own perspective about culture but do you know what exactly the meaning of culture is? Here are some expert who proposed the meaning of culture. First, Gurito in Riyanti, stated that Culture indicates all aspects that members of a group share together. Children learn ways of doing things, ways of talking, smiling, laughing, liking and disliking things. Culture determines people's action, their social relationship and their morality (Gurito, 2003: p 1). In addition Dwyer proposed another definition of culture. Culture is that which the language learner needs to know in order to understand the meaning of the message in another language other than the formal properties of the language code (syntax, morphology and phonology) (Dwyer, 1996: p.3).

From different perspective culture has another definition. Regarding with Edward Sapir in Mahadi et al, stated that culture is a system of behaviours and modes that depend on unconsciousness. In other side, Rocher (1972, 2004), an anthropologist, believes that

“Culture is a connection of ideas and feelings accepted by the majority of people in a society” (p. 142). Undeniably, there are many definition of culture that has proposed by an expert or institution based on the field of humanities.

By considering the explanation above, the writer assump that culture is a part of life where people create or keep it unconsciously from past time until recent which they use it to interact each other in many aspect of life. Culture is also a system that connect the idea and feelings that people agree with so that culture cannot be separated with life.

C. CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Language is used to communicate with others. It also involves social practices of interpreting and making meanings rather than just a code. Generally speaking, language is introduced by Crystal (1971, 1992) in Mahadi et al as “the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self expression”. Similarly, Emmitt and Pollock (1997) believe that language is a system of arbitrary signs which is accepted by a group and society of users. It is taken delivery of a specific purpose in relation to the communal world of clients. Chase (1969) declares that the purpose of language use is to communicate with others, to think, and to shape one’s standpoint and outlook on life. Indeed, language figures human thoughts.

As mentioned, culture can be assump as a connection between ideas and feelings in society agreed by huge number of people. In case, language is noteworthy point that people use it to share that idea. Briefly, Chia Lin Hin in stated that, “Both of language and culture have a function of communication because they both carry meanings”. So that as nonnative english user we need to considare the essential of the target language which is related with the name of culture. Thus, Saville Troike mentioned that, “In order to communicate successfully across languages and cultures, one must understand culturally different norms of interaction and people’s values and thought” (Saville-Troike, 2003).

Additionally, we might briefly see the connection between culture and language. Indeed, language and culture are connected each other. Brown (2000) in Freimuth stated, “Is convinced there is a connection between language and culture. He says, “It is apparent that culture... becomes highly important in the learning of a second language. A language is part of a culture, and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven... (p 177)”.

To convince the relationship between culture and language, the writer will mention some perspective by experts. Wenying Jiang (2000) wrote an article discussing the inseparability of language and culture. His study looked at native Chinese speakers and native English speakers. Hammerly (1985) believed language learners were not fully trained until they exhibited the knowledge and behaviour of the culture of the language they were learning (as cited in McGinnis, 1994). Baumgratz (1995) goes on to say that historical languages have embedded within them a reflection of the community that existed. Prins and Ulijn did a study on the readability of mathematical problems in the English language in 1998. They felt it was difficult to “disentangle the role of linguistic and cultural factors.” (Prins & Ulijn, 1998, p 139). Brenneis claims that the close union between language and culture has been widely accepted in American anthropology (2002). He, himself, came up with five characteristics that both language and culture share, thereby reinforcing their close connection (Brenneis, 2002). Gumperz (1996) also hints at a close relationship between language and culture by saying language is more than something you simply use to interact in a society, meaning we need to know how language and cultural differences work.

As the conclusion, culture is representation of idea and thought of people. We see it as accordance as human being. Regarding to humans as a socialize, language is really needed on this item. Language also represent meaning of thing for instance giving the name to the food, machine, animals even the way of life etc. Without having meaning, culture would be just observable realities. In other word, as non native speaker, we need to comprehend and able to differentiate the culture of the target language. It will be extremely nessesary when someone wants to learn other languages.

D. TEACHING CULTURE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS

English is a symbolic presentation of its nation that should be learnt by the students as a unite thing in order to be able to communicate well. As Mahadi et all (2012) stated that particular languages are associated historically with particular cultures; the languages provide the key to the associated cultures, and especially to their literature; the languages themselves cannot be fully understood otherwise than in the context of the cultures in which they are inextricably embedded; subsequently, language and culture are studied together. Language and culture are unquestionably thing that cannot be seperated. Remembering how important those two things to teach to students, the

teacher's task is to make students understand and become aware of cultural differences by making relation of form and the context of the target language including their values, beliefs, and needs. There are two things that should be consider when teach culture in foreign language class, they are goal and strategies.

The first is goal. The goal for teaching culture to students is to develop students' awareness and interest to culture whether it is the target culture or their own culture. By understanding both culutures, it will help them to examine the contrast of them and enrich their knowledge of the diversity among cultures by not underestimate any of the cultures being learnt. Seelye in Yi Qu (2010) propose some goals that students should acquire certain understandings, abilities, and attitude: That they understand that people act the way they do because they are using the options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs; That they understand that such social variables as age, sex, social class, and the place of residence affect the way people speak and behave; That they can demonstrate how people conventionally act in the most common mundane and crisis situations in the target language; That they are able to evaluate the relative strength of a generality concerning the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating the statement; That they have developed the skills needed to locate and organize material about the target culture from the library, mass media, and personal observation; That they possess the curiosity about the target culture and empathy toward its people.

The second is strategies. Strategy is an approach that use in class, this is an important things to be consider remembering that strategy is a way to achieve the goal. According to Peterson et al (2003), there are some strategies for teaching language and culuture. Those are authentic materials, proverbs, role play, film, culture capsules, students as cultural resources, Ethnographic Studies, and literature.

E. CONCLUSION

One of the goals of EFL learner is to be able to communicate in the target language. In order to be able to communicate well, teacher should not only teach the students about the language grammatically but also teach them something beyond in it which is culture. By doing so, students are expected to understand the language in a right context. In teaching culture in foreign language, there are two things to be consider: goal and strategies.

REFERENCE

Sun, Li. *Culture Teaching in Foreign Language Teaching* (vol 2), 2013

Mahadi, Tengku Sepora Tengku, et all. *Language and culture* (vol 2), 2012

Chahak, Somayeh Mohammadi, et ll. *The Study of Culture on Foreign Language Teaching* (vol 2), 2012

Qu, Yi. *Culture Understanding in Foreign Language Teaching* (vol 3), 2010

Peterson, Elizabeth. *Culture in Second Language Teaching*, 2003

Dra. Rahayu Dwi Riyanti M.A Cross Cultural Understanding

Mahadi et al 2012 Language and culture vol.22 (International of humanities and social science p. 230

Hsin Language and Cuulture in Foreign Language Teaching