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reframing java:
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



Editors:

Dr. A. Rachmad Djati W., M.Sc.

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Karno



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JAVA INSTITUTE – SOEGIJAPRANATA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
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THE 1ST JAVA INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

Reframing Java: Past, Present and Future

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Preface

For years we are used to doing mono-disciplinary study of our own perspectives. This kind of study might give significant contribution to the respective field and the society in general. Many people have become specialists in certain scientific as well as practical fields. In the 'specialist trend' situation, there is a need to communicate with each other to put our study and practice in larger context. The Java Institute International Colloquium (JIIC) is one of efforts to discuss Java from several points of view. This book is a compilation of various topics highlighting the theme "Reframing Java: Past, Present, and Future". The contributors are (mostly) researchers from both domestic and foreign universities and institutions. They have conducted studies on several aspects of lives in Java, or reviewed particular aspects of Java living in global context. They are experts in public health, economics, culture, education, and environment studies.

We would like to share our gratitude to all contributors for their willingness to share ideas in the meeting and this book. We are also grateful to the Rector of Soegijapranata Catholic University, Prof. Dr. Y. Budi Widianarko, for his support and encouragement, to the committee. We thank to all committee members and fellows to make this compilation prepared.

Chairperson,
A. Rachmad Djati Winarno

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INCORPORATING LOCAL CULTURES –*JAVANESE* IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN INDONESIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching-learning activities in classrooms involve a number of elements interacting one another as a complex system. However, not as other activities of teaching, teaching language –English, seems to be more social and cultural since language is a means of communications when a group of people in a society interact with one another. Activities of teaching-learning English as a foreign language in a classroom are a kind of cultural processes in which each of the students has his/her own culture. Learning English as a foreign language itself is learning about its culture. Therefore, it seems that learning English in Indonesian secondary school contexts is very complicated in which the students in the classroom interact with one another bringing his/her own culture and simultaneously trying to understand and use the language functions, English, on the basis of its culture.

On the basis of the facts that the teachers of English and the students face, the English teaching-learning process in a classroom must begin with the students' real life situations, students' socio-economic cultural backgrounds. The students' socio-economic cultural differences have implications for their behaviours in the classroom and, therefore, these differences among the students do take on a role in the classroom. What the teachers of English do

at the beginning of the class must be able to lead the students to what they suppose to learn. At the end of the class, the teachers of English must be able to make the students aware the usefulness, meaningfulness, and importance of what they have learned in the classroom for their real life situations. It implies that to be successful in English language teaching-learning process, the teachers of English must incorporate local cultures (students' socio-economic cultural backgrounds)—in this case Javanese cultures in their teaching so that the students' learning will be meaningful.

The teachers of English, as educators, must become culturally receptive by making connections with their students as individuals while also understanding the cultural contexts that influence their interactions (Worrell, 2009). The cultural context intended in this paper is Javanese culture which is used as input texts and products of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesian secondary school contexts. To do so, the teachers of English should know who the students are, be able to develop teacher-made pedagogical materials, suitably formulate teaching procedures, and conduct contextual teaching and learning.

DISCUSSION

Meaningful teaching-learning activities are those which are suitable with the students and relevant to their real life situations. Therefore, teaching-learning English as a foreign language in Indonesian secondary school contexts must be based on the cultures where the students live, in this case *Javanese culture*. To incorporate local cultures—*Javanese cultures* in teaching English as a foreign language, it is suggested that the teachers of English do the steps as follows.

1. Knowing who the students are

To treat the students appropriately and to cater the students with suitable English teaching materials, the teachers of English need to know who their students are. If the teachers of English are able to do so, their teaching materials and activities will be in accordance with the students' local cultures and backgrounds. Their characteristic backgrounds include age, sex, nationality, social background, economic background, and interest (Hutchinson and

Waters (1987: 53-63). McNeil and Wiles (1990: 79), furthermore, state that a good beginning for teachers is to find out some general information about their students (e.g., ethnic and family background, family status, parents' level of schooling, religious orientations, and soon Knowing who the students are, the teachers of English will be appropriately treat the students, adopt, adapt, develop, or design English teaching materials suitable with the students.

Although learning a language is learning about its culture, English culture, teaching-learning activities should start and end with students' real life situations. If tasks/activities directly start with *Halloween*, *valentine*, or *thanks giving* for instance, the students will find out some difficulties because they are not their real world occurring in Indonesian contexts , Javanese cultures. In Indonesian secondary school contexts –in this case Javanese, therefore, the English teaching activities should have such input texts related to students' Javanese cultures (*Javanese wedding ceremony*, *sekaten*, *gambhyong* dance, *wayang*, etc.) but language functions and language features must be based and focused on standard of content of English –standard of competence and basic competence spelled out into teaching objectives and English teaching materials.

2. Developing teacher-made pedagogical materials

At present the teachers of English are provided with various types of English coursebooks. However, those commercial coursebooks are influenced by economies of scale so that they are massively produced and they do not focus on particular groups of students having particular socio-economic cultural backgrounds at the expense of others (Nunan and Lamb, 2000: 180). For reasons already indicated, no textbook is going to be a perfect match for the students (Nunan and Lamb, 2000: 181). The teachers of English, therefore, should have the option of assigning supplementary materials based on their own specific needs in their own specific teaching situation (Ansary and Babaii, 2002).

On the basis of the facts, it clearly seems that the teachers of English need to develop teacher-made English pedagogical materials. The materials will pedagogically be suitable with the students' local cultures –socio-economic

cultural backgrounds. Clark and Silberstein in Nunan (2004: 53) emphasize that classroom activities should parallel the students' 'real world' as closely as possible.

Minsky in Shrum and Glisan (1994: 24), furthermore, states that the research has confirmed the importance role of context plays in enabling language learners to process and produce a foreign or second language (Swaffer, Arens, and Byrnes and Smith in Shrum and Glisan, 1994: 24). Learners use various kinds of background knowledge they already have. This is in accordance with Act No. 20, 2003 about National Education System articles 1 and 36, Government Rule No. 19, 2005 about national standard of education, and National Education Ministerial Rule No. 22 about standard of content, 23 about standard of graduate's competencies, and 24, about the implementation of National Ministerial rules No. 22 and 23 Year 2006 in Sukarno (2008: 95-96).

Okeke (2009) states that a curriculum, which shows no recognition to the cultural values of a people, appears to be laid on a path incompatible with the sociology of learning that is aimed at sustaining the socio-cultural development of any society. In line with Okeke's point of view, the implementation of school-based curriculum gives the teachers of English opportunities to spell out standard of content of English into suitable English teaching materials with their students. The teachers of English, therefore, should be able to incorporate local cultures – *Javanese culture* in teaching reading, writing, and speaking.

a. Teaching reading

Incorporating local cultures – *Javanese culture* is quite possible in developing teacher-made English teaching materials for reading. Reading texts about *Halloween*, *thanks giving*, *valentine*, and *origami* are not Indonesian or *Javanese* students' real world. The students are not familiar with them. It will be meaningful if reading texts as inputs are about *Javanese* wedding ceremony, *ketoprak*, or *wayang*. For more specific related to *Javanese* local cultures, Semarang has *warak ngendog* and *gambang*, Yogyakarta and Solo have *sekaten*, Klaten has *yakowiyu*, Gamping Sleman has *bekakak*, Sleman

has *jathilan*; Purworejo has *ndolalak*; Banyumas has *ronggeng/lengger* and *ebeg/jathilan*, Purwodadi has *tayub*; Blora has *barongan*; Rembang has *tongtongklek*; Kudus has *ternag*; and so forth. Reading texts about those cultures and arts can be created as meaningful and more understandable input texts.

Javanese wedding ceremony is more general for Javanese secondary school contexts. In Javanese wedding ceremony, there are so many meaningful symbols or signs that have moral values. If those symbols in Javanese wedding ceremony are presented in English texts, they can be meaningful texts and can also be used to teach the students to have good personalities – character building. The following are the examples of parts of Javanese wedding ceremony.

PISANG RAJA SETANDHAN SASULUHAN: bilih risang temanten engkang pinindha raja saari saestu sageda darbe wewatakaning raja engkang sarwa-sarwi tanggel jawab berbudi bawaleksana, tresna sih mring kawula, remen suka dana, hanetepi pangandika. Tembenipun saged sinuyudaning kawula, sukur-sukur risang penganten saged dados tepa palupining brayat engkang tansah saged tinulad dening asanes. The bridegroom and bride seem as if they were king and queen on one day. They should have characters as king and queen have. They must be responsible for their duties, love others, give funds for social purposes, and fulfill their promises. They must be able to be good models for others (Suwarno Pringgowidagdo, 1998: 146).

Although the bridegroom and bride are treated as though they were king and queen, in other part, there is *SUNGKEMAN: Engkang pinindha raja saari sampun jengkar saking dampar arsa lumarap ngabyantara para pinisepuh. Boten kesupen penganten putri gya kakanthi penganten kakung esthining manah among sumedya anguswa pepadanging engkang eyang, rama, miwah engkang ibu. Penganten sarimbit sigra tumungkul amarikelu, tangkeping asta*

sumembah ing jengkul kanan. Ing batos among nyenyadang rumentahing sih saking eyang saha rama ibu, saha nyuwung tambahing pangestu anggenira badhe mbangun brayat, netepi jejering agesang, sageda tulus mulya manggih raharja In short, the bridegroom and bride kneel down their parents, showing their respects (Suwardi Endraswara, 1999: 86-87).

If those materials are presented in English, they will be suitable input texts in teaching reading and they have high moral values. Those two parts mean that although children have socially, economically, academically high status (as king and queen, for instance), they must always respect their parents. They must be responsible for their duties. They must fulfill their promises and so forth. However, the language functions, language features, and micro skills developed in the texts must be based on standard of content of English, standard of competence and basic competence. It is not useful if they are not in accordance with standard of content of English.

b. Teaching writing

In teaching writing, the students are given opportunities to write down their own specific cultures—local cultures in the forms of descriptive, recount, procedure texts, and soon. However their micro skills to be developed must be on the basis of standard of content of English. Having completed their writings, the students are given chances to present their writings in front of the class and the others are to pay attention to the presenters. In this part of teaching English, the students will know, understand, respect, and tolerate others' local cultures. They will be aware that they are in multicultural contexts.

The language elements in this step must also be based on standard of content of English. It is no use if the language elements and micro skills developed are out of standard of content of English. Certain language elements must clearly be emphasized.

c. Teaching speaking

In teaching speaking, the procedures are almost the same as what is done in teaching writing. The students are given chances to discuss anything related to their local cultures—Javanese cultures either in general or in particular. They are work in groups. The language functions—expressions to be developed must be based on standard of content of English.

The models and contents of teacher-made English teaching materials and teaching activities in teaching reading, writing, and speaking above are culturally local but language elements used and macro skills developed are really English. English, as other languages, is fundamentally used for communication and for expressing and sharing an understanding of people, situations, texts, and ideas. It does not have a set 'content', other than structures and skills, which cannot be studied in a vacuum. Therefore its content can and should be the pupils or students' world. Their daily lives, cultures, environments, hopes and fears, and needs must be involved in what is happening around them in the class during the teaching-learning process (Davis, 1996: 233-234). Language is functional and must be contextualized in the students' real life situations (Crawford in Richards and Renandya, 2002: 67). Furthermore, Gonzalez (1995: 54) states that the 'received' tradition was that language and culture were inseparable, that one had to teach both language and culture, since language itself without contextualization of culture, was merely a code leading to all kinds of intercultural misunderstanding without the cultural content that necessarily went with idioms, figurative expressions, and larger cultural presuppositions.

3. Suitably formulating teaching procedures

To make teaching-learning English as a foreign language useful and meaningful for the students, the teachers of English must consider the pattern *real life situations-English content-real life situations*. The teachers of English start their teaching by giving the students input texts. The input texts should be based on the students' real life situations, not directly authentic texts. Using authentic material is problematic in the L2 classroom because it is not constructed to contain only the aspects of language the learner has

encountered or learned up until that point and so may not be entirely accessible to the learner. There are good reason to use pedagogically prepared material in order to provide the stepping stones to understanding and using authentic material (Graves, 2000: 156). It is in accordance with Worrell (2009) stating that in understanding the target language, in this case English, the students are strongly influenced by knowledge and experiences of their own first or second language and their socio-economic background.

The students will easily comprehend messages presented in the target language because they are familiar with the content of the input texts. Having comprehended the input texts, students are given more (semi) authentic texts and if possible until they reach authentic texts (in a continuum) in English contents.

English contents refer to material contents and language elements. In this step the students study the language (linguistic) elements and language functions to be able to communicate with others using the target language because at a very general level, we do three things with language: we use it to exchange goods and services (this is the transactional or service macrofunction), we use it to socialize with others (this is the interpersonal social macrofunction), and we use it for enjoyment (this is the aesthetic macrofunction). Those macrofunctions are interwoven when language is used in daily life activities (Halliday in Nunan, 2004: 19).

At the end of the teaching, the teachers of English must be able to bring the learned materials into the students' real life situations. In this step, the teachers of English make the students aware that the learned materials are culturally, socially, and economically useful and meaningful in their real world. The students use the learned materials in their daily life interactions.

4. Conducting *contextual teaching and learning*

Contextual teaching and learning applied in teaching English as a foreign language helps the teachers of English relate subject matter content to students' real life situations and motivate students to make connections between knowledge and its applications to their lives as family or society members, for

instance. This teaching model, of course, starts with what the students know, face, and do in their real world—their local culture.

Actually contextual teaching and learning is the place for applying teacher-made English teaching materials. The English teaching materials are contextualized in activities in the classroom. Therefore, the students will be more easily follow the lesson. It is in line with Wright in Crawford (2002: 88) stating that effective English teaching materials are those which are in accordance with students' real life situations, providing them with appropriate linguistic cultural inputs. These materials will assist the teachers of English to be more responsive and the students can benefit from access to the materials used in class.

CONCLUSION

Learning a language—English, facilitated by teaching in a formal class, is learning about its culture. However, to start with authentic materials in learning English, the students having Indonesian secondary school contexts will find a number of difficulties. They need such input texts relevant to their real life situations in the forms of pedagogical texts—teacher-made English teaching materials on the basis of students' local cultures (Javanese cultures) as stepping stones to understand authentic texts. Although the contents are culturally local—Javanese, the language functions and linguistic features developed are really English and must be based on standard of content of English.

At the end of the English teaching-learning, the students must be able to meet the pre-determined objectives. They must be able to make use of the learned materials in their real life situations to culturally, socially, and economically interact with one another using the target language—English as productive skills. It means that they learn English meaningfully.

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