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Promoting Blended Culture in *TEIL*

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Abstract: As an international language, English does not exclusively belong to English speaking countries anymore. It is widely used in all branches of science and all aspects of life for international communication in an international relationship among countries in the world and other purposes. In the international relationship, each person taking part in communication is strongly influenced by his own culture and he should incessantly respect others' culture in order that communication smoothly takes place. Therefore, in relation to preparing students to be able to intelligibly get entangled in international communication for an international relationship or other international purposes, teaching English as an international language (TEIL) in schools should cater the students with good cross-cultural understanding, both local and global cultures, in order that they have high sensitivity towards cultural diversity. Both local and global cultures can be the content of TEIL as English itself cannot be learned in a vacuum and language learning in classrooms is a kind of social process in miniature producing a culture, language as a cultural product. Accordingly, teachers of English TEIL should promote blended cultures. This paper discusses how to promote blended cultures in TEIL. To do so, it is suggested that the teachers of English 1) identify their students' cultural linguistic background, 2) plan lessons comprising global cultures, 3) give input texts, 4) discuss linguistic features in contexts of cultural diversity, 5) help the students employ linguistic elements to produce either written or spoken texts consisting of global cultures that can function at home relevant to local cultures, 6) assign the students to present their texts, and 7) discuss the importance and role of blended cultures in international lives. If these steps are well done, the students will have good commands in blended cultures important for international communication for international purposes.

Keywords: *TEIL* and *blended culture*

Introduction

The use of English rapidly grows in the world lately. English is now widely used more for global communication in multilingual contexts, across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Canagarajah in Alsagoff, 2012: 109). As a result the field of English language teaching-learning has different labels according to its use where English teaching-learning processes are conducted –English as a native language (ENL), English as a second Language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as an additional Language EAL), world Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), and English as an international language (EIL), or other labels depending upon

experts who create and mention them (Kirkpatrick, 2007: 27; Kumaravadivelu, 2012: 16); and MacKay, 2012: 28).

As an international language, English does not exclusively belong to English speaking countries having ENL or those having ESL anymore, or even EFL. It is globally used in spite of limited purposes for certain countries. It is now widely used in all branches of science, technology, arts, and all aspects of life for international communication in an international relationship among countries in the world and other purposes.

In the international relationship, each person taking part in communication is strongly influenced by his own culture and he should incessantly respect others' culture in order that communication smoothly takes place. This fact has various impacts and implications in conducting English teaching-learning processes, especially contents -cultures. Therefore, in relation to preparing students to be able to intelligibly get entangled in international communication for an international relationship or other international purposes, teaching English as an international language (TEIL) in schools should cater the students with good cross-cultural understanding, both local and global cultures, in order that they have high sensitivity towards cultural diversity.

Having high sensitivity towards cultural diversity in learning an international language(s), in this case English, will give benefits for learners themselves and their social environments as Willems (2002: 9) asserts that mastery of languages as carriers of cultural identity in all its diversity opens new perspectives and could thus well contribute to world peace. Cultures as one of the contents in TEIL will also give the learners benefits with the awareness and the tools that will allow them to achieve their academic, professional, social, and personal goals and become successful in their daily functioning in L2 (or EFL) environments (Hinkel, 2001) or in international communication contexts. Learners having cultural diversity awareness, later on, will easily be able to adapt themselves to new situations in new social environments. They will easily survive and achieve their objectives.

To prepare learners learning English as an international language to be easily entangled in global communications, teachers of English through their English learning materials and classroom activities should cater them with blended cultures. This is strongly suggested that the learners will get some benefits as previously mentioned. The following is a discussion concerning on promoting blended cultures in TEIL. It is arranged into three sections: 1) language and culture; 2) TEIL and culture; and 3) how to promote blended culture in TEIL.

Discussion
The discussion on promoting blended cultures in TEIL is broken down into three parts, namely 1) language and culture; 2) TEIL and culture; and 3) how to promote blended culture in TEIL. The focus of the discussion is the third part, how to promote blended culture in TEIL, for it is the intention of the paper.

Language and Culture
Language and culture are two things that cannot be separated. They seem to be two sides of the same coin. Language is a kind of cultural products of a particular society as a means of communication among its members, and language itself is a tool to communicate (other) cultural products manifested in various forms. The good and or bad sides of a particular culture can be seen from its original language via which it is conveyed. Even such a person personality can be viewed through the language s/he uses, expressions.

Culture itself can be defined as a set of believed patterns as a way of life followed and practiced by a particular society. Currently, however, members of a society having a particular local culture incessantly interact with other members of other societies having their own local cultures. Simultaneously, there is an interaction among local cultures. With the benefits of the development of information technology, cultures existing in almost every community are accessible. Even people living in a particular society in a rural community can easily see others' cultures as Kumaravadivelu (2012: 11) states that now people have a greater chance of knowing about others' cultural way of life –the good, the bad, and the ugly.

From the discussion above, as language cannot be separated from culture, learning a language means learning its culture. Therefore, in learning English as an international language, there are *target culture* (including the culture(s) of Inner-Circle countries –English speaking countries), *source cultures* (the students' cultures), and *international target cultures* (involving a mixture of Inner- and Outer-Circle countries, and among students' cultures) which is later on called *blended cultures* (Brown, 2012: 149). Ware, Warschauer, and Liaw in MacKay (2012: 338) are concerned with reducing the traditional emphasis on Western culture but blending local culture with global overtones and, furthermore, Leung and Street argue that there should be a balance between local and global standards as there is no strong boundary in interactions. What occurs is both cultural assimilation and acculturation.

Learning a language will have understanding on the language and the culture. Learning English as an international language will have knowledge of English language, target cultures, source cultures, and blended cultures. Therefore learners will not only know information about the culture but also know how to engage with diverse others having diverse cultures. The intercultural language learning involves an awareness of the relationship between language and culture among people entangled in the communication and interpretation of meanings (Liddicoat, 2011: 38). Therefore, intercultural communicators do not simply communicate in contexts of diversity but also monitor, reflect, and interpret what occurs in communication (Liddicoat, 2011: 839). The ability to monitor, reflect, and interpret what occurs in communication depends upon the understanding of the language used and the culture.

TEIL and Culture

Language is merely a set of symbols, patterns, and grammatical rules. It cannot be learned and taught without contents, in a vacuum. Therefore, teaching-learning a language, including teaching English as an international language (TEIL), needs contents to discuss and cultures can be one of the contents in TEIL. This is in accordance with Gonzales (1995: 54) stating that language without the contextualization of culture is merely a code leading to all kinds of intercultural misunderstanding.

As touched upon in the previous section, there are three types of cultures in TEIL as the contents of teaching. They are *source cultures* –learners' cultures, *target cultures* –Inner-Circle countries, and *international target cultures* –a mixture of Inner-and Outer-Circle countries and learners' cultures which, in this paper, is called *blended cultures*. TEIL having blended cultures as the contents is an ideal for cross cultural education, since the subject provides for the discussion of everyday issues –cultures and the language –English, provides a common medium of expression (Mee, 1996: 201-202). Cultural values play an important role in determining what participants do in verbal interactions (Kachru and Smith, 2008: 42-43).

In TEIL, learners and teachers are individuals having their own cultures and learning-teaching English with its cultures –target cultures in blended culture contexts. They should be engaged in the task of forming and reforming their identities in this globalized world with blended cultures (Kumaravadivelu, 2012: 12). The task of local teachers of English is to design a language pedagogy that is localized and socially sensitive to the diversity and richness of the English used today in an increasingly globalized and complex world (MacKay, 2012: 346).

The fact that English is frequently used for cross-cultural communication suggests that English learning materials in TEIL should be culturally sensitive, encouraging students to learn about other cultures as a way of reflecting on their own values and belief (McKay, 2012: 40). The English learning materials should cover source cultures, target cultures, and blended cultures –a mixture of source cultures, target cultures, and Inner- and Outer-Circle countries. In this context, learners will learn their own cultures and others' cultures through English language. Automatically, they will understand and, with their teachers' guide, respect others' cultures. As a result, it is expected that the learners will be able to intelligibly get entangled in international communication contexts, globalized world. This is in line with Robinson-Stuart and Nocon in Brown (2007: 194) suggesting that language learners undergo culture learning as a "process, that is, as a way of perceiving, interpreting, feeling, being in the world, … and relating to where one is and who one to meets" in international communications, for English itself is an international language. This is strengthened by Burns' statement in Flowerdew (2012: 233) that limiting learners' exposures on limited variations of L1 and L2 varieties to represents universal norms denies the realities of repertoires of world Englishes learners encounter when they go out into the real world (Burns in Flowerdew, 2012: 233). However, it does not mean that every variety of English and cultures existing in teaching-learning English as an international language are all

accepted. The idea is that the English and the culture are intelligible for global community, globalized world.

How to Promote Blended Cultures in TEIL

Blended culture here means a mixture of *source language* –learners cultures, *target language* – Inner-Circle Countries: English speaking countries, and *international target cultures* –Inner-and Outer-Circle countries. Those cultures function as English learning material contents to be presented and discussed during English teaching-learning processes either in classrooms or as assignments outside classrooms. They are not purely blended cultures, but they are presented and discussed in turns or simultaneously. They exist in English classes. In this TEIL, both learners and teachers of English do not focus upon particular local or target cultures, but all are equally presented and discussed proportionally. The teachers of English, then, should mediate between a 'foreign' lesson content and the 'local' orientation of their students to have cultural continuity, a particular innovation is adjusted to enable the best possible fit with a host environment (Holliday, 2003: 160-170).

TEIL in classrooms is a kind of structured society in miniature; therefore; TEIL itself is multicultural in nature because it is attended by various learners having different characteristics and coming from various cultural backgrounds. English learning materials consisting blended cultures as contents will suit this condition. Teachers or lecturers of English in a multicultural schools or university or college classrooms may need to i) promote intercultural awareness, ii) use comparative perspectives in presenting materials, iii) reconsider 'universals' in university learning and teaching, iv) acknowledge and use local knowledge and locally appropriate methodologies, or v) promote the development of an 'ethnographic imagination' (Willis in Palfreyman, 2007: 1).

In developing the capacities for intercultural exploration that can be adopted or adapted in TEIL, Liddicoat (2011: 843) proposes that teachers, in this case teachers of English; a) involve students in a process of noticing, reflecting, and interacting; b) construct source and target culture; c) view instances of language use as experiences of culture and opportunities for culture learning; d) focus on the capabilities required for on-going learning about cultures through experiences of languages; and e) encouraging the inclusion of multiple perspectives. In short, Liddicoat's perspective on intercultural exploration applied in TEIL is that source and target cultures are equal and learners learn cultures through the language they are learning. Further, Liddicoat (2011: 840-841) proposes principles of teaching and learning on which an intercultural pedagogy exists by a) active construction; b) making connections; c) interaction; d) reflection; and e) responsibility.

In practical way, how to promote blended cultures in TEIL can be divided into seven steps: 1) identifying students' cultural linguistic background; 2) planning lessons comprising blended

cultures; 3) giving input texts; 4) discussing linguistic features in contexts of cultural diversity; 5) helping the students employ linguistic elements to produce either written or spoken texts consisting of blended cultures that can function at home relevant to local cultures; 6) assigning the students to present their texts; and 7) discussing the importance and role of blended cultures in international lives.

Identifying students' cultural linguistic background

The first task of the teachers of English in classrooms is that they should find out who their students are to know their students' cultural linguistic backgrounds and characteristics as students are the centre of learning in TEIL. This task is quite important to decide what English learning materials are to deliver and how English materials are presented and discussed. This is useful as the students are strongly influenced by knowledge and experiences of their own first or second language and their socio-economic cultural backgrounds. The differences among the students do take on a role in the classroom activities and atmosphere (Worrell, 2009). This is supported by Alsagoff (2012: 106) asserting language learning as essentially a social process involves the identity of learners.

Having known who their students are, the teachers of English are able to adopt, select, adapt, develop, or even create English learning materials consisting of cultures suitable for the students. The teachers will also be able to decide the best way in presenting English learning materials and choose appropriate teaching aids, based on their students' preferences and learning styles.

Planning lessons comprising blended cultures

Having got information about their students' cultural linguistics backgrounds and characteristics, the teachers of English should plan lessons comprising blended cultures and activities to be done during English teaching-learning process. Blended cultures as the contents of English learning materials must be proportional in number and suitable for students' backgrounds and characteristics. The blended cultures should involved *source culture, target culture, and international target cultures*.

cultures as contents of TEIL has the advantage of direct relevance to the learning of another language, and the motivational factor of simultaneously encouraging enquiry into and review of one's own cultural habits. Intercultural enquiry can be used as the topic base of a curriculum (Corbett, 2003: 33). However, it is unnecessary to teach culture explicitly in an ELT programme because it is already implicitly there in the lessons (Valdes in Corbett, 2003: 33). It depends upon the teachers sensitivity on cultural values.

Giving input texts

Ideally, TEIL should begin with students' real life contexts and end with everything useful and meaningful for students' lives of future lives. It is proposed in order that the students can smoothly follow the lessons. At the beginning of the lessons, the teachers should give input texts relevant to their students' characteristics and backgrounds –*source cultures*. It expected that the

students can easily follow and comprehend the texts. Davis (1996: 233-234) stating that student' 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. However, the teachers can give additional texts related to *target cultures* or *international target cultures* if the students have got enough warming up concerning the materials to be discussed.

Discussing linguistic features and contents in contexts of cultural diversity

Linguistic features here consist of language elements and grammatical rules employed in the texts. While discussing linguistic features, the students are expected to understand the contents of the texts and unconsciously comprehend cultural values in the texts. The task of the teachers is to make the students understand linguistic features and implicitly convey the cultural values to the students.

Helping the students employ linguistic elements to produce either written or spoken texts consisting of blended cultures that can function at home relevant to local cultures

The task of the teachers in this step is to assign and help the students employ linguistic elements to produce their own texts. It is optional whether the students will write down texts about their own cultures or others' cultures. However, it is suggested that the students create new texts about others' cultures. In writing down others' cultures, it is believed that the students will search for information about others' cultures and write down in the forms of their new texts. Through this process, the students unconsciously learn and know others' cultures. By writing down, the students will not easily forget what they search for and write –about others' cultures, as a result they will more comprehend cultural values and respect others, finally will easily be able to interact and keep in touch with others.

Assigning the students to present their texts

Having finished creating new texts on (others') cultures, the students are to presents their texts in front of the class. Having this activity, the students presenting the text will deepen their understanding on what they write down, whilst others will listen to and pay attention to the presentation to check linguistic features employed in the texts and contents of the texts. This activity is done in turns. Reinforcement on comprehending others' cultures and cultural values does happen. In short, the students exchange their information about cultures, and cross-cultural understanding on blended cultures among the students and reinforcement occur.

Discussing the importance and role of blended cultures in international lives

In each end of the students' presentation, the teachers should highlight linguistic features employed in the texts and contents of the texts including cultural values. At the end of the whole class, the teachers should summarize what the students have learned and emphasize the importance and role of blended cultures in international lives and relationships. In this section,

the teachers should also tell the students certain important things related to how to behave and interact with foreigners, what expressions to be used, and other things relevant to cultural issues depending upon the materials previously discussed. The cultures of the classrooms and cultures discussed in classrooms represent a tension between the internal world of the individual and the social world of the group, a recurrent juxtaposition of personal learning experiences and communal teaching-learning activities and conventions (Breen, 2004: 130).

Final Remarks

With regards to the above discussion, some conclusions can be made. Using blended cultures as the contents of TEIL give some benefits for the students. Through blended cultures in TEIL, the students get linguistic features to be employed in creating new texts, understand others' cultures important and relevant to international communications, and practice useful and meaningful expressions for international communications. If blended cultures can be the contents of TEIL, the students will be early equipped with cross-cultural understanding to intelligibly be able to entangled in international communications without impediments related to cultures.

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