THE USE OF LOCAL SHORT STORY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING (A LITERARY REVIEW ON THE USE OF LOCAL SOURCES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHING MEDIA IN EFL)

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ABSTRACT

The use of native English story in EFL, which has so far been a source for heated debate among the scholars due to the possible intercultural conflict experienced by the learners and can possibly lead to the learners' confusion during the class, is basically driven by the long gone communicative competence theory, the paradigm which views that incorporating cultural aspects (sociolinguistic element) of the native English speakers is inseparable in acquiring communicative competence. Actually, the use of local short story for language learning, despite being absent in some aspects such as; idioms, style, pragmatic, etc., can possibly incur a lot more motivating aspects, this is because the learners can usually understand the overall learning process in a more comprehensive manner. Based on schemata theory, the process of learning might greatly be affected by the learners' prior knowledge due to the schemata that the learners already had, thus the learning process involving the native English speakers' paradigm might significantly hamper the learners in understanding and enjoying the story smoothly especially when the story is relatively longer and the teacher is not really competent in explaining the material or the learners who are still in the lower proficiency level. This literary review aims at highlighting the issue on the use of local short stories which can probably provide more psychological advantages compared with the foreign learning sources, as long as the materials are supported with good layout, sufficient vocabulary and standardized grammar, this package will certainly enable the leaners to learn the content and moral values, thus improving not only their linguistic aspects, e.g. vocabulary, grammar, etc., but also their self –confidence in leading their life which is certainly very suitable to the way of life of the learners.

Keywords: *The use, local short story, language teaching*

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHORT STORY IN EFL

Short story (Poe as cited in Abrams, 1970, p. 158) is commonly known and defined as a narrative that can be read in one sitting or approximately lasts within one half hour to two hours. Typically, short story tends to emphasize to a certain character portrayal or single effect which can easily be understood by its readers. Since short story is limited to some of the above aspects thus it doesn't pay much attention into the details which are considered as important elements in proses, novels, and the like.

Despite its shortness, Pardede (2011), nonetheless, believes that short story is one of the effective media that can be used for EFL learning due to its unique characteristics, such as: its length, and simplicity. He also believes that short story can possibly assist teachers in improving all students' skills, e.g. reading, writing, listening and even speaking.

A TUG OF WAR BETWEEN LOCAL AND NATIVE SHORT STORY

Despite the strong support for the use of short story in EFL context, the problems seem to persist due to the following dilemmas:

The growing concern on the students' cultural background
There is no denying the fact that culture is important for people, thus the learners who come to learn will inevitably bring along his or her own previous learning experience which is also culturally embedded (see e.g. Byram, & Morgan, 1994). Slavin, (2009), alike, argues that by the time children enter school, they have absorbed various aspects of the culture (e.g. language, belief, attitude, ways of behaving, etc.) which they have acquired from their previous upbringing. From the above concept, it is clear that those scholars emphasize the importance of the learners' cultural background in order to be wisely accommodated during the EFL learning activities.

An endless yet an important issue: cultural diversity awareness
Before illuminating the issue of cultural diversity awareness, it is certainly important to grasp the meaning of cultural diversity which is defined as (UNESCO, 2001) a principle for organizing sustainable cultural plurality, both within and across society (p. 11).

Further, Brown E, L. (2004) consolidating the excerpts from various scholars e.g.: Banks (2001), Brown, E, L. (2004), Gay, (1985) and Sleeter (1995), defining cultural diversity awareness as " the continuous modification of one's belief system by: (1) seeking out and internalizing accurate knowledge of

one's own cultural frames-of-reference and the culture of "others" (2) recognizing and respecting the contribution of "other" (micro/macro) cultures to the progress of a society (3) valuing, understanding, and participating in cross-cultural interactions, and (4) nurturing equitable behaviors in one's "self" and "others" (p. 5).

The importance of cultural diversity awareness in education field has also been proven through some studies lending to the conviction that teachers with cultural diversity awareness tend to have more positive influence leading to their students' achievement (e.g. Banks, 1997; Gay 2000, as cited in Brown, E. L. 2004). Similarly, Quick and Nelson (2011, p. 51) argue that diversity is proven to be more effective in promoting creativity and innovation which will certainly lead to better problem solving and improved organizational flexibility.

Local short story vs. native speakers' short story

While the survey conducted by Rodliyah, Imperiani, & Amalia, (2014) indicated that Indonesian students could possibly accept both local and foreign sources in having their EFL reading materials. In EFL scholarship, however, the use of local and native speaker's sources in EFL has actually been a prolonged issue to debate. While some scholars believe that the exposure of native English speakers might be positive since it can significantly support the learning process (see e.g. Bachman, 1990, or Brown, 2001 on "language- culture connection").

Another scholar, take for example Alptekin (2002), on the contrary, believes that the newly adjusted materials to local values should be done. He argues that the paradigm of the new language learning nowadays is not for the sake of adopting a new culture, but merely for instrumental reason. With the growing number of the English speakers in the expanding circle (see Kachru, 1998) the mere "prescriptive" teaching method (see e.g. Merrison, et al. 2014) without incorporating local values or the learners' cultural background will be of less use since the instances of communication will probably happen more in non-English countries rather than in the inner circles.

Other scholars who also seem to doubt of the efficacy of the incorporation of the target culture are Jabeen & Shah (2011) who found that the Pakistanis' students are found to have negative attitude when they are exposed to the native English culture. Jambor, (2007) alike, believes that there are some problems regarding the way English is taught in Korean context. Lastly, Hu (2002) postulates that the teaching of English in China is considered not effective due to the fact that there is a possible cultural differences between the philosophy adopted by Chinese and the concept applied in English teaching.

THE NATURE OF INDONESIAN CULTURE

As a multi- cultural and multi- lingual country (see e.g. Muamaroh, 2013; Murtiningsih, 2014) Indonesia doesn't seem to have problem in receiving the new language. This is because most Indonesians have also learned other languages prior to the introduction of English in Indonesia take for example Arabic, thus making them able to adopt the new language even easier although in some cases interference might arise (see e.g. Madya, 2007). Additionally, Indonesia is also considered as an oral community, based on the fact that there lie countless of local stories which have been passed down from generation to generation (Rahim, & Rahiem, 2012).

Bunanta (2003 as cited in Rahim, & Rahiem, 2012) recount that there are more than 300 hundred ethnic groups which have their own typical stories as well as their own means of storytelling. Through story reading or storytelling activities, children become familiar not only with a variety of examples of good and bad deeds, regulations and punishments, but also learn the reasons for taking action, problem solving, empathy, etc. Commenting on the importance of local stories, Alwasilah (2007) urges language educators in order to be aware of the importance of elevating the status of local literature to a higher and respected one, due to the fact that these value- laden stories have so far been neglected. He also reiterates that presenting cultural values accommodated in the local stories will not create "ethnocentric paradigm" in fact, it can develop critical thinking through continuous self-introspection on their cultural identities.

THE EFFICACY OF LOCAL SHORT STORIES IN INDONESIAN EFL CONTEXT

What is "schemata"?

Based on psychologist (e.g. Slavin, 2009), schemata is the concept that is important and becomes the basis of our understanding toward the newly succeeding concept. Thus students who previously don't have the basic knowledge or sufficient information on the second language culture or paradigm must have difficulty in understanding this new concept. Supporting the above idea, Byram and Morgan (1994, p. 44) firmly

postulate that "learners need to become aware of their own cultural schemata in order to effect an acknowledgement of those of a different culture."

Preventing cultural conflict
Martin and Nakayama (2008, p. 211) define conflict as referring to intercultural conflict as "involving a perceived or real incompatibility of goals, values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more interdependent individuals or groups". William (1994, pp. 2-6) forwards that cultural conflicts usually emerge due to the differences in values and norms or behavior of people from different cultures. Specifically, Triandis (1994, p.18), coins the term "cultural distance " in order to emphasize that the intensity of conflict will usually depend on "how far the distance occurs". Further, Palmer (2013, p. 4 as citing Le Roux, 2002) reiterates that EFL teacher should be careful in accommodating "the cultural component" in order to prevent some negative instances such as; "frustration, misapprehensions, intercultural conflict, and school failure".

Implanting cultural values and identities
Since most of local short stories are morally or value laden stories, e.g. the values adopted from religious teaching, local customs, traditions, morals, heroic stories, etc., (Bunanta, 2003, as cited in Rahim, & Rahiem, 2012), thus these kinds of stories will generally incur more benefits to the students since they can provide not only cognitive or motoric aspects, namely English, but also a chance to preserve the values which are closely relevant to the students' identity, either as a person or as a citizen in this beloved country. However the challenge regarding the use of local short story is also huge, some problems persist, e.g. the low quality of the textbooks, teachers' competence in presenting the short story, etc. Zacharia's (2003) study, for instance, reveals that many Indonesian teachers strongly prefer the teaching materials from English speaking countries, especially for teaching pronunciation and listening skill and not many Indonesian teachers use locally produced materials, due to the fact that there are many Indonesian ELT books are of low quality. Secondly, the teachers' performance in presenting the quality teaching method regarding the use of short story remains a big issue to resolve this is because there are still many Indonesian teachers who are under qualified (see, e.g. Ashadi, 2014).

Teaching material or media?
It has been common secret that most of prestigious schools tend to use native books which are luxuriously packaged along with other supporting devices e.g. audio visual media, etc. The existence of locally produced Indonesian English books which are commonly less expensive compared with foreign books (e.g. the ones produced by Cambridge University Press, Longman, etc.) are still considered lower in quality due to the facts that they are not properly produced e.g. the lay out, the picture, the proof reading, supplementary materials, etc. Brinton, (2001), however, believes that media can be used to support the learning process along with the textbook, and can be in the form of various sources either electric or non-electric, thus allowing teachers to select the most suitable material or media for the learning process without having to burden the students with such expensive devices.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. The use of local short story can possibly be used in EFL context, as long as the selection of the materials are done carefully in order that the materials will suit the needs and the expectation of the students and the other relevant stake holders (e.g. school administrators, teachers, parents, etc.).
2. The use of local short story can probably provide a much easier learning process due to the fact that they contain more relevant schemata thus making it easier for students to understand the local story compared with the other foreign books which are usually packaged with a more exposure on L2 culture.
3. The use of local short story can also be used as a means of comparison between local values and foreign values so that the students can be more aware of the differences leading to cultural diversity awareness. In this case the use of local short story can also be presented alternately after the presentation of native short story in the next session depending on the time available, or vice versa. During the use of local short story discussion or interactive learning method (see Brown on interactive learning, 2001) can be performed by the teacher so that the students can get more involved in a discussion leading to their critical thinking improvement (see e.g. Alwasilah, 2007, Larson, 2014).
4. The use of short story should also be considered based on certain categories such as; students' proficiency, preference, the length of short story, etc. For some areas in which local values are highly appreciated, the use of local short stories can also be used as an alternative in providing an English material so that the students can be more familiar and be more spirited to learn thus preventing cultural

conflict due to the persistent distance between the students' cultural background and the L2 cultural paradigm.

5. The effectiveness of local short story will probably create a much greater impact on the lower proficiency level due to the fact that most of Indonesian local short stories might lack the natural aspects of English language, e.g. pragmatic components, idiomatic expressions, etc.

6. The use of teaching media can also compensate the moderate quality of the teaching materials produced locally so that the teaching process will be more meaningful, the use of media like; wayang, gloves, pictures, can be very interesting and can be an additionally effective package in English learning process. This effort can also be beneficial due to the fact that not all schools in Indonesia are properly equipped with modern facilities thus the use of expensive or luxurious materials might not be efficacious due to the incompetence of the teachers, and the lack of necessary equipment to support such sophisticated teaching materials.

7. The writer believes that there should be further study in order to know the general quality of Indonesian English writing skills, teachers' capacity and the possible implementation of local short stories in educational EFL context, especially in formal school setting, if the short stories are still regarded worthy-off to be maintained as Indonesian cultural inheritance. Besides the persistent problems regarding local publication (e.g. funding) should also be thoroughly solved since the quality of presenting teaching material will also depend on the quality teaching materials. Last but not least, the English locally written materials can also be used as an introduction of Indonesian culture to those who might be interested in knowing Indonesian culture.

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