

# Integrating Cultural Awareness in English Language Teaching Materials

Nurdiana

Bunda Mulia University

## Abstract

Over the past few years, English has increased itself as a lingua franca of international community. Due to this fact, various problems have arisen in English Teaching. They regard to several aspects of English, e.g. grammar or vocabulary. In this paper, I shall discuss the importance of Integrating Cultural Awareness in English Teaching Materials, which I think is one of the most complex problems in teaching English as an international language.

To me, culture is inseparable with language. For instance, when my students and I are discussing houses, we also talk about cultural differences regarding houses and the furniture. Americans, for example, do not use a “gayung” when they take a bath. I explain the cultural differences and tell the students that not all words in Indonesian can be translated into English because of the cultural differences. Also, the meaning of rooms designed in an American’s house is different. In Indonesia, the meaning of living room could be “ruang keluarga” whereas it is actually “ruang santai”.

To sum up, the materials used for English teaching should cover cultural awareness as the speakers of English not only come from the English-speaking countries, but they are also from the non-English speaking countries.

**Keywords:** *Cultural Awareness and English Language Teaching Materials.*

## 1. Introduction

Even though English is not the language with the largest number of native language speakers, it has now become a lingua franca. (Harmer, 2001: 1). That means it is used by people whose native language is not English or they have different first language. (Kirkpatrick, 2007: 155). Consequently, English is occasionally in conflict with more local languages, such as Welsh in Wales, or French in parts of French-speaking Canada. (Harmer, 2001: 4)

Lots of people is worried about the teaching of English as it is seen as a form of ‘cultural imperialism’. However, Kanavilil Rajagopalan (in Harmer, 2001: 5) says that the teaching of English should not be seen as a form of ‘cultural imperialism’. I myself agree to Rajagopalan’s statement. The teaching of English

is not a form of ‘cultural imperialism’. When we learn a language, we should be knowledgeable of its culture to avoid conflicts and misunderstanding when communicating with the native speakers of English. We even should incorporate English-speaking countries’ culture to make the messages we convey understandable; nevertheless, it raises a question which is related to the status of English now such as, “Is it possible to speak English without incorporating English-speaking countries’ culture?” or “Will people misunderstand the messages that are conveyed in English but the speakers do not integrate English-speaking countries’ culture?”

According to Anthony J. Liddicoat (<http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>), learning a foreign language is not an easy assignment. It is not just a matter of combining lexical items in grammatically correct sentences, yet it involves essential learning to communicate with others in that language and such communication deals with culture. He further says that :

1. “Language is a marker of identity and to use a language is an act of social identity in that it encodes how the speaker is presenting him/herself in a particular interaction. Language use involves the expression of self not just the expression of ideas and intentions.”
2. “Second language communication is intercultural communication. This may seem obvious, but it is always important to remember that when a person uses their second language they are encoding ideas in a linguistic system which is located within a cultural context and which will be interpreted as being located within that context. Language learners have to engage with culture as they communicate.”
3. ”Second language communication is bilingual. This means that the communicative resources available to second language users are different from those available to monolingual speakers of the language. Bilinguals need to be able to mediate linguistic codes and cultural contexts as a regular part of their interaction.”

Furthermore, Liddicoat (<http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>) raises some questions regarding the way in which language teaching and learning are conceived such as:

1. What is culture for communication?
2. How can intercultural competence be taught?
3. How is intercultural competence acquired?

The answer for question one, according to Liddicoat, deals with intercultural competence. Intercultural competence involves at least the following:

1. Accepting that one's own and others' behavior is culturally determined.
2. Accepting that there is no one right way to do things.
3. Valuing one's own culture and other cultures.
4. Using language to explore culture.
5. Finding personal solutions in intercultural interaction.
6. Using L1 culture as a resource to learn about L2 culture.
7. Finding an intercultural style and identity.

The answer for question two shall be discussed later in this paper, while the answer for question three will not be discussed here as it does not really relate to the topic of this paper.

As English has become the lingua franca, some problems appear regarding the teaching and the learning of English such as, problems in grammar and vocabulary. For instance, when Americans got an accident, they say "I have broken my leg" instead of "My leg is broken". The latter seems to be uttered by Indonesians as they mention the part(s) of the body first then the complaint. It is unlike Americans who mention the subject first, the verb, and the parts of the body. For Indonesians, "I have broken my leg" can be interpreted that someone breaks his or her leg intentionally.

Accuracy (grammar and vocabulary) is not the only difficulty in learning English. Cultural differences among the speakers of English also seem to be one of the problems when learning and communicating in English. Take a look at the following examples. When talking about having a bath, we normally talk about things we have or use in a bath room. Indonesians, for example, usually use

“gayung” to take a bath while Americans normally use a bath or bath up (thus they “take a bath”). In this case, how can we describe “gayung” in English whereas in English there is no “gayung”?

In my opinion, the fact that English language has become the lingua franca also deals with cross-cultural communication or intercultural communication. According to Samovar and Porter (2004: 15), “Intercultural communication involves interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event.” Gibson (2000: 9) states that intercultural communication occurs when a message sender and a message receiver have different cultures while David Matsumoto, Jeffrey Leroux, and Seung Hee Yoo (<http://www.kwansei.ac.jp>) say that in intercultural communication, interactants (people who do the intercultural communication) come from different cultures and they do not share the same ground rules of communication and interaction. In conclusion, intercultural communication is an interaction among people coming from or having different backgrounds. The study of intercultural communication, according to Milton J. Bennett (<http://www.mairstudents.info>), has been trying to answer the question, “How do people understand one another when they do not share a common cultural experience?”

As English as a lingua franca has dealt with intercultural communication, English Language Teaching (ELT), in my opinion, should incorporate cultural awareness in English Language Teaching materials. Cultural awareness is the term used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication. (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993: 5). According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993: 5), “Cultural awareness covers life and institutions, beliefs, values, attitudes, and feelings conveyed not only by language but also by paralinguistic features such as dress, gesture, facial expression, stance, and movement.” They further say that “The raising of cultural awareness is an aspect of values education”. (1993: 1).

According to Michael Byram, Bella Gribkova and Hugh Starkey (<http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>), critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) is an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. It is not the purpose of teaching to try to change learners values, but to make them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others. There is nonetheless a fundamental values position which all language teaching should promote: a position which *acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction*. The role of the language teacher is therefore to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop a knowledge of a particular culture or country.

Culture itself is defined as a shared system of attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour (Gibson 2000: 7). Similar to Gibson, Bennett (<http://www.mairstudents.info>) says that by definition, cultures are different in their languages, behaviour patterns, and values. Hofstede (in Gibson, 2000: 7) states that culture is “the collective mental programming” or “software of the mind” while Hall (in Samovar and Porter, 2004: 28) says that “Culture is communication and communication is culture.” According to Kramsch (1998: 4), “Culture refers to what has been grown and groomed.”

According to David Matsumoto, Jeffrey Leroux, and Seung Hee Yoo (<http://www.kwansei.ac.jp>), culture not only affects language lexicons, but also its function and pragmatics. For instance, Kashima & Kashima (in David Matsumoto, Jeffrey Leroux, and Seung Hee Yoo) examined 39 languages and found that cultures whose languages allowed for pronouns to be dropped from sentences tended to be less individualistic, which they interpreted as reflecting cultural conceptualizations of self and others.

Based on the description above, culture regards something that is abstract, e.g. attitudes, beliefs, or values. Culture also affects language use and communication as when we use the language, we reflect the concept of the culture of the language. It is part of communication as when communicating with others, we always deal with culture.

As language is inseparable with culture and so it leads to cultural awareness, to me, the incorporation of cultural awareness in English Language Teaching (ELT) is necessary. It suits the idea of communicative approach, which regards communicative competence in teaching English. Communicative competence describes four competencies covering grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. (Cem Alptekin in <http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx>).

Grammatical competence refers to the native speaker's knowledge of the syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonological features of the language, as well as the ability to manipulate these features to produce well-formed words and sentences. It provides the linguistic basis for the rules of usage which usually results in accuracy in performance.

The second competence is sociolinguistic competence. It deals with the social rules of language use, which involve an understanding of the social contexts in which language is used. Such factors as the role of participants in a given interaction, their social status, the information they share, and the function of the interaction are given importance. Social contexts here refers to the culture-specific context embedding the norms, values, beliefs, and behaviour patterns of a culture. Appropriate use of the language requires attention to such constructs.

The next competence is discourse competence. It is an ability to deal with the extended use of language in context. It is achieved through the connection of sentences and utterances to form meanings. These connections are often implicit. That means ideas we convey are linked to each other based on general knowledge of the world as well as the familiarity with a particular context.

The last competence is strategic competence. It is an ability to cope in an authentic communicative situation and to keep the communicative channel open. This requires communication strategies that one can use to compensate for imperfect knowledge of rules, or for factors such as fatigue, inattention, and distraction, which limit the application of such rules.

The communicative approach encourages foreign language learners to participate fully in the target language culture. Therefore, regarding English language learning and teaching, the native speakers of English are the best model

for the learning and the most important element in the success of the teaching. Not only are learners expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language, but also to learn how to use these forms in given social situations in the target language setting to convey appropriate, coherent, and strategically-effective meanings for the native speakers.

As a result, the impact of communicative approach to the English learning is the emergence of enculturation, in which learners acquire new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers. (Cem Alptekin in <http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx>)

As various communicative features underlying the sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies in the target language culture are different from those in the learners' own culture, it is suggested that teachers develop target language communicative competence in learners by integrating language and culture. To some people, integrating language and culture is considered the primary objectives of language learning because it gives learners opportunities to use the language in real life situations. In addition, learners will have experience of using the language as it is used by the native speakers.

For instance, ELT teachers are encouraged to not only expose British culture to their students, but also increase their awareness of the cultural diversity of the country while at the same time teaching a standard variety of English so that it does not offend the native speakers, and to be understood by them (Bex 1994 in Cem Alptekin in <http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx>). Hence, it leads many English teachers to enhance their students' sociolinguistic competence in English. The teachers even teach their students to "behave" like the English people. (Latulippe 1999 in Cem Alptekin in <http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx>)

Actually, the incorporation of cultural contents in language teaching materials, techniques for increasing awareness of the culture of the target language community, as well as the culture of English as an International language, have been one of the hottest issues in ELT. (Guest 2000, Littlewood 2000, Tomlinson 1990, and McKay 2002 in Seran Dogancay-Aktuna in <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.com>).

Speaking about the integrating of cultural contents in English language teaching materials leads to another point related to models or classifications of world Englishes. The term Englishes appeared as English has become a lingua franca and an international language. Now, it not only belongs to English-speaking countries, but also many other countries all over the world such as, India, Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Thus, we have Indian-English, Singaporean-English, or Malaysian-English.

Bolton (in Jennifer Jenkins in <http://www2.uic.edu>) states that there are three possible interpretations of 'World Englishes'. First, it serves as an "umbrella label" covering all varieties of English world wide and the different approaches used to describe and analyze them. Second, it is used in a narrower sense to refer to the so-called new Englishes in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean (Kachru's outer circle). Third, it is used to represent the pluricentric approach to the study of English associated with Kachru and his colleagues and often referred to as the *Kachruvian* approach although there is a considerable overlap between this and the second interpretation of the term.

The first use is also sometimes represented by other terms, including 'World English'(in the singular), 'international English(es)', and 'global English(es)', while the second is in fact more commonly represented by the term 'nativised', 'indigenised', 'institutionalized', and 'new Englishes' or 'English as a second language'. There are still more other terms that are currently in circulation. Despite the range of the interpretations of the term World Englishes and its alternatives, however, the links between them are so strong, and the field now so well established, that there seems to be little confusion over the intended reference.

Braj Kachru (in Harmer 2001: 8) propose the division of the English-speaking world into three concentric circles. The first circle is called 'inner circle'. The countries which belong to this circle are Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Britain, and the United States, where English is spoken as a first language. The second circle is 'outer circle'. It covers all countries in which English spoken as a second or a significant language such as Singapore, India, Pakistan, Malawi, Malaysia, and Nigeria. The last circle, 'expanding circle', refers to the countries in



which English has acquired cultural or commercial importance such as, China, Japan, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Greece, Israel, and Indonesia.

Kirkpatrick (2007: 27) states that the most common classifications of Englishes, particularly in terms of English language teaching, are English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL), and English as a foreign language (EFL). ENL is spoken in English-speaking countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. ESL is spoken in countries where English is usually an official and important language. Nigeria, Malaysia, and the Philippines are the examples of the countries in which English is used as a second language. The last classification, EFL, is spoken in countries where English is not used in daily life. It is learned at schools, yet the learners do not have many opportunities to practice it outside the schools. Indonesia, China, and Korea are the examples of the countries where English is used as a foreign language.

The classifications and the division of English have led to confusion among the learners as the non-native speakers of English. Take a look at the example given by Harmer (2001: 8). He says that in Brazil, there are two large teaching organizations: 'Cultura' and 'Bi-National' centres. 'Cultura' is supported by British Council schools and therefore the teachers teach British English, while the latter, 'Bi-National' is supported by the United States Information Service and thus the teachers teach American English. The question is, according to Harmer, which variety should the students choose?

In countries all over the world, they can choose British or American English to learn. In other countries they can choose Australian English, or a more outer circle variety such as, Malaysian, or Indian English. However, if they intend to study abroad, should they choose Ireland, Australia, Britain, Canada, or New Zealand?

Having discussed the variety, classifications and the division of English, which English, actually, should the learners and the teachers adopt? Obviously, teachers who are from Britain, the United States, or Australia will use their variety of English as a model; nevertheless, for the majority of non-native teachers of English could use one or two varieties of English.

Harmer (2001: 9) says that the safest conclusion is that the teachers should work with the variety that best reflects their own language use, always provided that this will be understood by most other English speakers in the world – and/or the speakers that the students are most likely to come into contact with.

Harmer further says that although teachers and students learn only one variety of English, it does not mean that they should only learn that one language variety. Teachers should expose their students to different language varieties in listening (and reading) texts so that they do not only hear the teacher's voice. This will help the students when they deal with different language varieties. However, teachers should not expose too many different varieties to beginner or elementary students. In my opinion, teachers had better familiarize the students the varieties in English when they are already in intermediate, upper intermediate or advanced level.

In reference to what has been described above, there are some questions that could be discussed in this paper. First of all, regarding the status of English now, which has become a lingua franca or an international language, which model or variety of English that should be taught to the students, particularly in the countries that belong to the 'expanding circle' such as, Indonesia or China?

In my opinion, teachers should teach the English language that belongs to the 'inner circle', like British or American English. They should use course books written or developed by British people or Americans. This is particularly intended to or aimed for beginner or elementary students. Nevertheless, teachers should choose one of the varieties so that the students will not get puzzled when they are learning the language. When they are already in upper intermediate or advanced level, teachers can expose or familiarize the students with more varieties of English.

The second question that could appear is "When is the best time to expose culture to the students by incorporating cultural awareness in English teaching materials? To me, we could familiarize the students with English culture since the very beginning. This is based on the notion that 'language is inseparable with culture and so culture affects a language'. In one of the previous paragraphs, I gave an example of the influence of culture to a language. A sentence like "I have broken my leg" is normally used by Americans or British people, while

Indonesians seem to say “My leg is broken” as they mention the part(s) of the body first then the complaint. It is unlike Americans who mention the subject first, the verb, and the parts of the body. For Indonesians, “I have broken my leg” can be interpreted that someone breaks his or her leg intentionally.

Perhaps the way Americans or British people tell people about their complaints is influenced by their culture that does not practice collectivism. That means they practice individualism, which tends to focus on “ I “. Another example is when Americans comment on or give opinions on something, I notice they normally say “ I don’t think you should.....” instead of “ I think you shouldn’t....”. Some of my colleagues said that it has nothing to do with culture; however, I believe that it has something to do with the individualism that is practiced by Americans.

To sum up, teachers should teach their students how native speakers of English usually say something in the beginning of their learning as it reflects their culture, yet the teachers are not encouraged to tell their students to behave or to act like the native speakers of English. What the teachers should do is just to teach, not to force their students to use American or British English as well as its culture. However, if we take the status of English as a lingua franca or an international language into account, teachers should not blame the students if they make a mistake when conveying their ideas in English, but they do not incorporate American or British culture though they are still in beginner or elementary level.

Liddicoat (<http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>) proposes an approach to teaching language and culture. The approach involves opportunities to reflect on one’s own culture, to experiment with the new culture and to decide how one wishes to respond to cultural differences. It divides language and culture teaching into four stages:

1. Awareness-raising
2. Skills development
3. Production
4. Feedback

## **2. Awareness-raising**

The awareness-raising stage is where the learners are introduced to new input about language and culture. New input should be introduced through participative tasks which encourage the learner to compare the new culture with their own practices.

Ideally the learner should have an opportunity to notice differences between the new input and their own culture, with the teacher supporting them in noticing differences. Schmidt (in Liddicoat in <http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>) has made the argument that language learning happens most readily when students themselves notice things about the language and this applied equally to language and culture learning (in Liddicoat in <http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>). It is especially important that students have the opportunity to think about and talk about what they notice, either in their first language, or if their proficiency is adequate in the second language.

Students' noticings are followed up wherever possible with an explanation of the function of particular actions in the target language to assist them in developing an explanatory framework for understanding what the speaker is doing. This explanation does not have to be deep, nor does it have to be detailed. Most importantly, it needs to be seen as being a normal way of acting. Some teachers may worry that as non-native speakers, they do not have enough insight into the other culture to teach it. However, being a native speaker is not always an advantage either, because in an intercultural approach, the teacher needs to know something about both cultures. Because ILT is comparative and is based on learning to notice differences, the important element is the exploration of difference rather than teaching difference and this is something teachers and students can do together. In particular, teachers' experiences of intercultural communication, especially of problems, can lead to insights about language and culture.

For awareness raising authentic video materials are particularly useful, as are cartoons, stories, etc. However some materials designed specifically for language learners may 'edit out' or 'nativise' cultural information in order to focus on

language giving students a distorted picture of the culture (Kramsch, 1987 in Liddicoat in <http://languagecenter.cornell.edu> ).

### **3. Skills development**

This stage allows students to begin working with their new knowledge and trying out native speakers ways of acting and speaking. This involves short, supported communicative tasks which practice elements of the new knowledge and helps to build towards overall learning for a new speech situation. This work involves picking apart some of the language and cultural needs of the students for focussed practice.

Ideally experimentation should occur immediately after awareness raising to help fix their newly noticed knowledge through experiential learning.

### **4. Production**

In this stage, students put together the elements they have been trying out in the experimentation phase and integrate the information they have acquired in actual language use. The best way to achieve this is through role plays, preferably unscripted role plays if the students are at a stage to be able to do these. In the role plays, they will need to act out the cultural and linguistics information that they have been practising so far. In essence, they try out being a native speaker of the language. The aim is for them to experience culturally different ways of interacting. In part this involves the students in experiencing the impact of using a different set of cultural rules on their identity and experiencing the comfort or discomfort this can bring.

### **5. Feedback**

This is an important part of the activity and involves reflecting on the experience of acting like a native speaker in the production phase. During this phase, the student discusses with the teacher how s/he felt about speaking and acting in a particular way. This allows the teacher to comment on the language use of the student, but also allows the student to express how they felt. The feedback should allow the student to work towards discovering a “third place”: a place of comfort

between their first language and culture and their second (Crozet and Liddicoat, 1999; 2000; Kramsch, 1993 in Liddicoat in <http://languagecenter.cornell.edu>)

Some aspects of using a new language and culture are difficult or uncomfortable, others can be liberating. In engaging with a new set of practices, questions of identity are important and even very small cultural differences can produce quite strong emotional reactions. In the feedback, it is important to recognise the positives and negatives students express and to acknowledge the validity of these feelings.

Negative feelings are particularly important as they have strong implications for future interaction in the language. If a learner is unable to use the culturally contexted practices comfortably, s/he needs to develop ways of facilitating interaction without using these practices. Simple avoidance is rarely adequate as the practices involved are read by potential interlocutors in particular ways and avoidance may lead to unwanted and/or unintended readings of the speaker. One solution is to explain avoidance of uncomfortable cultural practices in terms of the user's first culture. Such explanation requires conscious awareness of the practice and its significance and allows the users him/herself to frame the way in which avoidance should be read. An alternative solution may involve the development of an intermediary practice which is acceptable from both the user's first culture perspective and also from the interlocutor's cultural perspective. Such intermediary practices involve decentring from the first culture but do not involve assimilating to the second culture and reflect a true intermediary 'third' position.

The next question that can be raised after discussing the status of English is when teachers assess students' performance, which English should the teachers refer to? I think this depends on the model of English used. If our institution uses course books written by Americans then we, as teachers, should assess the students' performance by referring to American English. If it uses course books written by a British, we should refer to British English when assessing students' performance. However, we should be flexible by not criticizing the students if they are not able to use American or British English appropriately. Teachers

should remember that English is now an international language; thus, it is unfair if they only base their assessment on those two varieties.

In summary, since English as a lingua franca is, by definition, not the native language of its users, model for learners should accordingly not be dictated by any native-speaker language use, but instead its design should be guided by *pedagogical principles* rather than only linguistic ones. That is to say, insights from the psychology of learning should be taken into account, and considerations of learnability and teachability would have to be crucial design features. These would include criteria for selection, grading and presentation and aim at a considerable reduction of complexity, chiefly through elimination of communicative redundancy. (Mackey 1965 in Barbara Seidlhofer in <http://www.basic-english.org>)

In reference to the descriptions above, I myself believe that we, as non-native speakers of English, as well as English teachers, should be knowledgeable of the varieties in English and its culture and expose it to our students. When teaching a language, we teach them how to communicate and it is exactly like what Hall (in Samovar and Porter, 2004: 28) says that “Culture is communication and communication is culture.” Nonetheless, problems could emerge when we do so such as, which culture (Indonesian, English, Australian, American, or Canadian) we should refer to when we speak English to those whose native language is not English, or which culture we use when talking to Indonesians in English. To me, it is a kind of problematic when communicating in English with non-native speakers of English.

Relating English as a lingua franca or an international language to English teaching and learning, how can the students learn and the teachers teach English culture and the culture of English as a lingua franca? I suppose the answer is not difficult. Teachers can assist the students to learn the culture by incorporating cultural awareness in the teaching materials. By doing so, not only will they comprehend English culture, but they can also make comparison with local culture so that their cultural understanding of the language they are learning will be beneficial to their language improvement. In addition, the students will be more skillful in doing intercultural or cross cultural communication.

According to Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), the study of cross-cultural interaction is important because of several factors. They further say that a number of factors, both linguistic and socio-economic, have raised the study of cross-cultural interaction to high international profile in recent years. They are:

1. The rise in economic importance of the Pacific Rim countries

Countries such as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand have very different traditions and cultural behaviours from the traditional ELT or English Language teaching heartlands of Europe and North America. As increasing numbers of students have travelled abroad to learn English, there has been a re-evaluation of teaching content to take account of the need to explore and explain cultural differences in greater detail.

2. The influence of increased immigration on curricula

Teachers of English as a second or foreign language in English-speaking countries have long recognized the need to teach the way of life of the host country to immigrants. However, in recent years, a more open recognition of the need to understand the immigrant community's way of life has led to a more critical awareness of the host community's culture.

3. The study of pragmatics

Linguistic studies in the field of pragmatics (the ways in which language use is influenced by social context) have heightened awareness of the degree to which cross-cultural communication is affected by culturally-related factors. Such factors include people's expectations regarding the appropriate level of formality and degree of politeness in discourse.

4. The study of non-verbal aspects of communication

Of crucial importance has been the work of non-verbal aspect of communication such as, gesture, posture, and facial expression. Studies have shown these non-verbal elements to be the most culturally-influenced part of behaviour.

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), however, say that it is hard to identify a detailed syllabus for the study of culturally-induced behaviour. Ned Seelye (in Tomalin and Stempleski 1993: 7), provides a framework for facilitating the



development of cross-cultural communication skills. The following is a modification of his 'seven goals of cultural instruction':

1. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
2. To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as, age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
3. To help students to become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.
4. To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
5. To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
6. To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
7. To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

Many language teachers support the integrating of cultural components in English Language Teaching (McKay, 2004: 11). According to Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (in McKay, 2004:11), the inclusion of cultural components in language teaching can promote international understanding, broaden an understanding of one's own culture, facilitate learners' visit to foreign countries, and motivate learners. However, they further say that the incorporating of culture, particularly Western culture, is not motivating or beneficial to students. They made this statement after examining the Moroccan situation. Moroccan teachers believe that the inclusion of Western culture, and comparing cultures, create dissatisfaction of the students' own culture. In addition, the teachers believe that the students will be more enthusiastic in learning English if it is taught in contexts related to their lives rather than in the context of an English-speaking country.

McKay (2004: 11) says that in Chile, the Ministry of Education has decided to put an emphasis on the students' own culture and country as they would be

more motivated to learn English. In Japan, the situation is even worse. According to Suzuki (in McKay, 2004: 12), promoting Western cultural standards in the use of English often causes a feeling of inferiority to Japanese people while Smith (in McKay, 2004: 10), argues that in reference to an international language:

- a) Non-native speakers do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language.
- b) An international language becomes “de-nationalized”, and
- c) The purpose of teaching an international language is to facilitate the communication of learners’ ideas and culture in an English medium.

Referring to the three arguments, I have conducted a small survey on the incorporation of English culture in relation to intercultural communication and the status of English as a lingua franca and an international language. As mentioned previously that there are three models or classifications of English: ENL, ESL, and EFL. Based on the result of the survey, most of my students prefer using ENL and its culture. The main reason is they want to avoid misunderstanding when communicating in English, both with the native speakers and the non-native speakers of English.

I myself prefer integrating Western or English-speaking countries’ culture in the materials that are used to teach English. To me, we must learn about it, and as teachers, we should teach it to our students. Being knowledgeable of a language and its culture is essential, yet we do not need to internalize it. We can apply the cultural norms of a foreign language we are practicing though to others, applying them is not a must. For instance, English language has been internationalized and used by millions of people, both native and non-native speakers of English. Thus, the use of English by applying its culture is sometimes debatable.

McKay (2004: 12) says that the attitudes towards the inclusion of Western culture in English as International Language materials are not the same. Perhaps it is because English has become plural so that one English becomes many Englishes (Kirkpatrick, 2007: 28). He further says that the spread of English has caused the development of many Englishes while Kachru (in Kirkpatrick, 2007: 28) states that “English now has multicultural identities”.

To me, the status of English now has created a kind of “puzzlement”. It has multicultural identities as it has developed from one English into many Englishes. Hence, which cultural identity should we incorporate when speaking English? Should we blame the students or those who use English but apply Indonesian or Malaysian cultures?

As I believe integrating Western culture as well as cultural awareness in English Language teaching materials is an important assignment, I would refer to what Tomalin and Stempleski (1993: 8) suggest regarding incorporating cultural awareness in language materials. They recommend five practical teaching principles to be incorporated when English teachers do lesson planning:

1. Access the culture through the language being taught.
2. Make the study of cultural behaviour an integral part of each lesson.
3. Aim for students to achieve the socio-economic competence which they feel they need.
4. Aim for all levels to achieve cross cultural understanding—awareness of their own culture, as well as that of the target language.
5. Recognize that not all teaching about culture implies behaviour change, but merely an awareness and tolerance of the cultural influences affecting one’s own and other’s behaviour.

By referring to Tomalin and Stempleski’s teaching principles, we can, for instance, include cultural awareness when teaching *yes/no questions* or *wh-questions* dealing with personal information. Frequently asked questions (FAQ) in personal information are normally related to name, address, jobs, interests or hobbies. In Indonesia, information such as, religion, marital status, and age matter in the first meeting. Questions like “Are you married?”, “How old are you?” or “What is your religion?” are the ones which are commonly asked though you have just known the person you are talking to.

I myself occasionally experience this when I meet my students for the first time. Thus, when teaching *yes/no questions* or *wh-questions* dealing with personal information, I raise some points from which the students can learn cultural awareness. I would tell them that to some, age, religion, or marital status is considered sensitive. Therefore, we should be aware that we cannot ask those

questions to others, particularly to those that consider age or religion as a sensitive matter.

To sum up, the learning of English necessitates the raising of cultural awareness so that we can use the language correctly and appropriately. The inclusion of cultural awareness will become more essential as English language has been a lingua franca, a language used by thousands of people all over the world.

## References

- Gibson, R. (2000). *Intercultural Business Communication*, Oxford: Cornelsen & Oxford University Press GmbH & Co.
- Harmer, Jeremy. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Essex: Longman.
- Kirkpatrick, Andy. (2007). *World Englishes: Implications for International Communication and English Language Teaching*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McKay, S. L. (2004). Western Culture and the Teaching of English as an International Language. *Forum English Teaching*, vol. 42, 10-15.
- Porter, R. E., Samovar, L.A. (2004). *Communication Between Cultures*, Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Tomalin, B., Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural Awareness*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [http://www.mairstudents.info/intercultural\\_communication.pdf](http://www.mairstudents.info/intercultural_communication.pdf) (retrieved on 10 Dec.2010)
- [http://www.kwansei.ac.jp/s\\_sociology/attached/5288\\_44277\\_ref.pdf](http://www.kwansei.ac.jp/s_sociology/attached/5288_44277_ref.pdf) (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)
- [http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx/hemeroteca/elt\\_journal/2002/enero/560057.pdf](http://biblioteca.uqroo.mx/hemeroteca/elt_journal/2002/enero/560057.pdf) (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)
- <http://fds.oup.com/www.oup.com/pdf/elt/catalogue/eltj1.pdf> (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)
- <http://www2.uic.edu/~mbatti3/Ling583/Wiki/3868086c41ef721dfe02a90cfd7c468d.pdf> (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)
- <http://www.basic-english.org/member/articles/seidlhofer.html> (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)
- <http://languagecenter.cornell.edu/director/intercultural.pdf> (retrieved on 10 Dec 2010)