

## **INTEGRATING OF LOCAL CULTURE-BASED INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING SPEAKING CLASSROOM AT THE THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITAS TOMAKAKA MAMUJU**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aimed to explore an integration of local culture in teaching speaking to enable students to speak English in EFL classroom. It employed a descriptive study using a purposive sampling technique and taking 76 respondents from EFL university students. The questionnaire and interview were used to collect data on the perception of EFL university students on integrating local culture into learning. Observation applied to gain the data on the EFL students' interaction on integrating local culture-based instruction. The result showed that students' speaking on integrating local culture-based instruction in teaching speaking classroom in Indonesian EFL classroom fall into 3 categories: (1) highly understanding of local culture (HULC); (2) moderately understanding of local culture (MULC); (3) low understanding of local culture (LULC). This research is expected to be a reference for teachers' professional development, especially teachers' capacity in teaching speaking classes.*

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Integration, Local Culture*

### **Introduction**

Cultural content has become an important issue in a multicultural context. Integrating local culture into learning English as a foreign language is increasingly being practiced and local culture is seen as a tool that can help language learners acquire a new language. Vygotsky (1978) states that each culture functions as a learning tool to developmental function in learning.

Current studies into learners' local culture and their connection to EFL learning have gained attention in recent decades (for example; Barfield and Uzarski, 2009; Kristiawan 2012; Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Dorđević 2009). Barfield and Uzarski (2009) proposed 'indigenous artifacts' and other cultural aspects that can be used in EFL classrooms such as food, dress, authentic artifacts, music, and dance. They claim that there are two benefits that EFL learners can gain through cultural-based teaching. First, it can further expand students' knowledge about

their own culture. Second, this teaching approach is more relevant for students, because the material that is directly related is closely related to the culture of students.

Some scholars such as Kristiawan (2012), Kanoksilapatham (2015), and Dorđević (2009) have done research in their own countries that show that learning English through incorporating learners' local culture not only helps students become more aware of their own culture and language, but also makes the study of English more successful.

Aspects of Mandar culture that are integrated into the teaching of speaking classes are in the form of facts, practices, and cultural values. These things are then adjusted to the abilities and characteristics of the students. Holliday (2013) stated that a foreign language has the flexibility to immerse itself in any cultural context. Because of this, students can learn foreign languages more easily. In this regard, many studies have been conducted on cultural integration, but research on which aspects of culture influence students' emotions and willingness to speak English are still rarely found. The discussion about the willingness of learners to learn and speak needs to be explored again because it greatly affects the foreign languages learning, including English. This research is to integrate aspects of local Mandar culture in learning English and encourage the willingness of students to speak.

There is a stigma in EFL learning, that English is one of the most difficult subjects. This stigma causes students to have negative attitudes towards English. It was found in several cases in the field that students would skip English class when psychologically it meant that students were under pressure in the lesson. These negative concepts or perceptions ultimately cause students to be unmotivated to learn. Although many methods have been applied, this phenomenon still occurs over the years.

This research is here to reveal problems in the practice of teaching English from a different perspective. Local culture and context are integrated into learning to build a friendly learning atmosphere for Indonesian, especially learners from the Mandar tribe. This research will also specifically explore the impact of cultural input towards learners' emotions. Therefore, this study investigates how local culture, especially the local Mandar culture, functions to arouse learners' emotions in learning and using English.

Culture and communication are directly linked. "When cultures differ, communication practices may also differ. As Smith pointed out: In modern society, different people communicate in different ways, and the way people communicate is the way they live. It is their culture,...Communication and culture are inseparable."(Larry, 2000, p.95).

Teaching culture is important by most teachers, but it has remained insubstantial and sporadic in the most language classroom (Omaggio, 1993). That this study aims to motivate English foreign language (EFL) learners to speak through integrating learners' local culture. There has been a conflict of opinions in related literature regarding cultural integration in English foreign language classrooms. While some scholars (e.g, Abdulrahaman, Usu, and Tanipu, 2016; Choudhoury, 2014; Dai, 2011; Hesar, Konca and Zarfsaz, 2012 ) believe that EFL teaching should integrate the teaching of the target language culture because language and culture cannot be separated. Others (e.g Barfield and Uzarski, 2009; Đorđević, 2009; Kristiawan, 2012; Kanoksilapatham, 2015) argue about the importance of it in teaching because local culture gives students a sense of closeness and intimacy and can be a motivating factor that influences these EFL students to engage in the language.

## **Method**

Speaking skill is one of the main subjects taught to students, which is two hours a week by lecturers who are experts in the field. This speaking class is the focus of this research. It was carried out on EFL students at Tomakaka University, West Sulawesi, Indonesia, by taking the population of all students at the university. Meanwhile, the sample was taken using a random technique and the third semester students were selected with a total of 76 respondents.

Questionnaires, interviews, and observations were used in collecting the data of this study. The first two tools are to obtain data on perceptions of EFL students in integrating local culture into learning, while the last is to obtain data about their interactions in learning to speak using the integration of the local culture. This data was analyzed using thematic analysis. This research is proposed to be included in the category of descriptive-qualitative research.

## **Results**

The findings of the research described the integration of local culture in teaching speaking classrooms. This subsection describes the results of the analysis of integrating local culture in teaching speaking classrooms deals with the students' language learning strategies that were frequently used in learning English speaking skills.

The responses of the students to each category of strategies were separately classified into three groups, namely high, moderate/medium, and low usage. Students of Tomakaka

University Mamuju were medium strategies users. It was apparent that the students reported having, respectively, high to medium proficiency of use of each of the six categories, with a mean ranging between  $M=3.59$  and  $M=2.64$ .

Besides that, in this research, the researcher applied Duncan's multiple range tests to find out the data statistic analysis of the students' language learning strategies by applying. It was the most sensitive statistic test to account for the data of the whole sample of this research. This result showed the six categories of language learning strategies that were employed by the students by integrating the local culture at the third-semester students of Universitas Tomakaka Mamuju.

## **Discussion**

The finding illustrated that local culture as learning material input and involves psychological which has great effects on students' emotion and spirit in learning. As mentioned above, local culture reduces learning anxiety, generates emotional experience, then provides a fun learning atmosphere.

Integrating local culture as learning material input involves psychological aspects which have great effects on students' emotion and spirit in learning. A local culture that integrates into teaching reduces learning anxiety, generates emotional experience, then provides a fun learning atmosphere. It could be seen from the data presented below, the analysis shows that current students' EFL of Tomakaka University is interested and enjoys following speaking classes by integrating local culture.

Students in the interviews that had been conducted stated that the integration of local cultural terms into English classes could reduce their anxiety. This happened because the learning inputs in the form of learning materials, vocabulary, reading discourse, etc. were taken from their environment. Many local cultural terms which in the implementation of the learning process helped them to speak English more fluently. In this case, it was revealed how local culture could well facilitate students to learn English more easily.

One participant said, 'In fact, to speak English using some local terms from our culture was easier. For example, iced Pallebutung (typical food made from banana, powder mixed with local ingredients). "Iced Pallebutung is my favorite food and I know well how to make

it.”. Similarly, another said, “Bau Peapi and Jeka are very delicious”. (kinds of Mandarese food made from fish and mix with local ingredients, and Jeka is made from cassava).

When students combined his/her words with some words from their culture, it is easier for the students than using all new words of English. The reason is sometimes they did not know how to pronounce the words such as hamburger. “ But If I say I eat Sambusa (typical food of Mandarese), it is easy. Sambusa is a local food in Mandar. Every day the people eat in my village (Mandar is the name of the ethnic group in West Sulawesi, Indonesia).” Others said, “when the researchers talked about the local places or events, the names of places or events aided them to speak English easily. The researchers have some sweet experiences in those places. A student said, “One day I went to the market by Bendi. It is easier to speak in English.”

Around 50% of students confirm they were interested in and enjoy the learning process by integrating local culture in teaching material EFL classrooms. While 18 % of them gave their opinion that local culture is not important and there is no need to do it in English-Speaking class. Over 35% of the students presented their opinion that knowledge of British culture as a native language is needed to teach the English language, and it can be analyzed that it is always better to know over two languages and cultures in order to be more effective in teaching classroom. In addition, it deserved to be noted that 85 % of students are enthusiastic about learning EFL by integrating local culture in order to facilitate their learning.

### **Highly understanding of local culture**

As optimal learning input in teaching speaking class, local culture was not only comprehensible, but also understanding. It can be seen through the percentage of students’ response to integrating local culture in teaching, their approval is about 50 %. The understanding content of local culture and their surrounding provided them many local terms that enable students to speak fluently. Since the complexity of ELT reduces by having some local terms, the students do not have high anxiety. The students can pick various local terms that help them babble. Local terms reduce the complexity of vocabulary choice and pronunciation. Local culture significantly functions as a cognitive tool to recall learners’ existing knowledge to be used (Vygotsky, 1978 ). Wang (2017) states that learners’ critical language awareness towards both in the target language and their native language is developed.

### **Moderately understanding of local culture**

In the teaching and learning process by integrating local culture, some students have been categorized as highly understanding with learning materials and the interest to the learning

process by the content of local culture, but it is also undeniable that some students who participate in teaching and learning class can only be at the intermediate level or moderately understanding from the data about 28.9 % students are in a neutral position in giving response to the integration of local culture in teaching and it categorises in this study as moderately understanding. Such conditions are things that often occur in the teaching and learning process which certainly requires more serious attention and treatment to overcome. The researcher strongly believes that the integration of local culture into learning material was very interesting but it requires a method from a teacher to present it to the students well.

### **Low Understanding of Local Culture**

This study had found that some students are still categorized in low understanding in the learning process, it can be seen on the data that about 21% students EFL of Universitas Tomakaka disagreed with integrating local culture in teaching speaking class, however, the local culture is expected to overcome the students' problem.

In this view, the classroom as a formal setting presents all the content found in an informal setting to get the learners familiar with using them. That's the situation that helped the students low quality to relax and easy-going in the teaching and learning process. As Vygotsky (1978) states, learners have a capacity to associate with everyday cultural experiences. It confirmed that English is not the only sole carrier of meaning.

Local culture in ELT reveals that the local culture contributes new linguistic terms in English and English functions to globalize those terms. 'Blending' culture in a foreign language teaching brings the impact of natural use of the local terms in foreign language use (Garcia, 2011). In addition, the current phenomenon of multilingual society enables mixed terms in verbal interaction.

### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the integration of local culture into the process of teaching English, especially speaking classes, has a positive impact on students. In this study, the learner's perspective shows that local culture has a significant influence on the atmosphere that occurs in the classroom. The atmosphere that occurs is the process of learning English as a foreign language, especially in teaching speaking skills to be more fun. With a positive atmosphere that occurs, there is also a reduction in anxiety in students and they gain confidence

to learn to speak English. Then, they have a great desire and motivation to be more active in speaking in English. They find it easier to do that because it's based on what they have around them. Local culture involves the knowledge and modalities they have in their first language and culture while reducing their cognitive load in ELT because some linguistic input is known. Here, the complexity is reduced.

Because of this, learning becomes a personal experience by exploring cultural facts and practices that act as a bridge to less familiar cultural content associated with the target language and cultures of English. In addition, learners learn to construct their personal meaning using the familiar contents and new language forms. In addition, local culture can act as the ice breaker by creating humor, fun, and stimuli for learners to engage in language learning activities. Language teachers normally think about how to create a cheerful classroom to make learners feel comfortable in the classroom and motivate them to persist with the class. Here, the students' local culture assists English teachers as they share some sense of interest and humor. In addition, local culture functions to stimulate learners to be more productive in speaking since they feel comfortable speaking.

### **Suggestion**

By integrating local culture in teaching speaking classrooms it will be a various and dynamic of teaching and learning process, in this point, the next research is expected to explore the foreign language use and its effects on cultural identities.

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