THE DELIVERY OF WESTERN CULTURE IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT SMAN 10 MALANG

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ABSTRACT: Culture is closely related to language. It indicates that in learning a language, learners also need to learn about the culture. The delivery of western culture in English teaching and learning process can be delivered by teachers and this study investigated teachers through in-depth interview to see whether they convey the cultural aspect. The findings show that English teachers at SMAN 10 Malang have delivered the cultural aspects and it was also confirmed by the students through questionnaire.

Keywords: Western Culture, English Teaching and Learning

English is one of the foreign languages which are taught in schools, from primary up to secondary schools. Moreover, there are also kindergarten and playgroups which provide English as the subject. In this case, English is a language which is very important because it is taught in every level of education in Indonesia. For the English teachers, an appropriate teaching strategy is needed to make the students learn English more easily. One of the additional aspects that occur in learning English is the cultural aspect. In learning a language, the learners should also learn the culture of where the language comes. Language is rooted in culture and culture is reflected and passed on by language from one generation to the next (Emmit & Pollock, 1997). From this, one can see that learning a new language involves learning a new culture (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). In English, the learners should also know the western culture to use English in the appropriate way.

Levine and Adelman (1993) stated that culture is a shared background as the result of common language and communication style of a society. Culture is a social practice which produces, circulates, and exchanges meanings (Thwaites, 2002). In sum, culture is a result of people’s thought or imagination so that they make it as belief or customs. Through the belief and customs, human being has the thing called culture. Although culture is broad in meaning and types, people can still study culture through its differences and similarities.

There is a term socio cultural competence in the language learning. Socio cultural competence is one of aspects of communicative competence. Lee and McChesney (1999) define socio cultural competence as the cultural norms, values and beliefs needed for appropriate and native-like language use. Cultural factor is one of the components of socio cultural competence. Hence, in order to gain the socio cultural competence, language learners have to learn the culture of the target language. In schools, English teachers can develop their students’ socio cultural competence by conveying the cultural aspect during the teaching and learning process. It is a challenge for English teachers in Indonesia to insert the cultural aspects when they teach English in class. As it is also stated by Baker (2003) that every language will reflect the values, beliefs, and assumption of the culture it
came from, so learning a language will also involve learning culture the language expresses.

This research presented two research problems. They are (1) how well do English teachers understand western culture? (2) do English teachers convey the cultural aspects during English teaching and learning process? The result of this study is expected to give language teachers especially English teachers more information about the importance to deliver cultural aspect of a target language when teaching the language. In this study, western culture refers to the culture which comes from English speaking countries. The aspects of the western culture which is discussed are the basic and often recognizable ones in everyday life. In America, the basic cultural value involves individual freedom, self reliance, equality and privacy (Grouling, 2012). For examples, the way westerners open a conversation with strangers is different from Indonesian context. Westerners value privacy very much, so they will avoid questions which are related to people’s privacy and of course they will not ask about age, where they live or even marital status.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach to investigate the delivery of western culture during the English teaching and learning process by the teachers. The most common or basic culture is the one that can be seen in everyday life such as the way native speakers introduce themselves. In reaching the aim of this research, the researcher requires data as a whole. Thus, the data should be in details. Interview guide and questionnaire are used as the instruments to collect the data. A classroom observation is also done to collect more data.

This research has been conducted on March-April 2012 at SMA Negeri 10 Malang, Jalan Danau Grati No. 1, telephone (0341) 719300/717300, Malang 65139 on the second semester of school year 2011-2012. The subjects of this study are teachers who have knowledge on western culture and deliver it to the students during teaching and learning process. Those teachers should have two main criteria. The first criterion is that the English teachers have to know western culture from a real source. The real source is either they once lived in an English speaking country or they once know native speakers so that they directly get the western culture knowledge from them. The second criterion is the delivery of western culture itself by those teachers during teaching and learning process.

In qualitative research, in-depth interview is like a usual conversation between the interviewer and interviewee rather than a formal event such as press conference, yet the responses of the interviewee are previously determined by the interviewer (Marshall and Rossman, 1995:80). In order to facilitate the interview, the researcher made a list of objectives called Interview Guide. The questions chosen were based on the example of basic cultural value in America which involved individual freedom, self reliance, equality and privacy as stated by Grouling (2012). The questions were also related to family since the family life in western culture also needed to be learned. The example of family life which could be asked was the fact that in western culture, children in age above seventeen was considered mature, so that the parents would not interrupt their children’s business much. Moreover, parents would suggest their children to solve their problems themselves.
Meanwhile, questionnaire typically entails several questions that have structured responses categories and may include some that are open-ended (Marshall and Rossman, 1995:96). This research uses questionnaire as the supplementary instrument to go along with in-depth interview. The researcher also makes an outline which contains the objectives and expected responses in the questionnaire. There were three variables which became the basis to develop the questions on the questionnaire. The first variable was about the comprehension of western culture. The intention of the first variable was to know whether the students know the western values. The topics used were introduction and family. The second variable was the delivery of western culture in the teaching and learning process. The last variable was intended to know how the students attracted in learning English by knowing the western culture.

Besides, the researcher also conducted a class observation to observe the classroom activity and to note down the cultural aspects which might be delivered by the teachers. The data were analyzed using narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is a qualitative approach to the interpretation and analysis of qualitative data.

FINDINGS

The description of the findings was divided into three sub-points based on the instruments that the researcher used in the data collection. They were interview guide, questionnaire and classroom observation.

The Result of the In-depth Interview

The first result was from the in-depth interview. There are four interviewees who are also the English teachers of the school. They teach the tenth and eleventh graders. The interview was done face to face. The first question asked to the interviewee was about their style of English. The objective of this question is to investigate the understanding of the differences among the three English styles. Teacher 1 said that she uses the one which is more suitable to their need in teaching English at the school, so she does not use one particular style, yet she knows about the three English styles. Then, teacher 2 also stated that she does not use one particular style in her English. Teachers 3 and 4 do not use one particular style of English.

The second question was about how the teachers view culture in relation to language. It aims to know if they are aware of the need in learning culture when people learn a foreign language. The four teachers stated that culture is closely related to language. The third question of this interview was about the teachers’ experience in working together with native speakers. It is intended to investigate the source of the knowledge about culture they have. This is important since the validity of the information is being measured. The four teachers stated that they have worked with native speakers in the school in the past and more than once. They said that there used to be native speakers who became the guest teachers in the school.

The fourth question was about how westerners or natives introduce themselves and what gesture they make. The four interviewees answer the same that if westerners want to introduce themselves, they will just simply say their names while shaking hands. This can be inferred that it is no doubt that all interviewees know the most basic activity westerner have which also represent
their culture. The fifth question was about the topics that most westerners have to open a conversation. There are several answers to this question. The interviewees stated that westerners commonly talk about weather, the recent issue which happened in the country, weekend activities, and favorite things about the country or place they are in at that time, and events which occur in those places.

The sixth question was about western family. The interviewees were asked if they find something special or unusual in western family. Teacher 1 said that western family uses to be flexible. Teacher 2 stated that they tend to be fair in task division. Teacher 3 said that it was rare to find only mothers who take care of the children or doing household activities. Fathers and mothers usually work together. While, teacher 4 noted that the family member value privacy very much even if it is their children’s. The seventh question was about the way parents treat their children. Both teacher 1 and 3 said that western parents never forbid their children to fulfill their curiosity. Teacher 2 also said that parents will support their children in doing their favorite activities. Besides, teacher 4 stated that western parents are very discipline.

The eighth question was the continuation question of the seventh question. They were asked if western parents are included in very discipline parents. All of them said yes for this question. The ninth question was about the fact that those teachers convey these values to their students in the teaching and learning process. All of them answered that they conveyed the cultural values when it was suitable for the topic they were discussing. The tenth question was asking about the strategy they used to deliver the cultural aspects in class. Three teachers said that they had a strategy to convey the cultural aspect. They make an agreement with the students in order to make the students accustomed to the western culture. For example, everyone should come on time in every class. They will get punishment if they do not and it is also happened to the teachers.

The Result of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was for the students. The number of students was twenty five ideally because the researcher took one class from grade eleventh, XI Science 2, as the sample but unfortunately there were three students absent on the day this questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire consists of ten questions and there are two types of question, multiple choice and open questions. Those questions were classified into three groups based on the variables; they were (a) the comprehension of western culture and (b) the delivery of western culture in teaching and learning process (c) the influence of western culture towards the students’ motivation in learning English.

(a) the comprehension of western culture

There are 68% of the participants who choose shaking hands for question about the gesture westerners have when introducing themselves. Then, 77% of them choose the current weather which is the correct answer for question about the topic westerners have when they talk to a stranger. For question about the proper form of addressing, 59% of the participants choose Mr. Grisham. There are also 59% of the participants who choose mothers and fathers do household activities in turn for question about the role division in western family. In short, it is proven that mostly the students have understood about the western culture and it can be inferred that they have been familiar with those culture.
(b) the delivery of western culture in teaching and learning process

There were 86% of the participants admitted that the English teachers convey the cultural aspect. Most participants or 77% of them stated that their teachers conveyed western culture not more than three times a month. While, there were several examples of the cultural activities that the teachers have taught them. The question about the way teachers conveyed the cultural aspect in teaching and learning process lead 86% of the participants answered that the delivery of western culture was done based on the topics they discussed.

(c) the influence of western culture towards students’ motivation in learning English

There were 90% of the participants who feel that the understanding of western culture help them in learning English and that understanding the western culture influences the students’ motivation in learning English in several aspects.

The Result of Classroom Observations

The classroom observations were conducted four times. The first classroom observation was conducted in X-4 on March 30, 2012. The second classroom observation was conducted in X-5 on April 2, 2012. The third classroom observation was conducted in Science-1 on April 3, 2012. The last classroom observation was conducted in Science-2 on April 3, 2012.

In the first classroom observation, it was known that the class was opened by a performance of a student who spoke out wise words. This activity is intended to motivate the students and it also can improve their confidence in speaking English. There were also students’ performances on the next classroom observation. This time, the student in charge had to retell the book she had read. This activity is aimed to train the students to be more confident when they have to speak in front of the audiences.

In the third classroom observation, the students were asked to retell the story from a movie she had watched. Besides retelling the story, this student had to find the moral values of the story. The last classroom observation was begun the class with agreement dealing with politeness. The teacher taught the students how to be polite when they wanted to interrupt or ask questions to the teacher.

DISCUSSION

This research was intended to investigate the delivery of western culture during English teaching and learning process by English teachers at SMAN 10 Malang. The possibility of meeting native speakers should trigger English teachers to convey cultural aspect when they were teaching. Thus, cultural competence may become the requirement to interact with native speakers since it helps them in using English properly. The indicator of cultural competence mastery can be known when the language learners use the proper words and gestures when they communicate with native speakers.

This research presented two research questions to be answered. They were: how well do the English teachers understand about western culture and whether those teachers deliver the western culture during teaching and learning process. The result of in-depth interview which engaged four English teachers of SMAN 10 Malang showed that the teachers understand well about the western culture, especially the most basic ones such as in introduction, politeness and family life. They also stated that they delivered the western culture during teaching and
learning process. Basically, all of them convey the cultural aspect based on the topics they were discussing. They would add the cultural aspect when it was necessary. In addition, the three of them also made a strategy in training the students to be accustomed to western culture. They always have a performance as the opening of the class. Some of them called it a moment of silence session.

In the questionnaire which was given to twenty two students of grade eleventh, the mastery of English usage could be seen. For instance, the question about the topic westerners have when interact with others for the first time might lead the students to choose the improper answers such as marital status or age. The possibility that students would choose marital status or age was triggered by the fact that those students imitated what their parents usually did. However, it was also possible that the students do not like it since they had been thought by their English teachers that marital status and age were sensitive topics to be asked. But, they still asked that because their parents also did it, so they thought that asking about marital status or age was good and polite.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

These conclusions are based on the data analysis which has been done in the previous chapter. Firstly, the English teachers of SMAN 10 Malang understand well about the western culture. Secondly, the delivery of cultural aspect is also done by the English teachers of SMAN 10 Malang during teaching and learning process. Thirdly, based on the questionnaire which was distributed to the students, it is known that through learning culture, they can expand their comprehension of English. Since learning culture is important in improving students’ communicative competence, it is suggested that the delivery of western culture in English teaching and learning process should be done. The strategies in delivering the cultural aspect should been thought carefully in order to make students more interested in learning it and do not feel forced. It is also suggested for further researchers to conduct another research dealing with the delivery of western cultures in English teaching and learning process, especially the most suitable teaching strategy that can be used to deliver the cultural aspect of English.

REFERENCES


