Interconnection of Cultural Literacy in Learning English and its Understanding as a Foreign Language in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT: *This research analyzed the model of cultural literacy in learning and understanding English as a foreign language in higher education. Cultural literacy is closely related to applying English as the main foreign language in higher education. The lecturer became a role model and a central point in introducing and guiding students to understand cultural literacy and English as a foreign language. Moroever, this study portrayed a qualitative descriptive method. Five lecturers from private higher education in Malang city were recruited as informants in gathering information. Furthermore, the study unraveled that cultural literacy and learning English as a foreign language had interconnections to explore each other's culture from any aspect, thus, creating adjacent dialogic and informative spaces as intercultural communications*.

KEYWORDS: cultural literacy, English, foreign language, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, culture exerts a significant influence on the language learning process. Acquiring a language is a process of interaction between individuals and groups, requiring a two-way understanding. Therefore, studying the target language's culture is crucial to adjust to the target language's actual meaning (Afriani, 2022).

Culture, in this case, is defined as a living order in a group of people related to beliefs, views on life, political systems, existence, and customs inherited from generation to generation. The adjacent correlation between language and culture affects appropriate messages' delivery to the target speaker. Therefore, the speaker must be able to understand the interlocutor's cultural aspects (Frank, 2013) Moreover, understanding cultural aspects can be applied through formal education, referring to the policy of the National Ministry of Education in 2004, stating that a student must possess the regulation of information and thoughts in the context of science. In its stages, the use and understanding of information through language delivery have been well-prepared (the next level up to the university level).

The use of a language is crucial for every human being in any sector to interact and communicate with others. Adjusting the target language's culture may shape students' fluent adaptation. However, in a language learning context, language needs may experience a shift. The modern era demands that people must harmonize the use of international languages to plunge into a wider world scope (Giosa, 2009).

In the context of education, people may more frequently encounter international languages at a higher information level. A broader scope of a delivery target is expected when the information is uttered in international languages. English as a foreign language (EFL) may represent the adjustment of the language. The existence of English as an international language may ease global communication and interaction (Peterson & Coltrance, 2003).

Higher education as an agent of change in Indonesia is crucial to educating society. Thereby, in this modern era, the students must have English skills as a foreign language and be literate. They should sort out any information, leading to a reasonable or logical response (Fadhilah, 2022)Cultural literacy has never escaped from the sector of human life, which is increasingly plurality in all fields. Plurality in terms of religion, ethnicity, nation, and others must be addressed with adjustments, including from the process of exchanging information. Therefore, this study tries to reveal the influence of cultural literacy on learning English as a foreign language in universities. (Gita Aprinta, 2013).

Based on the explanation of experts listed in the printed book of the Finnish Ministry of Education entitled "Education for Global Responsibility-Finish Perspectives, " cultural literacy is defined in the form of intercultural competence (intercultural). In some references, the term has the same meaning as intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural effectiveness, and intercultural adaptation. The book also mentions that cultural literacy is included in nowadays global education (Riani, 2018).

Cultural literacy policy as a global education is not something without consideration. The world's challenges are getting tougher with the ratification of the ASEAN Economic Community within the scope of the Southeast Asian region. Free trade occurs when products to the people of other countries also have free access to enter this country, and vice versa. The need for human resources with life skills and knowledge can be achieved through cultural literacy. The cultural literacy education movement will lead every individual to succeed in the existence of world development. Nevertheless, it is necessary to master English as a foreign language to achieve the upgrade.

This study attempts to uncover the interconnection of cultural literacy with learning English as a foreign language of higher education. Given the needs of the world related to these two things, the reality is that the two must also be taken a hand in hand. In addition, the era of cultural literacy development cannot grow and develop without the connection with the learning and understanding model of English as English as a foreign language in universities, creating adjacent dialogic and informative space.

METHODS

This study portrayed a qualitative descriptive method, recruiting five lecturers from public and private universities in Malang City who are at the faculty of cultural sciences and the faculty of English Language Education as informants in gathering information. This technique was selected to obtain myriad data. The data were then synchronized with the expected theory to support further processing data. Meanwhile, in the context of data analysis, qualitative descriptives were plotted to observe and emphasize the researchers' instincts in connecting several variables of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction to Cultural Literacy in the English as a Foreign Language Class
Introducing cultural literacy needs to be examined in terms of definitions that distinguish between cultural literacy and cultural literacy. The existence of these two terms has different meanings. As for what is meant by culture, there are two aspects of culture: visible and invisible culture (Saepudin et al., 2018). A visible culture can be seen through the senses of the eyes (traditional clothing, food, celebrations, and languages). However, the invisible culture is values, beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, traditions, and roles. So that cultural literacy is a habit of a person to emphasize the process of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and scientific development (Helaluddin, 2018)

There are several criteria to find out that someone has cultural literacy:
a.   Understand the complexity and cultural dynamics containing strengths, weaknesses, paradoxes, and climate changes to the culture that can be avoided.
b.   Have the ability to analyze their own cultural attributes and can identify and even deconstruct existing stereotypes.
c.   Have a high concern for cultural components which include culture universally, internally based on values and lifestyles (external) between culture and culture.
d.   Tends to prefer cultural relativists over cultural fundamentalists.

The existence of these four components if integrated into education, there are several aspects that need to be considered, including: (Helaluddin, 2018)
a.   Content integration
b.   There is a process to construct knowledge
c.   There is an adjustment in the method of learning in the classroom.
d.   Reducing prejudice
e.   There is a strengthening of school culture and structure.

But in this case there are also several striking factors that can affect the failure in learning English, especially in universities.
a.   The capacity of students in one class is too much
b.   Lecturers in teaching too much theory
c.   The method used is to use too much *indirect*
d.   Communication is not carried out using English so that English is only carried out during learning

e.   The number of hours in using English is very minimal, so there is no habituation done. (Suharyanto, 2008)

The importance of English is as a demand to be mastered by all students. English language is a demand to be mastered fluently both in oral and written both at the basic and upper levels. Learning English as a foreign language is not only fostered by students to know grammar, vocabulary, the ability to listen, read and even speak but there are several things that are important to know, including being able to raise culture awareness. Culture awareness is a way for a person to be able to understand the differences between their community and others with different backgrounds in attitudes and values,
In addition, Afriani (2019) argued that several benefits obtained if teachers can involve cultural literacy in the classroom, including the following:

a.   Raising awareness that in greeting people, expressing gratitude, making requests for help and expressing things that are approved or disagreed with people who are fundamentally different cultures are not in common with those who have the same culture. This can be seen through intonation and gestures.
b.   If a person is culturally literate, it will be easy to communicate, interact and understand others properly. Meanwhile, if people are not culturally literate, it will be difficult to carry out conversations. Examples are idiomatic expressions, jokes and name-telling.
c.   Cultural literacy can be a motivation for students to increase interest in learning and can help students to understand and observe the similarities and differences that exist in various groups. (Zelvia, 2019)

Cultural Literacy Model in Learning and Understanding English as a Foreign Language
Learning language and culture is an accurate whole. As Hirsch points out, the emergence of the term "cultural literacy" is found in observing American life, which was once illiterate and lacked the ability to understand one's own culture when communicating (Hirsch, 1987).
According to Dehbozorgi et al. (2017), there are several ways to recognize cultural literacy in the classroom English as a foreign language:

a.   Use of authentic materials.
The meaning of the use of authentic materials is that lecturers can take advantage of learning by using pamphlets, restaurant menus, travel brochures and other printed materials to teach culture to students. In addition, lecturers can involve students to conduct *focus group discussions* discussing cultural norms. Provide education through watching films so that the topic can be discussed about nonverbal behavior such as physical distance between speakers, movements, and eye contact and social roles.
b.   Proverbs
Proverbs is one method to introduce cultural literacy to students , namely by conducting discussions discussing common proverbs in the target language and students are directed to focus on proverbs in the student's cultural background. For example, "prepare an umbrella before it rains" means that everyone must be careful before a bad event will happen.
c.   Role-Play

What is meant by Role-Play is the art of role-playing. In role playing, students can communicate with different cultures. For example, how to cope with different groups with targets. The role is played to identify the communication being played.

d.   Students as cultural resources

There is a student exchange (*student exchange*), students in immigrants or students who can speak English at home are invited to become native speakers so that students get a lot of insight so that they can share authentic insights to be applied in everyday life.

e.   Ethnographic Studies

The existence of ethnographic studies is carried out by students directly to obtain data or information from native speakers. The existence of this activity is by telling students to go directly to communities in which there are native English speakers. Then students conduct an ethnographic interview process.

f.   Literature

The existence of the literature is about cultural information and can evoke a reaction that can impress the reader. The literary text aims to help students gain insight into a culture.

Based on the explanation above, the use of cultural literacy can be applied according to the potential of students to be taught. The existence of several points in a bag can be a reference in introducing cultural literacy models in learning and understanding English as English as a foreign language . Thus, students can have knowledge about various cultures to improve student competence (Desyandri, 2018).

In addition to the above models, there are several models that can be applied to recognize cultural literacy, especially English as a foreign language. Lack of knowledge about English as a foreign language is the absence of habituation in communicating while a language is a habit that can be done continuously. The main capital in communicating is the courage to communicate without fear. The existence of this main capital is a form of developing and training mentally because at the time of learning students are afraid of word order that is said to be disorganized or even wrong. (Suharyanto, 2008).

In addition, students during learning are given the opportunity to practice in communicating by applying two-way communication between lecturers and students, or lecturers with students can be remembered and applied by students. This will get a positive response from different students if lecturers or lecturers apply the lecture method. Students only tend to listen without knowing and understanding the content being discussed. (Suharyanto, 2008). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture as affirmed in the book entitled "Supporting Material for Cultural and Civic Literacy" there are several strategies used to strengthen cultural literacy in schools including:

a.   Strategy of creative workshop activities in regional languages
b.   Residential strategy
c.   The introduction of national resilience
d.   There are workshops conducted by lecturers and education staff
e.   There is training in making educational games and
f.   There is a focus group discussion carried out by all elements of the school.

Interconnection of Cultural Literacy in the Learning Process English as a foreign language of Higher Education

The relationship of cultural literacy is very close to the development of English as a foreign language when projected in the global context of the world. Some experts also share the view that teaching language is also included in the transfer of culture between these parties. Especially in English as a foreign language, understanding the form of language and its conventions must be considered, related to how to convey a meaning so as not to cause different perceptions. In addition, language speakers are also required to be able to conclude to the point of delivering inference with critical thinking. (Y. Qu &; E. H. Telzer, 2017).

In essence, cultural-based or multicultural education in universities can be carried out in several aspects which include:
a.   The process of reconstruction of a science
b.   Integration of learning content
c.   Adjustment of learning methods in the classroom. This depends on thedesign of the method of delivering knowledge transfer
d.   Reduction against prejudice
e.   Strengthening the social or cultural structure of the environment

Given the importance of cultural literacy, it is necessary to increase teacher competence in introducing culture in the learning process. Referring to Muller's statement condemned by Hallbert and Chigeza (2015) which explains that a person can be said to have cultural literacy if he meets the following criteria:
a.   Understanding cultural complexity both weaknesses, strengths, paradoxes and even cultural changes that cannot be avoided
b.   Able to analyze cultural attributes by reconstructing and identifying various stereotypes.
c.   Concern for cultural components which includes universal, external (lifestyle) and internal aspects (values).
d.   Tends to favor cultural relativists over cultural fundamentals.

If someone already has cultural literacy and skills in English as a qualified foreign language, there are several benefits in aspects of life. Of course, these two skill capitals, it can help build a more civilized nation.

The importance of cultural literacy today is as a positive energy to improve competence initiated by education in introducing culture in the educational process. As such, an educator must have the skills to teach cultural literacy. If these skills have been mastered by a teacher, they must introduce creativity, critical thinking, to overcome a problem, how to make the right decisions, communication and collaboration and introduce other literacy to students. (Helaluddin, 2018).

The output of cultural literacy is as a skill for students to deal with social mobility and flexibility when in a transcultural and transdisciplinary environment, there are several different terms to review this including:

1.   Global competency
2.   Cosmopolitansm

3.	Global citizen
4.	Cosmopolitan capital.

Through this cultural literacy, it is hoped that it can replace the attitude of individuals towards caring for others with the cultural knowledge behind it. In the context of individual people, cultural literacy helps to interact appropriately with different backgrounds. In addition, it can also strengthen the existence of a cultural awareness in improving communicative communication with culture between students and providing awareness and understanding of a similarity between ethnicity, race, religion. As a teacher, of course, you can be one of the individuals who can provide extensive experience to students to foster a critical attitude in order to develop students' cultural literacy. Referring to the opinions of Sercu, Garcia and Cato there are severalobjectives in familiarizing students with the target language culture including the following: (M. Kuhn & S. Stahl, 1998).

1.	Can improve students' knowledge skills about the world and foreign communities
2.	To foster the value of respect and tolerance among others
3.	To foster reflection on the existence of one's own culture.

The application of cultural values needs to be applied in accordance with the objectives ofnational education, it is created in order to improve the cultural literacy of students. In addition, the content used for learning is not allowed to contradict or contradict the national character of Indonesia. As the culture can be believed that to be the source of a high percentage. The existence of a target culture is the most important thing to improve student competence in conducting English communication.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of cultural literacy in learning English as a foreign language has an important role for students in strengthening their understanding base. Just like the differences regarding cultural literacy and cultural literacy are very difficult to understand. Even though the two terms are very different even though they look the same. The role of teachers is very central in introducing cultural literacy in the classroom. Such as starting to directly involve students in understanding the complexity of cultural dynamics, analyzing cultural attributes, and having a high concern for cultural components which include culture universally.

The cultural literacy model in learning English as a foreign language can be started by using authentic materials where lecturers can involve students to take part in focus group discussions that discuss cultural norms dialogically. In addition, it can also use proverbs or role-play methods to understand cultural characters. Ethnographic and literary studies can also be an effort to recognize the literacy models of various cultures so that students have competence in recognizing cultural literacy models. The relationship between cultural literacy in the process of learning English as a foreign language in universities is a projection in this very advanced era. However, this must also be accompanied by the high competence that must be possessed by lecturers (teachers) in explaining cultural literacy to students. This relates to the output that will be produced as well as to face social mobility and flexibility when in a transcultural and transdisciplinary environment

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