



The Importance of Incorporating Target Culture in ELT

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- Culture and Language is Closely Connected
- When we teach a language, we teach the culture as well.
- Speaking a language without understanding the culture is becoming “a fluent fool”
- Communication across cultures: intercultural communication



The study of language cannot be divorced from the study of culture and vice versa (Selyee, 1993)



Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981, cited in Abisamra, 2009)

Teaching language vs teaching culture

- Not all teachers acknowledge the importance of incorporating target culture in ELT
- Difficulty in classroom implementation
- Fear of “Cultural Imperialism”
- Which culture should be taught? Home or target culture??

ELT in Indonesia

- English is taught at Elementary Schools
- not all teachers are qualified
- tendency to be grammar-focused

The Survey

- Problem: (a) Teachers' definition of Culture ;(b) Teachers' Perception of the Role of TC in ELT; (c) Teachers' Perception of Incorporating TC in ELT
- Participants: Elementary English Teachers who have taken Cross-Cultural Understanding Subject
- Data Collection technique: Questionnaires

Findings: Definition of culture

- customs and traditions (43,5%).
- ideas, will, and work (30,5%)
- language and ethnic or national identity (6,6%) .
- arts (4,3%)
- and ancestors' heritage (4,3%).

Findings: 2 Perception of the Role of Target Culture in ELT

- From 30 participants, 90% of them said “yes” English teachers should know the target culture.
- Reasons:
 - 1) English teaching-learning process could run more smoothly (48,2%)
 - 2) Students can understand English better (29,6%).
 - 3) English language and culture could not be separated (14,8%)

- 10% of the participants said “no”.
- Reasons:
 - 1) English subject in elementary level did not focus on material about the target culture but vocabulary building (40%)
 - 2) teachers’ lacks of knowledge about the target culture (50%).

Findings 3: Incorporating Target Culture in ELT


- 20 (67%) teachers chose “yes”, incorporating target culture in language teaching necessary.
- Reasons:
 - 1) Indonesian and English culture were different (30%).
 - 2) Students can compare differences between home and target culture (25%).
 - 3) Giving cultural information can broaden students’ knowledge (25%).
 - 4) Giving cultural information could help students understand English better (20%).

- 33% teachers indicated that incorporating target culture in language teaching was not necessary.
- Reasons:
 - 1) incorporating the home culture of the students in English language teaching was far more necessary than incorporating the target culture (40%).
 - 2) many values of the target culture considered not in accordance with the values of the home culture (20%).
 - 3) they considered unnecessary to teach elementary students English (30%).
 - 4) teaching the target culture difficult and sophisticated (10%).




Have teachers applied the incorporation of culture in ELT?

- most of the teachers (60%) said “no”.
- Reason: limited knowledge of the target culture, their status as elementary English teachers, having no idea of how to implement it




How do the teachers incorporate culture in ELT?

- they compared the elements of L1 and L2 (58,3%) including the ways of life and ways of speaking people from the target culture and give little illustration about them (41,7%).
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Conclusion

- Culture is mostly viewed as sociological facets, something separable from language.
 - most of the teachers believed that the target culture has a positive role to make ELT more effective but did not practice it in ELT due to lack of knowledge and fear of instilling inappropriate values to the students.
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- Because they teach English at the Elementary level, they focus more on vocabulary building than on other aspects.
- They think that home culture is the most appropriate one to use in the classroom because they are afraid that students will learn something which is not in accordance with the values of their home culture.



Recommendation

- Increase teachers' awareness of the importance of incorporating target cultural information in their teaching.
- Remind teachers that incorporating target culture does not mean to impose target cultural values or to change the students' value systems.
- Include the home culture to preserve students' sense of identity.

THANK YOU