English as an International Language and Implication on

English Teacher's Roles

and Student English Learning

Akbar

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo, Indonesia

Abstract

English has been used in enormous important purposes to communicate in international level such as for academic and commerce. English as an International Language (EIL) is the use of English that enables native speakers and non-native speakers to communicate. However, there has been debate on how to teach EIL in language classroom specifically to the exposure of either the native language culture or the non-native one. This article will first define the notion of EIL before exploring the issues. Finally, this article will discuss implication on the roles of teachers regarding existing principles of EIL and student English learning

Keywords: *English as an International Language, Teachers Role, Students English Learning*

Introduction

English has been regarded as a language compulsory to master for academic, professional commerce, information access and connect people internationally. Such needs seem to contribute in significant ways to the growing speakers of English from non-native speakers. McKay (2009) argues that English acquires this status due to the fact that the growing number of its speakers that originate from speakers of English as a second language and as foreign are seemingly more familiar to English. It seems that this number will have been increased significantly near future because many new English speakers are born at present time either from Second and foreign language speaking countries. The

new English speakers increase generally because many countries presently legalize English as compulsory language to study from elementary schools to tertiary education. Indeed, Graddol (1999) argues that the speakers of English as a second language will be particularly higher than the speakers of English as native speakers. In addition to this phenomenon, Kachru (1986 as cited in Sasaki, Suzuki & Yoneda 2006) contends that non–native speakers outnumber the native speakers of English. Consequently, the needs for English is no longer for specific purposes such as academic and professional but has transformed into for various communicative purposes to connect the English speakers internationally, or so-called English for international Language.

Discussion

Defining English as an International Language and Language Use as Cultural Acts

Indeed, English has been argued as an international language (Crystal 1997). While EIL is often found in the literature, this term often causes confusion. This may be because EIL has a number of synonyms that are occasionally found in the literature. (Seidlhofer 2003) argues that EIL is often used interchangeable with other terms such as Global English, English as Lingua Franca, English as a World Language, English as a medium of intercultural communication and World English, which is a term that has recently been used. Thus, a clear definition is essential in order to provide us useful information about what EIL means. (Llurda 2004) defines the use of English as an international language worldwide to connects people whose English either as native or non-native language. While this definition clearly includes the element of interaction either between native and non-native, and non-native to non-native speakers, EIL has been debated in the area of which culture students should learn in language classrooms. The question relates whether students should learn the native culture or students' local culture and what cultural elements are needed.

The answer to this question is essential as language and culture have particularly strong relationship. Crozet and Liddicoat (1997) contend that culture plays an important role as an underlying factor of language usage in term of text production either in oral or written form. This can mean that the use of language for the purpose of communication is driven by culture. In other words, their cultural interests have been the motive for the use of language. this is because "every attempt to communicate with the speakers of another language is a cultural act" Kramsch (1995 as cited in Crozet, C & Liddicoat, A 1997). The acts of using the language , according to Crozet, C & Liddicoat, A 1997, is a

reflection of culture that is found within the language acts in any form. For example, the way people use language expression in everyday conversation represent their cultural values. In Palopo, eastern part of Indonesia, the people are usually greeted using their status as a father and their first children's names after their status. The people usually greet with this expressions "good morning, Akbar's father" or "Where have you been Joko's father?. The reason of using this is to respect the person according to the local cultural belief that they are more respected if they are married. Indeed, the name of their first child and their family status as father are the indicator that they are already married and adult. Therefore, they are called and respected accordingly. If the language and culture are inseparable, the teaching of culture should not be overlooked in facilitating the students to master one language as culture is the motive of people to act in everyday communication and methods of how to express their feelings and ideas through the language.

Debate on Cultural Exposure in Teaching English

However, culture with regards to teaching English is mostly about whether teachers need to equip their English teaching with the exposure of native culture or the students' local culture. With regard to teaching culture in EIL classroom, the notions of whether English native speaker culture or the students' local culture should be prioritised for language learning are debated. The opponents of native culture maintain that the roles of teaching target culture are especially fundamental in language teaching. McKay (2000) states that some have argued that the absence of knowledge of the target language culture can result in failure of language learning. Consequently, many hold the believes that language teaching have to adopt the target language culture such as England and USA, and perceive that native language teachers are better models to teach English (Llurda 2004). This is because the native teachers are perceived to have better skills and knowledge to help students learn native language competence (Renandya 2012). In addition, it is possible that the exposure of target culture can motivate the students to learn a language. For example, the popularity of American and British movies and music may encourage the students to learn English. Another example is that exposure to Western geographical pictures may stimulate the students to learn English because they are interested in visiting the English speaking countries (McKay 2000).

On the other hand, the proponents of students' local culture in language teaching argue that the teachers need to expose local culture in English teaching. The coverage of students' own culture in language learning can provide benefits for students as useful resources to communicate their culture with other English speakers (McKay 2000). Such cultural communication may

be able to encourage cross-understanding between different English speakers which is positive for international communication. In addition, Seidlhofer, Barbara (2003) argues that the current needs for language learning within the curricular has moved from "accuracy" to "comprehensibility". Because the purpose of learning English changes into communicative needs, the native speaking competence is no longer the objectives of English teaching (Renandya 2012). Furthermore, the idea of ownership of English strengthens the existence of non-native culture in English teaching. Widdowson (1994) contends that non-native speakers possess a strong sense of belonging to English. Consequently, such sense of ownership results in the modification of English in accordance to non-native speakers specific needs. For example, the speakers of EIL in professional context use their English as reflection of their identities and show a creative approach to using the language that is not a product of imitating the native speakers of English (Seidlhofer, Barbara 2009).

Implication of English as International Language and Culture on Teacher's Roles in Teaching English

The debate subsequently contributes to an emerging question about how English teachers need to respond these different perspectives of the inclusion of culture in language teaching. Indeed, these issues have a significant implication for English teaching. The roles of teachers in teaching English as an international language play a significant function in order to inform the students the necessary learning materials that can help them to learn English more efficiently in a more global context of English usage. This is an important aspect of learning as a principal change in the needs for learning English has been for more miscellaneous uses of English. Consequently, the goals of teaching English have transformed as well into not merely to possess English competency that are similar to native speakers but has become more purposeful focusing on communicative goals. This change challenges the existing roles of teachers in EIL and evaluate their teaching goals that can facilitate the present goals of learning EIL in their classrooms (Renandya 2012). Therefore, for this purpose, teachers need to play roles that reflect the principles of EIL.

McKay (2012 as cited in Renandya 2012) illustrates five principles for teachers to adopt in setting their roles in teaching English as an international language. The first principle is to facilitate intercultural competency to help students to communicate with other speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The roles of teachers in this principle are as both to help students improve their language competence and also to raise their awareness of intercultural issues. To achieve intercultural competency that teachers set as

their teaching goals in EIL, teachers need to help students to reach intercultural compentency as illustrated by Byram's (1997 as cited in Renandya 2012) five saviours: (1) understanding on themselves and others, (2) the ability of making connection of language meanings and their interpretation, (3) development of awareness of cultural issues, (4) ability to acquire information of culture surrounding them, and (5) the ability to adapt and respect other culture. The five components of intercultural competency should be shown through the teaching instruments that teachers prepare for their language teaching such as in curriculum and syllabus. The second principle is the encouragement of awareness of various types of English students can encounter in their English communication. Students' knowledge of different forms of English that are spoken around the world can raise their awareness of language barriers they will encounter in their English communication. To raise this awareness, students need to be exposed to different Englishes that students will find more likely find in their English communication. For example, Indonesian students may need to know Chinese English, Singapore English and Malaysian English. Multilingualism is the third principle teachers need to promote in their classroom. This can mean that the focus of language teaching is not merely English competency but also the language ability of speaking their native languages or other languages at the same time. Consequently, students can move from their target language and their native language very easily. The fourth role is the inclusion of both local culture and international culture in the process of language learning. teachers need to be sensitive to the cultural materials in textbook they used for their teaching. they should not be only the consumer of cultural information in the textbook. Conversely, teachers need to make adaptation of their language teaching materials to their local culture. For example, it is not effective to present only western culture materials in the used text book such as garage sale because this material is not relevant to their local culture. The last principle is the implementation of teaching methodology responsive to social and cultural issues.

Implication of English as an International Language and Culture on Students' Learning

Similarly, [Kirkpatrick (2012)](#) examines the implication of EIL for language teaching in ASEAN countries such as Singapore and Indonesia. He argues that language teachers need to adopt what he calls "Lingua Franca approach". The language approach can help form and strengthen the identity of English speakers in ASEAN countries. To implement the approach there are four components of language teaching teachers need to adopt. Firstly, language goal is not native speaker-oriented skills but rather the recognition of multilingualism and bilingualism in lingua franca context. Secondly, intercultural competency is facilitated with the exposure of students' local culture relevant to lingua franca context among ASEAN countries. The next component is that

design of curriculum needs to facilitate students to involve in discussion of their local culture and values of other culture critically. Finally, students need to be exposed to variety of English through listening materials in order to recognize different speech styles. In other words, teachers need not to push students to imitate the native speakers speaking competencies but rather build the students confidence to bring their identity in their language use. Teachers need to praise students' unique characters in accordance to their local culture. Also, the local culture has to be informed to students through the design of language curriculum.

In addition to this approach, McKay (2009) highlights the implication of EIL for language teaching. She argues that there are three elements teachers need to adopt in their language teaching. Teachers should no longer extol the inclusion of the culture of native speakers of English. Native culture such as American and British should not only the cultural exposures that teachers offer to students. "EIL materials should provide students with the vocabulary and information to do this by including local cultural content" (McKay 2009, p. 140). Secondly, the needs of students and teachers for good language learning according to local culture needs to be enclosed in the implementation of EIL. If the expectation of language learning in EIL is not to copy the native speakers, the local expectation of language learning should be facilitated in EIL. English teachers and curriculum designers need to search for appropriate methods that fit the nature of local culture. Finally, the recognition of local teachers' ability to teach English needs to be appreciated. This is because local teachers have the ability to be bilingualism that enable them to move from target language to local language. this ability can facilitate students to learn a language by providing students with clear explanation of language learning from their local language. The other ability of local teachers is their familiarity to local culture. This ability enables local teachers to explain the difference between local culture and native culture in language learning.

The five principles of EIL indicate that teachers themselves need to be culturally and linguistically knowledgeable and sensitive in order that students can experience learning that contains the five principles of EIL either through the inclusion of cultural and linguistic learning materials and teaching methods. Consequently, the students can reach the learning goals that direct them to be more cultural and linguistically competent to bridge them to the use of EIL. In addition, English teaching and learning is no longer for the purpose of imitating and copy the language skills of native speakers. Conversely, EIL encourage the recognition of students' local language identity. As result, the exposure of culture in EIL promotes the importance of local culture and not merely praises the culture of native speakers. Another implication is that EIL recognizes bilingualism of local English teachers. Their ability to move from target language to local language and vice versa is the advantage that can provide students with

clear insight into target language. Also, the local English teachers are familiar with the local culture. This familiarity can facilitate students to gain intercultural competency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, English has predominant role as international language nowadays with growing language users from non-native speaking backgrounds. The priority of teaching native or students' local culture in teaching English is an issue in EIL. To tackle the Issue, teachers are required to evaluate their existing roles and adopt the principles of EIL in their teaching.

References

Byram, M 1997, *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, UK.

Crozet, C & Liddicoat, A 1997, 'Teaching culture as an integrated part of language teaching: an introduction', *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, no. 14, pp. 1-22.

Crystal, D 1997, *English as a Global Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Graddol, D 1999, 'The decline of the native speaker', *AILAReview*, vol. 13, pp. 57-68.

Kachru, BB 1986, *The alchemy of English: the spread, functions and models of non-native Englishes*, Pergamon Press, Oxford.

Kirkpatrick, A 2012, 'English as an international language in Asia: implications for language education', in AKaR Sussex (ed.), *English as an international language in Asia: implications for language education*, Springer, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, New York & London.

Kramsch, C 1993, *Context and culture in language education*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Llurda, E 2004, 'Non-native speaker teachers and English as an international language', *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 314-323.

McKay, SL 2000, 'Teaching English as an international language: implication for cultural materials in the classroom', *TESOL Journal*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 7-11.

McKay, SL 2009, 'Teaching English as an International language: the Chilean context', *ELT Journal*, vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 139-148.

Mckay, SL 2012, 'Principles of teaching English as an international language', in *Principles and Practices for Teaching English as an International Language*, Routledge, New York, pp. 28-46.

Renandya, WA 2012, 'Teachers roles in EIL', *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 65-80.

Sasaki, M, Suzuki, T & Yoneda, M 2006, 'English as an international language in non-native settings in an era of globalization', *Comparative Sociology*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 381-404.

Seidlhofer, B 2003, *A concept of international english and related issues: from 'real english' to 'realistic english'?*, , Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

Seidlhofer, B 2009, 'Common ground and different realities: world Englishes and English as lingua franca', *World Englishes*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 236-245.

Widdowson, HG 1994, 'The ownership of English', *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 77-88.