INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE (ICC) IN TEACHING SPEAKING MATERIAL USED IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SEMARANG

Girindra Putri Dewi Saraswati
UniversitasNegeri Semarang
girindraputrids@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims at finding out a concrete picture of intercultural-bound English speaking material used in English department of UniversitasNegeri Semarang. Specifically, this study deeply examines the intercultural component attached in English teaching material used in speaking classroom by employing Intercultural Communicative Competence theory. This study uses qualitative method, and case study design. The data was collected by using observation, interview, as well as documentation study techniques; and was validated by using triangulation method which encompasses data source triangulation, researcher triangulation, theory triangulation, as well as methodology triangulation. Results show that the teaching material in form of textbook used by lecturers in English Department of UniversitasNegeri Semarang has implicitly and explicitly embedded the aspect of intercultural communication in a form of politeness. It was shown from the explanation, practices, as well as degree of formality provided in the textbook that the speaking material attempts to emphasize the teaching of culture in terms of politeness acceptable in the target language. Future research needs to be conducted focusing on kinds of politeness which have to be mastered by the students.

Key words: intercultural communication; teaching material; speaking

INTRODUCTION

In teaching English, nowadays, approach used by most teachers worldwide has tended to emphasize the use of communicative approach rather than employing classical method, like, Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), and Audio-lingual Method (Bourke, 2006; Efrizal, 2012; Ahmad & Rao, 2013). The use of communicative approach here has been more or less in line with the theory delivered in 1980 by Canale and Swan about placing Communicative Competence as the goal of teaching English for modern teachers. This communicative competence, according to Canale and Swan (1980), is divided into three major strands: grammatical competence, which encompasses the knowledge needed to

understand and express ideas accurately through language; sociolinguistic competence, which includes discourse; and strategic competence, which emphasizes the need to understand the context, meaning, and strategy behind delivering utterances in order to achieve successful communication. Flashing back to the earlier theory of English, the approach has also supported the theory of Hymes (1972), emphasizing on the importance of socio-cultural knowledge to be taught to learners besides the grammatical knowledge.

With the emergence of thoughts and theories, claiming that English is now used as a Lingua Franca in which English is seen as a means of communication between people who come from different first language backgrounds (Jenkins, 2012, p.486), Baker (2012) argues that "English is used most commonly not by native speakers but as a contact language between interlocutors with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (p. 63)". With the appearance of ELF in a huge range of different cultural contexts, English is claimed to be used as a means of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication endows people from different cultural backgrounds with the potential to enter into a dialogue, go beyond their cultural boundaries, and contribute to enriching cultural practices (Holliday, 2011). Culture is thus seen as one of the central aspects in teaching language. As Hofstede*, et al.* (2010) argues, culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is shared by people who live within a social environment. However, culture itself needs to be learned, it is not innate. Therefore, the school or college, as one of language learners' most important environments, plays a role in introducing culture to learners. Especially in the context of teaching a second language (L2), an

awareness and knowledge of intercultural communication needs to be given to learners in a classroom.

In response to the issue of teaching culture in L2 classrooms, a specific conception of culture develops. Culture is distinguished as the big 'C', which comprises the arts, music, and literature of the L2, and small 'c', which focuses on the everyday communication and rules in the L2 (Gill&Čaňková, 2002). With the emerging awareness of cultural issues in language teaching, the close correlation between English and intercultural language learning is clearly visible. Intercultural language learning attempts to show that beyond the importance of teaching a linguistic knowledge of the target language (L2), teaching a socio-cultural understanding of the L2 is also highly beneficial to students – one can thus make learners aware of the existence of different cultural values held by L2 speakers when communication occurs. The goal of teaching communication thus becomes broader, aiming to not only enable students to grasp the meaning of sentences in an utterance, but also aiming to give them the ability to understand the differences between the learners' L1 culture and the L2 culture, which are reflected in the communication practices. Corbett (2003) proposes the term 'intercultural approach', to refer to teaching intercultural knowledge in English Language Teaching (ELT). He explains that the ultimate goal of an intercultural approach in ELT is no longer to help students gain the competence of a native speaker, but more to help them attain intercultural communicative competence (ICC). ICC includes the ability to understand both the language and the behaviour of the L2 community.

The theory of ICC was put forward by Byram (1997), who attempted to differentiate the term 'intercultural' into two different

competences: intercultural competence (IC), and intercultural communicative competence (ICC). IC is interpreted as the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in one's own language, drawing upon one's knowledge of intercultural communication, one's attitudes of interest in otherness, and one's skills in interpreting, relating, and discovering. As an example, he employs the ability to translate another country's historical documents, to draw the understanding towards this conception. On the other hand, ICC is the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. In other words, ICC is "the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and the ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram, Gribkova& Starkey, 2002, p. 10). People with this competence are considered to be able to negotiate a model of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other, and they are able to act as a mediator between people of different cultural origins. For the sake of this study, the discussion will mainly be related to ICC, since it focuses on how to teach learners to maintain successful spoken communication with people from different L1 backgrounds.

In order to support his work, Byram (1997, pp. 70-71) proposed three basic features of the model of ICC. First of all, this model proposes an attainable ideal, i.e. the intercultural speaker, and it rejects the notion of the native speaker as a model for foreign learners of the language. Second, this is a model for the acquisition of ICC in an educational context, and it therefore includes educational objectives. Third, because it has an educational dimension, the model includes specifications of locations of learning, and of the roles of both the teachers and the learners. Moreover, to support the acquisition of ICC, Byram also proposed three main types of locations in which ICC is presumably acquired. These three locations are: the classroom, fieldwork, and independent learning.

Therefore, in my perspective, the teaching materials provided by teachers or instructors for EFL classroom teaching have a significant role, not only as the source of linguistic knowledge of the L2, but more to give students a model for the application of the L2 in intercultural communication. It is further argued by Troncoso (2010) that language materials may become influential artefacts which mediate transactions between different cultures. The subject of this study is high-school students, who are relatively capable of independent learning through any kind of materials. The materials thus have a powerful role in mediating the students' learning of both the linguistic features of the L2 and the L2 culture, as well as how to mediate between the L1 and L2 cultures in intercultural communication.

In addition to the application of ICC in ELT classrooms, Byram proposed four aspects of interaction across the frontiers of different countries, which need to be taught in the classroom. They are: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. Knowledge is considerably important, as it may influence the upbringing which is attached to individuals while interacting with someone from a different L1 and cultural background. It may also affect the way learners treat the addressees in a polite way. The next aspect is attitudes towards people who are perceived as different with respect to the cultural meanings, beliefs, and behaviours they exhibit, which are implicit in their

interaction with interlocutors from their own social group or others. The last two aspects are skills, which are described as skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. It is argued that a person can obtain both skills if they have enough knowledge about the culture itself. In particular, the skill of interpreting and relating draws upon one's existing knowledge of the culture, while the skill of discovery and interaction involves interaction with an interlocutors or addressees.

To sum up the theories proposed above, I would like to argue that the idea underlying the conception of ICC is the need to respect one's own as well as others' culture when communication occurs. It is seen as important in teaching English for communication (oral English) since inappropriate grammar errors are considered to be more tolerable than inappropriate language, since the latter has the risk of being seen as rude or insulting to the addressees (Bardovi-Harlig, 1991; Crandall &Basturkmen, 2004).Considering the urgency of teaching inter-culturally acceptable English to the learners, this study is aiming at finding out the Intercultural Communicative Competence, as Part of an Attempt to embed intercultural knowledge in teaching English, contained in the teaching material used in Teaching Speaking in English Department of Universitas Negeri Semarang.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative method which basically attempts at examining people in particular living environment, interacting with them, and trying to understand the language and interpretation they have in facing the world (Nasution, 1996, p.5). In particular, this is a case study three second-year-teaching speaking classes in English Department of UniversitasNegeri Semarang Indonesia, attending Interpersonal and Transactional Conversation class. The teaching speaking textbook used in the classroom will be evaluated using the theory of Byram (1997) of Intercultural Communication Competence, comprising: knowledge, attitude, skills of interpreting and relating, as well as skills of discovery and interaction. Data was collected through study document in form of textbook analysis, and combined by observations and interviews with three teachers and three students involved in the teaching process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Generally, the textbook currently used in the lecture is composed based on communicative approach in which there are different themes for each unit in the textbook. In each unit, the learners are required to master the language function provided besides practicing conversation and understanding the dialogue that shows how English is used in different social contexts.

Knowledge
Cross Cultural Communication knowledge contained in textbooks is an interpretation of the author of a textbook on the communicative approach. This is seen in the language role that is taught by language function (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition to this, there is also explanation of the cultural context and the level of formality in accordance with the principles mentioned in the communicative approach.

Cross Cultural Communication knowledge contained in teaching materials can be applied in everyday life of the learners because the theme is a manifestation of the expression or function commonly spoken

language daily. Cross Cultural Communication knowledge contained in teaching materials, further, can be applied when learners are communicating face to face with native speakers. The contents of the main language function embedded in the teaching materials are provided based on what considered polite and acceptable in native country.

Cross Cultural Communication needs to be assessed for possible inclusion in the teaching materials as in the era of globalization and communicative as it is today, the mastery of grammar is no longer critical success factors of an oral skill. Decency that determines the success or failure of communication in a foreign language as one's ignorance of grammar owned another language can be understood as a learning process, while the misused of language because of ignorance of a speaker in decency target language can be considered as something very offensive and is considered inappropriate (Bardovi-Härlig, 1991; Crandall &Basturkmen, 2004). Therefore, in the era of communicative mastery, knowledge needs to be loaded on Cross Cultural Communication.

The form of an explanation and/or tables regards the level of civility, formality, or gesture in speaking in the target language. On the other hand, it is also considered implicit because the doctrine of the Cross-Cultural Communication specifically focused on politeness embedded in the conversation samples.

Attitude
Attitudes in communicating Cross-Cultural contained in the textbook is exemplified in conversation or dialogue, explanation and table of degree of formality. Attitudes used communication may include politeness and the predominance in interacting with foreign

speakers include gesture and intonation of the word stressing.

Attitudes in communicating across cultures contained in textbooks are based on the interpretation of the author of textbooks in terms of politeness of native speakers. Attitudes in Cross-Cultural communication in the text book can be applied in everyday life, especially in the target language country for socio-cultural patterns described is acceptable in the target language country.

Attitudes in Cross-Cultural communication contained in textbooks can be applied when there are situations listed in textbooks are reflected in the actual life of learners. The contents contained in the text book itself are patterns of general conversation of a beginner level. Attitudes in cross-cultural communication, which focuses on the understanding of politeness, about how to give and answer greeting, thank, apologize, etc., considered to be included in the textbooks so that learners can have the basics knowledge of cross-cultural communication with the target language and to open opportunities for foreign speakers to be accepted in the community of the target language (LoCastro, 2012).

Attitudes in communicating across cultures contained in teaching materials in textbooks are equipped in the explanation of the customs or habits of people in the country of the target language, conversation, and table degree of formality. Emphasized by Nguyen (2011) that the skills of foreign speakers in using the target language will be considered accomplished when the speakers can understand when, where and to whom is an utterance worthy to be delivered.

Skills of Interpreting and Relating
Aspects in the ability to interpret and relate contained in textbooks through the activities

of a small group practice or, more specifically on activities cued dialogs. In these activities, learners are given the opportunity to interpret the situation given by the author of the book. Furthermore, given the clue to link the context of the situation with the outcome expected by the author of textbooks. The ability to interpret and relate is seen from the author's understanding of textbooks.

The ability to interpret and relate can be applied in speaking practice for novice learners and to be applied in a general and simple conversations with native speakers. Furthermore, the ability to interpret and relate is contained in the text book can only be applied at the beginner level when learner attempts to initiate a conversation or a relationship with a native speaker, to which the relationship belongs to general introduction.

The ability to interpret and relate should be included in the textbooks is considered to be essential to be embedded since learner needs to be given with sensitivity in connecting context with speaking practice. The ability to interpret and relate embedded in the textbook through activities that can be done by learners to practice speaking.

Skills of Discovery and Interaction

Discovery and interact capabilities contained in the textbooks through the activities of general discussion and role play. Aspects contained in the textbook is the aspect of critical thinking and linking of certain cases in the context in which the skill in language such as vocabulary was also emphasized because learners are required to find ideas in speaking and interacting.

The ability of discover and interact in the text book is discussed based on the conception of the book author who use the social background of American culture. The ability of discovery and interaction can be applied in the classroom during the rehearsal talk that may trigger the verbal ability of learners. The ability to discover and interact contained in the textbooks can be applied after the learner understands the theories in cross-cultural communication and has managed to make conversation by clue or after the cue is given.

The ability of discovery and interaction should be included in the textbook because this ability can stimulate students' creativity in interpreting theory given by speaking practice. Discovery and interacting capabilities contained in the textbooks in form of role-play activities.

CONCLUSION

This study aims at finding the aspect of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the textbook used in Teaching Speaking Textbook in English Department of UniversitasNegeri Semarang. Results show that the textbook used has embedded the cross-cultural competence in four main aspects, i.e. knowledge, attitude, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction. In particular, most of the knowledge and practice of understanding of culture is given in terms of politeness and how to be polite in native country. Further research is needed to explore about the teaching of politeness.

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