

Curriculum Adaptation in English Language Classroom

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Abstract

The article addressed curriculum adaptation in English language classroom. Since language classroom faced many shifts of setting and paradigm, a well-designed curriculum is needed and it is teachers' duties for doing so. In making curriculum accessible for students with different culture and language, strategies and techniques should be done. This article discussed useful strategies to support the curriculum design and implementation.

Keywords: *curriculum adaptation, English language, classroom,*

1. Introduction

A great challenge for teachers is making curriculum accessible to students with a native language other than English (Bell, 2000). Teachers need appropriate texts and materials for English Language Learners (ELL). There are several strategies and techniques for adapting the curriculum for ELL.

The first is demonstrating sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity. Having a culturally and linguistically appropriate curriculum is essential (Gay, 1993 in Richard-Amato and Snow, 2005). Making lesson culturally relevant is described as culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. In addition, respecting and using students' native language is integral in responsive teaching (Cummins (1999) and De Houwer (1999) in Richard-Amato and Snow (2005). Native language instruction has linguistic, cultural, cognitive-academic, and affective-psychological benefits to learning a new language. In a lesson of the Pilgrim and Thanksgiving, the teacher discusses vocabulary words and uses the overhead projector to diagram his thoughts in Both English and Spanish.

The second is providing relevant background knowledge. Helping learners retrieve relevant background knowledge facilitates understanding of the lesson content and increase their interest in learning. Brainstorming at the beginning of a lesson encourages them to share what they already know about a topic, which facilitates learning. It can be done by providing students with direct experiences through videotapes, internet information, and fieldtrip. Then, the teacher can assist them in connecting new knowledge to what is already known.

The third is analyzing material into content knowledge and academic proficiency. This strategy can be implemented by considering relevant matters, such as content

knowledge and academic proficiency skills. The first is related to the coverage of the course and the latter focuses more on what skill to be achieved by the students. Gonzales (1994) in Richard-Amato and Snow (2005) suggested teachers develop an annual plan by reviewing textbook, curriculum guides, and teacher manuals to determine the essential content for the specific grade level and course. After determining essential content knowledge and completing unit lesson planning, teachers need to focus on determining the prerequisite or background knowledge the students need to understand. In addition, the teacher can adapt curriculum to provide students with experiences to enhance and formulate background knowledge. Class journals can provide a forum for students to express ideas. To enhance academic proficiency skill, speaking, listening, reading, and writing thinking, and studying are academic proficiency skills necessary for success in school (Graves: 1987 in Richard-Amato and Snow: 2005). The objectives for each lesson can be divided into three categories: language skills, content skills, and thinking/studying skills. Teachers can determine that certain skills are necessary for studying, reading, and understanding the aspects of the content area to be covered. Teacher then can have the assessment to determine what skills the students have and do not have. After that, the teacher designs a plan to teach and practice the skills gradually throughout the year.

The next is including language development and content vocabulary activities. Language development is defined as curricular modification to evoke talking, reading and writing the students' current English level. Students' level of language must be assessed and appropriate questions and activities developed to promote continued process. The teacher may provide many opportunities for language use while simultaneously developing content knowledge. It can be done through student pair or small student groups talking about issues or content, reading aloud or silently, writing group reports, or solving group problems. The teacher can also speed language development by providing a connection to native language vocabulary (Perez, 1993 in Richard-Amato and Snow, 2005). Content area courses in science, social studies, literature, and math are built around relevant vocabulary. Often, students cannot comprehend a lesson without knowing critical vocabulary. There are many ways that the teachers can do to maximize the development of the students' vocabulary. For example: by using picture, demonstration, examples, modeling, thinking aloud, and visual representation of the words.

The last is modifying plans and text. It happens very often that many teachers modify lesson plan to meet the needs of the unsuccessful students at the predicted pace of the year. Teachers can modify sections by making graphic depiction of the text, outlining the text, rewriting the text, using audiotapes, providing live demonstration, using alternate books, using simplified objectives, asking students to draw, and creating pairs and small groups. Graphic depiction of the text improves student performance. Teacher can use graphic organizers and visual displays such as graphs, charts, Venn diagrams, maps, time lines, and clusters to modify difficult texts. Meanwhile, several types of outlining can be effective for summarizing and emphasizing important information of the text. It allows students to see and prioritize key points. In addition, rewriting curriculum is an effective text modification of curricular materials. Most texts are written above the students' level. Thus, many students do not read at the grade level for which reading materials are

intended. Therefore, written materials should be organized in simple sentence. The rewritten text should maintain a specific format to promote easy reading.

Another way is using audiotape. Teacher can put sections or entire chapters on audiotape. Students with reading difficulties can listen to the tape over and over again to reinforce learning. recording the materials can also be done by the students. And, the next is live demonstrations can bring life to a text. For example, if the teacher brings vegetables and fruits to class representing the various crops, the lesson will be more interesting. If the teacher shows a videotape on farming or picking crops, the lesson will be more interesting. The next way is using alternate books. Teachers can select alternate books with similar concepts but an easier reading level. Alternate books are typically called high interest – low vocabulary level books. Teachers in many different levels find that many students with two sets of books progress faster. One set of books kept at school and one set at home aids the students in doing home reading and homework assignments. Next is teachers can use simplified objectives A simplified lesson clearly specifies objective and focuses on product and learning that directly relate to the objective. By focusing certain objectives per day, reading loads will be reduced and the students will be able to concentrate on the aspects of learning. Another way is asking students to draw. Requiring students to draw map or pictures enhance learning and functions as an alternate form of expression for students struggling with English. The last is creating pairs and small groups. Teachers can provide many opportunities for language use while simultaneously developing content knowledge. Having the students work in groups can be a useful way to gain a good mastery of learning because they can help each other, share idea, and respect others' ideas.

2. Indonesian context

In Indonesian educational setting, there are many ways that the teachers can do. Basically, the strategies for curriculum adaptations explained in the previous part are also possible to be applied in Indonesian classroom setting, especially in English classroom setting. In addition, there are other strategies that might be useful for teachers.

a. Curriculum adaptation based on cultural values to gain our nation's characters and internalize the informal knowledge of the culture

In formal and informal setting, students are supposed to internalize the basic values and beliefs of their culture. They learn the rules of behaviors that are considered appropriate for their role in the community and begin to be socialized into that community. In school, children learn rules of correct conduct, a hierarchy of cultural values, how to treat and interact with one another, gender-role expectations, respect, and all of the other informal matters of culture.

Every culture, whether consciously or unconsciously, tends to glorify its historical, scientific, economic, and artistic accomplishments while frequently minimizing the achievements of other cultures. What a culture emphasizes in its curriculum can provide some insight into the character of that culture. The Asian people, including Indonesia, the

culture is distinctively collectivist, emphasizing the goals of the group or society, fosters in-group belonging, demand cooperation, stresses moral behavior, and pursues harmony

Indonesian also belongs to the group whose typical values are reactive. The values are related to subtle communication, listen first and talk, they focus on honor harmony, humility, and agreement. People very often prefer to use indirect communication style and tolerate silence and find it meaningful. But, seeing the reality of the generation nowadays is a paradox. We have the noble characters and values but now, they are hard to be internalized by the young generation. Moral values become the basis for mutual understanding in living together in diversity. Thus, students are equipped with the values of living together in peace is not only a form of co-existence but rather the pro-existence. Education should be able to stop improving values of silence, ignorance, inequality, prejudice, injustice, and indifference is shifted to the values of inclusive, care and share, equality, justice, and sympathy (Satianingsih, et. al, 2020).

Relevance to Indonesian objectives of national education, which is to develop and form nation's characters and civilizations, every educational institution and element must take part in developing and achieving these goals. Therefore, the concept of national educational objectives is considered as the basis of the educational development of Indonesian cultural values and characters. Education institution is no longer a place to transfer knowledge only, but it is also a place to form youth's attitude, behaviour, character, and leadership. Thus, it is justifiable to reflect several basic values and characters of Indonesia and cultivate them to all young generation in the form of national character building through education to achieved Indonesian golden generation (Rokhman & Syaifudin, 2014).

Curriculum is the heart of education. The curriculum nowadays should give more attention to the education on nation's characters, values, and beliefs. Education is considered as an alternative way to enhance new and better generations who have the awareness to internalize the values into their daily lives. There are eighteen vales to be achieved, they are, religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard-working, creative, independent, democratized, curious, having nationalism, loving the nation, appreciative, friendly, loving peace, fond of reading, having concern to the environment, care, and responsible. The result is a not a short tome effect but a long term one. Therefore, we need to begin implementing it as soon as possible (Putri, 2019).

Studies of values inclusion in English classroom have been limited. Nevertheless, some TESOL experts such as Edge (1996) and Brown (1997) have been influential in encapsulating the framework for values to be included in the English language teaching and learning. Research on values inclusion can be found in Aisyiyah and Novawan (2017) which investigate the students' experience and perspective on values inculcation in English language learning. Their study reveals the positive dispositions of the participants toward the English language teaching and learning which inculcate values as a part of the process. Other studies investigates teachers' perspective confirm the nature of *morality of teaching* and *teaching of morality* which provide opportunity for values inculcation to be planned and practiced in English Language Teaching and Learning (e.g. Novawan et al., 2020).

b. Changing Modalities

In classroom setting, teachers can change the mode of presentation. It is a very good idea. There are many ways to classify student learning styles (<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/reading>). One of the most basic classifications of student learning styles involves student preference of tactile or kinaesthetic, auditory, and visual learning

Students who share the style of tactile/kinaesthetic learning tend to touch everything, move while they are reading materials, and like doing things with his or her hands. In dealing with this kind of learner, teacher should provide manipulative, allow the students to trace maps and diagrams, reduce long periods of sitting, use role-play or have student construct things. These strategies are efficient to assist their learning. In addition, teachers can use several instructional media such as real objects, model, pictures and magazines.

Auditory learners usually remember information from discussion or from what they hear. To facilitate this kind of learners, teachers can change visual material to auditory using someone's voice or give oral directions. Getting their attention before giving instruction is also important. Another alternative is by using mnemonic strategies or songs. Activating the learners' attention in classroom discussion and having them participate are other strategies that can be applied. The instructional media to help these learners can be in the form of tape recorder, computer software that speaks written words, movies, sound filmstrips, and audiotapes.

Visual learners usually never feel disturb with any noise around them and they can be part of the noise because they may speak too loudly. They also prefer to show or demonstrate rather than tell or explain. They have difficulties in understanding oral direction and they often look to other students to see what to do when oral directions are given.

As strategies, teachers may use visual materials because the student must look at what he or she is to learn and provide them with written directions. Providing visual materials during lectures, such as outlines, diagrams, and study guides is also very helpful. In addition, teachers can teach visual learners to take notes and have them keep an assignment notebook. The instructional media that can be used are flash cards, movies/videos, charts, graphs, tables, pictures or power point presentation. Gilakjani (2012) mentioned that in order to help students learn, teachers need to teach as many of these preferences as possible. Teachers can incorporate these learning styles in their curriculum activities so that students are able to succeed in their classes. Miqawati (2014) also mentioned that certain type of reading strategy (PQRST) is effective to improve all students with different learning styles and teacher can implement it to facilitate their students when learning.

c. Providing students with enough relevant background knowledge

Providing students with enough relevant background knowledge will help them master the materials so that the learning objectives can be easily achieved. In doing this, teacher

should give as many exposures as possible, without neglecting the students' level of proficiency. By providing ample background knowledge or topic familiarity through different sources, students became familiar with the topics and their background knowledge was activated. Consequently, they could talk more easily and for longer periods of time on the familiar topics compared to those topics they were not familiar with. In other words, background knowledge had a positive effect of on speaking ability of EFL learners (Shabani, 2013).

d. Implementing various techniques/strategies and media when teaching

There is no such best method in teaching, especially in language teaching. Teachers should consider their teaching objectives and the characteristics of the students before teaching. Implementing various methods that are suitable with the students' characteristic is the best way. Teacher should not be monotonous in teaching, meaning that treating all students the same and perceiving that all materials can be delivered in any way they prefer. If it happens, the students will feel reluctant to learn. Strategies are pivotal for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence (Oxford, 2003).

Language learning strategies also enable students to gain a large measure of responsibility for their own progress. Montaña-González (2017) also stated that enhancing strategies in second or foreign language classrooms is one of the teachers' roles, since their mission is to facilitate the learning among their students and make their thinking process visible. Aisyiyah (2019) noted the importance of accommodating students' various learning styles and needs by implementing different teaching strategies, such as when teaching grammar. She found out that combining learner-centered grammar teaching and explicit grammar teaching was effective in accelerating students' language proficiency and autonomy.

In order to teach a second language (L2) effectively, teachers must take into consideration the needs and biographies of each learner, as a result, they are able to employ methodologies that guide students in using strategies which enhance their L2 learning process. If we imply the most effective strategies, we can help our students understand the concept of such strategies and its importance in terms of accelerating and facilitating their English learning. Furthermore, the roles of teaching media are pivotal and they can be used to help students' in improving their understanding and motivation. As highlighted by Rinda et al. (2019), teachers can use social media like Instagram when teaching as it assisted students to be autonomous learners, find better ideas to construct writing, enhance their spelling correction, and promote their motivation. |

e. Modifying lesson plan

Good teachers involve four steps of activities: before, whilst, and after teaching. They do lesson planning, implementing the plan, observing the teaching and learning process, and reflecting. During the implementation and observation period, they must find some notes

that are related to the success or failure of the teaching and learning process. Teachers must not have their lesson plan the same for the next year even though they have reached their criteria of success. They should modify their lesson plan to achieve a better or more successful result in teaching. Richards (1998) stressed the importance of lesson planning for English language teachers. He stated that “the success with which a teacher conducts a lesson is often thought to depend on the effectiveness with which the lesson was planned”.

f. Implementing alternative and authentic assignment, like portfolio, rubrics, etc.

This kind of assessment occurs during the progress of an action. It is a systematic and reflective process to measure the students' ability and teaching and learning process. Unlike other way of evaluations, the alternative assessment tends to be a student-centered assessment. Not only the teacher who can judge the performance done in the process of teaching and learning but also the students. It can also be an effective means of improving the teaching process. In other words, it provides some benefits, both for the teachers and the learners. First, the teachers and the learners can see and view their work and performance during the course objectively. Second, they can understand their progress and the relation to the goal of the program. Third, the teachers and the learners can take more benefits from it by modifying their teaching or learning strategies (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Dikli, 2003). In ESP settings, Chirimbu (2013) used alternative assessment during the Business English course of university students. He found out that it offered the opportunity of quality and comprehensive evaluation not only of the learners' linguistic competence, but also of their communicative competence. Miqawati (2019) highlighted that students' motivation increased and their understanding of what to achieve when they experienced peer assessment.

3. Conclusion

Making curriculum accessible for students with high diversity is crucial. There are several ways to do curriculum adaptation, especially in EFL classes. In doing so, particular strategies can be implemented, such as considering values in the curriculum, changing modalities (mode of presentation), providing students with enough relevant background, implementing various methods, techniques, and strategies when teaching, modifying lesson plan, and implementing alternative or authentic assessment. It is expected that learners gain their optimal capacity when teachers design the curriculum well.

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