

**TRANSFERRING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE
IN LOCAL NARRATIVE READING FOR EFL STUDENTS**

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Abstract : Indonesia has many narrative reading and different culture of many regions. Lacking of appreciation of own local culture is a continuing concern for many countries, including Indonesia. Through its constitution, the government of Indonesia recommends that the education sector take part actively in preserving Indonesia local cultures. EFL teachers should use them in their teaching and learning process as one of the resources to apply to preserve culture for younger generations (EFL students). This research used local narrative reading to able the EFL teachers to preserve Indonesia culture as well as to transfer culture knowledge which makes their students study English and its culture with ease.

Keywords : *Indonesia, EFL teacher and students, Cultural knowledge, and Local narrative readings.*

INTRODUCTION

Languages is important in human life. Pople communicate each other by using language. One of the international language used in countries throught the world, including Indonesia, English has become one of the subjects taught widely in this archipelago country. Due to the importance of English as a world language, the Indonesian goverment supports English as the main foreign language taught in schools, starting as alocal content in elementary schools until as a compulsory subject in high schools and universities. This foreign language is important to be taught with the aims to improve the ability to absorb information and to tranfer knowledge and technology,

art, culture, and to develop the relationship among nations in the world.

The ability of absorbing information and transferring knowledge and technology, art, and culture needs the ability of mastering English. This is not an easy thing since English is considerd as one of the most difficult lessons and the students are usually afraid of joining foreign language (Tarwiyah, 2008).

Many factors become the obstacle in achieveing a better result of students' language skills, including reading. Reading habit is having the habit of reading in everyday life and not just for school purpose. Reading habit tends to be associated with course work and examinations, rarely with pleasure. Yet it

is a known fact that whatever the discipline, students (children and

The teachers of EFL are supposed to teach creatively in order to make their students have good motivation and be more interested in learning English. The use of EFL textbook which incorporate Indonesian narrative readings enables the EFL teachers use them in their teaching and learning process as one of the resources to apply to preserve for younger generations. Kirkpatrick (2008), who studied English teaching in Indonesia, noted that Indonesian students tend to communicate in English when discussing local cultural information with foreigners (English speakers). This suggests that an approach which is sensitive to local culture may be beneficial for English language education in Indonesia.

There are many types of narrative. They can be imaginary, factual or a combination of both. They may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, personal experience. The narrative text is chosen in this research because it tells something interesting that has purpose to amuse, entertain for the readers or viewers. Manu

adolescents) cannot fulfill their potential if they do not read widely. students love reading them and make many non local narrative readings become popular.

Narrative readings are usually told by a story teller and to make interesting, a good story must have interesting content. It should tell about an event or audience would find engaging and should be detailed and clear, with events arranged in the order in some other effective way (Mark and Anderson, 1997.p.2).

By having the ability to absorb information and to transfer cultural knowledge in narrative readings enables the EFL teachers to preserve Indonesian culture as well as to transfer cultural knowledge which makes their students easy to study English and its culture. In the other side, the application of using EFL textbooks of narrative which incorporate Indonesian narrative readings seems to accommodate the government's goal to produce school graduates who are competent in using English and who have absorbed local cultural knowledge at the same time. This paper is specifically intended to describe and analyze the moral values obtained in the local narrative readings which are implemented in the

classroom activities and English language ability developed in the EFL classrooms.

LOCAL NARRATIVE READINGS

The Indonesia governments commonly have implemented the national requirement for local content teaching by placing three subjects into their local content curriculum. They are based on the schools' needs. Three of which are the local language of as the first language of a significant majority of the residents in the region, transaction art of the region and the last one is English. Given these three options, most primary schools have chosen English as the local content subject they would teach. However, the requirement that whatever specific subject is taught as part of the local content curriculum must embody the local culture of the region means that EFL teachers have tended to use teaching materials which are culturally appropriate for the context, such as translated Indonesian folktales. The central governments did not instruct schools how to teach a particular subject. For this reason, curriculum construction is based on teachers' own interpretation of the rules. In this paper has led to the focus on the local narrative readings as one source of learning material for study of EFL.

Narrative readings are one of genre which is taught at schools. Celce and

Murcia (2000) state that narrative is structured round the chronological development of events and is centered on a person or hero. Consequently, a narrative is usually personalized or individualized tells about the events related to the person or people involved.

The social function of the narrative readings is to entertain reader or listener with the fictive or non-fictive experience. Beside the purpose, it is also deal with problematic or unusual events. Narrative has a structure, a shape or a pattern. It can be represented graphically in this figure.

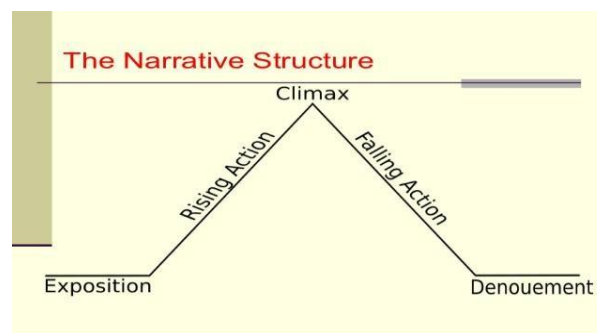


Figure 1
Generic Structure of Narrative

That figure is known as the Freytag triangle. The idea of the Freytag triangle is to serve as a kind of blue print or map which can be used to guide us systematically include writing. The Freytag triangle that was cited on consists of:

1. The orientation, it establishes the characters and situation.

2. Rising action, it refers to series of complication leads to the climax.
3. The climax is the critical moment when problem / conflicts demand something to be done about them
4. Falling action is the moment away from the highest peak of excitement.
5. Denouement / resolution consists of the result or outcome.

Narrative are more demanding tahn recounts because they highlight a complication in the sequence of events. In narrativ, the writer makes the plot suspense as he / she evaluates the complication is included in the story before the situation is resolved. Types of narrative;

1. Adventure: a story that includes exciting and dangerous events that characters have to solve.
E.g. Junior detective stories
2. Horror story : a story which attempts to scare the reader or listener with frightening events but which usually ends happily. E.g. Dracula
3. Romance : a story which deals with romantic love. There are some obstacles in the way but true love usually wins out in the end.

4. Fairy tale : a well- known story from forklore for children which often involves fairies or orther magical character.
5. Epic: a story which deals with big themes and heroic achievements and aevents that are „larger than real life:e.g. Iliad, Beowulf, etc.
6. Moral tale: the stories which explicitly attempt to teach people about the right way to behave:e.g. traditional fables from folklore.
7. Myth or legend : stories which belong to a particular ethic group and which attempt to explain the way of nature and the universe:
e.g. Tangkupan Perahu Legend, etc.

These are examples of Local Narrative readings.

First Story,



Keramo Island from South Sumatera

A long time ago, there was a kingdom in South Sumatra. The king had a very beautiful daughter. Her name was Siti Fatimah. She was single. Many young men fell in love with her. However, they did not have any courage to propose her. The king wanted his daughter only to marry a rich man. One day, a ship from China arrived. The captain of the ship was Tan Bun Ann. He was a prince. He came to South Sumatra to do business. He was a merchant. He planned to stay for several months. He came to the palace to meet the king. He wanted to ask the king's permission. "I will let you stay here and do this business. But remember, you have to share your profit. You have to give half of your profit to the kingdom," said the king. "I agree, your majesty," said Tan Bun Ann. Since then, Tan Bun Ann often came to the palace. He met Siti Fatimah several times. He really admired her beauty. He tried to find out more about her. He asked his man to ask the people about her.

After several days, Tan Bun Ann finally got information about Siti Fatimah. He knew that she was single and the king only wanted to have a rich son-in-law. The information made Tan Bun Ann work harder. He wanted to be richer. Tan Bun Ann also approached Siti Fatimah secretly. Siti Fatimah really admired his patience

and his spirit to work hard. She also fell in love with him. They secretly had a relationship. After a while, Tan Bun Ann felt it was time for him to propose Siti Fatimah. He talked to the king. "I will let you marry my daughter. But there is one thing you have to do. Give me nine big jars filled with gold," said the king. Tan Bun Ann wrote a letter to his parents in China and told them about Siti Fatimah. The parents agreed and sent him nine big jars filled with gold. To cover the gold from the thieves, the parents put some vegetables on top of the gold.

Later, the nine big jars arrived at the pier of Musi River. Tan Bun Ann immediately looked for the jars. He was so surprised. When he opened the cover of the jar, he saw rotten vegetables. He only looked at the top of the jar. He did not search at the bottom of the jars. "Hmmm... Maybe the gold is in the second jar," thought Tan Bun Ann. Again he did not find the gold. He was so angry. He threw the jars into the river. Every time he did not see any gold in the jar, he always threw it to the river. And finally he opened the last jar. Again, he did not see any gold. This time he was so tired. He did not have any power to throw the jar into the river. Instead he smashed the jar with a big stone. And when the jar was broken, Tan

Bun Ann found the gold! He knew he made a mistake. He immediately jumped to the river. He wanted to collect the gold. Siti Fatimah saw what was happening. She waited for Tan Bun Ann at the river bank, but he never showed up. She was impatient. She also wanted to jump and helped him. Before she jumped, she told her guards a message, "If you see a pile of soil on the river bank, and that means it is my grave." Then she jumped into the river. The guards waited and waited. And several days the people saw a pile of soil. The soil was getting bigger and bigger. It finally became an island. The people named it Kemaro Island. Kemaro is from the word kemarau, it means drought season. People named it that because the island is never drowned although the level of the water in the Musi River is high.

And the second story



The Bitter Tongue

It's exactly the story of a prince named Serunting Sumidang area. Offspring of the

giant named Princess Grace, dikhabarkan tangles with the law named Aria cliffs. Because this is a sense of hostility envy Serunting against Aria cliffs. It is said, they have adjoining paddy fields separated by trees. The fungus grows under the trees. Fungus Aria cliff facing towards the fields to grow into the metal gold. While overlooking fields Serunting mushrooms grow into plants that are not useful. The feud that one day had turned into a brawl. Realizing that Serunting more powerful, Arya Climbing stop the fight. He tried to find another way to beat his opponent. He persuaded his brother (wife of Serunting) to tell him secret magic Serunting. According to her sister Aria cliffs, is the magic of Serunting vibrating reed plants (although not with the wind). Deliberately he plunged his spear on the vibrating reed. Serunting fell and was seriously injured. Feeling betrayed his wife, he went rogue. Serunting went to Mount Siguntang imprisoned. By Hyang Mahameru, he promised supernatural powers. The condition is that he should be imprisoned under the bamboo tree until the entire body is covered by a bamboo leaf. After nearly two years of meditation, the leaves had covered his entire body. As promised, he finally received supernatural powers. The miracle is that any sentence or word that

comes out of his mouth would turn into a curse. Because of this he was given the nickname the bitter tongue. However, he did have good intentions. Commonly known, he changed Serut barren hill into the woods. At Karang Agung, is told he meets an elderly couple who wishes to have a child toothless baby

The internalization of culture through the readings of Indonesian narrative readings in EFL can be a means of forming national identity. This internalization involves negotiation within individuals, negotiation between the culture where they are being raised, and new cultural values they are exposed to. Students are able to identify themselves as members of a specific cultural and will ideally use their knowledge to support and maintain their own local culture alongside the national culture and the globalized world culture, which is the aim of the national educational process in Indonesia.

LANGUAGE , CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

Teaching language involves the teaching of culture as well. A number of authors have suggested that language and culture are inseparable. Risager (2007) believes that L2 can be used to teach the culture of the learners. Kramsch (1997)

said that culture exists wherever the language is being learnt. Functioning EFL as the context for local cultural knowledge acquisition makes the students experience a negotiation between their own culture and the cultural knowledge of the target language. Being introduced to the target culture (C2) through teaching materials and class activities essentially helps the students to recognize their own identity that identity formation happened. This phenomenon fulfills the notion of sociological subject in the umbrella of identity concept as defined by Hall et al. (1996). In response to the growing society , Hall et al also said that one as a sociological subject should realize or aware of his/her being individual is formed in relation to "significant others" which give meaning to his/ her existence within the society. In line affirms that identity of oneself is not a „unitary entity“. There is a process of „dialogic circuit“ connects one with others; one will other people. Values, meaning and symbol as three aspects of culture of the upbringing effect the formation of one's identity (Hall, 1996). In this research, the process of learning local culture through EFL in class has made the students to interact, negotiate and define their own identity. Learning the target language has made the students are not

only acquiring sufficient EFL basic skills local cultural knowledge as well as to receive information about a foreign culture.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE TEACHING –LEARNING PROCESS

Classes always involve teachers and students in teaching – learning process. Kramsch (1995) noted that “ language continues to be taught as a fixed system of formal structures and universal speech functions, a neutral conduit for the transmission of cultural knowledge. Culture is incorporated only to the extent that it reinforces and enriches. Not that it puts in the question, traditional boundaries of self and other.” Where culture exists in every language, here she seems to emphasize that language can be a means of transferring cultural knowledge. Yet, the Indonesian context where English is a foreign language, learning and obtaining English language competence seems much enhanced using familiar cultural artifact such as Indonesian folktales in translation which is used as English language teaching – learning materials. It has been suggested that interculturalism is a more achievable goal than biculturalism in L2 study (Byram, 1998). This suggests that English language learners, particularly

where English is a foreign language, are generally expected to learn and accept C2 as knowledge instead of accepting and internalizing C2 as norms and values relevant to their daily life. Language and local culture preservation have often been of political interest in Indonesia. The decision to make English the first foreign language in Indonesia (Lauder, 2008) and the obligation for all academics and teachers to participate in preserving local culture embodied in its constitution and policy documents as described above. Indonesian observers have tended to view traditional values. Citraningtyas (2012) suggested that local content , particularly in the form of local narrative readings in the form of folktales such as *Malin Kundang*, might support the formation of national identity and develop students’ national culture knowledge. Since this approach has been widely accepted in Indonesia, it is important to understand its impacts and effectiveness in achieving the goals of national education.

TEACHING EFL THROUGH LOCAL NARRATIVE READINGS

Most textbooks were chosen by a group of stakeholders that includes teachers, principals, parents of students, and the school committee. Actually

teachers had limited ability to influence the choice of materials and were required to use the texts to adjust in order to accommodate the students' needs, fulfill the local content requirement, and also address contextual issues arising from the institutional background of the school. For example in an Islamic school. For example in an Islamic university or school means that the teaching and learning process requires the inclusion of specific values and approaches that fit with the school's orientation.

Nevertheless, the teachers felt that having a textbook as a basis for teaching was valuable and desirable. In their view, a textbook provides an important reference for both teachers and students. The teachers got comfortable relying on a textbook and made the preparation easier and more effective. This view is in line with observation in other locations (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tok, 2010). The EFL teachers use local narrative readings as medium for teaching EFL. The reasons the EFL teachers used these textbooks were they could address or transfer some values as the following.

Moral lesson as presented in the previous section that narrative reading has generic structure of resolution which mean

it contains the result or moral outcomes. Western folktales such as *Cinderella*, for example, which was presented in the textbook as a western story for students to study, tend to contain incongruent cultural values. Prince Charming and Cinderella dancing and embracing in public is not acceptable on some local cultures and religion in Indonesia, for example in the Islamic context. This due to the couple has not married yet. Fostering *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity) as the Indonesian national philosophy. The teachers felt their students were proud to be Indonesian and believed this aspect of their identity should be fostered through exposure to the diverse culture, values, and characteristics of the nation. Teaching the story *Bathara Kala* which come from Java or *Malin Kundang* which comes from West Sumatera, rather than *Cinderella*, because the story is Indonesian in origin and because this is a way of contributing to the preservation local culture.

They are aware of the significance of teaching local cultural knowledge in developing their students a sense of belonging and an awareness of local cultural heritage. They see this as supporting their students' cultural identity and allowing them to find their place in the

increasingly globalized world. The EFL teachers recognize the need for students' understanding of local culture but also include an understanding of the broader cultural traditions of Indonesia. The goal of introducing Indonesian narrative readings was to introduce a variety of Indonesian cultures from different parts of the country. The diversity of Indonesian culture of culture will become familiar to the students and they will be more able to participate in the Indonesian national mainstream. In this way, the use of a variety of items from different Indonesian cultures may encourage the formation of national identity.

IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER BUILDING

Teaching and learning EFL by implementing the local narrative readings in the other side will result in good implementation of character building which is suitable with what has been mentioned in Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture number 54 in 2013 about the competency standards and secondary education graduates. It is written that the mentions that the graduates must have behavior that reflects the good attitude of the faithful, noble, knowledgeable, confident, and responsible

to interact effectively with the social and natural environment as well as placing themselves as a reflection of the nation in the association world.

The use of narrative teaching as the resource to apply to preserve for young generations also gives the motivation for the students to understand other cultures, including English and its culture. This becomes possible since the students tend to master English more readily and learn it better when they understand the cultural content being presented to the EFL teachers in the teaching and learning process. The students felt happy when they found something they could recognize in a text of written in English. They need to know about English culture but the awareness and participate in their own.

CONCLUSION

This paper shows the use of Indonesian narrative readings as material for EFL has benefit for language learning. The EFL teachers believe that familiarity with the content of such stories facilitates student's mastery of English and makes them more comfortable using a new language, English. This outcome is a bonus, as the primary impetus for using such materials was originally to fulfill government requirements that local content curriculum.

This also shows that learning the target language (L2) can be a means of C1 (culture of the language learners) instead of associating with and emphasizing on learning C2 (culture of the target language).

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