

Integrating Cross-Cultural Curriculum into School Based Curriculum: Using Peer Review Technique to Enhance Learners' English Vocabulary

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of the Peer Review Technique (PRT) in improving students' English vocabulary. English Vocabulary Improvement (EVI) is an important unit in English subject and the other units are grammar use, pronunciation, writing, reading, speaking, and listening skills. English subject is taught in the Islamic secondary schools in Indonesia by integrating certain elements of various cultures into the School Based Curriculum (SBC). The main focus of this project was to use PRT in teaching EVI after the integration of Cross-cultural curriculum (CCC) into SBC. A class of 40 students having the same level of achievement was chosen for the project. This class was then divided into experimental (20 students) and control (20 students) groups. They were numbered to be selected randomly. The result of investigation proved that the experimental group which was taught English vocabulary using PRT has improved better than the control group which was taught by the conventional approach. The findings of this project indicate that the CCC can be developed to help the teachers' effort to improve students' English vocabulary in a plural society.

Keywords: Cross-cultural curriculum; school based curriculum; peer review technique; students' English vocabulary improvement

Abstrak

Kajian ini adalah satu usaha untuk mengkaji kesan Teknik *Peer Review* (*Peer Review Technique*-PRT) dalam meningkatkan perbendaharaan kata Bahasa Inggeris. Peningkatan perbendaharaan kata Bahasa Inggeris (*English Vocabulary Improvement*-EVI) adalah unit penting dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris manakala unit-unit lain adalah penggunaan tatabahasa, sebutan, menulis, membaca, bertutur dan kemahiran mendengar. Subjek Bahasa Inggeris diajar di sekolah-sekolah menengah Islam di Indonesia dengan mengintegrasikan unsur-unsur tertentu daripada pelbagai budaya yang Berasaskan Kurikulum Sekolah (*School Based Curriculum*-SBC). Fokus utama kajian ini adalah untuk menggunakan PRT dalam pengajaran EVI dengan mengintegrasikan Kurikulum Merentas Budaya (*Cross-cultural Curriculum*-CCC) ke SBC. Seramai 40 pelajar yang mempunyai tahap pencapaian yang sama telah dipilih untuk projek ini. Pelajar ini kemudiannya dibahagikan kepada kumpulan eksperimen (20 pelajar) dan kumpulan kawalan (20 pelajar). Pelajar diberikan nombor untuk dipilih secara rawak. Hasil siasatan membuktikan bahawa kumpulan eksperimen yang diajar perbendaharaan kata Bahasa Inggeris dengan menggunakan PRT telah bertambah baik berbanding dengan kumpulan kawalan yang diajar dengan pendekatan konvensional. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa CCC boleh dibangunkan bagi membantu usaha guru untuk meningkatkan perbendaharaan kata Bahasa Inggeris pelajar dalam sebuah masyarakat majmuk.

Kata kunci: Kurikulum merentas budaya; sekolah kurikulum berasaskan; teknik semakan; penambahbaikan perbendaharaan kata Bahasa Inggeris pelajar

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Whiting (1986, p.684) argues that cross-cultural curriculum was firstly introduced by George Peter Murdock, an anthropologist from Yale, in 1930s. He developed a curriculum content of people's conviction, clothing, their basic needs, performance, community structure, ways of worship, and ways of thinking for improving English language of non-native speakers in America. These elements were included in the curriculum of teaching English language for foreign students or foreigners in the USA.

The first main target of developing CCC in USA at that time was to increase the foreign students' English vocabulary, other basic skills of English, human relation, and the mutual understanding of cultural diversity among them. It was also done to develop the people's understanding of the different verbal communication system (Murdock, 1967, 1969; Whiting, 1986; Hoy, Andrew R., 1994).

Furthermore, George Peter Murdock recommends that the cross-cultural curriculum should be developed in every school (Whiting, 1986; White Douglas R, 1986). He reinforces that the concept of cross-cultural curriculum development is able to encourage the people's understanding, appreciation of the varieties of cultures to different verbal communication and characters, and faiths or ideologies as well their philosophies of life (Whiting; 1986, p.685).

Since then, Wei-Wei Chang (2004) added that CCC could also enhance the students' higher order thinking skills, which is very important in this era of globalization. In addition, Doralee Grindler Katonah (2007), and Barrett (2008) stated that the CCC could significantly increase the performance of teaching and learning of other subjects in schools.

In Indonesia's plural society where you would find 746 local languages, 556 ethnic groups of cultures, 19 common law, 5 religions and beliefs to one God, and 17,508 islands (Anonim, 1995; 1999). Therefore, Indonesia is trying to find ways and strategies to improve the teaching and learning process of English as a subject in schools and colleges. Currently, the performance of students in the subject is not very satisfactory, especially in vocabulary and other basic skills of English. This is probably because the content of the curriculum is unsuitable and not related to the students' own cultures and daily life. For example, a topic on food would be discussing about western food or fast food such as KFC, McDonald. It is found that if the content is changed to local food instead, the students would be more interested and motivated to learn and take part in the teaching and learning activities.

At present, Indonesia has implemented School Based Curriculum since 2006 which gives teachers' opportunity to explore different content of the curriculum and methods of teaching. Accordingly, teachers need to practice the concept of integrating CCC into SBC in teaching English vocabulary through agreeable approaches or techniques based on conditions of school environment. For this reason, the paper will discuss an attempt to improve the teaching and learning process of English in Islamic secondary schools in the city of Makassar South Sulawesi Indonesia by using Peer Review Technique (PRT). Nelson, Stephanie (2000) argues that about 70 % of her students could accomplish improvement in vocabulary and writing of English as well as increase their critical thinking skills through PRT. The following section will discuss the important concepts in this paper.

■2.0 CROSS-CULTURAL CURRICULUM

Gullestrup, Hans (2002) conceptualizes that cross culture is undefined borderlines of continuously changing units of one own cultural contents as a result of interacting with other cultures. She defines that culture is a philosophy of life, values, norms, rules and actual behavior. Also, it is the tangible and intangible materials acquired by man in his living experience. Moreover, cultural influences affect one's ways of perceiving and behaviors which are passed on from generation to generation.

In addition, cross-culture is also defined as an accumulation of global cultures and local ones to produce various experiences, cumulative deposits of knowledge, denomination of groups or worships, performances, vision of a great future, and dynamics of human interaction (Samovar; Porter; and McDaniel, 2006: 98 - 99). There are two crucial things which much be noted for people who come from diverse global cultures; (1) having knowledge about the people from other cultures, and (2) having respect for their diversity (Samovar; Porter; and McDaniel, 2006: 99). In relation to that, school environment possesses a plenty of varied cultures.

2.1 School Based Curriculum

School Based Curriculum (SBC) for English subject in Indonesia has a fundamental function of developing students' intellectual, social and emotional growth in schools. In other words, SBC could help students' success in learning English and other subjects. Mastery of English vocabulary will stimulate learners of that foreign language to explore and attempt to think and take action critically. The English language curriculum for secondary schools hopes to prepare students to achieve reasonable competence, which would enable them to reflect on their own experiences and experiences of others, express ideas and feelings, and understand the various nuances of meaning and to participate in a community using English language, to make responsible decisions personally as well socially. Therefore, English vocabulary should be well mastered by students in order to analyze ideas and the main points of information in certain knowledge written in English (Pusat Kurikulum, Balitbang Depdiknas: 2003). To achieve the above language competences, this SBC departs from traditional techniques.

The School Based Curriculum does not describe the implementation of Indonesian local and modern cultures clearly and systematically in its contents for teaching English subject in schools, especially for Islamic secondary schools. Diknas (2005) designs most content of English curriculum based on western cultures and only a few of them contain certain local Indonesian cultures and related to students' daily life. This situation may cause students to lose interest and not motivate them to learn vocabulary and the other basic skills of English.

2.2 How Teachers Integrate CCC into SBC

The concept of integrating CCC into SBC is designed with some basic principles as follows. Values of local, national and global cultures are unified with SBC. Those values of cultures are merged into competency standards, and indicators of English learning as well as the vision and mission of school. Texts of local cultures, religions, worships, beliefs ceremony, and traditional customs are utilized to teach English vocabulary and they are taught in the classroom.

2.3 Developing English Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a means to convey views or ways of thinking, feelings, experiences, and desires. Learners of English as their foreign language know that the words are important parts of English teaching that they must continually learn. Hence, teachers should ensure their students' awareness in developing vocabulary use as they need to be. Departemen Agama (1994) provides the general guide lines of teaching English vocabulary in Islamic schools. Teachers should take some considerations to use many kinds of techniques to be applied in teaching vocabulary in classroom. By using various techniques, hopefully, will produce good results of students' English competencies.

According to Nation (1990), learners must be interested in comprehending the message, the communication should contain some items that are just a little beat above the learners' present level of achievement, and learners should not feel worried by their contact with the foreign language.

Moreover, inference or guessing is one of the strategies in learning vocabulary in which the learners guess the meaning of words by reading them in certain context and guessing their meaning from the context. Usually it is clear in a situation what particular thing someone is referring to; in a written context a bit more detective work may be called for (Read, 2000; and Schmitt, 2000).

2.4 Implementing Peer Review Technique in the Classroom

According to Topping, Keith (1998, p.250) peer review means the production of many things dealing with professional learning academically in schools (e.g. peer review of academic writing for a foreign language, and professional facilities such as concerned with medical things). Miranda, Kay (2001, p.1-2) defines peer review technique as a technique which enable a teacher to use available resources to teach learners inside or outside the classroom. In addition, the peer review technique means to progress on the whole learning environment effectively when it is implemented accurately.

I have been teaching English subject for about twelve years in this Islamic secondary school (MTsN Model) in the city of Makassar South Sulawesi Indonesia.

Out of nine classes consisting of 40 students in each class of third grade secondary students in academic year 2011-2012, one class was chosen to investigate the effectiveness of PRT in teaching English vocabulary. Their average age was between 14 to 15 years old and their English competency was at the same level because they are non-native speakers. Before starting the project, researcher explained in detail to all participants about the aim of the study. The students agreed the researcher to take part in the study to teach them with PRT in 20 students of experimental group and 20 other students were taught by conventional methods as a control group.

The materials for teaching English vocabulary consisted of various local cultures such as foods, clothes, traditional ritual, celebration, race, and social. The students spent fifteen meetings to study the materials in the classroom and the English laboratory. T-test was used to analyze the data statistically by SPSS.

The steps of using a peer review technique in this project were: (1) a teacher had students exchanged manuscript of English words relating to cultures to be translated into English or vice versa in the classroom before the teacher reviewed their work; (2) a teacher allowed each learner to check, critique, and edit another learner's task in the classroom; (3) after students got feedback from their friends, a teacher divided them into smaller groups about 3 to 5 in each group, then they were allowed to critique. (4) The teacher made sure that feedback did not become hurtful or malicious; (5) a teacher asked each group to make an oral presentation of the topic based on their discussion; (6) the teacher functioned as a facilitator and sometimes solved during the learning process; (7) the teacher sometimes gave a reward to the best group to motivate the students (e.g. applause, or giving candy); and (8) finally, the teacher asked each group to improve their ideas, brainstorm, and think critically.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To find the students' English Vocabulary Improvement (EVI) in control and experimental classes, the researchers calculated the result of students' pre-test and post-test in order to answer the hypothesis whether by integrating CCC into SBC using PRT was able to enhance learners' English vocabulary or not. The results found in both classes were significantly different before and after being provided treatment.

3.1 Students' English Vocabulary Improvement in Control Class

This group of students was taught using the conventional technique and having the same materials of teaching as the experimental group. Based on the result of pre-tests, students' achievement in pre-test 4 students (20 per cent) were categorized in fairly good, 11 students (55 per cent) were in poor category, 5 students (25 per cent) were in very poor, and none of them were growing up to good, very good and excellent categories (see Table 1).

Table 1 Students' grade and percentage in control group

No.	Category	Grade	Pre-Test	%	Post-Test	%
1.	Excellent	9.00 – 10.00	-	0	-	0
2.	Very good	8.00 – 8.99	-	0	-	0
3.	Good	7.00 – 7.99	-	0	2	10
4.	Fairly good	6.00 – 6.99	4	20	3	15
5.	Poor	4.00 – 5.99	11	55	10	50
6.	Very poor	0.00 – 3.99	5	25	5	25

There was no significant improvement of students' EVI in post-test grades. 2 students (10 per cent) could increase his EVI up to good category, 3 students (15 per cent) were in fairly good category, 10 students (50 per cent) were in poor category, and 5 students (25 per cent) were still in very poor category (see table 1).

3.2 Students' English Vocabulary Improvement in Experimental Class

The treatment offered to this experimental group was different from the control group. The findings show that students could improve their EVI significantly after treating them with PRT. Findings in pre-test and post-test scores indicate diverse improvement. The data in pre-test show that none of the students had been in excellent, very good, and good categories. 3 students (15 per cent) acquired fairly good class, 17 students (85 per cent) were in poor category, and no one was in very poor classification (see Table 2).

Table 2 Students' grade and percentage in experimental group

No.	Category	Grade	Pre-Test	%	Post-Test	%
1.	Excellent	9.00 – 10.00	.	.	2	10
2.	Very good	8.00 – 8.99	.	.	1	5
3.	Good	7.00 – 7.99	.	.	7	35
4.	Fairly good	6.00 – 6.99	3	15	6	30
5.	Poor	4.00 – 5.99	17	85	4	20
6.	Very poor	0.00 – 3.99	.	.	0	0

However, the results of the post-test show that 2 students (10 per cent) achieved excellent category, 1 student (5 per cent) was in very good category, 7 students (35 per cent) got good category, 6 students (30 per cent) were reaching fairly good category, 4 students (20 per cent) derived poor category, and none of them were in the poor category.

3.3 Discussion

The results of this study are shown clearly by the difference of grade, percentage, and t-test value of pre-test and post-test in both control and experimental groups. The students' grade and percentage in control group were still categorized into poor classification as pointed out. The findings were tested and categorized using the schools' grade from Diknas 2005.

The total score of pre-test and post-test from both experimental and control groups were different. These scores were analyzed to see the difference of students' mean score (see Table 3).

Table 3 Total score of experimental and control group

Students' group	Score of Pre-test	Score of Post-test
Experimental group	464	679
Control group	468	474

The total score of both groups in the table above shows the improvement of students' English vocabulary taught with PRT in experimental group and taught with conventional technique in control group. Then, paired samples statistics were used to analyze the students' mean score because the two groups were given the same test in pre-test and post-test.

Table 4 Mean score of experimental group and control group

Table 4. Mean score of Experimental Group and Control Group

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 <u>exppretest</u>	23.2000	20	3.70774	.82908
<u>expposttest</u>	33.9500	20	5.65197	1.26382
Pair 2 <u>cgpretest</u>	23.4000	20	5.70687	1.27610
<u>cgposttest</u>	23.7000	20	5.38125	1.20328

The average of students' mean score in English vocabulary before being taught by PRT was 23.2000, and after being taught by PRT their mean score increased until 33.9500. On the contrary, the students' mean score in control group did not go up significantly where the pre-test was 23.4000 and post-test was only growing up to 23.7000. This means the PRT was successful to improve the students' English vocabulary significantly (see Table 4).

Furthermore, the researcher found that the t-test value in experimental group was -16.477 and the probability's value of students was 0.000. The value of probability was smaller than t-table ($0.000 < 0.05$), which means the result of experimental group is significantly difference from the control group (see Table 5).

Table 5 The value of students' t-test
Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	exppretest - exposttest	-10.75000	2.91773	.65242	-12.11554	-9.38446	-16.477	19	.000
Pair 2	cpgretest - cposttest	-.30000	1.55935	.34888	-1.02980	.42980	-.860	19	.400

4.0 CONCLUSION

The control and experimental groups had the same learning environment but were exposed to different strategies of learning English vocabulary. This project indicated that using PRT could help students' improvement of learning English vocabulary more effectively.

One of the factors that must be considered in integrating CCC into SBC is by choosing an appropriate method or approach or technique or strategy to enhance the target of teaching and learning. It was noted that in some countries such as the America, Canada, Australia, UK, etc. cross-cultural curriculum has been practiced for teaching English as a foreign language to non-native speakers. In other words, content of local cultures could be used to teach EVI, basic skills of English, and all aspects of learning English as a foreign language more effectively in Islamic secondary schools in Makassar in particular, and in all level of schools in Indonesia in general.

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