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## **CULTURAL LITERACY PRAXIS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMPN 14 PADANG**

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### **Abstract**

Cultural literacy refers to the ability in understanding someone's value, habit, belief and communication about others culture. This study aimed at investigating the praxis of cultural literacy in teaching and learning activities at SMPN 14 Padang. The study utilized a case study approach. The data were gathered use observation and interview. The data of this study were teacher and students activities in English teaching and learning. The result of this study revealed that habit, learning activities and attitudes have been existed as aspects of cultural literacy praxis. It concludes that English teaching and learning activities at SMPN 14 Padang have contributed in praxis of cultural literacy.

**Keyword:** Cultural literacy, Praxis, Teaching and Learning English Junior High School.

Culture cannot be separated in human life. In any case, everything that human done based on the culture that human got from the old times. According to Naqeeb (2012:42) and Segal (2015:71) cultural literacy is the abilities in understanding, figure out, and implementing the similarities and differences someone's habits, values, and beliefs about culture. Also, the history and concepts underlying a culture (Naqeeb, 2012, p. 042; Segal, 2015, p. 71). On the other hand, Cultural literacy education is applying the education principles and methodologies through the formation of life skill based on the integrated curriculum that developed in the school (Suyitno, 2017, p. 33).

Moreover, the issue of national culture and character become interest in Indonesia, such as culture shock, culture lag, and individualism. As mentioned by Nurasiah et al in their study, the climax of the issues on various aspects of life were embodied in various writings in the printed media, interviews, dialogue, and speeches in electronic media (Nurasiah, Azwar Uswatun, & Rizqia Amalia, 2017, p. 40).

Further, the issues of bad character increases the problem of corruption, students' fight, free sex, drugs, abortion, and so on that makes the nation's leaders, law enforcement officers, educators, religious leaders, and parents' concern (Saidek & Islami, 2016, p. 158). In this situation, there were several alternatives to this issues have been offered by government, like regulation, legislation, and the application of law to decreased this issues.

Regarding to this issues, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a character education. Character education is the activities that lead to improve quality of education and the development of focusing on teaching, guiding, and nurturing every human in order to have

the intellectual competences, positive characters, and interesting skills (Wahyuningsih, 2017, p. 833). The activities in character building include positive attitude and habituating good behavior in formal education; elementary, junior high, high and/or vocational high school. The path in starting school starts from the orientation of new learners until graduate. Furthermore, the basis for the implementation of character building is based on the consideration of the basic principles of humanity that is adopted in Pancasila. Yet, it is still limited to the understanding of values in the conceptual level to become actual values with enjoyable passes in school, family, and society (PERMENDIKBUD, 2015, p. 4).

There were some previous studies that had already investigated about cultural literacy before (Naqeeb, 2012; Rokhmawan & Bayu Firmansyah, 2017; Segal, 2015; Suyitno, 2017). According to Naqeeb (2012), promoting cultural literacy in the EFL classroom should be always concerned; aimless and inexperienced teachers would teach their students chaotically. Therefore, to be culturally literate the knowledge of one's language, grammar, pronunciations, syntax of speech should be along with the knowledge of culture. Furthermore, Segal (2015) was investigated and renowned the range of research currently being conducted in the field "literary-and-cultural studies" or LCS and the project focuses on four academic fields (cultural memory, migration and translation, electronic textuality, and bio politics and the body) and four concepts (textuality, fictionality, rhetoricity, and historicity). The aim is to deploy and enhance cultural study.

In Indonesian context, Rokhmawan and Firmansyah (2017) found that the local oral story-based storybook could be a tool for implementing a literacy program with the headline of *Sekolah Berbasis Literasi* (SBL) program. The *Sekolah Berbasis Budaya* (SBL) program targeting the development of various aspects of the system, organizing, personnel, and the provision of facilities and equipment to support the application of literacy culture based on the tradition of oral- local-. Then, SBL programs can be a role modeling to develop cultural activity of oral literacy. However, not enough to arrange a series of programs, culture must be followed up continuously by doing activities regularly as habituation and develop literacy activities until the activity can be embedded. Hence, Suyitno (2017) explained that culture exists within every activity of people's lives. In every community activity, individual member of community upheld and adhered in cultural values. The reflection of the cultural values of society appeared in the way of thinking, feeling, and behaving every day. As a result, in teaching-learning activities, understanding and cultivation of cultural values to the students need to be done. Understanding cultural values that lead to the development of students' cultural literacy needs to be developed. The development of cultural literacy will have an impact on the development of student character.

In this present study, this study is to investigate the practice of cultural literacy in teaching and learning English at SMPN 14 Padang. In this case, this school has already appointed by the government as *Sekolah Berbasis Budaya* since July 2012. The claimed of school vision is making students excellent in academic, religion, culture, and environment insight. Based on the school title as *Sekolah berbasis budaya* and school's vision, this study is going to see the practice of student's cultural literacy in English classroom, school environment, and teacher and student's discourse.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to gain insight into the cultivating cultural literacy in school. Qualitative research is exploring and developing the phenomenon that happened (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). This study used case study as the approach. It is because wants to answer an overview of how cultural literacy practiced in school since the school was choose as the *sekolah berbasis budaya*.

The data for this study was English classroom activities of cultural literacy praxis and the data source of this study were teacher and students in classroom activities. In qualitative research,

samples tend to be small and not necessarily representative of the phenomena under investigation (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 118). In choosing the participants, purposeful sampling will be used (Creswell, 2012, p. 206).

To investigate the praxis of cultural literacy in English Language Instruction classroom activity, two instruments were used. The first one is the observation was employed to get information of cultural literacy in English education praxis for SMPN 14 Padang in detail and accurately. Furthermore, the observation of cultural literacy had already begun since June 5, 2018; the school started at 7 a.m. until 2.10 p.m.; the observation done through recording the classroom activity in English subject by using cellphone camera. Then, the classroom activities recording were transcribed to catch what happened in the classroom in detail. Second, the interview was directed to find out the information of all kind of cultural literacy that happened in classroom activities. The interview was to conduct with open-ended questions and open-ended responses.

Data was recorded using record application from smartphone and transcribed it then typed the data onto a computer file to be analyzed. The data is analyzed by using Naqeeb (2012), Segal (2015), Rokhmawan & Firmansyah (2017), Suyitno (2017), and Ochoa, et, al (2017) as the aspects of cultural literacy which is cultural literacy can be stated as the ability to understand, implemented, and figure out the value, attitude, habit, belief, and communicate about others' culture.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presented how classroom activities is practiced the cultural literacy praxis in Junior High School. The aspects are habit, learning activities, and attitude in context of teaching and learning process in English subject. The data showed that the teacher already applied cultural literacy in English classroom; pre-, while/st, and post activities.

In pre activities, the teacher started classroom activities by greeting the students before teaching and learning activities. It indicated that teacher implicitly let the students know how to greet someone by referring to the indicator. The next activities, teacher was asking students about previous lesson. It showed that the teacher wants to encourage student about what they have done before.

During the teaching and learning activities, the teacher started the lesson by asking the students about the meaning of what they wanted to learn. For the first meeting, the teacher asked about physical appearance. In this section, teacher implicitly wanted to introduce the students about someone's physical appearance and expectedly students were able to know about the diversity. For example, the students can differentiate their friend's hair, skin color, height, and so on. In second meeting, the teacher asked students about family tree where the students were asked to create their own family tree. The objective was to make the student know their position in their family and know how to call their grandfather, grandmother, nephew, nieces with the correct title. In addition, in the third and fourth meetings, the teacher asked the students how to introduce themselves to others. This kind of activities implicitly taught the students how to introduce themselves in English.

In post activities, the teacher always closed the teaching and learning process by saying "I think that is all, thank you for the attention, see you class". This indicated the teacher ended the class / teaching and learning by greeting students. It meant that teacher want the students know how to close the meeting in English class.

On the other hand, the other aspect was about habit where indicator stated that student finishes exercise on time. This kind of activity was finding as habit after the teacher did this continuously. First, the teacher gave only 20 minutes to finish the exercise, and then in the next meeting, the teacher did this repeatedly until it became the habit for students to finish the exercise on time. It was supported in teacher's interview, which stated:

*"Biasanya waktu yang di berikan sekitar 20 menit untuk mengerjakan latihan. Dan bisa*

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*selesai tepat waktu.”*

The other indicator was about teacher's correction of students' pronunciation included in learning activities. This activity always showed in every single meeting that recorded. Then, the teacher stated to correct student's pronunciation, it would be better if the student finish their reading activities or dialog because the teacher do not want to make the student's feel nervous after the correction then, It was state in teacher's interview:

*“Siswa di biarkan dulu sampai selesai membaca teks atau dialog. Setelah selesai barulah bagian pronounciation yang salah tadi di perbaiki dan diminta siswa sekelas untuk mengulanginya. Takutkanya nanti akan mengganggu konsentrasinya membaca dan psikologisnya. Biasanya anak kalau langsung di tegur akan kesalahannya dia akan merasa minder. Takutnya untuk yang akan datang dia tidak mau mencoba karena takut salah dan di tertawakan teman-teman.”*

Based on the interview above, the teacher gave the students' time to finish their reading first before correcting their pronunciation. The teacher felt that if the teacher disturb student's concentration while reading, students automatically did not want to read anymore because they felt embrace with their friends. What has teacher's explain on the interview implicitly gave the example of teacher's attitude in order to made students feel comfortable while learning English and it is also part of teaching and learning activities.

In brief, based teaching and learning activities above, the teacher has implicitly taught students about the diversity about someone's physical appearance. It is indicated that students can defined the meaning of physical appearance such as, hair color, skin tone, and so on in whilst activities teaching and learning process. According to Naqeeb (2012: 042), cultural literacy is a knowledge that someone's should know in order to understanding of grammar or pronunciation. Naqeeb's theory was related with what teacher has already done in teaching and learning activity.

The other aspect was an attitude where students kept quiet when teacher explained the learning material; student is asking permission when they would like to go out from the classroom; student raised their right hand before answering teachers' question; student raised right hand before asking question in learning session. This indicator was identifying as the students' attitude. Students' raised their right hand before asking and answering teacher question.

As mentioned by Chaiklin (2011:32), attitude can be defined in psychological and sociological side, in psychological side; attitude is a verbal expression as behavior that attempt to reduce prejudice and discrimination by changing attitudes. Moreover, the sociological side of attitude definition as verbal expression that looks into an intention to act. It can be concluded that most of the activity that students done in classroom activities were defined as an attitude in sociological side.

Moreover, those attitude indicators were in line with the concept of cultural literacy by number of experts. Attitude to the social and cultural phenomena that shape the existence and also applying skills and knowledge inherent the possibility to modify such an artefacts or attitudes, and give the benefits to everyone involved in given situation (Ochoa et al., 2017, p. 547; Segal, 2015, p. 71).

## CONCLUSION

According to definition of cultural literacy can be stated as the ability to understand, implemented, and figure out the differences and similarities of someone attitude, habit, belief, and communicate. Based on the finding in teaching and learning activities revealed cultural literacy was applied during teaching and learning activities. The teacher taught students about cultural literacy implicitly by giving the materials that consist of differences and similarities of someone's physical appearance, family, and how to introduce myself in English way. Another aspect that appeared in

classroom activities that practice cultural literacy is an attitude. It was showed that student kept quite while teacher explain the materials, student is asking permitting when they want to go outside from the classroom, student raises their right hand before asking and answering teacher's question. Those kinds of activities stated as an attitude in classroom activities. It also showed that the teacher might be success in teaching and learning not only subject matter, student's character, especially attitude.

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