

## Conference Paper

# Effect of Bringing Local Culture in English Language Teaching on Students' Writing Achievement

Ratna Nurlia and Fitri Arini

College of Teacher Training and Education PGRI Blitar, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

### Abstract

The use of local culture in the teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia may lead into consideration since language and culture are interrelated. Local culture in English language teaching enables students to learn English skills well because students are asked to discuss or describe something they know very well. This paper reports the results of an experimental study which was concerned with how well bringing local culture in English Language Teaching could affect students' writing achievement. Quasi-experimental research applying non-randomized pretest-posttest design was used in this study. The subjects of the study were the students of English Department of College of Teacher Training and Education in Blitar. Class A, which consisted of 23 students, was taught using local culture strategy, and was the experimental group, while class B, which consisted of 25 students was taught without using local culture, and was the control group. The results showed that bringing local culture in English language teaching produced better achievement of the students' writing skill.

Corresponding Author: Ratna Nurlia and Fitri Arini; email: yeol\_ratnabl@yahoo.com

Received: 1 March 2017

Accepted: 27 March 2017

Published: 12 April 2017

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Ratna Nurlia and Fitri Arini. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the LSCAC Conference Committee.

**Keywords:** local culture; writing achievement, English language teaching

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, language teaching concentrates on what students want to learn rather than on what is to be taught. It can be said that the attitude and the initiative from the students are the main activity in the classroom. The success of students in the classroom is the main goal of teaching and learning activity. Many factors influence students in the classroom. One of them is culture. It is important to relate language with the culture because language must be treated in a social context. It means that learning a language cannot be separated from learning the culture. In [10] states that culture takes crucial role played in the classroom. Moreover, literature states that language and culture are interrelated [3]. Therefore, language and culture is the key to unlock the language teaching methodologies in the classroom. The importance of culture comes since a language cannot exist in vacuum. It has to show some objective function when utterances are written. When we use a language, the production made is generally about what we know or what we have experienced. Language is not only communicating with words but it is the root of cultural and contextual schemata and

### OPEN ACCESS

frames [8]. Indirectly, language becomes a vehicle for learning the content of our written texts [9].

Moreover, the focus on local culture in English language teaching is stated on the 2006 English curriculum. The objectives of this curriculum are; 1) to enhance the students' ability to communicate both written and spoken at the functional level of literacy, 2) to develop the students' awareness on the importance of English to provide competitive ability in the global society, 3) to develop students' knowledge of inter-related language and culture (Depdiknas, 2006). These objectives are supported with Contextual Teaching and Learning approach in which a teacher of English language should give students opportunity to see the meaning in the academic subject with the context of their daily life. In (Johnson, 2002: 25) states that contextual teaching and learning helps students see meaning in the learning of academic material by connecting academic subject with the context of their daily lives including their personal, social, and cultural circumstances. In this case, cultural circumstances as part of students' daily life should be included in the materials or lesson plan in the teaching of English. By including local culture in the teaching and learning process, it is expected that students will be aware of their own culture and able to learn English better since they are asked to describe something they know very well.

Some studies dealing with local culture have encouraged the writers to use local culture in this study. The study from (Sudartini, 2012) who conducted critical analysis on the teaching of English as a foreign language showed that in line with national goals, in which teachers should support and promote character education in their teaching and learning activities, integrating Indonesian local culture values in English Language Teaching plays important roles in encouraging, improving, and maintaining the spirit of nationalism to promote character education. Furthermore, [5] in her study concerned with the reaction of the students in Palangkaraya City towards the integration of multiculturalism into English learning showed positive results. In English teaching and learning, teachers brought the idea of multiculturalism they got from their students' closest environments that could promote them to increase their vocabulary. It also became a joyful activity which could attract the students' interest by inserting multiculturalism into English material. From the background, thus, the researchers conduct an experimental study which focuses on the effect of bringing local culture in English language teaching.

## 2. Method

This study used quasi-experimental research with non-randomized pretest posttest design [1]. The subjects of the study were the students of English Department of a College of Teacher Training and Education in Blitar who took Writing IV that focused on the writing of expository essays. The experimental group taught using local culture

strategy was Class A, which consisted of 23 students. The control group taught without using local culture was class B, which consisted of 25 students.

The instruments used in this study were writing tests with scoring rubrics for pretest and posttest as the main data and students' questionnaire as additional data. The tests used in this study were composition tests in form of essay tests. The students were asked to write an expository essay based on the instruction in 90 minutes. In scoring the test, inter-raters reliability was used. The scoring assessment was adapted from Heaton's scoring rubric [2] that provided five features to be scored: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. This research was conducted from March to April 2015. There were 8 meetings available to conduct this research including the pretest and posttest. The instructional materials used in this study were expository essay; comparison and contrast organization.

## 2.1. Experimental Group Treatment

During the research, the students in the experimental group were asked to develop two comparison/contrast essays through process writing by bringing local culture as the topic to develop. The lecturer also used an essay about local culture for the modeling essay in pre-writing activity to discuss the features of comparison and contrast essay. The first writing process task was done in pairs. It was on the fourth meeting of the treatment schedule. Before asking the students to write, the lecturer gave assignment to get some information about two different local cultures or events in the previous meeting, so that when the students did writing in the classroom, they already had much information to write.

The drafting and writing stages in this meeting were done in pairs. The students were asked to make an outline and a comparison and contrast essay about two cultural events from their environment in 90 minutes. Their writings should be submitted after the class was over. Here the lecturer gave her feedback at home. It took much time to cover all writing essay components in just one week. Therefore, the teacher's feedback focus was only on the content of the essay.

The activity in the fifth meeting was editing. The students did self-editing (using self-editing format) and peer reviewing using peer feedback sheet. For the language used, the lecturer allowed the students to use computer. In 30 minutes left before the class was over, the students were asked to edit their essays based on the self-feedback, feedback from peers, and also feedback from lecturer. In the end of the lesson period, students' writings were submitted.

In the sixth meeting, the lecturer asked one pair to read the best writing essay in the class for the publishing stage of writing process. Then the lecturer held a class discussion and also gave general feedback on the students' writing. The lecturer gave

Dependent Variable: posttest			
F	df1	df2	Sig.
1.924	1	46	.172

TABLE 1: Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>. Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups. a. Design: Intercept + streategy + pretest + streategy \* pretest.

general feedback related to scoring rubrics and components of a good essay in the end of meeting. Then the lecturer gave individual assignment as homework. For the homework, the students were asked to write a comparison and contrast essay about two historical places from their town individually. So, the writing process for the second assignment was done at home. To control any kind of plagiarism during the writing, the lecturer warned the students that any kind of plagiarism would be regarded as failure in writing class.

## 2.2. Control Group Treatment

The students in the control group were asked to develop two comparison and contrast essays through a writing process, too. The only difference was the use of modeling essay and also the topic for writing task. The control group was taught by using the material that was usually used to teach essay writing from the writing lecturer. It was taken from the handbook of writing four adapted from [6]. During the treatment, the control group had eight meetings and the students were asked to develop two comparison and contrast essays just like the treatment in the experimental group. The two writing tasks in this group were done individually.

After the treatment, the data was analyzed by using ANCOVA. In [7] states that ANCOVA is suitable for quasi-experimental, non-randomized control group, pretest-posttest design. Before computing the data using ANCOVA, there were three assumptions that should be fulfilled: linearity, homogeneity of variances, and homogeneity of regression slopes. Scatter plots showed a linear (straight line) relationship for each group. Therefore, it could be said that the assumption of linearity was not violated. Then, Lavene’s test of equality of error variances as shown from the table was 0.172 (> 0.05). It means that it did not violate the assumption. It means the variances in the posttest are homogenous.

The researchers used one follow up activity to get additional data by giving a questionnaire to the experimental group. The questionnaire data was used to check the students’ attitude and opinion towards the strategy.

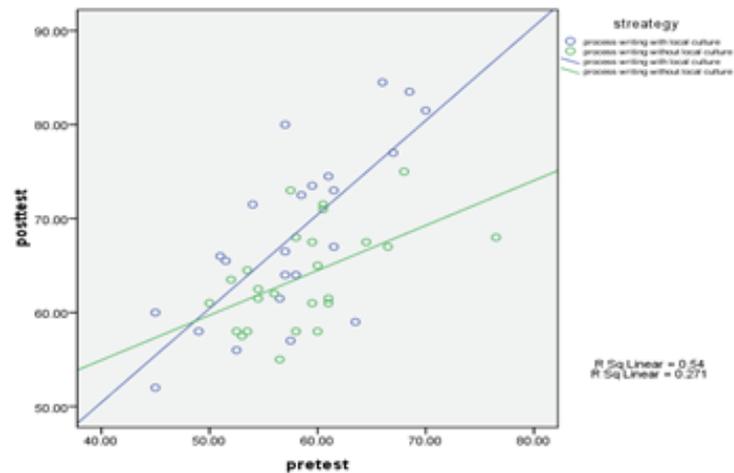


Figure 1: Scatter Plot.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. Findings

The research applied the inter-rater approach of reliability estimates in which two raters for scoring the writing paper were needed. In order to confirm the reliability of pre- and posttest scores, correlation coefficients between two different raters were calculated. The result from pretest of control group was 0.745 and the posttest was 0.734 while the pretest of experimental group was 0.820 and the posttest was 0.795.

The analysis of the empirical data is divided into two phases: 1) the results of final analysis using ANCOVA to know the significant difference between the mean score of the control group and experimental group in the posttest, 2) the posttest results to show the mean difference between the control group and the experimental group. The posttests for both experimental and control groups were conducted concurrently based on the midterm-test schedule. It was conducted on April 27, 2015. All students of both experimental and control groups were present.

Table 1 shows that the significant value is 0.004, which is lower than 0.05 ( $0.004 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the experimental and control groups were significantly different and the result of analysis indicated that the null hypothesis saying that both strategies (process writing using local culture and process writing without using local culture) are equal should be rejected.

The test assessed the differences between the adjusted means for two groups, which were reported in the Estimated Marginal Means table as 68.55 for the students taught using local culture, and 63.51 for the students taught without using local culture. Thus, based on the Estimated Marginal Means, the alternative hypothesis saying that the students who are taught using local culture achieve better writing than those who are taught without using local culture.

Dependent Variable: posttest						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1311.615 <sup>a</sup>	2	655.807	19.663	.000	.466
Intercept	242.638	1	242.638	7.275	.010	.139
pretest	1088.684	1	1088.684	32.641	.000	.420
strategy	302.243	1	302.243	9.062	.004	.168
Error	1500.880	45	33.353			
Total	211438.750	48				
Corrected Total	2812.495	47				

TABLE 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. <sup>a</sup> R Squared = .466 (Adjusted R Squared = .443).

Dependent Variable: posttest				
strategy	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
process writing with local culture	68.551 <sup>a</sup>	1.206	66.122	70.980
process writing without local culture	63.513 <sup>a</sup>	1.157	61.184	65.843

TABLE 3: Estimated Marginal Means. <sup>a</sup> Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: pretest = 58.2292.

The results from SPSS computation were supported by the results of students’ attitudes towards process writing using local culture strategy as the main focus of investigation. It was proven by the results of students’ questionnaire that supported the idea of bringing local culture in English language teaching. The students in the experimental group seemed to have more positive attitudes (84%) and felt more confident to write something they knew very well from their environments.

#### 4. Discussion

From the statistical point of view, the finding of the research showed that statistically the students taught using local culture in English language teaching showed significant higher achievement than those taught without local culture. It could be seen from the significant value of SPSS computation,  $P = 0.012 < 0.05$  which is lower than 0.05.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the differences between the adjusted means for two groups, which were reported in the Estimated Marginal Means table as 68.55 for the students taught using local culture, and 63.51 for the students taught without using local culture. Therefore, the experimental and control groups were significantly

Topic of the Questions	Students' Responses		
	Positive	Negative	Not clear
The students' general impression of bringing local culture in English language teaching	20 87%	3 13%	-
Benefits of bringing local culture in English language teaching	18 78%	2 9%	3 13%
Weaknesses of bringing local culture in English language teaching	20 87%	1 4%	2 9%
The purpose of bringing local culture in English language teaching	19 83%	4 17%	-
The students' experiences in learning writing by using local culture	20 87%	- 10%	3 13%
Total	97 84%	10 9%	8 7%

TABLE 4: The Summary of Students' Answers and Interpretation of the use of bringing local culture in English language teaching.

different. The result of analysis rejected the null hypothesis that say using local culture and without using local culture were equal. In other words, theoretical hypothesis was supported with empirical evidence.

From the practical view, the research finding indicated that bringing local culture in English language teaching would build up learner's cultural knowledge, awareness, and competence. The teaching of writing gave advantage to the students to have many ideas in introducing their own culture. They did not have any difficulties in gathering ideas to write something they know very well. This finding is in line with the literature that states that language is not only communicating with words but it is the root of cultural and contextual schemata and frames [8].

It also supported the previous study by (Sudartini, 2012) that said that in learning English, bringing the idea of multiculturalism taken from the students' closest environments promoted them to increase their vocabulary. The result of this study showed that the idea of bringing local culture in English writing classroom however attract the students' interest. When the students were asked to discuss their own culture, they were more enthusiastic and did not get any difficulties in getting vocabulary since culture can be found around them. They learned from their environment that they know very well. For those who previously did not care about their own culture, by learning English, indirectly they were helped to know more about their own culture by getting information and reporting it in their writing tasks. It helped the students not only in writing skill (in getting ideas) but also in knowing their own culture and share it in written way.

## 5. Conclusions and Suggestions

The results of the study supported the literature views that learning language could not be separated from culture. The findings of this study revealed that bringing local culture in English language teaching gave a significant effect on the students' writing achievement. The idea of bringing local culture in the classroom was in line with the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning approach. During the teaching and learning process, the students not only learned a foreign language but also became aware of preserving their local culture. From the results of the research, some suggestions were delivered to English language teaching and to the future research. As it was proven that local culture gave positive effect on the students' writing achievement, the researchers gave suggestions to English language teachers/lecturers to bring and include local culture in English language teaching.

## References

- [1] D. Ary, L. C. Jacobs, and A. Razavieh, *Introduction to research in education*. (6th ed), Worth, Belmont, 2002.
- [2] J. B. Heaton, *Writing English language prompts*, Longman, New York, 1988.
- [3] E. Hinkel, (1999). Introduction: Culture in research and second language pedagogy. In E Hinkel (ed), *Culture in second language teaching and learning* (pp.1-7). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [4] A. Hogue, *The essentials of English: A writers handbook*, Pearson, New York, 2003.
- [5] I. Indriati, "Bridging an idea of multiculturalism into English language learning," in *Best practices in the teaching of English*, H. Cahyani and B. Y. Cahyono, Eds., pp. 315-327, Malang: State University of Malang, 2011.
- [6] A. Oshima and A. Hogue, *Writing Academic English*, fourth edition, Pearson, New York, 2006.
- [7] J. Pallant, *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for windows (Version 12)*, Ligare, Sydney, 2005.
- [8] M. Regmi, 2014, <https://neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2011/04/01/the-role-of-local-culture-and-context-in-english-language-teaching/>.
- [9] J. Richard and T. S. Rodgers, *Approaches and method in language teaching*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
- [10] C. Sowden, "Culture and the 'good teacher' in the English language classroom," *ELT Journal*, vol. 61, no. 4, pp. 304-310, 2007.