

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE AS A BASIC TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CHILDHOOD IN INDONESIA**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims at revealing: (1) the important of teaching culture in English language; (2) the important teaching culture for childhood; (3) the teaching English is important for childhood; (4) the teaching English is important in Indonesia; and how the age and duration of education in Indonesia. It is kinds of qualitative research which is aimed at revealing the important of teaching English language for early childhood in Indonesia. There are still lack of research about the important of teaching culture in English language, therefore, this research is significant to be conducted. The finding of the research can be described as follows: First, cultural learning in the foreign language classroom touches three spheres: empathy and understanding, knowledge, and communicative skill. Second, learners will understand aspects of the foreign culture in the traditions of social anthropology. Third, young children being educated in English that is highlighted in this volume refers to the widespread belief that ‘younger is better’ when it comes to language learning. Fourth, the objective of English language teaching in Indonesia is to equip students with a working knowledge of the language. The last, in Indonesia the age begin to study in formal education is from the age 7 years old, and the duration is for 12 years.

**Keywords:** childhood, culture, English language teaching, English language in Indonesia.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is very important to us. Using education we can get many knowledges and informations. As the next generation, children must get good education. Education can be given in early childhood about from age 3 years old. In this age students will be easy and be fast to memorize some words or knowledges, because in this age students have good brain to memorize the knowlegde that they received. In education, teachers must give good process in teaching learning. So that, students can be easy when studying in the classroom. Moreover in early childhood, they more intresting study that have characteristic fun and enjoyable.

According to French (2007: 12) The child’s interests, strengths, culture, needs and learning styles are placed at the centre of planning for his/her learning and development. It means that, culture is one of learning style can make students interest in their study. According to Byram (2003: 1) Culture’ in language teaching and learning is usually defined pragmatically as a/the culture associated with a language being learnt. It means that, teachers can use culture to teach English language as a basic. Using culture, children will be fast to learn new language or foreign language. In the classroom teachers teach the differences of two culture (Indonesia and English), so that students will be more interisting study it. In culture teacher will introduce new word using English language about the differences culture. Besides, teachers will give short video about two culture are differences use English language, so it will make the childhood more fun study in new language in the classroom.

According to Oatey (2008: 49) Culture is people generally have clear judgements about whether particular objects, behaviours, relationships and beliefs. It means that, using culture students can open the students thinking about learn foreign language and make students capable in foreign language. English language is the important language to study. As we know, English language is a international language or global language in the world. Teaching English language is not new today moreover in Indonesia. In Indonesia have curriculum in teaching English language from 1975 years old. Curriculum 1975 introduce of instructional system in teaching learning. In this curriculum, students already introduced in English language. According to law 1989 in Chapter IX mentioned that English as a compulsory subject to be taught from Grade 7 at lower secondary level. Government Regulation No. 060/U/1993 dated February 1993 mentioned that on primary level English might be taught as a local content subject starting Grade 4. Besides, using English as a media, of instruction with the proviso that this is needed for developing knowledge of a particular subject or vocational skill. It means that, English is very important to students study from childhood as a basic language toward next level.

In Indonesia the national curriculum has experienced eight time changes. They are the 1945, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1994, 2004, 2006, and the last is curriculum of 2013. All curriculum in Indonesia use English language in Primary school, but in the curriculum of 2013 government have new policy about teaching English language in Primary school. English language learning is omitted in school, students can learn English language in the next level (from junior high school). So that students can not study English language in Primary school, but in private school. If there is no English language teaching and learning from primary school, how teacher can increase their ability in foreign language? If they learn English language from junior high school the capability of students will lessen or they will be difficult to memorize of word. Consequently, the aims of this study was to reveal the important of teaching culture in English language; the important teaching culture for childhood; the teaching English is important for childhood; the teaching English is important in Indonesia; and how the age and duration of education in Indonesia. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the importance teaching culture in English language?
- 2) What is the importance teaching culture for childhood?
- 3) Why is teaching English important for childhood?
- 4) Why is teaching English important in Indonesia?
- 5) How is the age and duration of education in Indonesia?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Childhood**

Early childhood education generally means education before the start of formal school or before the age at which children are required to attend school. Early childhood is a critical stage of development that forms the foundation for children's future well-being and learning. According to Curtis and O'Hagan (2003: 2) The first five years of a child's life is a period of rapid growth and learning. Therefore children need activities which will stimulate their social, physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional and moral development. The early years curriculum should be linked with a child's stage of development, which can be ascertained by careful observation of the child and discussions with the parents and family. The child's

progress should be monitored, recorded and shared with the parents. It means that, in the early childhood, children must be given the stimulate about language teaching so that they will be easy and be fast in mastering English language.

Early childhood educators have always relied upon their knowledge of child development and maturational theories. More recently, it has become equally important to understand the vital roles that experience, culture and responsive adults play in the emergence in children of skills and abilities in each developmental domain. According to Samuelsson and Kaga (2008: 12) In the early childhood period that children develop their basic values, attitudes, skills, behaviours and habits, which may be long lasting. Studies have shown that racial stereotypes are learned early and that young children are able to pick up cultural messages about wealth and inequality. It means that in the early childhood, children can learn culture to introduce foreign language.

## 2.2 Culture

Culture is the set of practices, codes and values that mark a particular nation or group; the sum of a nation or group's most highly thought of works of literature, art, music, etc. A difference is sometimes made between "High" culture of literature and arts, and small "c" culture of attitudes, values, beliefs, and everyday lifestyles. The culture dimension of language learning is an important dimension of second language studies. Education is seen as a process of socialization with the dominant culture. In foreign language teaching the culture of the language may be taught as an integral part of the curriculum. According to Knapp and Antos (2007: 3) Culture is a system of diversities and tensions, and includes differences of power, differences in access to legitimate means of expressing power, and struggles over these means. It means that, within the diversities in studying culture, the students will get many knowledges moreover in learning language.

The word "culture" seems to be used in three main senses or groups of senses. First of all, culture is technically used by the ethnologist and culture-historian to embody any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual. The second application of the term is more widely current. It refers to a rather conventional ideal of individual refinement, built up on a certain modicum of assimilated knowledge and experience but made up chiefly of a set of typical reactions that have the sanction of a class and of a tradition of long standing. The third use made of the term is the least easy to define and to illustrate satisfactorily, perhaps because those who use it are so seldom able to give us a perfectly clear idea of just what they themselves mean by culture. Culture in this third sense shares with our first, technical, conception an emphasis on the spiritual possessions of the group rather than of the individual.

## 2.3 English Language Teaching

Language is a very complex phenomenon, and it cannot yet be fully accounted for by anyone within one wholly consistent and comprehensive theory. Language teaching is an art in that it is a highly skilled activity which is learned by careful observation and patient practice. However, language teaching is a science. Linguistics provides a growing body of scientific knowledge about language which can guide the activity of the language teacher.

According to Richmond (2014:10) The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) is dynamic and changing. Identifying successful ways to teach English is a problem-solving mission. In the process, less effective approaches and methods are modified and replaced by those that seem to work better. Along the way, the range of possible techniques and ways of conceptualizing language learning has

expanded, and sound principles for effective teaching and learning have become more apparent. The practices that we observe today are the culmination of decades of linguistic and psychological research, innovation, and classroom application. Nonetheless, the needs and aims of students and classrooms vary, so there is no one best way to teach.

### 3. METHODS

It is kinds of qualitative research which is aimed at revealing the important of teaching English language for early childhood in Indonesia. Within qualitative research, the reseacher explained with the implementation of theoris in finding and discussion. The supporting sources taken from the books, journal, and many others releted to the topic.

### 4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 The Important of Teaching Culture in English Language

The relationship between language and culture, whether in general or in a particular case, is of course an extremely complex problem which has psychological, sociological and political dimensions, each worthy of study beyond. It would, however, be shirking responsibility to proceed to discussion of the learning of language and culture within language teaching simply on intuitive or commonsense grounds. The claim that language teaching improves intercultural relationships is therefore potentially justifiable if changes are made in the teaching of culture as an integral part of the subject. According to Byram (1989: 4) Cultural studies is an integral part of foreign language teaching, it is necessary to consider its precise relationship to the `subject' and to secondary education as a whole. It is not enough simply to assume that cultural studies as a natural part of language teaching will inevitably lead to positive educational outcomes. It means that, culture can use to learn the ability of English language for the early childhood in the classroom.

Teaching cultural studies in English studies means that we have to enable our students to approach the most relevant *processes* of (a) *social development* (b) *signification* and (c) *identity formation* of the foreign culture(s) so that they, by communicating about them, can learn about and compare these processes with what they know about their own (and possibly other cultures). Cultural learning in the foreign language classroom touches three spheres: empathy and understanding, knowledge, and communicative skill. A foreign language course which incorporates all three aspects trains its learners for intercultural competence and is likely to be an enriching experience. Again, there is general agreement among syllabus designers and curriculum planners to strive for intercultural competence in the foreign language. There are, however, divergent ideas of how one gets there; doubt is expressed if one can reach this goal at all, and there are different notions of what exactly the learners should be able to do as interculturally competent individuals. If learning a foreign language and, in the process, learning a foreign culture implies exposing one's cultural identity, it could also be said that we gain and develop our identities in and through the processes in which we differ from others.

According to Risager (2007: 5) Culture pedagogy has traditionally focused on foreign and second-language teaching, with the main emphasis on foreign language teaching. i.e. the teaching of languages that are primarily spoken in other countries than the country in which the teaching takes place. It means that, studying English

language can be introduced from the early childhood by using culture. Culture pedagogy normally refers to language teaching with a general purpose, since it is here that 'language and culture' occur as a combined object for teaching. That language teaching with a general purpose ought to deal with both language and culture is something about which a broad consensus has gradually been established in most of the world, though more in theory (statements of intent) than in practice. In both forms of teaching, great demands are made on the teacher to be a generalist who has an overview of the entire subject area, including language, literature, culture and society.

#### 4.2 The Importance of Teaching Culture for Childhood

Learners are 'committed' to their culture and to deny any part of it is to deny something within their own being. Comparison, and especially contrast, is a means of helping learners to realise that this process will not do justice to the reality lived by other people, to their culture and cultural values and meanings. Learners cannot simply shake off their own culture and step into another. The part of the syllabus dealing with the teaching of culture and cultural studies might be expected to follow the same pattern: a descriptive analysis of a culture associated with the language of study and a series of statements about cultural phenomena which may be exemplified in the home and foreign cultures. According to Tomalin & Stempleski (1993:7-8), modified Seelye's (1988) in Selma, et al (2001: 2) there are seven goals cultural instruction", and listed the goals of teaching culture as follows:

- a. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
- b. To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
- c. To help students to become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.
- d. To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
- e. To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
- f. To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
- g. To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

For learners are to understand aspects of the foreign culture in the traditions of social anthropology, i.e. as participant observers, then the aim must be to participate in it and experience it from within, as well as observe it and understand it from without. Any other perspective would be insignificant because it would leave learners firmly planted in their own culture, judging the foreign culture by inappropriate standards, seeing the foreign culture from a tourist viewpoint and failing to apprehend the nature of the intimate relationship between the language they are learning and the culture it embodies.

#### 4.3 The Policy of Teaching English Language in Indonesia

In Indonesia has experienced eight time changes curriculum. In the last curriculum is 2013 curriculum. In this curriculum, there is policy that there is no English subject in primary school. The students will learn English language in the next level (Junior High School). Based on Sindonews.com (October, 11<sup>th</sup> 2012) explained that the government agreement to abolish the students lesson of English

language in Primary school (*SD*). The Deputy Minister of Education and Culture in the field of Education Musliar Kasim said that, the primary students is better focus in learning Indonesia language, the addition of English language is also considered to burden of primary students.

The purpose of government to abolish English language is to decrease of burden of students and prioritize of Indonesia language. Many people give negative and positive reactions about the policy of government about the abolishing of English language in Primary Students (*SD*). The negative reaction come from Fahrur Zaman M.Pd, he is a Deputy of General secretaris of IKA UPI Bandung and Director of Media Advocacy Indonesia Center for Telecommunication Law. He said that, “the abolishing of English language is only a action of government in political language. He added that the mother tongue for Indonesia Nation in sociolinguistic studies is not Indonesia language, but local language” (tribunnews.com). Besides, the others negative reaction come from Lita Anggraeni, she is parents and work as a government employees. She said that, “Unfortunately if English is abolished. Now the children are already on the can, suddenly wiped out, pity them” (voaindonesia.com).

The new policy of government will appear many effects. The effect come from the students and the English teacher. From the English teacher, the teachers will be loss of job in teaching English language in school. Based on the Jakarta HanTer explained that in the past, school had six English teachers, but now is only two. Then, the effect from students, the students will not study English language to improve their foreign language. Students will fell difficult in learning English language if they do not study from the early childhood.

#### 4.4 The Importance of Teaching English for Childhood

English language learners, it is important to also recognise that learning through the medium of English is not always young children’s biggest challenge. The reason for young children being educated in English that is highlighted in this volume refers to the widespread belief that ‘younger is better’ when it comes to language learning. In some countries, English can have an official role in the society, hence leading educationalists to introduce English language education into pre-primary settings. Educators’, policy makers’ and parental beliefs often tend to guide and shape the forces that lead to young children receiving some form of English language education at young ages.

The role of language in the educational success, difficulty or failure of ELL children. While focusing on language makes a great deal of sense given the importance of language in education, it is critical to recognise that language-related issues are not the only or even necessarily the most serious challenges faced by ELLs in school. Depending on the background of specific children or groups of children, their academic success can be jeopardised by issues related to poverty, poor health, trauma linked to immigration and/or pre-immigrant experiences, cultural differences between home and school, school and school district policies and practices (including assessment requirements), the quality of educational materials, instruction and curriculum, teachers’ attitudes and inadequate teacher preparation. According to Victoria and Maria (2016: 24) The role of language in the education of ELLs have been shaped by four commonly held beliefs:

- a. Learning and using more than one language is burdensome and has associated costs or disadvantages.
- b. Young children are effective and efficient (second) language learners.
- c. Amount of exposure is a significant correlate of language competence.

d. The languages of bi- and multilinguals are separate neuro-cognitive systems.

Taken together, these beliefs have important implications for thinking about when and how ELLs should learn English – for example, to what extent ELLs should begin to learn English during the pre-school years in order to prepare them for formal schooling in English; the role of the L1 in pre-school and school programmes where English is otherwise used as the only language of instruction; whether ELLs should receive instruction in the home language to ensure acquisition of academic objectives while they learn English; and whether their achievement in non-language subjects (such as mathematics or science) and in English (such as reading and writing) should be assessed in the same ways and, in the case of English proficiency, using the same benchmarks as are used with monolingual native English-speaking students. According to Victoria and Maria (2016: 30) There are three aspects of early childhood education and instruction in implications of these findings for educating young ELLs are:

a. Language of instruction

The most radical innovation to have been tried in educating ELLs in the US involves the language of instruction.

b. Oral language development

Evidence, reported earlier, from research on the oral English language development of ELLs during the school years indicates that ELLs require many years of schooling to acquire native-like proficiency in English for academic purposes.

c. Development of literacy skills

Literacy instruction for young ELLs, it is helpful if teachers are aware of their ELLs' existing literacy-related skills and of literacy-related practices in the home so that they are better able to individualise instruction that builds on their existing skills.

#### 4.5 The Importance of Teaching English in Indonesia

English language in Indonesia is very important. The importance of English in international student mobility has been wellrecognised for many years, as manifested in the international English language competency tests; i.e IELTS and TOEFL. The important of English language not only for international English language competency tests, but also in teaching English or English studying. English Language has been seen as a good medium of communication in Indonesia. Apart from the fact that it has been adopted as a teaching language in higher Institution of leaning, it is also being considered as an enhancement for social status. All in all English language has been seen as a standard medium of communication all over the world and Indonesia cannot be left out. In some way or another, teaching and learning of English Language can be considered to be an integral part of Indonesia educational system for a long time now.

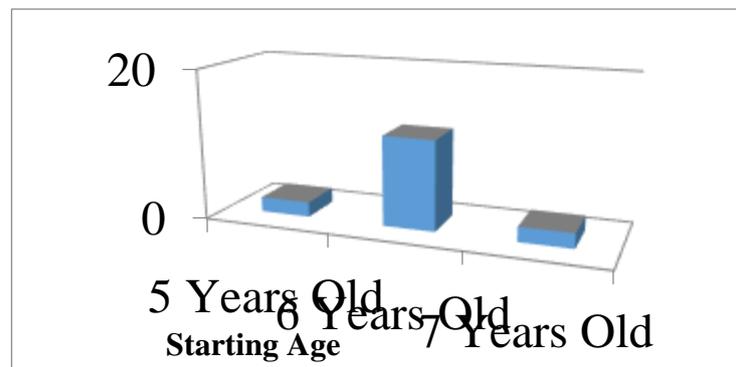
The policy of the *Pusat Bahasa* (Language Centre) is not to borrow Western words unless there is no local choice. One of the stated reasons is that the effect on the language of too much Western influence is to produce a kind of linguistic segregation between the language of the common people and the educated elite who are familiar with Western languages, in particular English. With English being given this status, the objective of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia is to equip students with a working knowledge of the language. While this instructional objective may appear self-explanatory, in the context of formal schooling, the notion of "working knowledge in English" has been approached in different ways throughout the history of ELT in Indonesia. For instance, in the 1975

English Syllabus, while the final goal of teaching was said to be the development of communicative competence in English, the actual English teaching focused almost exclusively on the mastery of linguistic patterns without giving proper attention to their in communicative situations.

#### 4.6 The Age and Duration of Education in Indonesia

The age of students duration to study is important for students. Children will be easy to master a matery if they learn something from in early childhood. In Indonesia, the age duration already from the childhood namely from the age of 7 years old in formal education. If the children study start in age 7 years old, they can study English language. Here, students can begin to introduce of culture or culture foreign to compare two cultures are different (Indonesia and English cultures). Using culture, children will be easy to learn a foreign language and they will not fell unfamiliar with foreign language.

The age duration of education in Indonesia can be considered slowly in entering formal education than other countries. If we see in China, Myanmar, and New Zealand, the ratably of formal education starts at age of 5 and 6 years old. According to Huong, et. al (2014: 11) In the majority of countries with data available (12 of 16 countries), formal education officially starts at the age of 6, while in two countries (Myanmar and New Zealand), children start formal education at the age of 5 and in China and Indonesia, at age 7. It should be noted that in New Zealand, 5 year-olds are enrolled in Year 0, focusing on readiness for academic curriculum. It means that, in Indonesia starting the study of English language must be in the early childhood like in kindergarten. Here, the chart of age duration in ASEAN Countries:



**Figure 1: Official Starting Age of Formal Education (Number of ASEAN+6 Countries)**

Many of the ASEAN+6 countries have 12 years of formal education divided into primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels while some have 11 years of education. Here, the tabel of education sector structure and years of primary and scndary education.

**Table 1: Education Sector Structure and Years of Primary and Secondary Education**

Structure	Total Years	Countries
6+3+3	12	Cambodia, China*, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand.
6+4+2	12	Australia (or 7+3+2)
5+3+2+2	12	India
5+4+3	12	Lao PDR, Viet Nam
6+4+2	12	Philippines, Singapore**
8+4	12	New Zealand
6+3+2	11	Malaysia

Structure	Total Years	Countries
6+5	11	Brunei Darussalam
5+4+2	11	Myanmar

**Notes:** \*in China, some provinces apply a 5+4+3 structure; \*\*Singapore's education structure is commonly described as 6+4+2. Other pathways consist of 6 years of primary education, 4 or 5 years of lower secondary education, and 1, 2, or 3 years of upper secondary education.

From the table explained that the duration in Indonesia to study in Primary and Secondary education is for 12 years. The detailed structure of education varies among countries but most countries have 5 or 6 years of primary education, followed by 3 or 4 years of lower secondary, and 2 or 3 years of upper secondary education. 6+3+3 is the most common education structure in the region, followed by 6+4+2 system. This represents 8 of 15 countries reviewed.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Studying English language is very important for students, moreover from early childhood. In early childhood, children will be easy to memorize and understand the new words especially in learning English language. From the finding of this paper showed that students can learn English language from introducing of culture. Using culture students will get many new words, so that the vocabulary in English language will be easy covered by students. Besides, the government must change the policy about abolish of English language in elementary school in Indonesia. Although students can learn English language in private school, but if in formal education (in elementary school) students can learn more about English language that accordance with the government curriculum role. Studying English using culture will give many advantages for students. Beside teachers can introduce the local culture and mix the comparison of two cultures from local culture and west culture (English and Indonesia cultures), students will get new knowledges. The social development will appear for students, students will be more care about the social enviroment such as; how to manner giving respect/honor to old people?, how to manner caring to people in surroundings? and so on.

In Indonesia the age begin to study in formal education is from the age 7 years old, and the duration of they school in primary school is for 12 years. The age duration in Indonesia is slowly than others countries, mostly others countries in ASEAN+6 Countries begin to study in age 5 and 6 years old (see tabel 1). So that, it might make students easy to learn about something. In early age, students will be fast to master something moreover in knowledge. In Indonesia English language can use to communicate to tourists, because English as a foreign language. Besides, using English language students who want to study in university can use competence of English (TOEFL and IETS) as a one of the university entrance requirements. Finally, teaching English in Indonesia is very useful for students. Students needs this language as foreign language to communicate and to equip.

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