

Constructivism Approach in EFL Class to Build Intercultural Communication

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Abstract:

English textbook is important for English learners. They can learn the target language by doing tasks available in the book. The tasks are arranged based on certain theoretical framework. TEFL in Indonesia adopts CLT which building communicative competence for learners as the goal of CLT. The teachers use textbook that is made on the basis of CLT with the aim to teach communicative competence (Richards, 2006:20). English is taught and spoken as a foreign language in EFL classroom (Laio, 200; Ying, 2010) and Constructivism in teaching English is viewed as part of cognitive psychology. The CC is developed into ICC and Byram (1997) said an interculturally competent speaker of a Foreign Language (FL) possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values and knowledge about a culture. This study reveals that tasks with random access instruction (29.17%) also top down instruction (29.17%) are mostly used in this book. Created situation and meaning construction (58.67%) using collaborative learning (62.82%) are applied because this student's book is for the third graders of primary school therefore teacher's explanation and colorful images are important for learners. Task contains knowledge (29.17%) because learners must gain knowledge before applying it.

Key Words: *Constructivism, CLT, communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence*

1. Introduction

People may say that English is one of international languages spoken around the world with a great number of speakers. English is eminently spoken by majority people in the world. Encarta recorded five languages spoken by more than 10 million people are Chinese (1,212,560,000), Arabic (422,039,637), Hindi (366,000,000), English (341,000,000) and Spanish (322,200,000) (adopted from Honna, 2008:4). But why English is used by many people in different countries? Previously because English is known as language of democracy but now the users use English in the online world through the internet (35,2%) (copied from Honna, 2008:5). Those reasons above are the potential basis that English is used as a common language or a multicultural language in

the global society. History recorded the development of English language since the old era till the modern era with its variety of speakers.

The role of English is varied among countries such as Indonesia which belongs to the country which using English as an international language (Kachru, 1992:356). It shows that English is as the first foreign language in Indonesia so that TEFL applied here. Teaching English for primary students needs English textbook as resourceful material depends on the school curriculum. Textbook has been used for many decades and becomes teaching material because textbooks continue to constitute the guiding principle of many foreign language courses around the world (Leah Davcheva and Lies Sercu, 2005:90). English language is taught formally as well as informally depends on the curriculum applied. One of English textbook that I will investigate is Green Adventures Book Five used for third graders of a private primary school in Semarang which is published by ILP (International Language Program) in 2010.

English is used to connect people with different cultures around the world. One aspect of language teaching is culture. In the era of CLT today the scope is about how learners learn a language, kinds of classroom activities and the roles of teachers and students in the classroom (Richards, 2006:2). The purpose of CLT is to develop communicative competence includes building knowledge for using language in different social context moreover Byram wrote that learners not just learn to gain knowledge about language but to develop their ability to use language in socially and culturally appropriate ways (2001:4). Furthermore Byram proposed his idea about Intercultural Dimension in language teaching with the hope to help learners acquire linguistic competence and develop their intercultural competence to be intercultural speakers (2001:5). Learning English as the target language pushed the users to be socially competent speaker on the basis of Byram's model. Thus students are expected to gain knowledge then applied their knowledge to improve their skills to be ICC speakers.

There are some other research due to similar topic such as research conducted by Nygaard (2014) who examines how textbooks in International English invite students to expand their intercultural perspectives through tasks related to texts about multiculturalism (as quoted from Knudsen's thesis in 2016:7). Aleideine Kramer Moeller and Kristen Nugent (2014) built various models of ICC for example cultural task that promote ICC and represent best practices in ELT. Lin Liu and Yin Shang conducted research about the application of constructivism to the teaching of intercultural communication (2014). They create a model involving students in autonomous learning, initiative discovery of cultural differences and personal experience of intercultural circumstances. Those previous studies give their insights in ELT and building ICC through textbook and applied constructivism.

Based on those previous studies I try to formulate my research questions to meet the objectives of the study as the following:

- a. How tasks are arranged to build student's intercultural communicative competence?
- b. How student's ICC is developed through constructivism approach?

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Cognitive Approach

Children learn a new language during their growing period. Their golden age period will work best if parents and caretakers teach them many things visually and orally. Some experts conducted research to investigate how languages are learned by children among others are Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner. Those people are very famous scholars in cognitive psychology. Therefore through their studies they found what is called constructivism. According to Lin Liu and Ying Zhang (2014) Constructivism is a branch of cognitive psychology including Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (Piaget, 1966), Vygotsky's theory of ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) and Bruner's concept of Discovery Learning (Bruner, 1983). They found that someone develops a learning process when they are learning something including a language.

The cognitive approach does not focus on learners but also teacher's role. Based on the research conducted by Wang (2012) that cognitivism applies better in the classroom context if teacher's role is as facilitator and this is the change from traditional role as knowledge transmitter. Wang (2006) also reveals that teaching should be conducted in real situation because the learners should be exposed to real situation in order to help them construct their own knowledge. As learners they will also need to get their learning experience so that they can use it to construct their own meaning in their learning process.

2.2 Culture in ELT

Learning a foreign language includes learning the culture of the target language. According to Kramersch (1993) foreign language education should include teaching culture of the target language. The cultural elements of the target culture are written in the textbooks or in the related documents (Cortazzi and Jin, 1999). Kramersch (1998:3) said that language expresses cultural reality (it reflects its speakers' experience, attitudes and beliefs), it symbolizes cultural reality (speakers view their language as a symbol of their identity), and it embodies cultural reality through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects. Therefore in foreign language class the non- native language speakers like English teachers in Indonesia, they have to learn English culture so that they can teach English to their students completely and accordingly.

Since many years ago some researchers have conducted research about language and culture thus the findings show that there is a close relationship between language and culture. Agar (1994:28) said that there is a close bond relationship between language and culture as reflected in *languaculture* which means that culture is language and language is loaded with culture. His idea is supported by the fact that in teaching a foreign language it is commonly aware to teach culture of the target community (Byram et. al.1994; Hinkel, 1999; Lange and Paige, 2003; Corbett, 2003; Fenner, 2006). Language is the result of culture therefore language adheres to culture where it is from. Cultural representation embodies attitudes, way of thinking, customs, and beliefs admitted by the people. English as lingua franca has been developed throughout the human history scattered all over the world.

2.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Deardoff (2008:33) defined IC as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on someone's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. This competence will be improved further through the process becoming ICC by emphasizing contextual socio competence. Michael Byram proposed his idea about Intercultural Dimension in Common European Framework (2001). Thus the aims of incorporating Intercultural Dimension in ELT is to help language learners to interact with speakers of other languages and in order to be intercultural speakers who will be successfully not only in communicating information but also in developing human relationship with people of other languages and cultures (p.4). Interculturally competent speakers must have social competence and they use English as lingua franca in their talk. Both Deardoff and Byram have defined that ICC can be developed through the interaction process involving knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

2.4 Materials in ELT to develop Intercultural Dimension

English textbooks are important in ELT since it provides important information for the learners. A good textbook for developing Intercultural Dimension if it is written in intercultural and critical perspective or an authoritative material (Byram, 2001:18). The authentic material is very useful for learners because it can help learners to understand the content and the intention by discussing or analyzing it in the target language. Big C and small c should be elaborated into teaching materials to be socio-cultural context for students to learn.

Byram (2002:12) argues that what teachers should ask is not how much information about a country and its culture one can include but how one can develop those other competencies which will help learners to interact successfully with other cultures and identities. Teachers have the role to promote the ICC through their teaching practices so that learners can develop their ICC by interaction with people from different culture in the global world. Teachers should know how to give the authentic materials to the learners in order to help them to acquire skills for analysis than factual information.

2.5 Tasks

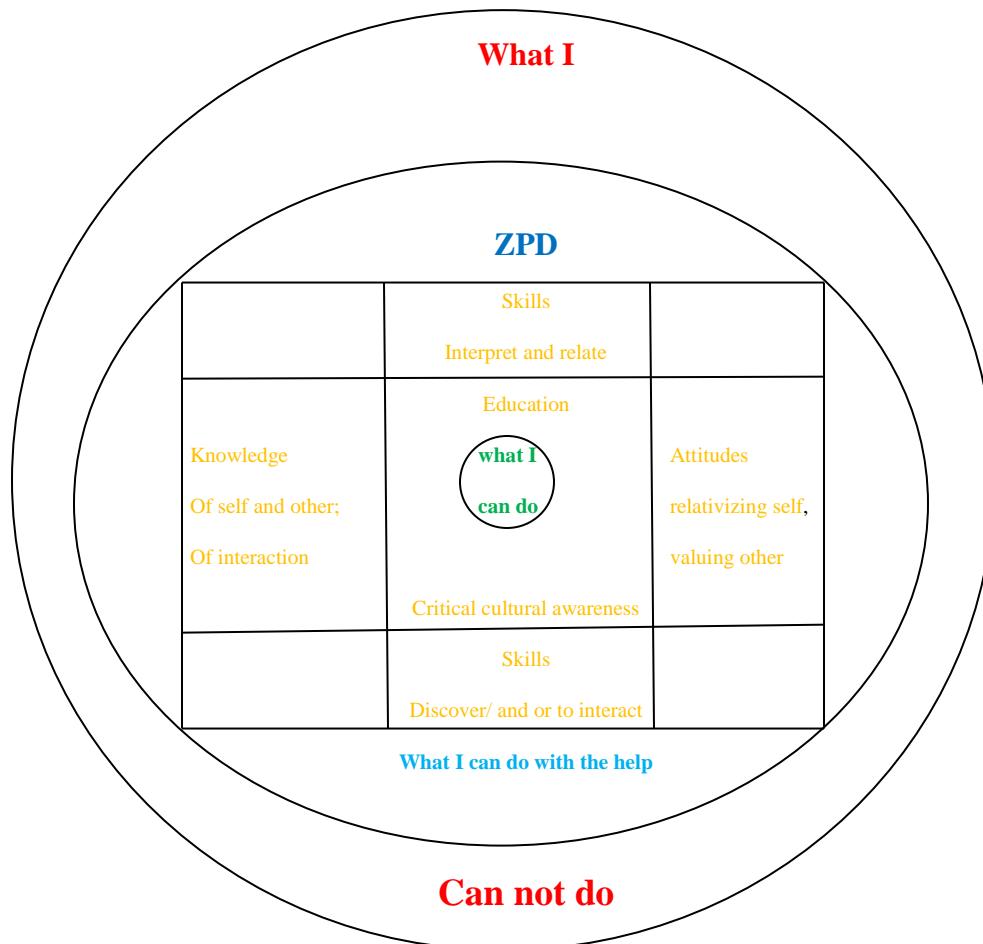
Each textbook is completed with exercises and students must do the tasks as part of the given exercises. The tasks are created aimed at finding student's comprehension upon something that they are learning. Teachers ask questions to students as feedback for them so that teachers can know their students' comprehension. Feedback can be given in various ways such as giving conclusion and examination but the purpose is same. The tasks are also varied depend on the objectives of the learning materials.

Tasks defined by CEFR (2001:10) as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary action in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfill or an objective to be achieved. It states that tasks need action to accomplish in order to get the result. Another definition of tasks is given by Sercu (2002:69) who said that just as the cultural content of foreign-language courses deserves more scrutiny than it has received till now, the culture learning tasks and practice activities, which are at the heart of any learning process, also deserve closer examination if we want to enhance the potential of language

courses for promoting the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence. In this definition tasks related to acquisition and interaction needed to develop learners' ICC.

2.6 Constructivism Framework (Vygotsky's theory of ZPD) adopting ICC (Byram's factors of ICC)

Figure 1: ZPD for building student's ICC



Adapted from Innovative Learning.com

3. Methodology

This study is conducted by applying case study. The case study is chosen because this is the pilot project to find out the phenomenon of student's book tasks as supplementary material for third graders of primary school students. TEFL in the primary school in Indonesia is conducted based on the school's accreditation published by the government and the school in this study has got A accredited therefore English is taught since the first graders. A case study is a description of a real situation involving a decision making or problem solving. A case study focuses on a particular unit such as a person, a site, a project, etc.

4. Findings

4.1 Book Details

Green Adventures Book One is published by ILP (International Language Program) in 2008. The address of the publisher is on Jl. Raya Pasar Minggu No. 39 A, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia, 12780. The book is accompanied with DVD in order to help young learners interested to learn English.

At the back of the book there is an information as follows:

Come Fly Through English With Us!

The first level of six in the Green Adventures series introduces children to an exciting and magical world of English. In this level, children meet Smuff and friends and are led on exciting adventures where they are exposed to a wealth of English language.

Throughout the program, technology based courseware is used in the classroom in conjunction with this course book. Technology based courseware consists of Adventure Stories, Digital Teaching Assistants and Digitally Assisted Language Activities.

Language consolidation sections at the end of each unit allow parents easy access to the learning content of their child's Green One program.

A student DVD is included in the front of each course book and contains stories and language building activities which the children can enjoy at home and share with their family.

www.ilpworld.com

4.2 Constructivism approach

The Cognitive approach has its own teaching modes to identify the tasks and they are 1) Random access instruction, 2) Scaffolding instruction, 3) Situated or anchored instruction and Top down instruction. There is one element of cognitivism that is scaffolding and Vygotsky has created a model called ZPD in which scaffolding is the area where the learners can do something with the help. Other elements are derived from Piaget and Brunner. There are 7 units provided in this student's book namely People and Jobs; Around Town; Transportation; Our School; What's happening; Opposites and Project work/Our own town. The tasks of this student's book are identified based on the teaching modes into the following table:

Table: 1 Teaching modes applied in Green Adventures book five series

Teaching Modes	Unit in Green Adventures book five							Frequency	Percentage
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Random Access Instruction	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	28	29.17%
Scaffolding	5	2	3	3	1	2	3	19	19.79%

Instruction										
Situated or Anchored Instruction	2	2	4	3	2	4	4	21	21.87%	
Top-down Instruction	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	28	29.17%	
Total								96	100%	

The table shows that the dominant instructions of tasks found in Green Adventures book five series are Random Access Instruction (29.17%) and Top-down Instruction (29.17%). The random access instruction include different instruction for students to do the tasks such as *Meet Bunga and Marcus-Which Job? (unit1-p.3)* and *Now, make sentences of your own (unit 1-p.4)*; *The Green Adventure News: Listen to Marcus interviewing someone about their job and help him to finish writing the news story for the Green Adventure Newspaper (unit 2-p.27)* and *Your Interview! Interview somebody you know about their job. Find out...1)Their name;2) What their job is; 3)Where they work; and 4) And what they do. (unit2-p.27)*, etc.

The Top-down instruction is also dominant in this book because teacher's explanation is firstly needed before assigning students to do the tasks. For instance of top-down instructions found in Green Adventures book five series are: *Around the world: How do they get to school? (unit3-p.37)* and *Let's speak! (unit3-p.38)* also *Write and talk about how you get to school. (unit3-p.38)*; *Spot the differences (unit4-p.46)* and *What does your classroom look like? (unit4-p.46)*, etc.

The tasks available in this student's books are comprised into 7 units and they are identified into teaching modes and it can be illustrated below:

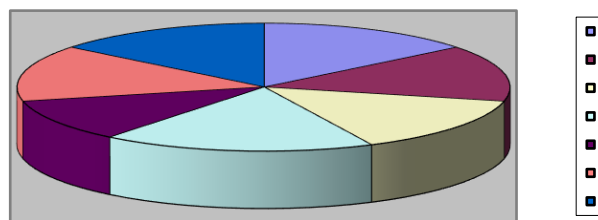


Fig 1: Chart of tasks described into teaching modes

Based on the chart, random access instruction is dominant in unit 5 because tasks are given in different instruction in this unit. Scaffolding instruction is dominant in unit 1 because unit 1 consists of tasks which can be done with the help of teacher. Next are unit 3,6 and 7 mainly consist of situated or anchored instruction because the tasks used authentic as well as created situation. The last is unit 3 and 6 which are mainly consist of top down instruction because the learners can learn from general thing then bring those into specific.

4.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence from cognitive approach

The next phase is analyzing tasks into four major elements to apply ICC in teaching English namely Situation, Collaboration, Communication and Meaning Construction. The Situation and Meaning Construction are viewed from the authentic and created situations because cognitivists believe that authentic situation and created situation includes cartoon, picture taken from social media, many more as long as containing culture can develop intercultural communicative competence. The table of the analysis is as follows:

Table 2: Situation and meaning construction elements

Unit	Situation and Meaning Construction	
	Authentic	Created
1	3	2
2	2	2
3	3	2
4	1	4
5	1	2
6	3	3
7	0	3
Total	13	18
Frequency	41.94%	58.07%

From the previous data, the dominant situation and meaning construction is the created element (58.07%) because the Green Adventures book five series is used by third graders in their first semester. Children like colorful and animated illustrations therefore the authentic is less than the created situation. The aim of using more animated illustration such as cartoons is to help students have fun learning atmosphere so that they can develop their understanding for getting knowledge especially English.

The tasks which show created situation for examples are *reading text (entitled The Professor's Fight, unit5-p.55-56)* because this it is narrative text and uses not just human (*Marcus and Bunga*) but also animals (*Smuff the dragon and Squeak as the mouse*) and thing (*Magic Book*) as main characters. The imagery characters and storylines will help them learning English better. The story is about problem solving packed into a journey carried out by them. Another example is *What are they doing? (unit5-p.59)* this ask is about completing sentences showing that the subject is doing something. The task is organized with giving 5 characters are doing something and they students must complete the sentence using correct verb and tense.

The tasks comprised into 7 units and they can be described into the chart as follows:

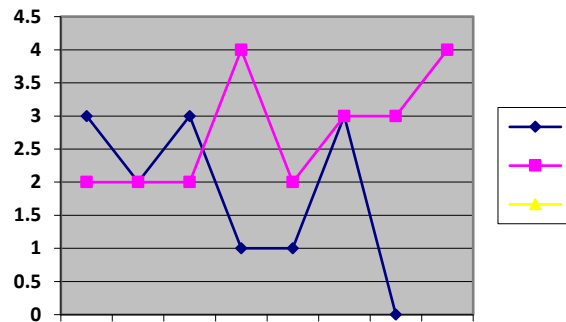


Fig 2: chart of tasks analyzed into situation and meaning construction

The next element to be analyzed is the collaboration and communication. Those two elements are viewed from the collaborative learning and non- collaborative learning because cognitivists believe that in fostering students’ ICC the tasks should have collaborative learning in which teacher and students can cooperate with in doing the tasks. Even students can work together with their classmates in pair and in group. By assigning them into group they can minimize their anxiety and it can create their motivation and independence in learning English. The table about this collaborative learning is as follows:

Table 3: Collaboration and communication elemens

Unit	Collaboration and communication	
	Collaborative learning	Non collaborative learning
1	7	8
2	7	4
3	9	4
4	7	5
5	6	4
6	6	4
7	7	0
Total	49	29
Frequency	62.82%	37.18%

The tasks found in the student’s book are analyzed into collaborative and non-collaborative to show the elements of ICC from this cognitive approach. The elements of collaboration and communication from 7 units of student’s book can be seen in this graph below:

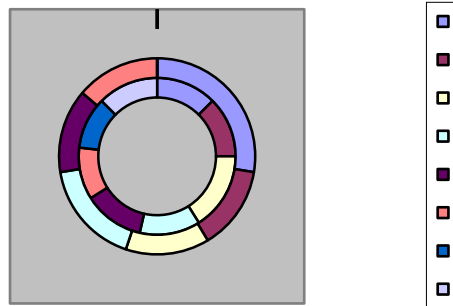


Figure: 3 chart of tasks described into collaborative and non-collaborative

The chart shows that collaborative learning is more dominant than non-collaborative because cognitivists believe that learners will have better improved when they do collaborative learning.

4.4 Byram's ICC

This step is classifying tasks into Intercultural Competence based on Byram's model of ICC (1995) that comprises five elements (savoirs) namely:

1. Knowledge (savoirs) includes two components such as knowledge of sociocultural and knowledge about other people
2. Attitudes (savoir etre) belong to the intercultural speaker because it is the foundation of intercultural competence.
3. Skills or interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre) mean that we see people having different identities and their own individuality.
4. Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire) include the ability to learn a new culture and cultural practices and operate the knowledge, attitude and skills.
5. Critical cultural awareness (savior s'engager) includes an ability to evaluate critically on the basis of criteria, perspective, practices and products in other cultures and countries:

Table 4: Tasks incorporating Byram's model of ICC are as follows:

Intercultural Communicative Competence	Number of utterances	Percentage (%)
Knowledge	21	29.17
Intercultural Attitudes	11	15.27
Skills of interpreting and relating	14	19.44
Skills of discovery and relation	13	18.05

Critical cultural awareness	13	18.05
TOTAL	72	100

The table shows that the dominant element is knowledge (29.17%) and then skills of interpreting and relating (19.44%) and the last is intercultural attitudes (15.27%). The dominant is knowledge because based on the model of Byram students can get knowledge from authentic and created situation which has cultural elements so that they can learn about it. The students also learn from their experience to build their knowledge in real situation. While the least is intercultural attitudes because the author of this book is Indonesian (non-English speaking person) therefore the intercultural attitude is not dominant in the book but the students can still learn about it even from the utterances produced by the characters in the story.

Those tasks can be illustrated into the following chart:

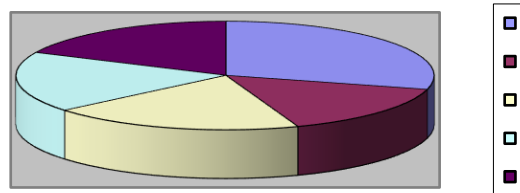


Fig 4: ICC found in tasks

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of this study I can draw conclusion as the following:

Tasks are arranged on the basis of cognitivism are suitable for young English language learners. TEFL in Indonesia should be taught hand in hand with the culture, local as well as target culture because learning a new language without learning the culture will not give students opportunity to gain knowledge about the language. Learning is a process therefore students should follow the process to get their own learning experience by doing tasks. The tasks that show constructivism are tasks that are arranged into random access instruction and top down instruction because the level of the learner is improved. The cognitive approach in this study are the result of combining Piaget, Vygotsky and Brunner. The tasks adopting cognitive approach are tasks which have random access instruction and top down instruction in the student's book.

To help young learners build their intercultural communicative competence is by deigning tasks which applied collaborative and using authentic materials. This study shows the result that created situation is more dominant than authentic because the student's book for primary level is created by the Indonesian author therefore they have more images of authentic situation provided

in the book. The ICC factors based on Byram can be adopted step by step that is building knowledge than skills of interpreting and related. The others are skills of discovery and building intercultural awareness.

Suggestions and Recommendations

This study is expected to give contribution to:

The English teacher especially non-native of English they should learn English and the English culture because language is the result of the culture. By knowing the culture of the target language the learners will have better knowledge when they have to use the target language in their communication.

The next is for curriculum developer, this study is hoped to give contribution for them so that when they develop a language curriculum they will accommodate big and small C in their language curriculum. The local and target culture should be adopted into language curriculum.

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