BICOS: The Development of Character Building in CCU Course

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ABSTRACT
This paper presented ideas and insights about core values for character building in the cross-cultural understanding (CCU) course. Core values refer to any values held by the society covering spiritual, moral, and socio-cultural values. Ideas and knowledge about character building in this course will help faculty members promote values and behavior among the students. This paper will specifically show how the values can be implemented in the CCU course through a teaching model labelled as Bicos. Bicos consists of several teaching strategies, namely brainstorming, comparing and contrasting, and sharing. Due to the help of Bicos, faculty members and students can have meaningful academic interaction to understand the culture and build their character. In addition, this study provides an example of how the teaching model is implemented through instructional media.

Keywords: Bicos, Cross-Cultural Understanding, character building

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of EFL pedagogy, three domains of education, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor, have gained much attention among education practitioners. The cognitive domain has been the predominant educational outcome as stated in the curriculum to learning objectives in all levels of education. It is reflected by many strategies proposed by researchers to enhance students' skills while lecturers have implemented them in their language classes. However, affective and psychomotor cannot be neglected in the teaching and learning process because the three domains are inseparable. Affective domain teaches students how to deal with things emotionally, such as feelings, values and attitude, whereas psychomotor covers physical functions, reflex actions and interpretive movements. Thus, the two last domains are put in the hidden curriculum, such as character building.

Language learning is closely related to culture and social practice [1]. It means that learning a language is learning its culture. According to culture iceberg, culture covers what is seen, such as clothes, food, languages and music. More than that, aspects in the deep iceberg shape the culture like values, beliefs, history, and norms. Character building can be taught through this part. One course that mainly talks about culture is Cross-Cultural Understanding. In this course, students are exposed to understanding different cultures, especially those from western countries. The aspects discussed in this course include westerners' lives, characters, education, daily life, and core values [2]. Core values refer to any value held by the society covering spiritual, moral and socio-cultural values. To enhance students' awareness of cultural diversity and build their characters through culture in the CCU course, this paper proposes a model of teaching called BICOS.

2. BICOS AS A TEACHING MODEL

BICOS is an alternative model of teaching which stands for brainstorming, comparing and contrasting, and sharing. As previous studies have shown, brainstorming is an approach used to develop students' ideas, creativity, and critical thinking [3]. It is usually conducted in a small group discussion, and students use it as idea generation to be actively involved in an initial discussion by communicating their ideas verbally. This stage is implemented in the beginning when the class is assigned to talk about a particular thing. Lecturers need to provide a video or a passage related to a topic to be analysed and discussed. Meanwhile, students are divided into several small groups with a different country for each, for instance, family values in US, UK and Japan. Lecturers can choose the countries, or they let students decide it

themselves. More importantly, lecturers have to provide clear instructions about the activity, such as determining the analysis aspects. In this time, small groups have to find the topic out according to the country. In the process of constructing their group conclusion by having a discussion, students should always be reminded that they are not allowed to make any judgment of good or bad to the culture they are discussing. This action can lead them to be tolerant and respectful of others' culture.

The second stage is comparing and contrasting. Comparing is a stage where students try to find similarities from the ideas that have been shared by the other members of the same group. On the other hand, contrasting is a stage where students discuss the differences found with the same group members. In this stage, all groups should compare and contrast their findings to their own culture. A good example is that it is common for American parents to put a new born baby in a separate room that belongs to the child. However, Indonesian parents think differently. They keep the baby with them in the same room. Comparing and contrasting stages can hone students' criticality since they need to think about possible similarities and differences in the ideas generation. It also helps them shape the ideas and their arguments boldly to be ready to share their ideas in front of the class. To inculcate characters such as non-discriminating, discipline and cooperative, lecturers have to encourage students to objectively see a various culture that may be very different from students' culture. Therefore, stereotyping and humiliating will not happen. It is also good to keep in mind that people and their culture are only different, and none is better.

The last stage is sharing. All groups should present their findings in front of the class, so everybody knows the topic, in this case, is the family values, from different countries and cultures. Lecturers must direct the presentation session to run smoothly and ask questions about the differences between other cultures and students' own culture to trigger non-discriminating practices. A question like 'how do you perceive the differences between this culture and your own?' Furthermore, this stage provides broader perspectives for the students. It enriches their cultural knowledge so that they will be proud of their culture but not easily judge other culture from their cultural viewpoints. After all, groups have shared their group discussion, and lecturers have to summarise the discussion with the students. Furthermore, inserting cultural interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge and skills is also influential action to strengthen the process of character building. Interpersonal skills are behaviours a person uses to interact with others. It covers the ability to make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people and entails perceiving the messages underlying facial expression, voice and gestures [4] The examples are empathetic, responsible, understanding respectful. On the other hand,

intrapersonal skills are the capability of one's self to manage his/her self for self-discipline, self-esteem, self-understanding, and being able aware of his/her thinking. Eventually, students are also promoted to behave wisely whenever they interact with other people from different cultures.

The implementation of BICOS is very beneficial for university students since it provides opportunities to analyse and evaluate ideas in various types of information related to a diverse culture. Students are also trained to communicate their ideas effectively and appropriately in the class, both academic and non-academic. They also can develop their intrapersonal and interpersonal knowledge and skills by realizing that people act differently as they come from a different culture. With the help of lecturers in emphasizing that no culture is better than others, students can demonstrate good morality and behaviour in living in this very diverse world. Moreover, university students are digital natives who live their real lives and live in their social media. Implementing Bicos in CCU can prevent students from inappropriate actions in social media, too. As we all know, commenting and sharing things are at ease on social media. People can hurt and get hurt if they do not equip themselves with strong positive characters. In many cases, cyberbullying is inevitable. It happens due to several factors, but the immense cause is the lack of ability to refrain from demeaning others or simply delivering thoughts without thinking of further effects. Thus, character-building remains significant to hold harmony in lives.

Through BICOS in CCU, lecturers can lead students to be holistic human beings covering physical, academic, socio-cultural and emotional dimensions. Likewise, students subconsciously strengthen their core values to enable them to have and perform a good attitude wherever they are in. The values are self-esteem, strong nationalism and humanity [5]. Students can grow to be good citizens, for they are proud inhabitants, but they still appreciate diversity. Moreover, BiCOS will help students adapt themselves to 21st Century Skills [6] concludes that 21st century education needs to provide students with stimulating activities that make students produce creative and critical ideas and understand complex perspectives, make evaluations from those perspectives, utilize technological platforms, and work collaboratively with others. Bicos is very student-centred, where students are allowed to lead the learning. As a moderator, lecturers are expected to make students feel empowered to learn to attain the learning objective at its best.

Culture is believed to influence how people see things. In its stages, BICOS facilitates students to analyse a specific case from another culture. An active and meaningful discussion is the part of this strategy that bridges them to a more complete and accurate understanding of culture. Critical analysis can also

evaluate the accurate portrayal of cultural themes, so students no longer stand by their oversimplified assumptions or stereotypes [7].

3. CCU IN UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MALANG

Cross-Cultural Understanding is a compulsory course with two credits in the Department of English, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia. Like CCU in general, this course gave students practice using analytic skills that will help them improve or develop a greater appreciation and understanding of culture's diversity and complexity. This course is also intended to complement students with cultural knowledge and skills for various challenges inherent in working in other cultural environments with people of other culture. Since it is the Department of English, the focus will be cultures of English speaking countries, but it is not limited to it. Students are also expected to be able to compare those cultures with Indonesian culture.

In its practices, students do not merely study the cultural product such as clothes, food and dance, but beyond that. As Hall's cultural iceberg, 90% of culture lays below the surface. This covert aspect is the heart of this course. Topics such as verbal communication, family values and education in English speaking countries are often discussed in the class. Here is an example of the implementation of Bicos in CCU. The topic is family values. In the beginning, students with their groups are assigned to watch a related video provided by the lecturer. The aspects that should be analysed are child-raising, young adulthood, and the elderly. The lecturer, in addition, has to emphasize intended values such as respect and independence. Respect means that every culture has its uniqueness in raising a child, for instance. Independence is also promoted through the topic and the group assignment.

After watching the video, the lecturer gives groups some time to discussion and find further information about the topic in western culture. Students in this second stage of Bicos have to compare and contrast the western culture to their own culture, Indonesian culture in general and in particular such as students' own family or ethnic groups like Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, etc. The lecturer needs to encourage students that the cultures between western and Indonesian probably differ a lot. Hence, providing judgement of better culture is unnecessary. After students are ready with their group works, it is time to share with the class. Now, the class is in the last stage of Bicos. Each group must present the result of their discussion about the aspects mentioned from both views', western and their own. A question and answer session should be given after each group's presentation. The question may come from the other groups and the lecturer. The same question for all groups from the lecturer is also acceptable. In the end, the class

have to summarize what has been learnt. The lecturer should reinforce the summary and the expected values and characters so that the students can keep in their minds to behave appropriately whenever they interact with other people from other cultural backgrounds.

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