Assessment Model Implemented in Learning Gallery to Teach Cross Cultural Understanding for EFL Learners

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Abstract

In response to one of the demands for EFL learners to have cross cultural competence mainly on cultures of English speaking countries, this article describes assessment model implemented in *Learning Gallery technique* to teach *Cross Cultural Understanding*. *Learning Gallery* as one of the innovative ways of teaching content courses with an abundant coverage of materials proves to be able to help learners to be competent in some topics of cultures. This fact has been proved by implementing assessment model, namely Student-Self Test and Teacher-Made Test. The result of this study reveals that such an assessment model brings about improving the students' cross cultural competence, awareness, and sensitivity and it leads them to be more independent learners as well. Moreover, through a reflective interview given at the end of the course, they claim that by developing their own test, doing their peer's made test, and doing teacher-made test, they are experienced in test development, better prepared for the test, and to be more independent learners. Accordingly, this study gives a meaningful insight for EFL lecturers teaching content courses to implement *Learning Gallery technique* with such an assessment model in order to help the EFL learners to be autonomously independent learners and competent in their own subjects learnt.

Keywords: assessment model, learning gallery technique, Cross Cultural Understanding

A. Introduction

It is unavoidable that a language learner not only learns the language itself but the culture in which the language exist. This is due to the fact that language and culture are closely associated and one cannot be understood or appreciated without knowledge of the other (Sapir, 1929 as cited by Suntharesan, 2016). Accordingly, EFL college students of English Education Program of IAIN Tulungagung, Indonesia are demanded to learn cultures of the English speaking countries. Hence, it is compulsory for students to take Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) Course (*Buku Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan,*

2016). As EFL candidate teachers, they should be engaged in developing cross-cultural competence so that they are able to transmit global learning to their future students.

Considering the fact that the world population significantly increases and people move across national borders, to prepare EFL teachers who are competent in helping learners' function and roles as members of global society is significant. They are then demanded to learn cultures across mainly English speaking countries as those of English origin which include a wide range of topics. A study carried out by Seeberg and Minick (2012) implies that the more distant a cross-cultural experience and the more emotionally loaded a theme; the more impact there will be in the affective aspects of the standards. The wide coverage of the learning materials is then delimited on the basis of the syllabus of CCU course.

Furthermore, to achieve the learning goal, *learning gallery teaching strategy* as part of active learning with which the students are actively involved in the course was implemented. The term "learning gallery" as part of active learning used in this study shares common elements of involving students in doing thing and thinking about the things they are doing (Eison, 2010 as quoted from Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Learning Gallery teaching strategy implemented in this study is the researcher's modified jigsaw group project by which the students are grouped and they are responsible for a certain material to learn. The grouping of students is intended to invite each student to be actively involved in the instruction. This strategy is sequentially done in 3 steps, namely **In-group comprehension, Expert-group discussion, and home-group confirmation.**

1. *"In-group comprehension" covers the following learning activities:*
   a. Divide the students into several groups based on the number of topics discussed + 1.
   b. Appoint one member of the group as the leader
   c. Ask them to name their groups using names of a country for instance
   d. Assign the leaders of the groups to divide the topic into several sub topics and assign each member to learn the assigned sub topic which is then called as *"reading phase"*. This is done in outside classroom instructional practices.
   e. Guide the students to have *"confirmation and one topic comprehension gathering phase"* in which the students staying in one group tell what they have learned and gather all information of all sub topics. Then confirm that each member understands the topic. The teacher ensures that each student becomes an expert of the topic in the group and is able to share to other students.

2. *Expert-group discussion includes some activities:*
   a. Ask the leader of a group to send his members to other groups as representatives to present their topics and ask 2 members of the group to stay as "the hosts".
   b. Explain the tasks of either the representatives or the host. The representatives should present the topic to the other groups and listen to the presentation of

other groups. Meanwhile, the hosts lead expert-group discussion in their own groups.

c. Guide the students to create expert-groups consisting of representatives from each group and two hosts to conduct expert-group discussion.

d. Float from group to other groups to make sure that the expert-group discussion runs well.

3. *In home-group confirmation covers some activities:*

a. Ask students to return to their own group sharing what they got from other groups. In this phase, both the representatives and the host should have obtained information related to all topics discussed

b. Ask the leaders to lead the discussion

c. Guide students to have this home-group confirmation activities

d. Answer the students' questions and explain to the class.

e. Conduct a test to make sure that all students understand all topics well.

Another important thing in EFL instruction that needs to taken into account is either an assessment of learning or that for learning. Governance Policy 213 (2012) defined the first as being conducted to determine how much students have learned as of a particular point in time in order to report achievement status to others. The later is as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. Assessment can be in the form of a test which is commonly developed by the teacher- called a teacher made test. In addition, one type of assessment that has been shown to raise students' achievement significantly is student self-assessment (Black & William, 1998; Chappuis & Stiggins, 2002).

In addition, in the past five years, there have been some studies on assessment of EFL instruction which focused more on language skills. For example, Zhao (2014) investigated assessment teacher-supported peer assessment for EFL writing which proved to substantially affect learners' perceptions, and the nature and the perceived value of peer assessment respectively. This is in line with Azarnoosh (2013) revealing that there is no significant difference between the learners' peer assessment and teacher assessment, since no friendship bias was found in peer assessment, but this leads to the change of students' attitudes towards a positive perception on peer assessment. Ketabi & Ketabi, (2014) studied on tools such as journals, portfolios, surveys, oral interviews, and presentations used to conduct formative assessment and revealed classroom assessment to be potentials as formative and for-learning; Lee & Coniam (2013) investigated teachers' attempt to implement Assessment For Learning (AFL) in Writing which shows that conventional assessment practice pose obstacles to AFL in Writing, so that it requires teachers' collaborative efforts especially in exam-oriented context. Still, studies on an assessment model for teaching CCU Course are numerically counted. Studies on CCU were done to develop students' cultural awareness as conducted by Angelova & Zhao (2016) who implemented online collaborative

projects between Chinese and American students, and Chen & Yang (2016) who employed United Beyond Our Diversity (UBOD) project to promote intercultural communicative competence. It is hardly found a study on how to assess CCU instruction with wide range of topics which aims at building cultural competence and awareness by using teacher-supported peer assessment which proved to essentially affect students' perception.

Regarding the importance of equipping the EFL students with cross cultural competence and the lack number of studies on assessing their CCU competence, it is necessary to invite them to be more engaged in controlling their own progress. Hence, this article is intended to picture out the assessment model appropriately implemented in such a condition and the learners' responses on employing the model. Because student-self assessment is scientifically proved to be able to promote students' achievement, therefore, the assessment model employed is by integrating both *Teacher Made Test* and *Students Self Test*.

Students Self-Test (hereafter simplified as SST) is one of the ways of Student-Self-Assessment which according to McMillan and Hearn (2008) is defined as a process by which students 1) monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning and 2) identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills. The SST in this study is defined as a kind of test regulated by the students themselves. SST is implemented to see how much progress they get during the process of instruction, because the students will be challenged to measure their own learning progress by means of developing a test and doing their peer-made test in their own nature. It covers the principles that the students take as active participants in conducting such kind of an assessment and they are engaged in self-assessment in order to be more reflective and are able to set goals for their learning improvement. In line with this, Black & Wiliam (1998: 143) states that "Self-assessment by pupils, far from being a luxury, is in fact an essential component of formative assessment.

Teacher Made Test as stated by Physe (1997) is responsible for helping students learn about themselves. The term *Teacher Made Test* (TMT) in this research defined as one form of classroom assessment developed by the teacher to seek information on how much is the students' achievement. Such test becomes an integral part of teaching CCU course because it provides significant information or inputs about the growth and achievement of learner's content knowledge of CCU which according to Desheng and Varghese (2013), it is classified as testing knowledge of content. This test is intended to test the students' *cross cultural competence* that refers to a surface level familiarization with cultural characteristics, values, beliefs and behaviors. TMT in this context is then considered as new process of gathering information about the EFL learner learning achievement on CCU. As according to Physe (1997) that assessment refers to new *mats* for gathering information about students' achievements. The test which is developed based on materials discussed in learning gallery is in the same type with that developed in SST, namely T/F questions with 21 test items done 40 minutes. Such kind of test is carried out to validate the result of SST.

B. Research Methodology

This study was qualitatively done by conducting reflective interview after implementing *learning gallery* teaching technique equipped with student-self test and teacher-made test as an assessment model. This part further discusses about the participants and assessment procedures.

1. Participant

The participants of this study were the fourth semester students of English Education Program of State Islamic Institute of Tulungagung Indonesia. They were joining Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) Course in which they had to learn various kinds of materials concerning with cultures of some English speaking countries, namely United Stated of America, United Kingdom, and Australia. There were 60 students staying in two (2) different classes. Each class consisted of 30 students.

2. Assessment Procedures

The procedures of implementing the assessment model in this study are described below.

Students Self Test (SST). The SST administered at the end of *Learning Gallery Round* is carried out through several steps: 1). the students are firstly trained to develop T/F questions; 2). the students develop their own test based on the materials they have learned at the same type of the test and the same number of test item; 3). The developed T/F test is submitted to the lecturer; 4) the lecturer distributes the test sheet to the students at random so that they will not do their own tests and they cannot plan to do their own selected peers' test; 5). The peer test is done by the participants of the research; 6). After doing the test, the test taker give the tests back to the test developer; 7). The answer sheet is then scored by the test developer, 8). the students report their peers' scores to the lecturer; 8).the students (the test developers) return the result of the test to their peers. In addition to celebrate students' progress and achievement on CCU, this SST provides them with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate their CCU knowledge, language skills, attitudes, or behaviors, so that they know their own grades. As revealed by Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001) that Students Self- and peer-assessment which are being used increasingly in higher education is beneficial to help assign grades to students' work and to help students to learn more effectively.

In doing this kind of test, first of all, each student should ensure him/herself that s/he understands the points of all topics learnt The students' understanding on the materials learnt is significant as the basis to develop the test. It was decided that the test type was True False and the number of T/F items is 20. Such an objective test is developed in order to help students to score their peers' works. The test was developed after finishing all the steps of Learning Gallery. In order to avoid cheating, the lecturer distributed the developed SST to the other students at random, so that each student did not know whose question s/he would do. The next step was doing the T/F test in 40 minutes. After doing the test,

the sheets should be given back to the test developer to be scored. Each true answer was scored 1 point, so that the total correct score was 20. In short, Student-Self Test is a kind of student-self regulated test with which the students prepare, develop, do, and score their own made test.

Teachers Made Test (TMT). Teachers Made Test is another model of assessing students' achievement in CCU. TMT in this study refers to a kind of test developed by the teacher. Hence, in addition to do SST, the students joining this CCU Course should do TMT as well. The type of TMT is similar to that of SST in term of the test type, number of items, and time duration of doing the test. This was done to validate the participants' understanding on the whole materials that they have already discussed. The TMT is developed through some steps i.e. 1). each group which discussed a certain topic selected randomly using a lottery has to submit its power points and summary of the materials to the lecturer. 2). those collected summaries and power points are then used as the basis to develop the TMT

This TMT which consists of 20 items was conducted a week after doing SST. Each student has to completely do the test in 40 minutes. Subsequently, the test was checked and scored together among the participants themselves by exchanging to the other participants and the lecturer provided them with the correct answers. This was done in order to give the participants a real chance of mastering the materials of CCU. By having such kind of an assessment technique, the learners are consciously able to measure their own competence which hopefully stimulates further curiosity on the need of learning CCU. Each class had different TMT in terms of the content of the materials, because each had different information about the topics of CCU discussed during the process of Learning Gallery.

C. Finding and Discussion

The findings of this study are classified into two main points, namely Students Self Test (SST) and Teachers Made Test (TMT) which covers either the strength or the weakness during developing and doing the test.

1. Students Self Test

This study found that the common problems appear during developing the T/F test cover language, content of the materials, and technical problem. In relation to language problems, some students get difficulties to arrange T/F statements in terms of grammar and vocabulary. The grammatical problems are the constraint which mostly appears among the students when they develop T/F test. They had difficulties in constructing good and correct T/F statements. They said, for example *" it is difficult to arrange grammatically correct sentence, because I am afraid my friend can not understand my statement (Novita).".*

In addition to grammatical problem, some students have both limited number of vocabulary and word choice difficulties, so that it challenges them to make readable and comprehensible sentences. They experience confusion in constructing good and correct sentences appropriate for T/F test, as stated in the quoted students' comment: "It is difficult

for me to make questions because my number of English vocabulary is still limited..." (Fahmi) and "…Difficult to choose diction, .. " (Husaini).

Concerning with the content of the materials, what the students experience is that developing a T/F test is not simple because they have to select which part of the materials which is necessary to be taken as underlying information to be tested. As stated by one of them that," it is difficult to choose the materials." The material coverage that they have learnt is so wide, so that to make T/F questions "suitable" for their own level is neither simple nor easy. They get confused on how to select the best and the most appropriate questions for their friend among various topics they have learnt. For those who never developed any test, this would be a challenging experience, so that they have to be very careful.

Meanwhile, the challenges during doing the students' peer-made test is that on one hand, the T/F statements are easy because some of the T/F statements are copied from the materials that the students have read several times. On the other hand, they are sometimes confusing because of confusing grammatical use. When doing the test, they sometimes misunderstand and do not know some strange words used in the test. As being seen in the quoted comment: "I don't understand what the statement means because the language used is confusing and vague" (Nayo). As a result, they did the SST by guessing what their peers mean. Thus, the grammatical error made by students when developing the T/F test and inappropriate diction result in the test taker' confusion and misunderstanding.

Another challenge that the student find during doing the SST is concerning with the technical problem for example some of the students' handwritings is not clearly readable. As a result, those who find such kind of unreadable test get more technical problem to read the statements. This sometimes leads the test takers to spend more than the others and to misunderstand as well. With a limited time of doing the test i.e. 40 minutes for 20 T/S statements, each test taker should make use of their time well. They are also trained to have self confidence on their own competence, so that it is not necessary for them to do cheating during the test. This finding is reflected from the quoted student' comment: "My friends' hand writing is not clear so that it is difficult to read." (Tsalista)

In addition to some weaknesses found during the SST assessment, this study indicates that there are some important findings which the students can take advantages from the SST. During the process of developing the test, students feel to have valuable experience to construct a T/F test. Beyond the difficulties they found the students' awareness of being demanded to be able to make such kind of test when later they are in a real world to be an EFL teacher. Doing exercise of making a test is not provided in any courses. The advantages they found during developing the test is reckoned to be bigger than the constraints they faced. This can be seen in this quoted student's comment: "…The first is that difficult to construct sentences/ but as a-teacher to be, it is time to learn how to develop a test." (anonymous). This shows that they such kind test provide the students with learning experience either to enhance students' learning skills (Alshammari, 2016), social skills (Hung et.al., 2016), and increase self-efficacy (Baleghizadeh and Masoun, 2014).

Further to having good chance of developing T/F test, this study reveals that the students have more chances to review the materials and have more reading practices for the sake of getting more understanding on the materials they have read. This is explicitly stated in this quoted comment: "I can read all the materials because I made the questions from all the materials". When the students master the materials, they can develop the test at least for their own interest. Some studies have proved that self assessment gives them a sense control over learning and assessment outcomes (Mahmoodi et.al., 2014) and students designed test helps them to review the book content in detail (Kafrani and Afshari (2017).

Another point that can be revealed from this study is that developing T/F test is useful to train their capability of constructing grammatically and logically correct statements. They have chance to improve their grammatical proficiency. "I can learn again how to write/construct good sentences, learn grammar, and relearn materials given by the "experts" from other groups" (Nayo). This finding is parallel with some previous studies revealing that there is a significant effect of self assessment in enhancing the students' willingness and in creating positive outlooks toward English language learning (Weisi and Karimi, 2012; Aghaie and Zhang, 2012).

2. Teachers Made Test

There are some important findings concerning with doing Teachers Made Test (TMT) which covers the strength and the weakness of doing the TMT. They include Language Learning Experience (LLE), Learning Experience (LE), and Learning Motivation (LM). Concerning with LLE, by doing the TMT, the students get new vocabulary as explicitly reflected in this quoted statement: "I get new vocabulary from doing the teacher-made test" (anonymous). They also claim that they can learn how to make thinking-arousing T/F statements which are either grammatically correct and logically appropriate with the materials coverage "...I can learn how to make good trapping questions (utri sueratri)." This shows that the EFL learners have experience on language learning. Furthermore, doing the TMT brings them about knowing types of sentences together with the level of difficulties. This is a natural smooth way of making them aware on how English sentences are used in T/F test. This phenomenon can be clearly portrayed in the quoted statement: "Teachers' made test actually used simple sentences and it is taken from the materials taught but because I can not focus so I am trapped." (Siti Latifah)

Another important point related with Learning Experience (LE) is that the students get more understanding on the materials learned, because when they do TMT, they think that the T/F statements look easy but there are so many traps if they carelessly read them. The grammar used has also made them strategic in understanding each T/F statement when they did the TMT. This finding indicates that TMT helps them to measure their progress, as in line with Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002) who found in their study that Portfolio assessment used in conjunction with teacher-made tests contributed to Iranian EFL learners' achievement and their feelings of responsibility towards monitoring their progress. This phenomenon is explicitly proved in the following quoted statements:"…

The questions look easy but there are so many traps if we carelessly read, but the grammar make us easily understand" (anonymous 1) and "doing teachers made test make me more understand and punctual (anonymous 2)." This means that they get learning experience in doing T/F test punctually and strategically.

Moreover, it can be pictured out that by doing the TMT test; the students get much learning motivation because of their dissatisfaction resulted from low score resulted from their own carelessness to read the T/F statements. Accordingly, this leads them to be more encouraged to study and struggle harder for their future learning improvement. Their awareness that they are not punctual has also made them to be more discipline and rigorous to study. This fact is explicitly found in the quoted comments below:

"I am motivated to study and struggle harder. I should be more carefully read and do the test." (Nayo Himatul). When doing teachers made test, I am not satisfied with the score but I will try to be the best." (Amirotul Mufidah).

Such an awareness indicate motivation building which further produces the need of chasing better achievement in their future learning and this is the significant point. This is parallel with the previous research proved that learning motivation affects on achievement (Feng et.al, 2013; Rahimi & Karkami, 2015; and Alrabai, 2016).

Besides the strength of doing the TMT, there are some weaknesses. The first is for the students, TMT is more difficult than SST in terms of sentence construction, the diction used, and the content coverage. The T/F statements are not copied from the students' summary of materials as they usually did when developing SST. Instead, they are constructed on the basis of the material coverage by the teacher herself. Accordingly, the students feel that the T/F statements are seemingly trapping them to understand. Moreover, the difficult words they find lead them to get difficulties in understanding the test items. Such a state experienced during the test has brought them to a psychological constrain i.e. getting panic and loosing concentration, as experienced by the student below:

"When I did the test from my teacher, I felt confused because there were so many trapping words. Several questions were easy to be done but when I found difficult statements and unfamiliar words, I was immediately panic and could not concentrate anymore." (Fatimatul Munawaroh)

Regardless the weakness and the strength of developing the test, those of doing their peer-made test and scoring their peers' answers, the three important findings about LLE, LE, and LM obtained from TMT give the learners experience on learning assessment, learning autonomy, learning confidence, and mainly learning culture. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Wu et. al (2013) which reveals that assessing cultural awareness in active learning context promotes the EFL learners' confidence. The result of this study indicates that the EFL students learning CCU by employing *Learning Gallery* teaching technique equipped with the integration of Teacher-Peer Assessment model can bring about the maximum improvement on CCU Course which covers wide topic areas of learning. This implies that they can improve their cultural knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity. The

finding of this present research is also implicitly parallel with the one revealed by Birjandi & Tamjid (2012) who employed peer and teacher assessment in Writing Course. They found that such a model of assessment result in the maximum improvement in students' writing. This proves that this model of assessment would work optimally when it is implemented in an EFL learning context in which the EFL learners are actively participated and engaged a lot during the instructional process.

D. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implication

In a nutshell, the present study indicates that by having both Students Self Test and Teachers Made Test, the EFL learners get meaningful learning experiences not only related to learning the content of Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) covering various topics to be discussed but they get valuable chance of being involved in real context of language learning as well. Furthermore, they get chance to practice a learning assessment by developing their own test and doing their peers' developed test. This means that in addition to achieve the objective of the course, the students of English Education Program have valuable chance of training themselves to be an EFL teacher who are demanded to be good in English and skillful in developing an English test. The result of this study is pedagogically applicable by those teaching a Content Course covering abundant numbers of learning materials, because this study proves that the assessment technique provide both students and teachers with an effective way of learning assessment. This study gives a meaningful insight for EFL lecturers teaching content courses to implement *Learning Gallery technique* with such an assessment model in order to help the EFL learners to be autonomously independent learners and competent in their own subjects learnt. However, this study is only as a qualitative study which has no control group to show the effectiveness of carrying out such kind of assessment model toward a content course with a wide coverage of the materials. Accordingly, it is suggested to conduct further study on verifying whether this assessment technique is effective to be implemented in EFL context.

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