ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN PESANTREN INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA: FROM COLONIAL TO GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Diding Fahrudin
Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia
dfahrudin@yahoo.com

Abstract

English Language Teaching has spread to most institutions in Indonesia, including pesantren institutions. This spread has resulted in certain cultural and political conflicts due to the fact that English has its culturally western values with to some extent contradiction to those of pesantren institutions which have their own typical traditions with Islamic values. To globalize themselves, it is no doubt that these institutions need English badly for various purposes. This paper will try to present how these conflicts in English Language Teaching in the pesantren institutions are managed in harmony by pesantrens. Regarding this fact, the paper will also present the arguments of how English Language Teaching in pesantrens is tactfully shifted from colonial to global perspectives.

Keywords: pesantren institutions, cultural and political conflicts, globalize, arguments, perspectives.

Introduction

Globalization has led the countries in the world to become borderless and this has made English a lingua franca for many purposes in many fields (Phillipson, 1993: hal. 41-42; Crystal, 2003: 11-14, 28-48, 106-110; Jenkins, 2010; Mckay, 2009: 14, 15, 19). The importance of English language is also strongly felt in pesantren as typical Islamic boarding schools with kiais, ustadzs, santries and unique teaching and learning systems (Dhofier, 2011) to face globalization. The development of English Language Teaching (ELT) in pesantren causes cultural conflicts between English with Western values and pesantrens with their uniqueness which need to be well managed for global pesantren improvements in the near future. The roles of kiais in pesantrens are so fundamental regarding the language planning and policies. These aspects are the fundamental reasons why such title of the research is used. This paper tries to depict cultural conflicts regarding English Language Teaching in pesantren institutions and to propose what these institutions believe culturally relevant issues.

Maxwell (2001) depicts how culture works. Culture is considered as a starting point of then number of narratives of individuals or institutions. Culture works as the basic foundation of identity narrations in daily life. Culture consists of and forms the settlement in which we live. In addition, culture has worked in our memory since we were born, from our early recognition and collective memory in sports, child births,
dances, workers and love of the community. Culture also works in traditions as cultural heritage sources.

Culture is a complicated concept. (Williams, 1976; Worsley, 1985; dan Walker, 1984) explain to mean culture. Culture is a number of values with high etiquette in arts and limited merely to the elite. Culture is considered a way of life and an encouraging spirit for human beings and is associated to a number of values imposed by the majority with their power. Culture is considered as the way how a community with different individual backgrounds live together in harmony.

English Language Teaching (ELT) has spread to many areas and fields, including pesantrens in Indonesia, with various methods and approaches from grammar-translation method to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), from teacher-centred approach to learner-centred approach. An important point regarding ELT is that the values of English is different from those of the learners. English is full with western cultures; pesantrens, on the other hand, are loaded with the values of pesantrens basically grounded by Islamic perspectives and this contradiction leads to cultural, political and ideological conflicts.

On the field, the research found some interesting issues regarding ELT in pesantren. To start with, the stake holders of pesantren institutions, in particular English teachers in these schools, face dilematic situations: "Should these teachers fully teach English on the basis of Inner Circle/Core/Centre perspectives (British English or American English) or should they do this in accordance with pesantren’s consideration or should they do this by mixing the values of Western and pesantren?" In this case, the English teachers should negotiate this issue with the Kiais who has their power in connection with language planning and language policies of the pesantrens. The second issue is that if English is taught according to the culture and ideology of the learners or teachers, the question is "Is this way of teaching 'accepted' academically?" The last is that if the fact that the local content of the learners is used in ELT in pesantren in connection with transcultural flows (Pennycook, 2007) is accepted in the periphery or expanding circle countries, are these new Englishes considered accepted for international communication?

Pesantrens are the oldest Islamic institutions which have become the strongest Islamic institutions, the centres for Islamic propagation and for Islamic development in Indonesia. The word ‘pesantren’ stems from Tamil language which means “Islamic the trainer of Qur’an reading”. Other resources state that the word stems from an Indian language Shastrī originally from shastra, meaning ‘sacred books, books on religion, or books on knowledge’. Outside of Java islands, this word refers to surau (in West Sumatra Barat), dayah (in Aceh), and pondok in other areas (Ensiklopedi Islam Jil.4, 1994: 99 – 105).

Pesantrens as knowledge institutes have typical teaching and learning which are different from those of other institutions. In Java, pesantrens are identical with padepokanorkombongan, meaning a housing complex whose houses are divided into small rooms for their santris (Mastuhu, 1994: 11). Pesantren traditions are traditional Islamic frames in Java island which have become the research objects to learn Islam in Indonesia. The objectives of pesantren teaching are not only giving the lessons to the santris, but also to improve morality, train and encourage the santris to live in simple life, appreciate humanity values, and help them to do good deeds (Qomar, 2005: 20).
Pesantrens are generally divided into two categories (Dhofier, 1984: 41): salafi and khalafi. Salafi Pesantrens maintain the teaching of kitab kuning (old manuscripts) as the main teaching. Madrasa systems are applied to make it easy to implement sorogan systems used in the teaching of Qur’an with the old system, like Lirboyo and Ploso Pesantrens in Kediri, Maslakul Huda Pesantren in Pati, and Tremas Pesantren in Pacitan. Khalafi Pesantren have accepted general knowledge into their curricula of the madrasa this type of pesantrens manage, or they have established the general schools which accept public schools. Pondok Modern Gontor or Persatuan Ummat Islam pesantrens both do not teach kitab kuning (old manuscripts) or classical Islamic books anymore. Well-known Pesantren institutions, like Tebuireng and Rejoso Pesantrens in Jombang, have owned Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools and Higher Education and have still maintained the teaching of kitab kuning (classical Islamic books). Pesantrens have lately developed into certain types depending on their different tendencies

This development is actually interesting to discuss and then influences the whole pesantrens’ traditions, regarding social, religion systems, ways of life, both microcosmic and macrocosmic perspectives. Cultural and religion homogenities decrease in accordance with variety and complexity of the modern Indonesian development (ibid: 42) and this can actually be seen from how culture, politics and ideology influence English Language Teaching in pesantrens in Indonesia.

The research coverage includes how ELT is implemented with regard of the perceptions of kiais, ustads, English teachers in pesantrens, santris, santris’ parents and alumnny of pesantrens. This limitation is expected to map the key issues regarding the ELT in pesantrens. The assumption is that English teachers in pesantrens face a difficult situation which can disturb the comprehensive plan of the teaching and learning process of ELT in line with pesantrens’ values.

Language and Culture

Language and culture cannot be separated because culture is a big umbrella, while language is one of the elements of culture. Both language and culture are often discussed and semantically support each other. There is a similar perspective between the idea of Berger (1990 dan 1991) and anthropological ideas regarding how language is perceived as an objective reality. The symbolic anthropological thought studied by Clifford Geertz and Spardley considers culture as a symbolic knowledge filled with concepts, theories and recipes as tools for human beings to understand and interpret their environment, experiences and as a basic frame to implement behavior patterns. The culture filled with a knowledge system created from the cyclical relation between deductive and inductive principles with continuous processes responding all stimuli in human beings’ life is a language phenomenon (Spardley, 1976 and Geertz, 1992).

In the context of Berger’s sociological context (1990 and 1991), language is considered as a dialectic result (stimuli and respond) between subjects and internal sociological world. Dialrectic lasts in a three-step simultaneous process, from externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization is a human orientation as a subject to its environment. Objectivation is a result of human orientation which then becomes a distanced reality, while internalization is an objective reality transformation as a part of subjective awareness. Through externalization, both language and community become human beings’ products; meanwhile, through
objectivation, language and community become a real. Consequently, through
internalization, community and language (such objectivity!) become powerful and
force for each individual wherever they live and this force can be seen from the
procedure and social control system on the implemented system.

In the language context as a system, language legitimation means to order
language patterns which actually mean a way of thinking. This can be seen how English
Language Teaching (ELT) takes place in pesantrens in Indonesia and this teaching still
uses old paradigm prepared by the legitimate, Department of National Education. It is
an idea that the teaching and learning of English for Junior and Senior High Schools are
the teaching model prepared by the Department; meanwhile, pesantrens are really
unique institutions which need the uniqueness of language treatments. The ELT books
are those which are different from Islamic values as typical values of pesantrens. There
is a tendency that those who have written ELT books appear to have an idea that the
ELT books are highly recommended with the cultures of the Core/Inner Circle
countries.

English Language Teaching: from Colonial to Global Perspectives

In English Language Teaching (ELT), whether it is in pesantrens or others, there
are two terminologies to discuss Core and Periphery (Phillipson, 1993: 17-30).
Core refers to the countries of Britain, the United States of America, Canada, Australia,
and New Zealand whose people are the native speakers of English; periphery, however,
is associated to the countries who use English as an international language for
international purposes, such as Scandinavia and Japan and the countries once colonized
by English speaking countries. Periphery also covers the countries who have intention to
using English as those who are native speakers of English. The periphery countries to
accept anything from difference had led English to be colonially taught, meaning that
the core countries impose their ideas to be accepted by periphery countries. This is
closely related to the term linguistic imperialism as further explained by Phillipson
(ibid: 47) that

English linguistic imperialism is that the dominance of English is asserted and
maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural
inequalities between English and other languages.

Linguistic imperialism is actually included in linguicism (ibid: 47), that is a
structural identity and the activities used to institutionalize, make it effective to
reproduce power and sources without balance from language perspectives. This
imbalance is strongly felt in ELT in pesantrens who tend to follow cultural, political
and ideological factors of the core countries which then follow the ideas of the Core and
tend to forget their own cultural values as local genius (Fahrudin, 2000).

Historically, English is considered a colonial language starting from the version
of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe in 1910 who taught Man Friday to speak English
(Phillipson, 1993). Stone (1957:17) states that The Life and Adventures of Robinson
Crusoe full of British values started to dominate reading texts in Europe and this had the
book illustrates linguistic imperialism. Phillipson (1993:109) criticizes that the
relationship between Crusoe and Friday is a community racial structure, that is why
Crusoe did not learn Friday’s language, but Crusoe insisted on teaching English to
Friday. Brantlinger (1990) considers an epitome of power and an irrational construction to Other. Liddell (1910: xi) in Cook (1998) argues that:

*We enjoyed the stolid, business-like way in which Crusoe sets to work to make, and succeeds in making, the best of a very bad job, and as Britons we like to think of him as a typical of the Britons who, before his time and since, have by pluck and perseverance planted colonies all the world over, and turned howling wilderness into regions of prosperity and plenty.*

Two things are considered in the above illustration: Crusoe as a model for rationalization and dedicated to reconstruct Britain and her colonization.

For further illustration, the following dialog is good to know:

Master: *Well, Friday, and what does your nation do with the men they take? Do they carry them away and eat them, as these did?*

Friday: *Yes, my nation eats mans up too; eat all up.*

The above dialog depicts the relationship between Self and Other constructed by colonialism through English language. Friday is unable to speak in his own language but he was constructed to express his ideas in English (Cook, 1998).

Cook (*ibid*) argues that an important dimension related to colonialism is actually connected to cultural colonialism rather than politics or economics. Thomas (1994: 2) states the following idea:

*Colonialism is not best understood primarily as a political or economic relationship that is legitimized or justified through ideologies of racism or progress. Rather, colonialism has always, equally importantly and deeply, been a cultural process; its discoveries and trespasses are imagined and energized through signs, metaphors and narratives; even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence have been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning. Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalize forms of oppression that are external to them; they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves.*

Cook urges that cultural imperialism in connection with English teaching is imposed to the local culture. In other words, how imperialism produces European culture. It happened how Malaysia and Singapore officially legalized English forced by Britain.

*Makerere Report* (1961:2) in Phillipson (1993) illustrates how colonial values depicted in 5 Tenets exist in ELT as follows:

1. English is best taught monolingually,
2. The ideal teacher of English is a native speaker,
3. The earlier English is taught, the better the result,
4. The more English is taught, the better the result, dan
5. If other languages are used much, standards of English will drop.
Tenet 1 is actually contradictory with UNESCO (1953:47) states below:

‘On educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as a late stage in education as possible. In particular pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible.’

Phillipson (1993) criticizes these tenets as depicted in the following statements:

- The policies of these tenets in connection with ELT are strongly felt with the perception of the Core/Centre countries,
- All tenets contain linguistic imperialism, i.e. the domination continuously maintained for the sake of core countries’ advantages,

Historically, the influence of English is not that a big deal. Globalization, however, has led Indonesia to need English more. Globalisation is defined to illustrate a global reality which forces the physical borders among the countries. In other word, globalization can mean as a power to fulfill a standard and create an order to treat any countries equally (Javis, 2007). Steger (2003) states that globalisation consists of a multidimensional process empowering the social interdependence for international communities.

The role of English in the global village has shifted significantly from a colonial language to a global language with the decolonization process and multicultural perspectives. In the past, the following schema illustrates the colonialization (Phillipson, 1993):

![Scheme 1](image)

Britain and America as the core countries can impose anything, such as culture, politics and ideology to periphery countries, in which Indonesia is included. This is the colonial format. Crystal (2003) illustrates further that basically the Inner Circle countries force the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle to follow what the Inner Circle intend to have.
Illustration 3 depicts how the Core (Inner Circle) countries colonially impose the Periphery countries.

Mufwene (2002) explains that English is the first language in most and considered as the key issue to determine social-economic conditions. The more global the country is, the more English language is (Brutt-Griffler, 2002), and this language is even reconstructed by the globalization process. English language, therefore, multiculturally belongs to its speakers with their own cultural backgrounds (Herther, 2009).

The shifting paradigm of ELT from a colonial language to a global language has been mostly discussed. Many books present the relevant discussion, such as Language and Discrimination by Roberts, Davies and Jupp (1992), Linguistic Imperialism by Phillipson (1993), The, for example Cultural Politics of English as an International Langugae by Pennycook (1994), English and The Discourse of Imperialism by Pennycook (1998), Ideology, Politics and Language Policies: Focus on English by Ricento (ed.) (2000), English-Only Europe: Challenging Language Policy oleh

Smith notes some information with regard to international culture and language as follows:
1. Learners do not need to follow the cultures and norms of the native speakers;
2. The ownership of international language becomes 'de-nationalized', and
3. The purpose of the language learning is to help the learners to express their own culture and ideas using English.

Brutt-Griffler (2002) further states that (1) an international language is an ethnocultural product for international purposes; (2) an international language tends to develop itself side-by-side with other languages; (3) an international language is studied by anyone. At the moment, these ideas belong to English language.

Language and culture in ELT have shifted in some ways. Kramsch (1993) states that learning a language does not mean that we accept the culture of the language learned. Learning English as an international language does not mean that we have to practice the culture of English, but tetapi mendorong leads the learners to understand pragmatic differences which influence their international communication. Byran (1998) differentiates 'knowing' which is close to 'interculturalism' and 'accepting' other culture as 'biculturalism'. 'Interculturalism' is defined as knowledge about other cultures without accepting it in daily life practices, while 'biculturalism' means that someone knows other's culture and accepts it as daily practices.

The issues of culture learning into an international teaching are agreed by many experts. Gonzales (1995) and Brutt-Griffler (1998), Brown (1986) and Brown (1990) all agree that teaching a language cannot be separated from the culture of the language. Brown (1986: 121) reminds us that 'it is virtually impossible to teach a language without teaching cultural content' and (ibid: 45) argues that 'it is really an integral part of the interaction between language and thought. Cultural patterns, customs, and ways of life are expressed in language; culture-specific world-view are reflected in language.'

Other experts question this issue. McKay (2009: 85) questions which part of English culture should be included in teaching the language. Richard (1995) and Prodromou (1988:76) found some examples of how the culture of an international language made the learners frustrated because the learners felt far away from their own cultures. Prodromou (1988:76) presents one of the finding regarding this issue:

Appealing to a world market as they do, they cannot by definition draw on local varieties of English and have not got very far in recognizing English as an international language either. What were they about? They were mostly about situations which were not only imaginary,... but vacuous, empty of life. Even when the textbooks went technicolour, they were still marketing a black-and-white cardboard cut-out world.

Prodromou (1998: 80) states that when the learners entered the classroom:
They leave their three-dimensional humanity outside and enter the plastic world of efl textbooks; textbooks where life is safe and innocent, and does not say or do anything. Our modern books are full of speech acts that don’t act, don’t mean anything..... Most textbooks project an Anglo-centric, male dominated, middle-class utopia of one kind or another.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) divide three information types with regard the textbooks:

- *source culture materials* ‘inserting learners’ culture into the teaching content;
- *target culture materials* ‘using the culture of a country where English is used as the first language,
- *international target culture materials* ‘using the cultures of various English speaking countries and those who do not use English as an international language.

Mckay (2009) illustrates two contexts in which the target culture can be introduced with regard as English as an international language as follows:

![Diagram of Scheme 4](image1)

The left triangle shows that the teacher has the same cultural background with the learners’ but different backgrounds with the textbook’s. The above illustration shows that the content of the target culture is not interesting.

![Diagram of Scheme 5](image2)
Scheme 5 shows that the triangle on the left with the teacher is from target culture as a 
native speaker with the learner from different cultural background.

Mckay (2009) criticizes that the imported books to the outer space and expanding 
circle countries still show the dominance of the inner Circle countries.

The shifting of ELT from colonial to global perspectives influences the view 
how an ELT textbook is considered. The word ‘international’ contain the bilingual 
learning. Mckay (2009) even suggests that the aspects of pedagogy not connected to 
those of inner circle countries. ‘Culture of Learning’ is defined as follows (Cortazzi dan 
Jin, 1990):

Much behaviour in language classrooms is set within a take-for-granted framework 
of expectation, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, 
about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are 
for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose 
of education. In many classrooms both teachers and learners are unaware that such 
a culture of learning may be influencing the process of teaching and learning. A 
culture of learning is thus part of the hidden curriculum.

It can be concluded that English Language Teaching is strongly advised to 
‘listen’ to the local culture whereever it takes place. It is true that this ‘listening’ process 
can harmonize the cultures of English Language Teaching with those the learners’ 
cultural backgrounds. The following are some examples of how pesantrens deal with 
English Language Teaching.

In pesantren institutions, kiais, ustads, santris, and their alumni hand and hand 
to harmonize these conflicting values for the purpose of betterment of such institutions. 
They strongly and carefully select the teaching materials, teaching techniques, and other 
classroom activities with Islamic perspectives. Here are some examples. The teaching 
materials are extra-carefully selected with Islamic perspectives. When they find some 
contents which are contradictory, they change them with another ‘sound’ Islamic one. 
The ustadz who teaches English will insert certain expressions which do not exist in 
English Language Teaching materials. Another way is that the ustadszs try to compare 
ELT cultures with those of Islam, meaning that this leads to learn to understand the 
cultures of others.

Teaching techniques are also well selected. In term of groupwork, the students 
are divided into small groups according to the gender perspectives. They are never 
grouped without considering this gender issue. The students themselves group them on 
the basis of gender. When groupung is done, they automatically find their friends in a 
group with the same gender. Eye contact is alo another thing to discuss. In English 
Language Teaching on the perspectives of the West, the teacher-and-student 
communication or student-student communication is strongly advised to have good eye-
contact; however, in pesantren institutions such eye-contact is highly advisable to be 
avoided due to the fact that eye contact leads to jinnah which we are strongly banned to 
be nearby such condition.

The Proposed English Language Teaching in Pesantrens

The English Language Teaching in pesantrens should be selectively built and 
developed according to pesantrens’ perspectives. Therefore, pesantren institutions have 
proposed the colonial perspectives to be adapted with equal considerations as follows:
From

Scheme 3

perihery

core/centre

Skema 6

perihery

core/centre

Scheme 6 illustrates an equal treatment regarding English Language Teaching (ELT) in pesantrens and this shows win-win solution as written in the abstract of this research.

Conclusion

English Language Teaching in global perspectives which tries to harmonize the culture of English Language Teaching and that of its learners is a new approach in this context. Selecting, adapting and contrasting the culture of ELT and the one of its learners are actually the efforts that English as a global language with multicultural perspectives should well consider. These efforts lead to treat the cultures of both parties equal, meaning that the foreign language learners learn the culture of the language they learn and at the same time they empower their own local culture.
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