

Conference Paper

Evaluating the Teaching of English for Civics: a Socio-Semiotic Perspective

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Abstract.

The development of four language skills relevant to Pancasila and Civics should be the focus of English instruction for civics in higher education in Indonesia. Students should be exposed to civics-related material in English for Civics programs, and they should be given opportunities to use that information in their daily life to hone their English language and literacy abilities. It must give students of English a simple approach to learning about Pancasila, Indonesian history, politics, citizenship, geography, and culture. Students who participate in civic education develop the attitudes and abilities required for democracy, such as a feeling of civic responsibility, critical thinking, and agency. Unfortunately, because listening skills were neglected, pupils often have uneven skills. According to the questionnaire results, students wish to participate in English language learning activities that involve public speaking, debating, writing, reading, and hearing in Pancasila and civics class. The researchers employed a socio-semiotic viewpoint to assess the existing syllabus, lesson plan, resources, teaching journal, mid-test questions, and final test questions to understand the changes that need to be made. To better suit the needs and objectives of the learners and to foster English proficiency, it will be highly helpful to revamp the English for Civics teaching and learning process. English proficiency must be associated with academic performance and plays a crucial role in training students to be knowledgeable and engaged.

Keywords: English, Civics, Socio Semiotic Perspective, higher education

1. Introduction

The teaching of English for Civics in Indonesia has encountered many obstacles in terms of book sources, lecturer's competence, needs analysis, best practices, training, etc. When we search for books or journal articles concerning English for Civics in Indonesia, there will be very limited sources available on the internet or in bookstores. This fact hindered English lecturers teaching English for Civics in improving their competencies related to language function, vocabulary, reading texts, and social practice in the field of Civics.

Civics instruction falls within the category of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which has its own target context and linguistic function. Studies on ESP instruction

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Published 21 December 2022

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICESRE Conference Committee.

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have uncovered some serious issues that lead to the ineffectiveness of teaching and learning process. Several factors have caused low achievement of student language competence such as teachers' ignorance of students' fields of study, a lack of ESP training, an improper need analysis, and huge classes (1-3). A fundamental realization that "a language is an instrument of communication, rather than a set of phonological, grammatical, and lexical objects to be memorized"(4) is the source of the growing knowledge of the relevance of ESP. Since language is regarded as a tool, it is crucial to tailor language teaching to the specific needs of the students so as to enhance their interest and motivation. The English spoken by students studying civics will be different from that spoken by those studying engineering, medicine, and other academic subjects. Teaching and learning are understood as the development of students' and teachers' capacity to effectively deploy meaning-making resources in the context of certain disciplines (5). Language is viewed as a social resource for meaning-making. By fusing content with language teaching and learning, the Language as Social Semiotic (LASS) method of teaching and learning seeks to solve the difficulties facing higher education in a worldwide society.

Since it is believed to be pertinent to ESP education, the social semiotic has been chosen as the analysis's perspective. The writers thought of language as a product of the social process using Halliday's theory. Therefore, it is important to consider the sociocultural setting of language interpretation. It is crucial to consider the situation and cultural context while studying a language. The focus of language teaching and learning shifts to the identification and selection of social practices and semiotic resources since both can be used to get students ready for the workforce. Participation in social activities by students broadens their understanding of meanings, improves their comprehension of language, and increases their access to resources for meaning expression (6).

This research evaluated English for Civics using a socio-semiotic perspective as the purpose of the program in the development of communication skills, not on the linguistic analysis. It will be very beneficial to redesign the teaching and learning process of English for Civics to meet the learners' needs and goals as well as to develop English competence. A significant distinction between current knowledge and necessary knowledge, as well as between objective needs and subjective needs, is a learner's need (7). The outcomes of needs analysis in English for Civics must be very useful for curriculum redesign. For this reason, this study focused on getting needs analysis and evaluating the existing teaching and learning process in the course English for Civics.

2. Method

This evaluative research employed a qualitative method by analyzing the syllabus, lesson plan, materials, teaching journal, mid-test questions, and final test that have been employed annually in the course English for Civics. The evaluation referred to the socio-semiotic perspective as the teaching of English for Civics belongs to the teaching of ESP. In addition, the researchers distributed questionnaires to students for obtaining information on the teaching and learning process in the course English for Civics as well as the students' needs. Totally 35 students from the Pancasila and Civic Education Study Program of a private university in Bojonegoro Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia filled out the google form. They came from different semesters as they have taken the course English for Civics in the academic years of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Student's questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to 35 students who have taken the course English for Civics through google forms. They filled out the seven questions investigating their needs, perspectives, and suggestions on English for Civics. Table 1 described the results of the students' questionnaires.

3.1.2. Syllabus and lesson plan

Table 2 shows the description of the syllabus and lesson plan of the English for Civics course from meetings 1 to 16. It presents the reading topic, language, function, and material in English for Civics.

3.1.3. Teaching journal

The list of materials in English for Civics from meetings 1 to 16 can be seen in Table 3.

TABLE 1: The results of students' questionnaires

No	Question	Proportion
1	What materials do you expect to have in English for Civics?	Speaking (14), Reading (2), Writing (2), Listening (1), Grammar (6), Pronunciation (2), Civics, law, Pancasila, human rights, democracy, smart and good citizenship (20), Unspecified (5)
2	What materials did you learn in English for Civics?	Speaking (12), Reading (9), Writing (8), Listening (4), Grammar (19), Pronunciation (2), Civics (6), Unspecified (2)
3	Did you get improvement in English competence through the course of English for Civics?	Yes (15), not really (15), no (5)
4	Were the four language skills presented in balance? What language skills dominated the course? Were there any language skills ignored?	Reading & writing (often) Speaking (sometimes) Listening (seldom)
5	Did the lecturer give an explanation or assignment?	Mostly explanation through face-to-face interaction in the classroom
6	Did the lecturer explain interactively and attractively? Why and give examples?	Yes (17), not really (16)
7	What are your suggestions for the betterment of teaching English for Civics?	More English materials related to Civics, discussion activity, group work than individual, dialog, vocabulary, listening in the language lab, additional credits, TOEFL material, writing, speaking, & balanced language skills.

TABLE 2: The syllabus and lesson plan of the English for Civics course

Meeting	Syllabus	Language & function	Lesson Plan
	Reading topic		Material
1	English for civics	-	Present tense
2-3	Public holiday for Pancasila Day	Present tense	Present perfect
4-6	What are human rights?	-	tense
7	Quiz	-	Speaking
8	Mid-test	-	democracy
9-10	History of the Indonesian constitution	Past tense	Simple Past tense
11-12	Corruption: causes and solution	-	Democracy, past
13-15	What is anti-corruption day?	Giving opinions, presenting a poster on	tense
		anti-corruption day	Types of business
16	Final test	-	Nationality

TABLE 3: Teaching Journal of English for Civics.

Meeting	Materials
1	Introduction
2	Public holiday for Pancasila
3	Simple present, present continuous, present perfect
4	What are human rights?
5	Students' Club
6	Doing exercise
7	Quiz
8	Mid-test
9	Sentence analysis (tense)
10	Six moral values
11	History of the Indonesian Constitution
12	Review of tense from the previous test
13	Speaking using present & past tenses
14	Presentation (material review)
15	Presentation (material review)
16	Final test

3.1.4. Mid-test

The questions given in the mid-test of English for Civics have been repeated annually. Table 4 presents the mid-test questions.

TABLE 4: Mid-test questions.

Text	Reading topic	Question
1	US House of Representatives Lesson	A The House of Representatives has how many voting members? We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years? Name your U.S. Representative. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states? What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now? B Identify some tenses in the text "U.S. House of Representatives Lesson", what are there?
2	A Political Party in the US	Write whether the following statement is True or False (T/F) A political party is an organization that finds capital and charity. Party members seek to gain public support and votes for their political candidates and issues In the United States, there are only two political parties Democrats tend to favor states' rights, policies that favor businesses, and private solutions to social problems. Republicans tend to favor a broader and more active role in the federal government, labor laws, and vigorous social programs.

3.1.5. Final test questions

Like mid-test questions, the final test questions also have been repeated annually. The detailed questions are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Final test questions.

Text	Reading topic	Question																																	
	Six moral values in Indonesia	<p>A What do Indonesians do to moral values? What do Indonesians believe about moral values? When do Indonesians teach their generation about moral values? What will they always remember about the six moral values? 5. Give examples for each moral value!</p> <p>B. Make sentences using present tense and past tense</p> <p>1.....</p> <p>2.....</p> <p>3.....</p> <p>4.....</p> <p>5.....</p> <p>C. Fill in the blank using the appropriate tense</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th>Base</th> <th>verb V2/Past</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>do</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td>Went</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Read</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td>Walked</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Speak</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Sleep</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> <td>washed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>Teach</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Write</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td></td> <td>sang</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.	Base	verb V2/Past	1	do		2		Went	3	Read		4		Walked	5	Speak		6	Sleep		7		washed	8	Teach		9	Write		10		sang
No.	Base	verb V2/Past																																	
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4. Discussion

4.1. The results of students' questionnaires

The results of students' questionnaires (Table 1) indicated that the current teaching and learning of English for Civics was less interactive and communicative with students. Some students said they got improvement in English, but some did not really get it. Meanwhile, the needs analysis showed that the majority of students wanted the materials related to their knowledge background, for example, Indonesian history, Indonesian law, human rights, Pancasila, democracy, smart and good citizenship, and so on. Their requirements are in line with the goals for national education set forth in Law Number 20 of 2003, which state that students should develop their potential to be decent people who respect and believe in God Almighty, who are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and who become democratic and responsible citizens (8-9). In the other words, the students want to correlate their

knowledge background for studying English. Figure 1 describes the aims of Pancasila and Civics Education in Indonesia that must be acquired by students from school levels until higher education. They comprise the following elements i.e., (1) civic confidence, civic commitment, and civic responsibility, (2) civic knowledge; (3) civic skills including civic competence and civic participation.

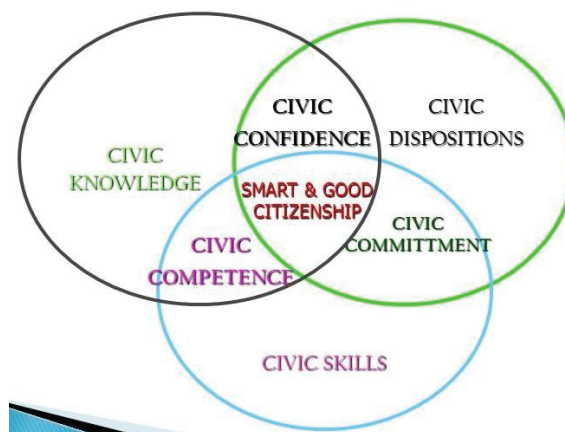


Figure 1: The Objectives of Pancasila and Civics Education (20).

In fact, the current teaching and learning of English for Civics accommodate Civics knowledge only dominantly in reading. Furthermore, the materials of grammar have nothing to do with Civics but general English. Language functions related to Civic background such as expressing an opinion, arguing, constructive conversation, group discussion, voting, petitioning, etc. were very limited. Basically, civic education needs to focus on teaching students how to communicate effectively on a personal level, understand political processes, and think critically about civic and political issues (10).

Reading and writing have traditionally dominated language learning and teaching in terms of the four language skills, whereas speaking and listening have been less frequently covered. Speaking exercises need to be emphasized more because the goal of the English for Civics curriculum is to improve communication skills. Students must have significant exposure to contribute sensibly to public conversations and debates as well as speech. They must learn how to state points relevant to the topic, put aside personal views and remain objective, make the audience interested in the topic, use rhetoric to persuade, and use notes but keep them brief and well-organized.

4.2. The evaluation of the syllabus, lesson plan, teaching journal, mid-test questions, and final test questions.

In the context of a socio-semiotic perspective, the syllabus, lesson plan, teaching journal, mid-test questions, and final test questions have not totally in line with it. As a result, the students felt demotivated because they did not correlate with their study background. Furthermore, the reading texts presented in the mid-test questions were out of the Indonesian Civic Education context because the topic was about the US House of Representatives and Political parties in the US. Meanwhile, the questions in the final test provided general English for parts B and C, thereby out of the Civics context too. The selections of words related to Civics must be considered to be tested so as to make the students more engaged. Taking a look at best practices in teaching civic education, some skills that matter in adult education consist of:

1. Create a community in the classroom that upholds democratic principles and respects diversity. Have students vote or reach a consensus on decisions regarding the lessons and assignments in the class. Justify the use of these student-centered, participatory methods and describe how they serve as examples of democratic processes in the larger society.
2. Introduce civics issues to students that call for an investigation, problem-solving, and critical thinking. The best learning tools for nurturing and advancing these skills are problem- and project-based learning approaches. In addition, give learners the tools they need to engage in active, informed civic engagement by supporting their thorough research into problems that are important to their life (via language and practice with learning methodologies).
3. Assist students in acquiring the knowledge and abilities necessary to become active, socially conscious citizens who can take appropriate action when problems, issues, or events have an impact on their communities.
4. Develop historical and political knowledge of the state in ways that are applicable to learners' daily lives. Always connect what the kids are learning to issues that affect their families or communities to ensure relevancy. (11)

Considering the civic skills, the teaching and learning process in the course English for Civics should include:

1. Language abilities or academic language frameworks required for students to participate in lengthy debates, such as taking notes, digesting information, analyzing information, organizing information, and recognizing differences.
2. Genuine Indonesian civic subjects that encourage self-awareness, such as Pancasila, multiculturalism, the constitution, law, governance, policy, democracy, human rights, general elections, justice, moral principles, etc. Instead of being created expressly for language training, authentic materials like the President's address, law, government policy, and others are generated for actual communication needs. (12)
3. Civics-related content is frequently presented as infographics, charts, and graphs, as well as with current news, concerns, challenges, and events that have an impact on communities.

As an ESP, teaching English for Civics must be planned to simultaneously improve language and civic skills. The materials used in ESP are mostly selected based on the learners' areas of professional competence in order to improve students' ability to communicate in English (13). The use of genuine materials is the other part of ESP. Authentic texts are books that can help students make connections between their own language and culture and the target language (14–15). Because they are more fascinating and stimulating, authentic materials have a motivational influence (16). They encourage contact and provide students with a sensation of coping with a living thing (17), especially when it comes to fostering reading abilities (18). Texts, images, moving images, speeches, and other materials may be used to teach English for Civics in the classroom.

The course "English for Civics" should be redefined to refer to educational services offered to adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials from their home countries, that help these adults become proficient in the English language and gain the fundamental and advanced skills necessary to be productive as parents, employees, and citizens. It must cover civic literacy instruction, English language learning, instruction on citizenship rights and obligations, and civic involvement instruction. This course has to include language unique to the subject, grammar and rhetorical conventions, readings, and typical Civics functions (19).

To widen the uses of spoken and written language, as well as reading and listening ones, students can be involved in language practices within the Civics context. Table 6 contains examples of social practices and semiotic resources that can be used for teaching English for Civics.

TABLE 6: Planning components of English for Civics.

Social practices	Semiotic resources
1. Agreeing, disagreeing, interrupting, making rebuttals, summarizing, and concluding.	1. Photo, pictures, puzzle, stories, history
2. Supporting ideas, challenging ideas, sequencing ideas.	2. Video
3. Defining motion, making contextualization, and making a judgment	3. State symbol, state map, state flag, capitol building
4. Contrasting and comparing	4. Civic flashcards
5. Presenting, describing	5. Political system
6. Maintaining eye contact with the audience during debate or speech	6. Political life
7. Using gestures and avoiding filler words	7. Civic action
8. Speaking clearly and concisely	8. Government policy
9. Varying tone Negotiating and cooperating	9. Law
	10. President's speech
	11. News
	12. Articles
	13. Chart/graph
	14. Constitution
	15. General election
	Interview, report, ppt

5. Conclusion

From a socio-semiotic standpoint, the English for Civics course's teaching and learning process has not been participatory or effective because the semiotic sources and social practices used in the classroom have not yet been relevant to civics. In addition, they haven't yet satisfied the student's needs. As a result, the students lost motivation to learn English for Civics, and as a result, their academic performance has not yet been at its best. By taking into account the social practices and semiotic resources in the Civics environment, the English for Civics course needs to be revised.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our special thanks of gratitude to IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro for the golden opportunity to join this wonderful international conference. The support can bring us to share and gain knowledge and information in this international forum.

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