

USING PALEMBANG'S TRADITIONAL FOODS AS ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS: A THEME-BASED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed at discussing the use of Palembang's traditional foods as teaching material through a theme-based language instruction. This idea is based on the awareness of the writer to maintain and preserve their cultures, especially in terms of foods. The data are got by reading references related to the subject, interviews, and observations. The data shown that the Palembang's indigenous foods can support Palembang as a cultural hub, because the great number of the foods are well-known and spread not only in local but also national scope. Teachers of English can participate in maintaining and preserving the foods by using the foods as teaching material. This can be done through theme-based language instruction. This approach is stressed on the real-life situation that are genuinely communicative and it tends to integrate the four language skills naturally.

Keywords: Palembang traditional foods, theme-based language instruction

Introduction

Maintaining and preserving cultures is the responsibility of one's community. There are some reasons why cultures should be preserved. First of all, it can function as the symbol of the community. It means that other communities agree that the characteristics of the people are attached to the cultures. Therefore, other communities cannot claim that the cultures belong to them. Secondly, cultures can be as an economic commodity. In other words, it can be sold to outside world. Since the uniqueness of the cultures is not possessed by others, it has definitely selling point. Moreover, for educational institution, cultures can also be used as teaching and learning media for the people.

Since culture is embedded within every aspect of society, language learning, in Soetje's (1984) words, should not be isolated from the society that uses it. Therefore, it is specifically proposed to educators, including language teachers in Indonesia that they pay closer attention to integrating cultures into their classrooms and supplementing the textbooks with the essentials of the cultures.

One of the cities in Indonesia which is famous for its unique cultures is Palembang. The cultures cover the costumes, wedding ceremony, folklores, sport, historical remains, foods, etc.

It goes without saying that Palembang traditional foods have been well known not only in local but also in international scope. It has been admitted that Palembang's traditional foods are very delicious. This opinion is supported by the increasing number of traditional restaurants in Palembang. For examples, Pak Raden, Martabak Har, Mie Celor 26, Model Dowa and Pempek 10 Ulu. These restaurants have many branches in Palembang. Moreover, at the airport most passengers take packages of traditional foods, especially Pempek and keremplang as gift for their families, relatives, friends, etc.

Unfortunately, the existing Pempek vendors in Palembang still have problems in increasing their sells. It is due to the lack of promotion and capital since the chance to participate in foods exhibition in which, they can promote their product are only afforded by strong capital businessman.

Therefore, Palembang traditional foods can support Palembang as cultural hub. Through culinary tourism, people will know more about Palembang. It means that foods can be used as our identity that can promote the region to the outside world.

For the reasons, the writers are interested in discussing using Palembang traditional foods as English teaching materials. In this paper the writers are proposing the integration of Palembang's tradition foods into ELT by using the theme-based language instruction.

Palembang traditional foods

1. Pempek



FIG. 1. Pempek, the most popular food from Palembang (photo by : Nila Kencana)

If you asked an Indonesian about the word 'Pempek' or 'Empek-empek', He will relate it to Palembang. Pempek, Mpek-mpek or Empek-empek is a delicacy from Palembang made of fish and sago. Because of the famous unique taste of empek-empek, Palembang is also known as "kota pempek".

Pempek is served together with a dark, rich sauce called *cuka* (vinegar). *Cuka* is produced by adding brown sugar, chili pepper, garlic, vinegar, and salt to boiling water. *Cuko* is purposely made in hot and sweet taste to add eating appetite. Yet, some people who dislike hot taste can prefer a less hot but sweeter *cuka*.

There are many varieties of Pempek, they are:

- ◆ Pempek telok (kapal selam)/pempek containing an egg,
- ◆ Pempek Tahu/pempek containing tofu,
- ◆ Pempek lenggang/pempek roasted in banana leaf,
- ◆ Pempek Kates/pempek containing raw papaya,
- ◆ Pempek lemjer,
- ◆ Pempek panggang / roasted Pempek,
- ◆ Pempek adaan,
- ◆ Pempek kerupuk and
- ◆ Model/tekwan.

Formerly, Pempek is made of a kind of river fish called *Belida*. However, because this fish is very rare and expensive now, people alternate the fish with other river fish as *Gabus*, *Toman*, *Bujak*, and even with sea fish as *Tenggiri*, *Kakap Merah* (Red *Kakap*), *Parang-parang*, *Ekor*

Kuning (Yellow Tail), and Ikan Sebelah. Although they are cheaper but the pempek made of those fish is still delicious enough. Pempek Can be found in restaurants and shops in any parts of Palembang. Some sellers even sell pempek door to door or roadside by using cart or bicycle.

2. Kerupuk



Fig. 2 Kerupuk Palembang. (photo by : Nila Kencana)

In Palembang, chip-crackers actually have 2 names, kerupuk and kemplang. The difference is on its shape, if the chip-crackers have curly shape, while kemplang have circle shape. There are two ways to cook this snack, fried and baked. kerupuk usually are fried while kemplang can be fried or baked. Material for making kemplang is the same as the material for making "Pempek lenjer", only the comparison of sago (kanji powder) more than usual "pempek lenjer". And also more salt, so that the dough feels more salty. There are many stores sell "kemplang" in Palembang, from ordinary taste to special one.

3. Model

Model is one of Palembang's favorite foods that looks like boiled pempek. It is served in slices with its broth. This food looks like Tekwan. The different is that Tekwan is pempek dough pinched in small shaped while model is tofu wrapped in pempek dough. Model, also called as "Pempek Kuah". There are 2 kinds of Model: Model Ikan (Model that is made from fish) and Model Gandum (Model that is made of wheat). How to make model is not so difficult. First, mix all ingredients to make Pempek, make it in sphere shape. Then, prepare the oil to fry it until the skin become a bit dried, take away and leak the oil trough. For those who like tofu can add tofu inside Model. Cut the tofu into two. Then wrap with Pempek dough, fried it. After that, prepare the broth. Boil water and include all ingredients for Model's broth in, stir it. Serve Model by putting the sliced Model in a plate and pour the broth. To add the taste, a little chilly or vinegar, and soy sauces can be added.



Fig. 3 Model

4. Tekwan

Tekwan is traditional food from Palembang made of fish and sago in the small shaped. It is served with its special broth completed by vermicelli and mushroom. To make Tekwan, first, pinch the Perpek dough to some small ones and put them in boiling water until its done, then leak the water trough. We call them as "Biji Tekwan". Second, prepare the broth ingredients. Slice onion and garlic, sauté them and add pepper. Third, boil shrimps' head in boiling water, then pour the sauté ingredients inside the broth. Finally, add sliced Bengkoang (water chestnut, cut in finger shaped), sohan, Sedap Malam, Mushroom and Biji Tekwan. Tekwan is served hot by adding chopped daun bawang, celery dan fried onion.



Fig. 4: Tekwan

5. Tempoyak

Tempoyak is one of favorite Palembang menu, tempoyak is made of durians and salt that is fermented at least a month so that it tastes to be sour, salty and sweet. Usually tempoyak is used as a menu that is combined with fish.



Fig 5 : tempoyak durian

6. Kelicok

Kelicok is a food that is made of combination of banana and wheat, then it is will be packed with banana leaf. This taste is sweet and smells naturally.

7. Kecepol

Kecepol is the same as Kelicok, but Kecepol is not packed with banana leaf.

8. Martabak HAR



Pic. 6. Martabak Har (photo by : Nila Kencana)

Named from its first creator's name, Haji Abdal Rozak, Martabak HAR becomes famous Palembang culinary. Made from chicken or duck eggs, flour skin and mixed with certain spices, it usually served with juicy soup made from potatoes, meats, water and spices which make this martabak different from others. Best place to have this martabak is Martabak Haji Abdul Rosak at Jl. Jendral Sudirman with price around Rp 10.000,- per piece.

9. Main Dish

- Nasi/Rice
- Nasi Minyak/Rice Boiled with water containing cooking oil
- Nasi Kebuli/Rice cooked with curry
- Nasi Gemuk/Rice cooked with coconut milk
- Ketan Tumis/Sticky rice cooked fried



Pic 7 : Nasi Gemuk



Pic 8: Nasi Kebuli

10. Snack

- Dadar Jowo
- Apem Baryu
- Putu mayang

- Telok ukan
- Bluder
- Engkak ketan
- Engkak Medok
- Engkak Kecut
- Muntu
- Bugis
- Kuepau
- Apem
- Gunjing
- Patu Embun
- Ketan
- Ketan punar
- Klepon
- Cucur
- Bodem
- Gelenak
- Dadar gulung



Pic. 9. Kue Engkak Ketan



Pic. 10. Dadar Gulung

11. Chilly Sauce/Sambel

- Sambel caluk/Terasi-chilly sauce mixed with pounded and fermented shrimp
- Sambel campur/Buah- chilly sauce mixed with pineapple, mango, small tomato and kemang
- Sambel Tumis/Sambel Cengo-fried chilly sauce
- Sambel Tempoyak-chilly sauce mixed with darians

12. Kue Basah/Cake

- Bolu 8 jam cake cooked for 8 hours
- Maksudu
- Bolu Lapis/Multilayer cake
- Engkak Ketan
- Kue Sari

(Source: Dinas Pariwisata Kota Palembang, 2008)



Pic. 11. Kue Makruba

The Places for Eating Out in Palembang

Application: Eating out with friends



How to integrate Palembang Traditional FoodS into Language Teaching

Integrating the culture into language teaching does not inherently provide a clear-cut framework for teachers to employ. The reason why this process is so fuzzy basically stems from the complex and vast nature of culture. The critical question, at this point, regards what the teachers should focus on within the wide range of topics or operations occurring in a culture.

Correspondingly, language teachers should not be misled by the delusion that including culture in their classrooms is a straightforward act, but should be alert to the fact that selection, development and/or adaptation of cultural materials or topics require tremendous care to ensure numerous premises. To illustrate, such materials, as Brooks (1975) lays out, should be derived from symbolism, values, authority, order, ceremony, love, honor, humor, beauty, and spirit, and should take into consideration and reflect several aspects, such as the life style, uniqueness, common sense, religion, and family values of the speakers of the target language. In light of the issues mentioned and emphasized here, the creative classroom teacher can come up with numerous ideas regarding how to integrate culture into the textbooks and classroom activities.

Therefore, the writers suggest to use theme-based language instruction in presenting Palembang traditional foods as English teaching material. This approach is a type of content-based instruction. Brinton (2003) supports the use of this approach when the purpose for EFL students is

language acquisition. According to Beiston, (2003, 2003): "The thematic content stretches over several weeks of instruction, providing rich input for lessons that are either language-based (i.e. with a focus in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) or skills-based (i.e. with a focus on listening, speaking, writing, or reading). In this environment, students can successfully acquire language. "For EFL teachers, developing thematic units around their required curriculum can be away to build a larger context in which to teach language that spans a group of lessons and can provide more opportunities for communicating in English.

The theme-based instruction consists of a series of lessons that are connected each other, possibly by a theme, grammatical point, or language function. A lesson, as defined by Brown (2001, 149), "is popularly considered to be a unified set of activities that cover a period of classroom time, usually ranging from forty to ninety minutes." Therefore, a thematic unit is a series of lessons, possibly for four to five classroom periods, that are connected by a topic or theme that connects students with language in a communicative manner.

Characteristics of Dynamic Theme-Based Language Instruction

The instruction has five characteristics, purposed by Shin (2007), they are:

- a. incorporate real life situation in instruction.
- b. integrate all four language skill communicatively
- c. encourage learner autonomy or learner choice
- d. use experiential learning
- e. apply project-based learning

These characteristics are not completely separate from each other since incorporating real life situation that are genuinely communicative tend to integrate the four language skills naturally.

Five Steps for Planning a Thematic Unit

Step 1. Examine curriculum standards and required units for the class

First, consider what the students are required to learn, based on the curriculum standards set by the Ministry of Education and/or your school: then develop a theme that can support the current educational goals of your particular program or class. From there the challenge will be to build a thematic unit that can provide the learner with a larger context within which students can make meaningful connections while learning a foreign language.

Application: Eating Out With Friends Unit

Many EFL textbooks have a chapter or section on food and drink or ordering food in a restaurant. It is a common topic for language instruction that has real-life application particularly because international travel is a main purpose for learning English. The language functions for ordering food at a restaurant and asking for the check or bill are easily found in most textbooks for English at the adult, secondary, and even primary levels. Therefore, the example for developing a thematic unit in this article will focus on this commonly used topic for EFL instruction.

Step 2. Choose a theme that is meaningful and relevant to students

The most important aspects of choosing an appropriate theme are that it interesting and meaningful to students and that it have potentials for real life application.

Application: Eating out with friends

In order to choose a theme that incorporates the commonly found topics in various textbooks mentioned in steps 1- ordering at a restaurant-the audience and real-life communicative situation should be considered.

Step 3: Brainstorming ideas that can incorporate real-life situation and tasks

Using a web, chart, or list can be helpful to brainstorm ideas. The approach to brainstorming can be based on real-life tasks that are necessary for communication or based on different subject or content areas.

Application: Eating out with friends unit

Figure 1. Brainstorming real-life tasks with a web



Step 4. Choose, Organize, and order the activities

After brainstorming, ideas for a particular theme, it is good idea to put these ideas in a chart.

Figure 2: Organizing tasks email with a chart

Real-life Tasks	Skills	Language Content
Inviting through email and accepting an invitation	Reading, Writing	Letter form – greeting, body, signature Present Progressive/Future Tense I am going to... What are you doing on...? I am having... Will you be free...? Asking Opinion What kind of cuisine/food/restaurant do you prefer? Vocabulary: Cuisines, types of dining, price range, types of food and drink
Calling friends to go out and eat and accepting phone invitations	Listening, Speaking	Phone greetings and farewells Present Progressive/Future Tense I am going to... What are you doing on...? I am having... Will you be free...? Asking Opinion What kind of cuisine/food/restaurant do you prefer? Vocabulary: Cuisines, types of dining, price range, types of food and drink
Making a dinner	Listening,	Requesting/making reservation

reservation over the phone	Speaking	I would like to make a reservation for...on.... Would you like to....? How many in your party?
Finding a restaurant: Reading restaurant descriptions and sample menus on OpenTable.com	Reading, Writing	Scanning for information Vocabulary: Cuisines, types of dining, price range, party size, types of food and drink
Making an internet reservation OpenTable.com	Reading, Writing	Scanning for information Vocabulary: Cuisines, types of dining, price range, party size, types of food and drink
Finding directions to the restaurant through Google Maps (maps.google.com) and sending them to friends	Reading, Writing	Reading a map and directions Go straight... Turn left/right at.... Writing email to friends with a link to map and directions
Taking a cab and giving driver directions to your friend	Listening, Speaking	Giving directions: Imperative Go straight...Turn left/right at....
Calling the restaurant for directions and giving directions to your friend	Listening, Speaking	Giving directions: Imperative Go straight... Turn left/right at.... Discourse markers: First, Next, Then, Now, etc.
Reading a menu	Reading, Writing	Vocabulary: different food, drinks, cuisines
Ordering food from a waiter and asking for the check/bill	Listening, Speaking	Request I would like ...could we have...? Would you like....?
Writing a thank you email to friends and responding to a thank you email	Reading, Writing	Thank you letter form - greeting, body, signature Thank you so much for.... I really appreciated.... Past Tense
Talking to another friend about the dinner	Listening, Speaking	Past Tense Discourse markers: First, Next, Then, Now, etc

Application: Eating out with friends unit

Based on the tasks chosen, the unit could then be planned as five consecutive lessons:

Thematic Unit: Eating Out With Friends

Lesson 1 : Inviting friends to dinner by phone

Lesson 2 : Using Open Table.com

(includes finding a restaurant a making a reservation)

Lesson 3 : Getting directions to the restaurant

Lesson 4 : Ordering food at the restaurant (includes reading the menu)

Lesson 5 : After eating out with friends
(includes thank you email and talking to a friend)

Step 5. Incorporate projects that can encourage learner choice and autonomy

Once you have chosen the activities and established the order of the activities, you can develop the project in which the learners can use the language communicatively by experiencing the language in a realistic situation.

There are two established goals for this project:

Goal 1. Each group will prepare a restaurant and classmates will be their customers.

Preparation of the restaurant will begin after students learn about different restaurants when using OpenTable.com or reading hard copy samples from that site. On Restaurant Day, the restaurants will be set up in different areas of the room, and students will take turns practicing English while making a reservation for a customer, and then hosting a group of friends eating out.

Goal 2: Each group will go out with a group of friends in twos or threes.

Students will first engage in inviting and accepting invitations, making reservations, and finding directions to the restaurants, which will occur during class time in the various lessons in the unit. On Restaurant Day, students will engage in a role play in which they eat at one of their classmates' restaurants. Finally, students will send thank you notes to each other and tell another friend what happened at dinner.

Conclusion

Palembang traditional foods can support Palembang as cultural hub. Through culinary tourism, people will know more about Palembang. It means that foods can be used as our identity that can promote the region to the outside world. Moreover, in terms of English language teaching, the foods can be used as the valuable materials which can help maintain and preserve our cultures.

Suggestion

The existence of Palembang traditional foods should be maintained well by the government and the citizens. It can be done by holding traditional foods festivals and supporting the traditional foods sellers to survive in this difficult financial situation.

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