
Ethnopedagogy as a Tool for Developing Intercultural Skills in English Language Learning

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Abstract

Globalization demands an educational approach that is responsive to cultural differences, especially in English language learning. Ethnopedagogy, which integrates local culture into the curriculum, offers an effective way to develop students' intercultural skills. This article aims to examine the application of ethnopedagogy in English language teaching and its influence on students' intercultural skills. The method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which analyzes relevant literature on ethnopedagogy and intercultural skills. The results show that the application of ethnopedagogy not only improves English language skills, but also strengthens students' understanding of cultural diversity, as well as communication skills and cross-cultural adaptation. Local culture-based learning has proven to be effective in motivating students and creating an inclusive learning environment. In conclusion, ethnopedagogy is an effective approach to preparing students for global challenges, with suggestions that educators integrate this approach into the English curriculum.

Keywords: Ethnopedagogy; Intercultural Skills; English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought significant changes in the world of education and intercultural communication. With the advancement of technology and easier access to information, students from different parts of the world can now connect and interact with each other. This creates a wider learning space, where cultural ideas, values, and practices can be exchanged directly (Faiz & Kurniawaty, 2022). Education is no longer limited to the local context; Instead, the curriculum increasingly includes a global perspective that allows students to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. As a result, education now demands a more inclusive and responsive approach to cultural differences, thus preparing students to participate in a complex global society (Humaeroh & Dewi, 2021).

In this context, intercultural skills become very important. These skills include not only the ability to communicate with individuals from different cultures, but also the ability to understand and appreciate diverse perspectives. In a global educational environment, students who have strong intercultural skills will be better able to adapt and collaborate with their peers, regardless of cultural background (Indriwardhani et al., 2022). Thus, the development of

intercultural skills in education is not only beneficial for improving academic ability, but also for building harmonious and productive relationships among individuals from different cultures, which ultimately strengthens the sense of mutual understanding and tolerance in society (Anindya et al., 2024; Harun, 2014).

English has been recognized as the dominant international language, serving as a primary communication tool in fields such as business, science, technology, and diplomacy (Prawinda et al., 2024). With more than 1.5 billion speakers worldwide, the language serves as a bridge connecting individuals from different backgrounds. In a global context, English proficiency is not only important for interacting efficiently, but also for accessing a wider range of information and opportunities. This makes English language mastery an essential skill for anyone looking to compete in the global market and contribute to international discussions (Lubis et al., 2022).

However, learning English is not just about learning grammar and vocabulary; Understanding other cultures is also very important. Language is a reflection of culture, and every expression has an underlying social and cultural context. Without a good understanding of English speaking cultures, students may have difficulty capturing nuances of meaning or communicating effectively. Therefore, the integration of cultural learning in English learning is crucial. This not only improves students' language skills, but also helps them develop empathy and appreciation for differences, which are indispensable in interactions in an increasingly connected world.

Ethnopedagogy is an educational approach that prioritizes the recognition and integration of local cultures in the learning process (Subrata & Rai, 2013). This approach focuses on how the values, norms, and cultural practices of a community can be adapted and applied in an educational context, thereby creating a more relevant and meaningful learning environment for students. Ethnopedagogy encourages educators to appreciate cultural diversity within the classroom and use local resources as teaching tools. Thus, students not only learn about academic materials, but also about their own cultural identity and the cultures of others, which enriches their learning experience (Muzakir & Suastra, 2024).

In the context of English language learning, ethnopedagogy has significant relevance. By integrating local cultural elements into English language instruction, students can understand the language in a broader context, including communication norms and distinctive cultural expressions. This approach not only improves their language skills, but also helps students develop important intercultural skills. For example, through local cultural case studies, students can learn how to use English in a way that is appropriate and sensitive to different cultural contexts. This makes English language learning more dynamic and contextual, as well as preparing students to interact effectively in a diverse society.

The purpose of this article is to examine the application of ethnopedagogy in English language teaching, by describing specific ways in which this approach can be integrated into the curriculum to improve the learning experience of students. In addition, this article will outline the contribution of ethnopedagogy to the development of students' intercultural skills, which is crucial in the current context of globalization. Furthermore, this article will also provide practical recommendations for educators on how to implement ethnopedagogy in English language learning. The significance of this research lies in its relevance to educators, who need to understand and apply ethnopedagogy to create a more inclusive learning environment, as well as benefits for students, where mastery of intercultural skills can enhance their learning experience and prepare them to interact effectively in a diverse world.

METHOD

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method is used to collect, analyze, and synthesize information from various relevant sources. SLR is a structured and transparent

approach to identifying and evaluating existing literature, so that it can provide a comprehensive overview of the topic being researched (Maulida et al., 2023; Nova et al., 2022). This process begins by defining a clear research question, such as "How can the application of ethnopedagogy improve intercultural skills in English language learning?" Furthermore, the researcher will establish inclusion and exclusion criteria to select relevant articles from various academic databases.

After the selection stage, the next step is to conduct a critical evaluation of the quality of the selected research. In this context, the researcher will analyze how ethnopedagogy is implemented in English language teaching and its impact on students' intercultural skills. The results of the SLR will be synthesized to identify patterns, themes, and gaps in the existing literature. As such, this article not only provides insight into best practices and challenges in the application of ethnopedagogy, but also strengthens the argument regarding the importance of intercultural skills in English language education. The SLR method allows researchers to provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and policymakers, as well as pave the way for further research in this area.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In conducting a research quality analysis, there are various factors that determine the relevance and credibility of each study analyzed. The research included in this review generally comes from leading academic journals that have gone through a peer-review process, which shows that their methods and findings have been evaluated by experts in the field. In addition, many studies also include strong empirical data, either through surveys, interviews, or case studies, so that the results are reliable and make a significant contribution to the understanding of ethnopedagogy in the context of English language education.

The inclusion criteria applied in the selection of the study included topic relevance, i.e. research that explicitly addressed ethnopedagogy and intercultural skills in English language learning. Research published in the last five years is prioritized to ensure that the findings analyzed reflect current practice and theory. In contrast, exclusion criteria include studies that do not have a clear methodology, are not relevant to the educational context, or whose focus is not directly related to ethnopedagogy. Thus, the results of this analysis are expected to reflect an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the application of ethnopedagogy.

The patterns and themes that emerged from the analyzed research show that the application of ethnopedagogy in English language learning often focuses on strengthening students' cultural identity and developing intercultural skills. The main themes identified include the importance of integrating local cultural contexts in teaching, which not only increases student engagement but also enriches their learning experience. The relationship between ethnopedagogy and intercultural skills is clear, where this approach helps students understand and appreciate cultural diversity, as well as improve their ability to communicate and adapt in a multicultural environment. These findings confirm that ethnopedagogy is not only a teaching method, but also an important strategy to prepare students for global challenges.

One vivid example of the application of ethnopedagogy can be found in a school in an area with rich cultural diversity, where English teachers integrate elements of local culture into the teaching curriculum. In this case study, teachers used folklore, songs, and local traditions as teaching materials to help students understand the broader cultural context while learning English. For example, students are invited to retell their regional legends in English, which not only improves their language skills but also strengthens their cultural identity.

The teaching methods used in this local context involve a cooperative and project-based approach. Students work in groups to explore different aspects of their culture, such as customs, food, and festivals, and then present them in the form of presentations in English. This approach not only encourages collaboration and communication among students, but also creates an inclusive and engaging learning atmosphere. Thus, students feel more connected to the material being studied, as they can see the relevance between the language they are learning and their local culture.

The impact of the application of ethnopedagogy on students is very significant. Many students report increased motivation and involvement in the learning process, as they feel valued and recognized for their cultural identity. The observed results showed an increase in intercultural skills, where students became better able to interact with classmates from different cultural backgrounds (Hidayat et al., 2023; Sayfiddinovich, 2022). They are beginning to show empathy and appreciation for diversity, which is an important component of intercultural skills. Thus, the application of ethnopedagogy not only improves students' English language skills, but also prepares them to function effectively in a multicultural society (Gunardi, 2024; Sándor, 2019).

Ethnopedagogy significantly develops a wide range of intercultural skills in students. Some of the key skills that have improved include cross-cultural communication skills, empathy, and cultural awareness. Through learning experiences that integrate elements of local culture, students learn to appreciate different perspectives and adapt to different ways of communicating. For example, in everyday situations, students can apply these skills when interacting with classmates from different backgrounds, for example in group discussions about different traditions or celebrations. They are able to express their opinions more sensitively and openly, as well as show respect for other cultures, which strengthens interpersonal relationships and creates a more inclusive environment (Marpaung, 2023).

In comparison with traditional approaches, the learning outcomes of students who use ethnopedagogy show a clear advantage in the development of intercultural skills. Students who learn through conventional approaches are often focused on technical aspects of the language, such as grammar and vocabulary, without understanding the broader cultural context. This can lead to a lack of effective communication skills. The advantage of ethnopedagogy lies in its ability to relate learning to students' life experiences, which makes the learning process more relevant and engaging. However, this approach also has challenges, such as the possibility of resistance from students who are more familiar with conventional methods, as well as the need for additional training for educators to apply this approach effectively. Thus, while both approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages, ethnopedagogy offers greater potential for developing intercultural skills that are essential in today's global era.

The Importance of Local Cultural Integration in English Language Learning

The findings of this study show that the application of ethnopedagogy in English language learning has profound significance. By integrating local cultural elements into teaching, students not only learn the language as a means of communication, but also understand the social and cultural context that comes with it. This is especially relevant in the era of globalization, where the ability to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds has become increasingly vital. These findings reinforce educational theories that emphasize the importance of contextual learning experiences, where students can see the relevance between the material being studied and their daily lives.

The implications of the application of ethnopedagogy to the curriculum and English teaching strategies are significant. Curriculum that adopts this approach should be designed to include teaching based on local culture and student experience, which not only improves language skills but also builds a sense of identity and cultural pride (Fadilah et al., 2023). Teaching strategies that focus on student collaboration and active participation in their cultural context will create a more inclusive and inspiring learning environment. In this way, ethnopedagogy can help transform the way English is taught from just cognitive learning to a holistic and well-rounded experience.

The importance of local cultural integration in language education becomes increasingly clear through the results of this study. Students who learn English in their own cultural context show increased motivation and engagement, which in turn contributes to better academic performance (Sugara, 2022). By understanding and appreciating their own culture as well as other cultures, students not only become more competent in English, but also better prepared to face the challenges of interaction in an increasingly diverse world. Therefore, educators and policymakers should consider ethnopedagogy as an integral part of language education to prepare students to become individuals capable of communicating effectively and empathically in a global context.

Ethnopedagogy contributes significantly to the development of intercultural skills that are indispensable in today's global world (Yanthi et al., 2020). By integrating local cultural elements in English language learning, students not only learn the language as a means of communication, but also understand the diverse cultural norms, values, and practices. This approach encourages students to think critically about their own culture as well as other cultures, thereby improving their ability to adapt and interact with people from different backgrounds. Through learning experiences that focus on cultural contexts, students learn to appreciate differences and overcome stereotypes, which are important aspects of intercultural skills.

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Concrete examples of intercultural skills that students acquire through ethnopedagogy include the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations, an understanding of the nuances of language related to social contexts, and the development of empathy for people from different cultures. For example, students who engage in group projects that involve discussions about local and international traditions may learn to listen carefully and provide opinions that are sensitive to the perspectives of others. Additionally, they can hone their negotiation and conflict resolution skills that are useful in everyday interactions, both inside and outside the classroom. Thus, ethnopedagogy not only improves students' language skills, but also prepares them to become more competent and empathetic citizens of the world.

Applying ethnopedagogy in English learning is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges facing educators is resistance to change from more traditional teaching

approaches. Many educators who are familiar with conventional methods may feel hesitant to integrate local cultural elements in their teaching. In addition, the lack of adequate training and resources to understand and apply ethnopedagogy effectively is also a barrier. Educators need to get the right support and training to understand how best to adapt their curriculum and teaching strategies.

In addition, cultural diversity in the classroom can also be a challenge. When students come from different cultural backgrounds, educators must be able to create an inclusive atmosphere that values all perspectives. This challenge requires good interpersonal skills and a deep understanding of cultural sensitivities. Educators should strive to avoid generalizations or stereotypes that can be detrimental to the student's learning experience. Therefore, the intercultural skills of educators are also very important in implementing ethnopedagogy effectively.

However, behind these challenges, there are many opportunities for further development in research and educational practice. Ethnopedagogy provides space for more in-depth research on the relationship between culture and language learning. Researchers can explore how different ethnopedagogical practices impact the development of students' language and intercultural skills. In addition, the opportunity to share best practices among educators through seminars, workshops, and learning communities can strengthen the understanding and application of ethnopedagogy in a broader context.

This opportunity also includes the development of a curriculum that is more responsive to the needs of students in the global era. With a growing body of research supporting the application of ethnopedagogy, schools and educational institutions can design programs that not only improve language skills but also build cultural awareness. This provides opportunities for educators to innovate in their teaching methods, thus creating a more engaging and relevant learning environment for students. Ultimately, the application of ethnopedagogy can help form a generation that is better prepared to face the challenges of interaction in a multicultural society.

CONCLUSION

The application of ethnopedagogy in English language learning shows that this approach is very effective in developing students' intercultural skills. By integrating local cultural elements into the learning process, students are not only able to master English better, but also improve their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Through teaching based on cultural contexts, students are trained to think critically about their own cultural identity and how to interact sensitively with people from different cultural backgrounds. The results of the study also show that ethnopedagogy creates a more inclusive and relevant learning environment, motivating students to be more involved in the learning process.

Advice that can be given to educators is to start adopting ethnopedagogical approaches in English language teaching curricula, especially in culturally diverse regions. Training and support for educators need to be improved so that they can understand how to effectively integrate local cultural elements in teaching. Additionally, it is important to create a learning environment that values diversity and fosters students' intercultural skills, so that they are better prepared to face global challenges. Further research can also be conducted to explore various ethnopedagogical methods that can improve the effectiveness of language teaching and the development of intercultural skills in various educational contexts.

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