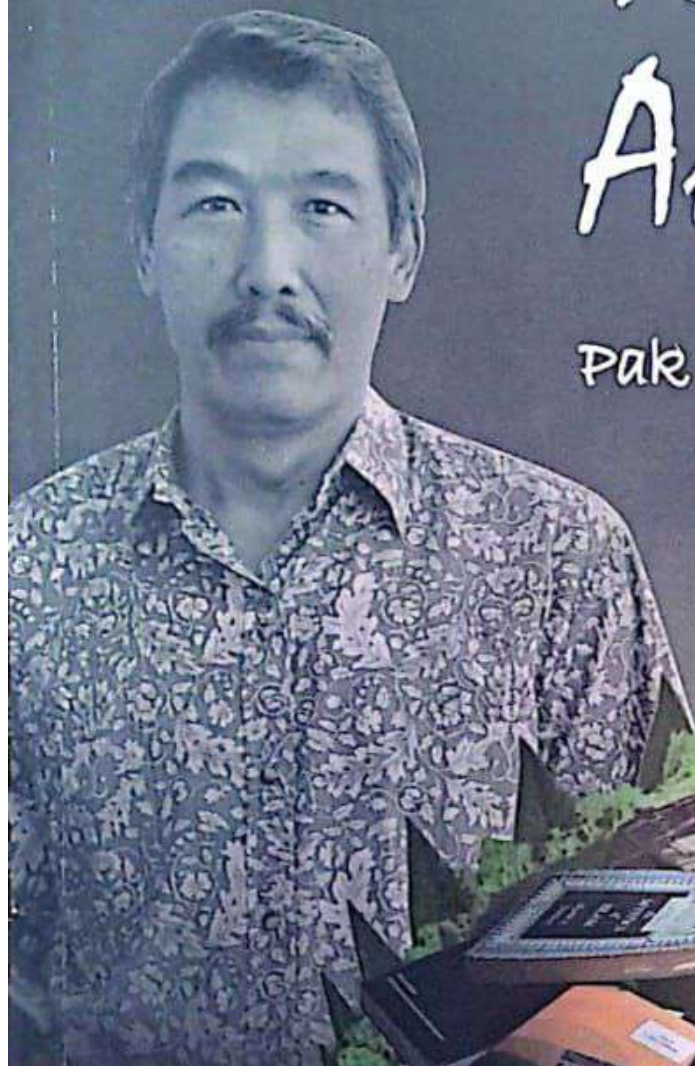


# Tumpeng Akademik

untuk  
Pak Effendi Kadarisman



Penyunting:  
Wahyu Widodo, M.Hum.

Kata Pengantar:  
Dr. Sugeng Hariyanto

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## **Tumpeng Akademik untuk Pak Effendi Kadarisman**

Penyunting : Wahyu Widodo, M.Hum.

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Gambar sampul : Effendi Kadarisman

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*Untuk Pak Effendi,  
yang telah mengendorkan syaraf dengan humor,  
mencerahkan nalar dengan ide-ide linguistik,  
membuka cakrawala dengan etnolinguistik,  
mengajarkan kecantikan hati dengan puisi,  
mencontohkan kejujuran pada diri sendiri ...*

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# The Essence of Intercultural Competence in Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesian Context

*Indawan Syahri<sup>1</sup>*

Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang

## Introduction

The use of English in various areas and fields commonly increases. People all over the world share the idea that they need English in order to 'survive' in their societies. It will be a new baseline: without English, you are not even in the race (Graddol, 2006). In virtual communication, they use English just to share ideas and feelings with other persons from other nations. It is not surprising that about 80 percent of all electronic information stored in computers and transferred via the internet is in English (Rohde, 1996). Take an obvious example, a person can easily find friends through social media. They need to invite new friends in English. English is the most widely utilized language in business. Producers advertising goods through media also use English. The contracts and invoices in business signed by sellers and purchasers are usually written in English. Agreements in many matters between two or more parties are realized in English. In academic affairs, every course requires both teachers and students to have a good command of both spoken and written English. Scholars have to socialize their ideas through journals which are commonly also written in English. Though they also might publish papers in other language journals, English written journals are mostly required by the academic communities. In shorts, English is the most widely used and taught foreign language around the globe (Yano, 2009)

Traditionally, native speakers of English are people who acquired the language naturally and effortlessly in childhood in the community which uses the language (Cook, 2003, p. 28). However, globalization has resulted in increasing numbers of children who have native-speaker parents but have grown up in the non-English speaking community. The number of native speakers of English is rapidly expanding. It makes the definition of native speakers get challenged (Yano, 2009). Conversely, English speakers

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<sup>1</sup> A professor of English Education focusing on Intercultural Competence studies

in the Outer Circle become 'functional' native speakers (Kachru, 2005). They are acquiring native-speaker intuition on grammar accuracy and generative ability in their varieties of English. In the Expanding Circle, some people speak new varieties of English, which are learned in non-English-speaking societies and therefore are linguistically and culturally de-Anglo-Americanized (Yano, 2009). These varieties have functional clarity and international intelligibility. The speakers of new varieties speak English not only with typical pronunciation but also with typical cultural embedment. They communicate ideas with others from different countries in English bringing along their own cultures, while trying to understand their the interlocutors' cultures.

It is estimated that the number of native English speakers is 300 million to 450 million (Stevenson, 1994), 320-280 million (Kachru, 1995), and 325 (Graddol, 1997 in McKay, 2002, p 32). More than one billion people are believed to speak some form of English (Rohde, 1996). Although the numbers vary, it is widely accepted that hundreds of millions of people around the world speak English, whether as a native, second or a foreign language. English, in some form, has become the native or unofficial language of a majority of some countries around the world today. In 20 to 30 countries around the world, English is merging with native languages to create hybrid Englishes (Rohde, 1996).

English, as considered as lingua franca (Jenkins, 2009) among people all over the world, has become a reality. In a global sense, people interact and transact to one another in English. From the simple purposes, for instances, greeting and introducing for making friends through social media to the most complex like diplomatic and business communication with persons from different countries people need English. As the consequences of the great number of speakers and the non-native speakers as the most, the new varieties pervasively appear in peripheral countries. For instances, Singaporean English, Indian English and others are recognized as new accepted varieties of English. They are competitively used as a means of international communication. The users of the new varieties commonly feel sure that the speakers from other nations who considered English as their second or foreign language understand what they tell and say. Even those who use English as the first language comprehend what they talk about.

As the new varieties of English increase and have multiple numbers, there should be some impacts on English teaching in Indonesia. Until the present time, applied linguists and teachers of English have considered 'legally' English as a foreign language for many years. As usually the foreign language learners are exposed to the materials dealt with native speakers'



cultures, enactment, and behaviors. Concerning English as an International Language (EIL) or global language, functions as lingua franca among nations, some questions are arisen: how to synchronize English teaching goals in Indonesia with global English, what relevant teaching materials to be taught, and how or what techniques to use.

## **Intercultural Competence**

Most generally people define culture as something to do with a geographical location, for instance, with a city, the west coast, or the British Isles. In larger perspectives, for example, there are Asian culture, African culture, Western culture and Eastern culture. Often people see culture in formal and non-formal organizations or institutions. Sometimes culture also refers to ethics; it may be claimed that one office has a different culture from other offices. It refers to the patterns or habits that are shared by all the members and applied to each context.

In relation to the views, Peterson (2004) offers at least three analogies in order to have more elaborative concepts of culture: *a melting pot*, *a tree* and *an iceberg*. The melting pot shows that deferent elements are 'melting together' with a common culture, a heterogeneous society becoming more homogeneous. A tree is another way to describe culture. It has parts you see immediately, such as branches and leaves. Not only branches and leaves, but also roots and other relevant properties. In this perspective, we may have broader views. How birds and other animals depend on trees for their lives. The last, an iceberg, shows that culture is very complex. The "tip-of-the-iceberg" of a culture is anything you can perceive with the five senses, but 80 percent of the iceberg's mass is underwater and it is invisible and usually unconscious part of a culture. Culture is a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, beliefs, norms, and behaviours shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time (Matsumoto 2000).

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to understand the language and behaviour of the target community, and explain it to members of the 'home' community – and vice versa (Corbett 2003 in Harden 2011). It includes cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. These dimensions can be differentiated into four components which are also core elements of intercultural competence, i.e. attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction (Witte 2011). The first deals with curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. The second is

knowledge of social groups and their practices and products in one's own and the other speech community, knowledge of the general processes of social, societal, intercultural and individual interaction, e.g. discourse, genre, narrative etc. The third is the ability to interpret documents, processes and events from another culture, to explain and relate them to corresponding documents, processes and events from one's own culture, and the last is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and its practices, ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time interaction. People who apply these components in intercultural communication must be able to encode and decode contents and at the same time to maintain social relationships.

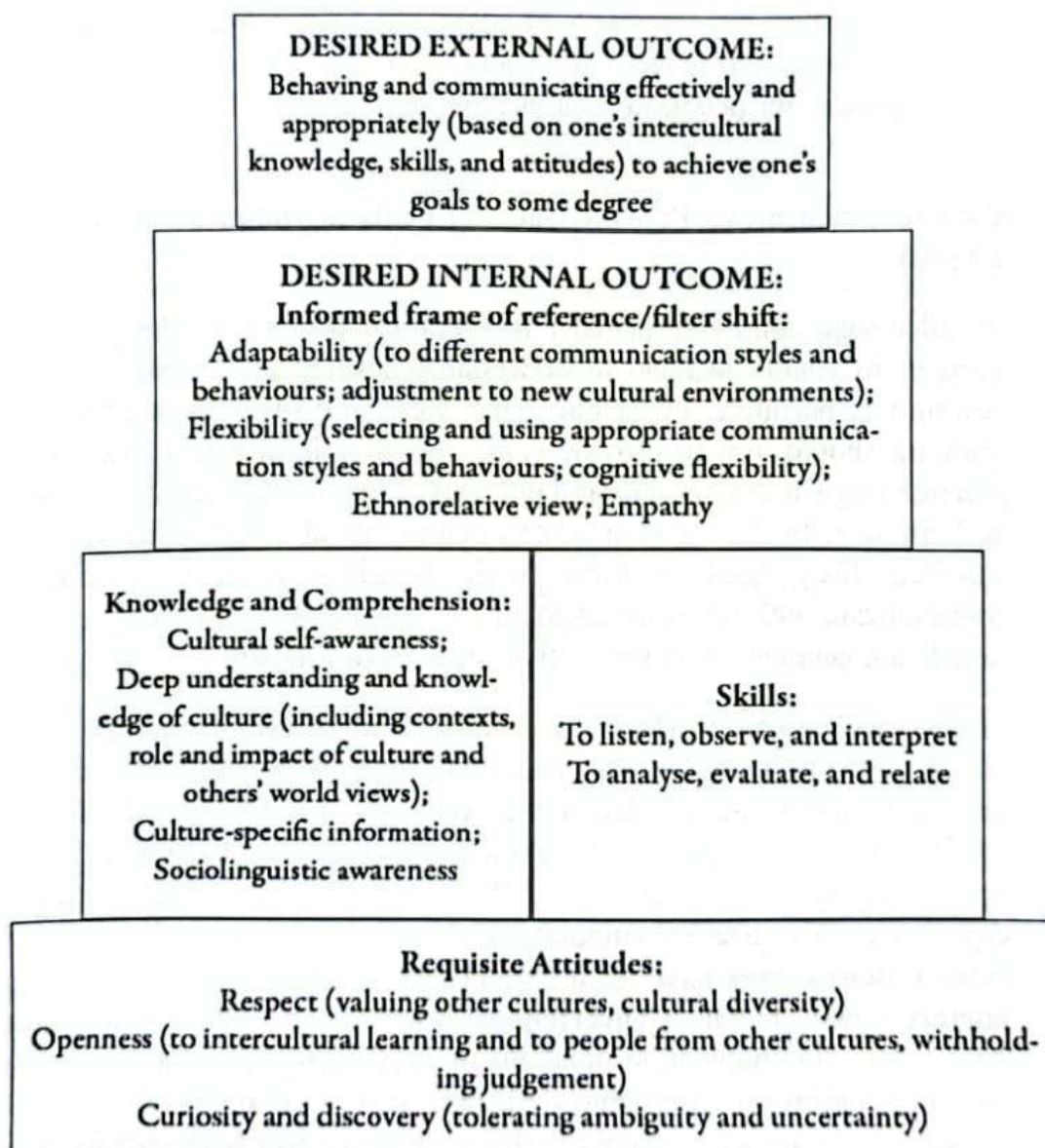


Figure 1. Pyramid model of Intercultural Competence (adopted from Deardorff 2011)

Figure 1 shows that the basic component of IC is attitudes. People should respect other people's culture and cultural differences, open themselves to intercultural learning and to people from other cultures, and withhold judgement and remain curious to discover tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty. Knowledge and comprehension is another essential element to enable people to communicate in cross/intercultural interactions. It is about both cultural self-awareness and sociolinguistic awareness. The first concerns the deep understanding of cultural knowledge, including the role and impact of culture and others' views; and the latter deals with understanding language use related to the society, for instance, degree of formality (appropriateness of expressions). Skill is also the element that people should have. It is not only language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), but also skills in analyzing, interpreting and evaluating. The three basics (attitudes, understanding and comprehension, skills) are very important for people communicating in intercultural contexts.

### **How to synchronize English teaching goals in Indonesia with global English**

In Indonesian context, especially for high school learners, the goal is, in general, to enable learners to understand, develop and create text, e.g., descriptive, narrative, explanatory, etc. Realizing EIL, the orientation of teaching should aim to provide some activities in which learners could practice English in cross-cultural contexts. They are facilitated not only to be familiar with the native speaker's culture but also with other varieties' cultures. They need to learn Anglo-American cultures in order to communicate with native speakers of English and other varieties' cultures to talk and negotiate with non-native speakers of English.

In communication, interlocutors need to have shared knowledge of the norms of their *act* as they do, *make* the things they make, and *interpret* their experiences in the distinctive way they do (Quinn and Holland, 1987). The first *act* includes verbal acts, whether conversation or writing for persuasion, direction, or aesthetics; they realize the distinctive experiences of a speech community. If they share a common language and cultural norms, they have no difficulties to 'make sense' of each other's utterance and action. Conversely, if they do not have that shared knowledge, communication breakdowns may occur. In order to establish the intelligibility in communication, they should be able to interpret the verbal acts expressed, not only understanding the words in utterances but also the values transferred. It is strengthened by recognizing the cultures embedded in the utterances.

The ability to communicate with others is not partially a matter of mastering a language usage. It deals with competencies holistically. Teaching English emphasizing on enabling learners to have Communicative Competence (CC) showed unsatisfactory results. Huda (1999) did a survey to find out that stakeholders (learners, teachers and parents) wished a change in the objective of English instruction. The reason why they wished a change is that the majority of learners (82.7%) never spoke English outside the classroom, as another finding of the survey. Of course, there were some factors that contributed to the 'failure'. This seemed to regard the objective of enabling the learners to possess the CC (including linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components, Canale, 1983) as referring to native speakers' competence. The settings exposed in the classrooms were mostly the interactions conducted by native speakers of English and less of those by non-native speakers. Teachers still assume English as a 'foreign language', but have not considered very well English as an 'international language'. Promoting Intercultural Competence (IC) is more realistic and challenging. The learners will recognize various cultures from nations in which English is used as L1, L2, and FL. Besides, they can express their cultures to others. Then, the teachers are challenged to teach English as a means of communication and sharing cultures in a global context.

### **What relevant teaching materials to be taught**

When communicating ideas, speakers usually bring their own cultures indicating identities of origin. For instance, the Chinese speak English with typical pronunciation and rhetorical structures. Though they try to imitate the native speaker's ways of pronouncing some words, the sounds will not be exactly the same as the native speakers do. The intelligibility is reached not only due to linguistic or language factors, but also shared knowledge of cultures embedded by the interlocutors.

In increasing IC, learners should be facilitated to have knowledge of various cultures. What cultures are to be taught? The contents of teaching materials are possibly derived from varieties of cultural backgrounds. The cultural diversities embedded are transferred through the target language. There are three domains that the teachers should consider, i.e. general culture, specific culture and behavior.

### ***General cultures***

The teaching materials are about the cultures of general principles in terms of degree of formality. Sociolinguistic variables play important roles in

this context. Teachers can list the dichotomies of formal and informal usage, and they can even arrange into three categories: formal, neutral and informal. The choices of utterances relevant to contexts are the focus of teaching materials.

Germane to primary contexts, the materials can be developed by emphasizing appropriateness in the Inner Circle *per se*, the utterances that are mostly used by native speakers. The appropriateness is determined by whether or not native speakers use the expressions or utterances.

### ***Specific cultures***

IC covers the knowledge of cultures that are practiced by people all over the globe. It deals with general principles applied in most communication. The cultures most commonly used by speakers of every language. This knowledge is usually brought the most dominant and advanced societies. General cultures are grouped into west and east cultures. For instance, in terms of *directness*, Anglo-Americans are more direct than eastern people. Chinese use inductive ways and indirect acts when requesting. Honorific markers are more frequently used by speakers of EFL or ESL from Asian Countries.

Indonesian speakers of English are frequently found to use 'sir, mister, mom, miss,' and the like as politeness realizations. They even call their classmates using 'mister'. It has nothing to do with asymmetric relationship between or among interlocutors. It is considered common among Indonesians. The lists of teaching materials contain specific cultures from many countries. They are taught to the learners because cultural differences of speakers potentially cause misunderstanding and communication breakdowns. In other words, intelligibility is maintained if the interlocutors have shared knowledge about each cultural background.

The teachers of English can develop their teachings materials based on cultural mainstreams. For instance, the topic of *preparing breakfast* covers general ways, i.e. American breakfast, then continue with more specific ways of preparing breakfast, e.g. Japanese breakfast, Chinese breakfast, and Indonesian breakfast. Discussions on diversities of manners, attitudes, menus, and others are essential for learners in order to have sensitivity to others' cultures. Knowing other interlocutors' cultures lubricates interactions and transactions made during communication.

## ***Behaviors***

Behavior refers to the range of actions and manners made by people in conjunction with themselves or their environment. It also deals with perceptions of other people's actions. In communication, the speakers tend to express their own cultural manners at the same time they convey messages. In effect, the interlocutors recognize the speakers' culture. Conversely, the speakers also need to know the interlocutors' cultures.

The teaching materials cover some topics that infer how people perform when realizing speech acts. Usually, individual behavior is influenced by the cultures that people manifest in specific communities. The community members are committed to applying cultural norms in their communications. When the speakers want to share the cultural norms, they have to recognize their values and habits in advance. At the same time, they try to understand other's cultures. If both interlocutors have shared knowledge, their communications run smoothly. We can start from community culture then continue understanding individual behaviors. Alternatively, we start from individual learners to community cultures. The key to understanding what people say is the context. A meaningful context often is provided by the culture; that is why language cannot be separated from the study of culture and vice-versa (Seelye 1993).

### **How or what techniques to use**

Intercultural competence is the ability to adjust and apply intercultural knowledge in a specific communication situation taking into account the actual conditions of the setting. Intercultural knowledge, as stated previously, consists of knowledge about cultural specifics, general cultural dimensions and personal behavior patterns as well as a conscious behavior repertoire which is derived from that knowledge.

How to train the learners in order to have intercultural competence? There are two approaches: top-down and bottom-up. The former recommends that teachers start from general cultures. For example, the teacher offers a topic of discussion 'how Americans go to the wedding party'. The teacher may give some texts about the American wedding party. It is about how the bride and bridegroom get dressed, how menus are served, including how the bride and bridegroom express their thanks to the guests.

Then, the learners are facilitated to find out other cultures relevant to the topics, those of the non-native speakers' varieties. They may visit websites to get some information about how other countries or ethnic groups to celebrate similar events, how Korean or Japanese hold wedding parties.

They may learn about wedding parties by comparing wedding events across cultures or across countries. The teacher may continue giving other activities to the learners. For example, the learners are asked to find information about traditional wedding parties around Indonesia. The learners are to compare wedding party traditions.

The bottom-up approach is different, the other way around. The learners are sources for eliciting and sharing information; this could be individual or group tasks since learners are heterogeneous. They are from different cultural backgrounds. They are asked to tell their classmates about typical cultures in their communities. In a group they may discuss what they learn from their classmates. Then, they agree to certain topics to discuss in a group. Each individual may perceive the topic in a specific way. For example, one group discusses South Sumatra tradition and compares it with Javanese tradition in wedding parties. Then they are asked to report results of their discussion both in speech and in writing. Each group will develop and create texts about what they have discussed. In the form of writing the teachers could facilitate the students to make compositions.

In applying these approaches, there should be supportive media. If the students are given internet access, they could do the tasks comprehensively in class. If not, the teachers can ask the learners to do the tasks in a group outside the class. In addition, Stringer and Cassidy (1993) propose some core techniques for improving intercultural communication while simultaneously increasing intercultural competence—with the following reminders for both teachers and students:

1. *Be aware of you own biases*, so they don't unconsciously control your behavior. Research indicates that merely being reminded that you have biases will allow decisions to be made in more bias-free manner.
2. *Practice flexibility*. The more choices you have in the different ways you can communicate, the more effective you will in intercultural contexts. Three pivotal aspects:
  - a. Understand your own preferences in style and process
  - b. Allow others to communicate in a range of ways without negative evaluation.
  - c. Use a wide range of styles and processes depending on context.
3. *Slow down your response* and check your assumptions. When quick reaction is based on inaccurate assumption, it reduces cross-cultural effectiveness. Asking ourselves "what assumption am I making?" and "how do I know my assumption is accurate?" allows us the opportunity to be more effective.
4. *Assume positive intentions*. It will allow us to begin a conversation both to discover their intents and to share the impact of their behavior

- on us. If their intent was positive, they will be more likely to behave in ways that we appreciate based on the feedback we have given them.
5. *Share the impact of other's behavior on you*—and ask them to do the same.
  6. *State your intent*. It helps avoid misunderstanding.
  7. *Listen with TING*—listen openly and empathically. This is the key to effective communication—especially on intercultural communication.
  8. *Apply the process of describe, interpret, evaluate (D.I.E.)* when someone else's behaviors are confusing to you—or you don't like them. This is a great technique for better intercultural communication.
  9. *Ask of someone else's behavior* “is a difference that makes a difference?” This is an advanced technique made possible only when someone is able to set aside their own behavioral preferences and consider how another behavioral might work.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The teaching of English generally should match with the functions of English. In Indonesian context, the term English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is 'legally' stated in the constitution. The goal is to enable the learners to possess communicative competence (CC). The teachers have already attempted to consider cultures at the same time they teach English as a means of communication. Some teachers, if not all, only concern with the target culture, American-Anglo cultures or Inner Circle Cultures.

Another fact English as an International Language (EIL) has become a reality. So the coverage of teaching English in Indonesia becomes much broader, i.e., covering CC plus Intercultural Competence (IC). In a *global sense*, the teaching goal is to enable the learners to communicate not only with native speakers of English but also with other non-native speakers of English. In a *local sense*, in Indonesia, English functionally becomes a medium of instruction, conference, business and Information Communication and Technology (ICT).

The teaching materials should cover all aspects of cultures from all over the globe. Teaching approaches, techniques and strategies provide some relevant activities in which learners can optimally obtain knowledge of other cultures. Finally, the learners are not only able to understand what people talk, but also able to tell and share their local cultures with others from all over the world.



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# Tumpeng Akademik

untuk Pak Effendi Kadarisman

Yang diingat mahasiswa Pak Effendi bukan hanya teori linguistik dan humor, tapi juga puisi. Pak Effendi memang dikenal sebagai bahasawan yang menguasai bahasa Jawa, Indonesia, Arab, dan Inggris. Saat puisi-puisi Inggris, Jawa, Indonesia, dan Arab bergantian mengalir dari beliau, para pendengar biasanya kagum ternganga. Kekaguman ini juga menularkan kecintaan, dan pada saatnya memicu orang untuk menuliskan sesuatu.

*Dr. Sugeng Hariyanto*

Effendi was a remarkable scholar – a polyglot and a polymath, with interests and expertise that extended far beyond those of a typical graduate student. His dissertation, on Javanese wedding narratives, was quite literally a work of art, which brought together language, culture and poetics in an unprecedented way. The final words on the final page were haunting and prescient: “a quest for scientific truths in poetic beauty could be an intellectual echo of poetic truths longing to be revealed by scientific beauty.” Those words were to mark the beginning of a brilliant career.

*Professor William O'Grady, Ph.D.*

'Mas Effendi' hari ini ... adalah juga produk budaya dan sejarah lewat proses yang panjang, yang bukan lagi milik dirinya saja, tetapi juga milik publik yang telah ikut membentuknya, tentu berkat kerja keras, kerja tuntas, berintegritas dan berkomitmen. Karena itu, Mas Effendi boleh pensiun dari statusnya sebagai ASN (Aparatur Sipil Negara), tetapi tidak boleh pensiun dari perannya sebagai seorang linguis sejati untuk terus memberi pencerahan ke publik yang mengagumi dan mencintainya.

*Profesor Dr. Mudjia Rahardjo*

Over the course of his long and many-faceted carrier Effendi has made substantial contributions to the linguistic sciences in a long series of articles like those collected in his volume *From Description to Explanation: Essays in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics* (2015). At the same time, he has been a pioneer—indeed one of the few pioneers—in a nascent field of ethnopoetics who, like the great poetician Dandin of sixth century South India, is also a practicing poet.

*Thomas M. Hunter, Ph.D.*



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