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## Coping with L2 Sociopragmatic Sensitivity Using A Story-Based Approach

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# COPING WITH L2 SOCIOPRAGMATIC SENSITIVITY USING A STORY-BASED APPROACH

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**Abstract:** Previous research findings have led to a gap that sociopragmatic failure, instead of pragmalinguistic failure, has scarcely been resolved despite its crucial function in communication. Therefore, this paper proposes a story-based approach, particularly a joint storytelling with multi-party interaction, to deal with learners' L2 sociopragmatic sensitivity. EFL learners with diverse cultural backgrounds need a motivating environment with agents that can co-construct experiences for optimum learning. By telling stories, learners are engaged in social relations that set them into interpersonal interaction demanding sociopragmatic awareness necessary for the development of their L2 sociopragmatic competence. For this purpose, classroom implementation follows the dimensions of embeddedness, tellership, and tellability while the learning sequence is based on co-constructed learning principles with four stages: setting the stage, executing the storytelling, monitoring the process, and evaluating the results. Future research may be conducted to test the compatibility of the model with actual EFL classroom instructions.

**Keywords:** sociopragmatic competence, sociopragmatic sensitivity, a story-based approach, joint storytelling

**Abstrak:** Hasil temuan penelitian terdahulu menunjukkan bahwa kegagalan menerapkan sosiopragmatik, bukan kegagalan menerapkan pragmalinguistik, dalam berbahasa Inggris belum berhasil dipecahkan, meskipun peran sosiopragmatik sangat penting dalam komunikasi. Oleh karena itu, makalah ini memaparkan pendekatan berbasis-cerita, khususnya menyusun-cerita bersama dengan modus interaksi serentak untuk mengatasi sulitnya penguasaan sensitivitas sosiopragmatik bahasa kedua. Pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing dengan latar belakang multikultur memerlukan lingkungan dengan pelaku pembelajaran yang mampu menata-bersama pengalaman belajar untuk mencapai hasil yang optimal. Dengan bercerita-bersama, pembelajar menjadi saling terikat secara sosial, sehingga memerlukan kewaspadaan sosiopragmatik dan sekaligus meningkatkan kompetensi sosiopragmatik mereka. Untuk tujuan ini, implementasi bercerita di kelas mengikuti tiga dimensi: keterikatan (dengan kenyataan sehari-hari), seni-bercerita, dan kelayakan-cerita. Urutan bercerita-bersama didasarkan prinsip pembelajaran susun-padu, yang terdiri atas empat tahap: persiapan bercerita, pelaksanaan bercerita, pemantauan pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi hasil cerita-bersama. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat dilakukan untuk menguji kesesuaian model pembelajaran ini dengan pelaksanaan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di dalam kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** kompetensi sosiopragmatik, sensitivitas sosiopragmatik, pendekatan berbasis cerita, menyusun-cerita bersama

As teacher-educators, we are concerned with sociopragmatic failure due to its crucial role in communication, considering that nowadays EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners are connected world-widely in this globalized era. In this way, cross cultural communication is unavoidable. When a person has a good command of English, he may not necessarily be sensitive to the language use in sociocultural context (Ishihara, 2017). Hence, he may fail to understand what is meant from what is said in a particular circumstance due to cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior (Thomas, 1983). As a result, that person may undergo a communication breakdown. For instance, an EFL learner may commit sociopragmatic failure in a commensality event with an American just at the beginning of the course if he has no clue of what he has to do in commensality. Commensality in the United States and Western Europe involves family members coming together for an evening meal. In this particular occasion, members of the family are allowed to eat only when all family members are seated at the table. Violation of this ideal will cause communication breakdown or, worse, ruining the happy moment (Ochs & Shohet, 2006). A mother was agitated seeing her child taking the spoon and the fork while some of the family members were not sitting down yet. Another child was reprimanded because she said, “*I wanna pray* (claps her hands) *Jesus? ... Jesus?*” (Ochs & Shohet, 2006). EFL learners should learn the pragmatic ground rules to prevent themselves from being trapped in the same situation. Another example, an American talking to a non-American acquaintance says, “*We really must get together sometime.*” For an American, these are simply ‘polite, meaningless words’, but the non-American often interprets them as genuine invitations (Thomas, 1983). The non-American misunderstanding of the deep level of the message may trigger a communication breakdown because he may consider the American as being insincere or irritating. If the non-native speaker understands the pragmatic ground rules, something which first appears to be a cross-cultural conflict of values may be shown not to be so. Therefore, we are urged to find ways to cope with sociopragmatic sensitivity that may arise in EFL learning contexts.

In most EFL classes, learners have encountered problems of using language in sociocultural contexts. EFL learners failed to use mitigation (hedging) in voicing opinions in formal setting (Taguchi, 2014). It was explained, in the study, that the teacher tolerated students for not using mitigation in voicing opinions in formal setting in order that they were not afraid of speaking up in class (Taguchi, 2014). In expressing one’s interests, an EFL student said, “*I think this class is interesting, but I want to know more about French pop culture and music.*” These expressions: ‘I want’ or ‘I’m more interested in’ form a sharp contrast with those from native speakers who use a conditional sentence to express their request, for instance ‘I’d love to if I could...’. A native speaker in the study said, “*I think the class is interesting. I’d love it if we could also talk about some more contemporary issues, uh, relevant to, the topic.*” Students were lacking syntactic and lexical mitigations to soften the tone of speech and expressed likes and dislikes directly. Besides, they also showed the inability to distinguish which linguistic device was appropriate for a particular setting. Hence, the students, at this level, had committed pragmatic failure, both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure.

This paper intends to propose an alternative approach for English language teaching and learning in EFL contexts in order to cope with L2 sociopragmatic sensitivity.

Learning from the nature of sociopragmatic competence, we would like to propose a story-based approach to cope with EFL learners’ sociopragmatic problems. At this point, it is important to identify who the learners are, what they need, and how they can be helped to

develop their L2 sociopragmatic competence. The following is meant to be a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, review of the latest research findings on the issue.

## L2 SOCIOPRAGMATIC SENSITIVITY

Sociopragmatic failure is more challenging than pragmalinguistic failure since it deals with learners' system of beliefs. Pragmalinguistic failure can be easy to overcome with explicit teaching of pragmatic features, but sociopragmatic failure has scarcely been solved (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Taguchi, 2014). For instance, one-semester interventions, designed in the form of tasks and culture strategies for EFL learners studying abroad, proved to be effective to develop pragmalinguistic competence of requests and apologies. However, the interventions did not prove to be effective for the development of appropriate use of sociopragmatic norms of apologies (Cohen & Shively, 2007). In the case of voicing opinions, it was found that while EFL learners managed the appropriate use of voicing opinions in informal setting, they failed to use the target pragmalinguistic features in formal setting (Taguchi, 2014). Some of the performance resembled that of native speakers and some diverged from that of native speakers. Sociopragmatic failure is much more difficult to deal with since it involves learners' system of beliefs as much as his/her knowledge of the language (Thomas, 1983; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Iwasaki 2011; Bella, 2011; Kim and Taguchi, 2016). The research findings indicate that length of residence does not guarantee the development of sociopragmatic competence (Cohen & Shively; Bella, 2011). However, interaction plays a major role for learners to co-construct experience and, thus, to develop sociopragmatic competence (Bella, 2011; Nguyen 2012). Hence, providing strategic interaction tasks in EFL classrooms can lead students to co-construct multiple turns in a multi-party interaction to develop L2 sociopragmatic competence (Nguyen, 2012; Kim & Taguchi, 2014; Kim & Taguchi, 2016).

Findings of previous studies suggest several probable reasons why sociopragmatic failure occurs. As summarized by Ishihara & Cohen (2010) in their book *Teaching Pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*, there are five common causes of EFL learners' divergence from the English pragmatic norms: (a) negative transfer of pragmatic norms, (b) limited grammatical ability in the L2 (Taguchi, 2014), (c) overgeneralization of perceived L2 pragmatic norms (Bella, 2011; Cohen & Shively, 2007), (d) effect of instruction or instructional materials (Kim & Taguchi, 2016), and (e) learners' choice being resistance to using perceived L2 pragmatic norms (Iwasaki, 2011). To illustrate, below is a brief conversation showing an example of sociopragmatic failure.

Setting: a welcome party for EFL students in an auditorium of Ohio State University. An American student engaged in a conversation with an Indonesian student gave a complement on her necklace.

"Wow, a beautiful necklace."

"Oh, no, it is very cheap."

"I don't care about the price."

The response to the complement, "*Oh, no, it is very cheap*" is typically Indonesian, showing negative transfer from L1 sociopragmatic norms, where complements often obtain a response of undertone. The last utterance "*I don't care about the price*" tells us that the American student was irritated by the inappropriate response to the complement. In English, the appropriate response would be, "*Thank you. I bought it in ... It is quite inexpensive.*"

Despite its important role in communication, little has been done to deal with sociopragmatic failure in EFL classrooms. Pragmatic competence, in general, has got less emphasis in teaching and learning English in EFL context, despite its being an important aspect of communication (McConachy & Hata, 2013). There has been a mismatch between textbook dialogues and authentic discourse in which the pragmatic features that represent everyday conversation have been scarcely served in many English language textbooks (Campilo, 2007). Nowadays, learners have engaged in highly globalized network. The use of World Wide Web and social media enables every learner to access information from all over the world almost instantly. Broadly speaking, this sets opportunities for learners to access authentic materials not only to learn English but also to learn about the world and further take leadership participation. The goal of learning English, then, should cover communicative competence, that is, the abilities to communicate effectively, efficiently, and appropriately according to the sociocultural contexts (Canale, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; Celce-Murcia, 2007). Unfortunately, little attention has been paid on how English as a foreign language should be taught in order that learners can use linguistic forms in its sociocultural contexts appropriately, both in spoken and in written modes of communication.

Based on the previous research findings, there is a huge gap that needs to be dealt with. Sociopragmatic failure, instead of pragmalinguistic failure, has scarcely been resolved, through neither pragmatics socialization nor pragmatics instruction. Little has been done in the EFL classroom regarding L2 sociopragmatic competence despite its crucial function in communication. Therefore, a story-based approach is proposed to deal with learners' sociopragmatic sensitivity.

## **EFL LEARNERS**

This section concerns three major issues: who EFL learners are, what type of learning environment they need, and what kind of practical solution may help them acquire sociopragmatic sensitivity. *Firstly*, it is important to know who EFL learners are. EFL learners are those who may be raised in an acquisition rich environment and those who may not. Therefore, learners in one classroom may share the same information but may not share the same meaning and they may have different levels of understanding about the information shared by the teacher (Nieto, 2010). For these diverse cultural backgrounds, the classroom should become the place for every individual learner to obtain necessary input and experiences to reach the same goals of learning (Nieto, 2010). *Secondly*, EFL learners need a motivating environment in which the agent in the classroom can collaborate with them to co-construct experiences that lead to optimum learning achievement (Nguyen, 2012). Unfortunately, teacher-student interaction has rarely served as a medium to co-construct a communicative action due to unequal status; and student-student interaction has been caught up in unnatural dyadic interaction following textbook practices. This situation has led EFL learners to learn less about L2 pragmatic norms, both English pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms. Whereas pragmalinguistic problems can be more easily overcome, sociopragmatic failure has proven to be far more difficult to cope with. *Third and finally*, EFL learners need a practical solution to cope with their situation. Therefore, putting them into activities that are rich with interactions and multiple turns may give them opportunities to use English in the right sociocultural contexts. Instead of involving them with activities in the form of dialogic interaction or memorized conversation, learners can be assigned to take

part in joint storytelling. By telling stories, learners are engaged in social relations that set them into interpersonal interaction demanding sociopragmatic awareness and realization.

## STORIES FOR LEARNING AND ACQUIRING L2 SOCIOPRAGMATICS

A story as one of the personal narratives can be a robust medium for developing social relations and therefore foster sociopragmatic development. It is a fundamental genre in that it is universal and emerges early in the communicative development of children (Ochs, 1996). Through stories, women in a transnational community built relations (Lee, 2015). Through stories also, children in an EFL classroom learned pragmatic features (Ishihara, 2013). Opportunities for social interaction could help learners acquire appropriate ways of negotiating workplace request (Holmes & Riddiford, 2011). Hence, a story can be used as a tool to engage learners in strategic interaction activities that allow them to develop their sociopragmatic competence.

Interactive storytelling in this paper is drawn from the dimension of interactive narratives. The dimensions include embeddedness, tellership, and tellability (Ochs & Capps, 2001; Georgakopoulou, 2007). Embeddedness shows how dependent a story is on the surrounding context and to what extent it attaches to the local surrounding discourse and social activity. Tellership refers to the extent and kind of involvement of conversational partners in the actual recounting of a narrative. Tellability is the participants' orientation to what locally constitutes a tellable story (Ochs & Capps, 2001). In its implementation for language socialization, an interactive narrative may take the form of joint storytelling. It can take two people to join in a group or pair storytelling and more than two people in a group or multi-party storytelling. In this paper, we propose multi-party storytelling because it includes multi-party interaction that is effective for sociopragmatic practice.

Multi-party storytelling emphasizes the significance of storytellers' shared interactional experiences. During the break time, women, in the transnational community, shared stories based on their daily lives, and the topics were culturally and socially embedded (Lee, 2015). Topics included married life, pregnancy, relationship, etc (Lee, 2015). In such an interaction, interlocutors express complaints, likes or dislikes, and use other types of speech act. In EFL classrooms, a teacher may assign learners to do multi-party storytelling by drawing on different topics of their daily life interests. This activity allows learners to co-construct experiences and knowledge of the world as well as to learn sociopragmatic features needed during the dynamic participation.

### Classroom Implementation

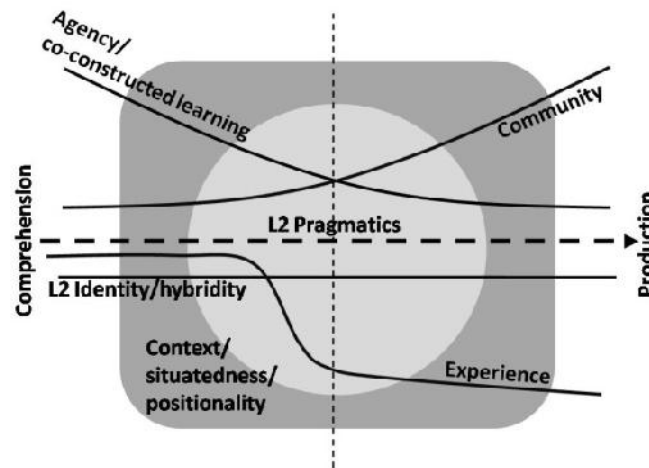
To help EFL learners develop L2 sociopragmatic sensitivity, the implementation of joint storytelling in the classroom follows three sequential dimensions: embeddedness, tellership, and tellability (Ochs & Capps, 2001, Georgakopoulou, 2007). *First*, embeddedness refers to how to set up the theme that can connect with learners' daily topics of talk, social activities, and the discourse they are usually engaged in. For instance, learners are inquired on what social activities they are usually engaged in with their peers, what topics they are most interested in to talk about, and for how long they may be involved in such a talk. As social activity types are collected from every individual learner in the class, and topics are also mounted, there is a time for teachers to nominate together with learners which social activity types will be dealt with and which topics will be selected. The selection will be put in a priority list for implementation throughout the semester. Changes may be made during the

implementation to fit learners' needs, motivation and comfort. There is a note here for teachers: which topics need not be those which rigidly refer to some academic or scientific ones. Learners may build their stories based on their ordinary experiences. If nowadays learners are following YouTube on futuristic innovation of airplanes, cars, tanks and the like, teachers may let them work out their talk. In this case, the target is not the scientific information of the story but the ability to communicate using English in the most appropriate way and mutually interact throughout the talk exchange.

*Secondly*, tellership needs to be set with great caution for EFL learners because learners are involved in the extent and kind of conversational partners in the actual recounting of a narrative in English. This stage intends to construct or reconstruct social relationship among members of the community. Their mutual engagement in the joint storytelling may lead them to the understanding of cultural and social belonging (Lee, 2015). Imagine when two or three school boys get together during the break time, what do they do? Some of them may engage in playing basketballs or footballs, but these are rarely found in most junior or senior high schools let alone in universities. Most of them, if not play with their gadgets, will sit and talk about what they usually do with the gadgets such as games, videos of new technology on cars, planes, trains, tanks, or talk about going to the movies, exotic destinations for holidays, and the like. So, three school boys are sitting together and chit chatting about the games they play or videos they watch. One will initiate, another will continue, and still the other will add. On and on the story goes and is recounted by every member of the talk and so it is built up in such a way that they form "co-tellership" (Lee, 2015). It is sometimes hard to stop as participants have different ways of asserting themselves in the activity. The development of the story involves so many skills of language from giving information and compliments, showing likes and dislikes, to expressing exclamation, surprise, and so on. As the story goes naturally, the verbal expressions occurring in the learners' speech are those which are genuinely developed through their knowledge of the world and their knowledge of the language. More specifically, it is their knowledge of L2 they pick up from their experiences, both from their own search from the world-wide web or from their peers during the tellership.

*Thirdly*, in an interactive narrative or joint storytelling, tellability is a very crucial part. For instance, when three learners get together recounting a story of their ordinary experience, they will come to a stage in which a member may not in favor of the point. There is a time when the participants' orientation to what locally constitutes a tellable story is justified by a group of a talk exchange in which a comment or a recount is not acceptable according to the local norm, while another comment or another recount is favorable. At this point, there is a crucial moment in which a participant of a talk or joint storytelling should be sensitive to the norm believed by all members of the group. This is exactly what constitutes sociopragmatic sensitivity. Once the topic is chosen and developed into an ongoing story and conversational exchanges, there may emerge potential hazards of different beliefs that can cause a communication breakdown. For instance, one boy initiates a story about the world fastest train; another questions and adds earlier types of train; and still the other shifts the topic. This last boy may cause a communication breakdown since his version of the story may not be acceptable. Or perhaps the first boy's story may be not acceptable since it is unrealistic according to the group. The point is that a tellable story is one which is suitable with the local norm of the group. Here it is clear that beliefs play the vital role in communication, and hence the need for sociopragmatic sensitivity. One should contribute actively in joint storytelling yet he must also be careful and sensitive enough to the group norm in order to function well in the interaction in that particular type of discourse and social activity.

The sequence of the learning process, as shown in Figure 1, is adjusted to learners' backgrounds following the sequence in multicultural education principles for L2 pragmatics instruction, that is, constructed learning which is developed with the teachers' guidance at the beginning of the session and gradually set for more independent learning with the peers or the ELF learning community (Ariani & Widiati, 2017).



**Figure 1.** Multicultural Education Model for Pragmatics Instruction  
(Ariani and Widiati, 2017)

As quoted verbatim from Ariani and Widiati (2017), this model incorporates the **five principles** of multicultural education into the teaching and learning of EFL pragmatics in Indonesian context.

1. The primary goals of learning English pragmatics range from comprehension to production.
2. Context/situatedness/positionality underlies all activities. Empirically established information and naturalistic speech samples are utilized to provide real life experiences that increase in the amount and complexity according to the level of pragmatic ability.
3. Agency/co-constructed learning is carried out collaboratively between teacher and students. The teacher gives sufficient guidance to the learners; and the guidance is gradually reduced as learners start to be independent and ready to become members of the interactive community. Co-constructed learning is meant to guide learners' observations and to raise pragmatic awareness.
4. Community learning provides a chance for interactional and language-focused practice.
5. The identity/hybridity principle leads learners to obtain the target language identity. This is achieved by the successful implementation of the other four principles through the time by exposing learners to English culture from the real life speech samples, then explaining cultural reasoning for the target language pragmatic norms, and providing strategies for target language use.

### Setting the Stage

In this stage, the teacher needs to form groups into manageable formation to enable monitoring and facilitating activities on the part of the teacher. In the meantime, the group formation is also intended to enable learners to interact well. The group formation is based



on learners' topics of interest. When a theme is selected for the whole class, then topics are divided for every group. Each group takes three interlocutors for maximum participation. Members may change anytime when necessary for a better situation, atmosphere, and better development of the storytelling process. The procedure of the talk exchange follows opening, main exchange, closing. *Opening* is the starting point of a talk, which covers the phatic function of language. One member must take the role to initiate a conversation. *Main exchange* involves turn taking mechanism when participants share information or experiences. This is the main session in which the teacher can monitor how turns move in the talk and which members take parts actively using English as a means of communication. Many language functions may be observable during this session. *Closing* refers to ways of ending a conversation. Both the opening and closing stages should take place appropriately.

The setting stage, being a crucial starting point, requires special notes. The teacher should inform learners about how to initiate a joint storytelling and to develop it into a multi-party interaction. Instead of distributing a text that contains dialogues to be memorized, the teacher guides learners with a scenario. The scenario is made general to fit the development of various topics. For instance, a scenario based on a theme "Leisure Time" may be formulated like this: "Have some talk with your friends about things you usually do during your leisure time. Find two friends who have something in common, and plan to search for the information about it. To help you with the use of English, it is suggested that you find information, spoken or written in English." From this scenario, learners may propose topics such as games, K-pops, sophisticated vehicles, movies, etc. Detailed instructions can be given by the teacher during the session. The use of scenario in the setting stage is to help learners to prepare materials for the talk. Learners may search for information on the same topic to be talked about. Under the guidance and consultation of the teacher, learners search for the right articles, videos, or any related materials in English; they are to be learned before the learners are engaged in a talk in the class. In short, the setting stage is a stage to prepare learners to be ready to become active members in the group as a social community and to facilitate learning in the best possible way for the learners to feel comfortable and motivated to engage in a talk and make themselves feel at home in the classroom.

### **Executing the Storytelling**

This stage requires the teacher to guide learners to know one another and get along well to share knowledge and experience in a joint storytelling which is developed naturally within the interaction. In this stage, the teacher plays the roles as a director and facilitator for learners to assert themselves to become active members of the community and to develop a sense of belonging in order to stay intact with the other members by performing appropriate social actions. EFL learners are engaged in the interaction using English. Every group may start their conversation and develop sharing experiences according to their topic of interest. At this point, learners are allowed to be as free as possible to express themselves. At earlier stages, full use of English is reinforced but the use of the mother tongue is tolerated. As practices continue meeting after meeting, the use of full English is obligatory and the use of mother tongue is reduced. However, words referring to traditional items may be used with explanation. Within this type of discourse, every member of the learning community may contribute any information he or she has obtained. Their information mostly serves as L2 input. The difference between materials in English textbooks and the materials from the learners' search is that the latter are authentic materials. For instance, when a group chooses

a topic about sophisticated transportations, every member should get related information and learn about it. They may discuss it prior to class discussion. In this joint storytelling stage, members of the group share their stories just like common school boys or girls share their stories about their favorite cars, trains, planes, boy band, etc.

In this stage, there are three types of social interactions. Firstly, every learner is engaged and share knowledge or experience in a small group of three. Secondly, this group should share their stories in a bigger group by joining another group. Finally, every group should share their stories in class, the biggest learning community. The following is a naturally recorded example of a three-minute talk by a small group of junior high school students during the break.

- 
- A : "Hello TOXIC MAN! I want to ask you something!"  
 B : "Hello LAREINA-"  
 A : "No. You have to call me the SECRET Killer."  
 B : "Nooooo."  
 A : "You have to call me the SECRET KILLER. That's my name."  
 B : "What the heck!"  
 C, D : "Hehehe"  
 A : "I want to ask you some question."  
 B : "Yeah, kill yourself.... Kill yourself..."  
 A : "No, wait—."  
 B : "They start it, just waiting to die."  
 A : "Wait, this is about World of Tank."  
 B : "Yeah"  
 A : "Okay, I want to ask you where... using tank destroyer, right?"  
 B : "Uhh... wait, wait, wait."  
 C : "Is there anything....um."  
 D : "You said it twice."  
 B : "Said God..."  
 A : "I want to ask you, wait—I'm on a new tank destroyer, and it of course—"  
 B : "USA?"  
 A : "It's the--."  
 D : "I'm here! AMERICA ON GUARD!" (shouting)  
 A : "It's the--."  
 D : (Speaking gibberish)  
 A : "Wait, it's not the United States tank destroyer. The T95. The heavy armored one with low fire power."  
 B : "*Halalah, yayayasa.*"  
 C : "I really like that."  
 A : "AIM!"  
 C : "*Dor!*" (Bang)  
 : "To motherland!"  
 (pause)  
 A : "Okay, I want to ask you. Something is really important. Well, in the new update in World of Tank, there is a new thing. I bought—"  
 B : "Come on man... *he he he*..."  
 A : "I bought a tank from the American Tank Destroyer. You know T95?"  
 B : "No."

C : "Oh yeah, I see it."  
B : "Yeah come on help me."  
A : "How about--."  
B, C, : "Yeah... yeah... *ha ha ha ha..*"  
D, E :  
A : "It's the T--."  
C : "Everything I know" (I know about it)  
A : "It's the T95."  
C : "Huh huh, okay."  
A : "You, buy it?"  
D : "T? T95?"  
C : "Oh.. T *enam lima* (T65)."  
A : "T95."  
C : "Oh, T twenty five (T25) E-"  
A : "*Eh, cobak itung YO...*"  
C : "*Iya ayok dah.*"  
(pause)  
E : "*Eh siapa yang mau tak gendong?*"  
E : "*Siapa yang mau tak gendong?*"  
F : "*Saya! Saya!*"  
A : "How about—."  
Girls : (shrieking)  
A : "How about—."  
Girls : (clapping noises)  
A : "Okay I want to ask you something. How do you- Hey!"  
B : "Eh."  
G : "*Wok, cowok ! Temennya Dirga!*"  
B : "*Kok bisa nyasar gitu.*"  
A : "*Gak! Bukan aku!*"  
: "I want to ask you-"  
B : "*Sebentar.*"  
A : "How to use a tank destroyer."  
B : "Huh, now?"  
A : "Come on man. Why is it very very-"  
B : "Keeping this tank."  
A : "Your accuracy is very noob, right."  
B : "Ha ha I know."  
A : "And your fire power is noob."  
B : "Yeah."  
C : "Wait... wait..."  
A : "You cannot penetrate me."  
C : "*Imajinasi. Pertama tanknya itu mental kalau ditabrak.*"  
A : "Heh, what the *hell !!!*."

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Notice that, given an opportunity to explore a topic of their interest, the students (A, B, C, D, E, plus some girls passing by) seem to enjoy themselves while talking about destroyer tanks. Notice also the way the interlocutors refer to themselves and/or to each other: *toxic man*, *secret killer*. While practicing the storytelling during the break, they keep on using English, although occasionally they slip back to Indonesian. The transcript of the recorded

conversation above shows that, through joint storytelling, Indonesian EFL learners may develop their speaking skill and sociopragmatic competence at the same time.

### **Monitoring the Process**

At this stage, the teacher monitors learners' participation focusing mainly on how the joint storytelling in multi-party interaction develops. The focus of monitoring by the teacher is on the sequence of the talk, turn taking mechanism, and most importantly of sociopragmatic sensitivity. When the learners fall back into their mother tongue, as shown in the recorded conversation above, the teacher should help them express their ideas in English. Recall that when lexical and/or grammatical items are learned in real communicative acts, they are probably retained better in learners' memory. In joint storytelling, it is expected that learners show appropriate initiation, main exchange, and closing. In a small group of three, the teacher monitors how the interaction goes during the development of joint storytelling. At this level, the teacher helps dependent learners with sufficient guidance to enable them to function in an interaction with what they know and experience confidently. This gives every member an opportunity to become a "co-teller" within the small group. In the meantime, every member may contribute a relevant or significant piece to the ongoing story so as to stay well adjusted in the group. Then, every learner is challenged to become a social member of a bigger learning community. When a group joins another to share experiences and knowledge of the world, the teacher guides the two groups to get along and reduces intervention in the form of detailed exchanges. This is intended to lead every learner to become a more independent learner who can get along with his or her peers as a community. Finally, every group may present themselves to share their experiences in front of the class. The class may interactively raise questions, give comments, or suggestions.

### **Evaluating the Results**

The evaluation stage is meant to examine and control learners' development in sociopragmatic sensitivity. This is done by tape recording or video recording their activities during the execution stage. The evaluation can be done at the end of the session or at the beginning of the following session. Recordings then are examined by the teacher and peers within groups or in front of the class. The focus of evaluation is on the points showing successful emergence of sociopragmatic ability during the joint storytelling session. Peer evaluation is intended for mutual correction and feedback among the learners to improve their sociopragmatic sensitivity as seen from the three dimensions of embeddedness, tellership, and tellability.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the storytelling dimensions may enable EFL learners to become active participants of a talk by taking part in elaborating, developing, and completing a chosen story. These activities in joint storytelling reveal how participants of a talk attempt to become members of an EFL learning community. These efforts may help the learners to develop their speaking skill and at the same time help them to raise their L2 sociopragmatic awareness, so that they may maintain their relations in a particular social activity. Hence, we propose that the story-based approach can be developed into a model of pragmatics instruction to teach

sociopragmatic ability. Future research may be conducted to test the compatibility of the model with actual instructional activities in EFL classrooms.

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