The implementation of culturally responsive teaching in ELT classrooms within the concept of emancipated curriculum

Agil Fitriya Hidayati[1], Yuliati[1], Fonny Dameaty Hutagalung[2]

[1]English Education Study Program, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
[2]Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

Article Info

Abstract

This qualitative study explores the importance of implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) classes in Indonesian higher education under the Emancipated Curriculum framework. In this qualitative study, the Emancipated Curriculum framework is used to explore the importance and urgently needed need of introducing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) into English Language Teaching (ELT) programs in Indonesian higher education. The study emphasizes the important role of learner-centered strategies in developing students' critical thinking abilities and promoting independence by implementing the advancement of social justice, critical thinking, and student empowerment. In order to improve cultural responsiveness in ELT, it emphasizes the critical necessity of coherence between instructional practices and policies. It also advocates for curriculum design and pedagogical approach adaptation in order to create inclusive and empowering learning environments that meet the diverse needs of students. The results highlight the need to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies into the curriculum to address current concerns about equity and inclusivity. This research provides insightful information for teachers and administrators who would like to encourage inclusive, hospitable ELT classrooms that value diversity. This study is a valuable resource for educators who want to build learning environments that empower and accept students from all cultural origins, thereby encouraging more equity and inclusivity in Indonesian education.

✉Correspondence Address:
B8 Building Room 104 FBS UNNES
Sekaran Campus, Semarang, 50229
E-mail: yuliati@mail.unnes.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Language teaching requires greater innovation and imagination than teaching subject teaching, making it a challenge for both teachers and students to teach and learn in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms (Ali, 2021). Teaching learners with a range of ethnic backgrounds, languages, socioeconomic situations, and ability levels is a challenge that nowadays educators in English Language Teaching (ELT) are facing on an increasing basis. Students from different language, racial, cultural, or economic backgrounds, as well as those who are disadvantaged, have historically been recognized as at-risk groups that are more likely to perform below peers (Tomlinson et al., 2014). Teaching different learners in the context of ELT requires qualified teachers with an adaptable technique who can modify their lesson plans to fit the unique needs of each student (Tomlinson, 2001).

Professional educators in ELT must be competent in order to meet the needs of such a diverse student base. In order to meet the various learning needs of their students, teachers must differentiate their education (Tomlinson, 2001). This requires providing thoughtful consideration to the interests, learning profiles (which include problems, skills, and preferences) of learners, and how prepared they are to learn. It is necessary for educators to acknowledge that every learner's experiences and background, both within and outside the classroom, have a substantial impact on how they learn. Additionally, educators need to consider their students' interests, learning profiles, which include learner preferences, strengths, and challenges, while developing lesson plans (Kieran & Anderson, 2019). The integration of critical pedagogy in English Language Teaching (ELT) is becoming more and more popular because of its capacity to promote social justice, critical thinking, and student empowerment (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013). This strategy is in accordance with Indonesia's dedication to developing an active and inclusive educational system that meets the varied requirements of the students' needs and provides them the necessary resources they need to succeed in a world that is changing constantly.

Curriculum/ educational system development plays a crucial part in shaping educational practices. As an instrument that is definitely used to achieve educational goals, the curriculum can be thought of as a guide or reference for the process of implementing education in Indonesia (Angga et al., 2022). The aforementioned statement demonstrates that regardless of the curriculum being viewed as only a written product, it should not be undervalued. In ELT classrooms, educators can use it as a guide and a tool for carrying out the teaching and learning activities that will be done in order to accomplish the purposes.

For a variety of reasons, Indonesia's educational system has changed substantially in the last few decades. The changing needs of students stand out among these as the main force behind the change (Schleicher, 2015). The Indonesian government became aware that the curriculum needs to be adjusted in order to accommodate the standards of today's global society. Indonesia aims to develop critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork abilities, prioritize student-centered learning, and adjust to the evolving educational landscape by implementing the Emancipated curriculum (Wang et al., 2023).

The learner-centered approach of the Emancipated Curriculum encourages students to take an active role in their own education (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). It encourages self-directed learning, critical analysis, and the development of transferable abilities that go beyond memorization and recitation of facts. By fostering a sense of independence and possession, teachers may provide their students with the freedom to explore their interests, follow their passions, and become lifelong learners. Additionally, the curriculum aims to teach principles like social justice, nationalism, and solidarity. The Emancipated Curriculum program lays a strong emphasis on utilizing digital resources and technology to improve the educational process. It is recommended that students use digital tools to study and comprehend concepts, such as engaging modelling, internet-based environments, and multimedia materials.

In line with the university's mission to establish a global reputation and pioneer educational excellence from a conservation viewpoint, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) offers students the opportunity to actively participate in their education through the Emancipated Curriculum. This effort, established by researchers, instructors, and administrators at UNNES, is an outcome of the university's enormous transformation since it was designated as a State University of the Legal Agency (PTN-BH) through Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation no. 36 of 2022, as of October 20 2022 and ratified by the president.

In Indonesian ELT classrooms, local and international culture topics have been used as examples to contextualize target and global cultures in order to enhance students' intercultural awareness of local, target, and global cultures, according to research "Intercultural Topics in the Indonesian English Language Teaching Classroom: Contextualizing Local and Neutral Cultures to Target and Global Cultures" (Marwa et al., 2021). The phenomena of reclaiming cultures other than the target language in English language education (ELT) is the reason for this research. Intercultural themes are examined in Indonesian ELT classes using qualitative research by the researcher, showcasing both the target and global cultures. Four English language teachers with cross-cultural educational experience from two Indonesian universities are included in the project. Field notes taken during observations, interview guides, audio recordings, and document compilations were used by the researcher to gather data.

Examining "Internationalization of the Curriculum at One Indonesian University: Decolonial Perspective," a prior work that is relevant to this study (Yuliati, 2022). This study examines the mechanisms of knowledge hybridization that can be used to blend local and Western knowledge. This study aims to explore, from a decolonial perspective, how leaders, academic staff, students, and academic-related workers at Indonesian university understand and apply the notions of the internationalization of the curriculum. The degree of knowledge ecology and hybridization in the curriculum is also examined, especially in higher education in Indonesia.

A study conducted by Halim (2022) also addresses various pedagogical concerns and elaborate on issues in the Indonesian Curriculum 2013, the most recent curriculum before the nation implemented its Emancipation Curriculum. A systematic literature review was used as the research strategy in this study. The researcher looked at substantial literature on the issue of culturally responsive teaching as well as articles connected to the topic and indications of current educational issues from journals that are currently published. The study's findings suggested that there needs to be more consistency between the existing educational system and what actually happens in the field.

The aforementioned explanation demonstrates how Indonesia continues to attempt to integrate or implement an international curriculum in order to better align the learning curriculum with the extremely diverse population of the nation. While CRT has been studied in a variety of educational contexts, including ELT, this research addresses a gap by examining the successful integration of CRT in ELT courses at Universitas Negeri Semarang that have adopted the Emancipated Curriculum. This study contributes to a better understanding of how culturally responsive teaching can support social justice, critical thinking, and student empowerment in specific educational contexts by looking at the intersections of CRT, ELT, and the Emancipated Curriculum. Thus, the purpose of this article is to investigate what and how cultural values might be incorporated into the curriculum.

METHODS

This study employed a systematic literature review to address the research issue. The strategy was chosen in order to gather extensive information regarding the application of culturally responsive teaching in the emancipated curriculum. The methods employed to gather data included eligibility, identification, and analysis from a range of research-related publications and journals (Nugroho et al., 2022; Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). Academic databases including ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar were used to find relevant research. A total of fifty publications of CRT, ELT, and the Emancipated Curriculum were acquired. These included journal articles, books, conference papers, reports, and theses. Keywords such as Merdeka Curriculum, Indonesian Curriculum, Indonesian CRT, ELT in classroom, teaching English with culture, caring instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustainable pedagogy.

Table 1. The number of data collected and their formats

Form of Data	Number of Data
Journal article	25
Book	10
Conference paper	5
Reports	3
Theses	2

The researcher gathered recent papers published between 2004 and 2024 related to english language teaching, culturally responsive teaching, and emancipated curriculum. The literature was screened using predefined criteria using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. Only papers that aligned with the main topic of the study were chosen for further examination. The following steps were included in the data analysis process:

1. Data Screening: The researcher looked through the gathered publications to see which ones fit the criteria for inclusion.
2. Data Extraction: From the chosen publications, important information about CRT in ELT within the Emancipated Curriculum was taken out.
3. Thematic Analysis: The extracted data was examined systematically to identify key themes, structures, and conclusions related to the implementation of CRT in ELT classes.
4. Synthesis: To gather conclusions and implications for the study, the results of the data analysis were combined.

An extensive evaluation of relevant research on CRT in ELT within the framework of the Emancipated Curriculum is made possible by the study's systematic approach to data gathering and analysis, giving insightful information on how culturally responsive teaching methods are being implemented in Universitas Negeri Semarang.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

English language teaching

The improvement of students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English is one of the main goals of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Idrus, 2014). Recognizing the varied requirements and backgrounds of English language learners is one of the core principles of ELT. The efficiency of language acquisition is greatly influenced by the learners' competence levels, linguistic backgrounds, cultural factors, and learning preferences, as highlighted by (Nunan, 2003). This knowledge emphasizes how important it is to use learner-centered strategies that meet each student's unique conditions and encourage participation in the educational process. Teachers in the ELT field use creative approaches to design dynamic, interesting classrooms that meet the various learning preferences and styles of their students. Warschauer and Healey (1998) highlighted the innovative potential of technology in enabling open connection, customized education, and collaborative learning. Language learners can learn a language more efficiently and with greater enjoyment if ELT practitioners use technology, multimedia materials, and communicative activities.

ELT educators play an important role in helping non-native English speakers improve their literacy and language skills (Floris & Renandya, 2020). By providing individualized training and customized interventions, teachers support students in growing their language skills and succeeding academically. ELT practitioners enable students to overcome language limitations and realize their full potential by offering personalized help and feedback (Anis, 2023). In order to address the changing demands of English language learners, educators can improve their pedagogical competence and modify their practices by reading current literature and taking part in professional development opportunities (Tong et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there has been a growing recognition in the literature of the importance of intercultural proficiency and cultural awareness in ELT (Baker, 2012). Teachers can foster students' global awareness and empathy for different viewpoints by incorporating cultural information and encouraging intercultural communication (Byram, 1997). In addition to enhancing language learning opportunities, this intercultural component equips students to negotiate cross-cultural interactions in a globalized society. To create inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms, educators must first understand and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of their students (Gay, 2002). This method not only improves language acquisition but also helps students from different backgrounds feel a feeling of community and belonging.

What is culturally responsive teaching?

The teaching method that is sensitive to cultural differences is more important than ever, especially in light of the wide socioeconomic disparities among students. According to Muñiz (2019), Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is a student-centered approach that acknowledges the significance of taking into account students' cultural backgrounds during the educational process. In order to establish a more welcoming and productive learning environment, it places a strong emphasis on integrating students' cultural identities, experiences, and viewpoints into the curriculum. This strategy recognizes that, in order to support their academic achievement, children from varied cultural backgrounds may have different needs, learning

preferences, and life experiences (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021). Over time, the idea of CRT has changed, and notable researchers like Gloria Ladson-Billings, Geneva Gay, and Django Paris have made important contributions to this growth.

The idea that development in education should be built upon student's cultural background is one of the fundamental principles of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Gay, 2002). It seeks to establish a welcoming and encouraging learning environment in the classroom where each student feels valued, included, and involved. Recognizing the student diversity, CRT aims to improve learning results by utilizing the cultural assets of its students (Gay, 2002). By integrating students' cultural perspectives into instructional strategies, CRT fosters fairness, diversity, and academic achievement for every student (Ely & Thomas 2001). This implies that teachers should make an effort to comprehend the traits of their students, such as their ethnicity, history, and culture. Teachers can encourage a more inclusive learning environment that respects and honors cultural diversity by recognizing and valuing the experiences of students from a variety of backgrounds.

It is important that educators understand the potential risks and problems that students from ethnically diverse backgrounds may encounter within the educational system (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021). Religious OR culturally diverse families frequently worry that Western values that go against their own cultural beliefs would have a bad impact on their kids. Thus, by integrating students' experiences and viewpoints into the curriculum, CRT is designed to address these concerns.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) acknowledges and values the cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities of all students, which is important in developing inclusion techniques for students from ethnically diverse backgrounds (Gay, 2002). The following are some ways that CRT contributes in the creation of inclusion strategies according to research conduct to Roma-Gypsy Student (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021):

1. Acknowledging Cultural Diversity: CRT values and recognizes the variety of cultures found in the classroom. When educators value and acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of their ethnically diverse pupils, they foster an inclusive learning environment in which every student feels valued and included.
2. Promoting Cultural Understanding: Students' empathy and cultural awareness are encouraged by CRT. Students are encouraged to learn from one another and develop a greater understanding of various cultures when unique cultural viewpoints are incorporated into the curriculum.
3. Empowering Student Voice: Students are empowered to communicate their viewpoints and cultural experiences through CRT. Teachers support the voices of ethnically diverse students and foster a feeling of community in the classroom by giving children the chance to express themselves and tell their stories.
4. Addressing Bias and Stereotypes: By accurately and favorably portraying a variety of cultures, CRT fights prejudice and stereotypes. Teachers may overcome harmful stereotypes and advance a more inclusive and equitable learning environment by including various cultural themes into their lessons and resources.
5. Enhancing Academic Achievement: It has been demonstrated that CRT raises academic achievement in students from varied cultural backgrounds. Teachers can make learning more relevant and interesting for students by incorporating their cultural backgrounds into the curriculum. This can boost students' motivation and achievement in the classroom.
6. Fostering Inclusive Practices: CRT promotes inclusive teaching strategies that address the varied needs of each and every student. Teachers can establish a friendly, encouraging, and easily accessible learning environment for students from diverse cultural origins by putting culturally responsive practices into practice.
7. Building Cultural Competence: CRT supports teachers' and students' development of cultural competency. CRT gives educators and students the tools they require to effectively operate and succeed in a multicultural society by fostering an awareness of, comprehension of, and respect for various cultural perspectives.

Furthermore, CRT advocates for the inclusion of diverse cultural representations in educational materials, such as history books and textbooks (Vasquez Heilig et al., 2012). By incorporating the historical and cultural contributions of minority groups, educators can promote understanding, respect, and empathy among students from different backgrounds. This approach helps to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment where all students feel valued and represented.

Adopting the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) allows educators to meaningfully contribute to national and international initiatives that fight discrimination against marginalized

communities and promote social inclusion (Meléndez-Luces & Couto-Cantero, 2021). To close the demographic inequalities between instructors and students and guarantee that every student has access to a top-notch, fair education, a persistent commitment to training culturally sensitive educators is necessary (Chun & Evans, 2016). CRT can support the development of a more equal, welcoming, and empowered learning environment for all students, regardless of their cultural background, by appreciating and utilizing multiple cultural viewpoints in the educational process (Bonner, 2018).

By putting the following strategies into practice, educators can better support diverse student groups by incorporating culturally sensitive techniques into their instruction (Muñiz, 2019):

1. Develop Cultural Awareness: The cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities of their students should be understood and valued by educators. By being aware of this, educators can make their classrooms more inviting and inclusive.
2. Build Relationships: It's important to build respectful and trustworthy interactions with students. Teachers that are culturally sensitive spend the time to get to know their students as people and express a sincere interest in their experiences.
3. Use Culturally Relevant Materials: Incorporate a variety of viewpoints, materials, and perspectives in the curriculum to give all students a more meaningful and interesting learning experience. Literature, history, art, and other materials that represent the variety of cultures represented in the classroom can be included in this.
4. Promote Student Voice: Encourage students to contribute their ideas, expertise, and experiences to the class. Give students the chance to express themselves through debates, assignments, speeches, and other activities.
5. Adapt Instructional Strategies: Adapt instructional strategies and techniques to the varied educational needs and tendencies of students from various cultural backgrounds. Utilize a range of teaching techniques to meet the needs of students with different learning styles and skill levels.
6. Develop Inclusivity: Establish an environment in the classroom that respects and values diversity. Celebrate diverse ethnic customs, occasions, and holidays to foster inclusivity and a feeling of community among all students.
7. Address Stereotypes and Biases: Face any prejudices, preconceptions, and stereotypes that might present in the classroom. To help children develop understanding and empathy, encourage critical thinking and conversations on social issues, injustice, and inequality.
8. Provide Opportunities for Reflection: Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own cultural identities, values, and beliefs. Make time for discussion and introspection to aid students in gaining a better knowledge of both themselves and other people.
9. Collaborate with Families and Communities: Build relationships with the community and families by involving them in the educational process to assist in student learning. To gain a deeper understanding of the backgrounds and experiences of students, consult with parents and other caregivers.

Teachers may build a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment that fulfills the unique needs of all students and fosters both academic performance and well-being by implementing these strategies into their instruction.

Knowing Indonesian curriculum
A country's educational environment is greatly influenced by its curriculum, which reflects its goals, values, and aspirations. Over the past few decades, curriculum development in Indonesia demonstrates the nation's dedication to improving its educational system to adapt to the changing demands of society (Pambudi & Harjanto, 2020). Indonesian education system has experienced substantial changes as a result of numerous variables that have changed the country's educational environment (Shaturaev, 2021). Socioeconomic gaps, which have a significant effect on educational performance, are one of the main causes of these changes (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). Because they frequently have difficulty getting high-quality education, students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds tend to lag behind their more advantaged competitors (Rothstein, 2013). This discrepancy has brought attention to the need for changes that will guarantee all students, regardless of their financial situation, fair opportunity.

Indonesian education system history starts to in Pre-Independence or Era Before independence. Diverse influences, such as indigenous educational methods and colonial legacies, shaped Indonesia's educational environment (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). During this time, the curriculum sought to establish in students an awareness of cultural identity and nationalist principles, establishing the groundwork for a

unique educational system in Indonesia (Pambudi & Harjanto, 2020). Post-Independence Curriculum Evolution is the next step in it. Indonesia started a curriculum transformation journey after gaining independence in order to reconcile its educational objectives to the needs of a newly independent country (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). Three major eras can be distinguished in the history of curriculums post-independence: The Curriculum Reformation era, the Curriculum on the Old Order, and the Curriculum on the New Order (Wahyudin & Surwirta, 2020). The curriculum's structure, content, and teaching practices changed significantly with each era, reflecting the socio-political circumstances of the time (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023).

Several Notable Curriculum Models Exist Over time, Indonesia has used diverse curricular approaches with the aim of improving educational standards and resolving new issues. The "Rencana Pendidikan 1964" placed a strong emphasis on academic knowledge and community leadership in an effort to enhance education in Indonesia (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023). Different elements of education were given priority in later educational programs, including the ones published in 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2013, and 2020. These included skill development and character development in addition to theoretical teaching styles. Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi, the 2013 curriculum, was developed in response to several laws and regulations aimed at improving Indonesian education standards (Zidan & Qamariah, 2023).

Even with all the attempts to improve the curriculum, problems still arise, especially when putting some of the ideas into practice. Furthermore, the existence of educational disparity based on a number of variables, including socioeconomic position, gender, disability, and mother language, has been a major motivator for the system's modifications (Gorard & See, 2009). These differences have brought attention to the necessity of inclusive teaching methods that meet the various demands of every student. Furthermore, the regional differences in educational performance between Indonesia's many districts and regions have highlighted how critical it is to address inequality on a systemic basis (Muttaqin, 2018).

And Indonesia intends to address the constantly changing environment of education, advance student-centered learning, improve digital literacy, and encourage the development of critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork programs by introducing the Emancipated curriculum in 2020. With regard to the Indonesian educational system, this curriculum change signifies a substantial shift toward a more progressive and student-centered methodology. The core of the Emancipated curriculum is student-centered learning, in which learners actively participate in their education and are encouraged to take charge of their education (Kemdikbud, 2024). Furthermore, this competency-based and student-centered curriculum was a component of the larger Merdeka Belajar project, which aims to change the educational system in order to better prepare students for the problems of the days to come (Irawati et al., 2022). In addition, the Emancipated curriculum emphasizes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork—all of which are necessary for success in the twenty-first century (Sarumaha et al., 2023). The goal of this all-encompassing approach is to give students the values, information, and abilities they require for success in a world that is associated and evolving continuously.

Emancipated curriculum concept

The Emancipated Curriculum is a curriculum that offers a variety of extracurricular learning opportunities with appropriate material to enhance students conceptual understanding and strengthen their skills (Kemdikbud, 2024). Researchers and educators that support the emancipated curriculum have emphasized the importance of moving away from teacher-centered methods and forward giving students greater influence over their education. The goal of the Emancipated curriculum is to prepare students for the challenges of the twenty-first century and to encourage a deeper engagement with learning by promoting critical thinking, student agency, social justice, interdisciplinary learning, experiential learning, inquiry-based learning, creativity, and innovation (Kemdikbud, 2024).

With an emphasis on critical thinking, social consciousness, and student empowerment, the Emancipated curriculum seeks to make education more engaging, egalitarian, and inclusive for students from all backgrounds (Yasmansyah, 2022). The goal of this curriculum design is to liberate students from inactive positions and empower them to take an active role in their own education, allowing them to influence their own learning and make significant contributions to society. Emancipated Curriculum is in line with modern educational theories that place an emphasis on students' overall growth as well as the development of the abilities and attitudes necessary for their future.

Sopiansyah et al. (2022) said the Emancipated Curriculum prepares students to become active, engaged, and socially responsible citizens by incorporating essential elements like:

1. Critical Thinking: An emancipated curriculum emphasizes the importance of helping students improve their critical thinking abilities. This curriculum encourages students to critically question,

examine, and assess information in order to develop their intellectual independence and a deeper comprehension of difficult subjects.

2. Student Empowerment: The concept of student empowerment lies at the center of the emancipated curriculum. Learners are offered the chance to choose their own learning routes, establish goals, and assume responsibility for their academic careers. This empowerment encourages students to actively participate in their education by establishing a sense of initiative and responsibility for themselves.

3. Social Justice and Equity: Diversity, equity, and social justice are common topics throughout emancipated curriculum. Students gain a wider perspective on the world and become activists for constructive change in their communities by tackling societal concerns and encouraging empathy and understanding.

4. Interdisciplinary Learning: Emancipated curriculum support interdisciplinary teaching methods that link many topic areas and promote an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. Through the integration of varied viewpoints and subject areas, students acquire a more extensive understanding of challenging issues and acquire adaptable problem-solving abilities.

5. Experiential Learning: The emphasis of emancipated curriculum is on possibilities for experiential learning that let students use their academic knowledge in real-world situations. Experiential learning, practical projects, and community involvement develop critical abilities needed for success in a variety of settings.

6. Inquiry-Based Learning: Emancipated curriculum encourage students to ask questions, look for solutions, and conduct research and exploration using inquiry-based learning methodologies. Through encouraging a spirit of inquiry and curiosity, students gain a deeper knowledge of the material and build a passion for learning that lasts a lifetime.

7. Creativity and Innovation: Through project-based learning, design thinking, and cooperative activities, emancipated curriculum promote creativity, innovation, and problem-solving abilities. This curriculum equips students to adapt to changing settings and make valuable contributions to society by encouraging them to think creatively and investigate innovative approaches.

Conclusively, the development of the Indonesian educational system is indicative of a deliberate endeavour to address the obstacles and inequalities that exist in the present educational structure. The Indonesian education system aims to establish a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students by acknowledging and addressing variables including geographic variances, educational inequality, and socioeconomic disparities (Mukminin et al., 2019). Indonesia's education system will become more progressive and responsive as a result of the adoption of programs like the Emancipated Curriculum, which demonstrate a commitment to evolving to meet the demands of students and society.

Aligning culturally responsive teaching with the emancipated curriculum
In the framework of English Language Teaching (ELT) under the Emancipated Curriculum, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) aims to integrate students' cultural backgrounds into the teaching and learning process while also recognizing and appreciating Indonesia's rich cultural diversity. The Emancipated Curriculum offers an excellent foundation for integrating CRT in ELT courses since it places a strong emphasis on the creation of a comprehensive Indonesian identity. In examining the points where these frameworks relate to one another, the researcher emphasizes the shared concepts between them as well as Universitas Negeri Semarang's integration methods in the current context.

Understanding culturally responsive teaching and the emancipated curriculum
According to Ladson-Billings (1995), the core of culturally responsive teaching is recognizing and appreciating students' cultural backgrounds in order to create inclusive learning environments. On the other hand, the Emancipated Curriculum, which was implemented in Indonesia, is strongly related to Freire's (1970) notion of critical pedagogy since it also advocates for educational freedom and student empowerment.

Shared Principles: Promoting inclusivity, equity, and student-centeredness are core values of both the Emancipated curriculum and CRT. The significance of appreciating and respecting students' cultural identities and experiences in the classroom is emphasized by CRT, as stated by Ladson-Billings (1995). The idea of education as a liberatory praxis is in line with the Emancipated curriculum, which places the same importance on student independence, responsibility, and societal relevance.

Furthermore, personalized and flexible learning pathways are supported by both the Emancipated Curriculum and CRT, which oppose a one-size-fits-all approach to education. According to Gay (2010), in order to promote student engagement and academic performance, CRT advises teachers to modify their

lesson plans in order to better suit the cultural norms and communication preferences of their students. In the same way, the Emancipated Curriculum supports student-centered strategies that let students follow their passions and explore their interests while staying connected in their cultural heritage and values from Indonesia (Purwadi, 2020).

Universitas Negeri Semarang implementation strategies
In order to achieve the newest Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) Vision, which is essentially to be a pioneer of educational excellence, UNNES expresses this commitment through a variety of integration methods in accordance with their Main Working Indicators (IKU). These strategies are as follows:

Curriculum design
As stated in IKU 6 UNNES: Program Studi Bekerjasama dengan Mitra Kelas Dunia, a university's ability to collaborate on study programs with top-tier partners—such as developing curriculum together—is a sign that it is achieving educational excellence (Yuliati et al., 2024). UNNES designs its curriculum with a focus on cultural relevance and diversity, echoing the principles of CRT (Gay, 2010). In subjects such as Language Material Development, Theories and Principles in TEFL, Syllabus Development, and Theories and Principles in Language Assessment, when creating lesson plans students are thought to take consideration of their target learners current learning environment, acknowledge the Indonesian curriculum, and attempt to incorporate international curriculum such as CRT. Incorporating diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices ensures that the curriculum resonates with students from varied cultural backgrounds.

Professional development
According to UNNES IKU 3: Dosen berlegiatan di Luar Kampus, academic staff members are required to uphold the Tridharma of Higher Education, which encourages teaching, research, and development as well as community service to encourage intellectual generation as a form of service to the state and nation. This means that off-campus activities are not only important for students, but also play a significant role for lecturers (Yuliati et al., 2024). To improve pedagogical abilities and cultural competency, UNNES provides faculty training (Paris & Alim, 2014). Teachers acquire the skills necessary to integrate CRT principles into their instruction through workshops and seminars, which promote inclusive learning environments.

Student-centered pedagogies
According to UNNES IKU 7: Kelas yang Kolaboratif dan Partisipatif, an exciting and engaging learning environment will be produced by utilizing innovative instructional techniques and multimedia (Yuliati, 2024). This will lead to interactive discussions between students and instructors, which can teach them critical thinking, problem-solving, reasoning, expressing opinions, respecting differences in points of view, and leadership skills. And develop the ability to think critically in order to draw conclusions and reach a consensus from learning outcomes that will create a memorable and long-lasting learning experience. As a means of fulfilling the university's objective of being a leader in educational excellence, creative and innovative learning activities are therefore expected to produce graduates with integrity. Through interactive and collaborative teaching techniques, UNNES places a high priority on student empowerment and participation (hooks, 1994). Courses such as "English for Business" and "Cross-Cultural Understanding" require students to work in groups to select and study specific topics. They then present their findings to the class to have a class discussion and the lecturer is present to supervise and provide further explanations of the material after the discussion. By valuing the voice and initiative of their students' teachers encourage discussion, critical thinking, and cultural validation.

Assessment and feedback
The importance of active and participatory learning activities, where students and teachers engage in collaborative and interactive teaching techniques, is emphasized by UNNES IKU 7: Kelas yang Kolaboratif dan Partisipatif (Yuliati et al., 2024). To establish an engaging and memorable learning environment, creative teaching strategies and media, including case studies, team-based projects, and technology-supported communication, are employed. UNNES employs evaluation procedures that are culturally sensitive and acknowledge a variety of forms of knowledge and expression. The majority of UNNES English Education lecturers always explain the assessment system for their subject at the first meeting of the semester. For example, in the course on extensive reading, the lecturers explain what the

students will be doing, how many points or scores they will receive if they complete all of the assignments, and how much of their attendance, weekly assignment, mid test, and final test will count toward their final score. The goals of assessments are to be fair, open, and representative of the cultural backgrounds and learning preferences of students.

Community partnerships
In order to enhance educational opportunities and advance cross-cultural interaction, UNNES encourages partnerships with nearby communities (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Through these collaborations, students can interact with a variety of viewpoints and apply what they've learned to actual situations. Are explained in IKU 2: Mahasiswa Mendapat Pengalaman di Luar Kampus and IKU 4: Praktisi Mengajar di Dalam Kampus (Yuliati, 2024). It highlights the need of getting students involved in a variety of off-campus activities in universities striving for excellence in education (Yuliati et al., 2024). Through these experiences, students are better equipped to become future leaders by developing both hard and soft abilities. Internships, independent study, teaching at other campuses, foreign student mobility programs, community service initiatives, research, and entrepreneurship are a few examples of off-campus activities. Moreover, the university's dedication to academic achievement is demonstrated by the presence of experienced practitioners teaching on campus, who enhance the current curriculum and give students the experiences and skills they need for the workforce. For instance, in order to teach English for Business (EFB) more accurately and in a way that students can understand, lecturers work in conjunction with outside experts in the field. Students receive supervised direct practical exercises in addition to learning in class with practitioners. It is hoped that after taking this course, which is taught by experienced educators and practitioners, students won't have any trouble adjusting to life outside of school. Another instance is the GIAT program that Unnes is putting into place, where students will work closely with groups from different departments to interact with the community, get to know the local way of life, and provide educational or other support to improve the community's quality of life for nearly two months.

Remarkable results are achieved for students, teachers, and communities when CRT concepts are included into the Emancipated Curriculum. Academic success, socioemotional health, and civic participation are all reportedly enhanced in culturally sensitive schools (Howard, 2003). UNNES develops self-assured, compassionate, and socially conscious persons in accordance with its mission to lead the way in excellent education by valuing variety and encouraging critical consciousness.

The results of this study have important implications for the existing literature. By concentrating on its implementation in ELT within the Indonesian higher education system, contributes to the increasing body of research on CRT in educational settings. This study's emphasis on the need to incorporate students' cultural origins into the teaching and learning process aligns with previous research that highlights the importance of culturally responsive teaching in developing inclusive and empowered learning environments. The importance emphasized by CRT on encouraging social justice, critical thinking, and student empowerment is in line with the critical pedagogy principles stated by researchers such as Freire. Additionally, the research's analysis of learner-centered strategies, culturally sensitive curriculum design, and academic staff professional development is in line with a growing amount of research on the importance of adapting teaching strategies to accommodate a variety of student needs and establish inclusive learning environments.

The implementation of CRT in ELT classes within the framework of the Emancipated Curriculum presents a promising way to solve the educational issues brought up by cultural variety and evolving student needs, as shown by the analysis of the study's results with those of previous studies. The strategies of student-centered learning, customized learning methods, and encouraging cultural appreciation and awareness are in line with the objectives of CRT and the inclusive education ideals that have been presented in the research. This study broadens on previous research on the advantages of integrating students' cultural experiences and identities into the educational process to improve learning outcomes and advance social equity by highlighting the significance of cultural responsiveness, critical consciousness, and student engagement. All things considered, the results of the research add to the continuing discussion on culturally sensitive in ELT teaching strategies and offer insightful advice to academics, educators, and administrators who want to build more welcoming and independent learning environments.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, the way that English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms at Universitas Negeri Semarang implementing Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) into the Emancipated Curriculum framework shows that this method is proactive in meeting the diverse needs of students from

different cultural backgrounds. Lecturers at this university encourage a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that values critical thinking, cultural validation, and respect for varied viewpoints by placing a high priority on student empowerment, cooperation, and active participation through interactive teaching approaches. The implementation of a student-centered pedagogy not only enhances the entire educational experience but also provides students with important competencies like critical thinking, reasoning, and leadership, readying them for triumph in an increasingly interconnected world.

Universitas Negeri Semarang's focus on developing a learning environment that connects with students' cultural backgrounds is highlighted by its curriculum design approach, which combines cultural relevance and diversity. Lesson plans are made inclusive and interesting for all students by the university educators by using a variety of voices, experiences, and opinions. Furthermore, the institution's emphasis on providing professional development opportunities for academic staff members is important in improving pedagogical skills and cultural competency, which in turn helps to create inclusive learning environments that encourage both intellectual development and community service.

The shift in ELT classrooms toward a learner-centered approach strengthened by the CRT ideas and the Emancipated Curriculum is a step in the right direction toward meeting students' evolving educational requirements. Additionally, Universitas Negeri Semarang encourages cooperative and participatory learning experiences that are consistent with CRT principles in order to execute the Emancipated Curriculum. The university lecturers encourage a transformative learning atmosphere where students develop critical thinking abilities, polite conversation, and an appreciation for and understanding of many cultures through creative teaching methods and a dedication to student empowerment.

FUNDING STATEMENT

REFERENCES

Abednia, A., & Izadinia, M. (2013). Critical pedagogy in ELT classroom: Exploring contributions of critical literacy to learners' critical consciousness. *Language Awareness, 22*(4), 338-352.

Ahmad, J. (2012). English language teaching (ELT) and integration of media technology. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 47*, 924-929.

Ali, S. S. (2021). Culturally responsive teaching: The case of a multicultural ELT classroom in a public sector Asian university. *Korea TESOL Journal, 17*(1), 109-130.

Angga, A., Suryana, C., Nurwahidah, I., Hernawan, A. H., & Prihantini, P. (2022). Komparasi implementasi kurikulum 2013 dan kurikulum merdeka di sekolah dasar Kabupaten Garut. *Jurnal Basicedu, 6*(4), 5877-5889.

Anis, M. (2023). Leveraging artificial intelligence for inclusive English language teaching: Strategies and implications for learner diversity. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, 12*(6).

Apple, M., & Apple, M. W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum*. Routledge.

Baker, W. (2012). From cultural awareness to intercultural awareness: Culture in ELT. *ELT Journal, 66*(1), 62-70.

Bonner, P. J., Warren, S. R., & Jiang, Y. H. (2018). Voices from urban classrooms: Teachers' perceptions on instructing diverse students and using culturally responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society, 50*(8), 697-726.

Byram, M. (1997). 'Cultural awareness' as vocabulary learning. *Language Learning Journal, 16*(1), 51-57.

Chun, E., & Evans, A. (Eds.). (2016). Rethinking cultural competence in higher education: An ecological framework for student development. *ASHE Higher Education Report, 42*(4). John Wiley & Sons.

Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 46*(2), 229-273.

Floris, F. D., & Renandya, W. A. (2020). Promoting the value of non-native English-speaking teachers. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand, 59*, 1-19.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Continuum.

Gay, G. (2002). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse students: Setting the stage. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(6), 613-629.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106-116.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (2nd ed.).* Teachers College Press.

George, C. (2008). *User-centred library websites: Usability evaluation methods*. Elsevier.

Gorard, S., & See, B. H. (2009). The impact of socio-economic status on participation and attainment in science. *Studies in Science Education, 45*(1), 93-129.

Halim, A. (2022). The Indonesian curriculum: Does it retain culturally responsive teaching?. *Journal of English Language and Culture, 11*(1).

Hall, G. (2017). *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action*. Routledge.

Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.* Routledge. Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory Into Practice, 42*(3), 195-202.

Idrus, F. (2014). Initiating culturally responsive teaching for identity construction in the Malaysian classrooms. *English Language Teaching, 7*(4), 53-63.

Irawati, D., Najili, H., Supiana, S., & Zaqiah, Q. Y. (2022). Merdeka belajar curriculum innovation and its application in education units. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan, 6*(2), 2506-2514.

Kementrian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi. (2024). *Sistem informasi kurikulum nasional*. https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/

Kieran, L., & Anderson, C. (2019). Connecting universal design for learning with culturally responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society, 51*(9), 1202-1216.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher, 35*(7), 3-12.

Marwa, M., Cahyono, B. Y., Latief, M. A., & Prayogo, J. A. (2021). Intercultural topics in the Indonesian English language teaching classroom: Contextualizing local and neutral cultures to target and global cultures. *Journal of Intercultural Communication, 21*(1), 34-45.

Meléndez-Luces, J., & Couto-Cantero, P. (2021). Engaging ethnic-diverse students: A research based on culturally responsive teaching for roma-gypsy students. *Education Sciences, 11*(11), 739.

Mukminin, A., Habibi, A., Prasojo, L. D., Idi, A., & Hamidah, A. (2019). Curriculum reform in Indonesia: Moving from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum. *CEPS Journal, 9*(2), 53-72.

Muñiz, J. (2019). Culturally responsive teaching: A 50-state survey of teaching standards. *New America*.

Muttaqin, T. (2018). Determinants of unequal access to and quality of education in Indonesia. *Jurnal Perencanaan Pembangunan: The Indonesian Journal of Development Planning, 2*(1), 1-23.

Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education (6th ed.).* Pearson.

Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching*. McGraw-Hill.

Pambudi, N. A., & Harjanto, B. (2020). Vocational education in Indonesia: History, development, opportunities, and challenges. *Children and Youth Services Review, 115*, 105092.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93-97.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 85-100.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017*). Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.

Practice, *Educational Researcher, 41*(3). (2012): 95, https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244

Rothstein, R. (2013). Why children from lower socioeconomic classes, on average, have lower academic achievement than middle-class children. *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every child an even chance*, 61-74.

Sarumaha, Y. A., Jaya, M. P. S., Nofirman, N., Padilah, P., & Khobir, K. (2023). Revolutionary of curriculum and its challenges in the 21st century. *JIIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan, 6*(8), 5881-5887.

Schleicher, A. (2015). *Schools for 21st-century learners: Strong leaders, confident teachers, innovative approaches.* International Summit on the Teaching Profession. OECD Publishing. 2, rue Andre Pascal, F-75775 Paris Cedex 16, France.

Seidlhofer, B. (2004). 10 research perspectives on teaching English as a lingua franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 24*, 209-239.

Shaturaev, J. (2021). 2045: Path to nation's golden age (Indonesia policies and management of education). *Science and Education, 2*(12), 866-875

Sopiansyah, D., Masruroh, S., Zaqiah, Q. Y., & Erihadiana, M. (2022). Konsep dan implementasi kurikulum MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka). *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal, 4*(1), 34-41.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*. Ascd.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Jarvis, J. M. (2014). Case studies of success: Supporting academic success for students with high potential from ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 37*(3), 191-219.

Tong, F., Luo, W., Irby, B. J., Lara-Alecio, R., & Rivera, H. (2017). Investigating the impact of professional development on teachers' instructional time and English learners' language development: A multilevel cross-classified approach. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 20*(3), 292-313.

Vasquez Heilig, J., Brown, K., & Brown, A. (2012). The illusion of inclusion: A critical race theory textual analysis of race and standards. *Harvard Educational Review, 82*(3), 403-424.

Wahyudin, D., & Suwirta, A. (2020). Politics of curriculum in the educational system in Indonesia. *TAWARIKH, 11*(2), 143-158

Wang, C., Zhang, M., Sesunan, A., & Yolanda, L. (2023). *Technology-driven education reform in Indonesia: A look into the crurent status of the merdeka belajar program.*

Warschauer, M., & Healey, D. (1998). Computers and language learning: An overview. *Language Teaching, 31*(2), 57-71.

Yasmansyah, Y. (2022). Konsep merdeka belajar kurikulum merdeka. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia, 1*(1), 29-34.

Yuliati. (2022). *Internationalisation of the curriculum at one Indonesian university: Decolonial perspectives (Doctoral dissertation).* University of Bristol.

Yuliati., Widowati, E., Margawati, P., Muhammad, A., Cortez Ochoa, A., & Valladares Celis, C. (2024). *The quest for excellence in education: Exploring best practices (Unpublished).*

Zidan, M. R., & Qamariah, Z. (2023). A Literature study on the implementation of merdeka curriculum. *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Ilmu Bahasa, 2*(2), 153-167.