

PRIVILEGE WALK IN CCU CLASS: “IF IN YOUR FAMILY, YOUR MOM IS WORKING MOTHER AND YOUR DAD IS HOUSEHUSBAND, PLEASE TAKE ONE STEP BACK”

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Abstract

Family values is one of the topics covered in Cross Culture Understanding (CCU) class. Delivering the topics regarding various techniques to apply is challenging because the materials are mostly knowledge oriented. Implementing Privilege Walk might be a choice of activity that exposes the students to the materials to help them in internalizing the concepts. Privilege Walk is aimed to make the students identify their privileges in their lives even when they are not aware that the privileges are happening. It is not to blame anyone for having different privileges over others due to religion, race, education, family nurture, etc. The procedure of the activity might take 30–45 minutes depending on the ideas raised. The students take one step back or forward if one statement applies to them. If it is not relevant or if they do not feel comfortable, they do not have to move. The activity was carried out in three CCU classes of Batch 2013 in Odd Semester, Academic Year 2015/2016. The observation was made by the teacher. The study reveals that the students showed enthusiasm in discussing the ideas. It promotes more student centered learning. Teacher is the facilitator for some key ideas which are missed.

Key words: privilege walk, family values, CCU

Background

Cross Culture Understanding (CCU) is a compulsory subject offered in the English Department, Lambung Mangkurat University. The materials include the topics about what culture is, the relationship between language and culture, the importance of understanding culture in studying a foreign language, verbal and nonverbal communication, educational attitudes, personal relationship and so forth. Those materials are designed to help the students comprehending the cultural differences and similarities, especially those which exist in English and Indonesian cultures in terms of knowledge and language uses.

Family values is one of the topics covered in CCU class. Delivering the topics regarding various techniques to apply is challenging because the materials are mostly knowledge oriented in addition to the language expressions. Moreover, students' limited English proficiency in comprehending the materials is also another challenge. Making the students aware of cultural privileges in family values is somewhat an easy and a difficult task. Implementing Privilege Walk might be a choice of activity that exposes the students to the materials to help them in internalizing the concepts and relating it to their closest environment. Privilege Walk is aimed to make the students identify their privileges in their lives even when they are not aware that the privileges are happening. It is not to blame

anyone for having different privileges over others due to religion, race, education, family nurture, etc.

Privilege Walk in CCU class is an engagement activity which is intended to identify the privileges concerning the American and Indonesian family values. Through this activity, it is hoped that the students are aware of the treats that they experience and hold on to during their lives and are able to make a comparison with their American counterparts to raise their better cross cultural understanding. American and Indonesian families might share different and similar family values in upbringing the children. Those differences and similarities show privileges in which some of them might be the cultures of the families and/or the community. This article tries to discuss how the implementation of the Privilege Walk activity is, in three CCU classes regarding the students' responses.

Theoretical Framework

A study on privilege by McIntosh (1989) started due to the background of male's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. She also realized that there is most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. She thinks whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. According to Jordan (2010:2), the participation rate for African Americans in higher education has been noteworthy, yet relatively small as compared to their white counterparts. This shows, either consciously or unconsciously, that even in the field of education, black privileges are not equally taken into account and treated as the white ones.

The word 'privilege' originated from Latin word *privilegium* meaning 'bill or law affecting an individual'; then it developed into *privus* 'private' + *lex, leg-* 'law' (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/privilege>). By Merriam Webster Learner's Dictionary, privilege is defined as the right to say or do something without being punished for it (<http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/privilege>). To bring the awareness of the privileges, McIntosh (1989) applied the Privilege Walk Activity. It is an activity designed to help people understand the effects of societal privileges or rights (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ>).

The significance of understanding privileges is elaborated in "From Cultural and Linguistic Competence Icebreakers, Exercises, Videos and Movies" accessed from <http://www.docfoc.com/clc-icebreakers-and-exercises-final-5pdf>, as cited below:

The purpose of the Privilege Walk exercise is to learn to recognize how power and privilege can affect our lives even when we are not aware it is happening. The purpose is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our life. It is important for the individuals participating in this exercise to challenge themselves and understand some of the privileges that have been granted to them because of their race, religion, education, family upbringing, etc. (2012:10)

As it has been stated, the important thing about being aware on the privileges is that in the end the participants can realize that they live in the world of differences and similarities. Therefore, they must be able to adopt and adapt with the different world.

Some restraints dealing with the activity implementation should be taken care into account. First, some statements might be of a sensitive nature for some individuals.

Second, since this activity is about privilege, every statement might address some small privileges that are based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, or sexual orientation. Third, privilege tends to be invisible to those who are privileged because we tend to not recognize the boosts in position that accumulate over time from those privileges. Next is that this activity is not to make any of the participant embarrassed about the privileges, whether one is highly privileged, moderately privileged or lack privilege. Last, since this exercise can be very triggering, this activity must be done in plenty of time to debrief and reflect what individuals experienced during the privilege walk (<https://ginsberg.umich.edu/content/privilege-walk-activity>). Another important thing is that this activity must be done in silence and if any of the participants feel uncomfortable, they should excuse themselves from the exercise since it must be voluntary

Method

This is a descriptive observational research comprising a cross-sectional study which involved one-time observation. The activity was carried out in three CCU classes of Batch 2013 in Odd Semester, Academic Year 2015/2016. There were 27 students in each Class A1 and Class A2, and 32 students in Class A3. Those classes were handled by the same lecturer. The observation was made by the teacher. The data was obtained from an observation without any intervention or manipulation.

There are various adaptations in every procedure of the Privilege Walk activity. However, these are the procedures which are implemented in the CCU classes. The procedure of the activity might take 30–45 minutes depending on the ideas raised. A list of 23 cultural privileges related to family values were read to the students. Each student takes one step back or forward if one statement applies to them. If it is not relevant or if they do not feel comfortable, they do not have to make a move. After all statements have been read and the actions have been taken, there must be a discussion session to confirm the ideas previously raised.

Results and Discussion

Teacher's Observation

The study reveals that the students showed enthusiasm in discussing the ideas. It promotes more student centered learning due to their eagerness of contributing during the discussion session. Teacher is the facilitator for some key ideas which are missed. In terms of restraints notified by some opinions, in fact during the implementation of the activity, the students looked comfortable either in admitting their privileges through their actions or in discussing some key ideas. They voluntarily moved backward or forward when the statement representing their privileges. To clarify their choice, the students volunteer telling the explanation for their privileges.

Ideas Brainstorming

A quite intriguing discussion happened between the students, involving the teacher, after each statement in the clarification session. The students were excited enough to add ideas on how they view the differences and similarities between the two cultures – American and Indonesian. The gist of the discussion is excerpted as follows:

General Information

Statement No 1 and 2 are counted as rhetoric statement because none of the students are American and their native language is not English. These are the two statements:

Statement No. 1: If you are not an American take one step forward.

Statement No. 2: If your native language is not English, please take one step back.

Child Raising

- a. Statement No. 3: If your parents put you as a newborn in a separate room that belongs only to you, take one step back.

In Indonesia, as a newborn, most parents used to put their newborn in the same room until s/he is over or more than ten years old. This is a little bit different with what happened in the US as stated below:

In the United States, it is not uncommon for parents to put a newborn in a separate room that belongs only to the child. This helps to preserve parents' privacy and allows the child to get used to having his or her own room, which is seen as a first step toward personal independence. ... This taught about independence and individualism. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:89)

However, nowadays due to the increased knowledge of parenting, few parents from Indonesia start to teach this personal independence and individualism to their kids at an early age

- b. Statement No. 4: If your parents believe that 'Children should "cut the (umbilical) cord" and are encouraged not to be "tied to their mothers" apron strings", take one step forward.

In Indonesia, traditional parents do not want to separate with their children although they are already nineteen or twenty years old. If it is possible, parents always want their children under their 'eyes.' This value differs with the American one as it is described below:

In the process of their socialization, children learn to "look out for number one" and to "stand on their own two feet." (Levine & Adelman, 1982:89)

In the United States, children are always taught to reach for the best one and be independent in terms of mental and physical condition.

- c. Statement No. 5: If it was assumed from a young age that you would go to college, please take one step forward.

For some Indonesian people who still live under the poverty standard, thinking of sending their children to university is up to their par. It is possible that the children never think of having higher education due to their parents' financial circumstance.

- d. Statement No. 6: If you are taught at a very early age to make decisions and be responsible for your actions, take one step back.

Being able to choose one own path is not initially trained in Indonesia. Some parents still interfere with their children's lives even though they are mature enough to decide. This does not show that decision making is important to be exposed, and this is quite different with what happened in the United States as illustrated here:

Many children are taught at a very early age to make decisions and be responsible for their actions. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:89)

- e. Statement No. 7: If you as children work for money outside the home as a first step to establishing autonomy, take one step back.

Earning money at a very young age is so much common in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the aim of this is quite different with those kids in the United States. They are taught about establishing autonomy related to their jobs. Then, in Indonesia, it is more due to how to earn money for themselves or the family. Some kids even become the breadwinners of the family. In the United States, the purpose of allowing children to work is more on morality than economy as described below:

Often children work for money outside the home as a first step establishing autonomy. Nine- or ten-year-old children may deliver newspapers in their neighborhoods and save or spend their earnings. Teenagers (13 to 18 years) may babysit at neighbors' homes in order to earn a few dollars a week. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:89)

- f. Statement No. 8: If you receive a weekly allowance at an early age, please take one step back.

Most of the students admitted that they collect a daily pocket money from their parents when they were little. Only a small number of students whose parents already gave a weekly allowance. It shows that most parents take much control of their children's finance. They do not train how to manage the money as early as possible. As people are getting more educated, some parents might realize the importance of teaching money management to their young children as it happens in the United States:

Receiving a weekly allowance at an early age teaches children to budget their money, preparing them for future financial independence. Many parents believe that managing money helps children learn responsibility as well as appreciate the value of money. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:89)

Young Adulthood

The cultural values treated in the family during young adulthood might vary from families to families. Some ideals are represented by the statements during the Privilege Walk activity.

- a. Statement No. 9: If you are encouraged, but not forced, to "leave the nest" between the age of 18 and 21 years, take one step forward.

In the United States, even now some other Asian countries, it is quite common that children who are aged eighteen to live separately with their parents. First possible reason is that it time to go to college in which it requires the students to live in a dormitory or boarding house. The other point is that starting an independent life is part of the American culture at that young adulthood. In Indonesia, the first reason is already a quite common background of letting parents to have their early twenty children to have a separate live. However, young adults do not easily 'leave' their parents' house, except they got married. Either the first or the second reason, parents are commonly looking for excuses in order that their young adult children still 'live' with them. This certainly differ with what happens in the United States:

Upon reaching an appropriate age (usually between 18 and 21 years), children are encouraged, but not forced, to “leave the nest” and begin an independent life. After children leave home they often find social relationships and financial support outside the family. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

- b. Statement No. 10: If you think your parents will arrange marriages for their children, take one step forward.

Arrange marriage is a strange idea for American people although they have the matchmaking and blind date terms, but in Asian countries arrange marriage is quite common. In Indonesia, in the past the practice of arrange marriage was famous, but now it is getting less practiced because the children want to have their own choice on their future husband or wife. In the United States, for non-immigrant citizens, they are not familiar with arrange marriage as described here:

Parents do not arrange marriages for their children, nor do children usually ask permission of their parents to get married. Romantic love is most often the basis for marriage in the United States; young adults meet their future spouses through other friends, at school, at jobs, and in organizations and religious institutions.(Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

- c. Statement No. 11: If you need to ask permission of your parents to get married, take one step back.

Even though in the United States, children are free to have their own choice on their future partner, parents’ approval is quite necessary. They expect both families from the man and the woman bless their marriage like it is stated below:

Although children choose their own spouses, they still hope their parents will approve of their choices. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

In Indonesia, parents’ approval is important. A marriage can be cancelled if it lack the parents’ agreement. In some rare cases, children continue with their marriage without the parents’ blessing.

- d. Statement No. 12: If your parents feel that children should make major life decisions by themselves, take one step back.

The concept of love in the United States is not represented by managing and controlling the children’s life. They give opportunities to the children to decide their own life. It is somewhat different with some Indonesian parents who still consider loving means taking control and making sure that everything is in the right path. However some other Indonesian parents might apply this value in their families:

Strong love between parents and children is universal and this is no exception in the American family. Coexisting with such love in the American family are cultural values of *self-reliance* and independence. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

The Elderly

- a. Statement No. 13: *If in your culture, older people may seek their own friends rather than become too emotionally dependent on their children, take one step back.*

The philosophy of independence and individualism remains the same although people are getting older in the United States. They try to depend on themselves in any cases, as reflected here:

Societal and familial treatment of the *elderly* also reflects this independence and individualism. Their financial support is often provided by social security or welfare systems which decrease dependence on their family. Additionally, older people may seek their own friends rather than become too emotionally dependent on their children. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

On the contrary, in Indonesia, the elderly expecting much on their children in terms of finance and home cares.

- b. Statement No. 14: If older relatives of yours are sent to nursing homes rather than integrate them into the homes of their children or grandchildren, please take one step forward.

In the United States, sending the elderly to nursing homes or retirement community is a perfect plan since the elderly can enjoy life more with their companion rather than staying in their children or grandchildren's houses but they are left alone because those children and grandchildren are busy with their own lives.

Some families send their older relatives to nursing homes rather than integrate them into the homes of the children or grandchildren. ... On the other hand, there are many older people who choose to live in *retirement* communities where they have the companionship of other older people and the *convenience* of many recreational and social activities close to home. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:90)

On the other hand, if it happens in Indonesia, the children are considered abandoning the parents because they send the parents away from their homes.

The Nuclear and the Extended Family

A different family management might be viewed culturally. People who come from strong kinship and family bond tend to stay living together although they have got married. So, a house might be dwelled by grandparents to grandchildren. However, there is also another culture which stresses on being independent and building small household. This creates the division of nuclear and extended family as it is represented in this opinion:

The distinction between the nuclear and extended family is important because it suggests the extent of family *ties* and *obligations* to relatives. In extended families, the children and parents have strong ties and obligations to relatives. It is common in these families to support older family members to have intensive contact with relatives, and to establish *communal* housing. The nuclear family usually has its own separate *residence* and is economically independent of other family members. Relatives are still considered "family" but are often outside the basic obligations that people have to their immediate families. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:91)

The statement No 15, 16 and 17 below also deal with the distinguished ideas on 'small' and 'big' families:

- a. Statement No. 15: If you live with your nuclear family at home, please take one step back.
- b. Statement No. 16: If you live with your extended family at home, please take one step back.
- c. Statement No. 17: If in your culture, when couples marry, they are expected to live independently of their parents and become "heads of households" when they have children, please take one step forward.

According to Levine and Adelman (1982), American family is nuclear family, and extended family is commonly found in other countries.

In the United States, the nuclear family, which consists of the father, the mother, and the children, is considered "the family." The extended family, common in other cultures, includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, and in-laws. (pg. 91)

People in the United States usually have their own living when they get married. They don't depend on the parents anymore since they are taught about independence since they were born. In Indonesia, married couple might still live in the parents' house due to the reason that they are not ready to have their own living. This makes the practice of having extended family look so much communal.

d. Statement No. 18: If in your culture, in times of financial need, a nuclear family members usually borrow money from a bank rather than from relatives, please take one step back.

New household is usually in need of financial help. In some cultures, it is easier to borrow from relatives rather than going through the complicated process and thick requirements of a bank loan. Nevertheless, this idea changes as it is stated by Levine and Adelman (1982):

It is not unusual in times of financial need for nuclear family member to *borrow* money from a bank rather than from relatives. (Pg. 91)

People discover that borrowing money from a bank is fairer than having a loan from family.

Familial Roles

The parents' roles customarily are separated between the father and the mother as they are represented in statements No. 19, 20, and 21.

- a. Statement No. 19: If in your culture, traditionally the male has been responsible for financial support of the home and family members, please take one step back.
- b. Statement No. 20: If in your culture, the female has often been responsible for emotional support, child-raising, and housekeeping, please take one step forward.
- c. Statement No. 21: If in your house, your father is as "the bread-winner" and your mother is as the housewife, please take one step back.

In both traditional American and Indonesia cultures, there is a distinction on what a father and a mother must do in the household. As the head of the family, the father is responsible to earn money and mother is the one who must take care of the domestic chores. It is represented in this opinion:

Traditionally, the male has been responsible for financial support of the home and family members. The female has often been responsible for emotional support, childraising, and housekeeping. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:92)

d. Statement No. 22: If in your family, your mom is working mother and your dad is househusband, please take one step back.

Nowadays there is a shift in the parents' roles. Father is not always the breadwinner of the family. Then, the term 'househusband' develops signifying this roles alteration, accompanying the old term 'housewife' as Levine and Adelman (1982) state:

However, among some people in parts of the United States, these parental functions are no longer fixed. The *prescribed* role of the man as “breadwinner” and the woman as housewife is changing. These changes include working mothers, “househusbands,” and an increasing number of day-care centers for children. Yet, traditional roles may be *preserved* even in households where the wife is working. (Pg.92)

In Indonesia, similar thing is progressing. More and more working mother can be found in every family. Although the motivation is more on the financial matter, the ambition of professionalism and giving society contribution also grow at the same time the working mothers step on their careers. This has been clearly mentioned by Levine and Adelman (1982):

Some mother work because of a financial need and not because of a desire to change their role from housewife to breadwinner. Others choose to work because they feel that financial support of the family should be shared by the husband and the wife. Still others are motivated to work because of *professional* interests and a desire to contribute to society. More than 50 percent of American women are part of the *labor* force. (Pg. 93)

Stability and Change in the Family

Statement No. 23: If your family has strong religious or ethnic backgrounds which continue to contribute to the preservation of the close-knit extended family, please take one step forward.

Some religious and ethnic values in the family must compete with recent conditions which have been different with the old times. Both in Indonesia and the United States, the situations are quite similar. Economy and society are among the causes in family value changes. Family values should actually be strengthened in facing the world of change nowadays. This is represented by this statement:

At one time, traditional roles and religion had a much stronger influence on the nuclear family. Now, economic conditions, societal attitudes, and job mobility in the United States compete with traditional influences. (Levine & Adelman, 1982:93)

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Privilege Walk activity has successfully been conducted in CCU classes because it triggers the students to realize their privileges which they have already held on to. The discussion after the statement giving is a must as the confirmation and clarification stages to students’ understanding. It especially stresses on finding differences and similarities, not focuses on underestimating one’s culture which poles apart. It is recommended that the students’ comprehension on the Family Values topics is assessed by having a test, since it was not done in this study. Although the result of overall students’ achievement in the CCU class is not quite satisfactory because the final test covers all topics during the semester, this Privilege Walk activity is worth trying in terms of making the students aware and understand the different and similar privileges that might exist among cultures.

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