

Designing Multiculturalism-Based ELT Syllabus for Civics Study (MBESCS)

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Abstract

Curriculum which should be developed into syllabus is considered as the key guide for any teaching and learning program. It contains the aims/goals of learning and the sequent target materials to learn by the learners. The Civics Study Program of the Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, University of Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta, Indonesia which had various students descend from different regencies and with different cultural backgrounds did not access the students needs in its syllabus. This paper aims at describing and disseminating the developmental research finding which was in the form of syllabus design using Multicultural Approach (Multicultural-Based English Syllabus for Civics Study /MBESCS) to the readers. This study involved 40 students. The data was gathered qualitatively with conceptually content analysis and quantitatively with conceptual and statistical analysis. It was conducted with the following procedures: (1) exploring the conventional syllabus content; (2) developing the syllabus prototype cyclically; and (3) examining the effectiveness of the syllabus by doing quasi-experimental design with t-test computation. This study resulted that the designed syllabus was considered appropriate to use in the present research setting for the following considerations: (1) it was based on the needs analysis and supporting theories; (2) the result of experiment using quasi-experimental design showed significant gain scores of t-test > t-table with $\alpha = 0.05$. It means that the designed syllabus was effective to use for the heterogeneous culture students.

Keywords: Multicultural Approach, syllabus, developmental research, ELT, teachers

Introduction

The need of English as a means of world communication cannot be avoided by anyone today, especially for those directly have involvements with the world outsides. Meanwhile, English is still considered as a “haunt” for its difficulty to learn in Indonesia. It is caused by the position of English in Indonesia as a foreign language (EFL) and not as a second language (L2). As an EFL, English is only treated as a knowledge, since the use of English is not supported by any community in this country. That is why, English mastery or ability in using English for both spoken and written forms is still regarded as a “luxurious” thing. Such condition demands the teachers to always find new approaches or methods in their teaching process which enable their learners to learn English joyfully, by considering that learning English for fun may improve their competences.

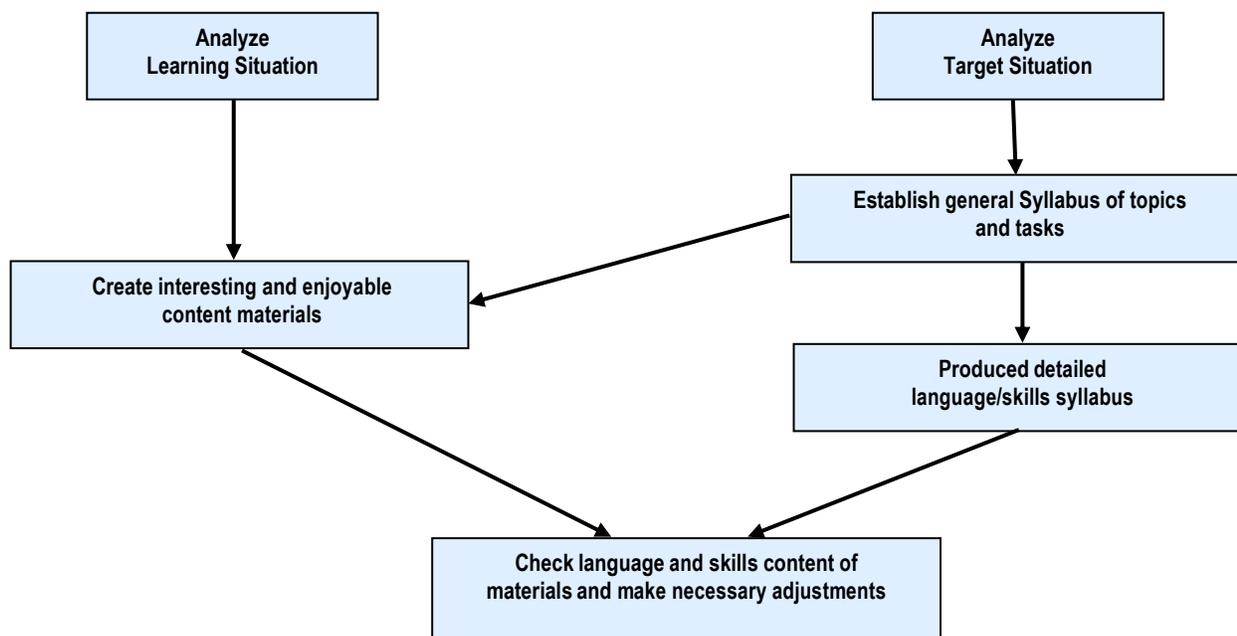
In line with the demand of English use at any areas, there have been many learning approaches and/or methods suggested by the relevant experts, as what Richards (2001) called “Beyond Methods” such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL), Multiculturalism, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), and Quantum Learning. The availability of those concepts should enable the teachers to find their needs in defining the most appropriate methods to implement in their classrooms. But not every teacher has neither intention nor knowledge to improve his/her teaching process by making use of the existence of the concepts as written above. As this fact also occurred in the Civics Study program, the Faculty of Teacher’s training and Education University of Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia in the last 2010/2011 Academic Year. An early observation made by the writer showed that the teacher used improper methods, beside it also showed that he did not acknowledge with the new ELT methods as mentioned above. It can be approved from the available syllabus used by the teacher of English in that time. The conventional syllabus did not illustrate that the designer accessed the current English language teaching (ELT) principles such as: teaching the four language skills, focusing learning activities on learners (students-centred learning / SCL), improving Bloom’s taxonomy integrated learning aspects or domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor), accessing authentic materials, using authentic assessment and all of the learning process base on the need analysis.

In connection with the facts written above, this study aimed at designing an alternative syllabus using multicultural approach.

The Principle and the Design of Syllabus

Syllabus is a fundamental part in teaching and learning process. Teachers use a syllabus as the guidance in making a lesson plan in a teaching process. A syllabus can be defined as a compendium containing the heads of a discourse, and the like; an abstract (see www.thinkexist.com). A syllabus is a document which contains what will (or at least what should) be learnt (Hutchinson and Waters, 1994: 80).

Figure 1. The role of syllabus in a learning-centered approach (Hutchinson and Waters, 1994: 93)



Syllabus design can be interpreted as an effort to design a syllabus. A syllabus is a specification of the content of a course of instruction, and lists what will be taught and tested (Richards, 2001: 2). It means that syllabus must cover the specific content of a course and listed sequentially from the easiest to the more complicated materials. Hutchinson and Waters (1994: 90-94) divide the approaches of syllabuses, namely as follows: (1) a language-centered syllabus; (2) a skills-centered syllabus; (3) a learning-centered approach; (4) the post-hoc approach of materials. In this case, the learners are motivated to enjoy the material in language learning. The process of playing the role of a syllabus based on a learning-centered approach is presented at Figure 1.

In connection with the concepts written above, this study covered integrated syllabus by its content, that is, by accessing the four aspects of language, skills, learning and materials. In this case, materials content was intentionally focused on the students various cultural backgrounds. This was considered important to do since the observed classrooms had various ethnics with their specific cultural differences.

The Nature of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education grew out of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, and is in part a response to the changing demographics of any nation (Banister & Maher, 1998). It is intended to unite the learners cultural differences to avoid relationships breakings which is defined as “Diversity Within Unity” by Banks et al. (2001). It also means that “A goal of multicultural education is to prepare students to function in today’s diverse society”. It is designed to develop citizens

in democratic society by considering the students needs. It considers how issues of race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, and abilities/disabilities are intertwined with educational process and content.

Nieto (2002: 29) defines multicultural education itself as "a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students" characterized by seven basic characteristics: antiracist education, basic education, important for all students, pervasive throughout the curriculum, education for social justice, a process, and critical pedagogy. Nieto also defined that all aspects of society, including students, parents, families and wider communities need to be involved in decisions to make school communities more inclusive (p. 68).

The development of ELT has made many approaches in delivering the materials. The approaches are developed to motivate the learners in language learning. Multicultural Approach is also developed based on the learners, circumstance. In this case Multicultural Approach is based on the learners' culture because the learners sometimes come from the different regions. These learners also bring their native cultures in the classroom. It cannot be ignored to develop a good model in teaching and learning process. Teaching with a Multicultural perspective encourages appreciation and understanding of the other cultures as well as one's own. Based on the above statement, Multiculturalism does not only suggest a variation in teaching process, but also gives a moral value to the learners how to respect other cultures. The main concept of Multiculturalism in this study is to teach English by considering the learners various cultures.

Purposes that in the classroom setting is possible to foster the formation of what is called a third culture, conceived of as the intersection of multiple discourses rather than as a reified body of information to be intellectualized and remembered (Kramsch via Hinkel, 2007: 29). Based on Kramsch statement, cultures in the classroom cannot be separated from the success in teaching and learning process. The various cultures must be acknowledged as a good power to strengthen the different motivations in English learning. Related to this insight, Byram (in Hinkel, 2007: 197) stated that: (1) the development of communicative competence for use in situations the learners might expect to encounter; (2) the development of an awareness of the nature of language and language learning; (3) the development of insight into the foreign culture and positive attitudes toward foreign people.

To respect another culture is not an easy matter. The status quo in Indonesia cannot be neglected from this event. Many cultural conflicts sometimes happen in Indonesia, for example in Kalimantan island. It shows that culture is very sensitive. But, the sensitivity of culture may enable Indonesia to be a strong country by implementing Multicultural Education in its educational system to lead the young generations or learners to have high tolerance toward the multi-societies phenomena with different ethnics, races, and religions (Mahfud, 2010: 1985).

The Mechanism of Multicultural Approach

The main point in this study is the assessments of the learners English learning process. The assessments must focus on the learners' cultures. A simple example is in writing assessment. The idea in writing assessment must cover the various cultures brought by the learners. In this case, the writer roled as a supervisor or

a counselor to control the assessment process. As an example, the students from Papua was given the topics which involved their cultural backgrounds. In this case, the writer's role was as the determiner in improving the motivation of learners in their learning of writing by embedding the cultural differences between the Papua students and others. As a teacher, the writer must be able to see the result objectively, by considering the ability, the culture, and the idea of learners. In this case, the teacher must make the students realize on how to respect others.

The Current Development on TEFL Curriculum and Syllabus in Indonesia

Since its independence in 1945, Indonesia has been implemented seven curriculums, they are the 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1994, 2004, and 2006. The 2004 curriculum is wellknown as Competency-Based Curriculum or CBC for short, while the 2006 curriculum is also popular as Education Unit Level Curriculum or School-Based Curriculum or SBC for short. In connection with curriculum implementation, Sujana (2011) said that one of the theoretical and practical bases in the current curriculum (School-Based Curriculum/SBC) implementation in Indonesia is the literation level within each of the education targets. In other words, there is literation level which has been defined as a prior level of achievement for each of education level.

Indonesian National Education Department (*Depdiknas*, 2004) quoted Wells (1987) views who defined the four levels of literation, namely: performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. At performative level, learners are demanded to read, write, and speak by implementing the used symbols. At the functional level, they are demanded to use the target language to fulfil daily life needs like reading parts of newspapers or manual reading they are interested in. At informational level, they are expected to access knowledge by making use of their language competences. While at the level of epistemic, they are expected to be able to transform their knowledges in English. Epistemic level is implemented in higher education levels. Based on the above identification, this study implemented epistemic level within the designed alternative syllabus. The designed syllabus contained materials that enable the learners to use English to transform their knowledges especially related to civics study.

Research Method

This research was conducted to develop a new syllabus based on the cultural differences of learners. This research used a Research and Development (R&D) approach. R&D is a process to develop and validate educational products (Gall et al, 2003: 402). It was conducted by three steps: (1) exploration, which aimed at analysing the available syllabus conceptually based on Hutchinson and Waters (1994) theory; (2) prototype development, which aimed at designing the most appropriate syllabus model using multicultural approach, and (3) experiment, which aimed at testing the effectiveness of the understudied syllabus (Multicultural-based Syllabus for Civics Study or MBSCS for short).

Research Subjects

The research subjects in this study was the first semester students of Civics Study Program of University of Ahmad Dahlan (UAD), Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Civics Study Program of UAD only had one class in the first semester of 2011 academic year. It consisted of 48 students who came from different regions of Indonesia.

Data Collection and Data Analysis Models

The research data was gathered and then analysed by conducting the following activities. First, investigation started by analyzing the cultural problems phenomenon

of the novice learners at the Civics Study (needs analysis) and the available conventional syllabus. The available syllabus was analyzed based on the concept of Hutchinson and Waters (1994: 99-104). The results of analysing the learners needs and the conventional syllabus content were, then, used to base in developing the alternative syllabus content, by embedding learners cultural issues as their target learning materials to discuss.

Second, syllabus prototype development for the research participants. The available syllabus needed developing for it was defined less-appropriate with the learners needs who descent from various different regions, even countries. This step was intended to implement and evaluate the designed syllabus prototype cyclically by using multicultural approach. In this case, learning materials which accessed various learners cultural issues and engaged with their learning target in Civics Study Program were used as instruments to achieve their learning goals. The procedures of developing syllabus was defined by using Glanz and Zuber-Skerritt models. Glanz model includes cyclical activities on: (1) focus selection, (2) data gathering, (3) analysis and data interpretation, (4) acting, reflecting, and modification (Gall et al., 2003: 585-591). Zuber-Skerritt model (as quoted by Cohen et al., 2000: 235) includes: (1) strategic planning, (2) implementing the plan (action), (3) observation, evaluation and self-evaluation, (4) critical and self-critical reflection on the results of (1)-(3) and making decisions for the next cycle of research. The above procedures was simplified as follows:

Prototype implementation → evaluation → revision → the new prototype implementation → evaluation → revision → and so on, to reach the ideal Multicultural-based syllabus (Hermayawati, 2008 : 22).

Third, experimental procedure. In this study, since the setting had only one class, the writer directly conducted post-test because the class was given pre-test and treatments during the prototype development or the second step. The result of the pre-test and the post-test were analysed statistically. In general, this research was conducted as follows: (1) the writer gave the pre-test to the class to find out the first data assumption; (2) the writer gave the Multicultural treatments based on Multicultural-based syllabus to the learners; (3) the writer gave a post-test to find out the effectiveness of the developed syllabus.

Syllabus Design

Multicultural-Based English Syllabus for Civics Study (MBESCS) emphasizes the approach of learning which is related to the learners cultural backgrounds differences. The aim of this syllabus is to provide both the teacher of English and the Civics Study students with Civics issues provided in English. It covers the standard of competency, the basic competences, and the indicators of learning. The difference between the conventional and the alternative syllabuses is provided in Table 1.

The standard competency of MBESCS is as follows: (1) Listening skill: students ability to comprehend the appeared issues related to Civics in English, and they can afford their cogitation related to Civics issues in English. The course takes 100 minutes in every meeting. The learning strategies of every course are discussion, talks exercise, and practice. The sources of the materials were taken

from Tempo Magazine, English for Law Students, Nationalism written by Hutchinson and Soge and other authentic hand-outs materials.

Table 1

The differences of the available syllabus and the new syllabus

No	Differences	Available Syllabus	New Syllabus
1.	Linguistics aspect	The available syllabus does not give clear purpose of linguistics. For example: the students are able to comprehend the unit without emphasizing to the	The new syllabus emphasizes the process of linguistics aspects. For example: the writing and speaking tasks explore the learners competences in using language components integratedly in developing speaking and writing skills.
2.	Cultural Pragmatic Language Use	The available syllabus does not provide Cultural Pragmatic Language Use.	The new syllabus provides more chance to the learners to explore their Cultural Pragmatic Language Use.
3.	Language Skills Development	The available syllabus does not contain the specific language skill. It can be shown from the verbs as follows: “combat”, “socialize”, and “comprehend”.	The new syllabus gives more chance to develop the target language skills. It can be shown from the use of the verbs: “write down”, and “extend”.
4.	Literation Level development	The available syllabus does not provide clear level literation.	The new syllabus develops epistemic literation, that is ability in using the target language learning (English) to transform civics materials to others.

Based on the table above, it can be defined that there are three differences between the conventional and the alternative syllabus. The differences are in the existence of linguistics aspect, the pragmatic culture, and the language skills.

Discussion

In this case, the product was in the form of an alternative syllabus using Multicultural Approach which, then, can be used by the teachers of English in Civics Study Program of University of Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It is considered appropriate with the learners needs for they come from various islands with their different ethnics, races, beliefs and/or religions. This Multicultural-based syllabus focuses on the details of the learning indicators, and the cultural problems which, then, can be used as the basic of defining English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials as instruments to achieve learners learning goals.

The effectiveness of the available syllabus was examined by giving pretest

and posttest to the research participants. The pre-test aimed at finding the first data assumption from the learners language ability. From the result of the pre-test, it was found that the highest score was 65, 71 and the lowest score was 5, 71. The total score was 35. Total scores were divided by 0, 35 to find out the final score. The percentage of the post-test is: $36,85 \times 100\% = 36,85\%$. Percentage of the success of the test before treatment is 36,85%. With the criteria as follows:

Table 2

The Description of Students' Achievement before the Action

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
≥ 80	0	0%	A
65-79	2	4,17%	B
41-64	18	37,5%	C
21-40	20	41,67%	D
≤ 20	8	16,67%	E
Total	48	100%	

According to the data above, it can be defined that students still had difficulties in their English Language Learning. Based on the above case, the writer considered to implement Multicultural-Based English Syllabus for Civics Study (MBESCS).

Table 3

Questions' characteristics

Questions	Characteristic of the questions
1-10	Listening test from the passage "Forgiving" from Tempo Magazine English Edition
11-20	Understanding of common knowledge about norms in the society
21-25	Reading understanding to the passage about Malay's norms
26-30	Reading understanding to the passage about forgiving in Idul Fitri
31-35	Essay of the understanding to their culture in their region

In MBESCS treatments, the students could improve their knowledge which was related to the course because this syllabus gave more chance to the students to elaborate their opinions freely. The characteristic of the questions are presented in Table 3 .

The success of the learners English learning is also provided in the following Table 4.

Table 4*The Description of Students' Achievement before the Action*

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Category
≥80	40	83,33%	A
65-79	8	16,67%	B
41-64	0	0%	C
21-40	0	0%	D
<20	0	0%	E
Total	48	100%	

Based on the table above, 83, 33% of students got the score ≥ 80 and the highest score was 100. The eight students got the score 65-79 and the lowest score was 74, 29. Based on the table above, it can be seen that MBESCS treatments was effective to the learners' learning achievement. It is shown from 48,33% of the increase. The increase of the students' learning achievement was because of the students ability to comprehend the main course given by the writer.

The success of the students can be shown as the students' achievement in language learning. It means that the students' learning achievement had been achieved. Based on the data given above, in a university level, the highest percentage achieved by the students was on "A" marks. So it can be defined that the students has achieved their target language learning goals. The increase can be seen from the average score D to A. The students' learning achievement is presented in appendix. The data above prove that the Multicultural-based syllabus is acceptable in the cultural differences such as in University of Ahmad Dahlan.

Validity and Reliability

Table 5*Questions' characteristic*

Questions	Characteristic of the questions
1-10	Listening test from the passage "Forging" from Tempo Magazine English Edition
11-20	Understanding of common knowledge about norms in the society
21-25	Reading understanding to the passage about Malay's norms
26-30	Reading understanding to the passage about forgiving in Idul Fitri
31-35	Essay of the understanding to their culture in their region

The validity of the test was validated by expert judgement. Sugiyono (2010: 177) stated that, to validate the construct validity can be done by using the opinion of the expert (expert judgement). The experience of the expert is used to validate the questions. The expert can be determined as the expert in its subject. Since the writer has the same area with this research, validation of this data was done by using triangulation theories. The characteristics of the questions are presented at Table 5.

The reliability of this test was done by using coefficient correlation formula. The calculation of the reliability is presented as follows:

Table 6. Raw Data to Compute Reliability

$$\begin{array}{ll} \sum x & : 333 \\ \sum xy & : 2586 \\ \sum y^2 & : 2633 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{ll} \sum y & : 325 \\ \sum x^2 & : 2725 \\ n & : 48 \end{array}$$

The writer computed the correlation coefficient for the first step by using the *Split-Half Method*. She used the correlation coefficient formula based on Arikunto (2010: 213). Based on the above data, the writer computed the data as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \cdot \sum xy - \sum x \cdot \sum y}{\sqrt{[(n \cdot \sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2] \cdot [(n \cdot \sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{48 \cdot 2586 - 333 \cdot 325}{\sqrt{(48 \cdot 2725 - (333)^2) \cdot (48 \cdot 2633 - (325)^2)}}$$

$$r_{xy} = \frac{15.903}{\sqrt{413.332.449}} = 0,78$$

From the result of computation as written above, it can be found that, r_{xy} is 0, 78. Based on the calculation of r_{xy} , the writer found the reliability of the test by using Spearman-Brown's formula (Sugiyono, 2010: 185) as follows:

$$r_{11} = \frac{2 \cdot r_b}{1 + r_b}$$

The calculation of the reliability is presented as follows:

$$r_{11} = \frac{2 \cdot 0,78}{1 + 0,78} = 0,87$$

Based on the calculation of reliability above, it can be defined that the coefficient of r_{11} is 0, 87.

Table 7

The Value of Reliability Coefficient

	Reliability Coefficient	Explanation
1.	0.800-1	Very high
2.	0.600-0.799	High
3.	0.400-0.599	Average
4.	0.200-0.399	Low
5.	0.000-0.199	Very low

Based on Table 7, it can be seen that the reliability of the test is very high and the test is reliable to be tested to the first semester students of Civics Study Program of UAD.

Discussion

Based on the above research findings, it can be found the effectiveness of the Multicultural-based syllabus. The result of pretest showed that the average score of the students was 36,85. It was considered as poor category. While the result of post-test was higher than the pretest. The average score of the posttest was 85,18. It was considered as excellent category.

Beside analysing quantitative data, the writer also interpreted the qualitative data as the result of interview made after treatments. The interview was done to find out the effectiveness of the Multicultural-based syllabus based on the lecturer's view. The following is the sample of interview with the teacher:

R : What do you think about the MBESCS Sir?

L : It is good. I think it is more detail and matched the needs of students.

R : Was the implementation of the syllabus effective based on your previous supervision?

L : You were good at implementing the treatments. You gave the students the basic materials

Based on the interview with the English teacher, the writer found the effectiveness of the treatments using MBESCS. The writer also interviewed the students which aimed at finding their views about the alternative syllabus. The following is the part of the interview:

R : What do you think about the English learning method we used?

A-20 : It was good, but the use of English should not be used continuously.

R : Why? And what is the difference with your previous lectures?

A-20 : Our lecture rarely talked about culture but translating the given texts more

R : Was teaching by Multicultural perspective appropriate in your class which was in multicultural circumstance?

A-20 : Yes, it was

The result of interviewing written above shows that teaching by using MBESCS was effective so that it can be used to vary English teaching and learning process. The effectiveness can be seen also from the calculation of the reliability of the test. The coefficient of reliability reached 0,87.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings as written above, it can be concluded as follows. First, MBESCS model was considered effective to use in the research setting. The effectiveness of the Multicultural-based syllabus can be seen through the students' learning achievement. The increasing can be seen through the gap 48,33% of pre- post test. Second, the interview of the lecturer and the student showed a good impression to the Multicultural-based syllabus. The Multicultural-based syllabus with Multicultural-based treatment got a good acceptance from the lecturer and the student. Third, the Multicultural-based treatment through a Multicultural-based syllabus can be used in a teaching and learning process in a class with various cultures background. The Multicultural-based syllabus can accommodate the interest of the students without creating a gap among cultures. Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the suggestion is addressed to the teachers of English to implement the Multicultural-based syllabus for the following reasons. First, Multicultural-based syllabus can be used to vary learning material, and teaching strategy. Second, by enriching the discourse with various cultural issues may enable the students to improve their insights about various cultures. Third, literating various cultural issues may enable the learners to have deep toleration toward others. Fourth, Multicultural-Based Syllabus is considered matched to use in the countries with multicultural citizen.

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