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Syntagma

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Terbit tiga kali setahun (Maret, Juli, Nopember), berisi tentang hasil penelitian, gagasan konseptual, kajian dan aplikasi teori, resensi buku dan tulisan praktis dalam bidang Linguistik, Sastra dan Pengajarannya.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Umi Tursini⁸

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia mulai dari awal keberadaannya sampai saat ini. Hal yang dibahas meliputi sejarah pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia, yang menunjukkan bahwa pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia pernah sangat berhasil selama era kolonialisme. Namun, ketika masa kolonialisme Jepang, pengajaran Bahasa Inggris kurang berhasil. Kemudian pada tahun 1950an, mulai menunjukkan keberhasilan lagi. Artikel ini juga membahas perkembangan kurikulum pengajaran Bahasa Inggris mulai tahun 1954 sampai tahun 2004. Implementasi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia mengalami berbagai kendala seperti belajar dan pembelajaran budaya, masalah motivasi, pendekatan pengajaran yang sesuai, dan kualitas guru. Namun demikian, beberapa usaha sudah dilakukan untuk mengatasi kendala-kendala tersebut. Pemerintah dan para praktisi pendidikan harus berusaha bersama-sama untuk mensukseskan pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: problems, curriculum, solutions

As we enter a new millennium, the ability and the need to understand and communicate with each other has become increasingly important, at times even urgent. In this situation, English takes an important role as the most widely used means of communication between other people around the world. So, a proper mastery of English is becoming more crucial. In Indonesia, English is taught from the Elementary School to the University level, whereas the teaching of English in some kindergarten schools is the latest trend of education in Indonesia.

The history of English teaching in Indonesia can be found in the anthology entitled *The Development of TEFL in Indonesia* edited by E. Sadtono (1997). It dates back to the period when some countries colonized Indonesia years ago. During the Dutch period, particularly before World War II, English was taught beginning from the Junior High School (MULO = *Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs* or extended elementary school). As Dutch is akin to English linguistically, and all of the students who entered MULO had a solid foundation in Dutch when they studied at the elementary school (HIS, ELS), English was relatively easy to master. As a result of quality education, MULO graduates could speak, read, and write good English

⁸ Umi Tursini, Mahasiswa Pasca Sarjana Universitas Negeri Malang

Then, during the Japanese occupation for three and a half year, Dutch and English were banned and all the books in those languages had to be burned. The education system was radically changed, no more schools for the elite; it was really an egalitarian system. Instead of Dutch, Japanese was taught intensively as it was designed to become the second language in Indonesia. The Indonesian language was to play a crucial role in education as well as in society at large.

With the Japanese gone and Dutch books burned, there was a considerable paucity of English textbooks and dictionaries. English was taught beginning at SMP and the method was the grammar-translation method. Most of dictionaries available were English-Dutch dictionaries, so it was a big problem for those who did not understand Dutch. When the Dutch returned, Guerilla schools were set up on remote villages and the lessons were interrupted by the arrival of Dutch troops patrolling the country side. Naturally no book was available.

When the Dutch left Indonesia for good, the educational situation began to improve slowly. English textbook began to appear and English-Indonesian dictionaries were slowly available. The teachers too were getting better as they were graduates from the so-called B-1 course, and those who were good would continue to attend the B-2 course.

The Central Inspectorate of the English Language Instruction paved the way to improve TEFL in Indonesia. In 1953-1957, a committee was charged with the developing of syllabi for the secondary English language instruction and the teachers manual. In 1958, the English language Materials Development Project was established to prepare new instructional materials for the junior and senior high schools. By 1962, it had developed into three coordinated sub-projects; they are the Materials Development Board, The English Language Testing Centre, and the English Language Pilot Project. In 1968, an English Language Project was set up by the Ministry of Education to address the problems of English Instruction in schools. Since then, a number of projects on in-service training and materials development in Ministry Education have come and gone.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN INDONESIA

In Indonesia, English was first chosen to be a foreign language that had to be learnt during the Indonesian Development since 1950. The English curriculum was first set in 1954 and had changed at least six times from 1954 until 2004. They are The Old Style Curriculum, The New Style Curriculum, The Revised

New Style Curriculum, The 1975 Curriculum, The 1984 Curriculum, The 1994 Curriculum, and The 2004 Curriculum (Suyanto, K.K.E., 2004).

The Old style Curriculum (1954)

In the old style curriculum, the instructional objectives were not clearly defined yet. English was taught only in Junior High School using the Audio-lingual Approach and in senior High School using the Grammar-Translation Method. This curriculum used the material that was established in Salatiga, Central Java.

The New Style Curriculum (1962)

The difference between The Old style Curriculum and the New Style Curriculum was not very significant in terms of the allocation of time, methods, and objectives. This was still a structure-based curriculum. The only difference was that the New Style Curriculum contained the results of the national conference of High School Principals throughout Indonesia.

The Revised New Style Curriculum (1968)

Based on the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No.096/1967), the functions of English Instruction in Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools were to (a) speed up the national development, (b) establish relationship with other nations, and (c) carry out national foreign policy. Therefore, The New Style Curriculum was revised. The Revised New Style Curriculum, established in 1968, pointed out that Math/Science students studied English three hours a week, Social/Culture students studied English for hours a week, and Junior High School students studied English three hours a week.

The 1975 Curriculum (Decree No. 088-E/U/1975)

This curriculum was designed to revise the 1968 curriculum. It was aimed at improving the quality of national education. This institutional, curricular, and instructional objectives were already clearly formulated. There were seven objectives:

1. vocabulary size of 4000 words for both Junior and Senior High Schools,
2. effective reading,
3. foreign language appreciation,
4. means of deepening knowledge,
5. means of communication,
6. eclectic approach, and

7. structure oriented/mastery of linguistic patterns.

However, those objectives were still considered too general or too broad.

The 1984 Curriculum (Decree No. 0209/U/1984)

This curriculum was made based on the reactions and correction toward the 1975 syllabus implementation. It focused on the oral aspect of communication. The vocabulary size was specified into 1500 for Junior High School students and 4000 for Senior High School students. English was taught three hours a week for Junior High Schools and three to seven hours a week for Senior High Schools. The English instruction was to improve the reading ability. Then, since it was a structure-oriented English curriculum, grammar was always present in the formats of the syllabus. The approach used was the Communicative Approach.

The 1994 Curriculum

One of the objectives of the 1994 curriculum was the development of the reading skill with the vocabulary size of 2500 to 3000 words. The syllabus was thematic, but the theme was not the objective, therefore it did not become the instructional material. The communicative approach that was used in the 1984 Curriculum was revised to be the meaningfulness approach. The reason was to encourage the students to communicate not only correctly but also meaningfully. It contained the integration of all language components and language skills and the integration of materials which was achieved through themes.

(Suyanto, K.K.E, 2004) also mentions that in 1994, there was also a decree that was made concerning English for Young Learners (EYL) (Decree No.060/U/1993; No. 1702/105/1994). No national curriculum was made but the list of competency that had to be acquired by the students.

However, some provincial curricula were developed. They recommended English to be taught since the fourth grade of Elementary School with the mastery of 500 words. Moreover, at the beginning, EYL was poorly implemented due to the unwell preparations of the syllabus, teachers, and materials.

The 2004 Curriculum (CBC)

This curriculum is the improvement of the 1994 curriculum. It is a competency-based curriculum. It still has themes but it focuses on the development of oral and written communication skills. English has already

been used as a means of learning. The teaching and learning methods are contextual so that the students can understand both the language and the culture. This Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an approach of teaching and learning that relates the materials and the classroom activities to real situation and actual experiences focusing on the learning process leading to creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and being able to apply their knowledge in their daily lives. (US Department of Education, 2001 in Suyanto, K.K.E, 2005).

CTL has seven principles, they are:

1. *Constructivism*

Constructivism is a learning theory claiming that people construct or build their own sense and meaning from new experiences based on their prior knowledge and beliefs. A constructivist teacher needs to learn his students' culture, life experiences, and knowledge, then construct a learning experience that gives students new opportunities to gig up the knowledge in a way that challenges their existing beliefs.

2. *Questioning*

Teachers use question to guide students' thinking rather than simply give students all the information deemed important. Students learn to pose questions about phenomena, learn how to formulate questions than can be tested, and learn to question each other about evidence, interpretation, and explanation.

3. *Inquiry*

In inquiry-based learning, students learn to use critical thinking skills as they discuss and analyze the evidence, evaluate the ideas and propositions, reflect upon the validity of their data and processes, challenge other's conclusions, determine how to best represent their findings and explanations, and relate others' ideas or established theories to their conceptual models.

4. *Learning Community*

A learning community is a group of people engaged in a learning activity who recognize the importance of both the individual and the group for deep learning to occur. Within a learning community, all people must be committed to speak and share ideas, listen carefully to other people's ideas, and collaborate to build knowledge with others in the group.

5. *Modeling*

Modeling is a process of providing an example of how teachers want others to be, to think, to act, and to learn. Often this requires thinking aloud and demonstrating what the teacher wants to the students to do.

6. *Reflection*

In reflection, we review events, activities, and experiences, and think about what we have learned, what we feel, and how we might use our new knowledge for.

7. *Authentic Assessment*

Authentic assessment includes a variety of strategies used to evaluate students' knowledge and skills. Both the product and process are measured.

ELT PROBLEMS IN INDONESIA

Any implementation of new policies will always encounter some obstacles. Similarly, the implementation of English education in Indonesia also encounters some problematic issues. According to Priyono (2004:17), a survey conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of The Republic of Indonesia has reported that the teachers (95.4% of public and 91.1% of private school teachers) admitted that the English instruction has been unsuccessful. Mantiri (2004:31) mentions some of the problem of ELT in Indonesia as follows:

The Teaching and Learning of the Culture

Culture plays an important part in the learning of a language. In the Indonesian context, the adoption of culture in ELT has been a problem. The government effort to encourage English teachers to use CTL (Communicative Language Teaching) approach has not been successful. The real practice is far from expectation. Although the curriculum 2004 allows flexibility in teaching English, the content and instructions are still a "copy" practice of Western Countries. While teaching in the classroom, teachers rarely include some cultural knowledge in their teachings.

Ideally, when we are learning a language, we should also learn the culture where the language belongs. For example, when we learn English, we should also learn the culture of The English-speaking countries. We can do this by involving some authentic materials that can teach the students not only the English language but also the culture of the English people. We can also include some knowledge of other culture in our teaching such as in the form of description or stories.

In addition, English should actually not be treated merely as a school subject but more as a means of communication. The aim of learning English is

not only for the sake of knowledge but also to be able to encourage the students to be brave in using the language in or outside of the classroom.

The Motivation Problem

The issues of motivation in Indonesia are considered to be crucial problems. The problem lies in the lack of exposure that the students must get. The time EFL learners are more exposed to the target language is mainly when they are in the classroom. Related to the motivation, EFL learners in Indonesia tend to have instrumental motivation. For example, some people learn English in order to find a good job or for some educational reasons, such as passing an entrance test of a university or scholarship selection.

Since English should be treated as a means of communication, the students should get as much opportunity as they can to use the language they are learning, whether in the form of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The teachers then should find the most appropriate strategy that fits the need and the capability of the students so that they will feel comfortable in learning the language. To know this, the teacher needs to understand the characteristics of the students which can determine what treatment can be used in order to motivate the students to learn the language.

The Relevant Approach to Use

The Indonesian government has been trying to meet the demand of a better approach in ELT through changes in English curriculum. However, the result is still unsatisfactory. English teachers and education practitioners are still confronted with the issue of finding the ELT approach that suits the Indonesian context. Many English teachers considered the use of CTL is more as problem than solution.

Government is indeed the policy maker. However, government should actually not interfere too much in deciding which approach to use in the classroom. They may give the guidelines but they should not obligate the teachers to use a certain approach, though they think it is the best. This mainly because the teachers are the ones who really understand the condition of the classroom and which approach is appropriate to use in such classroom.

The Quality of The Teachers

Related to the difficulty in implementing CTL, the quality of teacher has been questioned. Many current English teachers are either inadequately trained or trained by the "old teaching style". This condition affects the

adoption of CTL in ELT significantly. Most local teachers had no qualifications in English teaching and had low proficiency in the language. Teachers still prefer grammar translation since it is suitable for large classes, cheap, and only require grammatical mastery of the language. Therefore, they sometimes even cannot speak English well. It is much regretted that students are demanded to speak actively while the teacher herself rarely speak English.

Besides, teachers get low salary in Indonesia as a matter of fact they have to moonlight thus, their attention is divided affecting their teaching performance. It seems impossible for engage in private study to develop their professional skills.

Muhtadin (2004) gives some suggestion to overcome the problem of the quality of the teachers. They are:

1. Train the teachers to be skillful and professional
2. Supply the teaching media, books, internet, and video/CD
3. Provide a representative classroom
4. Provide a complete language laboratory
5. Teachers should be well-paid.

Conclusion

Though English has been taught in Indonesia for more than 50 years, it is still problematic. Some of the problems are practical, while some others are culture-bound. However, there are actually some efforts that are already done in order to improve the quality of ELT in Indonesia. Both government and educators are hand in hand working to see that ELT in Indonesia will someday succeed.

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