Some Aspects of English Competency Based Curriculum

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Abstract: *Talking about curriculum, since 1954 there have been several changes implemented in Indonesian schools with different emphases and purposes, but at least they share one common objective—to improve the quality of learning process in Indonesian education. However, the constraint is still on the result of the implementation of those curricula themselves—the objectives were not optimally achieved. Of course, there are many factors that might affect. One factor that might affect is the understanding of teachers in interpreting the message carried by the curriculum. This article discusses the nature of the newly implemented curriculum—Competency-Based Curriculum, particularly on the nature of English subject. The discussion involves philosophical theoretical bases of English CBC, the characteristics of English curriculum, syllabus development, teaching, and learning assessment, and changes and challenges associated and with the implementation of the English CBC. By having a clear understanding of this curriculum, hopefully, teachers can interpret what the curriculum demands and try to implement it optimally so that the objectives can be successfully achieved.*

Keywords : competency based curriculum, english education, implementation

Starting at 2004 school academic year, Indonesian education has launched a new curriculum called Curriculum 2004 or widely known as Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). This curriculum is the sixth curriculum that has ever been implemented in Indonesia. Before CBC Indonesia implemented 1954, 1964 (with revision in 1968), 1975, 1984, and 1994 (wth revision in 1999) curriculums. It seems that the changes of the curriculum in Indonesia happens in every ten years. But why does it need to be changed? Laymen say that the changes of our curriculum are simply due to the change of the Minister of Education in the parliament. This opinion is of course not absolutely right. Curriculum is changed because of the nature of the curriculum itself. It happens not in our country but also in other countries. In western countries for examples, curriculum is also changed in every ten years just like what happen in our country.There must be rationale behind this. The changing of the previous curriculum (curriculum 1994) into CBC also has reasons. Firstly, the students' potency is different, and this potency will develop if the stimulus is appropriate. Secondly, the quality of our education is still very low and neglets some aspects like moral, character, art, sport, and life skills. Thirdly, the global competition makes competent students

exist, incompetent ones fail. Fourthly, the competition happens in educational institutions (Depdiknas, 2003a:1).

The change of 1994 curriculum into CBC covers several changes in the development authority, learning approach, content setting, and model of socialization which are adapted according to the development of recent situation and condition. This changes happens gradually and continually and is directed to reach the flexibility principle to the content of the curriculum and teaching-learning process in developing intracurricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities. At the same time teaching and learning approach also directed to develop students' competence to manage learning outcome. Thus, learning process is directed to how students learn from what are learned.

The implementation of CBC is carried out to both primary and secondary levels of education covering all subject matters including English. If we compare English CBC and 1994 English Curriculum, of course there are some basic discrepancies. In order that teachers are able to develop this CBC according to what is recommended by the government of Indonesia, they should be familiar with what the curriculum demands them to do. Considering that there are various views among teachers of English over what CBC is, therefore, the chances and challenges associated with the concept of CBC would need to be clarified for the effective implementation of CBC in secondary schools in general and in SMP level in particular.

The discussion in this article focusses on the English Competency Based Curriculum of junior high school (SMP) level. There are five main lines of explanation in the issues that will be discussed one by one. First, philopsohical and theoritical bases of English CBC. Second, the characteristics of English curriculum. Third, cyllabus development; Fourth, teaching and learning assessment; and Fifth, changes and challenges associated with the implementation of the English CBC.

DISCUSSION
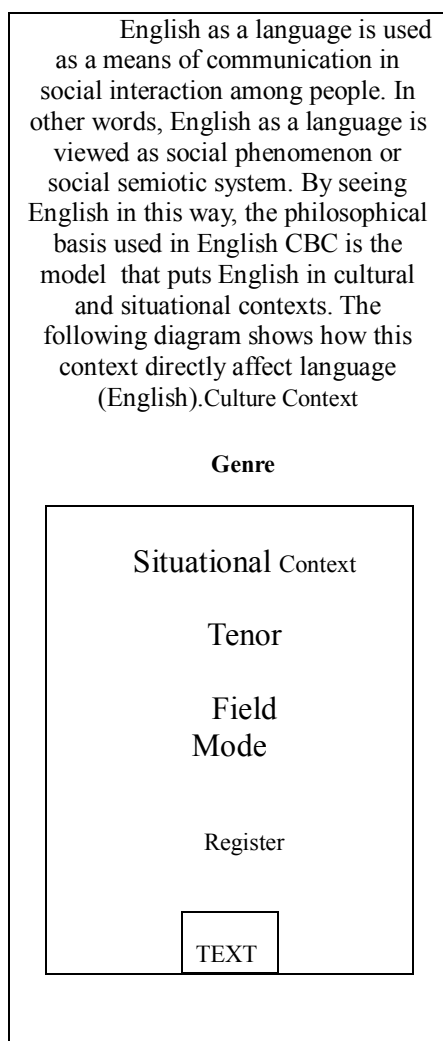
Philosophical and Theoretical Bases of English CBC

English as a language is used as a means of communication in social interaction among people. In other words, English as a language is viewed as social phenomenon or social semiotic system. By seeing English in this way, the philosophical basis used in English CBC is the model that puts English in cultural and situational contexts. The following diagram shows how this context directly affect language (English). Culture Context

Genre

Situational Context

Tenor

Field
Mode

Register

TEXT

Diagram 1. The relationship between text and contect (Hammond et.al. 1992)

Some Aspects of English.... (Majid, 2018)

The above diagram shows that a cultural context reveals some *genre* or texts such as narrative, descriptive, recount, report, and etc, which are usually used in daily lives. This context, then, is used in social context that has three components viz. field, tenor, and mode which affect our choice of language. *Field* refers to what is being talked about in a text. *Tenor* refers to interpersonal relationship among the involved participants. *Mode refers* to communication channel that we used—written and oral. Then situational context reveal register. Register is a language variation used by the people who used the language. In other words, the meaning given in the language depends on the situational context. All of these are formulated in the form of text. *Text* is a semantic unit or meaning is expressed in the form words, clauses, or sentences both orally and in written when people communicate. When people talk they produce text, when people write they produce text as well. Thus it can be said that when we communicate they produce text. This illustration shows that there is a direct relationship beween language and culture and between culture and language education.

In addition to philosophical basis, CBC also has some theoritical bases. They consist of communicative competence model (Celce Murcia et.al., 1995), functional language model or language as a social semiotics (proposed by Halliday in 1978), and literary theory and its application in language teaching (Kern, 2000).

Communicative competence model proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. is actually not a new model but a result of an 'evolution' of some models that

have been developed before. In this model, communicative competence is meant as discourse competence.

The Schematic representation shows that the main competence in language teaching is the discourse competence. This means that if someone communicates both orally and in writing, he or she is involved in discourse because any meanings that he or she receives and produces are always related to cultural or situational contexts surrounding him or her. Participating in a conversation, reading or writing automatically actives discourse competence. By activiting discourse competence, someone makes use of a set of strategies or procedures in applying values in the language such as grammar, pragmatic features, ets in understading and expressing the meaning.

Meaning is an abstract thing. Understanding is not rely only on the speaker's competence but also on interlouter's competence, as well. In an utterance, besides meaning, there are also meaning nuances that people need to understand. These abstract nuances named as metafunction or diversification of meaning.

Literacy education theory {Kern, 2000) is another theoritical basic of English CBC. Basically this theory sees language education as communication education that prepares students so that they can take part in social lives. Taking part in this communication activity means taking part in creating text or discourse. Competence in creating discourse is the main competence to achieve by CBC. It can be concluded that discourse competence can be achieved if the theory of language that underlies the curriculum as the

theory of language as discourse, and to achieve this competence, the theory that underlies teaching ang learning process is the theory of literacy education which care the process in order to reach the objective. The essence of language is said by Kern (2000: 34) as follows, "a literacy based curriculum is thus neither purely to structural dimensions of language use".

Characteristic of Language CBC

From the theoretical bases above, it is clear that the logic used in English education covers: (1) the main competence to achieve is communicative competence which technically means discourse competence; (2) the language theory used is the at the develop competence in producing discourse in language. Based on this, it can be concluded that all the theoretical bases used in this curriculum are in the cultural context. Language and its teaching is seen from sociocultural perspective.

Teaching materials used in this curriculum are arranged according to competencies proposed by Celce-Mercia et.al. They consist of competency components which are have to be mastered by students at the end of the program. Those components are classified into five other supporting competencies: actional, linguistic, sociocultural, discource, and attitude competence. (1992)

Language teaching and learning is based on the principles of English literacy development. The development model is taken from what Hammond et al. proposed which involve four steps—Building Knowledge of Field, Modelling of Test, Joint Construction of the Text, and Independent Construction of the Text and two cycles—Oral and Written Cycles. Building knowledge of the field consist of activity likes talking about the discussed topic. This activity is carried out interactively between teacher and students, students and students so that listening and speaking skills begin here. Cultural context can also be presented here. In short, Building Knowledge of Field is interactive and attractive where students and imitate the correct pronunciation from the teacher and are brave enough to say something in English.

Syllabus and Development

According to PP No. 25 tahun 2000 (Depdiknas, 2004) above the division of authority between national and regional government in relation to CBC, it is stated that the national government is responsible for deciding the standard competent and basic competence, contolling the national curriculum, and carrying out national examination of learning process. Regional government and schools in this case are responsible for developing and assessment system. Based on this devision, regional government or the schools are given more authority to do than they had before.

The assessment in authentic meaning that it only assesses the material taught, and not the ones have never been taught. Previous experience show that most of the time a certain test essessed the material that had never been instructed to students. As a result, the students' real achievement could not be seen.

Classroom assessment is called integrated

when it is integrated in the teaching and learning process by using various methods and techniques which are in line with the objective, teaching and learning process, and student learning experience as well, and is conducted in various ways: written, oral, product, portfolio, performance, and action.

Assessment should be done continously during teaching and learning process or after students finishing learning every competency without waiting until the middle or end of the semester. During this process, the teacher can observe the students' knowledge, the way they do assignment, until they get the assignment result. By doing continuous observation, teacher will know which students are fast learner which are not which new special help and which do not. The result of continuous observation should be informed to the students so that they know their strengths and weaknesses that they can do their best next time.

Other characteristic is holistic meaning that it must assess all targeted competencies that the students learn. Since there are six competencies that the students have to learn, therefore, assessment must cover all of those competencies. Actional competencies consisting of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills can be assessed individually or integrated with other skills. For example listening, it can be assessed alone or done while testing speaking. Assessing linguistic competence such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary can be integrated in assessing in actional competence, for example, correct pronunciation is tested when students have speaking test, grammar usage can be seen when

students have writing test, etc. Besides, a pecial test for assessing a certain linguistic competence is also possible, for instance a test of grammar, a test of vocabulary, etc. Sociocultural competence—the ability in expressing correct and accepted message according to the social and contextual factors, appropriateness factor—and cultural factor—close to speaking skill, therefore assessment of those social competence is integrated in testing speaking skill.

Chance and Challenges

The above discussion has about the nature of English Competency Based Curriculum. It is apperence, however, that has significantly different approach from the prociding ones. If we notify the nature of English CBC comprehensively, we can see that it has much superiority. In other words, CBC provides several changes that it can bring about successful teaching and learning process in general and successful in achieving the objective, that is, students have a good English competence and can use English for communication in particular. These changes could be fulfilled if the challenges that may inhibit the implementation can be handled or at least lessened. There some possibles challanges that may effect the implementation of CBC. To lessen the problems, not solve them some thought are offered.

The first challenge that may be faced by the and teachers is the syllabus development. In 1994 English curriculum and before, syllabus had already been prepared by the government. School and teachers could directly made use of it once it was issued. The teachers did not not need to be

busy reformulating and developing the syllabus. Now, this is easy not in their side anymore. Since higher responsibility has been given to the local government—development authority: 80% local curriculum and 20% national curriculum, therefore, local government and school (including teachers) have to developed syllabus based on their needs. In this case, they have to look at very carefully what their really need to include in the syllabus. This is very important because one factor that can contribute to the development of their region is the qualified human resources. And the quality of human resources is also decided by qualified education; while qualified education can only be achieved by good education plan, and good plan can only be started by formulating by good teaching syllabus. Now a question might arise: Are teachers ready to develop the syllabus? This question seems forto ready to answer, simply giving yes or no answer. But what is the answer if no? They may be, old trend will happen again. Teachers will still use the previous syllabus without caring the new one. Of course this shortcut is not the solution. One possibe solution os that the local government can instruct teachher who teach in one area to work together developing teaching syllabus of their area. This is much easier to do than let teacher do it alone.

CONLUSION

In summary, the implementation of CBCasa new curriculum in Indonesia education givs us new changes for better result in education than before, At the same time, there are some possible challanges that may be faced by the teachers. All these things can be handled if all parties related to

it can function according to the needs. It goes without saying that since CBC is new thing, it need to be socialized as optimal as possible to the users so that they know what it demands them to do. This is important because if the socialization is successful it will bring about a possible successful implementation of CBC.

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