

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT) COMPETENCY-BASED SYLLABUS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: Although competency has long been the major concern in ELT either in the EFL or ESL contexts, the rise of competency-based syllabus launched by the Ministry of National Education (2006) brought about significant issue among the English teachers in the country. One of the crucial issues is that how to transfer the concepts of competences into the syllabus design. Since a syllabus does not only contain a list of subject content, but also how curriculum planners (teachers) reflect their understanding and belief about nature of language and of language teaching and learning, the ELT must be carried out to achieve communicative competence. Current investigation on the practices of ELT, however, indicates that English teachers are still walking in place, leaving the CC as a big slogan in their jobs.

Abstrak: Meskipun kompetensi telah menjadi topik penting di bidang pengajaran bahasa Inggris baik itu sebagai bahasa kedua maupun bahasa asing, kurikulum satuan tingkat pendidikan yang diperkenalkan tahun 2006 membawa isu penting bagi para guru bahasa Inggris. Salah satu isu penting adalah bagaimana mentransfer konsep kompetensi ke dalam desain silabus. Karena silabus tidak hanya memuat daftar isi mata kuliah, tetapi juga memuat tentang bagaimana dosen merefleksikan pemahaman dan kepercayaannya terhadap hakikat bahasa dan pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dilaksanakan untuk mencapai kompetensi komunikatif. Namun demikian, penelitian terbaru terhadap penerapan pengajaran bahasa Inggris menggambarkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris masih jalan di tempat, dan meninggalkan slogan kompetensi komunikatif di dalam menjalankan profesinya.

Kata Kunci: curriculum, competency-based syllabus, genre-based approach, language skills.

INTRODUCTION

The shift of 1994 Curriculum to 2004 and completed in 2006 Curriculum in Indonesian educational context has brought about many issues and consequences. The current curriculum which is labeled as 'Competency-Based', requires that students' success in learning will be judged in terms of the appropriateness of competence they have achieved. In the case of ELT, competence is not a new issue, since both language learning and acquisition have been concentrated on the learners' ability to perform these language competences. However, since Competency-Based Curriculum must be consistent with the syllabus development, how can the curriculum developers encounter this issue? More importantly, how do the English teachers transfer the concepts of 'competences' and developing competences into the syllabus?

The purpose of this paper is to compare between the developmental model of Compe-

tency-Based Syllabus and its current implementation as set up by school teachers in ELT at Senior High School level. To deal with the issues, current (2011-2012) Syllabus of Science and Social of Grade XI, Senior High School 6 Padang is taken. It is expected that, through the analysis of the school teachers' concepts or beliefs on language and language learning as they reflected in syllabus development can be explored in terms of communicative language teaching principles.

COMPETENCY-BASED SYLLABUS FOR GRADE XI

The syllabus which is designed for the eleventh grade students is horizontally formatted in the following order: Standard of Competence, Basic Competence, Materials, Indicators of Achievement Competence, Learning Activities which comprises classroom session, structured task, and unstructured and

independent/ individual activities, Evaluation, and Time Allocation.

Standard of competence (which has already been stated in the curriculum) is arranged in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four language skills are further developed into 12 Basic Competences. The first Standard of Competence, Listening, for example: understanding meaning in transactional and interpersonal conversation in daily-life contexts, is developed into the following Basic Competence: (1.1. responding to meaning in transactional conversation (*to get things done*) and formal interpersonal and sustained accurately, fluent and acceptable by using oral language style in the contexts of daily lives involving various speech acts such as : expressing ideas, asking for an idea, expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction). This sub competence is further transferred into several indicators ranging from saying or expressing, to explaining, and identifying.

The twelve Basic Competences cover the following materials such as: (1) asking for opinion, (2) giving opinion, (3) expressing satisfaction, (3) expressing dissatisfaction, (4) giving advice, (5) giving warnings, (6) expression of fulfilling request, (7) expression of belief, (8) expression of pleasure, (9) short functional texts (banners, posters, leaflets), (10) report, narrative, analytical exposition, (11) asking for opinion, (12) giving opinion, (13) expressing satisfaction, (14) expressing dissatisfaction, (15) giving advice, (16) giving warnings, (17) expression of fulfilling request, (18) expression of relief, (19) expression of pain, (20) expression of pleasure, (21) banner, poster, leaflet, (22) report, narrative, and analytical exposition, (23) banner, poster, leaflet, (24) report, narrative and analytical exposition, (25) banner, poster, leaflet, (26) report, narrative, and analytical exposition.

To trace more about how teachers implement the syllabus into Instructional Design, it is sufficient to present here a *Teacher Group Activity Program* (Kelompok Kerja Guru/ KKG) as follows:

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Unit of Education | : State Senior |
| High School 6 Padang | |
| Course | : English |
| Class/ Semester/ Program | : XI / 1 |
| Total Class Session | : 4 sessions (8 hrs) |
| Time Allotment | : 2x45' / session |
| Materials | : Expression of pain, relief, and pleasure |

SPEAKING

| Standard of Competence | Basic Competence |
|---|--|
| 3. Speaking Expressing meaning in (formal and sustained) transactional and interpersonal conversation in the daily life contexts | 3.1. Speaking Expressing meaning in formal and sustained transactional and interpersonal by using oral language register accurately and acceptable in the daily life context, involving speech acts: expressing relief, pain, and pleasure. |

Achievement Indicators

1. Using speech acts in expressing feelings: relief, pain, and pleasure
2. Acting interpersonal dialog by using expressions of relief, pain, and pleasure

| No | Teacher's Activity | Steps/ Procedure (Teacher's Activity) | Students' Activity |
|----|--|---|---|
| I | Opening/ Introduction | | |
| 1 | Preparing students psychologically and physically to follow TL process | | |
| 2 | Asking questions while relating the previous lessons to the materials to be learnt | Apperception while asking question: What do you think about this class? | Ss respond: It is a wonderful class. Ss explain to support their interest |
| 3 | Stating the goals of learning together with the | Telling the goals and coverage of | Ss write and analyze the goals |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Basic competence | the materials | | 3 | Facilitating students to interact to the teacher, environment, and other learning resources | T asks Ss to make short dialog using expressions of pain, relief, and pleasure | Ss make short dialog using the expressions of pain, relief, and pleasure |
| 4 | Explaining the coverage of the materials | Telling the coverage of the materials about pain, relief, and pleasure | Ss take note, listening to the T's explanation | | | | |
| II Main Teaching Activity | | | | 4 | Involving students' active participation in every learning situation | T asks Ss to perform their dialog and explain the expressions they have used. | Ss perform their dialogs and explain the expressions they have used |
| A. Exploration | | | | 5 | Facilitating students to try-out something, in the laboratory, studio and in the field | | |
| 1 | Involving students to search for wider and deeper information dealing with topic or theme of the materials to be learnt by using the principles of ' <i>alam takambang jadi guru</i> ' and learning from various sources. | T presents the material related to expressions of pain, relief, and pleasure | Ss are asked to analyze and discuss the expressions | 6 | Explaining the activities based on the syllabus | | |
| 2 | Using multi-approaches of learning, media, as well as other learning resources | T has Ss listen to short dialog Resti: What do you think of the chicken soup? Mario: It's delicious. I would like to add some more, is it alright? Resti: Really? What a relief! It is the first time I make it. 1. What's Mario opinion of the soup? 2. Who makes the chicken soup? 3. Is Resti accustomed to making chicken soup? How do you know? 4. What does Resti say to express her relief? | Ss listen to the dialog, practice it with their peer and answer the questions | I B. Elaboration | | | |
| | | | | 1 | Making the students accustomed to reading and writing some specific and meaningful tasks | | |
| | | | | 2 | Facilitating students (through tasks) to explore new ideas orally or in writing | | |
| | | | | 3 | Providing students with the chance to think, analyze, solve the problem, and act without fear | | |
| | | | | 4 | Promoting students to work cooperatively and collaboratively | | |
| | | | | 5 | Facilitating students to compete fairly to improve learning achievement | | |
| | | | | 6 | Facilitating students to accomplish exploration report either in oral or in written form, individually or in groups. | | |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 7 | Facilitating students to perform individual or group work | | |
| 8 | Facilitating students to exhibit, game/ tournament, festival and products (if any) | | |
| 9 | Facilitating students to do the activities which grow and rise pride as well as self confidence in the students | | |
| C. Confirmation | | | |
| 1 | Providing feedback either in the form of positive or reinforcement, orally or in written form, or prizes to students' achievement | T gives reward to student who can answer the quiz | Ss respond to the quiz |
| 2 | Confirming students' exploration through multiple sources | T confirms the Ss' exploration and elaboration, that is correcting the Ss' answers | Ss listen to the T's explanation |
| 3 | Facilitating students to do reflection to gain learning experience they have performed | T reinforces the Ss' elaboration | Ss take notes on the important points |
| 4 | Facilitating students to have meaningful experience in getting the basic competence | T expand the lesson by presenting his/her daily experience | Ss pay attention to T's explanation |
| III Closing | | | |
| 1 | Making or drawing conclusion together with the students | T asks S to conclude the materials related to expressions of pain, relief, and pleasure | Ss draw conclusion with the T |
| 2 | Evaluating and reflecting on | T evaluates the Ss' task | Ss show the individual |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| | previous activity consistently | | task |
| 3 | Providing feedbacks to the learning activity | T asks for S's opinion about the lesson | Ss tell their opinion and evaluation on the learning process they have gone through |
| 4 | Planning the follow-up in the form of remedial program, counseling, and individual or group task based on their learning achievement | T assigns the Ss with the tasks | Ss take notes on the tasks to be searched out of class |
| 5 | Informing the topic for the next learning session | T tells the Ss about the materials for the next lesson | |

Based on the Syllabus and Instructional Design above, the following observations worth considering:

1. Course Content

The course content in this syllabus reflects the needs to develop the four language skills of the students namely: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teachers consider that students' interaction must be based on formal/ standard language, and language learning must reveal types of genres.

2. Scope and Sequence

The content that is covered in the syllabus ranges from expressing ideas to writing report, narrative and analytical exposition. But there is no clear indication as to what extent each topic should be studied. Since the four language skills are united in the syllabus, it is quite difficult to trace the sequence of this content whether they move from simple to complex, as well as the chronology of each language skills, and the need to study each of the materials.

3. Syllabus Framework

Based on the model of the above syllabus in which Materials, Indicators of Achievement Competence, and Learning Activities are specified, it is very certain that this syllabus (made and agreed by group of Teacher Association/ or KKG) employs

situational, topical, functional, and task-based. However, the employment of such model for this moment is not clear. Whether or not this model is based on knowledge and beliefs about the subject area, research theory, common practice, trends, is questionable.

Having closer look at the steps or procedures of teaching as written in the Instructional Design, the teacher seems to follow general rules to complete learning such as exploration, elaboration, and confirmation. This is also in line with the Genre-Based Approach to the current ELT requiring that four stages (Building knowledge of Field, Modeling, Individual, and Joint Construction) should be recycled for a complete learning of every genre (text-type). Unfortunately, however, the teacher's real activities in conducting the learning process (methods of teaching, particularly in the elaboration) has not been stated explicitly, and this indicates that they are not very certain of how learning should happen in the era of CLT.

4. Quality Insurance

How do the teachers make sure that they have planned ELT based on competence? The following answers are stated under two sub headings as *goal analysis* and *course analysis*.

Based on goal analysis, it is stated that ELT course at Senior High School level is aimed at providing the learners with the ability to perform the following things:

1. Develop communicative competence in oral and written form to achieve informational literacy level
2. Have awareness of nature and importance of English to increase the state's competition in global community
3. Develop learners' understanding of the relationship between language and culture

The first goal deals with affective, cognitive, and psychomotor. The second goal deals with cognitive and psychomotor, while the third goal deals with cognitive and psychomotor. Substantial analysis to the goals are stated that the first goal refers to communicative competence, the second goal refers to the sense or awareness of world competition, and the third goal refers to the understanding of language and culture.

Analysis of Output Standard Competence or SKL of the Course has explored the interrelationships among the four skills and SKL, Level of Cognitive (Bloom), Standard of Competence, Basic Competence, Description of Materials, and Skills to be achieved.

COMPETENCY-BASED SYLLABUS

Competencies as Richards (2001: 159) defines, 'are a description of the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for effective performance of particular tasks and activities'. Competency-based syllabus is widely used in social survival and work-oriented language program. Since the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Indonesia launched this curriculum in 2006, every schools in Indonesia has developed their own curricula, and ELT for Junior and Senior High School levels have also been in multi forms.

In facing the new direction of ELT in the country, teachers must be flexible, especially in light of the heavy demands that are placed on them and the isolation (from other language teachers) that they so often experience. Brown (1995: 4) proposes four different categories into which language teaching activities can be divided: (1) ways of defining what the students need to learn, (2) ways of organizing the instruction to meet those needs, (3) ways of actually presenting the lessons, and (4) ways of practicing what has been taught.

In order to achieve the desire competences, several types of syllabus design have emerged such as situational, topical, functional, and task-based. The situational syllabus is organized around different situations and the oral skills needed in those situations. Topical syllabus is organized around different topics and how to talk about them in English. Functional syllabus is organized around the functions most commonly needed in speaking. And task-based is organized around different tasks and activities that the learners would carry out in English.

There are other forms of syllabus that may contribute to the development of students' mastery of foreign language. Skills syllabus, for example, which is organized around the different underlying abilities that are involved in

using the language for purposes such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking. Approaching a language through skills is based on the belief that learning a complex activity such as "listening to a lecture" involves mastery of a number of individual skills or microskills that together make up the activity.

Task-Based syllabus is set up based on the belief that tasks are activities that drive the second language acquisition process. Grammar teaching is not central with this approach because learners will acquire grammar as a by-product of carrying out tasks. Tasks are motivating for learners and engage them in meaningful communication. The benefits of task in this syllabus can be seen in the importance of the following two tasks such as pedagogical tasks and real-world tasks (Richards, 2001:162).

In short, many types of syllabus designs should provide the teachers with alternative choices that inspire them to improve their teaching. Richards (2001:165) is probably true in this case when he says:

For almost all instructional programs, it is clear that some combination of types of instructional content will be needed to address the complex goals of the program for most general teaching applications, whose goal is functional ability in broadly defined settings and structural knowledge and communicative ability in specific situations, a combination of functional, structural, situational, and skill-based instruction is the probable choice. On the other hand, in some second language teaching settings, skills and tasks can be more narrowly specified, instructional resources are richer, or specific structural or formal knowledge is not required by the program for students to succeed, and a combination of task-based, situational, functional, and content instruction may be chosen.

Finally, conceptualizing content into language focus, at least in the level of syllabus design, one must reveal the following best points as Graves (2000) contends: (1) content, that is subject matter other than language itself;

(2) four skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, writing; (3) language skills, namely sound system, grammar, and lexicon; (4) situations, contexts in which one uses the language; (5) topic/ theme, what the language is used to talk or write about; (6) communicative functions, the purposes for which one uses language; (7) competency that unites situation, linguistic skills and functions; and (8) genres: text-types through which certain purposes are realized within social context.

CONCLUSION

The paper has put forward parts of teachers' efforts in planning and conceptualizing the ELT Curriculum as reflected in the syllabus and their instructional design. The absence of other instructional complementary, particularly the test type, of course, will not necessarily reduce current appreciation to such performance made by the teachers.

The application of some various types of syllabus in their design indicates their positive development toward professional responsibilities and this could be influenced by a number of studies or workshops that they formerly participated in. Frequent meetings in their KKG proved to provide significant impact on their teaching career. However, dealing with trends in TEFL that necessitate teachers to go with Genre-Based Approach, describing how discourse competence is developed through cycles and stages of building knowledge, modeling, joint construction, etc., the teachers seemed to ignore such approach as reflected in the absence of those points in their instructional design.

Having the lacks of genre approaches in current ELT may leave the teachers on the ground since the fast growing body of knowledge of this field present great contribution to the understanding of language, language teaching and culture, and interaction in post modernism era. It is a high time that teachers begin to realize or consider the real interaction such as those what young learners often do outside the classroom: accessing internet (communicating via email, face-book, *youtube*, twitter, etc.), reading international

magazines and newspapers, watching international festival or documentary films.

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