

## Conference Paper

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Turning Point of the English Language Teaching in Indonesia

**Slamet Wiyono**

The National Land Institute

### Abstract

English, in Indonesia, is spoken, taught and communicated as a foreign language. Due to the above condition, the position of English in Indonesia lies in the expanding circle of World Englishes [8]. The advantage of being in the expanding circle is that there must be a very different aspect of Language Teaching and Learning as compared to the other two circles above. The Indonesian language, for example, which does not have a tense system like that of English, constitutes a unique problem faced by Indonesians learning English. The statement previously mentioned implies that those who learn English must be highly exposed to the language as they should be made accustomed to practicing the language a lot since they mostly communicate using their either vernacular or national language after the class hours.

Corresponding Author:  
 Slamet Wiyono; email:  
 wiyon.slamet@gmail.com

**Keywords:** exposure, strategies, new paradigm

Received: 1 March 2017  
 Accepted: 27 March 2017  
 Published: 12 April 2017

**Publishing services provided  
 by Knowledge E**

© Slamet Wiyono. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the LSCAC Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

The changes of English language teaching curricula have been taking place so many times in Indonesia. Dated back since the time of independence of 1945, historically, there are some evidences showing the progress of the curricula in Indonesia. Three phases are proposed by Mistar in ([2]: 1) the phase of pre-independence that was a time before the independence; 2) the phase of early independence. It was 1945-1950; and 3) the phase of development that took place after 1950. However, according to [10], Indonesia undergoes the application of 1) content-based curricula consisting of the 1968, 1975 and 1984 curricula; 2) objective-based curriculum. That was the curriculum of 1994; and competency-based curriculum. It was the 2004 curriculum.

In a broader sense, Kasiani (200) cited in (Emilia, 2005: 22); *ibid* (2011: 1-2) declares and lists the periods of the progress of the curricula ever existed in Indonesia. They are as follows: 1) 1945-1950. The curriculum, at that time, had no clear characteristic due to a political situation. This was the time of the war of independence; 2) 1954. It was the application of the Old Style Curriculum. At that period, no language teaching objective was clearly expressed; 3) 1962. The New Style Curriculum was in application. The Audio-lingual Method was used. This went in line with the popularity of that method in

 **OPEN ACCESS**

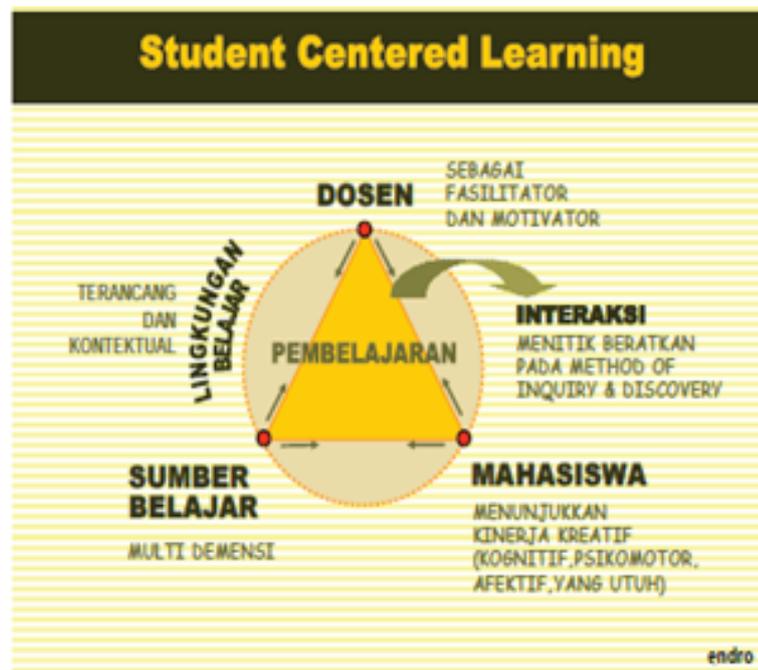
1960' and 1970's in the world; 4) 1968. It was the time of the application of Perfected New Style Curriculum. The above Audio-lingual Method was still applied; 5) 1975. This curriculum was based on the decree of Minister of Education No.008-E/U/1975. This curriculum had a clear instructional goal and was better than the previous one. The Audio-lingual Method was used as those of two previous curricula; 6) 1984. This curriculum was designed according to the 1975 curriculum. The communicative approach was used and regarded as the best in English language teaching. The student Active Learning (SAL) was emphasized; 7) 1994. The curriculum constituted a 1984 curriculum.

During 1945-1950, in the war of independence, Indonesia was in the dangerous situation, politically, as the Dutch wanted to invade again. Accordingly, the schooling system got the impact of the above situation and the curriculum was neither effective nor efficient.

Apart from the above description related to curriculum, Emilia (ibid, 2011) proposes three arguments on the changes of the curriculum in Indonesia just before the formal application of the 2013 curriculum. The three changes were: 1) the competency-based curriculum of 2001; 2) the 2004 curriculum; and 3) the 2006 curriculum, later popularly called 'school-based curriculum'. The 2001 curriculum was meant to develop the learners' English using target competencies, the 2004 curriculum was based on scientific study of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and the 2006 curriculum gave the freedom for teachers to make innovations in the class to reach the intended goal. Some part of 2004 curriculum; – standard competence, is used to develop the school-based curriculum of 2006, known as Kuriikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). Nowadays, the curriculum applied in Indonesia is the 2013 curriculum though there are also a number of schools are still applying the school-based curriculum.

In a tertiary level of education, however, two land marks are found to be signalling curriculum development. This implies that there has been a great curriculum change in university level They are 1) the content-based; and 2) the competency-based curriculum respectively. The intended change is that the conceptual change of the National Curriculum into the Core Curriculum and the Institutional Curriculum. The legal base of the content-based curriculum is the Decision of Minister of Education and culture No. 56/U/1994 stating that the goal of the curriculum is that the university students ought to master science and its application, whereas the competency-based curriculum has its legal base on the Minister of National Education No 232/U/2000 and No 145/U/2002 which has the goal of what competencies the university graduates should have required by the stake holders ([3]: 6-7)

In the content-based curriculum, it is the teacher who should play a central role of teaching-learning process. The teacher constitutes the only source as and acts totally as the sole actor. To say it in another way, the focus of teaching is on what to teach. This means that the teacher only transfers the knowledge to the learners, and the



**Figure 1:** The diagram which shows the student- centred learning. Adopted from ([3]: 25).

learners are passive. This is what is meant by teacher-centred teaching-learning process. However, in the competency-based teaching, the paradigm now is changed. The teaching-learning process makes the learners actively reconstruct what they have just been taught. The teacher is not the only source, instead he will be only one of the sources [12]. The student-centred learning diagram can be seen below

The learners are freely searching the sources. They may find them from the social media, such as internet, e-books, and some other types of materials as they have the autonomy of browsing, downloading and searching. In other words, the learning materials or sources can be searched multi dimensionally. The teacher then, is only a facilitator. A curriculum, as defined in the ([3]: 5) Kurikulum pendidikan tinggi adalah seperangkat rencana dan pengaturan mengenai isi maupun bahan kajian dan pelajaran serta cara penyampaian dan penilaian yang digunakan sebagai pedoman penyelenggaraan kegiatan belajar-mengajar di perguruan tinggi” (Kemendiknas No 232/U/200). An evaluation, according to (Nunan, 1998), usually takes the form of informal evaluation and takes place during the learning process. This would mean that there is a social teacher-student human relationship. That is the spirit of pedagogy. The change of a direction from teacher-centred to the learner-centred way of teaching and learning process is what this writing would like to describe and it is what is meant by the turning point of the English language teaching of the 21st century.

In the case of World Englishes, Indonesia occupies the expanding circle, that is the place where English is spoken as a foreign language, just like those of other countries



Figure 2: Action research cycle.

such as China, Japan, and the countries in the Middle East [8] and Greece, Poland [4]; whereas the other two circles are the inner and outer circles, where English is, respectively, spoken as native language in the former and as a second language in the latter. The countries belonging to the inner circles are United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand [8] and Ireland [4]; and the ones included in the outer circles are India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nigeria [8], and Singapore, Malawi [4]. The position of Indonesia, however, is advantageous because there must be a great difference in teaching strategy applied in those three circles. The language of Indonesia or popularly called Bahasa Indonesia is unique as the language does not have a tense system. In other words it can be said that the Indonesian language, which does not have a tense system like that of English, constitute a unique problem faced by Indonesians learning English.

## 2. Method

The method the writer used is the Action Research Cycle as proposed by Ferrance (2009: 9). The reason for using this type of cycle above is that the writer wants to improve his way of teaching as what Ferrance (2000: 3) states that action research is meant to do things better and how the instruction impact the students. The steps in the research are: identify the problem, gather data, interpret data, act on evidence, evaluate results, and next steps. See the cycle below:

The language taught in campus where the researcher works is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) especially from week 9 to week 16 that is legal English. In identifying

the problem, the researcher asked students orally to know how far they know legal terms because an ESP generally has certain characteristic (King 163)<sup>1</sup> in the form of 'sub-technical' vocabulary which focuses on certain nouns ([11]: 28). The reason why legal English is chosen is that because the learners need it their place of work [11].

The technical vocabulary use in legal English, especially land law, are among others land ownership (kepemilikan tanah), right of ownership (hak milik), right of use (hak pakai), right of building (hak guna bangunan), right of exploitation (hak guna usaha), (Sudargo and Harsono, 1972) land use (tata guna tanah), land utilization (pemanfaatan tanah), land tenure (penguasaan tanah), land law (hukum pertanahan), Basic Agrarian Law (Undang-undang Pokok Agraria or UUPA), and some general terms for law like article (ayat), paragraph (pasal), constitution (undang-undang), regulation (peraturan), decree (surat keputusan), and so on. The above terms ought to be known by the learners before the discussion.

The research will be done using Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The topic of the discussion is "The Gas Station Establishment " as the station is established near the campus and erected at the Village Owned Land (tanah kas desa). There had to be a talk before the establishment by the village chief and its staff or the government leaders, the company, the local people, as well as the legal regulation holders.

1) A journal written by King. P (1989) 'The uncommon core: Some discourse features of student writing', System, vol.17, 1, pp13-20, listed no. 163 in ([11]: 11).

Based on the above criteria the students were then divided into four groups representing a) government leaders, b) the company staff, c) the local people and d) the regulation holders. The government leaders may consist of a village chief, and his staff, chief of sub district or camat, a regent, or a governor and so on. The company staff may be a manager, a staff of human relation department, director and so on. The local people may consist of the youth organisation leader, head of desa wisma group and other prominent figures, and the legal regulation holders are the ones giving considerations related to the land use and land utilization and other regulations.

### 3. Cycle I

(Week 9) Group 3 (Local people) presented his paper. They seemed to refuse the erection of the gas station as it will pollute air and The group, of course, was argued or supported by the opponents. The paper was given to the teacher for further correction.

(Week 10) Group 2 (Company Staff) presented their paper showing the goodness of the project as it will decrease the number unemployment.

(Week 11) Group 1 (Government Leader). They will further discussion with both the local people and the company staff and gave the paper after the discussion finished.

(Week 12) Group 4 (Legal Regulation holders). They gave consideration of the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the project.

## 4. Cycle II

The procedures in Cycle 2 was repeated, but all groups have got the correction from the teacher. The discussion was ended by the collection of the paper for a further printing process.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

The followings are samples of findings found in both cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

This text is found in Cycle1 a representative of Local People.

- We are not agree with the Government Leader because this land is belong to village. We must got perimition from Mr. Lurah if want to build gas station in our village. We under government Lurah. So please ask Mr. Lurah and staff. Gas station will danger environment and pollution water and air. We, local people agree if Mr. Lurah agree too.

- (The researcher's comments)

Substantively, it is understandable. The company should ask permission to the Village Chief (Lurah). To a certain extent, they realized that they were under the Government leadership, as a matter of fact, yet, simultaneously, they were also afraid that their water will be polluted as the station will dig the land. Gram-matically, the expression of "we are not agree ""should be "we do not agree"; ..."this land belong"..... should be this land belongs"; "We must got perimition" should be " We must get permission" ; "...and pollution water and air" should be :..."water and air pollution".

- The Text found in Cycle2

Is the Government's obligation to ensure the supply and distribution of fuel oil as a vital commodity and dominate the life of people in the entire territory of the Republic of Indonesia. Technical implementation, as mandated in the 1945 Constitution, contained in Article 33 paragraph 2, which reads "The branches of production that are important to the State and which dominate the life of the people controlled by the State".

- (The researcher's comments)

Substantively, this text is more logical than the previous one and is much better expressed. However, the direct translation can be seen in the expression of "Is

the Government regulation....” is the direct translation of “Adalah kewajiban Pemerintah...” , that must be grammatically expressed “ It is the Government regulation that ....” (The impersonal It is deleted). Furthermore, the word “fuel oil” which is the translation of “bahan bakar minyak”.

## 6. Conclusions and Suggestions

Giving much exposure to the learners to freely search the learning materials is challenging and is making the learners active. Besides, the learners get their autonomy in creating, innovating, and finding the sources as they reconstruct what they have just been taught. This is what is popularly called the learner-centered learning process. The teacher, then, only functions as a facilitator. The learners enjoy the teaching and learning process. This process of teaching is oriented toward what the competencies of the learners should own. Therefore, it is challenging.

There is also a weakness in this type of teaching-learning process. This type of teaching needs a small size class, whereas the number students joining the Legal English class is 28 and 29. It is difficult for the teacher to observe such a big number.

## References

- [1] Act Number 5 of 1960 regarding The Basic Provisions Concerning the Fundamentals of Agrarian Affairs.2013. Center of Law and Public Relation, National Land Agency of the Republic of Indonesia.
- [2] G. Braine, (2005). Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- [3] Buku Panduan Pengembangan Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi Pendidikan Tinggi, Sebuah Alternative Penyusunan Kurikulum. 2008. Direktorat Akademik : Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi. Jakarta.
- [4] D. Crystal, English as a global language, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.
- [5] E. Emilia, Pendekatan genre-based dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggris: Petunjuk untuk Guru, Rizqi Press, Bandung, 2011.
- [6] E. Ferrance, Action research, Brown University, Providence, 2000.
- [7] Gautama, Survey of Indonesian economic law: Padjadjaran University Law School. Bandung: Lembaga Penelitian Hukum dan Kriminologi, Fakultas Hukum Universitas Padjadjaran.
- [8] A. Kirkpatrick, (2007). World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- [9] D. Nunan, *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.
- [10] Nurhadi., *Kurikulum 2004: Pertanyaan dan Jawaban*, PT Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, Jakarta, 2004.
- [11] N. P. Markee, "ESP today: A practitioner's guide. Pauline Robinson. Hemel Hempstead, UK: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd, 1991, xii + 146 pp," *English for Specific Purposes*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 263-266, 1993.
- [12] P. Suparno, "Guru demokratis di era reformasi pendidikan, Jakarta," Penerbit PT Gramedia Widiasarana, 2004.
- [13] P. Suparno, *Filsafat konstruktivisme dalam pendidikan*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius, 1997.