

# THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AT SMP I SINGARAJA IN TEACHING ENGLISH ON THE BASIS OF COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

By

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## KENDALA-KENDALA YANG DIHADAPI GURU-GURU BAHASA INGGRIS DI SMPN 1 SINGARAJA DALAM MENGAJARKAN BAHASA INGGRIS BERDASARKAN KURIKULUM BERBASIS KOMPETENSI

### ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini menyajikan secara singkat hasil penelitian yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui: (1) Kendala-kendala yang dihadapi oleh guru bahasa Inggris di SMP Negeri I Singaraja dalam mengajarkan bahasa Inggris berdasarkan kurikulum 2004 yang berbasis kompetensi; (2) Keberadaan support system dalam mengatasi masalah pengajaran berbasis kompetensi; (3) Harapan pengajar untuk mengoptimalkan pelaksanaan Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi (KBK) di sekolah yang bersangkutan. Data penelitian ini diperoleh dengan cara mewawancarai sejumlah guru bahasa Inggris SMP Negeri I Singaraja tentang pelaksanaan pengajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis kompetensi. Dokumen-dokumen seperti silabus, buku kurikulum 2004, dan materi pelatihan bahasa Inggris juga merupakan sumber data penelitian ini. Kemudian data yang sudah dikumpulkan itu dianalisa secara deskriptif kualitatif.

Hasil analisa data menunjukkan bahwa secara umum guru bahasa Inggris di SMP Negeri I Singaraja merasakan bahwa pelaksanaan pengajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis kompetensi belum bisa dilaksanakan secara optimal. Berikut ini adalah sejumlah faktor penyebab ketidakefektifan dari penerapan KBK, seperti: (1) Terbatasnya pengetahuan guru tentang konsep-konsep dasar yang melandasi KBK; (2) Terbatasnya jumlah buku-buku sumber, media, dan fasilitas-fasilitas pendukung lainnya di sekolah; (3) Kondisi lab bahasa yang tidak representatif untuk penyelenggaraan aktifitas peningkatan ketrampilan mendengarkan; Jumlah murid yang besar dalam satu kelas dan terbatasnya waktu untuk melatih ketrampilan berbahasa; (5) Sistem administrasi dan evaluasi yang jauh lebih kompleks.

Meskipun terdapat banyak kendala dalam pelaksanaan KBK, pengajaran bahasa Inggris berbasis kompetensi ini perlu terus dipertahankan karena dirasakan mampu meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam berkomunikasi. Agar pelaksanaan KBK selanjutnya bisa berjalan sesuai dengan harapan, perlu diadakan pengembangan fasilitas-fasilitas yang dianggap sebagai kendala optimalisasi pelaksanaan KBK. Pelatihan KBK bagi guru bahasa Inggris dan monitoring pelaksanaan KBK secara berkelanjutan harus menjadi perhatian utama.

Kata kunci: kendala-kendala, KBK

## 1. INTRODUCTION

School curriculums in Indonesia have undergone revisions for at least seven times. These revisions have been intended to increase the educational quality in our country. It should be noted that the change of curriculum is commonly accompanied by the existence of various problems in education. It seems that the change of the curriculum of teaching English from the one based on communicative language teaching to that based on competency creates problems in its implementation.

Even though there have been a number of modifications with the curriculum of English language teaching, the students' achievement is still low. One of the factual indicators is the implementation of the score 4,01 as the minimum passing grade for national examination. This criterion of 4,01 has caused controversy. This level of achievement in the scale of 11 illustrates the lowest level of learning achievement, in comparison with, for instance, the use of the score 6,00 as the minimum passing grade in Malaysia, and 7.00 in Singapore. This fact certainly arises a question as well as scepticism in the field of education, even among the teachers, about the modification of the curriculum done by the government or the national department of education.

There are a number of factors which seem to be responsible for the achievement in education, such as: (1) The development and the modification of the curriculum, which is done as a top-down process, without involving teachers, who, on the other side, are on the front line as the mediators between the curriculum and the students, having the role of translating the message from the curriculum into instructional practices in the classroom; (2) The implementation of the curriculum which is frequently done without an obvious strategy, including among others a socializing strategy and a systematic and con-

crete implementation. With regard to this point, it should be noted that the content and the message of the curriculum should be well communicated to the teachers. It often happened that the teachers frequently lost direction and guidance in the implementation of the curriculum in classroom instruction; (3) The tendency of not evaluating the implementation of the curriculum comprehensively, in which the evaluation is meant to identify the problems encountered in implementing the curriculum to overcome its weaknesses.

Referring to the fact mentioned above, it is considered necessary to find out the information concerning the problems faced by the teachers of English at SMP I Singaraja in implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Since CBC is relatively new, as long as the researchers know, there has not been a research inventarizing the problems faced by the teachers in the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom on the basis of CBC. This research aimed at describing the problems by using a profound situation assessment method by choosing SMP I Singaraja as the place for conducting the study. The emphasis of the study is on the aspect of the planning of instructional activities, as it is recommended in the 2004 curriculum, asserting that all of the activities taking place in the classroom are directed to one goal, that is, the mastery of the competency of a text or the ability to use the language for communication. This involves a process which is not simple, so the key of success here depends on the quality of the planning ... (Kurikulum 2004: 9)

Based on the consideration above, the problems being highlighted in this study can be formulated as follows:

- (1) What are the problems encountered by the English teachers of SMP I Singaraja in teaching English based on competency based curriculum (CBC)?
- (2) Is there any support system in the school

and how much is the support that the teachers can get from the available support system?

(3) What are their expectations in their attempt to optimize the teaching of English at SMP?

Based on the problems previously mentioned, the objectives of this research are to know:

1. The problems faced by the English teachers of SMP Negeri I Singaraja in preparing the lesson such as material selection, ordering the teaching materials according to level of difficulty, planning for the presentation of the materials in the classroom, planning for the instrument for measuring the students' mastery of the materials being taught.
2. The availability of the support systems that can help them to solve the problems they face in the implementation of CBC in the classroom.
3. The degree of the support that they obtain from the available support system.
4. The expectation of the English teachers at SMP 1 Singaraja to optimize the teaching and learning of English at SMP 1 Singaraja.

## 2. Research Methodology

The subjects of this study were the English teachers of SMP 1 Singaraja. They were chosen as the subjects of the study because they implemented the teaching of English based on CBC and SMP 1 can be considered as a favorite school in Singaraja. Moreover, the school has been prepared for conducting an instruction of national standard. It is therefore expected that the obtained data as to the teaching of English based on CBC can be more accurate and representative.

This research can be categorized as a case study, making use of Rapid Situation Assessment Method, which is commonly used in epidemiology for a fast identification of the problem associated with the spread of diseases and the resources available or possibly required to overcome the prob-

lem. Knowing a problem means finding out the type, the depth, and the scope of the problem. Knowing the available resources means predicting the available resources, such as financial support, human resources, knowledge, and facilities. The data of Rapid Situation Assessment were obtained by using the available information, and analysing the information, conducting an interview with the key informants, having a focused group discussion, and observation, the analysis of which is presented descriptively (Crofts, et al, 1999).

The main instrument of this research was a question sheet which was prepared for interviewing the English teachers of SMP 1 Singaraja as to the problems that they faced in implementing Competency Based Curriculum. This interview was directed to three important things in the implementation of the curriculum as put forward by Snyder et al (1989):

- 1) How far has the curriculum been implemented?
- 2) What are the factors that support or hinder the implementation of the curriculum?
- 3) What are the methodological issues that appear in the implementation, adaptation, and actualisation of the curriculum?

The obtained data, particularly the data from the interview with a number of English teachers at SMP1 Singaraja, were described in order to get the information concerning the factors that hinder the implementation of CBC among the teachers of English at SMP 1 Singaraja. From the description about the teachers' point of view to the teaching of English based on CBC, as they told us during the interview, the problems faced by the teachers were then formulated. The formulation of the problems are then accompanied with various alternatives of problem solving to overcome those problems.

## 3. The Findings and Discussion

### 3.1 General Description of the Result of the Study

From the result of the interview to a number of the English teachers of SMP 1 Singaraja, it can be said that the teachers who become the respondents of this research, strongly consider that the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum in teaching English needs to be maintained since it is believed that the teaching of English on the basis of competency can increase the students' ability in communication. However, there are still a lot of problems faced by the teachers in order to be able to conduct the teaching of English in accordance with the essence of Competency Based Curriculum. The problems encountered by the teachers comprise the points elaborated in the following section.

Most of the respondents of this study admitted that they had not fully understood the concepts of teaching English based on competency. Therefore, they were frequently not very sure whether the technique they used in a certain teaching had constituted the steps of teaching based on competency.

The size of the class, that is, the number of the students in a class, also becomes a problem for the optimal implementation of the concepts of competency based curriculum (CBC). In teaching speaking, a teacher often found difficulties in giving equal opportunities to all students in the classroom, in which there are about 40 students in a class. If it is expected that all students get the turn to speak, the time available in that session is not enough to reach the expectation. If most of the students do not get the chance to speak, the goal to be achieved in teaching based on CBC cannot be realised. In addition to the large size of the class, the open condition of the classroom makes the neighboring classes to be disturbed when the students in one class have speaking practices. In SMP 1 Singaraja, this problem was generally overcome by having speaking activities

not in an ordinary classroom, but in a hall or outside the classroom.

The time allocated for the teaching of speaking skill is also considered as the obstacle in the implementation of an instruction based on CBC. In this case, the teachers complained about the time limitation for teaching a number of language skills in a class meeting. It often happened that not all students got the turn to practise language skills that should learn in a certain meeting. This can happen because the number of the students in a class is very big and the time allotment for the class meeting is very short.

The instructional materials compiled on the basis of the concept of CBC also constitute the obstacle for the optimal implementation of CBC. It was often felt that the English text books from the central government did not represent the materials demanded by CBC. In relation to this point, there were respondents saying that they tried to obtain more relevant books. Moreover, in order to achieve the objective of teaching based on CBC, in which the instructional themes are based on types of texts, teachers are required to make use of more than source. This results in the fact that not only the teachers spend a lot on various resources, but the students also spend a lot of money on the additional materials recommended by their teacher.

Inadequate instructional media and facilities can constitute a hindrance in order to be able to implement the concept of competency based curriculum properly. In this case, a teacher has an extra burden of making media or teaching aids for teaching certain aspects of language since the central government or the school has not yet been ready to prepare the teaching aids required. The facility like a language lab is absolutely needed for the actualization of the activity of teaching listening skill. In SMP 1 Singaraja, there is a mini language lab. The existence of this lab seemed not to support the teaching of

listening because the number of the students in the school was seven hundred students. It frequently happened that the teachers there faced problems when they would like to use tape recorder in teaching listening. The problem was that there was not an electric socket in the classroom to operate the tape recorder. This can happen since the classrooms in junior high schools are not designed for teaching activities making use of electronic facilities. The laboratory room used by the teachers were the ones that were not designed for language lab. Therefore, when listening activities were conducted in the room, students in other classes were often disturbed because because the students having the listening classes making use of tape recorders, were not equipped with headsets. The operation of the tape recorder with loud noise certainly disturbs the activities in other classrooms. It seems that a standard language lab is required, so that the students' activities in language lab can be done properly and the listening activities would not disturb other students.

The teaching of English based on competency also involves instructional system using portfolio. In order to increase the students' learning motivation, their works in the form of portfolio need to be displayed on a special place to arouse the students' happiness for the works that they have produced. The problem faced in relation to this point was that there were no appropriate places to display the students' works.

The teaching of English based on CBC also requires the evaluation of three aspects, covering cognitive, psychomotoric, affective aspects. Most of the respondents of this study felt that they found difficulties in evaluating the students' interest in learning English (affective aspect). Evaluating the students' interest individually was really felt very difficult since the number of the students in class was really very big. Even it was said that the time available for the affective evaluation of the students was not enough. The

affective evaluation was then performed by inferring from cognitive evaluation. If the range of the students' cognitive achievement is 86 to 100, it is assumed that their affective achievement or their learning motivation is high. It was, however, realized that the students having low cognitive achievement do not necessarily have low motivation in learning. In addition to evaluating the students on the various aspects mentioned before, the teachers are also expected to conduct block test – a test given to students of teaching a number of topics. The challenging task after the administration of this test is the analysis of the test result. In this respect, the teachers are required to identify the number of the students who are successful in the teaching and learning process. The students who are not successful in the teaching and learning process should be given remedial activity, so that they reach the level of success being targeted.

From the instructional preparation, it was felt that the administration demand was of great burden for most teachers. The making of instructional preparation that required teachers to develop basic competency into target indicators of an instruction, was considered as a burdening. There was a suggestion that this teaching program or preparation should be in the form of a simple instructional program. The most important thing is that an English teacher always makes use of an appropriate method or technique in order to the expected instructional objectives. There was also an argument saying that the components of language teaching included in the competency-based teaching preparation and the ones included in the teaching preparation based on the 1994 curriculum are different only in terms of terminology. With respect to the methods being used in teaching English, it was said that the techniques of teaching based on CBC are relatively the same as the ones based on the former curriculum. The difference only lies on the administrative demands and the evaluation system, which is believed to be more complicated.

In relation to the various obstacles faced by the English teachers, as previously elaborated, there are a number of ways recommended by the English teachers in order to overcome the obstacles. For the purpose of overcoming the problems related to the existence of instructional materials, which were not relevant to CBC, the teachers struggled to get more relevant books from outside. In order to provide the students with a good model of pronunciation, the teachers used CD or VCD that they themselves attempted to obtain. The instruction involving the students in the form of drama technique was also considered as an effective alternative to develop the students' communicative competency. In order to give the students an appropriate model of pronunciation, the English teachers of SMP 1 often invited the native speakers of English to the classroom. According to one of the English teachers in SMP 1 Singaraja, the native speakers in this respect did not necessarily have professions as teachers. The most important thing, in this case, was that the students had the experiences to communicating in English with the native speakers of English. This experience was believed to be able to increase the students' self confidence in communicating in English. It was even said that SMP 1 Singaraja would soon have a joint venture with AILF Denpasar (Australian Language Institute), in which an English teacher from Australia would become a volunteer in SMP 1 Singaraja to help the students and the teachers in the teaching of English.

Even though there were a lot of obstacles being encountered in the implementation of CBC in teaching English at schools, the teachers there agreed that the teaching of English based on CBC is good to maintain and apply. This is due to the fact that the instruction based on CBC has been successful enough to develop the students' communicative competency. In maintaining the implementation of CBC, there are a number of things that need to be taken into account by the government in order that the implementation

of CBC can be done properly. These necessary things, as the respondents put forward, include:

- 1) **The necessity for developing the teachers' understanding as to the concepts of CBC.**  
Even though the training on the implementation of CBC in the teaching of English had frequently been done, the teachers still felt that they were lack of the proficiency in terms teaching methods based on competency. Therefore, the training on CBC needs to be increased in terms of frequency.
- 2) **The importance of having a close relationship with another institution.**  
To increase the teachers' understanding about the concept of CBC, it is admitted that junior high schools need to have a link with certain institutions, especially with the institution of teacher training
- 3) **The need for the limited number of the students in a class.**  
The number of the students in a class is necessarily limited, in order that the classroom activities intended to improve the students' competency in communication can be done optimally.
- 4) **A strict monitoring towards the implementation of CBC in the classroom.**  
A much stricter monitoring of the implementation of CBC in the classroom is considered to be important, so that the English teachers really try their best to put the concepts of CBC into practice in their teaching. The monitoring, in this case, should not only be done to headmasters. In order to make sure about the implementation of CBC among the teachers, it is not enough for the monitoring team to interview the teachers and the headmaster. Then monitoring team is required to directly observe the teachers teach in the classroom. In this way, the teachers will be able to feedback from the team if the techniques of teaching that they apply are in accordance with the requirements of CBC.
- 5) **The necessary to have a concise and efficient instructional materials.**

In order to make the teaching of English based on CBC more effective, there was a suggestion from the English teachers in SMP 1 Singaraja related to the curriculum of English. It was suggested that the materials in the curriculum should be shortened or reduced but should be taught profoundly, in the sense that the time allotment should be increased so that a lot of practices in using the language for communication can be increased.

### 3.2 Discussion

The main problem faced by the English teachers in teaching English based on Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) was that they had quite limited knowledge about CBC. This seemed to arise uncertainties on the side of the teachers in conducting teaching and learning activities in the classroom, bearing the features of CBC. In the atmosphere of these uncertainties, help from the government are greatly required to make various trainings in CBC more intensive, in order to increase the teachers' knowledge in teaching, techniques of teaching, and instructional materials based on CBC.

Other problems faced by the teachers in implementing CBC in teaching English are related to the facilities available in the schools, the teaching materials available, and the guidance of the implementation of CBC for the teachers in terms of teaching preparation administration. The teaching of English language skill, for instance speaking, requires a limited number of students in a class, so that every student gets the chance to participate actively in developing their speaking ability. However, the number of the students, when this study was conducted, was 40 students in a class. Therefore it was suggested that the number of the classes should be increased, so that the number of the students in a class could be reduced to an ideal number for the implementation of the concepts of CBC.

With regard to the teaching facilities, it was felt that the materials provided by the government were very limited in number. These materials might include teaching materials for listening class, which had not been provided by the government. In this case, the teachers got more and more burdens because the teachers should be active in attempting to obtain listening materials by themselves. The problem is even more serious since the language lab in the school is not in balance with the number of the students as a whole.

As previously presented, the implementation of CBC requires the teachers to do more administrative tasks. The teachers are also required to attempt to make the teaching materials not provided by central government available. Since the tasks given to the teachers are getting more and more, it is very reasonable, as what was expected by the respondents, that the teachers' salaries or incentives should be increased to make it relevant to the additional burdens given to the teachers.

## 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

### 4.1 Conclusion

From the description and the discussion of this research previously presented, it can be concluded that the problems faced by the English teachers of SMP 1 Singaraja are related to: 1) The teachers' limited understanding about the nature of competency based curriculum; 2) The large number of the students in a class; 3) Limited time allotment for instructional activities; 4) The limited number of English text books; 5) The inavailability of appropriate media and teaching facilities.

### 4.2 Suggestion

Referring to the problems faced by the teachers as presented above, the things being suggested can be stated as follows:

- 1) The teachers of English need to be given more intensive trainings about the techniques of teaching incorporating the concepts of Competency Based Curriculum;
- 2) The government is required to provide the schools with teaching facilities supporting more the achievement of teaching English based on competency;
- 3) Continuous monitoring towards the English teachers' instructional activities should be done;
- 4) The English teachers in junior high schools are expected to struggle to increase their knowledge on CBC and attempt to search for information as to the most effective ways of teaching English based on CBC.

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