

1 | Curriculum Innovations in Indonesia and the Strategies to Implement Them

Suwarsih Madya
(Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the curriculum innovations conducted in Indonesia in the last three decades or so and the strategies used to implement them. The strategies to be discussed are at the national, institutional, and individual levels. The discussion starts with defining two key terms ‘curriculum’ and ‘innovation,’ which is followed by the presentation of some information on the various contexts of EFL teaching in Indonesia to help the readers to understand the complexity of the problems in implementing the new curriculum. The rest is concerned with the innovations conducted in conjunction with the 1984 curriculum, the 1994 curriculum, and the 2006 school-level curriculum.

The term ‘curriculum’ means different things to different people. Lovat and Smith (1995), for example, quote 12 statements defining the term. Three statements define curriculum as subjects, disciplines or syllabuses and documents, six statements only consider it as intention, two statements have the experiential notion, and three statements limit the curriculum to experiences which are intended. The writer agrees with Lovat and Smith (1995, p. 20) who strongly argued that any complete, useful and effective definition of curriculum must include the following perspectives: curriculum as product, curriculum as process, curriculum as intention, curriculum as reality, and curriculum as both normative and descriptive. It is with these comprehensive perspectives that English curriculum innovations in Indonesia are discussed here, with emphasis being put on the process or implementation.

The term *curriculum innovation* may be defined differently by different people, but the writer would adopt Markee’s (1997) definition, which says: “Curricular innovation is a managed process of development whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values that are perceived as new by potential adopters” (p. 46). This seems to fit well the curriculum innovations to be described in this article of which the products were English teaching

materials, more communicative (student-centered) methodological skills, and creativity and critical thinking as new values to be practiced by secondary EFL teachers, who used to be pure textbook users, traditional teachers, and conformable and uncritical to top-down instructions or general situations.

The type of change in the English curriculum innovations discussed here may be called a combination of the so-called induced immanent change and selected contact change (Markee, 1997, p. 49) because the identification of problems were done together by outsiders, i.e., the British experts in the PKG (*Pemantapan Kerja Guru* or Improvement of Teachers' Performance) project and American experts in the CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) project, and the insiders, i.e., experts from English Teacher Education Department at some Indonesian higher learning institutions and selected EFL teachers as end users. The writer believes that the type of change will influence ownership; the more involved the users and stakeholders are, the greater the possibility of their ownership of the innovation will be.

Concerning who has a say in the implementation of an innovation, the writer's observation of the secondary English curriculum innovations in Indonesia lends support to what Fullan (1982) has stated that although teachers are key players in all language teaching innovations, many other individuals such as ministry of education officials, various personnel working for the donor agencies, school supervisors, principals and other decision makers, also have a stake in the innovation process. Differences in the degree of innovation sustainability can be found between the PKG project and the CTL project to be described in this article.

The curriculum innovations have been carried out in the existing situations and conditions, which to a great extent keep changing. In the writer's observation, the success of any innovation also depends on the degree of consistency between the innovation paradigm and the existing socio-cultural and political systems. The centralized system of government normally emphasizes uniformity and tends to develop commanding bureaucrats. This is not conducive to any contextual creativity. It follows that any curriculum innovation which requires contextual creativity and responsiveness tends to fail to achieve a true success under the centralized system of education and within the conforming culture. This is the case with the English curriculum innovations in Indonesia prior to the reform order starting in 1999.

This article is aimed at providing the readers with information on English curriculum innovative endeavors intended to improve the secondary schools students' mastery of English communicative competence within the frame of almost 20 years' time. The endeavors seem to have been influenced more

by factors other than educational ones. To help develop a comprehensive understanding of both the success and failure of the innovations, therefore, information on contextual aspects of English teaching and learning in Indonesia will be presented first.

ASPECTS RELATED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL TEFL

The English curriculum for secondary schools is developed in the framework of implementing the national educational system in a wider socio-cultural and political context. The multicultural and multilingual context may both facilitate and impede the learning of a foreign language. A culture in which obedience is highly valued tends to impede creativity. Similarly, a top down political system, in which a commanding bureaucracy is its normal feature, will allow very little, if any, opportunity for the subordinate to think critically and creatively. In addition, whether schools have access to information and development also depends very much on their geographical situations and conditions in the vast archipelago. Above all, the education system, of which secondary schooling is a part, certainly has a great influence on the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools. Information on all of these is therefore deemed necessary for better understanding the English curriculum innovations in Indonesia.

The Contexts of TEFL in Indonesia: Socio-cultural, Political, and Geographical

The context of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL hereafter) in Indonesia is indeed unique in many ways. This has been to a great extent attributable to the multicultural and multilingual nature of the Indonesian society, in which one can easily identify differences – in language, ethnicity, and culture to mention a few. According to *Ethnologue 2005* (Rachman, 2007), Indonesia has 745 local languages, of which 271 are in West Papua, and dialects with their own characteristics and about 350 ethnic groups and tribes, with their own customs, types of villages, social structure, beliefs and religions. Throughout South-East Asia, this country probably has the greatest diversity of culture, caused by differing histories of the people's contact with and responses to the outside world (Geertz, 1967). With all of these differences, however, the people are being united by being Indonesian recognizing Indonesia as the only home water-land and *Bangsa Indonesia*

the only nation, and esteeming highly *Bahasa Indonesia* as the only uniting language, as stated in the 1928 *Youth Oath* long before this country got its independence in 1945. All of this is clearly expressed in the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* or Diversity in Unity.

The status of *Bahasa Indonesia* or the Indonesian language, which is a variety of Malay, as the state language has contributed to the uniqueness of the context of TEFL. This is further made more unique by the fact that a lot of Muslim children have learned to read Arabic before learning English, in some cases even before learning to read Indonesian. In short, in most cases, Indonesian children may have learned at least two languages when they begin to learn English, i.e., a local language and *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Such a multicultural/multilingual environment may, on the one hand, facilitate EFL learning, but on the other, interfere with it. The pluralistic nature of the Indonesian society requires that the people tolerate differences in order to establish a peaceful and harmonious life. Understanding each other's customs and ways of thinking is a necessity. Tolerance and empathy develop naturally when one experiences in daily life that what makes one group happy may disappoint other groups, what is regarded as important by one group may be regarded as trivial by other groups, what is regarded as sacred by one group may be regarded as ordinary by other groups, and so on, and so on. In language learning, tolerance and empathy may, as maintained by Brown (2000), facilitate the EFL learning in Indonesia. Those who have learned to recite the Holy Koran, which is in Arabic, may find no difficulty in learning to produce the English long vowels and consonants which are absent in English. The vowels include /i:/ as in *seen* and *meet*, /u:/ as in *cool* and *boom*, /ɑ:/ as in *mark* and *harm*, and /ɔ:/ as in *born* and *caught*. The consonants include /ʃ/ as in *shoot* and *wish*, /ð/ as in *though* and *with*, and /θ/ as in *think* and *teeth*. However, the students' mother tongues and *Bahasa Indonesia* may have interfering effects on it. Since the local languages are different from one another and from *Bahasa Indonesia*, and geographical mobility is greatly possible, the interfering process may be complicated.

Such a context is further made more unique by disparities of development created by differing degrees of ease with which people have access to information and development. Our geographical conditions vary from one area to area. We inhabit about 930 islands out of more than 17,000 islands in the archipelago, which spread across the seas for 5,110 kilometers (3,194 miles) east to west and 1,888 kilometers (1,180 miles) north to south. Many of the islands contain rugged mountains and dense jungles that have posed problems of transportation and communication

among the people. This has resulted in disparities of development, which have great influence on any innovative endeavor.

It is true that nowadays advancements of information and communication technology have helped a great deal in improving the above said situations and conditions, yet the problems remain unsolved, especially in remotes areas which are separated by dense forests, swamps, and mountains, or in small islands, which are separated by seas from the rest of the worlds. In these areas, people are deprived of access to information and education, and schools, due to delivery problems, cannot be easily equipped with textbooks, curriculum guidelines and laboratories as well as other facilities. Certain schools in isolated areas are seldom, if ever, visited by their supervisors/superintendents and their staff members, for many reasons, rarely have the opportunity to attend in-service education. Another problem is related to young teachers' reluctance to take up teaching appointments in these areas. This has partly resulted in the mismatched teaching assignment. In the present decentralized system of government, which has been implemented since 2001, the problem has been worsened by the people's rising regional ego, which has resulted in an oversupply of educational workforce in some areas but a shortage in other areas.

The climate is another factor to be considered. Tropical heat, high degrees of humidity and salty wind do no good for the maintenance of the school hardware and software such as radio, audio-visual aids, computer hardware, and laboratory equipment. Due to financial constraints, only very few schools manage to provide air-conditioned rooms to store the equipment/materials. This has also contributed to the disparities in opportunities to enjoy innovation, which has in turn contributed to disparities in EFL learning achievements.

Another aspect which might have impact on EFL teaching in Indonesia is the political system, which has shifted from the highly centralized to highly decentralized one since Law No. 22/1999 (revised in 2004) was promulgated valid in 2001. This has given the district full autonomy in providing primary and secondary education. In relation to EFL teaching, differences have already occurred in the policy of teaching English to primary schools children since the implementation of the 1994 curriculum, which allowed primary schools to teach English to their 4th, 5th and 6th graders. But the above said full autonomy of districts has caused greater differences in English teaching policy. This international language is taught in primary schools in a number of districts to all graders and in other districts to 4th-6th graders only. Since no teachers of English have been specially trained and educated for primary schools, and only a few schools

can afford to hire qualified teachers of English, disparities of quality must have occurred in primary school TEFL, which will have great impact on any innovative endeavors of secondary school TEFL.

With this unique background, the students certainly have different EFL learning needs which should be considered seriously by any policy makers, including EFL curriculum policy makers, and curriculum implementers if the goal of TEFL in Indonesia is to be successfully reached. Any innovation endeavor will therefore be truly successful if it can meet the needs within the existing situations and conditions.

The Education System

Decentralization of Education

As has been touched upon before, the provision of primary and secondary education is delegated to the regional government. The implementation is regulated by the 2003 Education Act, which mandates the shift from a highly centralized to highly decentralized system. In this system, the provision of primary and secondary education becomes the responsibility of the district government in coordination with the provincial government, with the Minister of National Education remaining responsible for national education. Under this decentralized system, four crucial points are worth mentioning in the context of this paper: (1) the implementation of school-based management (the 2003 Education Law, Article 51); (2) the development of school level curriculum based on the national standards yet to suit the needs of each educational unit and learners (The 2003 Education Law, Articles 36 & 38); (3) the final exam for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary education, consisting of two types: the national level and the school level; and (4) English as one of the subjects in the national exams for both junior and secondary education (Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Standards of Education).

Six principles stated in the 2003 Education Law to guide the provision of education as a whole. For the reader's information, the six principles will be quoted below.

- 1) Education is conducted democratically, equally and non-discriminatorily based on human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national pluralism.
- 2) Education is conducted as a systemic unit with an open system and multi-meanings.
- 3) Education is conducted as a life-long process of inculcating cultural

values and for the empowerment of learners.

- 4) Education is conducted based on the principles of modeling, motivation and creativity in the process of learning.
- 5) Education is conducted by developing culture for reading and writing, and arithmetic, for all members of the community.
- 6) Education is conducted by empowering all components of the community through their participation in the implementation and quality control of the education services.

Since EFL teaching in Indonesia is an integral part of our national education system, the above principles shall certainly guide the development of EFL teaching, of which the curriculum is a crucial aspect. The above principles have been formulated in reference to the characteristics of the Indonesian plural society. It follows that curriculum innovations which provide opportunity for teachers and students to uphold the values they hold and to enjoy creativity, empowerment, and quality improvement, and are supported by the management system are likely to be truly successful. This can be seen in the introduction and development of CTL of English in junior secondary schools to be described later. By contrast, innovations which allow about the same opportunity but are not supported by the management system tend to fail in continuing the innovation and disseminating its results as can be seen in the PKG project in the context of introducing communicative language teaching.

Students

The number on students in the Indonesian education system has increased from 36,849,799 in 1984 to 40,535,864 in 1994 (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1996) and to more than 50 million in 2005 (Ministry of National Education, 2005). Of the 50 million students to serve, more than 29 million are enrolled in primary schools (both general and Islamic), more than 11 million in junior secondary schools (both general and Islamic), around six million in senior secondary schools (both general and Islamic), and the rest in higher education institutions. Considering the background described above, students vary in educational experiences. Some of them are highly advantaged, and most are fairly disadvantaged, and quite a few are severely disadvantaged. Those coming from the highly advantaged families may have enjoyed higher quality education since the beginning than those from the fairly disadvantaged ones, and those from the disadvantaged may have been deprived of even average quality education. The most disadvantaged ones are those who drop out from

primary schools due to socio-economic and cultural reasons despite the Government's continuing efforts to alleviate poverty and campaigning for basic education. All of this will certainly have great impact the ease with which the innovation practice is disseminated.

Referring to the goal of national education formulated in Article 3 of the 2003 Education Law, the students should be given ample opportunity to develop their whole potentials – ethical, aesthetical, logical, kinesthetic, or multiple intelligences, to borrow Gardner's (1995) term. In other words, they should be facilitated in developing their spiritual intelligence, their emotional intelligence, their intellectual intelligence, and their kinesthetic intelligence to be total persons. This is indeed advantageous for them since all of them will have a place. Any innovation endeavor which allows teachers to give due attention to the development of the whole potentials, with achievements in different domains of learning being equally appreciated, will then be likely to enjoy sustainable appreciation; hence a true success.

Teachers

As professional staff, teachers are the heart of the operation of schools. Money, materials, time, space, physical resources and curricula are all important, but during the whole process of learning the ability of the staff to perform is crucial (Harris, 1980). Schools, in contrast to an automated operation, are heavily dependent upon human performance for nearly every aspect of their operation. School personnel, particularly teachers and principals, are a vital link in improvement efforts and at the level of classroom practice, teachers are significant, if not paramount players (Crandall, 1983). In their synthesis and critique of research on effective schools, Purkey and Smith (1982) conclude that “change will not take place without the support and commitment of teachers” (p. 65).

All of this also applies to secondary school TEFLIN (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia) teachers though the challenges they are confronted with seem to be heavier, especially if the educational qualification required by Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Standards of Education is to be fulfilled. That is, all teachers, regardless of educational levels, are required to hold a first degree or have Diploma-IV certificate. According to the data provided by the Director of Educator Profession, Directorate General for the Improvement of the Quality of Educators and Educational Personnel, the Ministry of National Education, the number of secondary school teachers of English is 75,368. Of these, 37,643 are employed as civil servants while the rest as private teachers.

When the old minimal educational qualification requirement is applied, i.e., non-degree D-II (two-year teacher education) and D-III (three-year teacher education) certificates for junior secondary schools (abbreviated JSSs here-after) and senior secondary schools (abbreviated SSSs hereafter) respectively, the civil servant teachers of English fall into the following categories: appropriate and qualified (45.4% for JSSs and 73.5% for SSSs); qualified but mismatched (9.9% for JSSs and 8.3% for SSSs); appropriate but under-qualified (41.2% for SSSs and 16.8% for SSSs); and both mismatched and under-qualified (4.5% for SSSs and 1.5% for SSSs). When the new qualification requirement as mentioned above is applied, the problem becomes bigger. In addition, the disparities in teachers' quality are further widened due to unequal opportunity for teachers to attend in-service training. Any English curriculum innovation will be successful only if the teachers have the required competencies, which might be related to their educational qualification and further development through in-service education. As has been mentioned above, access to further development also varies from teacher to teacher due to geographical conditions.

Learning Resources

The teaching of EFL in Indonesia certainly needs the support of learning resources, which include student textbooks, other curriculum materials, and English input from the environment in general. The new policy on student textbooks emphasizes the efficiency of textbook use. Ministerial Regulation No. 5/2005 states that textbooks shall be used for at least five years before they are revised. The sad fact is that English textbooks used in secondary schools need improving as concluded by Collins (2005) in his study of fourteen textbooks as follows.

The textbooks do not always provide accurate information about the details of English usage, and this is likely have a negative impact on the accuracy of both the teachers' and the students' knowledge of English structure and use. ... there is evidence of an inadequate treatment of the fundamental relationships between form and meaning, and between class and function, and – most alarmingly – many straightforward factual errors. English teachers and educators in Indonesia therefore, it would seem, need to cultivate a critical stance in assessing the quality of grammar presentation when selecting and using textbooks. (Collins, 2005, p. 288)

In her study, through content analysis, of textbooks used in Indonesian high schools, Anita Lie (2001) found that the textbooks are not yet sensitive and responsive to varied socio-cultural backgrounds of the students in relation to gender, ethnicity, geography, and socio-economic status. As the Indonesian nation is socio-culturally diverse and its communities live in different geographical environments, the findings need serious consideration.

Nowadays, the environment is richer in English input, though reading materials are in general very limited, especially reading materials other than those presented in textbooks. This is because only very few schools have a library with an adequate collection of English readings. Nevertheless, one thing is worth noting here. That is, a lot of most Indonesian students can now enjoy radio and TV English broadcasts. However, it depends on the teachers whether their students are encouraged to benefit from such broadcasts.

Most teaching and learning situations and conditions, however, are still far from being conducive. Though education reform has been mandated by the Education Law, the teachers tend to put too much emphasis on the cognitive aspects because they have not been trained in facilitating their students' personal developments. This has been worsened by the washback effect of the national exam covering three subjects in both junior secondary schools (English, Indonesian Language, Mathematics) and senior secondary schools (English, Indonesian Language, Mathematics/ Economics), on the curriculum implementation, which is so strong that teachers tend to ignore other subjects and non-academic learning matters. As a result, any innovation endeavor will not receive full appreciation if they are not related to the national exam subjects. Only if the intended coverage of assessment data is truly implemented will some innovation endeavor receive true appreciation and continuously practiced. It is within such dynamic situations and conditions that have been described above that any curriculum innovative endeavor has been conducted.

THE SHIFT FROM STRUCTURAL TO FUNCTIONAL ORIENTATION

The 1975 Structural Curriculum

The 1975 English curriculum, which is said to be the further development of the 1968 curriculum, is obviously structurally oriented. This can be seen from the view of language and language learning described in the curriculum and from the curriculum content as translated (Departemen Pendidikan dan

Kebudayaan, 1979, pp. 76-77) and presented below.

View of Language and Language Learning

Language is a system of sounds and forms which have meanings. Languages in the world have their own systems, for example, the sound system of Indonesian is different from that of English.

In a language there are words symbolizing meaning. People who speak a language know and can use the symbols used in that language to convey meanings contained in the symbols. A symbol may have general meaning recognized by all the members of a community using the language and also a particular meaning used by a particular group.

Using words in language reflect activities, i.e., understanding and speaking. People listen and react to the words said to them. For example, they do something if what is said to them is an instruction or a direction. In other words, a piece of information is conveyed by a party to the other through language. When the information is understood, it stimulates a reaction from the second party. The verbal interaction develops when the information has attracted both parties' attention.

Beside verbal interaction, communication can also take place through other means, i.e., writing. Writing is used as a means of recording language which cannot be conveyed verbally. The writing system is also different from language to language.

Because language functions as a means to express someone's experiences, feelings, and opinions about the world in which they live, it also has cultural meanings. If someone is raised or has the opportunity to live in a different cultural environment, he/she will find differences or side meanings contained in the gestures, words, or expressions. The word *dinner* in English implies an understanding of time, the food served, the eating manner, and so on.

Language is a learned behavior. A normal child has the ability to produce sounds. Through listening and repetition, the sounds are formed and then have meanings. Only then do the words convey meanings and can invite reaction or responses from other people who have heard them. When a child turns to six or seven, he/she has acquired the basic knowledge of the sound system of her/his mother tongue and the structure of the sounds so that he/she is able to arrange the sounds into a meaningful structure, i.e., words and expressions.

Learning English, or any other foreign language, is not the same as learning a mother tongue. In learning his/her mother tongue, a child is in an advantageous situation in which he/she can internalize the language in its wholeness and the whole day for 5 or 6 years. Meanwhile, someone who

learns English in the classroom only listens to the language in the limited time and context. After the English class is over, he/she rarely gets the opportunity to hear the language outside the classroom. Such a situation should be taken into consideration when developing the materials so that the objectives of teaching English can be achieved.

Principles of Language Teaching and Learning

The teachers are advised to apply the principles below in teaching English (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1975).

- Since the oral language in a community has a primary status, the teaching of English begins with the introduction of the English sound system, both in isolation and in a series of sounds. It should be noted that the teaching of sounds in isolation is to make the individual sounds clear. The sounds do not have meanings until they are arranged to form words, which are later arranged to form expressions and sentences. English typically uses stress, rhythm, junctures, intonation to create meanings conveyed through words, expressions, and sentences.
- Besides learning the English sound system, students need to the English grammatical system. The mastery of the basic structure of English will enable students to understand, give response, and express themselves in a situation to communicate with other people. Learning English means forming new habits in accordance with its sound system and grammatical system through regular, intensive, and extensive language exercises. In other words, learning English means trying to implant the will to ask and answer questions, self-express, and make authentic arrangement of language forms as used by English native speakers.
- Learning English also means learning the culture, gestures, and oral statements which expand the meanings of words and sentences. For example, the word *sarapan* (Javanese) (= Indonesian morning meal) is not exactly the same as 'breakfast' because the cultural components contained in the two words are different.
- English has extensive vocabulary which has to be learned by students. The vocabulary can be classified into content words (e.g., *pen, school, go, pretty*) and function words (e.g., *with, for, may, will*). Function words need to be learned as soon as possible in a logical order. 'Content words' can be taught in small groups on things found in life situations in the surroundings. Increasing the vocabulary can be carried out after the sound systems and the basic structure have been mastered by students. (pp. 77-78)

Using the concepts of language and language learning and principles of learning described above, the 1975 curriculum of English is obviously a structural one. Being implemented through the instructional system development procedure, the curriculum consists of three parts. Part I is about the curricular aims, and instructional goals, and topics, Part II about topics and subtopics per semester, and Part III about teaching materials. In the senior secondary school English syllabus, for example, the curricular aims are as follows (the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1975): (1) Students have the knowledge of English sentence patterns of a higher level with expanded vocabulary of about 4,000 words; (2) Students have a *working* knowledge of English which can be used to (a) read effectively, (b) understand oral English, (c) write in English, and (d) converse in English; (3) Students accurately use sentence patterns of a higher level with an expanded vocabulary of about 4,000 words; (4) Students have the skill to use their (a) reading ability to understand textbooks and references written in English, (b) listening ability to understand lecturers/conversation in English, (c) writing ability to take notes delivered in English and communicate in written English, and (d) speaking ability to communicate in oral English; (5) Students appreciate English in particular and language in general as a system to communicate; (6) Students like using English for communication alongside the Indonesian language; and (7) Students appreciate English as a means to deepen scientific knowledge and know other cultures.

The above curricular aims fall into three types: the knowledge of the system (No. 1, 2, 3), language macro skills (No. 4), attitude to English (No. 5 & 6), and the English culture (No. 7). For each curricular aim, relevant instructional goals are developed and for each instructional goal, a topic is already determined. The first curricular aims have 26 instructional goals; the second, 4 goals; the third, 26 goals; the fourth, 4 goals; the fifth, 26 goals; the sixth, 4 goals; and the seventh, 1 goal. Furthermore, for each instructional goal, one topic is determined. Of the 61 topics to be covered, 48 topics are about grammar. The structural orientation is reflected in the subtopics which are mostly about grammatical structures. In short, the 1975 syllabus emphasizes the learning of the language forms.

The 1984 Weak Functional Secondary English Curriculum

The change from the 1975 to the 1984 curriculum marked the shift from focusing on language usage to language use. The 1984 English curriculum is intended to be a communicative one as can be seen in its introductory

statements. The statements are concerned with (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1987): (1) the nature of language as a means of communication; (2) the wrong assumption that learners' English linguistic knowledge will automatically enable them to communicate in English; (3) the importance of meanings and functions; (4) the nature of language use variations, which should be considered in designing learning activities; and (5) the importance of English linguistic knowledge in supporting the acquisition of language skills.

The curriculum mentions three types of language activity: reading, dialogues, and writing. Reading is aimed at developing the students' ability to comprehend various texts and increasing their vocabulary and structural experiences. The reading materials should be about things already known by students so that they can concentrate on the linguistic rules used to express the meanings. Dialogues are used to teach skills to use English orally to express various communicative functions. Writing is aimed at developing the students' skills in constructing correct and acceptable sentences and arranging them into a paragraph and various simple texts.

Though the syllabus is claimed to be communicative, the structural orientation is still very strong as implied in the statements of the structure-related instructional goals which emphasize the sentence-level meaning. Besides, the components of each unit include structure, reading, vocabulary, conversation, writing, pronunciation, and spelling which are presented in a matrix format; hence, implying little flexibility. In the writer's opinion, this curriculum can then be classified as the weak functional type (Yalden, 1983). Its implementation can, however, be said to be much more communicative. The recommendation that the communicative approach be applied in implementing the curriculum led to the decision to implement it innovatively more communicatively by retraining the teachers through the PKG project.

The Innovative Strategy to Implement the Curriculum: The PKG Project

Though efforts to reform the teaching in general and that of English in particular have been made since 1960s through innovative projects, the project which has shown great impact on the change from form-oriented to meaning-oriented English teaching was the PKG project carried out in conjunction with the implementation of the 1984 curriculum.

The recommendation that the 1984 curriculum should be implemented though applying the communicative approach was followed by the commitment to making the teaching of English more communicative by retraining the teachers through the PKG project. This project was in fact part of the national projects

aimed at improving innovatively English, Indonesian, Mathematics, and Sciences, and Indonesian teachers' professional competencies in conjunction with the implementation of the 1984 curriculum. The innovation was concerned with the in-service teacher training design, which ensured the integration of theory and practice. The design was innovative because it was completely different from the traditional type of in-service training, in which the participants received conceptual and procedural knowledge and then practice it in the so-called peer teaching. The innovative PKG project went further by having the participants practice in their own classroom the knowledge they had learned, with instructors and supervisors providing guidance, supervision and feedback. This can be seen in the description below.

The English PKG project, supported by the World Bank loan, was carried out in stages. The first stage established a development team, which consisted of senior teachers who had completed their Master's degrees in teaching English as a foreign/second language abroad under the scholarship scheme of the project. In their Master program they learned the theoretical and practical sides of the language teaching, especially the communicative approach. Upon completing their study, they were assigned a task as members of the PKG development team, and instructors in the ToT (Training of Trainers) program, which was the second stage of the project. The ToT program, in which experienced secondary school teachers of English were retrained, was aimed at helping the trainees: (a) to gain more confidence and fluency in using English in the teaching and learning situations; (b) to develop more effective ways of improving the communicative competence of their students; and (c) to implement the 1984 syllabus and use the textbooks in more communicative ways. The trainees, who had been recruited through a selection process, were first sent abroad (England and Singapore) for two fourteen-week courses which dealt with teaching methodology and subject matter content, and then visited another country, i.e., either Malaysia or Belgium, to observe EFL teaching in different situations (Djunaedi, 1990).

The third stage was a further retraining program in Indonesia, which was carried out through cycles of in-service and on-service activities. One PKG cycle consisted of two intensive two-week residential courses (in-service) at the provincial capitals and two six-week periods of classroom practice (on-service). The former emphasized the acquisition of both conceptual and procedural knowledge of the PKG procedure or the EGRA (Exposure, Generalization, Reinforcement, and Application) procedure, which is in fact the Indonesian version of the communicative approach to teaching EFL, with the instructors playing the roles of informants, exemplifiers, motivators,

and guides. The latter emphasized the application of the knowledge in the trainees' own classrooms, with the instructors monitoring and giving guidance, and involved trainees in weekly meetings in a key school in which they shared experiences and made detailed preparation for the following week's lessons. At the end of the training program, an assessment was carried out to find the best achievers in terms of training output. Upon completing the training, the best trainees then became trainers for other teachers and they did the training at the district level. They have been called *Key Teachers* or *Master Teachers*.

The completion of the ToT program was followed by the establishment of a training center at each district, the *Sanggar* PKG. The district training center was staffed by the master teachers at the district, selected from among the best master teachers who had completed the whole cycle of training at the national and provincial levels. The development activities were in the form of English MGMP (*Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran*) or English Teacher Forum, i.e., a regular meeting of teachers of English for purposes of professional development. All of these activities were well managed during the project, but when the project ended, very few district training centers were still operating. This might be related to ownership. The English MGMP, however, continued to play its role in providing opportunities for teachers to share ideas and experiences.

Up to the present time, the English MGMP at the district level is still an effective forum for professional development although the intensity of activity varies from district to district due to the educational decentralization already mentioned before. It is one of the evidences of the sustainable effectiveness of the English curriculum innovation in Indonesia in terms of the system.

Another type of evidence is the shift of the retrained teachers' form-oriented to function-oriented teaching practice. A number of the retrained teachers confessed to the writer through different occasions around 1990 that they became more confident in using English in the classroom and in using more communicative techniques. They found that the consistent application of the PKG approach could involve students in learning to use English productively. The principles are concerned with (a) the communicative competence as the goal of teaching; (b) the provision of optimal English input; (c) positive treatment of learner errors; (d) the important of lowering learners' anxiety; (e) natural order of acquisition; (f) the flexible implementation of the syllabus; (g) the mastery of English as a whole; and (h) the accuracy-fluency balance (Djunaedi, 1990, pp. 132-134). It can be said that the PKG training had resulted in a new classroom life which was obviously livelier.

It seems that the relative success of the PKG project was related to design of the project which, as described above, provided adequate time for the teachers to learn new practices and tools, learn to handle them and experiment with them in their own classrooms. The weekly meetings enabled them to share ideas with colleagues. This is in line with Kennedy (1996), who said as follows:

In any innovation, teachers need time to familiarize themselves with new practices and tools, learn to handle them and experiment with them. They need time to come to grips with new ideas and time to reflect individually and with colleagues on the implications of those ideas. They need time and space to understand new ideas and new roles, time to develop the appropriate skills in carrying them out and adapt new ideas to their classroom context. (Kennedy, 1996, as cited by Karavas-Doukas, 1998, p. 36)

However, the level of success of the EFL teaching reform in conjunction with the implementation of the new curriculum described above was lowered by the nature of centralized educational practice especially in terms of (1) the assessment system; (2) the school principles' lack of understanding of the communicative language classroom; and (3) the emphasized uniformity within the existing system. While the PKG approach emphasized the use of English, both productive and receptive, the junior and senior secondary school final exams were mostly concerned with reading plus some vocabulary and grammar. This certainly had some washback effect. In addition, most principals' view of classroom management was not conducive to the application of the PKG approach to EFL teaching in Indonesia. In their view, good classes are those in which the learners are thinking, not talking; thus no noisy classes. This was in fact also related to the fact that the noisy class might disturb the next door classes. Moreover, the educational supervisor emphasized uniformity in the lesson plan format and therefore refused variations, which had resulted from teachers' creativity required by the communicative EFL in Indonesia. Certainly these led to big problems in communicative language teaching, which emphasizes the learning of language use, not language usage. The requirement that that the learners' diverse needs be catered for in communicative language teaching could not be fulfilled in the centralized curriculum, which normally requires uniformity. The principals' and supervisors' unfavorable response to the change of the English classroom

life might be due to lack of information.

A number of points are, however, worth mentioning here. First, a great many teachers with whom the writer interacted in different professional occasions, especially the young ones, admitted that the PKG in-service training had enabled them to use various techniques which involved their students in learning to use English communicatively. The use of various techniques was found to influence the students' motivation. Second, their students' observable English performance had given them a sense of success and increased their motivation to teach. Third, the communicative approach gave them opportunities (in fact forced them) to use English; thus the maintenance and most probably improvement of their English proficiency. Fourth, a number of foreign experts who visited Indonesia in 1970s and back in early 1990s admitted that there had been much change in terms of English mastery. They said that when they visited Indonesia in the first time in 1970s, very few people could speak English, but years later they could find quite many young people they met in the shops and hotel staff relatively fluent in English.

The success of the PKG project in convincing the teachers of the possible success of teaching English as a foreign language communicatively would find great support later when the curriculum was revised to become more strongly communicative. In relation to this, a description of the 1994 will be presented below.

Strengthening the Communicative Orientation

The 1994 Curriculum

The success of the PKG project led in 1994 to the construction of the new curriculum, which was claimed to be communicative and was of the variable focus type. The 1994 English curriculum emphasized the mastery of communicative skills to be acquired through the implementation of the so-called meaning-based approach. The six points deemed important in the development of the curriculum/syllabus are that (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1993a, 1993b) (1) themes which are developed into instructional topics are considered as a more appropriate basis for arranging teaching materials into a lesson plan than linguistic elements; (2) linguistic elements of English such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation are to be presented in linguistic and situational contexts so that their meanings are clear and the situational context includes both the students' culture and the target culture; (3) the learning of the linguistic elements is aimed at supporting the mastery and development of the four

English language skills rather than at mastering the elements themselves; (4) in the teaching and learning process, the linguistic elements estimated to be difficult for students can be taught systematically under the related theme; (5) in the teaching and learning process, the four language skills are basically inseparable, and therefore developed in integration with one another, though the emphasis remains with the reading skill; and (6) the students are to be involved in all meaningful learning activities, i.e., activities which help (a) develop the students' potentials in science, technology, and arts; (b) students to grow and develop into true Indonesian citizens with strong character; and (c) develop social communication skills.

Furthermore, crucial points related to the syllabus model are the following: (1) the development of English language skills, especially the reading skill, is to be emphasized, while still allowing teachers to give due attention to difficult structural points; (2) the themes to be presented are sequenced based on the following combined principles (a) immediate to later use, (b) familiar to unfamiliar, and (c) easy to difficult; and (3) a theme is translated into topics, of which the activities can help (a) develop students' potentials in science, technology, and arts, (b) encourage students to grow and develop into true Indonesian citizens with strong character, and (c) develop students' social skills (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1993a, 1993b).

In the 1994 English curriculum, the teaching program for each semester contained (1) statements of objectives for the four language skills together with statements of the level of vocabulary and text types; (2) a list of compulsory themes together with examples of topics derived from them; (3) statements about language use and language elements, followed by a list of functional skills with each being accompanied by examples of communicative expressions; and (4) a list of words which are grouped according to the theme. All of this implies a relatively strong orientation to communicative competence. To ensure the achievement of the curriculum goal, teachers are advised to be creative in implementing the curriculum.

In translating the curriculum into teaching and learning materials, the teachers are advised to follow the following steps: (1) formulate the objective of the desired language skill; (2) choose a theme deemed appropriate; (3) derive from the theme a number of topics; (4) choose a topic deemed appropriate to meet the students' needs; (5) derive more topics from the already chosen theme if the suggested topics cannot meet the students' needs; (6) decide on the language use activities (reading, listening, speaking and writing) possible conducted within the already chosen topic; (7) decide on the functional skills and vocabulary items

needed to carry out communicative activities suitable for the students' development stage; (8) decide on the text form for certain communicative activities; and (9) delay any activity deemed inappropriate for the students' development stage (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1993a, 1993b).

This curriculum was basically welcomed by teachers who have received PKG training because they could then practice creatively what they had learned in the training. They were required to focus on the development of the students' English language skills, especially the reading skills and this requirement was met in the final exam of JSSs and SSSs. One problem worth mentioning here was concerned with the teachers' unfamiliarity with the non-matrix format which presents the curriculum points in print. Such a format was meant to allow flexibility and encourage creativity. However, the teachers had been so far spoiled with the previous matrix format. In response to this, the curriculum content was rearranged and reprinted in the matrix format about two years later.

It should be noted that when the 1994 was being implemented, the stability of Indonesia's political life was shaken with increasing intensity by the rising demand for more democratic life and public accountability. This peaked in the fall of the New Order Government in 1998, followed by the establishment of the Reform Order Government heading towards decentralization. In relation to this, the Regional Government Bill was constructed and passed to be Law No. 22/1999 on Regional Government. Two years were allowed for the preparation of its enactment. With this Law being promulgated valid by January 2001, the political system has radically changed from a highly centralized to highly decentralized one, with authority being delegated to the District Government jumping over the Province, including the authority to provide education, as has been mentioned before. The decentralization of education was implemented through the implementation of school-based management in which the school staff members have the authority to make decisions related to their tasks. It is under this type of management that further curriculum innovations find their good place. Meanwhile, the Education Bill was constructed and passed to be Law No. 20/2003 on National Education System. It is with the Education Law being enacted that the school-based management has its legal basis.

Making the Teaching of English More Contextual through CTL

In the late 1990s, quality and relevance were two of the major educational issues. The high rate of unemployment among secondary school leavers and degree holders caused great concerns. Education quality and relevance

were suspected to have created such a situation. The Government therefore initiated an innovation focusing on the development of contextual teaching and learning to implement the existing curriculum, aimed at improving the quality of education and its relevance to community needs. This project was carried out within the dynamics of education reform. The decentralized system of education is certainly conducive to the establishment of a more democratic life at school. The implementation of SBM (School-Based Management) would facilitate the innovative curriculum endeavor through CTL.

Why CTL? The education practice in Indonesia has been dominated by the view of knowledge as a body of facts to be memorized. Teachers act as the only knower in the classroom and therefore use lecturing as the main strategy to transfer their knowledge to their students who are regarded as pure recipients. As a result, students tend to be passive. In fact in many cases, they are deprived of the opportunity to develop their full potentials. This situation obviously lends little support to the achievement of the goal of national education, i.e., the development of students to be total persons. A new approach is therefore needed to empower the students. Empowerment will enable them to develop themselves into autonomous, democratic and responsible persons who are intellectually capable, spiritually and physically strong, aesthetically refined, and capable of exemplifying high moral standards. It is through the application of the contextual teaching and learning approach that such a goal is likely to be accomplished (*Departemen Pendidikan Nasional*, 2002). Subscribing to the constructivism, CTL will lead students to active learning, leaving behind rote learning, which has so far been a normal practice. CTL is regarded as an appropriate approach because its principles are deemed appropriate for improving the quality and relevance of education.

In the fiscal year of 1998/1999, the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is now the Ministry of National Education, initiated a pilot project aimed to improve the teaching of English, Indonesian, mathematics, and science through the CTL approach. To prepare for this project, a group of TEFL experts together with experts in Indonesian teaching, science teaching and mathematics teaching were sent to Seattle, Washington State, to learn about CTL. Upon returning from America, these experts wrote reference books on CTL and its teaching materials for Indonesian junior secondary schools. This was followed by the ToT on CTL for teachers of the four subjects working in 31 JSSs from the five provinces (South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Southeast Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, and North Sulawesi). Upon completing their ToT, they were to

practice what they had learned during the CTL ToT in their own schools during which they were supervised and guided by the above mentioned experts. When they had acquired the competencies in implementing CTL in their own schools, they were then involved in training their peer teachers in their own provinces.

The pilot project can be summarized as follows. A group teacher educators majoring in mathematics, Indonesian, English, biology, and physics and junior secondary teachers of mathematics, Indonesian, English, biology, and physics were sent to Seattle, U.S.A. to learn about CTL theory and practice. Upon returning from Seattle, the teacher educators as a team developed the model of CTL implementation in Indonesian junior secondary schools together with the related reference book and teaching materials. This was followed the ToT for teachers from 31 junior secondary schools in five provinces, i.e., South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, Southeast Sulawesi, Central Sulawesi, and North Sulawesi. Expert teacher educators, including the writer, were involved as trainers in the ToT. CTL theories were applied in an integrated manner in the ToT and this enabled the participants to understand CTL concepts through experiencing CTL in practice. That is, the application of CTL theories in the ToT involved the participants in CTL practice and this supported their understanding about CTL. As a Chinese proverb says, “Tell me, I will forget; show me, I will remember; and involve me, I will understand.”

During the training, the participants were involved in applying the CTL approach with the following seven components: constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. According to the constructivist view of learning, the acquisition strategy is regarded as more important than how much knowledge students can acquire and remember. In relation to this, teachers are to facilitate the learning process by (1) making knowledge meaningful and relevant to students; (2) providing students with opportunity to discover and practicing their own ideas; and (3) making students aware of their own learning strategies. Teachers are also to involve their students in conducting an inquiry through the cycle of observing-questioning-hypothesizing, collecting data, and making conclusions. Another crucial activity in CTL is questioning, which is useful to (1) dig information, both on administrative and academic matters; (2) check students' understanding; (3) elicit students' response; (4) explore students' curiosity; (5) find out which things students have known; (6) direct students' attention to a certain point; (7) stimulate more questions from students; and (8) refresh students' knowledge. Sharing or learning from one another among students through

which they form a learning community is also an important activity in CTL. This can be carried out in small groups, big groups, inviting a recognized figure to share their knowledge and expertise with the class, working with a group of equal ability, working with a group of higher ability, and working with a community. Another component of CTL is modeling from which students can see a concrete application of something. It should be noted that the teacher is not the only model. Where appropriate, students can also be the model. Still another component of CTL is reflection through which students think about what they have learned for purposes of internalizing it and integrating it into the older knowledge. This can be done before the lesson ends in the form of statements of what has been learned, students' learning journal, students' notes of the lesson, discussion, or students' work. The last component of CTL is authentic assessment of which the data are collected from students' activities during the learning process. The ToT participants were involved in activities to learn the conceptual and practical aspects of these seven components (*Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2002*).

Upon completing the ToT, the participants became the trainers for their colleagues, first in their own schools and then in other schools in their own provinces. During the implementation, related teacher educators visited the schools to conduct monitoring and provide technical supervision. Such a clinical supervision proved to be effective.

The project evaluation showed that in general the training was adequately effective in convincing the teachers that being related to the students' life, the lesson can motivate the students to learn and engage themselves actively in the learning process. The differences in success, however, were found from school to school. The schools whose teachers had been trained by the instructors with good understanding of CTL were found to have enjoyed some success which was indicated in the enthusiasm of students in learning English. By contrast, some schools whose teachers had been trained by those who lacked understanding of CTL failed to enjoy any success.

The successful implementation of the CTL project seems to be attributable to the improvement of the democratic life in the school under the SBM and the increasing spirit of regional development. The application of the CTL approach needs the support of such a situation. Conceptually, CTL (1) gives students ample opportunities to be actively engaged, to enjoy the relevance and meaningfulness of learning since learning is related the real world, to learn from each other, to develop to be more autonomous learners, to learn to become active in the community, to enjoy the appreciation of and respect for

their opinions; and (2) gives teachers opportunities to be creative in facilitating students' learning, using different techniques, and making the learning environment more dynamic and exciting. Above all, the CTL approach is consistent with the communicative language teaching which emphasizes the fulfillment of students' needs for using the language for communication. Though not all the concepts could be applied perfectly, the new experiences in the process of contextual teaching and learning seem to have contributed to the enthusiasm of both the teachers and students.

In short, the initial CTL project was found to be effective in changing the teachers' ways of teaching and arousing students' learning enthusiasm, motivation, and assertiveness. Besides being documented in the project report, this was also observed by the Director of the Junior Secondary School Supervision, the Ministry of Education,¹ who shared his observation with the writer in some occasions in June 2007. Another observation was also done by an EFL teacher educator,² who has been intensively involved in the ToT program, and was happy to share her observation with the writer. She said that she had also conducted a number of workshops on the implementation of CTL. A number of schools have even taken an initiative to conduct a workshop on CTL for teachers and invited her to supervise it. She said that having been involved in the CTL processes, the students were found to be more enthusiastic, more spontaneous, and more motivated to learn. These phenomena are an ordinary thing in good private schools, but in state schools, they are something worth noting. However, in some schools the success was regarded as less optimal due to the instructors' limited knowledge of CTL, both theoretical and practical. This has led to the idea to conduct the second stage ToT for them in 2002.

The Further Implementation and Expansion of CTL

From the first stage of the CTL project, some lessons were learnt. The strong points of the project were further solidified, while the weak ones improved to optimize the effectiveness of the approach across provinces. With a contribution from Prof. Kasihani K. E. Suyanto, information of the second stage CTL project can be presented here.

The second stage ToT was aimed at (1) identifying the problems encountered in implementing CTL principles in the classrooms; (2) finding out way-outs of problems related to teaching and learning materials, the competency-based curriculum, CTL and life skills education; (3) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the CTL model recorded in the video cassette for purposes of self-improvement, with impact on other teachers; (4) developing types of authentic assessment, such as portfolio

and rubric accompanied by appropriate examples; (5) developing a lesson plan, applying the CTL principles but using the available curriculum materials, and implementing them in real teaching in JSSs; (6) developing learning materials based on reports of outdoor learning activities (neighborhood walks, excursions); and (7) conducting self-reflection and improving self-performance through classroom action research.

This second stage ToT ensured the availability of quality instructors and supervisors for the expanded project to reach 1000 JSSs spread in all the provinces throughout the country. These instructors were expected to develop teaching and learning materials, various assessment instruments, and training materials.

The second stage ToT materials covered the following topics: (1) the competency-based curriculum, CTL approach, and life skills education (4 hours); (2) sharing experiences in applying the CTL approach (6 hours); (3) classroom action research (4 hours); (4) modeling (7 hours); (5) authentic assessment (3 hours); (6) analysis of teaching-learning materials (4 hours); (7) learning community (out-door activities) (9 hours); (8) classroom (real) teaching (8 hours); and (9) reflection (2 hours). These were accompanied by (1) various formats to identify practical classroom problems; (2) practical classroom action research materials; (3) sets of teaching models on CDs; (4) a guide to conducting outdoor activities; (5) the competency-based CTL materials; (6) types of authentic assessment; and (7) a guide to self-reflection. In addition, each participant received a CD containing a model teaching applying the CTL approach and visual teaching aids in the form of 30 flashcards and three posters each relating to the themes of Grades 1, 2 and 3 of JSSs. These aids were aimed at stimulating the development of similar materials by the teachers themselves.

The cycle of ToT activities were kept the same as that of the first stage ToT, i.e., workshop, demonstration/modeling, discussion, and reflection. However, emphasis was put on the practical aspect, involving the participants in developing the CTL models themselves for teaching the four language skills, through both individual and group work. They were then to implement the plan in a teaching simulation with peers acting as students.

Data for evaluating the effectiveness of the ToT were collected through on-going assessment of the following points: (1) classroom problems and their solutions; (2) authentic assessment; (3) reports on outdoor activities; (4) analysis of teaching materials and media; (5) real teaching in the classrooms and reflection; (6) attendance and involvement in activities; and (7) attitudes towards the competency-based curriculum implemented through CTL; as well as (8) mastery of teaching materials and English

proficiency. The evaluation resulted in three categories of teachers:

- 1) Teachers who passed and were regarded as eligible to be instructors for their peers
- 2) Teachers who passed but were regarded as ineligible to be instructors for their peers
- 3) Teachers who failed to fulfill the tasks required during the ToT.

Those who were regarded as eligible to train their peers were then involved in disseminating CTL to other teachers in other schools in other provinces. With the school having full authority to make decisions about their own affairs, the implementation of CTL could be appropriately further developed. Positive results of the implementation of CTL had also encouraged more schools to join in the CTL movement and more than 1000 schools to date have practiced CTL. In short, the application of the CTL approach has strengthened the practice of teaching English communicatively.

It should be noted that to ensure that the success of implementing of the CTL project, key stakeholders at the District are provided with information on the CTL approach and its implementation as an innovative endeavor to improve the results of student learning. This might have contributed to its sustainable implementation.

As has been touched upon before, the innovative strategies of implementing the curriculum are part of the education reform, which is a dynamic process. Fulfilling the mandate of the 2005 Education Law, the English curriculum is changed to suit the new educational paradigm in the context of decentralization, democratization, and regional autonomy. This will be described below.

The 2006 Curriculum

The 2006 curriculum is characterized by an innovation in its decentralized management. In contrast to the previous curriculums, which are centralized, the 2006 curriculum is decentralized in the framework of national unity. It is mandated by the 2003 Education Law that the curriculum is developed (a) based on national education standards for the pursuit of national education goals; (b) according to principles of diversifications, adjusted to the units of education, local potentials and learners' potentials; (c) in reference to the curriculum framework and structure for basic and secondary education which are determined by the Government; and (d) in accordance with its relevance by each educational cluster or unit and school/ committee under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education or the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the

district/city level for basic education, and at the provincial level for secondary education. These mandates are fulfilled in two related levels: the policy level and the operational level. The policy level is concerned with principles of national unity and the operational level with the principles of regional autonomy and school-based management. This is related to the national motto 'Diversity in Unity' already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

At the policy level, the Government determines the national standards formulated in government regulations, which will be the bases for the ministerial regulations to guide the operational level decision-making. The national educational standards, as mandated by the 2005 Education Law, have been stipulated in Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005 on National Education Standards, from which standards of content, process, and graduate competencies have been developed.

At the operational level, the school or educational unit shall develop its own curriculum based on the above said legal instruments. To ensure the consistency of the school-level curriculum with the legal mandates, the Government has also provided a guide book for school-level curriculum development, and conducted school-level curriculum development training at the national level. Besides, the curriculum development in each province and district/city is supported and facilitated by a team of curriculum socialization and development training and, if desired, by technical assistance provided by the Ministry.

The development of the school-level curriculum should be guided by the following principles (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP), 2006): (1) centered on the potentials, development level, needs, and interests of students and their environment; (2) diversified and integrated; (3) responsive to developments of science, technology, and arts; (4) relevant to the living needs; (5) comprehensive and successive; (6) lifelong learning; and (7) balanced national and regional interests.

For purposes of this chapter, the discussion will now be focused on the English syllabus, which, as part of the school-level curriculum, should be developed based on the standards of content and standards of graduate competencies. Referring to the standards of content, English is a compulsory subject at the junior and senior secondary schools and can be selected as a subject of local content. The graduate standards are of three types (Government Regulation No. 23/2006 on Graduate Competencies Standards): (a) the standards for the educational unit level; (b) the standards for the subject cluster level; and (c) the standards for the subject level. Statements of the first two types of standards of English are made for junior

secondary education units, general senior secondary education units and vocational senior secondary education, whereas type C standards for primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education levels.

Standards of English at the educational unit level are summarized as follows: Upon graduation, (1) junior secondary school students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in simple English; (2) general senior secondary school students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading and writing in English; and (3) vocational senior secondary school students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading and writing in English.

Standards of English at the subject cluster level are summarized as follows: Upon graduation, (1) junior secondary students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in simple English; (2) general senior secondary school students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading and writing in English; and (3) vocational senior secondary school students demonstrate listening, speaking, reading and writing in English.

At the subject level, standards of competencies are summarized as follows. Upon graduation,

- primary school students (a) understand very simple instructions, information, and stories presented orally in classroom, school surrounding contexts; (b) express orally meanings in very simple interpersonal and transactional discourse in the form of instructions and information in the classroom, school and surrounding contexts; (c) read aloud and understand meanings in the form of instructions, information, short functional texts, and very simple picture descriptive texts presented in written forms in the classroom, school, and surrounding contexts; and (d) write words, expressions, and short functional texts with correct spelling and punctuations;
- junior secondary school students (a) understand meanings in inter-personal and transactional oral discourses, both formal and informal, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in simple daily life contexts; (b) express meanings orally in simple interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the daily life contexts; (c) understand meanings in simple written interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the daily life contexts; and (d) express in written form meanings in simple interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, and report, in the daily life contexts; and
- senior secondary school students (a) understand meanings in inter-personal

and transactional oral discourses, both formal and informal, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news items, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review in daily life contexts; (b) express meanings orally in simple interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news items, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, review and report, in the daily life contexts; (c) understand meanings in simple written interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news items, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, review and report, in the daily life contexts; and (d) express in written form meanings in simple interpersonal and transactional discourse, both formally and informally, in the form of recount, narrative, procedure, descriptive, news items, report, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, spoof, explanation, discussion, review and report, in the daily life contexts. Note that standards for students in the language program are higher in terms of text coverage and situations in which English is used.

When examined carefully, there is no statement on the level of English proficiency for each level of education. The difference lies in the number of discourse types. This implies differences in vocabulary items used and types of expressions used. Each environment will require its own vocabulary items and expression to start with to make English learning close to the students' hearts and minds. At the primary level, the expressions taught should be related to the surrounding environment to which the English expressions are referred to.

From the above mentioned standards, have been developed standards of competencies and basic competencies for primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools, published separately for each level. Each document contains the background, aims of teaching English, coverage, and the points of the competency standards and basic competencies. One point of the competency standard for the first semester of senior secondary school and the basic competencies derived from it will be presented below as an example.

- *Competency Standards*: Read aloud meaningfully and understand meanings of written short functional texts related to the closest environment.
- *Basic competencies*: (1) Read aloud meaningfully with acceptable pronunciation, stress, and intonation words, phrases, and sentences; and (2) Respond well and accurately to meanings of short functional texts

(e.g., a written note, a list of shopping items, a congratulation card, an announcement) related to the closest environment.

Based on the above graduate competency standards, the competency standards, and basic competencies, the English syllabus for each school is to be developed by the teachers. The syllabus is to cover the competency standards, basic competencies, topics to learn, instructional activities, indicators for competency acquisition, assessment, time allocation, and learning resources.

The development of the subject syllabus should in principle be scientific, relevant, systematic, consistent, adequate, actual and contextual, and flexible. It follows that an English syllabus should have the characteristics described as follows:

- The whole substance and activities are conceptually correct and scientifically accountable;
- The coverage, depth, level of difficulty and sequence are suitable for the levels of students' physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual development;
- The components are functionally related in achieving the competencies;
- There is a consistent relationship between the basic competencies, indicators, instructional substance, learning experiences, learning resources, and assessment system;
- The coverage of indicators, instructional substance, learning experiences, learning resources, and assessment system is adequate in supporting the achievement of the basic competencies;
- The coverage of the indicators, main substance, learning experiences, learning resources, and assessment system should be determined by considering the latest development of science, technology, and arts in real life, and all related events;
- The syllabus with all its components as a whole can accommodate differences among students and educators, and the dynamics of change occurring at school and as demanded by the society; and
- The syllabus components include all domains of learning: cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and interactive.

Developing the school-level curriculum together with its syllabuses is certainly a task for principals and teachers to do. The Government has therefore established in each province a team assigned to (1) socialize curriculum policies; (2) to conduct curriculum development training for

each of the 33 provinces throughout the country; and (3) verify the school-level curriculum to ensure its quality. Each team consists of subject specialists, teachers, supervisors, and in-service teacher trainers. This team provides training for the district teams. Besides, technical assistance is also provided by the Ministry for those who need it. But when the planned curriculum networking is implemented, it will probably be the most effective means for all parties concerned be they in the Ministry, the provincial offices of education, the district offices of education, or the school, to learn from one another, both conceptually and practically, in developing the school-level curriculum with all its components. When this does happen, the desired aims of the curriculum change will be achieved.

With the 2006 school-level curriculum being constructed by the school, its relevance to the community's and students' need will be better ensured. This will certainly support the achievement of the declared aim of teaching English at school, which is the mastery of communicative competence in the true sense. The curriculum development is still underway so that no comment can be made on its effectiveness. Besides innovative strategies conducted at the national level for purposes of improving the quality of students' learning, innovations at the institutional and individual levels are worth describing here to enrich the whole spectrum of curriculum innovation.

INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL INNOVATIVE ENDEAVORS

Success in reforming the EFL teaching and learning will be sustained when the prospective teachers have the necessary competencies of which one is a good command of English. In relation to this, an effort to improve the EFL student teachers' English mastery will be described below.

Integrating the Intensive Course into the Existing EFL Teacher Education Curriculum

In Indonesia teacher education programs are run by LPTK (*Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan* or the Educational Staff Education Institutions) in teacher education colleges, teacher education institutes, or universities, of which one is the State University of Malang in East Java. This university runs the so-called intensive course of English for the new students, which is integrated into the existing EFL teacher education

curriculum. The course was designed out of the concerns for the deteriorating quality of the English proficiency of the secondary school teachers of English observed around 1990s³ In relation to this, the EFL teacher educators in this university believed that the improvement of the student teachers' English proficiency would contribute to the improvement of the situation. With this strong belief, they were then successful in winning the support of the decision makers at their institution, which was then IKIP Malang (*Institut Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Malang* or the Malang Institute for Teacher Education and Educational Science), which is the present State University of Malang, to create an intensive course, with a more innovative management, i.e., a management specially allowed within the existing system. This initiative was further supported by the Directorate General for Higher Education and expected to be a pilot project.

The English Intensive Course (EIC) has been designed to give the student teachers ample opportunities to learn English in an integrated program, i.e., a program in which the linguistic components of English (structures, pronunciation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling/punctuation) and its skill component (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are integrated in a set of materials specially developed for the course. The course is delivered in 16 successive weeks, with each week covering 27 teaching periods of 50 minutes each. This is an intensive course indeed, and probably the most intensive in Indonesia, in which English is the medium of communication both in the classroom and outside it. Its strong management ensures that all the 27 teaching periods are fully carried out by implementing a two-layer staffing system in which the faculty members have been selected based on their interest in and commitment to the program implementation. In this system, the second layer faculty members are to be ready to teach when the first layer staff members are absent. Such a staff management has been admitted by some of the participating students in an interview with the writer on January 6, 2007 as something that influences a great deal the learning motivation. The faculty members involved in the course admitted that the course requires them to work very hard but their students' observed improvement of the students' English proficiency has enabled them to maintain their working motivation.

Another point which keeps the students' motivation high is the assessment system. Formative and summative assessments are carried out and the results are made known to students. The assessments are comprehensive in content to ensure the adequacy of assessment data which are necessary for giving students feedback about their learning.

The students interviewed admitted that by attending the EIC they had

made a significant progress in their EFL learning. Though they sometimes felt fed-up with the strict learning process, they admitted that they were grateful for the level of proficiency only after one semester's course.

The EIC has been in place for more than ten years. Its sustainable practice might be attributable to the fact that the initiative was taken by its implementer. This seems to have ensured a strong ownership. In addition, the success of the EIC has attracted a number of higher learning institutions to invite the EIC team to provide training of implementing the EIC. If all EFL teacher education programs are committed to implementing the EIC, which implies the improvement of the English mastery by student teachers, the efforts to improve the teaching of English in Indonesia will enjoy greater success.

Individual Innovation

As legally mandated, all teachers are required to possess pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, which will professionally enable them to conduct a teaching and learning process which is interactive, inspiring, joyful, challenging, motivating students to engage themselves in the learning processes, and provide ample opportunity for students' initiatives, creativity, and autonomy (Government Regulation No. 19 Year 2005 on National Educational Standard, Article 19, on standards of process). As has been mentioned before, a huge task to upgrade the existing teachers' academic qualification and competencies is awaiting. Due to various reasons, only very few teachers have met the above requirement. Of the existing teachers, one particular teacher is worth noting due to his successful innovation. This teacher is a male teacher of English at a state senior secondary in a small city in the Yogyakarta Special Territory.⁴ He began his teaching career in 1992 soon after finishing his study at the English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, IKIP Yogyakarta. He has happily shared information on his innovative endeavor in implementing the communicative curriculum with the writer, who also supervises the TEFLIN Forum Online (www.teflinforum.diknas.org), in which his article is published. This teacher is special because of his own strong belief of foreign language learning. In the Indonesian context, in which the conforming culture was very strong long before the comprehensive reform taking place in 1998, this is a unique phenomenon.

In the first six month of his teaching in a small town southeast to Yogyakarta, he found some students with a good score of English obtained a paper-and-pencil test unable to speak English. It was a common

phenomenon that most of the students showed low motivation and looked reluctant to learn English. He also found that the school environment was not conducive to language learning, with facilities and equipment far from being adequate.

Wishing his students to be successful in learning English, he made some innovative efforts to change the situation by creating an English atmosphere in his class to make the students feel at ease with English and willing to speak spontaneously in English. He began his efforts by meeting with his headmaster and colleagues to talk about the importance of English in today's life. With the consent of the headmaster and support of his colleagues, he then initiated to a series of English activities in his school: holding English contests for junior and senior high schools in Wonosari Regency; publishing an English school magazine; holding crossword puzzle quizzes; holding one-day English camping attended by four schools; organizing an English debate for senior general and vocational high school students; inviting native speakers to school; and holding a talk show in English with native speakers for his school and some neighboring ones. These activities were found to have successfully raised awareness of students, teachers, parents, and the educational personnel at the Wonosari District Office of Education of the importance of English.

His hard work was recognized by the Ministry of National Education as evidenced in the appointment of his school in 2000 as one out of eight model schools in Indonesia by the Directorate General of General Secondary Education, the Ministry of National Education. Since then, a lot of development funds from the Government go to his school.

Here is the summary of his successful procedure in making his students willing to speak. The procedure is preceded by a series of preparation activities: (1) explaining the importance of English in the world followed by question-and-answer activities about the importance of English; (2) using pictures as teaching aids, e.g., pictures of persons engaged in activities, places of interest, buildings, means of transportation, animals, etc.; and (3) presenting English basic sentences structure to be used in the speaking activities, followed by (a) pre-communicative activities such pronunciation, vocabulary, and spelling practices; (b) writing sentences based on the pictures related to the topic; (c) translating Indonesian sentences related to the topic into good English; and (d) presenting English question types to be used to create dialogues. All of these are aimed at supporting the students' speaking activities.

When the preparation activities are over, the teacher conducts the procedure consisting of five steps: (1) Describing Pictures; (2) Questions

and Answers; (3) Telling a Story; (4) Simulation; and (5) A Short Talk. Since in the preparation stage the students have already learned the vocabulary, sentence structures, and pronunciation, they are ready to make a description on the picture by first making a written description individually, with the teacher going around to supervise them, and then asking them to present in turn their description in front of the class, if possible with appropriate expansion. The following activity is questions-and-answers aimed at activating students to speak English. It is believed that oral questions directed to someone will encourage him/her to respond; thus their active production of oral English. This is followed by asking the students to tell a true story taken from the library or prepared before by the student/teacher. The fourth activity is a simulation of group work in which students have ample opportunity to speak about something they like in English, for example, describing a place, telling about their unforgettable experience, telling about how to operate equipment, telling about a TV program they like, and telling about the job they want to be. All of this is done in a simulated community life in which one acts as the leader. The last activity is a short talk prepared before. Five students are asked to present a short talk, followed by questions asked by the teacher and the audience. This is to check if the talking student knows what he/she is talking.

To make sure that students are learning, an oral exam is conducted regularly. In this case, students are to talk about pictures, maps, diagrams, advertisements or posters. They are given adequate time to prepare it. The scoring will be based on the number of words a student uses and the number of errors made when speaking, while a separate scoring is carried of their fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and accuracy.

The five steps above have been found suitable for the ordinary students or ordinary schools with minimum facilities but have a willingness to progress. Creative and dynamic English teachers will get the advantages of these activities. The use of the five-step procedure described above has proved effective in improving the students' speaking ability with or without the presence of the English teacher.

This teacher has practiced the procedure successfully for more than ten years. The success of his innovative endeavors has been due to his hard work and the support of his environment. Above all, it is based on his own strong belief about teaching English as a foreign language. His initiative ensures a strong ownership. He is a truly autonomous teacher, who possesses a high level of professionalism. The aim of teacher reform will be achieved if all teachers have about the same quality as this particular teacher.

CONCLUSION

The English curriculum has been changed from time to time in the effort to improve English learning in the true sense within the dynamic and unique contexts full of challenges, both internal and external. The journey of changing the English curriculum innovatively discussed in this chapter indicates that the degree of success of any innovation endeavor in Indonesia has been very much influenced by the strategic environment and who took the initiative. When the situation and condition were fully conducive to desired changes, the innovation enjoyed a great success and was sustainable. When the situation and condition were partially conducive to change, however, the innovation enjoyed some success. In addition, when the initiative of the innovation was taken by the implementer, the ownership lay with the implementer and it was therefore be sustainable, as shown in the institutional and individual innovative endeavors. All of this implies that to be successful, an innovation needs the support of the environment with all its aspects.

NOTES

1. A statement by Dr. Hamid Muhammad, Director.
2. A contribution from Prof. Kasihani K. E. Suyanto, Ph.D., of State University of Malang.
3. Information obtained through an interview conducted on 6 January 2007, the initiator of the course, Prof. Sunardi Djiwandono, who was accompanied by key staff members of the EIC.
4. Information obtained through an interview with the teacher concerned and his article.

REFERENCES

- Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (Board of National Education Standards) (BSNP). (2006). *Pedoman pengembangan kurikulum tingkat satuan pendidikan* [Guidelines for developing school-level curricula]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Collins, P. (2006). Grammar in TEFL: a Critique of Indonesian high school textbooks. *TEFLIN (Teaching English as a Foreign Language in*

- Indonesia) Journal*, 17(1), 1-10.
- Crandall, D. P. (1983). The teacher's role in school improvement. *Educational Leadership*, 41(3), 10-13.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1975). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah atas 1975: Garis-garis besar program pengajaran bidang studi bahasa inggris* [Senior secondary school curriculum 1975: English teaching guidelines]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1976a). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat peratama (SMP): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Junior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1976b). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat atas (SMA): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Senior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1986). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat peratama (SMP): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Junior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1987). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat atas (SMA): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Senior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1993a). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat peratama (SMP): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Junior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1993b). *Kurikulum sekolah menengah umum tingkat Atas (SMA): Garis-garis besar program pengajaran (GBPP): Bidang Studi Bahasa Inggris* [Senior secondary curriculum: Basic course outline (BCO): English Subject]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (The Ministry of Education and Culture). (1996). *Lima puluh tahun perkembangan pendidikan Indonesia* [Fifty years' developments of Indonesian education]. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Departemen Pendidikan Nasional (The Ministry of National Education). (2002). *Pendekatan kontekstual* [Contextual teaching and learning or CTL]. Jakarta: Dit. PLP, Ditjen Dikdasmen, Depdiknas.
- Departemen Pendidikan Nasional (The Ministry of National Education). (2003).

- Manajemen Peningkatan Mutu Berbasis Sekolah: Pembelajaran dan Pengajaran Kontekstual, Buku 5* [Managing the school-based quality improvement: contextual teaching and learning, Book 5]. Jakarta: Dit. PLP, Ditjen Dikdasmen, Depdiknas.
- Djunaedi, D. (1990). An introduction to the PKG (Pemantapan Kerja Guru) English Program. *TEFLIN Journal*, 3(2), 129-137.
- Harris, B. M. (1980). *Improving staff performance through in-service education: A guide to better practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Karavas-Doukas, K. (1998). Evaluating the implementation of educational evaluations: Lessons from the past. In P. Rea-Dickins & K. P. Germaine (Eds.), *Managing evaluation and innovation in language teaching: Building bridges* (pp. 25-50). London: Longman.
- Lie, A. (2001). Multicultural issues in the 1994 English curriculum in Indonesian senior high schools. In W. A. Renandya & N. R. Sunga (Eds.), *Language curriculum and instruction in multicultural societies* (pp. 42-79). Singapore: RELC.
- Lovat, T. J., & Smith, D. L. (1995). *Curriculum: Action on reflection revisited* (3rd ed.). Katoomba, Australia: Social Science Press.
- Markee, N. (1997). *Managing curricular innovation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ministry of National Education. (2005). *Indonesia: Educational statistics in brief 2004/2005*. Jakarta: MONE.
- Purkey, S. C., & Smith, M. S. (1982). Too soon to cheer? Synthesized research on effective schools and educational leadership. *Elementary School Journal*, 40, 60-69.
- Rachman, A. (2007). *Kepunahan bahasa daerah karena kehadiran bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris: Satu upaya penyelamatannya* [The extinction of local languages due to the presence of Indonesian and English: A rescuing effort]. Jakarta: UNJ.
- Rea-Dickins, P., & Germaine, K. P. (Eds.). (1998). *Managing evaluation and innovation in language teaching: Building bridges*. London: Longman.
- Yalden, J. (1983). *The communicative syllabus: Evolution, design and implementation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.