

## **Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in ELT English Language Teaching**

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### **Abstract**

ELT in Indonesia has a different position in the latest curriculum published by the government. This is due to the students' interest that is varied and their interest is arranged into a new program structure in the curriculum. The students can choose their own interest when they are on the ninth grade. For some reasons proposed by some scholars whom are experts in education, they say that approaching to be a part of global community, Indonesia should produce students who have good English literacy. If the latest curriculum is implemented by every school in Indonesia, there will be a significant result concerning to the human resource quality of Indonesia. The government as the policy makers should involve teachers in the process of curriculum development but in reality the teachers are not involved in the process. The students will be victimized by the new curriculum. We can learn from the statement delivered by the policy makers that English is a terrifying subject for students without giving any proof to support their opinion. What they said is not scientifically true as they demand that English is just a local content in the curriculum. As a lecturer, I try to propose a new perspective that can help teachers to teach English without any doubt due to the position of English subject in the curriculum. The idea is about CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) in ELT (English Language Teaching). This is not a new idea but just a new perspective to proof that somehow we should have good English literacy.

**Keywords** : CTL, ELT, curriculum

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the study**

The root of education is to humanize human being. This is the philosophy of education that is written in character education. Koesoema written in his book *Pendidikan Karakter* (2010:135) that character education put the growth of individual moral as priority in educational institution therefore those two character education paradigm must not be separated namely the internalization of value into students as individual and the mixture of togetherness in living that gives more respect toward individual freedom. This implies that if those two elements are integrated it will make character education as pedagogy. The government has determined to teach character building at younger age, formally starts from elementary to high school level. The teachers should teach students kinds of subjects with the character traits implied in the subjects so that at the end of the lesson the students can meet some character traits and apply it through their behavior and attitude.

This condition sounds great and has positive relationship to reduce school bullying occurred in this beloved country. The bullying happened because of some factors for example poverty and injustice in getting the education itself. The poverty contributes significant enough as it rooted in every area from big cities up to remote area. Urban society with its various kinds of people is often experienced crime caused by poverty. On the other hand, big cities also have their own serious problems due to poverty. The direct result is uneven education experienced by children in those areas.

As written in the 1945 Constitution that education is the right of every Indonesian so that they have to be literate through education. According to Agung, Iskandar et al (2011:7) the 1945 Constitution is the basic law for living for Indonesian as the state and country. Other important element is *Pancasila* as the philosophy of the nation and the ways of living for Indonesian people. Related to education both elements are not only implemented in formal but also in informal education with the hope to make people realize that they need to be well educated people whose have good character. This can be done if the government is consistent to boost education in this country and not doing action without having scientific research.

In national context, approaching to 2015 which ASEAN and China will have free trade agreement among those countries, gives an opportunity for Indonesia to be English literate. One way to help the government to do this is by using CLT in teaching English. Why English matters? It is because they do not understand that we are part of the world and the world has made commitment that English is a medium of communication in this global era therefore we have to master it. If we do not use English in our communication we cannot be able to be part of global communication because we are not English literate. That is why with using Contextual Teaching and Learning, English is no longer a terrifying subject as it is spoken by the government but a friendlier one.

### **Problem Statements**

In order to conduct research based on the topic above, I formulate some research problems in this study as follows:

- a. What is CLT?
- b. What are the benefits of using CLT in ELT?

## **Objective of the study**

The objectives that are going to be achieved are:

- a. to find out the meaning of CLT
- b. to find out the benefits of using CLT in ELT

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

There are some theories underlying the appearance of CLT. CLT itself is not a new teaching paradigm in Indonesia but there are a few teachers who have applied CLT in their teaching practices. They have become familiar with CLT to help them do teaching and learning process. Among some methods and approaches in teaching, teachers may choose their own choice due to their competences and their classroom environment.

CTL is started to use in schools in USA on the early of 21<sup>st</sup> century when the educators refused to the dualism about idea and action, brain-movement, physic-psycho, abstract-concrete, theoretical-applicable and others. Alwasilah, Chaedar in her introductory to CTL (2010:23) stated that the dualism is not productive because the truth meaning is the whole meaning that cannot be separated with the reason of specialty and expertise of book writers or curriculum developer. This gives a new idea that educators should teach subjects thematically so that all meaning and information will be conveyed completely.

The latest curriculum put English as a local content in it thus teachers of English will face difficult situation in order to teach the students. The difficulty is that they realize that English is no longer having strong position as an obligatory subject anymore. This condition will give another perspective in their students' minds that English is not a subject that they should master like other obligatory subjects. For state schools by law they have 2 credits for teaching English from junior high up to senior high schools while in elementary level English is not allowed to be taught. This condition is contradictory to ACFTA in 2015 in which all countries will be free to send their human resources to those countries and English is the medium of communication that must be mastered by them. What will happen to the future of Indonesian human resources if this new curriculum is applied in every school in this country?

As an educator, I realize that English is needed in global communication therefore English is important to be taught at younger age. Language acquisition starts at younger age so that the younger they learn a language the better result will they get. Indonesian students speak in more than one language namely mother tongue and vernacular and may be one or more foreign languages. They are bilingual or even multilingual students but it the government concern only to employ Indonesian language instead of English language, we can predict what our young generations will be in the future.

### **ELT**

ELT or is known as English Language Teaching is a term used by people who are involved in English teaching. English as a foreign language is admitted by more than a hundred countries in the world as an international language. It is used in many fields in the world such as economy, politics and education. Some schools have international programs that made English as one of requirements to meet before enrolling to those programs. If the Indonesian government published the policy related to the teaching practices in Indonesia and the policy is not eligible to be applied, the result will be different from the expectation. The expectation is that the students will have better understanding about foreign languages and are able to use it fluently on the contrary if English is no longer an obligatory subject than it is powerless to compete with other obligatory ones.

The HDI of Indonesia of 2012 is 0,629 below the average of 0,640 for countries in the medium development group and below the average of 0,683 for countries in East Asia and Pacific (UNDP, 2013). This HDI of Indonesia shows that Indonesia has lower position than Philippines. The data show that what the government has done so far did not give significant result as we expected. The reality is not a good result concerning to the competent human resources. One factor that is used to measure is English literacy. English is an international language that must be mastered in order to compete in global market. The global trend shows that only those who are English literate will join the competition. This reality is a portrait of the worsened condition of education in Indonesia.

### **English as working language**

As I have written above that in 2015 ACFTA will be applied among those countries therefore Indonesians must prepare everything related to it. One thing that is a must is English language. We can see from the development of ASEAN countries that is very rapid and it effects to the development of English. Kirkpatrick (2009:215) said that the role of English becomes important as it is accepted to be the sole working language of ASEAN. Due to this priority, Indonesia as a part of ASEAN should realize that Indonesian human resources should communicate in English properly. The more they speak in English the more fluent they will be. Learning English should start from younger age as they have active brain whose active neurons will absorb everything very quickly and store it in their mind.

Kirkpatrick (2009:215) stated that the Bangkok Declaration of the 8<sup>th</sup> August 1967 heralded the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). There are seven aims and purposes of ASEAN written in the declaration and article 1 lists the fifteen purposes of ASEAN and only one of the fifteen purposes mentions ASEAN's cultural diversity that is purposes number 14 reads: To promote an ASEAN identity through the fostering greater awareness of the diverse culture and heritage of the region. (2009:217)

The purpose implies that all members should respect the diversity of culture, languages and religions among them. On the other hand, Indonesia also has a slogan called unity in diversity or *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in which Indonesian language is the national language that binds all different culture in Indonesia. This condition influences the need to have a working language among ASEAN countries that is English as English language is a medium of communication in the international community.

### **CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning)**

Seeing the reality that English shall be the working language among ASEAN countries make them aware that they should use English without discriminating cultural diversity among the members. The role of English will be stronger if we want to be able to compete in the global world. There will be lots of opportunities for those who are English literate to join in the competition. Learning from our neighboring country Malaysia in which their people can speak in English, we as Indonesian should adopt what they have done in order to catch up and at the end always keep up with their progress.

One way to achieve it is by applying CTL both in formal and informal school. Some teachers have known what is CTL while others have options whether they want to do it or not. There are many approaches and methods in ELT and CTL is an approach resulted from different theories like science, social and humanity studies. As a result CTL gives a new perspective in teaching that is teaching in a whole context and will not be separated.

Alwasilah, Chaedar (2011:19) said that there are four key concepts integrated one to another in CTL namely teaching, learning, instruction and curriculum. Those four concepts are integrated as follows: **teaching** is a reflection of teacher's personality professionally; **learning** is a reflection of student's system personality that emerges in their attitude related to the given task; **instruction** is a social system which teaching and learning take place; and the last **curriculum** is a social system refers to a plan for teaching.

Another scholar Johnson (2002:25) said that CTL is an educational process that aims to help students see meaning in the academic material they are studying by connecting academic subjects with the context of their daily lives, that is, with context of their personal, social, and cultural circumstance. To achieve this aim, the system encompasses the following eight components: making meaningful connections, doing significant work, self-regulated learning, collaborating, critical and creative thinking, nurturing the individual, reaching high standards, using authentic assessment. This means that students, teachers, environment and things related to teaching are integrated into one.

In English lesson, CTL is intended to build qualified meaning which links English lesson and other subjects with the personal and social student's environment. Alwasilah, Chaedar (2011:20) gave an example when the students are asked to seek the synonym of waste and dangerous therefore they will look up in the dictionary and will end up finding the synonym of *sampah* and *bahaya*. Actually those words are not the synonym but they are the meaning of the words waste and dangerous and this is a good example of finding the meaning out of context.

The better result will be seen if the students can give explanation in accordance to the above example when they can say that there are some waste phenomena in their

neighborhood so that the people can smell the bad smell of the waste and aware of the dangerous situation of the waste. This is a good example because the students are not only learning about the meaning but also the learning the environment. On the other hand, the physic and psycho condition give certain meaning for the students. (Alwasilah, 2011:20).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This article is proposed to give a new perspective for English teachers to try the CTL in their teaching practices. They can get better result if they apply this method as they are aware of the personal and social condition of the students and also the environment. Thus the research method applied is descriptive analysis method because I only propose the CTL.

### **Research Type**

Due to the purpose of writing the article the research type is descriptive research. I as the researcher give a new idea to propose the use of CTL in ELT concerning to the 2015 ACFTA. The ASEAN and Chin soon will have only one language spoken among those countries without discriminating different culture of each country. The language spoken is English and the English language is known as a working language among the members.

### **Data Analysis**

As the research type is descriptive so that the data of my study are ideas proposed by some scholars. Therefore the data of my study are in the form of words realized in statements and opinions written in books. Those words are powerful so that they will give real information due to my study. They are the evidence to support my analysis. The idea that I try to propose is the use of CTL in ELT with the intention approaching 2015 when AFCTA is run.

Since the research type is descriptive so that the data analysis is by formulating a new idea to give foundation to the future of English in Indonesia. It is analyzed from micro up to macro scale. The micro scale is seen from Indonesian context while the macro scale is seen in the ASEAN context. The CTL will be the approach used in ELT with the hope to improve Indonesian human resources in using English professionally.

## **ANALYSIS**

There are two steps applied in this study namely data collection and then data analysis. The data collection is done by collecting some information related to the topic, in this study the topic is CTL in ELT. The data are collected through some steps namely reading and documenting the theories created by some scholars in their field.

When the data have been collected then the data analysis will be carried out. The data analysis is done by categorizing all relevant information and then formulating a new idea with the contribution to ELT in Indonesia. The analysis is as follows:

### **CTL in ELT**

As it has been explained briefly in the introductory that in 2015 Indonesia and other member in ACFTA will have a new beginning of conducting free trade, the business world will be bigger among those members. There will be some regulations published to support the running of the ACFTA. Through some discussions held in the conference there is an agreement that English is the medium of communication and in the business context English is the working language among the members.

The number of ASEAN countries is growing and it gives another opportunity, in terms of language, to use other language as the second language used. The historical background refers to the colonial past of some countries in which they are under American, French and Russian. By this condition some countries speak using different first foreign language like Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia that use French as their second language.

By joining the ASEAN those countries now have English as their major second language. Referring to the condition ASEAN countries use English as their second major language it should give Indonesia a new idea that English is important because English is the official language used among the members. Moreover English is the medium of communication in the international community. If the Indonesian government insists to reduce the time allotment for teaching English in Indonesia and it is even worst that elementary school students are no longer have English as their subject. We can predict that Indonesian human resources will have less power in negotiation because they are not English literate.



The CTL in this case is applied not only for English lesson but also other lessons as well because CTL is a learning system based on the philosophy that students are able to absorb the lessons if they can catch the essence of academic materials that they get. Then they catch the essence through their assignments if they can relate new information with the knowledge and experience that they have. The system of CTL is similar to the work of nature as a whole so that CTL unites concept and practice.

Language is learnt and language acquisition starts from the early growth of a child. By emphasizing the use of brain, CTL will be successfully done in ELT because CTL is a system that stimulates the brain to arrange patterns that build an essence. This CTL can work well because CTL is a learning system that is suitable with the brain so that the brain yields the essence by combining academic materials and context from student's daily life. It sounds natural as the process is carried out in the brain and the environment stimulates the brain neurons to form a path. This system focused on context and relationship.

The ELT using CTL will give a new perspective that English is not a difficult subject in fact it is a fun subject for students. The English teachers should be creative as they are the agent of change so that the learning process will produce the change of student's behavior that is relatively permanent. Next is that the students have potency, interest and ability that become the pure seed to grow naturally therefore the teachers can motivate the students to grow their potency optimally. The last is to achieve the change, the teaching and learning process is a must because it is part of our own life. Those three points refer to the definition of studying defined by Zais in *Curriculum : Principles and Foundations* (1976:246).

### **Contribution in Teaching English in Indonesia**

Talking about the contribution of CTL in ELT in Indonesia is that the teachers should be creative to support the students in their learning process. The students themselves also contribute actively as they have to relate their knowledge related to the new information concerning to their environment. Naturally the process sounds real because the relationship happens every time they study. This learning process is a part of our daily life because everything is controlled by the brain that needs to be stimulated in order to produce change in terms of knowledge and behavior.

Alwailah, Chaedar (2011:21) proposed seven strategies that should be done proportionally and rationally. Those seven strategies are as follows:

1. The teaching based on the problems or it is more familiar with the term problem based teaching.
2. CTL uses various physical and social contexts.
3. Considering the diversity of students.
4. Empowering students to study by themselves.
5. Studying through collaboration, this can be done by having study group.
6. Using authentic assessment because each student is unique and have his or her own character.
7. Pursuing higher standard to make the students actively compete in this competition.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are some conclusions that can be drawn from the study as follows:

1. CTL reflects interrelated principle. This can be seen when the students are joined in the group work discussion to find solution to a problem.
2. CTL reflects different principle. This can be seen if the students challenged to respect other uniqueness.
3. CTL reflects self organization principle. This can be done if the students involved in seeking their own self identity and finding their own ability and interest.

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