

SOME THEORITICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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Received : May 02th, 2019

Accepted : May 20th, 2019

Published : May 30th, 2019

Abstract : Teaching language in classroom at all levels in ELT curriculum sets up the main goal to learn and to teach language as to achieve discourse competence oral or written. Discourse means texts whether transactional or inter-personal written or oral. This means that students can do many types of action using language in a specific context such as in classroom, but this does not mean that they are not being taught other things out side of the classroom environment around them. The supporting competencies (linguistic, socio-culture) can include many themes and topics as presented in each subcomponents in competency. There are four steps of language learning can be applied and planned by teachers before teaching. Building knowledge of the field: guiding students to understand/ elicit the main principles of the materials. Example, writing simple transactional conversation text. Modeling of the text: teachers give model of what they are doing. Teachers present an example of the transactional conversation text. Joint construction: collaborate with students while they are doing the simple conversational transactional text. Independent construction: let them do the simple conversational transactional text independently.

Keywords : English language teaching, curriculum development, transactional conversation

INTRODUCTION

English Language Teaching (ELT) Curriculum is designed base on some theoretical considerations for defining or clarifying some things that need to take decisions. For instance, how high is the literate level to get in those levels of educations - elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school - (SD /Ibtida'iyah, SMP/Tsanawiyah, SMA/Aliyah); the proportions between oral language and written language throughout the levels; the types of competency model should be developed; the types of language model is used to define, the kind of psychological learning suitable to be based on for the decisions; and the types of teaching and learning process would be better to use to get communicative competence. The following discussions are important to take into account.

DISCUSSION

The first theoretical and practical consideration taken for this ELT curriculum

development is to get the literate level in every level of school. This means that literate level of every level of schools – elementary school (SD/Ibtidaiyah), junior high schools (SMP/MTs), and senior high schools (SMA/Aliyah) - need to be differentiated. There are some literate levels in available literature that we can read such as promoted by Wells (1987).

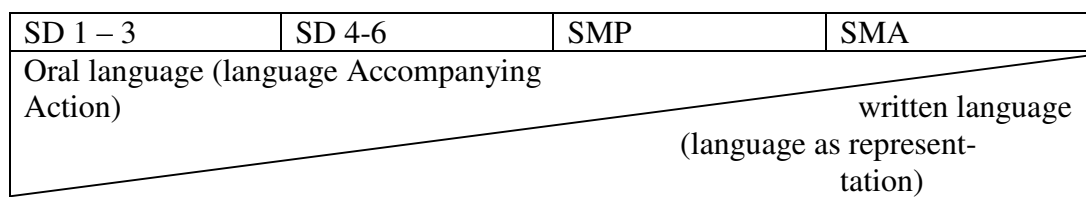
According to Wells (1987), there are four literate levels can be put depend on the school level as follows: *Performative*, *Functional*, *Informational*, and *Epistemic*. In *performative literacy* level, one is able to read and write, and speak with the symbols used and communicate in certain contexts; in *functional literate level* one is expected to use the language in daily needs (survival) such as to read newspaper, to read manual etc.; *informational literate level*, one is expected to access knowledge with the language; mean while the *epistemic literate level* one is expected to be able to transform knowledge by using a certain language (eg. English).

In national curriculum, junior high schools (SMP/MTs) students are expected to obtain the functional literate level for communication purposes “survival”, and senior high schools (SMA/Aliyah) students are expected to obtain informational literate level since they are prepared to go to university level. Therefore, it can be said also that elementary students (SD/Ibtida’iyah) start at grade four are able to obtain performative literate level (Richard, 2006). This means that elementary graduate students are expected to understand instructions in classroom or the school environment, can interact for the school context, able to read and write simple words commonly needs in the children lives (Krashen, 1984). In other words elementary graduate students can participate in classroom activities or outside by using simple contextual English (skilbeck, 1976).

Oral and written Language in ELT Curriculum

The second theoretical consideration in developing English Language curriculum is the differences between oral and written language. The differences between oral and written language is to be important to consider in English Language Teaching curriculum (Halliday, 1986). This is important to take into account because many people regard that language teachers jobs is to teach how to construct sentences grammatically without paying attention to the characteristics of oral and written language. There is a continuum or pendulum start with oral language and increase to more written one that can be applied to English education in Indonesia.

Diagram 1: Look at the following continuum



This continuum shows that oral language should dominate the English teaching at elementary school (SD/Ibtida’iyah) and still rather dominant at junior high school (SMP/MTs) but decreasing more at Senior high school (SMA/Aliyah) level. This means that oral language here is not only the language stated through utterances or voices but also the language varieties should be taught as well. English at elementary school is more ‘language accompanying action or here and now’ (Krashen,1984) and step by step students can develop written language ability that is needed at senior high school level. At this level, students in accordance with their cognitive development get more involvement with the language as a representational phenomenon that is not presence around them (language as representational).

Naturally, language acquisition is preceded by oral language (Cameron 2001), and written language is difficult to develop if the oral language is not mastered already. This is sometimes called “nature curriculum” – learning oral language first then written. This is not in line with school curriculum. School curriculum

commonly starts with simple vocabularies and grammar but longer and longer is more complicated. This is not wrong, but it is important to decide that not all complicated elements of language are really difficult to acquire (acquired) and the element of language that are regarded simple but it is really easy to acquire. Many researchers in language acquisition shows children for the first time acquire functional language accompanying action.

According to Larson-Freeman and Long (1991) that children tend to master expressions as pre-fabricated or formulaic expressions heard around them. For instance, ‘Good morning, how are you, ‘fine, thank you’, ‘good bye, see you tomorrow etc’. on the contrary, morpheme ‘s’ for plural or for the third person singular tends to be forgotten by English language learners in many countries even though it is very simple –only an ‘s’ letter. English Language Teaching Curriculum developers and then materials designers for English teaching program and teachers need to pay attention to formulaic expressions that are commonly used by teachers and students in the

classroom so that the teaching and learning process can be done naturally in the classroom.

Oral and written languages should be taken into account because they are different in some cases. Oral language is colored by many verbs and interactional features such as gambits and other discourse markers. Written language is colored by crowded lexicons and many complicated nominal phrases (Cameron, 2001). For example, in oral language, one tends to use short clauses and also many verbs.

Naturally, written language is to be 'heavy' syntactically and heard more formal. So, it is important to remember that to develop oral language does not only to memorize the written expressions in conversation. Expressions which are used in classroom conversation are as much as proper use in oral language mode not awkward and formal. It is important to note that teacher should be able to do teaching and learning classroom by oral language and they are as model directly imitated by students. The teacher's expressions repeatedly heard in the context of classroom or the school environment is called 'scaffolding talk' (language is used to do all activities in classroom such as oral instructions in English).

Moreover, every level of education must be responsible to develop oral communication ability comprehensively in order students are able to achieve the goals contextually. This means that language education cannot be illustrated as constructing a building start from foundation till top of it but every level of education (SD, SMP and SMA) can be illustrated more as creating a skeleton. For instance, a skeleton of a chick, since hatching it has head and tail completely. That chick has complete parts of body which are bigger and bigger will be stronger.

Elementary school students must be taught correctly in whatever simple the language it is. At the junior high school and senior high school levels certainly the students will be more and more skilful. English can be used to communicate orally or written as the target of curriculum goals. If this happens, the students have what so called 'communicative competence'. And this communicative competence is as the basis of developing this curriculum.

Competency Model in English Language Teaching Curriculum

The third theoretical consideration is used to develop English Language Teaching

curriculum is communicative competency model theory (Celce Murcia et al., 1997). It is because the curriculum users do need to understand the language competence. So far, there are some competency models which are pertaining with language that concerns with language competency from many perspectives. In ELT curriculum, language competency model used is a model that is motivated by language pedagogical consideration that has developed since Canale and Swain (1980) model for about thirty years ago.

A comprehensive model nowadays, in some updated literatures, is given by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell (1997) which is compatible with the theoretical view that language is a 'tool of communication and not just a set of rules'. Consequently, the language competency model will be achieved is a model that can be used to prepare students to be able to communicate with language in the society where the language is used. This model is formulated as 'Communicative Competence' which is represented by Celce-Nurcia et.al (1997) as the following diagram.

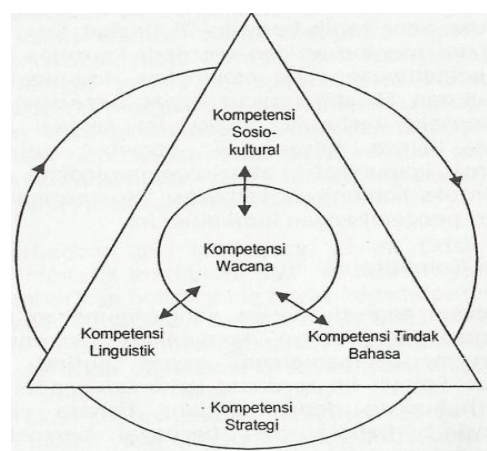


Diagram 2: communicative competency model by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei dan Thurrell (1997)

This diagram shows that the main competence in teaching and learning a language is Discourse Competence or *Kompetensi Wacana* (KW). This means that if one communicates he or she participates in creating discourse which is revealed in language or text. The text can be oral or written. When someone interacts orally or written he or she gets involves in creating text in context. This means that person does discourse activities (McCarthy and Carter 2001).

Discourse competence can only be obtained when students have got supporting competencies such as a) linguistic competence, b) action competence - speech act for oral language and rhetorical for written language, c) socio-cultural competence, and d) strategic competence. Celce-Murcia at al. elaborate each component into a set of subcomponent that can be applied as a guide for learning language. The subcomponent can help identify what things need to include by language education program as ‘declarative knowledge’ or knowledge about language (Print, 1991).

“Communicative competence is originally derived from Chomsky’s distinction between ‘competence’ and ‘performance’. The former is the linguistic knowledge of the idealized native speaker, an innate biological function of the mind that allows individuals to generate the infinite set of grammatical sentences that constitutes their language; and the latter is the actual use of language in concrete situations”. The following table can show the description of the communicative competences and tasks.

Diagram 3: Types of Communicative Competence and Tasks by Celce-Murcia et al., 1997

Communicative competencies	Linguistic competence	Mastering the knowledge of the linguistic code: Phonological: Spelling, pronunciation; Lexical/vocabulary, structural, syntax, punctuation, rules of word and sentence formation	Phonological competence: spelling alphabets/letters and numbers, and pronouncing English Sounds. Lexical Competence: Understanding main words and functional words. Structural Competence: Understanding the rules of noun phrases & constructing and presenting Description Texts which describe objects by using noun phrases. Understanding the rules of word and sentence formation or structural skills. Constructing sentence types and sentence forms.
	Socio-cultural competence	Understanding and producing utterances appropriately including speech acts	1. Understanding English Language Teaching for students such as interesting strategies based on the socio-cultural context. 2. Being able to teach by using English as the language of bilingual instruction in the social context of school and the society. 3. Producing appropriate utterances of communication.
	Discourse competence	Combining grammatical forms and meanings to achieve texts in different genres	Combining Grammatical Forms and Meaning to Achieve Texts in Different Genres in the Forms of Different Text types: poems/prose/Lyrics, procedures, Descriptions, Reports, News Items, Narratives, Recounts, sfoofs, discussions, expositions, argumentatives, Reports, Letters, Announcements etc.

	Strategic Competence	Mastering the communication strategy to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns in communication	Being able to use relevant language contents such as language functions/English expressions clearly in an organized and coherent way. According to the genres and communicative situation; selecting the relevant contents and expressing them by using appropriate tones of voice, body language and gestures.
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Diagram 4. Discourse Competence (this can be put as an appendix)

Purpose components of discourse competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997:14)
<p>COHESION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reference (anaphora, cataphora) - substitution/Ellipses - conjunction - lexical chains (related to content schemata), - parallel structure <p>DEIXIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal (pronouns) Spatial (here, there, this, that) Temporal (now, then, before, after) Textual (the following chart; the example above) <p>COHERENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized expression and interpretation of content and purpose (content schemata) Thematization and staging (theme-rheme development) Management of old and new information Propositional structures and organizational sequences Temporal, spatial, cause-effect, condition result, etc. Temporal continuity/shift (sequence of tenses). <p>GENRE/GENERIC STRUCTURE (formal schemata)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative, interview, service encounter, research report, sermon, etc. <p>CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE (inherent to the turn-taking system in conversation but may extend to variety of oral genres)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to perform openings and reopening Topic establishment and change How to interrupt How to collaborate How to do preclosings and closings Adjacency pairs (related to actional competence) First and second pairs parts (knowing preferred and dispreferred responses)

Diagram 5. linguistic Competence

<p>Proposed component of linguistic competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997:18)</p> <p>SYNTAX Constituent/phrase structure Word order Sentence types Statements, questions, imperatives, exclamations Special constructions Existentials (there + Be....) Clefts (it's X that/who..., what + sub. +verb +Be) Question tags, etc. Modifiers /intensifiers Quantifiers, comparing and equating Coordination (eg. Adverbial clauses, conditionals) Embedding Noun clauses, reltive clauses(eg. Restrictive and non-restrictive) Reported speech</p> <p>MORPHOLOGY Parts of speech Inflections (eg. Agreement and concord) Derivational processes (productives ones) Compounding, affixation</p> <p>LEXICON Words Content words (Ns, Vs, ADJs) Function words (pronouns, prepositions, verbal, auxiliaries Etc.) Routines Word-like fixed phrases (eg. Of course, all of a sudden) Formulaic and semi – formulaic chunks (eg. How do you do) Collocations v-obj eg. Spend maoney. ADV-ADJ eg. Mutually intelligible. ADJ-N eg. tall building. Idioms eg. Kick the bucket</p> <p>PHONOLOGY (for pronunciation) Segmentals Vowels, consonants, syllable types Suprasegmentals Prominence, stress, intonation, rhythm</p> <p>ORTHOGRAPHY Letters (if writing system is alphabetic) Phoneme-grapheme correspondences Rules of spelling Conventions for mechanics and punctuation</p>
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Diagram 6. Socio-cultural competence

Propose components of soci-cultural competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997:24)
<p>SOCIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS Participants variable Ages, gender, office and status, social distance, relations (power and affective) Situational variables Time, place, social situation</p> <p>STYLISTIC APPROPRIATENESS FACTORS Socio-cultural background knowledge of the target language community Living conditions (way of living standards); social and institutional structure, social convention and rituals; major values, beliefs, and norms; taboo topics; historical background; cultural aspects including literature and arts Awareness of major dialect or regional differences cross-cultural awareness differences; similarities; strategies for cross-cultural communication</p> <p>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE FACTORS kinesthetic factors (body language) -discourse controlling behaviours (non-verbal turn-taking signals) -backchannel behaviours -affective markers (facial expressions), gestures, eye contact - proxemic factors (use of space) - haptic factors (touching) - paralinguistic factors acoustical sounds, nonvocal noises - silence</p>

Diagram 7. Actional competence

Proposed components of actional competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997:22)
<p>KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS</p> <p>INTERPERSONAL EXCHANGE - Greeting and leave taking - Making instructions, identifying one self - Extending, accepting and declining invitations and offers - Making and breaking engagements - Expressing and acknowledging gratitude - Complementing and congratulating - Reacting to the interlocutor's speech - Showing attention, interest, surprise, sympathy, happiness, disbelief, - Disappointment</p> <p>INFORMATION Asking for and giving information Reporting (describing and narrating) Remembering Explaining and discussing</p>

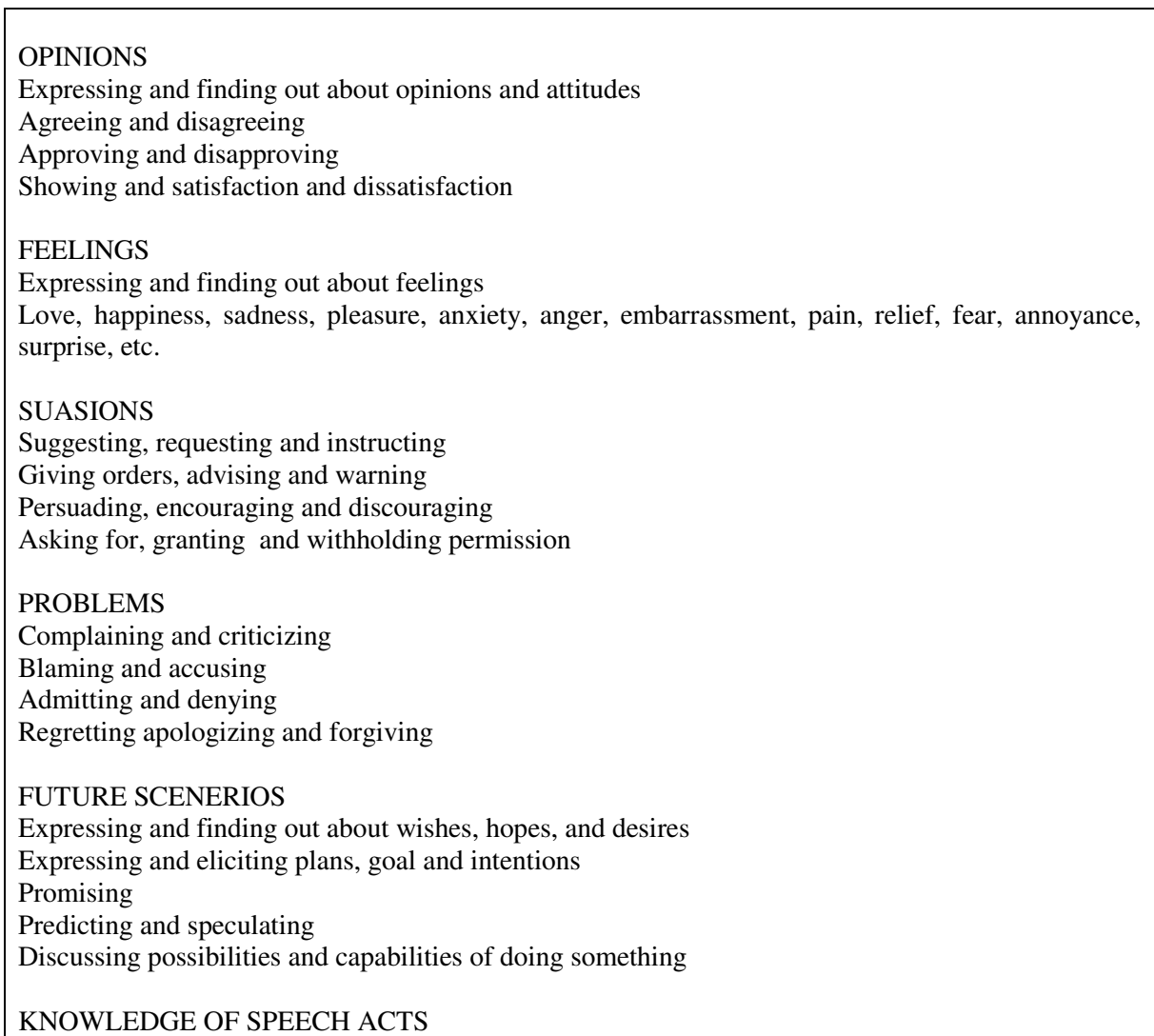
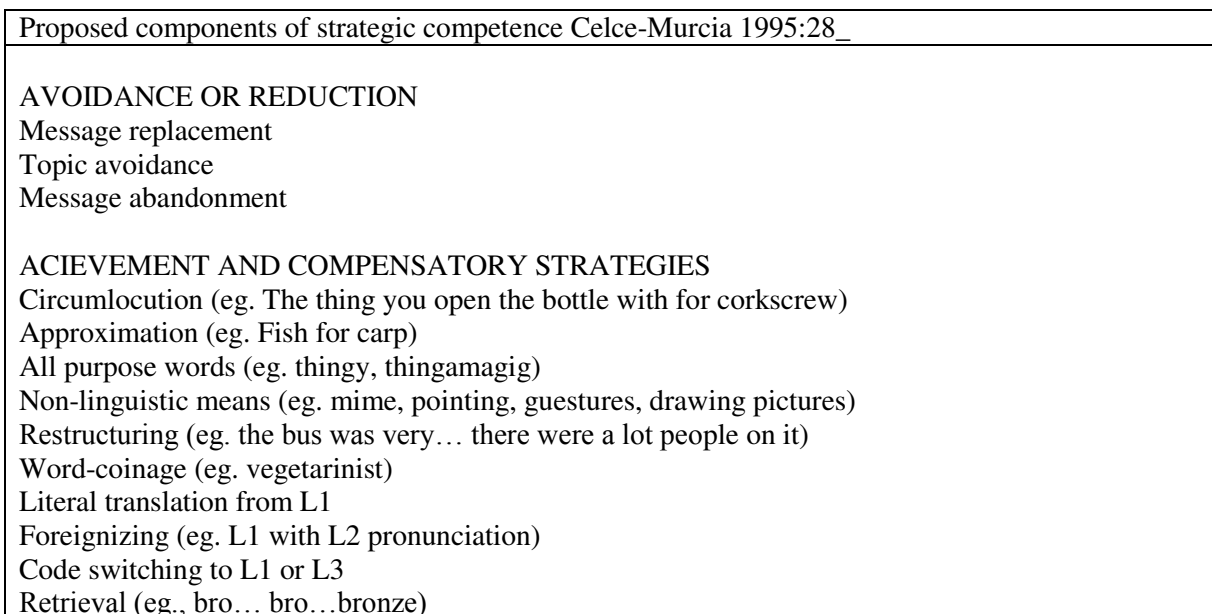


Diagram 8. Strategic Competence



STALLING OR TIME-GAINING STRATEGIES

Fillers, hesitation advices and gambits (eg. well, actually..., where was I...?)

Self and other – repetition

SELF-MONITORING STRATEGIES

Self initiated repair (eg. I mean)

Self rephrasing (over-elaboration) eg. this is for students ...pupils ...when you are at school...)

INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES

Appeals for help

Direct (eg. what do you call?)

Indirect (eg. I don't know the word in English ...or puzzled expression)

Meaning negotiation strategies, indicators of non/mis-understanding

Requests

Repetition requests (eg. pardon? Or could you say that again please?)

Clarification requests (eg. what do you mean by...?)

Confirmation requests (eg. Did you say...?)

Expressions of no – understanding

Verbal eg. sorry, I am not sure I understand...

Non-verbal (raised eyebrows, blank look)

Interpretive summary (eg. you mean...so what you're saying is ...?)

Responses

Repetition, rephrasing, expansion, reduction, confirmation, rejection, repair

Comprehension checks

Whether the interlocutor can follow you (eg. am I making sense?)

Whether what you said was correct or grammatical (eg. Can I/can you say that?)

Whether the interlocutor is listening (eg. on the phone: are still there?)

Whether the interlocutor can hear you

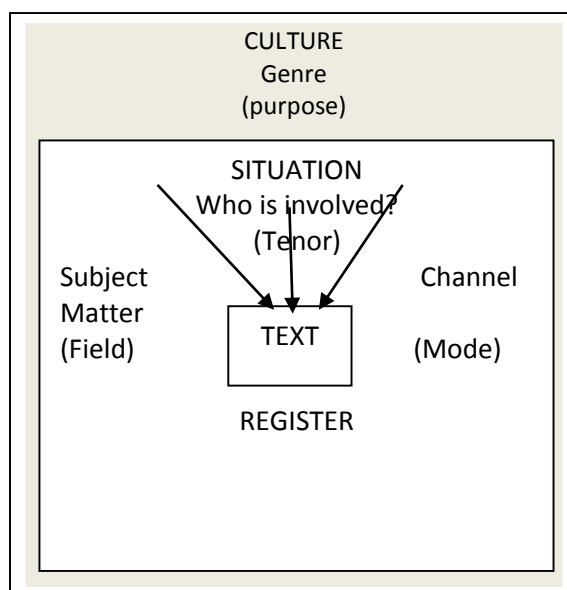
LANGUAGE MODEL IN ELT CURRICULUM

The fourth theoretical consideration used in English Language Teaching Curriculum Development is language model. Other than competency model, a language model views that language is as a means of communication or as a social semiotic system (Halliday, 1978, 2002). Base on this model that 'every text is not presence in an empty space but it exists from context of situation and culture. Halliday (1978) further points out the texts are always produced in a context. While texts are produced by individuals, individuals always produce those texts as social subject; in particular. In other words, texts are never completely individual or original; they

always relate to a social environment and to other texts.

Halliday (1978, 1985, 2002) proposed a highly articulated relationship between context and text. Context, or what is going on around the language event, is seen as 'virtual' or having the potential to 'actualise' the event in the form of a text. Halliday developed a specific terminology in order to describe these relationships or correspondences between context and text. For example, the content or the stuff being talked or written about in the context is actualized in the text as 'ideational' or 'representational' meaning, the social relations between the participants in the context are actualized in the text in term of 'interpersonal' meaning, and finally, the mode or medium of the language event is actualized in the text as 'the textual' meaning.

Diagram 9. Context, text and language system relationships can be drawn as follows (Halliday, 2002)



It is noted that *register* is referring to the fact that language we speak or we write varies according to the type of situation. *Field* refers to what we are talking about, what we are doing, what is going on, within which the language is playing a part. *Mode* is what function language is being made to serve in the context of situation. *Tenor* is the role relationships in the situation and who the participants in the communication group are, and in what relationship they stand to each other. *Genre* is stated by Swales (1990) that ‘genre is quite easily used to refer to a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations’.

These three elements (tenor, field, and mode) form the context of situation. They also form ‘register’-variety of language based on the use/situation (Halliday and Hasan, 1985). Every situational context is born in a context of culture. In classroom context, for instance, reveals the context of culture deals with school education. The language used in school context has specific characters which differentiate from other situational contexts. Hence, it is so important for students to master the common expressions which are used in the classroom.

Those expressions are not taught in piecemeal but should be taught collectively that

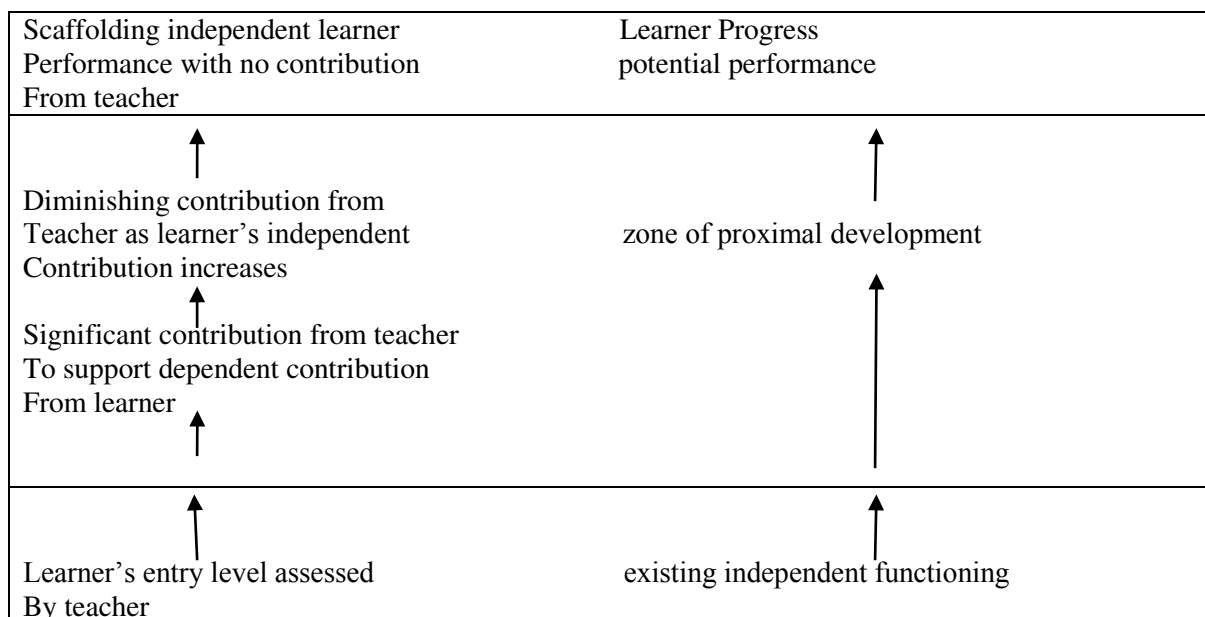
will create many texts. The texts are combined meaningfully in English culture. In other words, each text has its own certain structure such as asking attention, asking permission, borrowing, admission, thanking and are realized by expressions. For example, to borrow pencil a student is hoped to build conversation as follows:
 A : Excuse me. May I borrow this?
 B : Sure.
 C : Thanks.

The student knows what he wants to say before asking his friend borrow the pencil. He knows also what to say after having permission from the pencil owner. He does not forget to say ‘thank you very much’. Asking permission and thanking, illustrate the polite culture. This politeness is not just revealed through selecting words, but also the ways of student communicate (Krahnke 1987).

Psychological Process in ELT Curriculum

The fifth theoretical consideration in English Language Teaching curriculum development based on Vigotsky (1978) and Feez, et al. (2002) concerning with the process of learning language. Look at the following diagram.

Diagram 10. The process of learning language



This theory describes that the process of learning language is a step always need support (scaffolding developmental steps) that concern with language aspects. Vigotsky pointed out that in developing skills, knowledge and understanding, students must go through two steps.

1. Independent performance
2. Potential performance

The potential development would probably be achieved through social interaction between students and ones who smarter such as parents or teachers. The gap which is available between the two steps is called 'the zone of proximal development / ZPD (Vigotsky).

This language learning process has two implications:

- a. If a language teacher just concerns/teaches what the students have already been able to do or the existing level of independent performance, they will never develop. BUT
- b. If a teacher supports the students till they develop into the zone of proximal development and they reach potential performance, they would get the progress that they have to achieve.

This model shows that 'input' is not enough to support the students to reach the potential performance level. Vigotsky pointed out that

learning is a collaboration between teachers and students. Teachers are as the side of having knowledge and students are as apprentice to an expert. This collaboration is always involving dialogue between teachers and students and this also reveals scaffolding activities. This theory has a direct implication to the process of teaching and learning in classroom which includes some steps.

1. Steps in Teaching and Learning Language in ELT Curriculum

CONCLUSION

Designing curriculum needs strong theoretical basis. The theories are as the plausible reasons or strong reasons to design the curriculum. English Language Teaching (ELT) Curriculum has minimally six, would probably more theories are as the background to design it. First, literate level must be considered in order to know what are the ability to reach in each level of schools (SD /Ibtidaiyah, SMP/M.Ts. and SMA /Aliyah). Second, the ranges of oral and written ability proportionlly planned in each level of the school. Third, the competency models prepared to support the success to obtain discourse competence as the main goal to learn. Fifth, what language models are appropriate to prepare for every level of the schools. Sixth, psychological aspects in relation to the English subject curriculum and the last is the steps of teaching and learning the subject are important to consider.

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