

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Abstract: The main purposes of this study are (1) to describe the implementation of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) in teaching English, and (2) to investigate the teacher's difficulties in implementing CTL in teaching English at the seventh grade students of SMPN-1 Palangka Raya. It was used qualitative method. The subject of this study was an English teacher of SMPN-1 Palangka Raya. It was used observation, interview and documentation to collect the data, and for data analysis it was used data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The findings show that (1) the implementation of CTL implemented by the teacher was through some components of CTL which were applied more frequently than others. The questioning, learning community, and modeling were frequently applied. (2) The problems faced by the teacher were the condition of the students who still made some noise, the large amount of students in the class, little attention from the students, and the shyness from the students to speak up.

Keywords: *Contextual Teaching and Learning, Teaching English*

Language learning is essentially learning to communicate, therefore, learning English is guided to improve students' skills in communicating in English, both orally and in writing. The communication meant is to understand and express information, thoughts, feelings, and develop science, technology, and culture using the English language.

Further, the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget and his colleagues have demonstrated that children in primary or elementary school are usually in what is called the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. This means that they learn through hands-on experiences and through manipulation of objects in the environment. Children in primary or

elementary school setting generally learn by doing (Kral, 1994:762).

Actually, we know that the curriculum develops into some changing year by year. The recent and famous curriculum lately is school-based curriculum. One of the components of that curriculum is Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). Contextual here is an approach in teaching and learning. CTL means teaching learning concept that suggests the students to apply what they have learned into their real life experiences.

CTL applies 7 principles: constructivism, questioning, inquiry, learning community, modeling, authentic assessment, and reflection. The change in English Education paradigm has been

started by training English Teacher Trainers from 6 provinces in Kalimantan and Sulawesi through Overseas Fellowship for Teacher Training and Material Development Program, which lasted for three months (two months in Indonesia and one month in Seattle, USA). The training emphasizes the development of the trainees' knowledge on CTL principles, skill in creating teaching and learning activities in English classrooms and in developing materials based on CTL principles. The development of new curriculum for English for Junior High School is also oriented toward CTL principles.

SMPN-1 Palangka Raya was chosen as the place of conducting the research because of some reasons. First, it is one of the schools in Palangka Raya which implement TSP Curriculum (KTSP). Second, it has acquired "A" accreditation. Third, based on the syllabus, the English teacher there implements CTL as teaching and learning method, especially at the seventh year students.

Based on pre-observation conducted on May 8, 2010, the information gotten that the school really applies CTL. At teachers' office, written that contextual teaching and learning is used as the learning method there. On a syllabus of English teacher at SMPN-1 Palangka Raya was written that the method used by her was Contextual Teaching and Learning. The teacher applied CTL while teaching English. It made the anxiety to prove that and come to the teacher to ask some questions.

Along that process of implementing CTL at Junior High School level, exactly at SMPN-1 Palangka Raya, it is assumed that it was needed to conduct a research

describing the implementation of that. The study on this problem is important, because it will be known how the implementation of CTL for English subject at Junior High School is. Also, it will be known the difficulties in implementing this approach.

According to background above, the research problems could be stated, "(1) How is the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning in teaching English at the seventh grade students of SMPN-1 Palangka Raya? And (2) what are the teacher's problems in implementing the Contextual Teaching and Learning in teaching English at the seventh grade students of SMPN-1 Palangka Raya?"

According to Muslich (2007:41), Contextual teaching and learning is a learning concept which helps teacher to relate learning material to concrete students' world, and support students to connect between knowledge which they have and its application in their daily life.

According to Johnson (2002), Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a system for teaching that is grounded in brain research. Brain research indicates that we learn best when we see meaning in new tasks and material, and we discover meaning when we are able to connect new information with our existing knowledge and experiences. Students learn best, according to neuroscience, when they can connect the content of academic lessons with the context of their own daily lives.

According to contextual learning theory, learning occurs only when students (learners) process new information or knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames or reference (their own inner

worlds of memory, experience, and response). This approach to learning and teaching assumes that the mind naturally seeks meaning in context—that is, in relation to the person's current environment—and that it does so by searching for relationships that make sense and appear useful.

Influenced by the new 20th century scientific worldview that finds reality in relationships, that sees in the whole something that transcends its parts, educators now find it necessary to rethink how we teach. Contextual teaching and learning, an instructional system, is based on the premise that meaning emerges from the relationship between content and its context. Context gives meaning to content. The broader of the context with the students are able to make connections, the more meaning content will hold for them. A great part of the teacher's job, then, is to provide context. The more students are able to connect their academic lessons to this context, the more meaning they will derive from these lessons. Discovering the meaning in knowledge and skills leads to mastery of knowledge and skills.

Contextual teaching and learning engages students in significant activities that help them connect academic studies to their context in real-life situations. By making these connections, students see meaning in schoolwork. When students formulate projects or identify interesting problems, when they make choices and accept responsibility, search out information and reach conclusions, when they actively choose, order, organize, touch, plan investigate, question, and make decisions to reach objectives, they connect academic content to the context of

life's situations, and in this way discover meaning. The discovery of meaning is the central characteristic of CTL.

According to modern science, a principle of interdependence relates everything in the universe to everything else; Reaching high standards, Reaching high standards means students know and reach the high standard, identify the purpose, and motivate the students to reach it. Teachers show the students how to reach what is called 'excellence' (Johnson, 2002:29). Using authentic assessment, the students will be more motivated to not only understand the learning concept, but also to apply it in real practices. They will learn seriously to comprehend the learning material theoretically and practically.

Nurhadi (2002) has also stated that there are seven components of CTL. First, *Constructivism*, it is the basis of thinking (philosophy) of CTL approach, namely that human knowledge is built by little by little, the result is extended through a context of limited (narrow) and not all of a sudden. Second, *Inquiry*, it is the core part of the activities of CTL. Skills and knowledge acquired by students are not the result of considering a set of facts, but the result of finding themselves. Third, *Questioning*, it is the knowledge that someone has is originated from the "ask". Questioning is the main strategy of the CTL-based learning. Questioning in teaching and learning is seen as activities to encourage, guide, and assess students' thinking abilities. For the student, questioning activity is an important part in implementing inquiry based learning, which is digging up information, confirming what is already known, and draws attention to aspects not already

know. Fourth, *Learning Community*, it is the concept of Learning Community that suggested learning outcomes gained from cooperation with others. Learning results obtained from the "Sharing" between friends, between groups and between who know and who do not know. Fifth, *Modeling*, it means that in a learning particular skills or knowledge, there are models that can be imitated. The model can be a way to operate something, a way to throw ball in sport, a way to spell English, or the teacher gives an example of how to do things. Sixth, *Reflection*, it is a way of thinking about what's new in learning or thinking back about what has been done in the past. Finally, *Authentic Assessment*, it is the process of collecting various data that could give students learning progress. The student progress should be known by teachers in order to ensure that students experience of the learning process correctly.

Based on those, for the next step in this research is conducting CTL, that teaching in junior high school. The aim of teaching English in secondary school is students have the language skills with the level of vocabulary mastery 1,000 words according to their interests, development of students and particular grammar.

The study would be contributed to the two kinds of significances, namely theoretical and practical significances. Theoretically, the result can be used as the reference for those who want to conduct a research in English learning process using CTL. The study can give a broader point of view for teacher in teaching English. Practically, the study can help students find the easy way of learning English. The study can help the teachers teach better way of teaching English by applying a

new method named CTL. The result can be useful for English teacher in giving addition input of teaching learning process.

METHOD

This study used qualitative approach. It is because by this approach the information could be seen clearly by the explanation of words and the explanation from the informants. Bogdan & Taylor in Moleong (2002) define "qualitative methodology" as research procedure which produces descriptive data in written or oral speech from people and behavior observed. The type of this study was descriptive study. That meant to describe the implementation of contextual English teaching and learning at the seven grade students of SMPN-1 Palangka Raya.

The study took place at the seventh grade in SMPN-1 Palangka Raya, which is located at Jl. Ahmad Yani No. 12 Palangkara Raya. This study was conducted two months, from November 8, 2010 to January 8, 2011.

Subject of this study was an English teacher at SMPN-1 Palangka Raya. The class observed was VII-6. The class consisted of 42 students. The English teacher of this class became the key informant for this study. The subject was taken through purposive sampling.

On this study, it was to collect the data through some techniques, as follows: Observation, it is the action of watching somebody or something carefully to notice thing; Documentation, it means something's written. While using documentation technique, the researcher should research something's written such as books, magazines, documents,

regulation, notes of meeting, and so on; and Interview, it is a dialogue done by interviewer to get information from interviewee (Arikunto, 2005:158).

Meanwhile, to analyze the data, as Miles & Huberman said in Arikunto (2005), there are some summaries of data analysis. Following that the writer applied it in this study, there are some summaries of data analysis. Following that, the writer applied it in this study: Data reduction, it is the activity of summarizing, selecting, categorizing, and focusing the data gathered; Data display, it is the activity of displaying the data reduced; and 3) Conclusion, it is the summary from the writer in answering the problems of the study.

FINDINGS

To know the implementation of CTL, the writer has observed the class for four times. The explanation of the observations result from the first until the fourth observation is as follow: 1) The first observation conducted on November 24, 2010. The English skill taught was speaking skill. The material was about expression of politeness; 2) The second observation done on November 25, 2010. The skill taught was writing. The material was about telling time; 3) The third observation done on December 1, 2010. The skill taught was writing. The material was about simple past tense; 4) The fourth observation held on December 3, 2010. The skill taught was speaking. The learning material was about expressing apologizing.

From all of the meetings observed, it can be concluded that; there was seldom to invite other model except the teacher; in questioning, most of the questions asked

by the students were pointed to the teacher, not to other students; and in authentic assessment, the time is barely enough to ask all the students to practice, especially when the students were asked to practice speaking. It can be also concluded that CTL was applied in that class, although there were still some lack.

In interviewing, From the teacher's explanation, the writer can conclude that the reasons of those problems are: 1)The condition of the seventh grade students who just leaved elementary school; 2) There is a large amount of the students in a class; and 3). Little attention and interest of the students is caused by they consider that English is very difficult; 4) The shyness from the students to speak up is caused by the students were not used to speak even in discussion or telling their opinion. The writer also asked the teacher about the facility of the school, does it influence in implementing CTL. From this answer, it is known that the facility of the school such as VCD and TV help in implementing CTL. It helps the teacher for example in modeling of saying some words and expression or for other modeling.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the writer can discuss and analyze that CTL, which is the learning concept which helps teacher to relate learning material to concrete students' world, and support students to connect between knowledge which they have and its application in their daily life as Nurhadi (2002) said, was applied by the teacher. It was shown by the result of observation. The writer saw that the teacher had related learning material to concrete students' world.

In accordance with the result of observation done six times, there are some components that always applied in every meeting. The first is constructivism, it means that the teacher had built the knowledge little by little. The teacher had made the knowledge meaningful and relevant to students; The second component seen by the observer in every meeting is inquiry. Sabri (2005) said that this approach appoints students to learn much by their own selves, develop their creativity in problem solving; The third is questioning. Questioning which can be applied between students and students, between teacher and students, between students and teacher and others who have moved into the class. The writer mostly saw this component applied between students and teacher. The students seldom asked other students. There was never to invite others who move into the class. In applying learning community, the writer saw that when the learning material was about speaking skill, this component was always applied. This component was seldom applied when learning material was about writing skill. In modeling, there was never to invite a model from outside.

Related to this, as Nurhadi (2002) said, CTL has seven components, such as constructivism, inquiry, questioning, learning community, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment. From the result of observation done six times, there are some components that always applied in every meeting. The first is constructivism, it means that the teacher had built the knowledge little by little. The teacher had made the knowledge meaningful and relevant to students, for example when the teacher asked the students to write a paragraph using simple past tense about

the students experience on last Sunday. The second component seen by the observer in every meeting is inquiry. Sabri (2005:12) said that this approach appoints students to learn much by their own selves, develop their creativity in problem solving. The students are appointed as learning subject. Here the teacher did not only explain the learning material as written in the book, but also invited the students to have a conclusion and understanding the material. The third is questioning. Questioning which can be applied between students and students, between teacher and students, between students and teacher and others who have moved into the class. The writer mostly saw this component applied between students and teacher. The students seldom asked other students. There was never to invite others who move into the class.

In applying learning community, the writer saw that when the learning material was about speaking skill, this component was always applied. This component was seldom applied when learning material was about writing skill. In modeling, there was never to invite a model from outside. For example to invite a native speaker as a model in saying, how to speak words, and gestures while speaking. There was only the teacher as the model in pronouncing and saying some words. In authentic assessment, the writer saw that when learning material about speaking skill, the teacher seldom gave the score for all students. It is because the time was barely enough or all students to present and practice speaking in front of the class. In contrast, when learning material was about writing skill, the teacher could give the score for all students.

Furthermore, according to Johnson (2002), there are three principles of CTL. They are the principle of interdependence, the principle of differentiation, and the principle of self-organization. From the research finding, the writer can conclude that these three principals were done while learning in the class.

The first is the principle of interdependence. The principle of interdependence calls educators to recognize their connection to one another, to their students, to the community, and to the earth. It asks them to build relationships in all they do. It insists that a school as a living system, and that the parts of that system exist in a web of relationships that creates a learning environment. In short, the principle of interdependence, which connects everything in the universe to everything else, encompasses the various components of the CTL system. This was seen in the class observed that the teacher tried to connect the material with the students' real world experience. It means this principle was done in the class.

The second is the principle of differentiation. As Johnson (2002) said, differentiation is evident when CTL challenges students to respect one another's uniqueness, to respect differences, to be creative, to collaborate, to generate new and different ideas and results, and to realize that diversity is assign of robustness and strength. In the class, the writer saw that this principle was build when students collaborate with other while learning.

The third is the principle of self-organization. The principle of Self-Organization requires educators to encourage each student to actualize that

student's full potential. In keeping with this principle, the central aim of the CTL system is to help students achieve academic excellence, acquire career skills, and develop character by connecting schoolwork with their own experience and knowledge. This principle was seldom done in the class. There were seldom seen that the teacher encourage each student to actualize that student's full potential.

Actually, problems in applying a learning approach are almost gotten. Likewise CTL, it also has problems in implementing it. From the problem told by the teacher, the problem that often gotten in most of meetings is the shyness from the students to speak up. This problem was mostly gotten by the teacher in every meeting observed. It is a problem because in CTL the students are suggested to be brave to speak up. They are suggested to not be shy in speaking, such as to ask a question, tell their opinion, to discuss, and so forth. They are also suggested to not be afraid of mistakes in speaking. That is also because the components of CTL such as questioning, inquiry, and learning community suggest the students to speak up. For example while learning community, when the students are shy, this component could not be applied well.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the research finding and discussion, it can be concluded that these three principals were done while learning in the class: the principle of interdependence, which connects everything in the universe to everything else, encompasses the various

components of the CTL system. The implementation of CTL was seen in the class observed that the teacher tried to connect the material with the students' real world experience; The second is the principle of differentiation. Differentiation is evident when CTL challenges students to respect one another's uniqueness, to respect differences, to be creative, to collaborate, to generate new and different ideas and results, and to realize that diversity is assign of robustness and strength.

Problems in applying a learning approach are almost gotten. Likewise CTL, it also has problems in implementing it. Problem was mostly gotten by the teacher in every meeting observed. It is a problem because in CTL the students are suggested to be brave to speak up; They are also suggested to not be afraid of mistakes in speaking. These problems obtained probably because of some reasons. First, CTL is new for the teacher and the students. The teacher did not understand deeply about CTL; the second, in CTL, the students are suggested to be more active than the teacher. It is hard to do because the knowledge of students in English is limited; and the third, the time allocated for the learning is limited. It causes the delivering of material using CTL cannot be reached maximally.

Following the conclusion, some recommendation would be addressed. English teachers should develop their understanding about CTL. It is easier for

the teachers to apply what they really understand. It is hoped that the government does some training and seminars about the implementation of CTL in the class for the teachers. Next, the students should be able to follow what CTL suggested them, such as to be brave in speaking or other discussion, and to be more active. Finally, other researchers are suggested to do a research of implementing CTL in different approach of the study, and this result can be used for additional information of the implementation of CTL in English classroom.

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