

## English Language Teacher Education: Rewriting S-1 National Curriculum<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** As part of an overall attempt to improve secondary school teacher education, a program has been launched to review and develop the national curriculum (KURNAS) of English language teacher education in Indonesia as a means to improve the quality of teachers of English. The new curriculum is at the same time intended to be a revision of the 1995 national curriculum supposedly in use now. For the purpose a team of three members was appointed by the Secondary School Teacher Development Project (nationally known as Proyek PGSM), comprising English teaching professionals from Universitas Negeri Malang, GAJAH MADA UNIVERSITY, and a senior high school teacher of English. Following a study of the existing documents related to ELT in Indonesia, an initial draft was written and gradually developed following a series of discussions and exchanges of ideas with teachers and professionals in the field of ELT. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the appointment of the team, the draft for the new KURNAS comprising Books I, II, and III, has been completed and ready for a try-out. The try-out was intended to put into practice the Intensive Course (IC) Program as one of the most important components of the new KURNAS for the development of fluency in English as an essential basis for the preparation of competent high school teachers of English. This article describes the background and the underlying principles of the curriculum revision, along with the classification and identification of courses, descriptions of courses their and syllabus outlines.

**Key Words :** kurnas, core curriculum, local curriculum, intensive course, flexibility, horizontal flexibility, vertical flexibility, professional subjects, general subjects, specified subjects, external flexibility.

In The Staff Appraisal Report (SAR) on The Secondary School Teacher Development Project for Indonesia prepared by The World Bank<sup>2</sup>, it is stated that

over the last 25 years, Indonesia has focused on increasing access to educational opportunities. As a result, from 1969 to 1994 the participation rates increased significantly from 15% to 54% (junior secondary), and from 9% to 34% (senior secondary). About 11.3 million students are described to be currently enrolled in about 28.600 secondary schools, more than half of which are private schools.

To cope with the increasing number of students wanting to get education, a set of education strategies have been stipulated by which access and equation to education for every person is to be improved, linkages among educational inputs, processes, and products, are to be strengthened, budget and trained staff are to be more efficiently used. As part of the implementation of the strategies, obligatory basic education has been changed from six to nine years. Programs have also been set up to improve the quality of education in general, emphasizing the need to prepare qualified teachers, especially secondary school teachers, which is the responsibility of teachers' colleges or LPTKs.

Until recently LPTKs are still faced with issues and problems of various kinds, academic or otherwise. The list of issues in SAR includes overstaffing, limited access to inservice training, unqualified faculty, rigid preservice curriculum, inadequate teaching facilities, outdated references and library books, lack of faculty offices, poor cooperative relationship with schools, weak educational research, inadequate accreditation system, etc. To improve teacher education, a 5-component project is proposed aimed at (1) improving pre-service and in-service teacher education, (2) strengthening linkages to secondary schools, (3) raising the qualifications of teacher educators, (4) building educational research capacity, and (5) preparing for a wider mandate.

For each of the project components, a number of programs have been identified to be implemented to achieve their specific objectives. The programs include a wide-ranging list of attempts for the development of LPTKs in terms of organization, management, staff development, research capacity, learning materials, facilities, and curriculum improvement. The complete list of programs include studies and activities such as development of career information system, development of accreditation system and instruments, planning for wider mandate, conducting research on the improvement of instruction, development of diagnostic tests to assess the entry-level knowledge of S1 students, supporting fellowships for higher academic qualifications, establishing partnerships with foreign universities<sup>3</sup>, strengthening school linkages, providing offices and conference rooms for faculty,

development of learning materials, organizing in-service education for secondary school teachers, and updating science equipment. As for curriculum improvement programs, the project specifies that English and Social Science Studies be developed at this stage, giving special attention to the implementation of flexibility in the curriculum.

This paper is a description of the steps and the procedures by which the national curriculum (KURNAS) of S-1 English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) is being reviewed and rewritten as part of the overall efforts to improve secondary school teacher education.

## STAGES AND PROCEDURES

To conduct the study for reviewing and rewriting KURNAS a team of three was appointed, comprising English teaching staff members of IKIP MALANG, Gajah Mada University, and SMA Islam Malang, representing LPTK, non-LPTK, and High School respectively. In a five-year period the team is expected to produce a revised curriculum for the training of high school teachers of English. The complete set of the curriculum is to consist of three books: Book I for The Curriculum and the Course Descriptions, Book II for The Syllabus Outlines, and Book III for Guidelines of Implementation.

The project was started with a review of the 1995 S-1 KURNAS of ELTE which was supposedly used as a basis for organizing various academic programs to prepare high school teachers of English. Visits were made to various high schools to talk to teachers of English to get first hand information about the teaching English in high schools and the major issues and problems related to its implementation. Visits were also made to English departments of some LPTKs, both government and private, to talk about the project, to conduct seminars in order to convey some of the main ideas concerning the revision of the curriculum of ELTE, and to get feedback and ideas for its completion. The visits and discussions with teachers of English at both high school and LPTK levels were made at the early stage of the curriculum development to ensure that important issues and real concerns could be recorded from those who were involved in the actual and day-to-day business of ELTE. This was also a deliberate attempt to go along a different process in the development of curriculum in which, unlike what had typically been

done earlier, teachers in schools and lecturers in LPTKs were involved and invited to take part. Since the beginning of the process, so far 12 schools and LPTKs have been visited, where 168 teachers and faculty members have joined and participated in the discussions following presentation of highlights of the curriculum being developed.

At the later stage of the curriculum development, by the time Book II was nearly completed, the draft was sent out to more than 40 English departments of both government and private LPTKs throughout Indonesia to let faculty members know of what was being done in rewriting curriculum in order to get their feedback, opinions, and suggestions. Presenting this paper to the 48<sup>th</sup> TEFLIN National Seminar (November 1998) where 260 EFL experts and practitioners were present was yet another attempt to socialize the development of KURNAS from time to time to get feedback and ideas for improvement. When the entire draft was finished, the complete set of Books I, II, and III was presented in a workshop which was specially organized for heads of English departments of 12 of the existing 31 LPTK, including all of the 10 government IKIPs (July 1999). This was soon followed by try-out program conducted in four of the 12 English departments participating in the workshop. The try-out was primarily for the implementation of the IC program, one of the most essential components of the new KURNAS.

## FACT AND ISSUES

From the visits and discussions with fellow teachers of English in high schools and LPTKs, some interesting facts and impressions were noted, reflecting the prevalent issues and misconceptions concerning curriculum, its development and implementation. Some of the major issues include: (1) the position of curriculum, especially the national curriculum, how it should be developed and implemented, and what it should consist of; (2) attitude toward and misconceptions about the nature and characteristics of flexibility, including the implementation of major and minor subjects; (3) the heterogeneous conditions and capabilities of various LPTKs; (4) the general opinion of requiring an adequate mastery level of English language for teachers of English; (5) the question of suitability and availability of teaching materials; (6) inter-relationship between curriculum, teaching materials,

and final exams organized centrally or even nationally, especially as they are required of private LPTKs; etc.

First and foremost of all the impressions was the widespread sense of surprise on the one hand, relief and appreciation on the other, on the part of the teachers, that in the development of a curriculum, attempts were made to hear what they had to say about it. It seemed to be generally understood, if not even accepted, that curriculum development was considered conventionally to be the business of the people somewhere up the bureaucracy; that curriculum was something that was typically handed down from above; and that there was nothing they could say or do anything about. All they had to do was just take it as it was and do it as they were told, to the letter down to the smallest details. Nothing, of course, could be more erroneous than that. Curriculum is basically an academic business, and academic business is, in many ways, the business of teachers. Those responsible for the actual implementation of any curriculum in every day business of teaching should at least be consulted in its development or modification.

There was also a confused understanding resulting in an apprehensive attitude toward the concept and implementation of flexibility, whereby non-English major students can take some English courses. That arrangement seemed to remind LPTK teachers of English of the major and minor subject arrangement which, in the past, was understood and implemented in a manner that created a lot of frustration. The feelings of apprehension and frustration among teachers of English who were involved in the teaching of English as a minor subject to non-English major students were primarily related to the large number of students wanting to take English courses without necessarily having adequate potentials and motivation to study English properly. That of course was not the appropriate implementation of the characteristics and organization of English as a minor subject as one form of the implementation of flexibility.

Indonesia is a very large country with so many islands, characterized by great distances, meager communication and poor travel facilities. Conditions and levels of developments of many of its parts are heterogeneous in many respects, including level and quality of education. It is not realistic to expect, therefore, that education can be organized nationally with too much emphasis or insistence on uniformity and rigid standardization. That is true in many areas of management and organization, including the setting up of KURNAS of English. That realization was reinforced through meetings and discussions with teachers of English,

implying the necessity to design KURNAS aimed at the development of English proficiency level that is modest enough to be achieved nationwide, but represents an adequate, however minimum, professional level of mastery.

Although not necessarily directly related to the development of curriculum, issues concerning the writing, production, and distribution of teaching materials were seriously raised, especially among high school teachers. The same thing applies to the required use of certain method of teaching without adequate efforts to prepare the teachers properly. Issues were also recorded concerning final exams, some of which were centrally organized with its related complications. Among LPTKs, particularly private LPTKs, the most significant and disturbing problem of exams was related to the rule requiring them to have government-administered exams. The selection of subjects to be tested, the relevance and consistency to the standard curriculum, the excessive bureaucracy and fees, are some of the typical issues and complains.

## PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

Taking those facts and issues into consideration, the development and rewriting of S1 curriculum for the training of teachers of English is based on the following principles and points of view:

- (1) Curriculum is a device in an educational endeavor that is primarily academic in nature, and should be treated, developed, and implemented as such.
- (2) School teachers and college professionals of relevant fields of study should be involved and consulted in the development of curriculum.
- (3) Fluency in English is basic and prerequisite for teachers of English. They should first of all be competent in English, have the basic understanding about language and literature as background and supporting knowledge, and master the necessary skills and competence in teaching.
- (4) In an S-1 ELTE, fluency in English should be given priority and developed since early in the beginning to form a solid basis of mastery, to be continued and maintained throughout the rest of the program. This is attempted by requiring first semester students to join and successfully complete an Intensive Course (IC) program.

- (5) The national curriculum (KURNAS) of S-1 ELTE should consist of core curriculum that is required nationally, and local content that is designed and implemented locally by the individual LPTKs.
- (6) The core curriculum that is nationally required should consist of courses for the formation of minimum but adequate mastery of English, supplemented by selected courses to provide the most essential background knowledge about language and literature.
- (7) The local content should be designed as a complement to the core curriculum in building up a more solid and more complete mastery of English, and to serve the local needs utilizing locally available resources. Local content can be developed to reinforce the formation of basic mastery of English, supporting know-ledge background, or any other component of the curriculum that a local English department considers important.
- (8) The total number of credits and its overall distribution among various groups of subjects should basically be considered constant. Improvements of subject mastery should primarily be attempted through better organization of subjects and higher quality of implementation rather than insistence on additional number of credits.

## FLEXIBILITY

In addition to the above principles underlying the development of the present S-1 ELTE curriculum, the notion of flexibility should characterize and be reflected in its organization. This is a feature of the curriculum arrangement that enables students to develop a variety of competencies during their studies so that later after graduating, if necessary, they can take up jobs and responsibilities other than, or in addition to, their own major studies. This flexibility aspect is to be incorporated in the ELTE curriculum to enable graduates of LPTKs to qualify for jobs other than, or in addition to, their own basic academic qualification.

The SAR describes three different kinds of flexibility to be developed in the curriculum, each of which leads to an additional (teaching) qualification of some kind. The three kinds of flexibility are VERTICAL flexibility, HORIZONTAL flexibility, and EXTERNAL flexibility.

HORIZONTAL flexibility refers to the arrangement of a curriculum which enables a student to get competency and qualification to teach another subject other than his own major subject in the same level of education. Depending on the kind of curriculum arrangement that a student chooses to take up, one can have a FULL second subject competency (double-major competency), which entitles him to teach the second subject with full authority; a PARTIAL second subject competency (similar to minor subject competency), which allows him to help teach the second subject under the guidance of another teacher who is fully authorized to teach the subject; and a BASIC second subject competency which, in an emergency and with some additional training, entitles him to help teach a second subject under the guidance of the subject teacher. In its application in the S-1 ELTE curriculum, a non-English major student wanting to get English as second subject competency of any kind is required to take IC program and finish successfully. The implementation of this characteristic in the curriculum implies separate sets of courses that need to be carefully prepared.

VERTICAL flexibility of the curriculum is reflected in the arrangement of courses by which a student can study to have a competency to teach his major subject at different levels of education. Under this scheme an S-1 ELTE graduate can have a qualification to teach English at elementary, junior high, senior high, and even college levels of education. As far as teaching English is concerned there does not seem to be any difficulty in organizing the curriculum. Basically it is merely a matter of providing courses that are specifically oriented toward the teaching of English at certain levels of education. Depending on one's preference, a student majoring in English can choose some of the subjects that suit his future teaching career.

EXTERNAL flexibility refers to characteristic of the curriculum organized in a way that makes it possible for a student to equip himself with competencies outside teaching profession. This design is a precaution and anticipation of a possibility that an LPTK graduate, despite his teaching qualification, for some reason has to work outside teaching profession because he cannot get a teaching job. Courses in Translation, Oral Interpretation, Shorthand, or Business English are some examples of subjects that may be offered to students of ELTE under the scheme of external flexibility.

## INTENSIVE COURSE (IC) PROGRAM

As an important part of the curriculum being developed for the training of high school teachers of English, a successful implementation of IC program is crucial. This is an academic program that is organized along the following major points<sup>4</sup>:

- (1) IC is a one-semester program of 18 credits conducted in the first semester, and required of all new students majoring in the teaching of English.
- (2) It is a course conducted intensively with an average number of 28-30 class-hours a week throughout the first semester.
- (3) The main objective of the course is to establish fluency in English on the part of the students. At the end of the IC program the students are expected to have mastered the basic English language skills, especially listening, reading, speaking, as well as basic grammar and vocabulary.
- (4) The materials for teaching are specially selected, organized, developed, and used in an integrated manner for the mastery of basic English language skills as a whole, not necessarily limited to each one of them.
- (5) A group of teaching staff members should work as a team in the implementation of IC and maintain close coordination throughout the program.
- (6) Students' progress and achievement in the course is to be evaluated periodically so that corrective and remedial steps can be done in due time.

## OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED KURNAS

The 1995 KURNAS for LPTK<sup>5</sup> specifies 25 major studies and groups them into six schools with six major areas. They are schools of Education, Social Studies Education, Language and Arts Education, Mathematics and Science Education, Technology and Special Education, and Sports and Health Education, each with their own lists of major study areas. English Language Education, along with Arabic, Japanese, German, and French Language Education, belong to The School of Language and Arts. The 1995 KURNAS divides the LPTK courses of all major study areas into three major components: General Subjects, Professional Sub-

jects, and Specified Subjects, each with their allotted number of semester credits. There is also a formulation about flexibility with its varieties and the kinds of competencies they can give. For of each of the major study areas, the 1995 KURNAS provides no more than a list of subjects and their respective semester credit allocation. The subjects are grouped into two, Specified Subjects I (SS-I) for formation of competence in the subject, and Specified Subjects II (SS-II) for formation of competence in teaching the subject.

Against the background of that meager 1995 KURNAS, the present study for its revision is attempted. Some of the major points of the proposed revision include credit allocation of major components, specification of groups of SS-I into sub-groups, specification of core curriculum and local contents, interpretation and implementation of flexibility, and especially inclusion and specification of IC as an important part of the revision.

(1) Credit allocation of major components<sup>6</sup>:

Total number of credits for S-1 : 144 – 160

Distribution of credits

General Subjects : 10 – 20%

Professional Subjects : 30 – 50%

Specified Subjects : 30 – 60%

Credits for Core Curriculum

Total allocation : 50 – 80%

Distribution

General Subjects : 6 – 10%

Professional Subjects : 20 – 35%

Specified Subjects : 20 – 40%

(2) Credit allocation for Specified Subjects-I (SS-I)<sup>7</sup>:

Total number of credits : 79 – 89 credits

Distribution

Core curriculum : 59 credits

Local content : 20 – 30 credits

(3) Credit allocation for SS-I sub-groups:

LANGUAGE

Core : 35 – 47 credits

Local : 12 – 18 credits

Total : 47 – 65 credits

LINGUISTICS

Core : 6 – 12 credits

Local : 4 – 6 credits

Total : 10 – 18 credits

LITERATURE

Core : 6 – 12 credits

Local : 4 – 6 credits

Total : 10 – 18 credits

TOTAL : 79 – 89 credits

(4) List of subjects of SS-1 sub-groups with their credits

LANGUAGE : 47 – 65 credits

Core : 35 – 47 credits

IC : 18 credits<sup>8</sup>

LISTENING COMPREHENSION : 4 credits

READING COMPREHENSION : 4 credits

SPEAKING : 4 credits

WRITING : 4 credits

ENGLSI GRAMMAR : 4 credits

VOCABULARY : 2 credits

Local : 12 – 18 credits

(The kind and number of subjects, their contents and their position in the curriculum are to be determined locally by each LPTK. The list may include the same subjects, of more advanced level, listed as part of the core curriculum, such as READING III or WRITING IV. The may also be other LANGUAGE subjects that are considered important and can enrich students' mastery of English such as TRANSLATION, ORAL INTERPRETATION, PUBLIC SPEAKING, etc.).

LINGUISTICS : 10 – 18 credits

Core : 6 – 12 credits

INTROD. TO LINGUISTICS : 2 credits

ENGLISH PHONOLOGY : 2 credits

ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY : 2 credits

ENGLISH SYNTAX : 2 credits

Local : 10 – 18 credits

(To be determined locally. Some alternative subjects may include SE-

MANTICS, PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, etc.)

LITERATURE	: 10 – 18 credits
Core	: 6 – 12 credits
INTROD. TO LITERATURE	: 2 credits
PROSE	: 2 credits
PEOTRY	: 2 credits
DRAMA	: 2 credits
Local	

(To be determined locally. Some alternative subjects may include CROSS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING (CCU), CREATIVE LITERARY WRITING, LITERARY APPRECIATION, THEATRE, etc.)

- (5) Implementation of HORIZONTAL flexibility Intended for non-English majors allowing them to get one of the following:
- FULL second subject competency  
Required to study all SS-I  
Entitles graduates to teach English as fully qualified teacher of English
  - PARTIAL second subject competency  
Required to study the core subjects of SS-I, including IIC  
Entitles graduates to teach English as an assistant-teacher under supervision of a fully qualified teacher of English
  - BASIC second subject competency  
Required to study part of the core subjects, including IIC  
With some additional training and assignments to improve their English, entitles graduates to teach English as an assistant-teacher under supervision and guidance of a fully qualified teacher of English
- (6) Implementation of VERTICAL flexibility Intended for students majoring in English who wish to get special training and competency in teaching English at different levels of study. This competency can be obtained by taking some courses that are specifically designed for the purpose and offered as ELECTIVE subjects such as TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS, ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, etc.

- (7) Implementation of EXTERNAL flexibility Intended for students majoring in English who wish to study non-teaching English subjects that enables them to apply the competency, if necessary, outside the teaching profession. This competency can be obtained by studying some of the subjects offered for the purpose such as TRANSLATION, BUSINESS ENGLISH, SHORTHAND, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The draft of the curriculum for the improvement of ELTE has been prepared and designed in a fundamentally different manner from what had traditionally been practiced. Teachers of English in various levels of education have been consulted and involved to give ideas and suggestions. A special emphasis has been given to the more solid formation of proficiency in English on the part of the students as prospective teachers of English. This is to be attempted through the implementation of the IC program organized in the beginning semester to build a solid foundation for the students' active mastery of English as a prerequisite to be developed further throughout the rest of their S1 study. Relevant courses have been identified for a more complete and thorough mastery of English beyond IC, complementing and supporting students' proficiency in English with the relevant background knowledge and competence in teaching the language.

## Notes :

- The article has been modified and updated to include more recent steps in the development of the KURNAS from a paper that was originally presented at The 46th TEFLIN NATIONAL SEMINAR 1998, Bandung, Semarang, November 9-12, 1998
- The World Bank, Staff Appraisal report, Indonesia: Secondary School Teacher Development Project, Report no.15028-IND, January 26, 1996
- IKIP MALANG, and also IKIP BANDUNG, for example, have established this kind of partnership with Ohio State University, USA. Similar arrangements have also been made between IKIP SURABAYA and IKIP JAKARTA with University of London, IKIP YOGYAKARTA and IKIP SEMARANG with Deakin University, Australia, IKIP MEDAN

- and IKIP MANADO with University of Ohio, IKIP UJUNG Pandang and STKIP SINGARAJA with La Trobe University, Australia.
- 4 See INTENSIVE COURSE, Laporan Pelaksanaan Program Intensive Course, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FPBS IKIP MALANG, Lampiran KERANGKA KURIKULUM, Edisi Desember 1997
  - 5 Surat Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI no.0217/U/1995 tentang KURIKULUM YANG BERLAKU SECARA NASIONAL PROGRAM STUDI SARJANA PENDIDIKAN
  - 6 See Surat Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI no.056/U/1994 tentang KURIKULUM PENDIDIKAN TINGGI
  - 7 See Konsep KETENTUAN-KETENTUAAN POKOK KURIKULUM NASIONAL PROGRAM STUDI SARJANA PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS, October 1998
  - 8 For implementation see PROGRAM INTENSIVE COURSE JURUSAN

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