

Analysis Of Implementation Of Communicative Approach In Teaching English Under “Merdeka” Independent Curriculum

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Abstract

Nowadays communities are increasingly facing rapid and profound changes and tensions that affect the social, economic, and political aspects of life. The role of education has also become questionable in the millennial era. A matter of fact, 21st century education requires a gradual shift in curriculum construction focusing on the transferable competencies that learners need to develop in instructional settings. Communication is the real proof of an English competency. In today’s knowledge-based, types of skills and competencies that students need to gain are different from in the past. Emphasizing the communicative competence is one of the most influential developments in language education. The implementation of communicative activities in EFL/ESL classroom prepares learners to use English in the world beyond based on their own needs, interests and opportunities. This article was aimed to analyze of the implementation of Communicative Approach (CA) in Teaching English under Merdeka Curriculum. The data was collected from various journals of teaching English and articles online in internet The results have shown that Communicative Approach (CA) in Teaching English especially in the Speaking lesson is compatible and promising.

Keywords: *Communicative Approach (CA), Teaching English, Merdeka Curriculum.*

Abstrak

Saat ini masyarakat semakin menghadapi perubahan dan ketegangan yang cepat dan mendalam yang mempengaruhi aspek kehidupan sosial, ekonomi, dan politik. Peran pendidikan juga mulai dipertanyakan di era milenial. Faktanya, pendidikan abad ke-21 membutuhkan perubahan bertahap dalam konstruksi kurikulum yang berfokus pada kompetensi yang dapat dialihkan yang perlu dikembangkan oleh peserta didik dalam pengaturan instruksional. Komunikasi adalah bukti nyata dari kompetensi bahasa Inggris. Dalam berbasis pengetahuan saat ini, jenis keterampilan dan kompetensi yang perlu diperoleh siswa berbeda dengan masa lalu. Penekanan kompetensi komunikatif merupakan salah satu perkembangan yang paling berpengaruh dalam pendidikan bahasa. Pelaksanaan kegiatan komunikatif di kelas EFL/ESL mempersiapkan pembelajar untuk menggunakan bahasa Inggris di dunia luar berdasarkan kebutuhan, minat, dan peluang mereka sendiri. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan Pendekatan Komunikatif (CA) dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di bawah Kurikulum Merdeka. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai jurnal pengajaran bahasa Inggris dan artikel online di internet. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Pendekatan Komunikatif (CA) dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris khususnya dalam pelajaran Berbicara cocok dan menjanjikan.

Kata Kunci: *Pendekatan Komunikatif (CA), Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Kurikulum Merdeka.*

A. Introduction

The role and influence of English today are gaining a higher speed in the world. The main factors for this

phenomenon include expanding communication with the world after gaining independence and increasing speed and scope of information exchange in the global village. The dominant position in the internet space by the language of the published content is firmly held by English, which is a strong motivation to learn English for those who wish to promote their global competencies¹

A communicative approach is an approach which is worldwide known and established it has established itself in many parts of the world as a way of teaching languages, especially English. It is the approach that has prevailed in English Language Teaching over the past 50 years, and it is still used nowadays.²

The origins of the Communicative Approach are to be found in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The communicative approach is the product of some linguists and educators who had grown dissatisfied with the previous two methods used for foreign language teaching; the audio-lingual method and Grammar-translation method. These great linguists and educators who contributed to the rise of this worldwide used approach are Hymes, Chomsky, Wilkins, Van Ek and Alexander, and the Council of Europe.

However, all these linguists and educators felt that students during those years were not learning the language in the right way. They claimed that they did not learn the 'whole language' and realistic language. Students did not know how to communicate outside the classroom in real life situations, using the appropriate social language. So far they were relying on the structures of language instead of relying on functions and notions of language. This made them unable to communicate in the culture of the language studied³

Regulation of the minister of education, culture, research and technology no 56 of 2022:⁴

Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum in the Framework of Learning Recovery. Contains three curriculum options that can be used in educational units in the context of learning recovery along with the structure of the Independent Curriculum, rules related to learning and assessment, and teacher workload.

Starting from the 2022/2023 Academic Year, education units can choose to implement a curriculum based on their individual readiness starting from Kindergarten Classes I, IV, VII, and X. The government is preparing a questionnaire to help

¹ Brandl, K. (2008). *Communicative Language Teaching in Action*, New Jersey, Pearson Prentice Hall.

² Brumfit, C. J. (1984). *Communicative methodology in language teaching: The Roles of Fluency and Accuracy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

³ Spada, N. (2007). *Communicative Language Teaching: Current Status and Future Prospects*. *International Hand Book of English Language Teaching (Part I)*. New York, Springer.

⁴ Permendikbudristek No. 56 Tahun 2022:

educational units assess their readiness to use the Independent Curriculum.

• Three choices that can be made by educational units regarding the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the 2022/2023 Academic Year:

1. Implement several parts and principles of the Independent Curriculum without changing the curriculum of the educational unit that is being implemented.
2. Implementing the Independent Curriculum using the teaching tools that have been provided.
3. Implementing the Independent Curriculum by developing various teaching tools themselves.

In point no 3 by developing various teaching tools themselves, here teachers can create and use teaching methods such as Communicative Approach (CA).

The Communicative Approach – or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) – is a teaching approach that highlights the importance of real communication for learning to take place.⁵

Speaking is one of the language skills that must be mastered by students in Learning English. Speaking is one of the ways to extend information to people. Luoma⁶ said that speaking ability is an important part of the curriculum in language teaching. Speaking ability is an important object

for students to make their assessment well. Therefore, the students must speak correctly in order that they can be easier to convey their ideas or messages to the listeners. Speaking ability can also determine students' capability in reciting English vocabulary, language structure and etc.

The purpose of speaking is able to communicate with others. Sometimes students have miscommunication problems when they speak. Then, to avoid miscommunication in speaking, the students have to learn all sort language component of English such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Grammar is one of the components that must be considered. Thornbury⁷ stated to master in speaking fluently, must follow naturally from the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, with a bit of pronunciation thrown in. Therefore, speaking is one of the important skills to be mastered in English and needs to practice by students.

Based on the data above, this article was aimed to analyze of the implementation of Communicative Approach (CA) in Teaching English under Merdeka Curriculum.

B. Discussion

In the Communicative Approach, real communication and interaction is not only the objective in learning, but also the means through which it takes place. This approach started in the 70s

⁵ <https://www.whatiselt.com/single-post/2018/08/23/what-is-the-communicative-approach>

⁶ Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁷ Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

and became prominent as it proposed an alternative to the then ubiquitous systems-oriented approaches, such as the Audiolingual method. That means that, instead of focusing on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary (grammatical/linguistic competence), the Communicative Approach aimed at developing the learner's competence to communicate in the target language (communicative competence), with an enhanced focus on real-life situations.

According to Jack C. Richards,⁸ a learner can develop communicative competence by:

Developing communicative competence

Using language for different purposes and functions;

Varying the use of language according to the setting and participants;

Producing and understanding different types of text;

Maintaining communication despite linguistic limitations through the use of different strategies.

(Adapted from Richards, J.C. 2006. Communicative Language Teaching Today)

This change has had a huge impact on classroom materials, course books, teaching techniques and the teacher's role in the classroom, and still influences English language teaching and learning up to this day.

Some key features of the Communicative Approach

Lessons have communicative aims

⁸ Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T. S. 1999 Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press.

Communicating meaning is the main goal in CLT, and language is seen as a tool for learners to reach this aim. For this reason, the syllabus of courses that adopt a Communicative Approach to teaching favor lesson aims that will help students practice and develop their linguistic competence, rather than their grammatical competence. In order to achieve this, different types of syllabi were created, amongst them, the functional-notional syllabus, that enables learners to focus on the meaning (function) of language and practice it in a realistic setting:

Functional-notional syllabus

- Introducing yourself
- Ordering food at a restaurant
- Making a hotel reservation
- Apologizing and responding to apologies
- Making predictions about the future
- Making a complaint

Besides that, the syllabus might also include work on the four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking), as their development is vital for students to perform real-life goals. The skills are many times worked with simultaneously in what is known as integrated-skills approach. For instance, in a listening lesson, students can be asked to watch a video online and post their opinion about it in the comment section. Instead of just asking learners to leave their comment, the teacher might work on the appropriate language, vocabulary and register for this text explicitly, integrating the writing skill in a listening lesson.

This is desirable when adopting the Communicative Approach because it seems more realistic: in genuine communication, skills are seldom employed in isolation, and an integrated-

skills approach simulates what happens in real life. The source of the texts in skills lessons is also important. In the Communicative Approach, authentic texts are usually favored, as they might provide learners with exposure to a more genuine use of language.

Teacher acts as a facilitator in the learning process

In the Communicative Approach, learners are at the centre of instruction. That means that the teacher's role has changed when compared to previous methodologies such as Audiolingualism and the Direct Method. The teacher is now seen as a facilitator in the learning process, and some of the responsibilities attributed to them are:

**The role of the teacher
in the Communicative Approach**

ELT

- Setting the communicative context of the lesson;
- Managing learners and creating opportunities for communication;
- Maintaining learner motivation;
- Establishing a welcoming and safe environment;
- Giving instructions and setting activities;
- Monitoring learning and providing constructive feedback

Fluency and accuracy practice

In order to help learners improve their communicative competence, it is important to provide a range of practice activities. Although the ultimate aim is genuine communication, there is room for activities and exercises that ensure students practice language in a more controlled manner, focusing on the development of accuracy. These should not, however, be the only source of language practice. Activities that focus on the development of fluency are a vital part of a Communicative Approach lesson, as they give learners the opportunity to communicate meaning.

Activity types and classroom tips:

As the teacher is not the centre of instruction anymore, activities in the Communicative Approach usually favour student-student interaction and maximise learners opportunities to speak. The activities below can be used to provide learners with practice of the language, and the level of support given might vary depending on the stage of the lesson, the lesson aim, and the students' level of ability. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that preparing students to perform tasks is a vital step for the successful completion of activities and the development of their communicative competence.

Here are some activities that can be used in a Communicative Approach lesson:

1. Role-plays

In role-plays, learners are given an imaginary situation and are asked to perform a different role or act as themselves in a particular scenario. Role-plays enable learners to imagine themselves in realistic situations and "rehearse" before they need to use English in real life. They are also fun and motivating for some learners.

2. Information-gap activities

Information-gap activities require learners to talk to each other and find out missing information they need to perform a certain task. The information missing might include words, numbers and even drawings. The main point is to get students to talk and work collaboratively to share all information they need.

3. Jigsaw activities

Jigsaw activities involve learners reading, listening or performing different tasks at the same time and later sharing what they have done with their peers. For example, half of the students can be asked to watch a video on a certain topic and the other half can be asked to watch a different video, with a different viewpoint. After learners watch the videos and complete tasks for comprehension, they are asked to share what they had found out with their peers.

4. Open-ended discussions and debates

Debates and discussions can be a useful tool for fluency practice. They enable learners to share their own views on topics and use their communicative resource to convey ideas, make points, and agree and disagree with others. Debates are usually engaging and provide a rich resource for teachers to assess their learners' communicative competence. However, preparation for debates should be done thoroughly to help students succeed.

Developments of the Communicative Approach

After its advent in the 70s, the Communicative Approach branched out into different approaches and methodologies that aim at helping learners develop their communicative competence and is now a term that encompasses different approaches to teaching and learning.

“Merdeka” Independent Curriculum

1. What is a Learning Recovery Policy?⁹
Curriculum implementation by educational units must pay attention to

⁹ Buku Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka, 2022, Kemendikbud

the competency achievement of students in educational units under special conditions. The Covid-19 pandemic period was one of the special conditions that caused learning loss which varied in the achievement of student competencies. To overcome learning loss, a learning recovery policy is needed within a certain period of time related to the implementation of the curriculum by the education unit. Curriculum implementation by educational units can use a curriculum that is in accordance with the learning needs of students and must pay attention to the competency achievement of students in educational units in the context of learning recovery. So educational units are given options in implementing a curriculum that fits the learning needs of students. The three curriculum options are the 2013 Curriculum, the Emergency Curriculum (i.e. the 2013 Curriculum simplified by the Ministry of Education and Culture), and the Merdeka Curriculum.

2. What is meant by Independent Curriculum?¹⁰

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum with various intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competence. Teachers have the flexibility to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be adapted to the learning needs and interests of students. Projects to

¹⁰ *ibid*

strengthen the achievement of Pancasila student profiles are developed based on certain themes set by the government. The project is not directed to achieve certain learning achievement targets, so it is not tied to subject content.

3. Why do we need an Independent Curriculum?¹¹

Various national and international studies show that Indonesia has experienced a long-standing learning crisis. These studies show that many Indonesian children are unable to understand simple reading or apply basic math concepts. The findings also show the steep educational gap between regions and social groups in Indonesia. This situation then got worse due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. To overcome these crises and various challenges, we need systemic changes, one of which is through the curriculum. The curriculum determines the material taught in class. The curriculum also influences the pace and teaching methods that teachers use to meet students' needs. For this reason, the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed the Independent Curriculum as an important part of efforts to recover lessons from the crisis that we have experienced for a long time.

4. One of the spirits in the Independent Curriculum is the implementation of inclusive

learning. What is meant by inclusive learning?¹²

The curriculum is an important instrument that contributes to creating inclusive learning. Inclusion is not only about accepting students with special needs. However, inclusive means that the education unit is able to organize a learning climate that accepts and respects differences, both social, cultural, religious and ethnic differences. Learning that accepts the physical, religious, and identity of the students.

In the curriculum, inclusion can be reflected through the application of Pancasila student profiles, for example from the dimensions of global diversity and morality towards others as well as from project-based learning. This project-based learning later will automatically facilitate the growth of tolerance so that inclusion is realized.

5. What is the shape of the curriculum structure with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?¹³

The curriculum consists of intracurricular activities, projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and extracurriculars. The allocation of study hours in the curriculum structure is written in total in one year and is supplemented with suggestions for the allocation of study hours if delivered on a regular/weekly basis. In addition, there are adjustments in subject settings which

¹¹ ibid

¹² ibid

¹³ ibid

are explained in detail in the question and answer list for each level.

The achievement of learning English in the independent curriculum is determined by the Decree of the Head of BSKAP No. 8 of 2022 Learning Outcomes in PAUD, Basic Education and Secondary Education in the Independent Curriculum.

Rationalization of Achievement of Learning English¹⁴

English is one of the dominant languages used globally in education, business, commerce, science, law, tourism, international relations, health and technology.

Target

Learning general English at the level of Primary and Secondary Education in the national curriculum provides opportunities for students to open insights related to themselves, social relations, culture, and job opportunities that are available globally.

Their understanding of this socio-cultural and intercultural knowledge can improve their critical thinking skills.

Learning Focus

Learning English is focused on strengthening the ability to use English in six language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, viewing,

writing, and presenting in an integrated manner, in various types of text.

The minimum learning outcomes for these six English language skills refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) and equivalent to level B1.

Level B1 (CEFR) reflects specifications that can be seen from students' abilities for the following:

1. maintaining interaction and conveying something desired, in various contexts with clear articulation;
2. Comprehensively expressing the main points to be conveyed; And
3. maintaining communication even though sometimes there are still pauses.

Learning English at the Primary and Secondary Education levels is expected to achieve the ability to communicate in English as part of life skills.

Approach

The approach used in general English learning is a genre-based approach, namely learning is focused on text, in various modes, whether spoken, written, visual, audio, or multimodal.

There are four stages in the text-based approach, and these four stages are carried out in discussion of the same topic as follows:

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF): The teacher builds students' knowledge or background knowledge of the topic to be written or discussed. At this stage, the teacher also builds

¹⁴ <https://kurikulummerdeka.com/capaian-pembelajaran-bahasa-inggris-pada-kurikulum-merdeka/>

the cultural context of the text being taught.

2. Modeling of the Text (MOT): The teacher provides a model/example of the text as a reference for students in producing works, both orally and in writing.

3. Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): The teacher guides students and jointly produces texts.

4. Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): students produce spoken and written texts independently (Emilia, 2011).¹⁵

Pancasila Student Profile

General English learning in the national curriculum helps students to prepare themselves to become lifelong learners, who have a Pancasila Student Profile such as having faith and noble character, being independent, critical thinking, creative, mutual cooperation, and global diversity.

Learning English has the opportunity to achieve the Pancasila Student Profile through written, visual, oral text materials, as well as activities developed in the teaching and learning process.

The process of learning English can be carried out in 2 ways, namely:

- As an elective subject for education units that have ready resources.
- If HR is not ready, can integrate English content into other subjects and/or extracurriculars.

English Learning Achievement Objectives

Based on the Decree of the head of BSKAP, the achievements of learning English in the independent curriculum have the following objectives:

1. Communicative competence in English with a variety of multimodal texts (oral, written, visual and audiovisual).
2. Intercultural competence to understand and appreciate Indonesian and foreign cultural perspectives, practices and products.
3. Confidence to express yourself as an independent and responsible individual.
4. Critical and creative reasoning skills.

Characteristics of English Subjects

English subjects in the independent curriculum have the following characteristics

Various Types of Text

There are various types of texts taught in general English, for example narratives, descriptions, expositions, procedures, arguments, discussions, special texts (short messages, advertisements), and authentic texts. These various texts are presented not only in the form of written texts, but also spoken texts (monologues or dialogues), visual texts, audio texts, and multimodal texts (texts that contain verbal, visual and audio aspects), both authentic and texts made for teaching objectives, whether single or multiple text, produced on paper or screen. This is aimed at

¹⁵ Emilia, E. (2011). Pendekatan Genre-Based dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris: Petunjuk untuk Guru. Bandung: Rizqi Press.

facilitating students to become skilled at using technology (technological literacy), so that they can improve their abilities in navigating digital information.

Class Conditions

The teacher can determine the type of text he wants to teach according to the conditions in the class. Learning can start from the type of text that contains topics that are already known by students to help them understand the contents of the text they read and then be able to produce text of that type in spoken and written form. Furthermore, the teacher can introduce students to new types of text that are known to students. Teachers can help them build an understanding of these new types of texts, so that students are able to produce works in these types of texts, both orally and in writing. The selection of the type of text can also be adapted to the conditions that are often experienced by students both in the school context and at home so that students have the opportunity to study and practice the text in real life.

Learner Centred

The learning process focuses on students (learner-centred (Tyler, 1949,¹⁶ 1990), namely that the learning process must focus on efforts to change the behavior of students (which originates from being unable to be able), in using English in the six language skills in various text type.

Language ability

General English learning is focused on students' language skills according to the stages of development of language skills.

Receptive and Productive Elements

General English learning includes elements of receptive skills (listening, reading and viewing), as well as productive skills (speaking, writing and presenting).

Elements of English Learning Outcomes

The achievement of learning English consists of 6 elements with the following description:

1. Listening

The ability to understand information, give appreciation to the other person, and understand the information heard, so that they can convey responses in a relevant and contextual manner. The process that occurs in listening includes activities such as listening, identifying, understanding, interpreting the sounds of language, then understanding the meaning. Listening skills are also non-verbal communication skills that include how well a person captures the meaning (implied and explicit) of an oral presentation and understands the main and supporting ideas in the information content and the context

¹⁶ Tyler, R. W. (1949/1969). *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago & London.

underlying the exposure (Petri, 2017).¹⁷

2. Reading

The ability to understand, use, and reflect on text according to their goals and interests, to develop one's knowledge and potential so that he can participate in society (OECD, 2000).¹⁸

3. Viewing

Ability to understand, use, and reflect on visual texts according to their goals and interests.

4. Speaking

The ability to convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally in social interactions.

5. Writing

The ability to convey, communicate ideas, express creativity and create in various genres of written text, in an effective and understandable way, and is of interest to readers with the right organizational structure and linguistic elements.

6. Presenting

Ability to present ideas fluently, accurately, accountably in a communicative manner through various media (visual, digital and audiovisual), and understandable to listeners. Delivery in speaking and presenting needs to be arranged and

developed according to the needs or characteristics of the listeners.

Focus on Learning English in Each Phase

Learning English has a different focus for each phase. Here's the focus of each phase:

- **Phase A** is focused on the introduction of English and proficiency in spoken English.
- In **Phase B**, learning is focused on spoken English skills, but written language is introduced. In this phase, the teacher needs to help students understand that the pronunciation of English is different from the way it is written.
- In **Phase C**, at the final level (SD/MI/Package A Program), learning is focused on spoken and written English skills.
- General English learning in **Phase D** (SMP/MTs/Package B Program) focuses on strengthening spoken English and strengthening written language skills
- **Phases E and F** (SMA/MA/Package C Program), learning English focuses on strengthening spoken and written language with a CEFR B1 target

C. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, this article shows that four stages in the text-based approach, and these four stages are carried out in discussion of the same topic are equivalent to the steps of Communicative Approach

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF): The teacher builds

¹⁷ Petri, Helbert L. 1986. Motivation: Theory and Research. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company. Pransisca,

¹⁸ OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2001), Knowledge and Skills for Life – First Results from PISA 2000, OECD, Paris

students' knowledge or background knowledge of the topic to be written or discussed. At this stage, the teacher also builds the cultural context of the text being taught.

This approach is equivalent to the Role-plays in Communicative Approach (CA)

2. Modeling of the Text (MOT): The teacher provides a model/example of the text as a reference for students in producing works, both orally and in writing.

This approach is equivalent to the Jigsaw activities in Communicative Approach (CA)

3. Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): The teacher guides students and jointly produces texts. This approach is equivalent to the Information-gap activities in Communicative Approach (CA)

4. Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): students produce spoken and written texts independently (Emilia, 2011).

This approach is equivalent to the Open-ended discussions and debates in Communicative Approach (CA).

The results have shown that Communicative Approach (CA) in Teaching English especially in the Speaking lesson is compatible and promising.

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