

Evaluation of English as a Foreign Language and Its Curriculum in Indonesia: A Review

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Abstract

The most widely used language in research, business, politics and other areas of life in our contemporary world is the English language. The exploration of the world by the British people through colonization and their conquest of North America contribute immensely to the spreading of the language. This paper traces the historical spread of English as a language, the methods that were used to teach it across the ages and its adoption as a foreign language in Indonesia. It also examines its introduction to the senior high school and the effectiveness of the present curriculum. Findings show that the current program requires upgrading, while a lot of administrative adjustments are required to encourage students learning the language as part of the curriculum. It was further concluded that the only way to improve quality of graduates and make them useful in the international labor market is to incorporate English as part of the curriculum and as medium of teaching in Indonesia.

Keywords: curriculum, evaluation, English language, learning, teaching

1. Introduction

1.1 Genesis of English Language

English language is one of the most spoken languages in the world of today. The British were the only people who spoke English as a monolingual language within their domain of influence in time past. The industrial revolution that was started by the British enhances the development of the language to identify new technological terms when so many other people were still close to primitive life. The revolution and poverty of the eighteenth century in Europe forced many people out of some countries like France, Italy and Spain to the United States where they adopted English language through natural assimilation.

According to Crystal (1997), the language is now spoken by over two billion people with different accents and competency levels. He observed that the native speakers are now less in number when compared with the non-native speakers because the use of the language has spread beyond the borders of Britain. English language has now become world's language for research, publication, business and commerce. Teaching and learning are majorly being conducted in English language by universities and colleges across the globe (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Lauder, 2008).

The adoption of English language by Indonesia has brought about a tremendous change in the educational policies of the country. Consequently, some pedagogy relating to English language teaching, namely, the methodology, curriculum, and evaluation is been given substantial attention so as to improve the competency of its usage in the country. The ability of the teachers who are non-native speakers to disseminate instructions to students effectively is a key factor in the effective learning of the language. Nunan (1992) observes that though there are sometimes many contradictory and diverse opinions regarding the nature of English language and its teaching and learning, experts on curriculum are required to give consideration to data coming from teachers, learners and evaluation specialists in order to facilitate proper evaluation. The main focus of this paper is to review the methods of evaluating the effectiveness of English curriculum in Indonesia senior high schools with reference to some countries. It also examines the adoption of English language in Indonesia, the history relating to the teaching of the language, the competency of the teachers and possible ways of improving the process of its dissemination.

1.2 Importance of English Language and Its Curriculum in Indonesia

English Language has been seen as a good medium of communication in Indonesia. Apart from the fact that it has been adopted as a teaching language in higher Institution of leaning, it is also being considered as an enhancement for social status. All in all English language has been seen as a defacto standard medium of communication all over the world and Indonesia cannot be left out. In some way or another, teaching and learning of English Language can be considered to be an integral part of Indonesia educational system for a long time now. As stated by Lauder (2008), English is being used for following technological and scientific improvements and also for better job opportunities. Daloglu (1996) points out that an important requirement for effective delivery of high quality language education is a proper definition of the curriculum with clear aim and objectives. Developing a curriculum that clearly spells out how knowledge can be acquired constitutes an important phase towards realizing good quality language dissemination. However, to ensure that the appropriate knowledge is been passed to learners there must be a way of assessing what is been taught in various schools and at various levels.

1.3 Past Evaluation of Education Process in Some Countries

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) identified evaluation to be a process that is performed so as to obtain data that could bring about changes, make amendment, additions and/or subtractions from the curriculum. In order to make projection for the future, a continuous and systematic evaluation is required. This continuous evaluation suggests that acceptable revision of all of the components of the curriculum should be made, this being the view of Brown, 1989. Different Models have been used in different countries to evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of different subjects' curriculum in various countries. Some of these studies are identified in this paper.

Pittman (1985) adopted Robert Stake's Responsive Evaluation Model (RSREV) for evaluating a social science curriculum in an indigenous school district in the United States of America. The significance of the evaluation was predicated on developing, implementing, and evaluating a curriculum evaluation procedure. This was done in order to identify the appropriateness and failures so that areas with shortcomings can be improved and to determine if the improvement been made are positive on students' skills in social studies. The results of the evaluation identified the competency of the existing curriculum and suggested areas to be improved upon. Yıldız (2004) evaluated the Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) Turkish Language Program for foreigners in Belarus. He used Context Input Process Product (CIPP) Model was used to evaluate the program. The study was aimed at detecting the inconsistencies among the existing curriculum and the outcomes expected from the Turkish language program hosted at MSLU. The aim of the evaluation was similar to that of Pittman (1985). The study concludes that the needs and expectations of the learners are been met by the curriculum, although some recommendations were made to further improve the curriculum for improved dissemination and learning.

English program evaluation from the students' perspective of Çukurova University, a Vocational School, was done by Gullu (2007). The study examined the students' perception about the effectiveness and usefulness of English program and the difficulties they encountered. The evaluation also took into consideration the expectations and the essentials of the students. The outcome of the study indicated that the students faced some specific challenges such as problem of the course content; unappealing and inappropriate study materials, lack of interest and motivation and lack of instructional materials. Findings also showed that the program is not adequate and did not conform to students' expectations and needs.

Yanik (2007) evaluated English curriculum of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades of community primary schools in Turkey. The important variables that were investigated were the students' and teachers' opinions about the objectives of the curriculum and its content, methods of instruction, assessment and evaluation procedures, attitudes of learners and the challenges faced during the process of curriculum implementation. The findings of the study showed that the application procedure of English language curriculum are not compatible with teachers' and students' characteristics and perceptions and differ in relation to the available infrastructures in schools and classrooms.

2. Background

2.1 The Spread of English Language and Its History of Teaching

In the world of today, English has gained a tremendous reckoning as the world increasingly becomes a global village. The continuing and almost inevitable expansion of English language is strongly influenced and predicated on the role the British played in colonization, global education, modern civilization especially in the area of writing and governance. Their quest for exploration of other parts of the world enhanced the spreading of

the language. The trends of events in modern history buttress the critical place it occupies in this contemporary time.

Crystal (1997) gave an outline of the history of the spread of English among many nations of the world. This outline opined that English language was the official language of the leading colonial country, the Britain, in the 17th and 18th centuries. This period was followed by the decades of the industrial revolution which was also orchestrated by the British in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thereafter in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the United State of America emerged as the new world leading economy. English was also the language of transaction in the USA having being colonized earlier by the British. As a result, new linguistic opportunities came up due to the development of new technologies which other languages could not cope with. English was used as the language of communication in industries and this affected all facets of the society such as the advertising, press, broadcasting, transport, communications, sound recording and motion pictures (Crystal, 1997).

Since World War II, English becomes a popular language being used by world communities and is being recognized for global interaction especially when nations that speak different languages are involved in business and diplomatic relations (Toker, 1999). The role that colonization played in the expansion of English cannot be overemphasized especially the colonization of the United State of America. Crystal (1997) argued that the adventure of the British Empire that led to the conquest of the United States in the 19th century contributed in no small measure in making English language the world language. According to Graddol (2000), millions of people relocated from British Isles, Spain, France and Italy to the United States. The movement was caused by the results of revolution, poverty and famine that were then ravaging Europe. This led to the adoption of a single language (English) for communication, education and business since they came from totally different backgrounds and culture and were forced by circumstances to live together. After about two generations, subsequent generations took to English language by natural process of adaptation.

The finding of the America region by the British and the industrialization that emerged enlarged the influence of English language. English language was playing a significant role as a global language for scientific advances and cultural exports. It was also observed by Crystal (1997) that the development of the entertainment industry in Britain and USA resulted in a worldwide influence of the language as movies and news was exported to other parts of the world. Additionally, expressing the effect of the transfer of scientific and cultural heritage from the United States, what centuries of British colonialism and decades of Esperanto could not do, a few years of free trade, the movie industry, and the Internet accomplished it. It is now obvious that English language dominates politics, international business, and culture more than any other known language in human history.

English language as the most important language in the United State has contributed greatly to the popularity of European countries. The prominence of English language could be attributed to the establishment of European Union. The Union operates through an amalgamate system that comprises of 27 nations in a transnational and multinational approach. Although the Union cares for the other languages and encourages the recognition of sectional languages as part of its language policy, however, English remains the most widely spoken language in the union for most dealings.

In the work of Jawarskova and Porte (2007) the past of English language teaching (ELT) was divided into six categories: the early period, the 1960's, the 1970's, the 1980's, the 1990's and the new-millennium. They based their categories on the main advances achieved in the language. The early period of English language teaching came up through the study of Latin. The approach is considered as a conventional method of learning non-native languages. This was classified as the time of Grammar Translation Method (Richards & Rodgers, 1990). Language leaning comprises of reading, writing, speaking and listening. A typical Grammar translation class was based on reading and writing. Little consideration was given to speaking or listening (Bowman, 1989). The study by Brown (1989) as cited by Jawarskova and Porte (2007) considered the early period of 1960s to be period of oral pattern drilling combined with a great deal of behaviorally-inspired training. Audio-Lingual Method which was adopted during this period stresses the significance of listening, oral proficiency and comprehension with precise intonation. Students were required to repeat what the teachers say to them. This method is peculiar in its interchanges, calisthenics, repetition and reaffirmation. The learners' performances were monitored controlled and corrected through this method.

The main focused changed from repetition to incentive response after Audio-Lingual Method. According to Richards and Rodgers, 1990, the main drive of Total Physical Response (TPR) is to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level by depend on the meaning interpreted through movement. In TPR, meaning is given priority over the grammatical constructions being taught inductively. Commands provided by the teacher were

performed by learners as the major activities under this method. The teachers and the learners perform the role of exposing target language through commands and listening respectively.

In the closing years of the 1960s and at the start of 1970s, scholars began to question the appropriateness of the behavioral method of learning. This gave rise to the development of Cognitive Code Learning (CCL) method, which Jawarskova and Porte (2007) posited as structures learning through deductive means that include drilling exercise cum audio-lingual approach. Meaningful learning and Creativity in classroom routines were however added. At this period prominence was laid on combination of skills and more meaningful activities into the learning process, especially role-plays instead of structural activities.

Another method that gained importance after CCL was suggested by opedis, reported in (Richards & Rodgers, 1990) is a method that aimed at delivering advanced conversational proficiency in a faster way. A well-equipped classroom with an environment that has bright atmosphere, comfortable chairs, and musical background were thought to expedite information flow.

Gattegno (1976) developed the Silent Way method. This is based on the assumption that students should be given more time to talk in the class while the time the teachers uses in talking should be reduced. The main objective of the approach is to avail learners with oral capability as basic components in the target language with attention on linguistic substances and terminology. The trainers through this reversal of role will prompt from students through mimes and gestures.

Community Language Learning, a holistic approach to learning was another method that was evolved during this period. This confirmed that learning can be viewed as both cognitive and affective. The method is developed from humanistic methodologies to learning by the researchers that proposed it. The aim of the method was to improve non-native speakers of English language in a manner that they will be able to use the language like the native speakers. Howatt (1984) adopted the style of collaborative activities based on discussions, presentations, dialogues, observations and reflection on things learnt in the classroom, while listening to the teacher in less former classroom setting, while talking about classroom discussions with peers as well as personal perceptions about the classroom involvements as the main events to encourage learning within a peculiar environment.

These methods set the pace for a broader concept of methodology to English language teaching and learning during these periods. However, the emphasis on sentence structure in the teaching and learning of English language was queried, as it was observed that mastering of language was not limited to just being proficient in grammatical expressions. In view of this, Richards and Rodgers (2001) noted that a highly controlled, teacher-centered, sentence structure based translation and memorization oriented approach that could be considered as customary foreign English language teaching was abandoned for a student-centered based teaching. The student-centered approach established teaching on students' communicative requirements. (Savignon, 2007; Thompson, 1996; Whitely, 1993) stressed that Communicative Language Teaching accommodates the face-to-face oral communication as well as writing and reading activities. The satisfaction of learners' needs entails that the importance of certain language rules cannot be overlooked (Savignon, 2007). The facilitators of the procedures and activities meant to promote communication are the teachers (Whitely, 1993).

In an ideal teaching and learning environment that fosters a good rapport between the students and the teacher, students are seeing interacting with one another by expressing themselves and exchanging opinions. The main value of the technique reflects a constructivist methodology in the teaching of language. Constructivism approach highlights that students build understanding based on their own undertakings and contact with their environment. The approach demands that each student construct knowledge in interaction with his/her environment. According to (Abdal-Haqq, 1998; J. Brooks & M. Brooks, 1993; Richardson, 1997), this interaction can create a change in the individual as well as the environment.

The model of integrated teaching was however adopted in the twentieth century because all of these methods were found inadequate as an individual in the learning of English language. As the name suggests different methods were merged or integrated together to evolve a holistic model. The models merged four skills of writing, reading, speaking and listening with some other skills to disseminate information. The main merit of this approach is that it enhances the proficiency level of learners through the four skills in the target language while performing tasks.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Introduction of English into Senior High School in Indonesia

Facts from historical records reveal that after the Republic of Indonesia gained her independence, the Dutch language was jettisoned for English language as the first foreign language in the country with official approval in

1955. English is recognized as the most significant foreign language in Indonesia since 1980s and this has witnessed a tremendous growth since the early 1990s (Alwasilah, 1997). The recognition of English as a foreign language was based on government policy that was formulated through the act of the Parliament. In the Guidelines of the State Policy (GBHN) of 1983 and 1988, non-native language policy was not integrated but in the GBHN of 1993, the guideline on non-native languages, particularly English language, was clearly specified. Government Guideline No. 28, 29/1990 was introduced to replace Government Guideline No. 55, 56 and 57/1988. This guideline approved the use of English language in schools. Furthermore, Government Guideline of No 57/1957/1988 also supported the use of English Language as a foreign language and as a means of communication and interaction in the university. Subsequently, it was incorporated into Government Guideline No 60/1999 on the use of English language in all higher education.

The Dutch that colonized Indonesia did not introduce education to the generality of the people except for some privileged few that worked directly for them (Lauder, 2008). Western-type of elementary schools was not established until 1907 where English as a subject was only introduced seven years later in 1914 when junior high schools were established. Van der Veur and Lian (1969) as cited by Dardjowidjojo, 2003a posited that the advent of Senior high schools was in 1918. The literacy rate in Indonesia in 1930 was as low as 6.4% and in 1940 only 37 senior high schools were in existence in Indonesia (Tilaar, 1995).

Quest for self-expression promoted the idea of national language. Indonesia as a nation succeeded in the implementation of Indonesian as a general language in the country, this is obvious in the native language that is used by most of the people for daily communication. This has however jeopardized the competency of the people in using English for international engagements as the majority of people remain incompetent due to their low level of proficiency in English language. This problem transcend the lowly educated people, it has been seen in many occasions where highly educated are not able to express themselves adequately while giving presentations in international forum. Some astute academics also find themselves unable to access academic articles that are mostly written in English in this generation, thus many are confined to publications in Indonesian only. This is clearly a disadvantage even though the policy for the development of the national language has succeeded the current state of competency in English that is essential for international dealings remain a serious concern (Dardjowidjojo, 1996; 2003a, p. 71; 2003b).

3.2 Present Position of English Language in Indonesia Education Sector

English is a compulsory subject in schools in Indonesia (Lauder, 2008; Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). Although the country was not colonized by the British, the language has become a significant part of the nation's institutions. The exigencies of the language's import in transacting business and communicating with neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, India and other countries in the opinion of Lauder (2008) makes the learning inevitable.

The school based-curriculum, comprising English curriculum, as endorsed by the Department of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia has recently been implemented from Elementary to High Schools in the country. However, English as a subject remains an optional subject in elementary schools. Better acquisition of skill and effective language learning will be achieved if the curricula, syllabi, materials, and activities are enhanced and improved (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They agree with Gattegno (1976) that enhanced students' role and autonomy in the class will improve the learning process.

The learning process is divided across three years or three grades in Senior High Schools or SMA (Sekolah Menengah Atas) with mile stones of minimum competences which students should reach in each grade to ensure competence. Competence standards of teaching and speaking in Senior High Schools are done through oral expression of the meanings of interpersonal and transactional discourse in formal and non-formal communication. This is achieved by using recount, narrative, news item, procedure, descriptive, report, analytical exposition, spoof, hortatory exposition, discussion, explanation, and review in daily life contexts. The aptitude to communicate in English is a very difficult mission in Indonesia because of the emphasis on the national language. The fear of making mistakes has affected the rate of personal expression so much that not all of the students in an EFL (English as Foreign Language) speaking class have the courage to speak. Many of the students feel anxious in a speaking class (Padmadewi, 1998); and some are likely to keep silent to avoid making mistakes (Tutyandari, 2005).

Some of the identified problems of existing curriculum include the allocation of inadequate time for English lesson, lack of resources and instructional materials, lack of motivation by the stakeholders and open display of disgust for the language by students. Teachers are also faced with many problems in the course of their duties in teaching English as foreign language especially with overcrowded classrooms and inadequate continuous

development programs.

3.3 Different Notions of Curriculum

The term curriculum can be defined in a number of ways. Olivia (2001) agrees it does not have a clean boundaries suggesting that it cut across all field of studies. In some studies, researchers consider the notion of curriculum as subject matters, while others describe it as experiences that a student acquires through the tutelage of a college. Five different definitions are provided by Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) for the notion of curriculum. They are enumerated as follows: (1) A design for action or a printed material that involves approaches for accomplishing anticipated aims. (2) A curriculum can be said in general terms to involve the proficiencies of the learner. (3) It can also be seen as a structure for guiding people so as to measure the expected goal of a system. (4) It can also be regarded as a framework for study and (5) It can be seen as subject matter or content. 'The cumulative practice of organized knowledge, race experience, modes of thought, planned learning environment, instructional ends or outcomes, guided experience, an instructional plan, cognitive/affective content and progress, and a technological system of production' is the definition that is proposed by D. Tanner and L. Tanner (1980) for curriculum. The aggregation of subject matter, sequencing of content, the statement of ends, and prerequisite expected of learners when they start the study of content was the approach used by Gagne (1987) in defining curriculum.

Venville et al. (2012) agree with Scott (2008) who defines curriculum through what it should contain. These are aims, objectives, content or subject matter, methods or procedures and assessment or evaluation. Within the practice of education curriculum is a major element by which education policy is expressed (Ben-Peretz, 2009) Curriculum should be focused on certain group since it is prepared with certain objectives in view (Kay & Kienig, 2013). It is also seen as both a process and a product (Bloch, 2013).

The aim and objectives of what is the expected product is normally included in setting up a curriculum. Details of what to teach, the instructional materials to use in communicating the teaching as well as what the students are expected to know are part of the selections and contents of any comprehensive curriculum. It demonstrates a particular teaching and learning patterns. An important part of curriculum is evaluation of its outcomes.

3.4 Curriculum Evaluation

In real life situation and almost on regular basis evaluation is being conducted for a number of reasons. However, as it concerns education and English curriculum in particular, the primary aim of evaluation is to acquire information about students and teachers' performance within a learning environment. This also covers the possibility of finding solutions to perceived problems and strengthening existing positive methods and system because through evaluation, feedback can be obtained from stakeholders for the improvement of the system.

Evaluation also does not have a generally accepted definition. Educators view evaluation from different perspectives, some relate it with capability; while others describe it as estimation of the degree to which a precise objective has been achieved. Evaluation is mostly viewed as scientific review by some researchers; it is also being argued that it is basically the act of gathering and providing facts that will allow decision-makers to perform optimally (Worthen & Sanders, 1998). The target population for evaluation studies depend largely on what is been looked into. It could be restricted to a teacher and some students and at the same time it could cover a huge number of schools, students and teachers. Irrespective of a general consensus about the concept of phenomenon, Talmage (1982) describes evaluation as a means of obtaining facts for decision to determine merit and value-worth of decision making. This postulation emphasizes the important role played by evaluation in decision-making. Frechtling (2007) reviewed the varying degree of evaluation on the basis dimensions which could be design (quasi-experimental, experimental, regression discontinuity), intent (objective versus advocacy assessment), philosophical foundations (qualitative versus quantitative), and others. Cronbach (1991) differentiated between the three types of decisions that require evaluation. These decisions are:

- Identification of the requirements of the students for purpose of planning their training, judging students' performance for purpose of selection and grouping, notifying the student with his progress and deficiencies. These are categorized as individual decision.
- Judge the effectiveness of the school system and the competence of individual teacher. These are categorized under administrative regulation.
- Taking a decision on what instructional resources and methods that is suitable and identifying where adjustment is needed. This is placed under course improvement.

Tyler (1991) conceptualized evaluation as a process that is vital to curriculum growth. In this perspective, evaluation was considered to serve the purpose of determining the extent to which the curriculum had attained its

set aim and objectives. The strengths and weaknesses of a curriculum are being achieved through evaluation. This is followed by injecting new ideas into the system, implementation and continuous evaluation (Gredler, 1996). Evaluation is the formal determination of the quality, effectiveness or value of a program, product, project, process, objective or curriculum (Worthen & Sanders, 1998). Hence, in view of these definitions of evaluation, evaluation can therefore be defined as a systematic inquiry aimed at providing information to stakeholders in a particular program, policy or other intervention. Another interesting aspect of evaluation is the program evaluation. Program evaluation deals with the assessment of program domains. It has five facets:

- i) The necessity for the program
- ii) The proposal of the program
- iii) The program application and service provision
- iv) The impact of the program and
- v) Its effectiveness in terms of cost.

3.5 Need for Curriculum Assessment of English in Indonesia Senior High School

An important and integral part of the educational system is evaluation. It is crucial to having proper and coordinated service delivery within the system. It ensures uniformity in the dissemination of knowledge. Curriculum evaluation is the procedure by which effort is made in measuring the efficacy of any particular educational activity (Kelly, 1999). The universal objectives of program appraisal, as opined by Lynch (1996) involve assessing a program's efficacy in total terms and/or measuring its superiority in contrast with similar programs. Program evaluation will not only avail teachers and administrators with useful information regarding upgrading of current program but also gives accountability to external stakeholders. Its objective is to determine whether the planned curriculum implemented is yielding or capable of yielding the anticipated outcomes. The victories and the disappointments of the curriculum before and during implementation and the usefulness of its application can be determined using evaluation (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). A regular and continuous evaluation of any endeavor is important for its enhancement, which eventually leads to the need for curriculum evaluation.

The current English curriculum in Indonesia needs some adjustment. Lie (2002) explained that language educators and EFL administrators are required to re-examine it holistically both from within and outside to make it more responsive to multicultural experiences. The scope of the current curriculum that is limited to a single subject that is optional means that high school students may still avoid it if they find it inconvenient. The current system increases stress on teachers due to overcrowded classrooms. More teachers and more classrooms are required to enhance effective teaching. There is also the need to retrain the teachers on regular basis so they can be familiar with latest development regarding English language as part of the curriculum.

4. Findings/Discussion

The importance and prominent position that English language occupies in the world of today has made it an acceptable language beyond the original boundary where it serves as the mother tongue of the British. The role the British played in the seventeenth to twentieth centuries through colonization, industrial revolution, technological advancement and the conquest of the United States force many people and nations to learn English and adopt it in one way or the other. Although Indonesia was not colonized by the British, their style of spreading education everywhere they went made Indonesia adopt the language as a foreign language so as to be able to converse and transact business with other countries.

The advent and the introduction of English language as a foreign language were reviewed in this paper. It is observed that a lot of improvement is required in the curriculum so as to improve the competency of both the learner and the teachers. The need for curriculum evaluation is stressed by the inadequacies of the existing program which is taught only as a subject that can be avoided by some students. Even though it is compulsory at the senior high school level, the fact that English is not used to teach science subjects reduces the rate through which learners can build up their vocabulary in science and technology related subjects.

5. Conclusion

Based on the critical review and evaluation of English language as part of the curriculum in Indonesia, it was observed that there is adequate need of regular evaluation of the both educational system and curriculum so as to ensure uniformity in dissemination of knowledge. This will give a way of measuring the efficacy of the system. Through evaluation, accountability will be given to external stakeholders. I will also conclude that the should be constant re training of teachers and students in order to level up with international standard and make business

transactions and dealing easy for Indonesians. Improving on the English language as part of the curriculum will also give an additional advantage to the graduates to be able to get job opportunities at international levels. It is therefore to very paramount to evaluate the English and a foreign language as part of the curriculum in Indonesia.

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