



## KURIKULUM MERDEKA IN TWO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS: ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN EFL CLASSROOM

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### Abstract

Components in the curriculum are altered and developed as the curriculum progresses. The developments are crucial aspects of the curriculum. Every change and progress that happens during the development of it should be investigated. Thus, there is a need for more research and literature that focus on the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and its impact on English Education in Indonesia. The lack of research about *Kurikulum Merdeka* happens because it is a new program that requires more studies and investigations. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in two different Senior High Schools, its impact on the teaching and learning English process, and a comparison of the implementation curriculum in the two schools. The research used qualitative research design. The Interview was the instrument used to gain the data in this research. The result found that the first school mixed the 2013 and *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The second school fully implemented and *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. The difficulties of implementing it were related to English course time allocation and students' different interests in learning English. This study implies that teachers can prepare themselves to avoid problems and difficulties found in this research by finding solutions and strategies when encountering similar difficulties during teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Kurikulum Merdeka, EFL classroom, impact, implementation, comparison

### INTRODUCTION

National education system is based on national curriculum. As the development of curriculum from time to time, it shows that the implementation of education is dynamic. Thus, lot of components in curriculum are also altered and developed as the curriculum progressed. The components include the crucial aspects of curriculum. Those are the set of systematic plotted teaching and learning plan, course objective or goals, teaching approach, method, and strategy as well as the contents of learning materials. Those components are designated to prepare students for the changing future demand which is based on the advancement of technology and science as well as development in society. Therefore, knowing about curriculum in general, curriculum in language teaching and learning process, as well as the implementation of curriculum in real life and its impact on the teaching and learning process in language classroom in reality is crucial.

Also, the integration of curricula should show a relevancy with real-life situation (Beane, 1995, Czerniak et al, 1999). Furthermore, improved curriculum in form of integrated curriculum is much more beneficial for the sake of students (Gibbons, 1979). On the other hand, regarding the implementation of curriculum, the improvement of students learning process is influenced indirectly by the schools' leaders (Leithwood, 2004). Moreover, schools' head also plays a role in the schools' establishment (Klar & Brewer, 2013). Additionally, curriculum coordination, teachers' professional development, and mediating the new curriculum with enthusiasm and interest are important roles that schools' principal has according to Sebastian & Allensworth (2012), Schagen (2011), and Virgillio & Virgillio (1984). All in all, curriculum is well-planned teaching and learning process which is created by educational system and it contains of students' experience through the semesters.

Curriculum in Indonesia has been altered from time to time. The changes happened for several time from 1947, 1952, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013, and *Kurikulum Merdeka* (now). Thus, Indonesia's curriculum development is based on Pancasila and the 1945 constitution which is integrated with the change of science and technology, economy, socio-and cultural aspect, as well as Indonesia's political system. The main objective of the curriculum, even though it changes overtime, is to prepare students with proficiency that is needed in the future regarding world development's requirement. Thus, in line with the advancement in society, the changing of Indonesia's curriculum is divided into several phases in years.

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The term syllabus is used more commonly in the United Kingdom to refer to what is usually called a curriculum in the United States. Therefore, curriculum is a specification for carrying out a particular language program. Features include a primary concern with linguistic and subject-matter objectives sequencing, and materials to meet the needs of a designated group of learners in a defined context (Brown et al, 2015). Thus, the impact of current curriculum, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, implementation to the language learning in Indonesia needs investigating. Regarding Sampelolo and Kombong (2022), they suggested that *Kurikulum Merdeka* should include facility which allowed students to undergo international student exchange.

Then, Llanes et al (2016) gave suggestion that the international students exchange in *Kurikulum Merdeka* which is held in non-English speaking country can improve students' performance in English. MBKM is implemented as a form of educational development in Indonesia. Learning loss that happened during the spread of covid-19 bring significant impact in Indonesia's curriculum. Learning loss appear as an impact from distance learning (Cerelia, et al, 2021). Therefore, it is still new. Some research about MBKM implementation is limited. Thus, investigating writing strategies and challenges in *Kurikulum Merdeka* is needed. There is a need for more researches and literature which investigate the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and its impact on English Education in Indonesia. The lack of the research happens because *Kurikulum Merdeka's* implementation is a new program which require more time to be studied and investigated. Thus, sources in form of research can support and help the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* specifically for teachers in some aspects such as choosing the best strategy to use for teaching English that is based on *Kurikulum Merdeka* and other aspects (Sampelolo & Kombong). Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum, how it affects the process of teaching and learning English and the impact between the two different schools.

## METHOD

The research was conducted in two different Public Senior High Schools. The design of this research is case study. The data is gained from interview. The interview that was used was structured Interview. This kind of interview have been used as an instrument in English Language Teaching research (Jie & Xiaoqing, 2016). Interviewing teachers was done to know the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Senior High School. The sampling technique that is used is purposive. One teacher from each school was seen as enough sample due to the research limited time and place. Also, the questions in interview were aimed to investigate the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the Senior High Schools, how *Kurikulum Merdeka* give impact to the process of teaching and learning English and the comparison between the impact of it in the first school and second school.

The steps in method include finding the indicators of research question, then create the questions to gain the data that is needed. The interview questions then are used to investigate the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the Senior High Schools, how *Kurikulum Merdeka* give impact to the process of teaching and learning English and the comparison between the impact of it in the first school and second school. Then, after the interview is done, researcher analyze interviewee answer thematically and present it descriptively in result and discussion.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Kurikulum Merdeka* in each Senior High Schools

Curriculum implementation on language learning at the first school are as follows. Regarding one of the English teachers there, there is two different curriculum that are implemented. Thus, the 10<sup>th</sup> grader teaching and learning process are conducted by using 2013 curriculum as the educational system foundation. Otherwise, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grader were taught by using *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Additionally, the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* at the second school regarding language teaching and learning process is as follow through the perspective of one of English teacher who teaches there. The reason why *Kurikulum Merdeka* is implemented is because government wants to create educational system that is focused on students' need.

### The Impact of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in each Senior High Schools Teaching and Learning English Process

In the first school, the reason why 2013 curriculum is implemented in 10<sup>th</sup> grader class is because it is seen as a better curriculum regarding the RPP is easier to be designated than *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Furthermore, the implementation of MBKM at the Senior High School can be seen as a challenging curriculum to be implemented. The reason why it is challenging is because the teachers do not understand about the concept of



MBKM in details. Therefore, teachers tend to use old-fashioned way of teaching and learning. Most of them still use teacher-centered during the teaching and learning process. The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered as how *Kurikulum Merdeka* works becomes an obstacle (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023). Additionally, discussing about language teaching and learning process, the English material that are used are in form of video from YouTube, pictures, song, animations, textbook and much more. Then, the approach that are used in the language classroom is depend on the material or the KD (*kompetensi dasar*) of the lesson plan. For example, when the material is about procedure text. The approach that is used is total physical respond. This method adapts first language acquisition that happens to children (Rambe, 2019). Therefore, in line with the KD, students can practice and have a chance to explain what they are doing. Moreover, the pre, main, and post activities in language classroom were done as follows. The pre activity include asking general question about the material which will be discussed. Then, when students have raised their hand to answer, teacher will give them time to explain their perspective about certain material. The next activity is teacher explain about material in detail, and give students a task to be completed.

On the other hand, in the second school, independent curriculum means a curriculum which allows students to freely choose what they want to learn regarding their own potential and skill. It involves around students' specific talents and interest (Saputra, 2020). Thus, students will receive guidance from academic stake holder at their school namely teacher. Otherwise, in 2006 curriculum, teacher tends to dictate their students and the teaching and learning process is lack of adversity in terms of the chances which allows the learning process to be developed and advanced for better purposes. Moreover, the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* at the Senior High School is teacher have a chance to choose certain material that is in line with students' certain learning phase, for in *Merdeka* curriculum, students are divided into some educational level phases. Furthermore, the teaching and learning process were purposefully involved into *profil pelajar Pancasila*. This "Profil Pelajar Pancasila" encourage students to learn by using *Pancasila* ideal as the learning base (Indriana, Kurniawan & Asyhar, 2023). In addition, the English material which is taught by teacher is common material, for example, one of them is about procedure text. Thus, the teaching approach that is used is PjBL (Project Based Learning). Then, the pre, main, and post activities were done in accordance to the RPP that has been designated by the teacher.

## **The Comparison between the Implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in each Senior High Schools**

In the first school, the difficulty that is found by the teacher during the teaching and learning process is the time allocation for English course is limited. Managing the limited time also becomes the part of teacher readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum (Nurzen, 2022). Thus, she only has a chance to explain about the material in general rather than in detail. It is seen as serious problem knowing 80% of the students have poor English proficiency. Thus, the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in language learning at the first still need some improvement.

In the second school, the difficulties that is found by the teacher is related to students' different interests. Regarding the students variative interest, teachers have to conduct diagnostic assessment. In language learning, there is Diagnostic Language Assessment (DLA) which hold the consequences in learning process and the instruction that is used (Lee, 2015). The reason why teacher conduct the assessment is to acknowledge their students' specific interest. In short, the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* at the second school is successful.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion is curriculum is a dynamic aspect in educational system. Therefore, it changes from time to time. Its change is caused by the development of the world's society. Also, the advancement of science and technology become other reason why curriculum tends to change. Thus, society's need of adequate human resources to fulfil the requirement of advanced society in the future become the purpose of the curriculum's development. Therefore, government has created the updated version of curriculum from time to time. Then, the implementation of curriculum in schools brings variative impact. It can be negative as well as positive.

The result found that the first school mixed 2013 curriculum and *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the school. The second school fully implemented *Kurikulum Merdeka* as well as *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* in the school. The difficulties of implementing it were related to English course time allocation and students' variative interest in learning English. The implication of this study is teachers can prepare themselves to avoid problem and difficulties that were found in this research by finding solutions and strategies in case they get the similar difficulties during teaching and learning process.



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