



The Teacher's Role in The Implementation of Curriculum Merdeka in English Classroom

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Abstract

The Independent curriculum is a new curriculum used in Indonesia and a transitional curriculum from K-13 curriculum. Therefore, this study aims to examine how the role of a teacher in implementing the new curriculum in the class they teach, especially English teachers. This study used library research methods, the data were taken from several articles and similar research. The source of data came from Google Scholar by using keywords the role of the teacher in the independent curriculum and the application of the independent curriculum in English classes. The results of this study indicate that English teachers are people who play an important role in implementing the independent curriculum. The English teacher in this curriculum acts as a giver of understanding, and has influence to improve the quality of education as well as an adapter that aligns the curriculum with the characteristics and needs of students. English teachers can implement an independent curriculum by changing teaching methods, using new strategies to improve learning outcomes. For curriculum implementation there are several strategies that English teachers can use such as games, music, using interactive learning media when teaching, then you can also use Role-play, Information-gap activities, Jigsaw activities, open-ended discussions and debates.

Keyword : *Independent Curriculum, The Role of English Teachers, Implementation, Strategy.*

BACKGROUND

Education is one of the provisions that are needed by the younger generation to face the speed of the times. Qualified human beings are indispensable at this time. Law number 20 of 2003 states that the purpose of Indonesian education is to develop the potential of students to become knowledgeable, intelligent, independent and creative people (Agustinus Tangga Daga, 2022) To realize this goal, the education system in Indonesia has undergone several changes to date, and now the curriculum used is an independent curriculum.

The independent learning curriculum is a curriculum that prioritizes freedom and accessibility. The independent curriculum is designed to be more flexible and adaptive, and emphasizes on essential content, student skills and also on developing student character, the independent curriculum focuses on developing soft skills and character and giving time to students to learn several important competencies such as literacy and numeration (Pouw & Mulyanti, 2023) . The change in curriculum is certainly a challenge for an educator or often referred to as a teacher.

A teacher or a teacher is a person who dedicates himself as a person who teaches knowledge or knowledge to his students. The teacher also educates, directs and trains his students to understand the knowledge he has taught. Teacher is a term for people who have duties as teachers in educational units, and have a role to transfer knowledge to their students, but besides that, a teacher also acts as a person who is responsible for the morals and attitudes of his students (Ningrum & Suryani, 2022). In the independent curriculum, teachers are required to work together among fellow educators to achieve educational changes for the better, especially in improving the quality of students to have good competitiveness, a teacher in this curriculum must have a morally and spiritually mature personality so that it can be an example and role model for its students (Sibagariang et al., 2021).

In the independent curriculum, teachers have an important role in developing the independent learning curriculum according to (Anggraini et al., 2022) development of the independent curriculum, namely (1) immunizing learning objectives in accordance with the curriculum, lesson characteristics, students and classroom conditions, (2) designing learning poses, (3) carrying out the learning process, (4) evaluating learning, and (5) evaluating the components of the curriculum that have been in implement. However, the independent curriculum is a newly implemented curriculum in Indonesia and the independent curriculum is a step taken by the government for post-covid-19 recovery, so the application of this curriculum has several obstacles, namely (1) inadequate facilities and infrastructure, (2) teachers lack IT skills, (3) less social interaction due to covid-19, (4) the burden of assignments given to students is too much, and (5) lack of class hours, and (7) lack of supervision from parents (Zulaiha et al., 2022)

Based on research conducted by (Zulaiha et al., 2022) at SDN 17 Rejang Lebong, which has applied the independent curriculum for about one year, it was found that (1) teachers have difficulty in preparing lesson plans, (2)



teachers have difficulty in making lesson plans because they lack mastery of technology, (3) difficulty determining methods and making strategies in the teaching and learning process so that the learning process becomes fun and makes students more Active in it, (4) teachers still have difficulty in understanding the learning outcomes provided by the center, and (5) the limitations of books owned make learning a little hampered.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the independent curriculum is a new curriculum and still requires time for maximum application of this curriculum in every school in Indonesia and a teacher has an important role for the application of this curriculum. Therefore, researchers are also interested in examining how the role of teachers in the application of the independent curriculum. But in this study, researchers want to examine the role of teachers in the application of the independent curriculum only in English classes.

This research is important to do because it aims to be able to see the role of teachers in the application of the independent curriculum, especially in English classes and to explain the role of English teachers in the application of the new curriculum, namely the independent learning curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research that uses library research methods. This method is a method of collecting data in the form of several articles and studies similar to the topic discussed. The library research method according to Purwono is an effort made by researchers to obtain data or information obtained from books, scientific reports, scientific essays, dissertations and various other sources (Anggraini et al., 2022).

This research data is taken from journals and articles in *Google Scholar*. The keywords used are the role of teachers in the independent curriculum and *the application of the independent curriculum in English classes*. Data analysis techniques in this study follow Fraenkel and Wallen in Sari & Asmendri (2020), namely formulating goals to be achieved, defining important concepts, specializing in the analyzed units, looking for data relevant to the research topic, building conceptual relationships with the data collected for data presentation (Daga, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The times always change every day, as well as learning and learning techniques taught in schools are always changed according to the times and are expected to help students compete with the outside world after school is over. In addition to learning techniques, changes also occur in the curriculum in Indonesia, the latest curriculum is the independent curriculum. According to ((Rohimajaya et al., 2022) independent curriculum government has several main characteristics, namely: (1) project-based learning as a development of soft skills and characters that are in accordance with the profile of Pancasila students, (2) focus on important material so that they have sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies, (3) teachers are free to carry out different learning based on the abilities of their students.

A. Independent Curriculum

The independent curriculum is the latest curriculum used in Indonesia. The independent curriculum is a replacement curriculum for the K-13 curriculum. This curriculum is designed to be more adaptive and flexible which emphasizes the important material to be learned, character development and also the skills of students. This curriculum is one way to recover the learning crisis that exists in Indonesia. The independent curriculum according to (Hehakaya & Pollatu, 2022) has striking characteristics compared to the previous curriculum, namely its flexible curriculum structure, its teaching focus on essential materials, learning is arranged in stages rather than per year, and this curriculum frees teachers to provide teaching materials that are in accordance with the needs of students and teachers also develop teaching practices independently and various practices that are in accordance with the Minister's practices Education. The same thing was also stated by (Zulaiha et al., 2022) that the independent learning curriculum is a policy designed to improve the quality of education as a provision to face the future, the core of this curriculum is freedom of thinking for educators and students. The characteristics of this curriculum are recovery curricula, namely: (1) project-based learning to develop students' soft skills and character, (2) focus on subject matter, and (3), emphasize the development of students' critical thinking (Putri et al., 2022).

In the independent curriculum, there is a teacher figure who plays an important role in the implementation of the independent curriculum. according to (Ningrum & Suryani, 2022) are expected to be learning leaders, mobilizers of the community of practice, mentors for other teachers, can collaborate between fellow teachers and can realize student leadership in accordance with the independent learning curriculum. Teachers in this curriculum according to (Sibagariang et al., 2021) not only follow a predetermined curriculum but teachers strive to change learning activities in order to achieve the Pancasila student profile standard.

The independent curriculum has several objectives according to ((Asrifan et al., 2023) independent curriculum aims to provide a fun and flexible education system according to the needs of students. Also, this curriculum focuses on

important material and provides more time to develop students' competencies and characters. Another goal was also stated by (Kusumo et al., 2022) global era, therefore this curriculum emphasizes the development skills and character through the profile of Pancasila students to face challenges in the digital era.

The independent curriculum was created to produce a young generation who have a Pancasila student profile. The Pancasila student profile is a guideline for teachers to build the character of their students. Pancasila Profile According to (Kemendikbud, 2022), The Pancasila student profile is a competency and character that is expected to be achieved by students during the teaching and learning process, the Pancasila profile has six elements, namely first, faith, fear of God Almighty and have noble morals, in this first point students can become someone who fears God and has noble morals. Second, global diversity, students are expected to appreciate cultural values that exist in their regions and in other people's regions. The third is independent, namely students who can be responsible for the learning process and outcomes. The four work together, which is able to voluntarily do activities together. Fifth, have critical reasoning, namely being able to process quantitative or qualitative information, being able to analyze, evaluate and compile the news obtained. Sixth, creative is being able to modify and produce something original, meaningful, useful and have an impact on life. The independent curriculum and Pancasila student profile are designed to strengthen character and instill Pancasila values in students.

In the independent curriculum, teachers are given the freedom to adjust the lessons given to the abilities of their students. Teachers in this curriculum are people who have a very important influence on the successful use of this curriculum. The presence of teachers in the curriculum development process is very important to equalize curriculum content and student needs. Teachers in this curriculum are evaluators for their students. Because of the important role that teachers have in this curriculum, they need to have quality as designers, evaluators, researchers and even as decision-making people (Anggraini et al., 2022).

According to ((Surahman et al., 2022) There are several policies from the minister of education, namely Mr. Nadiem Makarim regarding the concept of freedom of learning, namely (1) Abolition of national standardized school examinations, (2) Minimum competency assessment assessments and character surveys to replace national examinations, (3) Teachers must make learning implementation plans before learning begins, (4) Establish a zoning system for the admission of new students, This aims to increase access and equitable quality of education.

B. The Role of Teachers in The Implementation of An Independent Curriculum

Teachers are people who have an important role in the independent curriculum. A teacher is required to have certain qualities in order to guide his students well, in accordance with the expected curriculum output. The teacher is the one who determines the success of the curriculum. Because of the importance of the role of a teacher in the independent curriculum, the government created a program to improve the quality of teachers This program is called "*Guru Penggerak*". The existence of this program is expected to improve the quality of teachers. Because, in this curriculum the teacher does not just act as a teacher but has a role as a person who prepares lesson plans, conveyors of materials, people who design the learning process, and people who evaluate the learning that has been implemented.

According to (Sibagariang et al., 2021) there are several things that are expected in the mobilizing teacher program , namely first, the mobilizing teacher is expected to have the ability to be independent and independent in developing their competencies and be able to motivate other teachers to innovate to increase educational output. Second, Able to move students to develop themselves according to the talents they have. To be able to achieve education that is in accordance with the vision of the existing school. Third, Able to innovate to develop their school, this can be done by means of a teacher being able to collaborate with parents and the community in order to grow an independent attitude and be able to have a leadership spirit. Fourth, the mobilizing teacher must have a good personality. It is expected that a teacher has emotional maturity and acts according to the code of ethics that applies in society. And fifth, able to manage student-centered learning, this can be done by creating good communication with parents.

A similar opinion was also expressed by (Jannati et al., 2023) according to him, mobilizing teachers have six roles in implementing an independent curriculum. First, as a mobilizer of teacher learning communities. Second, teachers are agents of change. Third, as a person who creates a place to discuss and collaborate. Fourth, it has a role as a creator of fun learning. Fifth, teachers must always develop themselves following the times. Sixth, act as a motivator.

In implementing an independent curriculum, teachers have the freedom to teach according to the abilities of their students and the level of student development (Rahayu et al., 2022) Not only teachers, in the application of the independent curriculum each school has 3 choices that can be chosen for the application of the independent curriculum. The choice is independent learning, independent change, and independent sharing of the implementation of an independent curriculum in each school can be seen from the learning carried out in the school (Alimuddin, 2023)

C. English Teachers in Implementing an Independent Curriculum in English Classes

The existence of an independent curriculum has an impact on the teaching and learning process of English teachers. In an independent curriculum, teachers must be ready to implement the new curriculum and face all existing obstacles due to curriculum changes (Tricahyati & Zaim, 2023). The role of English teachers in implementing the independent

curriculum in language classes is very important because English teachers are among those who have an important role in the realization of the independent curriculum. In this curriculum, teachers act as people who provide understanding and have an influence to improve the quality of education (Pertiwi & Pusparini, 2021). Not only that, according to (Retnaningrum et al., 2023) teachers in this curriculum also act as adapters that align the curriculum with student characteristics and needs. Therefore, English teachers need to use a variety of strategies such as speaking strategies, project-based learning, focus on teaching on language skill elements, and use a student-focused approach (Ayuningtyas & Ratih, 2023).

According to the Decree of the head of the Education Standard, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency (Kurka, 2022) teachers is the first, teaching English as a general skill because in the independent curriculum the purpose of learning English is to equip students with the ability to communicate using English as part of life skills. Second, teaching critical and creative thinking skills, this is one of the goals of the independent curriculum to help students develop their critical and creative thinking skills. Teaching confidently and responsibly because teachers must help students develop confidence and responsibility in themselves as independent individuals. Fourth, the approach in learning is in the form of a text-based approach. And fifth, teachers teach intercultural competence in order to help their students to appreciate the perspectives, practices and products of Indonesian culture and foreign cultural products.

According to (Halitopo, 2020) implementation of an independent curriculum in English classes is to use textbooks when teaching, because textbooks can be used to help students in the teaching and learning process and as a resource to achieve independent learning in the classroom. According to (Anis & Anwar, 2020) teachers can facilitate students by instilling motivation in students to learn English and teaching skills four language skills, namely listening, writing, reading, and speaking. The implementation of an independent curriculum in English classes according to (Shafa, 2021) done by changing the way of teaching, if initially always teaching in the classroom, it can be replaced with learning outside the classroom. This is also in line with the opinion (Hidayati & Sujarwati, 2023) which states that implementation can be realized by using different learning strategies as an effort to improve learning outcomes.

Every teacher, whether English teacher or not, must implement this independent curriculum in the classes they teach and the way of implementing it is also not much different. The following are the differences in how it is implemented According to (Hehakaya & Pollatu, 2022) English teachers are required to be more creative in the teaching and learning process and implement an independent curriculum. English teachers must be more observant in choosing the textbooks used (Halitopo, 2020). In the teaching and learning process there are several strategies that can be used by English teachers According to ((Prastha, 2022) there are four strategies that can be used to teach English in the independent curriculum, namely: (1) using games, (2) music, (3) using interactive learning media when teaching, and (4) overcoming.

In addition, there is also a strategy according to (Sujinem, 2023) in the independent curriculum a teacher is not the center of teaching anymore, so there is a need for a communicative approach that prioritizes interaction and maximizes opportunities for students to speak. Here are some strategies that can be done, namely: (1) Role-play, (2) Information-gap activities, (3) Jigsaw activities, and (4) Open-ended discussions and debates. A similar strategy is also proposed by (Ayuningtyas & Ratih, 2023) namely by using speaking strategies to improve speaking skills, ways that can be used, such as role-playing, debating, and discussion in groups.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum implemented in Indonesia, so there needs to be adaptation to this curriculum. The challenge to achieve something new cannot be avoided as well as in the application of this independent curriculum. There are several challenges faced by teachers in applying the curriculum. according to (KSPSTK, 2023) first is the readiness of human resources or teachers who are people who play an important role in the success of this curriculum. The development in question is not only about teacher theory and knowledge but also strengthening psychological, cultural, skills and adaptive attitudes of a teacher towards the development of social dynamics. Therefore, strengthening and improving the quality of teachers is something that needs to be improved so that the expected results are in line with expectations. Second, the ability of teachers to use technology. Independent curriculum learning leads to technology-based learning, therefore the empowerment of digital technology in the teaching and learning process is something that must exist in learning. Third, it is challenged to strengthen communication and partnership between education units and relevant stakeholders. No matter how great the learning curriculum is, if there is no communication network support, the implementation of the curriculum will be less than optimal. Fourth, it is challenged to carry out the function of learning assessment which is an important part of learning. At present the assessment carried out by some teachers is generally still limited and centered on the final assessment / summative learning), but in the concept in evaluation and learning theory, the implementation of assessment should include initial assessment, process assessment (assessment for and as learning) and end of learning (learning assessment).

Another challenge that occurs is the lack of experience of a teacher in teaching. Whether it's because it's the first-time teaching or it's the first-time teaching using an independent curriculum. In addition, limited references are also one of the challenges that must be faced because the independent curriculum is a new curriculum so that the existing references are a little bit so that it makes it difficult for teachers.



CONCLUSION

The independent curriculum is a transitional curriculum from the k-13 curriculum. The independent curriculum has several main characteristics, namely project-based learning as a development of soft skills and character in accordance with the profile of Pancasila students, focusing on important material and teachers are free to carry out different learning based on the abilities of their students. The existence of this curriculum makes new policies such as the abolition of national examinations and replaced with minimum competency assessment assessments and character surveys, then teachers must make learning implementation plans and establish a zoning system for the admission of new students in each school.

The existence of a new curriculum requires several adjustments in every school in Indonesia, not only schools but teachers also have to adjust and adapt to the new curriculum. Therefore, the holding of a mobilizing teacher program to improve teacher quality because in this curriculum teachers play an important role in achieving curriculum success. In this curriculum, teachers have the freedom to teach according to the abilities of their students, including English teachers. English teachers in this curriculum act as providers of understanding, and have an influence to improve the quality of education and as adapters that align the curriculum with the characteristics and needs of students.

Every teacher must implement this independent curriculum in his class, but in its application, there are differences between one subject and another. The Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum implemented in Indonesia, so there needs to be adaptation to this curriculum. For English subjects, English teachers can implement an independent curriculum by changing the way they teach, using new strategies to improve learning outcomes, and can use textbooks as a resource to achieve independent learning, as well as by implementing independent learning. Strategies that can be used by English teachers are such as using games, music, using interactive learning media when teaching, then can also use role-play, Information-gap activities, Jigsaw activities, open-ended discussions and debates. Another difference is that an English teacher must be more observant in choosing the textbooks used and must be more creative in the teaching and learning process because English is a compulsory subject for schools that implement an independent curriculum.

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