

ANALYZING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE 2013 CURRICULUM AND THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM: TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract.

Curriculum change is conducted as an effort to raise the standard of education. In Indonesia context, the education curriculum has been shifted from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. This change brings out some pros and cons in which some teachers support this alteration, meanwhile, others say no to this change. In response to that claim, this research aimed to analyze the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum from the teacher's understanding. To achieve that goal this qualitative research was conducted through the use of semistructured interviews as the data collection. The data were collected from an English teacher in one of the senior high schools in Garut, West Java. The result showed that the respondent has quite understood the difference between the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum in the aspect of the general characteristics of the curriculum and the learning method used. Even the findings revealed that understanding of the curriculum can be captured more for the Merdeka curriculum than the 2013 curriculum, meaning that there are many aspects of the 2013 curriculum that the teacher has implemented but she still does not fully understand. In spite of these findings, the teacher claims that there are challenges such as insufficient infrastructure or supporting factors of facilities to help her in conducting the Merdeka curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum change, Curriculum 2013, Merdeka curriculum, Teacher understanding

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is being improved in an effort to raise the standard of education in Indonesia. A curriculum is described in UU No. 20 (2003) as "a collection of lesson plans linked to objectives, material, teaching tools, and techniques used and used as guidelines in carrying out learning duties to accomplish an educational purpose. Thijs and Akker's (2009) argument that the lesson plan provides a clear statement of the curriculum supports this claim. This curriculum has had a significant impact on how Indonesian education has evolved. According to Ekawati (2016), an Indonesian curriculum that is acceptable for implementation will result in children who will contribute to the development of the idea in the future. The curriculum is a key element that contributes to improved student accomplishment, claim Crawford and Snider (2000). The curriculum has improved, particularly currently in Indonesia where the 2013 curriculum has been replaced by an autonomous curriculum. Muhammedi (2016) observed that the Indonesian curriculum was frequently updated, with modifications made in 1947, 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1994, 1997, 2004, 2006, and 2013. This curriculum change greatly affects the way teachers and students understand learning, especially in English. In line with Puspitasari, Pratolo, and Mahfiana (2020) in his research, he said that teachers believe curriculum changes will have a positive, creative and innovative impact. Then, according to Barnett, Parry, and Coate (2001) the curriculum is seen as a project that helps students develop an identity based on information, action, and self. However, this revision is likely to have some impact on the education system. According to Setiawati (2022) the advantage of changing the curriculum is that students will learn by seeing how society changes as technology advances. Meanwhile, new problems such as low student success are the negative effects of rapid curriculum changes. Therefore, government policies should pay more attention so as not to cause problems that must be faced by teachers and students in the learning process.

However, the emergence of current curriculum changes has an impact on educational institutions and teaching staff. The main reason for the government to change the 2013 Curriculum to become an Independent Curriculum is to improve the education system in Indonesia after COVID-19. McNeil (1985) asserts that the goal of the curriculum is to give each student a personal experience that supports their growth and freedom. In line with Lestari (2023) that the 2013 Curriculum was replaced or refined again into an Independent Curriculum after the government realized the challenges faced by teachers in implementing it. The difficulty faced by the teacher when implementing the 2013 Curriculum is that the teacher must first make a lesson plan based on the syllabus that has been determined from the center of the educational institution. This is in accordance with what was stated by Mulawarman (2021) that making lesson plans for project- and discovery-based learning is a challenge for teachers. This is supported by Lestari (2023) which states that the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) must be made by the teacher before carrying out teaching and learning activities in class and this lesson plan must be guided by the teacher's book and syllabus. Second, the teacher finds it difficult to explore the material and abilities of students. According to Palobo, et al., (2018) revealed that finding a match between the material to be studied and perception was difficult. In addition, teachers may have difficulty relating students' background knowledge to teaching strategies. Third, inadequate facilities are an inhibiting factor for the learning process during COVID-19. This is supported by Onyema, et al., (2020) revealing that for students in countries that do not have the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support online learning this is a challenge, especially for students or teachers who are in rural areas because it will result in a digital divide. So that these difficulties forced several schools in Indonesia to replace and implement a new curriculum, namely the Independent Curriculum. This was confirmed by Nurmasyitah, et al., (2023) that the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum during the pandemic was used as hope for learning problems. Then, the initial observations made in this study indicate that there is one school that has implemented an Independent Curriculum, especially in English subjects, namely Senior High Schools in Garut Regency. This is supported by Lestari (2023) who said that in a number of mobilized institutions, the Independent Curriculum has been implemented according to the readiness and circumstances of each school. Therefore, there are several schools and teachers who continue to use the 2013 Curriculum and some have started using the Independent Curriculum for several reasons.

Numerous earlier studies, including Puspitasari, Pratolo, and Mahfiana (2020), examined how the 2013 Curriculum in English was implemented. The study's findings indicate that the implementation of teaching English is influenced by teachers' opinions about the 2013 Curriculum. Four junior high school teachers were the subjects of this descriptive qualitative study, which used that methodology. Then, what distinguishes this research is that the research subject is only one high school teacher who has used K13 and the Independent Curriculum in teaching English so that it can focus on digging deeper into the teacher's understanding of the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. Then, there are other studies that examine the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for student learning. According to Nurmasyitah, et al., (2023) the results of the analysis of observational data and essay tests using descriptive statistical presentations show that visual learning styles dominate by 47%, kinesthetic learning styles by 37% and auditory learning styles by 16%. The research subjects were junior high school students. The thing that distinguishes previous research from current research is using the results of interviews conducted with high school teachers instead of students, so that data can be obtained from the teacher's understanding which states that students in high school are more dominant only visually and auditory. Another study written by Rizaldi and Fatimah (2022) states that implementing the Independent Curriculum at the school level is an effort to improve the quality of education after the COVID-19 pandemic. Research data is in the form of written data sourced from various relevant and reliable scientific works. The results of this study are that the Independent Curriculum has good characteristics and is very supportive as a form of all parties' efforts to restore the quality of education, especially after going through a long pandemic.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum according to the understanding of an English teacher in a senior school in Garut Regency. Discrepancies can be identified through teachers' understanding of the curriculum, knowing the obstacles faced by teachers when implementing K13 and the Independent Curriculum and analyzing differences felt by teachers to evaluate education standards in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Indonesia, each curriculum must have different characteristics. According to Prideaux (2003) for the curriculum to remain effective, the curriculum must adapt to changing expectations and values in education. These characteristic differences are found in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. According to Suttrisno and Yulia (2022) the 2013 curriculum is a curriculum that builds student values and character. This is supported by Maba (2017) that students are the main players in learning in the 2013 Curriculum (student center).

In addition, according to Aji and Budiyono (2018) in their research explaining that the 2013 curriculum uses a scientific approach, namely observing, asking, trying, associating, and communicating so that it can be implemented with several learning strategies that are in line with the 2013 curriculum. Mas highlighted this (2021) Teachers must plan learning in grades K-13, make the best learning decisions regarding learning tactics and procedures, develop useful competences, and establish success criteria. Also, it can be challenging to evaluate students' learning outcomes. According to Lestari (2023), there are three components to the evaluation of learning outcomes. In addition to measuring information competency (cognitive), assessments should also take into account attitudes (affective) and skills (psychomotor). Whereas the Independent Curriculum allows teachers and students the freedom to independently explore their learning. According to Nurmasyitah et al., (2023), the Independent Curriculum is a curriculum that gives pupils the chance to learn using their personal learning style. According to Suttrisno and Yulia (2022), this is justified by the fact that teachers give students the freedom to create learning experiences they find more enjoyable and that this is one of the requirements for meeting learning objectives. Teachers are also required to independently design and evaluate learning programs. Also, this curriculum is more adaptable and easier to understand, especially when it comes to creating learning objectives. According to Rizaldi and Fatimah (2022), it's an intriguing idea to adapt the independent curriculum to the features and circumstances of particular educational settings. Lestari (2023) supports this claim and adds that this independent curriculum facilitates, makes learning enjoyable, and, of course, makes learning relevant. The purpose of this study is to analyze the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum from the viewpoint of an English instructor based on the distinctions indicated above.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research in the form of a case study design which aims to investigate teachers' understanding of the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. In line with Breslin and Buchanan (2008) that for study and instruction that concentrates on the change between theory and practice, case studies are a helpful design.

The participants involved in this study were an English teacher at a senior high school in Garut. The teacher was chosen as a participant because she is experienced and has sufficient insight into the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum. To achieve the research objectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted as data collection. In line with Hawkins (2018) says that the most typical data collection method for qualitative descriptive research is conducting interviews with important informants. This qualitative research data was then analyzed using inductive analysis with several stages such as taking notes, conducting interviews, processing data, and drawing conclusions. This is consistent with the goal of Thomas (2006), which employs an inductive approach, namely that data can be summarized into a format that has a clear relationship between evaluation objectives and research data by creating an organizing framework.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part consists of research findings and discussion of this study.

Findings

The findings revealed that the teacher generally understood the difference of 2013 curriculum and curriculum merdeka. Yet, it was found that there were some principles of curiculum merdeka which have not been implemented due to some constraints. Hence, it is expected for the related parties to identify the barriers tackled by teachers in implementing the latest curriculum.

Teacher's Knowledge on the Characteristic of Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum

The data reveals that the different characteristics of the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum can be seen from several aspects such as administration, learning time, lesson plans, and syllabus. This is evidenced by the teacher's statement below.

"Secara general, administrasi yang lebih rumit membuat K13 ini berbeda dengan Kurmer. Kemudian, perancangan RPP juga banyak sekali poinnya, dan adanya ketentuan dari pemerintah mengenai silabusnya."

In addition, the teacher said it was different from the simpler Merdeka Curriculum. As stated by the following teacher.

"Administrasi dari Kurikulum Merdeka lebih bisa dipahami, RPP yang lebih simple serta fleksibel memungkinkan guru untuk mengeksplor topik lebih mendalam karena dibuat berdasarkan konsep atau strategi yang ingin kita sampaikan di kelas."

In line with the statement above, the teacher also said that the difference between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum affected the required study time. As the teacher said.

"Iya berdampak karena kalau sejauh ini berkurang. Kalau di K13 itu ada bahasa Inggris-Wajib, ada bahasa Inggris-Peminatan. Sedangkan, di Kurikulum Merdeka itu hanya bahasa Inggris-Wajib dan hanya 3 jam. Sedangkan guru di sini ada 3. Jadi, karena pengurangan jam tersebut sehingga berdampak ke hal-hal yang lain."

Based on this statement, it means that the teacher already feels that there is a difference from the application of K13 and the Independent Curriculum.

Teacher's Knowledge on the Methods of Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka Curriculum

In this respect the teacher said that the learning method when using K13 was very complicated and difficult to understand. As the teacher said.

"Kebetulan ibu tidak begitu memahami, jujur saja Kurikulum 2013 itu sangat rumit untuk dipahami karena terlalu banyak kalimat-kalimat yang rumit untuk diterjemahkan sesuai dengan apa yang kita tangkap. Lalu, kemarin itu COVID jadi lebih ke pembelajaran digital sehingga tidak bisa komunikasi dengan lancar dan tidak banyak mengeksplor karena bingung harus menerapkannya bagaimana dengan sistem digital. Jadi, hanya menggunakan media seperti Google Classroom dan metode pembelajarannya itu menggunakan video."

This means that teachers have difficulty understanding and applying learning methods in K13 because they are constrained by technology and the teacher's lack of understanding.

In contrast, when implementing the Independent Curriculum, the teacher said that the most superior method in the Independent Curriculum was PBL. As, the teacher said.

"Kurikulum Merdeka itu, metode pembelajarannya menggunakan PBL atau PJBL. Kebetulan ibu menggunakan PBL, kemudian model pembelajaran yang digunakan berganti-ganti sesuai materinya, misalnya kalau materinya teks menggunakan make a match metodenya lebih ke diskusi. Kemudian, GBA (Genre-based approach) dengan

memanfaatkan media worldwall.com. Lalu, kalau untuk speaking biasanya menggunakan metode cooperative learning dengan talking stick."

This means that the teacher already understands that learning must be project-based so that the teacher is more in-depth about the methods that must be applied.

As mentioned above, there are differences in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum that are applied in these schools which can be seen from the differences in the characteristics and learning methods. This makes teachers have different perceptions of the two curricula for several reasons. The following is a statement made by the teacher.

"Setelah menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka, Ibu lebih memilih Kurikulum Merdeka. Pertama, adanya kebebasan untuk menyajikan pembelajaran dari awal sampai akhir membuat ibu menjadi terpacu untuk mengeksplor berbagai macam metode dan media pembelajaran yang lebih asik kepada siswa. Kedua, siswa lebih percaya diri dalam pembelajaran karena materi yang disesuaikan dengan pengalaman mereka. Ketiga, pada Kurikulum Merdeka, ada istilahnya warming up atau ada pertanyaan pemantik untuk memulai pembelajaran sehingga siswa juga menjadi fokus pada materi."

As stated above, teachers prefer the Independent Curriculum because already understand the teaching patterns that must be applied in accordance with the Curriculum.

Discussion

Responding to the findings related to the teacher's understanding of the differences in K13 and the Independent Curriculum, seen from these characteristics, it is relevant to what was said by Mulyadin, Khoiron, Ginanto, and Putra (2023) the new curriculum introduces several new things compared to the previous one (2013 Curriculum), such as focusing on important content, providing flexibility for students, teachers and schools in implementation, as well as combining relevant and interactive activities in learning. This is similar to previous research from Fitriyah and Wardani (2022), first, that the Independent Curriculum has straightforward characteristics, is easy to understand, and easy to implement. Competence and student character should be the second point of emphasis. In addition, teachers are given the flexibility to simplify learning content. In line with other study by Suttrisno and Yulia (2022) that teachers are given the freedom to design more enjoyable learning, where teachers are required to design and evaluate learning programs independently which is one of the keys to successful learning objectives. In contrast to the 2013 Curriculum where there are too many learning points that must be achieved in lesson plans and the government's provisions regarding the syllabus make it difficult for teachers to apply the teaching pattern using K13. This is in line with what was said by Wijaya, Sholeh & Mispandi (2021) that teachers must be able to make several things, including syllabus, lesson plans, and assessment tools, all of which must comply with every regulation or provision set by the government. This finding is related to previous research from Sofiana, Mubarok & Yuliasri (2019) which explains that core and basic competencies must be reflected in lesson plans. The three basic competencies namely affective, cognitive, and psychomotor are separated into core competencies which include spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Then, Mulawarman (2021) also said that in general, teachers still have difficulty making lesson plans that follow standard scientific procedures and methodologies. Thus, this is what makes the study time different when using K13 and Kurmer. As stated by Rohimajaya and Hamer (2023) that the 2013 Curriculum sets lesson hours per week, while the Merdeka Curriculum sets study hours per year.

Then, responding to the above findings related to the methods used by the teacher, it turns out that the teacher's knowledge is quite extensive about the methods in the Independent Curriculum. In line with Kurniasih and Pusparini (2019) regarding creative learning models, several interesting and innovative learning models have been established, including project-based learning, problem-based learning, cooperative learning, discovery learning, genre-based approaches, scientific approaches, etc. This is supported by other studies such as Wasimin (2022) which states that the implementation of project-based learning in accordance with the steps can increase students' understanding of the subject matter and can help develop their personality and skills. In line with Hidayati and Rahmah (2023) who said that English teachers must be proficient in the Genre-Based Approach learning model because besides being effective, the government also recommends it, especially in the context of implementing the "Independent Curriculum". In addition, according to Chen (2021) using cooperative learning can help students achieve higher achievements, feel less nervous, and become more enthusiastic and interested in learning. However, in contrast to the implementation of K13, the teachers did not study the methods and media used due to facility constraints. In line with Zannah and Setiawan (2022) that learning methods have not been implemented optimally because not all teachers understand the 2013 curriculum teaching methods and the instructor's workload is too much. This is in accordance with previous studies put forward by Mulawarman (2021) that the difficulties faced by teachers include choosing the right learning media, lack of facilities, implementing project-based learning strategies and learning assessment problems.

Therefore, based on the discussion above, in the end the teacher is more dominant in the Merdeka Curriculum than the 2013 Curriculum on the grounds that Kurmer's principle is from students back to students and there are trigger questions that make students focus when starting learning. In addition, teachers can explore the material further so as to create active, interesting and collaborative learning activities. This finding regarding teacher knowledge is in line with previous studies by Orru, Gobbo, O'Sullivan & Longo (2018) that the trigger questions' main objective is to assist students in improving their memory and thinking skills. This is supported by research from Angga, Suryana, Nurwahidah, Hernawan, Prihantini (2022) who said that when using the Merdeka Curriculum, which is interacting and appealing, teachers can be more imaginative and expressive. In other words, implemented learning is enjoyable because both teachers and students are satisfied.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the previous section, this study aims to analyze the differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum from the teacher's understanding. Based on these findings, it was concluded that teachers understand the differences between the two curricula seen from the characteristics of the curriculum and the learning methods applied. However, the teacher understands the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum better than the 2013 Curriculum. Then, the teacher is given the freedom to explore the media and learning methods used when implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. In this case, the teacher claims that when implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, students are also more involved in their studies. Therefore, teachers prefer the Merdeka Curriculum.

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