

CURRICULUM REFORM IN INDONESIA: ENGLISH EDUCATION TOWARD THE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Dian Pajarwati¹, Hikamtul Mardiah², Ronitama Parsaulian Harahap³, Rusliani Octavia Siagian⁴,
Muhammad Taufik Ihsan⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, State Islamic University (UIN) of
Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau

Article Info

Article history:

Received Jun 13, 2021

Revised Aug 20, 2021

Accepted Aug 26, 2021

Keywords:

Curriculum development

English Language

Indonesian learners

Global Era

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to provide an understanding to everyone that it is necessary to know the development of curriculum reform in Indonesia, especially in the case of using English in the current era of globalization. This can be seen from the history of curriculum development in Indonesia, until the importance of using English language education in global competition. This writing is made in the form of a study of documents and literature whose understanding of knowledge is used as analysis. In view of this, Indonesia can learn from other countries that have succeeded in reforming and developing English curriculum while taking into account the uniqueness of its own context.

Copyright © 2021 ETDCI.
All rights reserved.

Corresponding Author:

Dian Pajarwati,
English Education Departement,
State Islamic University (UIN) of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau
Email: dianpajarwati2411@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, material, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. In other definition, a curriculum is the total learning experience provided by a school (Henzi et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2006). It includes the contents of courses (the syllabus), the method employed (strategies), and other aspects, like norms and values, which relate to the way the school is organized.

Indonesia curriculum changes every decade (Setiawan, 2020; Ekawati, 2016). This is caused by many factors such as the changes of society needs, the new insight of teaching learning process, political issues, development of industry and technology. The main aim of this change is as to improve the quality of teaching-learning process and learning design at school. According to some experts, the curriculum changes from time to time, both in Indonesia and in other countries, because the needs of people who every year are always evolving and the demands of the times are likely to change. Curriculum development is considered as a determinant of the future of the nation (Ekawati, 2016). Therefore, a good curriculum will be expected to be implemented in Indonesia that will produce the nation's future bright child with implications for the progress of the notion.

To sustain its future competitive employment both at national and international level, Indonesia Government needs to invest more in its human resources (Poedjiastutie et al., 2018; Debrah et al., 2000). Therefore, education is the critical aspect to prepare highly educated and well-trained human resources for an innovation driven global competitiveness. More specifically, one of the indicator of qualified human resources for nowadays global competition is the citizens' possession of high level of language of networking that is English.

Learning English in the digital native era currently occupies a very important position in the world of education in Indonesia (Lamb & Coleman, 2008; Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014). Through learning English, it is hoped that it will produce Indonesian individuals who are able to communicate in international languages with various nations in the world. Mastery of English in Indonesia is very much needed in order to open horizons for the Indonesian people to absorb the development of science and technology from other countries (Sholah, 2021; Hill & Thee, 1998). Learning English in Indonesia still faces various problems. This is evident from the results of several studies and reports which show that students' English mastery in Indonesia is generally still low. Furthermore, mastery of English after basic education in Indonesia is not successful compared to neighboring countries, such as Malaysia and Singapore. The failure to master English is influenced by non-linguistic factors, such as environment, culture, economy, family background, educational facilities, student attitudes, and parents (Sukamerta, 2013).

2. METHOD

This study is carried out literature study (Research Library) that uses journals and other literature as the primary means of generating the arguments in this paper (Fidel, 2008). The first is about Historical national education curriculum in Indonesia which will be analyzed through journal, and some articles. All articles can be accessed online that discuss about curriculum. In addition, an analysis of the implementation english curriculum is carried out. All relevant related documents can accessed through articles as well as online news. Furthermore, Language Teaching Development toward the Global Competitiveness also analyzed through document studies, in order to get an explanation related to the topics, the author also analyze related the documents.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Historical National Educational Curriculum in Indonesia

This section of this part provides evidences that Indonesia was hardly reached its own educational curriculum. This history of Indonesian national curriculum implies that the concept of student-centred learning as the characteristics of teaching for empowerment is hardly heard.

Indonesia had already changed its national curriculum several times. These changes were made in response to the needs and challenges in each period. It was in 1537 that education activity in Indonesia formally began as Portugal occupied the country. Under Portugal's colonials, education policy had already began even though it was implemented locally, i.e. the school was only built the centre of the colony such as in Ambon, eastern part of Indonesia (Aziz, 2008). Later on, education activity that was run throughout the country began in 1900. In this era of education, the schooling operation was connected to ethical policy when the Dutch occupied Indonesia. But the goal of education policy under the

Dutch's occupation was not different from that before. It was just to secure economic interest of the colonial-no educational at all.

After the independence of the country, the government especially Indonesian Ministry of Education concerned with curriculum. During the early birth of the national curriculum, there were some reforms. Curriculum reform began soon after Indonesia gained independence. The first was the 1947 curriculum which was implemented in 1950s. The curriculum was still continued by the Dutch and Pancasila was introduced to the students as the main basis of national education ([Mukminin et al., 2019](#)). The curriculum 1947 emphasized on personality, national character building and course content which related to everyday life. Students in this curriculum era were treated as objects where teachers were centrally source of learning.

In the beginning era of President Soeharto, the government set up the 1968 curriculum. This 1968 curriculum concentrated on the promotion of cognitive aspect and thinking skill among the students. Here, the foreign language was introduced. The government revised the curriculum again in 1975 and called it as the 1975 curriculum. This curriculum was designed based on the strategy called management by objective. Here, the learning objective was defined as the central of the curriculum development for the students to achieve. It covered detail points of learning activity like general and specific instructional objectives, learning material, teaching media, and learning evaluation. Teachers-centred learning was mostly employed in its implementation shown from how the teachers constructed their general and specific instructional objectives. Mostly ten years later, the government introduced new curriculum in 1984 and it was therefore, recognized as the 1984 curriculum. Different from the previous curriculum, this curriculum emphasized on the process skill approach; meaning that teaching is to teach the students how to learn. The interesting point of this curriculum was by introducing credit system for high school students to finish the study ([Aziz, 2008](#)). Due to the enactment of the Law No. 22, 1999 and its replacement (UU No. 32 Tahun 2004) about autonomy, education is decentralized to the local, provincial and district government. In this era, new national curriculum was released. It was the 2004 curriculum. The 2004 curriculum or competence-based curriculum was operated nationally based on the government regulation no. 25/2002. The government delegated the authority in education activity to the local boards of education, even to the schools or teachers ([Hamida, 2008](#)). Not only student-centered learning was shouted but the learning environment was also appreciated. Since there were some constraints in the implementation among the school teachers, the revision was made. The government then revised the curriculum. The coming revised curriculum was the 2006 curriculum which was popularly called school-based curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan –KTSP) ([Satriani et al., 2012](#)). In this new revised curriculum, the 2004 curriculum was still flavored; but the school or teacher is open to modify and improve the national curriculum due to the school characteristics, students' background, and the interest of stakeholder. The 2006 curriculum was the student-centered approach. Both students' needs and environmental awareness were easily seen in learning. This curriculum, in short, was acknowledged as the empowering curriculum, especially the teachers ([Dharma, 2008](#)).

In advanced, the implementation of the 2006 curriculum or school-based curriculum is not yet satisfactory in Indonesia ([Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011](#)). But in general, this curriculum was claimed as the best curriculum whom Indonesia ever had (Wachidah, 2013). This curriculum was developed to create better atmosphere of learning activities for the learners. Through this curriculum, the school teachers felt flexible to create, modify, and develop instructional design based on the need of the school stakeholders. Decentralized curriculum was desired and clearly adopted in this era. Recently, this curriculum was again modified to make it matched toward the international trends of the education, e.g. facing the

standard of PISA and TIMSS. This was made in a response to the global demand-critical learning approach toward the 21st century learning paradigm (Kemendikbud, 2013).

The development of the student-centeredness-based curriculum as discussed earlier is clearly presented in the following table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Curriculum and issues experienced in Indonesian education

Periods	Curriculum	Approach	Issues
1537	Portugal colonial curriculum	None	Colonial perspective
1900	Dutch colonial curriculum	None	Colonial perspective, education for feudalism
1947-1952	1947	The five principle-based curriculum	The first national curriculum, citizenship
1968-1975	1975	Management-objective	Instructional objective firstly used
1984-1994	1994	process approach/ meaningful approach	Credit points, Meaningful teaching-CBSA
1999-2004	2004	Competency-based curriculum	Decentralized based curriculum
2006	2006	School-based curriculum	Student-centered ; local awareness, students' needs; potential; learner empowerment
2013	2013	Scientific approach	Influenced by TIMSS & PISA, 21 st challenges, critical thinking/reasoning , independent learning , learner empowerment

3.2. English Learning Across Curriculum in Indonesia

English curriculum often ran for students' English mastery. The English curriculum ran in Indonesia moved from the teacher-centered to student-centered approach. English language teaching and learning has been implemented in schools since 1954 with its old curriculum. In the first period of its implementation, however, it was locally implemented. In the periods of 1968-1975, English was taught through the Audio-Lingual-Method (ALM) (Lie, 2007). The English was then well recognized as a foreign language which was considered as important in Indonesia. Thus, trainings were run to introduce Oral Approach (OA) in English learning. To this case, OA was regarded as the natural way to master English. Students by using this approach were invited to practice as much as possible; meanwhile the English teachers were forced to use Silent Way (SW) to facilitate students learning. Since problems arose during the implementation, teachers were then as central figures.

Some critics were addressed as it was much influenced by the English-use rather than English-usage (Widdowson, 2000). In the advancement of the English curriculum development, a communicative English curriculum was introduced in 1984 in a response to the vast developing world which calling more English for business and correspondence. Students were invited to practice as much as they drilled in the Communicative Approach in English learning (Lie, 2007). However, there was a poor implementation as the teachers failed in addressing "communicative" as the results of the lacks of English mastery itself and of understanding the method. Consequently, communicative competence was barely pursued. Meaning-based English curriculum was then released in 1994. It was hoped that students successfully learned in a meaningful learning impact. Friendly student

environmental topics were discussed in learning. Even the target was the same as the previous one – using communicative approach, the learning was not only know about the language itself but it was also intended to make it in context. However, due to the similar condition lack of teachers' knowledge competence, the textbook-teaching oriented made it hard for students to use English communicatively.

Toward millennium English learning, the government again launched 2004 English curriculum namely Competency-based Curriculum (KBK). In this English curriculum, students' English competence was echoing. Students learned how to use English contextually. In this way, it was aimed the students acquired English skills better than in the previous curriculum. The students were also required to incorporate cultural understanding in their English learning. But, mostly, were the learning outcome still far from being fascinating. The standard objectives of the English curriculum are as follows: (1) Developing communicative competence both in oral and in written in order to reach the level of informational literacy; (2) Raising awareness of the nature of English as a foreign language in order to compete with other countries in global community; and (3) Developing comprehension of the students about the relation between language and culture (Depdiknas, 2006; Leung, 2005).

The overall concepts of the English language curriculum in Indonesia emphasize on communicative competence. In this paradigm, the communicative competence refers to the ability to make effective communication—that is the ability to use language appropriately in social interaction which consists of grammatical, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and language components (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). For the first time, the 2004 competency-based curriculum was implemented in language teaching. It is an approach to teaching which focuses on mastery of the skills or competencies needed in different domains. This 2004 curriculum was aimed to prepare and provide students readiness in competing with students from other countries (Lengkanawati, 2005). For the overall characteristics of the curriculum, Genre-based Approach (GBA) was adopted as the main approach to reach the learning competences. There were three competences which were addressed to pursue: discourse competence, understanding various short functional texts, and the linguistic competence.

3.3. Development English Curriculum in Indonesia toward Global Competitive

In the current era of growing globalization, human resources must continue to improve their quality, one of which is through professionally managed institutions. The demands of the all-new 21st century are a challenge for humans to make breakthroughs in thinking and adapting concepts and actions (Krewski et al., 2020).

In developing the 21st century curriculum, it also considers a global perspective, not just national or local. The curriculum must enable students to think globally in the sense that students are able to reveal the breadth of information that can be used as a guide to direct them to become productive citizens and become human beings who have social concern for others around them, are able to work together, and are mutually dependent in harmony. In addition, the role of communication is also becoming increasingly vital. The era of advancing science and technology that is increasingly rapidly opening up opportunity to communicate internationally. The implementation of the free market demands the Nation Indonesia has competitive competence in various fields.

The globalization of the English language has and will continue to occur in line with globalization in the fields of science and technology, economy, politics, socio-culture (Sinulingga et al., 2020; Budhwar & Debrah, 2009). One of the concerns within the framework of the 2013 Curriculum in Indonesia is the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a learning concept in teaching and learning English

which aims to promote student learning autonomy and communicative development. Currently, all subjects including English are indirectly encouraged to use technology-based learning tools on the basis of alignment with the change in learning philosophy from instructivist to constructivism. Reflected in the 2013 Curriculum, the concept of ICT integration in ELT is based on advances in information technology; convergence of science and technology, the influence and impact of technology-based science and technology, and multi-literacy.

This is a challenge for us in higher education institutions and at the same time an opportunity to develop international cooperation programs. These challenges and opportunities require preparation and perseverance in order to create an academic society and culture with an international perspective. English has become a means of international communication and is used by about 350,000,000 people as a first language and about 400,000,000 people as a second or foreign language and the number of people who use English will continue to grow along with the world's population (Kitao, 1996). The importance of English does not lie in the large number of people who use it, but lies in its features as a means of communication between nations. English is the language used to convey information between countries, the language used by international business people, the language used by state officials in international forums, the language used in maritime and aviation, the language used in culture, film, music, etc. English is used as a medium of communication in newspapers and news. Eighty percent of computer data and stored in English. Satellite communications are in English. More than half of the world's newspapers use English. In India, there are three thousand magazines published in English. In many countries, television broadcasts use English, including Indonesia through the Metro TV channel, China through its CCTV. Because television broadcasts can be accessed from a variety of sources, many shows are shown in English in order to be understood by the viewing country and the international press in various countries. English is also used in international business, diplomacy, and science, and is used by international organizations including the United Nations.

So, the youth generation, especially students, are expected to be able to participate and adapt in the face of the globalization era in the world, so foreign language education really triggers this. The existence of curriculum changes that have occurred in Indonesia, including the issuance of foreign language education policies in the national education curriculum is evidence of efforts in responding to and facing the era of globalization through education in order to achieve the desired global communication opportunities, to equip students with English language skills, overcome the problems and challenges needed in the world of work, build the quality of Indonesian people who have noble character and are responsible.

4. CONCLUSION

In this era of globalization is marked by increasing advances in information and communication technology as well as the impact of using foreign languages which are the main requirements to be able to compete in the era of globalization. Foreign languages especially English, are tools for global competence and cooperation in human interaction. To improve the quality of self and society, namely through foreign language education both formally and informally. It is hoped that by mastering a foreign language, Indonesia can excel in the fields of economy, politics, education, and technology.

As English has an International standard it became the lingua franca global language of today's world. English is the first foreign language in Indonesia. In the recent development

of ELT in Indonesia, English has been taught in the elementary school as an elective subject since the implementation of the 1994 Curriculum.

The Indonesian education curriculum has undergone many changes and developments changes of the curriculum in Indonesia are influenced by social, cultural, political and economic situations as well as other considerations. However, from all these changes, the national education curriculum is designed based on the same foundation, namely Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. All these changes have the same goal, namely to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

The youth generation, especially students, are expected to be able to participate and adapt in the face of the globalization era in the world, so foreign language education really triggers this. The existence of curriculum changes that have occurred in Indonesia, including the issuance of foreign language education policies in the national education curriculum is evidence of efforts in responding to and facing the era of globalization through education in order to achieve the desired global communication opportunities, to equip students with English language skills, overcome the problems and challenges needed in the world of work, build the quality of Indonesian people who have noble character and are responsible.

REFERENCES

- Aziz, A. (2008). Curriculum Development in Indonesian Education.
- Budhwar, P., & Debrah, Y. A. (2009). Future research on human resource management systems in Asia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 26(2), 197-218. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-008-9103-6>
- Debrah, Y. A., McGovern, I., & Budhwar, P. (2000). Complementarity or competition: The development of human resources in a South-East Asian growth triangle: Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11(2), 314-335.
- Dharma, A. (2008). Indonesian Basic Education Curriculum Current Content and Reforms. In *Roundtable Discussion in Retrac Governing Board Meeting at Institut Aminuddin Baki, Genting Highland, Malaysia, 27 August 2008* (pp. 1–8). Genting Highland, Malaysia: Institute Aminudin Baki.
- Ekawati, Y. N. (2016). The implementation of curriculum 2013: A case study of english teachers' experience at SMA Lab School in Indonesia. *English Language Learning Development (ELLD) Journal*, 7(1), 84-90.
- Fidel, R. (2008). Are we there yet?: Mixed methods research in library and information science. *Library & information science research*, 30(4), 265-272.
- Hamida, L. (2008). Penerapan Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SLTP di Surabaya (Implementasi dan Kendala yang Dihadapi). *J. Penelit. Din. Sos.*, 7(3), 146–153.
- Kemendikbud. (2013). Permendikbud RI Nomor 81A tahun 2013 tentang Implementasi Kurikulum (2013). Jakarta.
- Henzi, D., Davis, E., Jasinevicius, R., & Hendricson, W. (2007). In the students' own words: what are the strengths and weaknesses of the dental school curriculum?. *Journal of Dental Education*, 71(5), 632-645. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.0022-0337.2007.71.5.tb04320.x>

- Hill, H., & Thee, K. W. (Eds.). (1998). *Indonesia's technological challenge*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Kitao, K. (1996). Why do we teach English. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 2(4), 1-3.
- Krewski, D., Andersen, M. E., Tyshenko, M. G., Krishnan, K., Hartung, T., Boekelheide, K., ... & Cote, I. (2020). Toxicity testing in the 21st century: progress in the past decade and future perspectives. *Archives of toxicology*, 94(1), 1-58.
- Lamb, M., & Coleman, H. (2008). Literacy in English and the transformation of self and society in post-Soeharto Indonesia. *International journal of bilingual education and bilingualism*, 11(2), 189-205.
- Lengkanawati, N. S. (2005). EFL teachers' competence in the context of English curriculum 2004 : Implications for EFL teacher education. *TEFLIN Journal*, 16(1), 79–92.
- Leung, C. (2005). Convivial communication: Recontextualizing communicative competence. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 119-144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2005.00084.x>
- Lie, A. (2007). Education policy and EFL curriculum In Indonesia: Between the commitment to competence and the quest for higher test score. *TEFLIN Journal*, Volume 18, (1), February 2007.
- Mappiasse, S. S., & Sihes, A. J. B. (2014). Evaluation of English as a Foreign Language and Its Curriculum in Indonesia: A Review. *English Language Teaching*, 7(10), 113-122.
- Mattarima, K., & Hamdan, A. R. (2011). The teaching constraints of English as a foreign language in Indonesia: The context of school based curriculum. *Sosiohumanika*, 4(2).
- Mukminin, A., Habibi, A., Prasajo, L. D., Idi, A., & Hamidah, A. (2019). Curriculum reform in Indonesia: moving from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum. *CEPS Journal*, 9(2), 53-72.
- Poedjiastutie, D., Akhyar, F., Hidayati, D., & Nurul Gasmi, F. (2018). Does curriculum help students to develop their English competence? A Case in Indonesia. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, 9.
- Setiawan, B. (2020). The anxiety of educational reform and innovation: bridging of top-down and bottom-up strategies within practice educational reform of curriculum in Indonesia. *Studies in Philosophy of Science and Education*, 1(2), 87-96.
- Sholah, H. M. (2021). The Effect of Mother Language Toward the Mastery of English Language Acquisition; Case of Indonesian Students in English Learning Process. *Tafhim Al-'Ilmi*, 13(1), 117-141.
- Sinulingga, R. O., Sinulingga, N. N., & Nurhikmah, F. (2020). Globalization And Its Improvement For The Life Of Indonesian Nation. In *International Conference Communication and Sosial Sciences (ICCOMSOS)* (Vol. 1, No. 1).
- Sukamerta (2013:4) “Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Siswa SD”, diakses dari https://sinta.unud.ac.id/uploads/dokumen_dir/a1c6cadf01fba066eca8d5ff35b2d2a.pdf
- Walsh, G., Sproule, L., McGuinness, C., Trew, K., Rafferty, H., & Sheehy, N. (2006). An appropriate curriculum for 4–5-year-old children in Northern Ireland: comparing

play-based and formal approaches. *Early Years*, 26(2), 201-221.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140600760003>

Widdowson. H., G. (2000). *Teaching Language as Communication*. In Diane Larsen. Freeman “ *Tehniques and Principle in Language Taching*”. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Widiati, U., & Cahyono, B. Y. (2006). The Teaching of EFL Speaking in the Indonesian Context: the State of teh Art. *Bahasa Dan Seni*, 34(2), 269–292.