

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN INDONESIA: A HISTORICAL REVIEW WITHIN 77 YEARS

Dyah Sulistyaningrum<sup>1\*</sup>, Sri Sumarni<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

\*dyah\_1212822014@mhs.unj.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

The paper provides an overview of the Development of Indonesia's English Education Curriculum literature-wise and compiles some measurements in different English Language Education curricula. Considering the criteria of this study as a result of the preliminary examinations, relevant articles were included in this review study. Descriptive and content analysis methods were used to examine the data. With content analysis, studies were about different English Language Education curricula. As a result, English Language Curriculum Developments are presented in this study, English Language Education Curriculum Developments can be determined and further measurements can be taken by teachers, educators and administrators.

Keywords: *English Language Education, Curriculum, Development*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is how students interact with instructional content, material, resources, and methods for assessing educational global goals. A school's curriculum is its entire learning experience (Henzi et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2006). It includes the school's organization, syllabus, strategies, norms, and values.

Indonesian curriculum changes every decade (Ekawati, 2016; Setiawan, 2020). This is due to many factors, including changing societal needs, new teaching and learning insights, political issues, and industry and technology development. These changes aim to improve school teaching and learning design. As the times change, experts say that Indonesia's curriculum success depends on curriculum development (Ekawati, 2016). Thus, Indonesia will need a good curriculum to lead the children to their successful paths for the sake of our nation's future.

Additionally, Indonesia must increase its investment in human-resources to remain competitive nationally and internationally (Debrah et al., 2000; Poedjiastutie et al., 2018).

A high-quality education is required to prepare highly educated and trained human resources for global competitiveness based on innovation. Education is critical for preparing highly educated and skilled human resources for an innovation-driven global competitiveness. English proficiency is one indicator of qualified human resources for global competition (Ekawati, 2016). More accurately, having a high level of networking English language proficiency is one of the indicators of qualified human resources in today's global competition. English is a key subject for students in Indonesia as a result.

Learning English in the digital global era is crucial to Indonesian education (Lamb & Coleman, 2008; Mappiasse & Sishes, 2014). Learning English is meant to make Indonesians as global communicators. Indonesians need English to absorb foreign

science and technology (Hill & Thee, 1998; Sholah, 2021). Although it has been taught for years, Indonesian English education still has some issues. Several studies show that Indonesian students' English proficiency is still low and Indonesians struggle to learn English even as basic education, unlike Malaysians and Singaporeans. English proficiency is influenced by the environment, culture, economy, family history, educational resources, students' attitudes, and parents (Pajarwati et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the Development of Indonesia's Education Curriculum in general and Indonesia's English Education Curriculum literature wise and to compile some measurements in different English Language Education curricula. This study also provides the English Education Curriculum Design that has existed in Indonesia.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 English Language Education in Indonesia

The English language education curriculum in Indonesia is the set of courses, learning activities, and standards that guide the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Indonesian schools. The curriculum has evolved over the years to reflect changes in the country's economic, political, and social landscape, as well as developments in the field of English language teaching (Kurniasih & Nugroho, 2019).

### 2.2 A Historical Review

A historical review is a critical examination or evaluation of events, ideas, or practices that occurred in the past. It involves examining primary and secondary sources to understand the context, causes, and consequences of historical events, as well as the ways in which they have shaped the present (Scott, 1991).

## 3. METHODS

A literature study (Research Library) involving Content Analysis generates this paper's arguments (Fidel, 2008). The History of Indonesia's National Education Curriculum and National English Education Curriculum will be analyzed through journals and articles. Journals, articles, and online news provide all relevant documents. Relevant studies were also used to explain Language Teaching Development.

Below are the main relevant sources of this study:

**Table 1. Main Relevant Studies**

No.	Years	Relevant Studies	Author	Published by	Published in
1.	2011	Curriculum development in Indonesian education.	Aziz, A.	Madrasah Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Dasar, <i>Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang</i>	Indonesia
2.	2014	Evaluation of English as a Foreign Language and Its Curriculum in Indonesia: A Review	Sitti Syamsinar Mappiasse & Ahmad Johari Bin Sihes	Canadian Center of Science and Education	Malaysia
3.	2021	Curriculum Reform in Indonesia: English Education Toward the Global Competitiveness	Dian Pajarwati, Hikmatul Mardiah, Ronitama Parsaulian Harahap, Rusliani Octavia Siagian.	Research Gate	Indonesia

## 4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results

The information in this section of the above-mentioned table shows how far behind Indonesia was in developing its own curriculum. According to the history of the national curriculum in Indonesia,

student-centered learning as a quality of teaching for empowerment is not often discussed.

The national curriculum of Indonesia had already undergone various changes. These adjustments were made in response to the requirements, situations, conditions, and difficulties of each era.

**Table 2. National Curriculum Changes 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, Student's needs; Potential; learner empowerment
2013	2013	Scientific Approach	Influenced by TIMSS & PISA, 21 <sup>st</sup> challenges, critical thinking/reasoning, independent learning, learner empowerment
2022	2022 Merdeka Belajar Curriculum	Student Centered Learning	Influenced by CEFR

Source: Pajarwati et.al (2021)

As Portugal colonized Indonesia, schooling activity there officially started in 1537. Although it was only executed locally and handled from a colonial perspective, Portugal's colonial policy on education

had already begun; for example, there were two schools built; one in Solor Island and one in Ambon, Eastern Indonesia (Aziz, 2011).

Later, in 1900, based on ethical policy, nationwide educational initiatives were launched. When the Dutch invaded Indonesia, the operation of the schools was tied to moral policies at the time.

However, the objective of educational policy during the Dutch occupation remained the same. There was absolutely no instructional purpose—it was solely to protect the colonial economy and for the benefit of colonial feudalists like the development of some schools to provide the needs for staff in hospitals, medicals, and military areas.

Following the nation's independence in 1945, the government, in particular the Indonesian Ministry of Education, was concerned with the curriculum. There were various adjustments made when the national curriculum was first getting started. Soon after Indonesia obtained independence, school reform started. The 1947 curriculum, which was put into effect in the 1950s, was the first. The five tenets of national ideology (Pancasila) were introduced to the students as the cornerstone of national education as the Dutch continued to teach the curriculum. The 1947 curriculum placed a strong emphasis on individuality, developing national character, and learning material that was applicable to daily life. In this curriculum era, teachers served as the primary source of learning, treating students like objects. Later, the government changed the curriculum in 1952, and as it was put into use in that year, it became known as the 1952 curriculum.

The 1977 curriculum was established by the government at the start of President Soeharto's administration. This 1977 curriculum placed a strong emphasis on strengthening students' cognitive abilities. The foreign language was first introduced here. In 1975, the government made additional revisions to the curriculum, which became known as the 1975 curriculum. This curriculum was created using the management by objectives method. Here, it was stated that the curriculum's main goal was to help pupils attain the learning objective. It addressed all the specifics of the learning process, including the learning objectives—both general and specific—the instructional materials—the teaching aids—and the learning evaluation. The instructors' construction of their general and specific instructional objectives demonstrates that teacher-centered learning was primarily used in its execution.

Approximately ten years later, in 1984, the government adopted a new curriculum, which came to be known as the 1984 curriculum. This curriculum places more emphasis on the process skill approach than the prior curriculum, which means that teaching is about teaching students how to learn. The curriculum's intriguing feature was the introduction of a credit system to allow high school students to complete their studies (Aziz, 2011).

Education has been focused on the local, provincial, and district government level as a result of the adoption of Law No. 22, 1999, and its replacement, Law No. 32, 2004 about autonomy. A new national curriculum was introduced during this time. It was the curriculum from 2004.

Based on Government Regulation No. 25 of 2002, a competency-based curriculum from 2004 was implemented nationwide. The local boards of education, as well as the schools or teachers, were given responsibility over education-related matters by the government. Not only was the importance of student-centered learning emphasized, but the learning environment as well.

The adjustment was made because the school teachers' execution of it had some limitations. The curriculum was then changed by the government. According to Satriani et al. (2012), the 2006

curriculum, often known as the "school-based curriculum," or KTSP was the subject of the upcoming revisions. The 2004 curriculum was still present in this newly revised curriculum, but due to school characteristics, student backgrounds, and stakeholder interests, the teacher or school may be willing to change and improve the national curriculum.

The student-centered approach was used in the 2006 curriculum (Dharma, 2008). Environmental awareness and student needs were both clearly evident in learning. In conclusion, this curriculum was hailed as an empowering one, especially by teachers.

Indonesia has not yet successfully implemented the 2006 curriculum or the school-based curriculum. However, this curriculum was hailed as the best one Indonesia had ever had (Wachidah, 2013). The goal of this curriculum's development was to improve the learning environment for the students (Satriani et al., 2012). With the help of this curriculum, educators were given the freedom to produce instructional designs depending on the requirements of various school stakeholders (Dharma, 2008). In this era, it was evident that decentralized education was desired and accepted.

Curriculum 2006 has recently undergone yet another modification in order to align it with current global trends in education, such as PISA and TIMSS standards namely Curriculum 2013. This was created in response to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning paradigm's demand-critical global learning strategy (Alawiyah, 2013).

In 2022, Curriculum Merdeka Belajar was introduced as the newest curriculum in Indonesia.

**Table 3. English-Curriculum Changes in Indonesia**

Year	Curriculum
1945	Grammar translation-based curriculum
1957	Audiolingual-based curriculum
1975	Revised audiolingual-based curriculum
1984	Structure-based communicative curriculum
1994	Meaning-based communicative curriculum
2004	Competency-based curriculum
2006	School-based curriculum
2013	Curriculum 2013 (K-13)
2022	Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Source: Misdi (2013)

Since 1945, the outdated curriculum has been used in schools to teach and learn English. However, it was initially deployed locally during the first phase of its implementation. The primary teaching method used was called Grammar Translation Method (GTM) (Lie, 2007).

- English was first implemented in teaching in Indonesia officially.
- Subject-Centered Curriculum Design/ Grammar Translation Based Curriculum which what should be studied and how should it be studied.

The Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) was used to teach English from 1977 to 1975 (Lie, 2007). At that time, English was widely acknowledged in Indonesia as a foreign language that was significant. As a result, workshops were held to bring the oral approach (OA) to the study of English. In this instance, OA was thought to be the most natural technique to learn English. In order to facilitate student learning, English teachers were compelled to adopt Silent Way (SW), while students were encouraged to practice as much as possible. Teachers became crucial figures as a result of the implementation's challenges. During this time, English developed further, and it was mandated that junior high schools teach it for three years and senior high schools for three years (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). Targeted were four linguistic abilities: speaking, reading, and writing (Lie, 2007).

- The first time English was made mandatory to teach for 6 years (from Junior High School to Senior High School)
- Structural Base Curriculum Program which should be studied and how should it be studied.

In 1984, it was pointed out to several critics that it was heavily affected by English use rather than English usage (see: Widdowson, 1978) In order to better meet the needs of the huge developing world, which demanded more English for commerce and correspondence, a communicative English curriculum was created by government. In order to learn English using the Communicative Approach, students were encouraged to practice as much as they had been instructed (Lie, 2007). Although there was a poor implementation, as she went on to describe in her review, the teachers failed to address "communicative" as the result of their own lack of English proficiency and their failure to comprehend the methodology (Lie, 2007)). As a result, efforts to improve communication skills were minimal.

- A Communicative English curriculum was created to accommodate more demand for English in commerce and correspondence of huge developing world
- The main goal of Problem-Centered Curriculum Design/Structure-Based Communicative Curriculum is to teach students how to analyze a situation and find a solution. As a result, students are exposed to real-world problems, which aids in the development of transferable skills.

Then, in 1994, a meaning-based English curriculum was made available. It was intended that kids would study effectively and have a positive learning impact (Lie, 2007). Environmental issues were discussed in class with kind students. Even though the goal was the same as the prior one, utilizing a communicative method allowed for learning that focused on context as well as language. However, the textbook-focused teaching style made it challenging for students to use English in a communicative manner due to the comparable state of teachers' knowledge competence.

- A Meaning-Based English curriculum was created utilizing a communicative method that allowed for learning that focused on context as well as language.
- The main goal of the Problem-Centered Curriculum Design/Meaning-Based Communicative Curriculum is to educate students in situation analysis and problem-solving.

As a result, they are exposed to issues from the real world, which helps them develop transferable skills.

The government unveiled its 2004 English curriculum, known as the Competency-based Curriculum (KBK), in preparation for the millennium (Lie, 2007). Students' English proficiency was shown in this English curriculum. Students gained knowledge about contextual English usage. Thus, it was hoped that pupils would learn English more effectively than they had in the prior curriculum. Additionally, the students were expected to incorporate cultural awareness into their study of English. But, for the most part, the learning outcome was still not particularly fascinating (Lie, 2007; Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). For instance, some students were scared to speak up in class and worried about making mistakes (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014).

A Competency – Based English curriculum was created hoping that pupils would learn English more effectively than they had in the prior curriculum. Additionally, the students were expected to incorporate cultural awareness into their study of English

- The main goal of Problem-Centered Curriculum Design/Competency-Based Curriculum is to educate students in the analysis and resolution of problems. Students are thus exposed to issues from the real world, assisting in the development of transferable skills.

The curriculum was updated to the 2006 English curriculum just two years later (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). The general objectives for teaching English in secondary schools in Indonesia are established. The following are the normal English curriculum goals: Increasing students' understanding of the nature of English as a foreign language will help them compete with other nations in the global community, and doing so will also help them develop their oral and written communication skills, as well as their understanding of the relationship between language and culture (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). The 2006 curriculum, as it is commonly known (Satriani et al., 2012), was established to improve the environment for the learners' learning activities.

- The general objectives for teaching English in secondary schools in Indonesia are established. The 2006 curriculum, as it is commonly known was established to improve the environment for the learners' learning activities.
- Learner-Centered Curriculum Design/School-Based Curriculum focus on how to help students compete with other countries in the international community, teachers should help students understand the nature of English as a foreign language. This will also help students improve their oral and written communication skills and their understanding of how language and culture are related.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture updated the elementary through high school curricula in 2013 in response to criticism from some quarters. This new curriculum is being tried to the response of the TIMSS and PISA about the learning evaluation after a less thorough review of the curriculum, such as the strengths and shortcomings for certain stages and components (Sundayana, 2015). English is now a required subject in junior and senior high schools as part of the new curriculum (Larson, 2014), in order to foster critical thinking among the students using a scientific

approach. Even though the current EFL teaching curriculum uses a scientific approach, GBA is frequently used to teach English. Whatever they do, teachers in critical positions need to be able to engage pupils in learning English (Yulia, 2013).

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Learner-Centered Curriculum Design/K-2013 focuses on how to foster critical thinking among the students using a scientific approach applying a Genre-Based Approach to teach English.

Curriculum Merdeka Belajar was introduced as the latest English Curriculum in Indonesia in 2022. This curriculum is influenced by CEFR which characteristic are as below:

### **1. Various Types of Text**

The types of texts taught in general English vary, such as narratives, descriptions, expositions, procedures, arguments, discussions, special texts (short messages, advertisements), and authentic texts. These different texts are presented not only as written texts but also as spoken texts (monologues or dialogues), visual texts, audio texts, and multimodal texts (texts that combine verbal, visual, and audio aspects), both authentic and texts created for educational purposes, both single and multiple texts, produced on paper or on a screen. This is attempted to facilitate students to be skilled in using technology (technological literacy), so that they can improve their abilities in navigating digital information.

### **2. Class Condition**

The teacher can determine the type of text to be taught according to the conditions in the class. Learning can start from the type of text that contains topics that are already known to students to help them understand the content of the text they read and then be able to produce that type of text in oral and written form. Furthermore, the teacher can introduce students to the type of text that is just known by the students. Teachers can help them build an understanding of the new type of text, so that students are able to produce work in that type of text, both oral and written. The selection of the type of text can also be adapted to the conditions often experienced by students both in the school context, and the context at home so that students can practice and study the text in a real-world setting.

### **3. Learner-Centered**

In order to change students' behavior (from being unable to be able), the learning process must be student-centered (Tyler, 1949; Tyler, 19, with an emphasis on using English in six language skills in a variety of text types.

### **4. Language Ability**

The goal of general English instruction is to improve students' language proficiency according to the development of their language.

## **5. Receptive and Productive Elements**

Gaining both productive and receptive skills is a requirement for learning general English (reading, viewing, and listening).

### **Elements of English Learning Outcomes**

The achievement of learning English consists of 6 elements with the following descriptions:

#### **1. Listening**

The ability to understand information, give appreciation to the other person, and understand the information heard, so that they can convey responses in a relevant and contextual manner. The process that occurs in listening includes activities such as listening, identifying, understanding, and interpreting the sounds of language, then understanding the meaning. Listening skills are also non-verbal communication skills that include how well a person captures the meaning (implied and expressed) in an oral presentation and understands the main and supporting ideas in the information content and context that underlies the presentation (Petri & von Wangen Heim, 2017).

#### **2. Reading**

Understanding, utilizing, and reflecting on texts in accordance with one's objectives and interests in order to advance one's so that he can participate in society (Takayama, 2013).

#### **3. Viewing**

The capacity to comprehend, make use of, and consider visual texts in light of their objectives and interests.

#### **4. Speaking**

The ability to convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings verbally in social interactions.

#### **5. Writing**

The ability to convey, communicate ideas, express creativity and create in various genres of written texts, in an effective and understandable way, and attracts readers with the right organizational structure and linguistic elements.

#### **6. Presenting**

Ability to present ideas fluently, accurately, and accountable in a communicative way through various media (visual, digital, and audiovisual), and can be understood by listeners.

Delivery in speaking and presenting needs to be arranged and developed according to the needs or characteristics of the listener.

### **Focus on Learning English in Every Phase**

Learning English has a different focus each phase. The focus of each phase:

- Phase A focuses on introduction to English and spoken English skills.
- In Phase B, learning is focused on spoken English skills, but written language is introduced. In this phase, teachers need to help students understand that the way English is spoken and written is different.

- In Phase C, at the final level (SD/MI/Package A Program), learning is focused on spoken and written English skills.
- General English learning in Phase D (SMP/MTs/Program Package B) focuses on enhancing spoken English and language proficiency in writing.
- Phases E and F (SMA/MA/Program Package C), with a CEFR B1 target, English language instruction emphasizes improving spoken and written language.
  - Merdeka Belajar Concept is not only a learning process carried out in the classroom which is always a question for educators. However, being free to learn has lofty ideals in realizing the nation's hopes without going beyond the boundaries of the world (Putra, 2019).
  - Learner-Centered Curriculum Design/Curriculum Merdeka Belajar focuses on:
    1. Recovery from learning backward or recovery from learning loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
    2. Improving the quality of education in Indonesia, which is to provide space for students to master the world of technology through the learning system.

## 4.2 Discussion

In a period of expanding globalization, human resources must be professionally managed to improve. The 21st century requires innovations in thinking, adapting, and acting.

The curriculum must help students to think internationally by revealing the breadth of information that can guide them to become effective citizens and human beings who have social concern for others, can work together, and are mutually dependent in harmony. Communication is also crucial. Science and technological advancements are accelerating international communication.

The English language will continue to globalize along with science, technology, economy, politics, and culture. All topics, including English, are encouraged to embrace technology-based learning aids due to a shift from instructive to constructivism. Higher education institutions have a challenge and an opportunity to build international collaboration initiatives. These difficulties and opportunities demand preparation and perseverance to develop a global academic culture. English is used by 350,000,000 individuals as a first language and 400,000,000 as a second or foreign language.

English will rise with the global population. English's relevance is not in its popularity but in its role as a global language. English is used to communicate between countries, by international business people, by state authorities in international forums, in maritime and aviation, in culture, film, music, etc. Newspapers and news utilize English. English accounts for 80% of computer data. English satellite communications. Half the world's newspapers are in English. India publishes 3,000 English publications. Indonesia's Metro TV and China's CCTV broadcast in English. Because television may be obtained from numerous sources, many programs are in English to be understood by the viewing country and worldwide press. English is utilized in worldwide business, diplomacy, and science, and by the UN.

Foreign language education helps the youth generation, especially students, adjust to the globalization period. The existence of curriculum changes in Indonesia, including the issuance of foreign language education policies in the national education curriculum, is evidence of efforts to respond to and face globalization through education in order to achieve global communication opportunities, equip students with English language skills, overcome problems and challenges in the world of work, and build the quality of Indonesian education

## 5. CONCLUSION

No matter how good the curriculum is, Nana et al. (2011) argued that the actions of the teachers and students in the classroom have a significant impact on the outcomes. It implies that the teacher's ability to carry out the curriculum and the school's role as a provider of learning would ultimately determine the effectiveness of curriculum reformation in education.

The Independent Curriculum can be called an "offer" because starting in 2022, Kemdikbudristek will give schools the freedom to determine the curriculum they choose. Whether to continue to fully implement the 2013 Curriculum, apply the Emergency Curriculum (simplified 2013 Curriculum), or choose the Independent Curriculum.

Each education unit can also implement the Independent Curriculum in stages, according to their respective readiness. After all, this change requires a process. There are already 2,500 educational units in 2021 that have implemented the prototype curriculum which became the forerunner of this Independent Curriculum.

Through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, teachers will get information, references, and inspiration for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. That way, teachers can learn, look for materials, and teaching tools, conduct assessments, inspire good practice in fun teaching methods, share experiences, create, and take part in online training to develop skills.

With the various features and facilities available in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, teachers have a fairly complete media that can assist in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Of course, because this is an online platform, so that teachers can access it properly, it must be supported by an adequate internet network.

The Merdeka curriculum offers something new to overcome various learning problems in Indonesia so far. The Independent Curriculum, if it can be implemented optimally, can be a driving force for the birth of a new era of learning that is more interactive, meaningful, deep, and fun for students.

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