

**EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHERS' VOICES ON THE CURRICULUM
CHANGES FROM K13 TO *KURIKULUM MERDEKA***

THESIS

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**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
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THESIS

Has Been Approved and Submitted to the Thesis *Munaqasyah* Defense as One the Requirements to Obtain a Bachelor's Degree in the field of english Language Education

By

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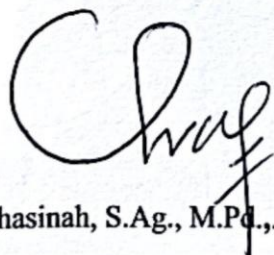
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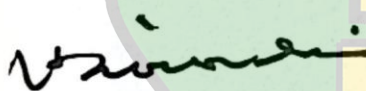
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FROM K13 TO *KURIKULUM MERDEKA***

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Saya yang membuat surat pernyataan



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ABSTRACT

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Changes From K13 To *Kurikulum Merdeka*

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Keywords : Teachers' Voices, Curriculum Change, *Kurikulum
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This study explores English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh. The study aims to examine teachers' perspectives, challenges, and strategies in adapting to curriculum change. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four English teachers who had experience implementing both curricula. The findings reveal that teachers perceive *Kurikulum Merdeka* as both progress and challenge. While the curriculum provides greater flexibility and supports student-centered learning, teachers also experienced challenges related to adaptation, understanding new curriculum concepts, developing teaching materials, technological and administrative demands, and managing diverse student characteristics. To address these challenges, teachers employed various strategies such as continuous self-learning, participation in training and professional discussions, collaboration with colleagues, and classroom-based instructional adjustment. The findings indicate that teachers play active roles in interpreting and implementing curriculum change. Therefore, the successful implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* depends not only on curriculum design but also on teachers' adaptability, professional development, and institutional support.

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Keguruan to conduct the research**

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the Background of the Study, including the research Question, Aims , significance, and key terminology. Each of these components must be thoroughly explained to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research.

A. Background of The Study

As a transforming force that enables students to reach their greatest potential and become productive citizens, education is crucial in forming both individuals and society. Education is a long-term investment in human capital that calls for careful planning and substantial funding, especially in Indonesia, where it is a key component of the nation's development goal. According to Hamalik (2015), education is defined as a purposeful and structured process that uses organized frameworks, targeted training, and systematic instruction to prepare students for future duties. The curriculum becomes a key element that directs the teaching and learning process within this framework.

Curriculum is a well crafted framework that combines learning content and pedagogical practices to promote successful educational delivery; it is more than just a list of subjects or themes (Hamalik, 2017). It was created to serve national educational objectives while preserving the uniqueness and independence of individual schools. A robust curriculum serves a number of important purposes, including maintaining fundamental cultural and educational ideals (conservative),

enabling ongoing assessment and enhancement of instructional strategies (evaluative), and fostering innovation to satisfy changing educational needs (creative) (Hamalik, 2017). These features demonstrate that the curriculum is a dynamic and flexible tool for adapting to change rather than being static.

Therefore, curriculum changes are more than just technical upgrades; they signify significant changes to the country's educational system. Revisions to a curriculum have an impact on teaching methods, learning objectives, evaluation procedures, and even the values that are taught in schools. Curriculum changes have broad effects at all educational levels, according to Mulyasa (2019). According to Mohammad, Special Staff to the Minister of Education, curriculum adaptation is both essential and inevitable in order to meet the demands of a world that is changing quickly (Mohammad, 2022). These opinions are a reflection of the increasing understanding that education needs to change in order to be effective and relevant.

As a result, curricular modifications signify significant changes in the country's educational system rather than only being technical upgrades. Revisions to a curriculum have an impact on teaching methods, learning objectives, evaluation procedures, and even the values that are taught in schools. Curriculum changes have broad effects at all educational levels, according to Mulyasa (2019). According to Mohammad, Special Staff to the Minister of Education, curriculum adaptation is both essential and inevitable in order to meet the demands of a world that is changing quickly (Mohammad, 2022). These opinions are a reflection of the

increasing understanding that education needs to change in order to be effective and relevant.

Curriculum changes invariably spark diverse perspectives and concerns within the educational community. The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* has generated significant apprehension among teachers, particularly at MTsN 1 Model, Kec. Kuta Alam, Kota Banda Aceh.

The frequent curriculum modifications in Indonesia have become a source of frustration for educators (Mulyasa, 2014). The 2013 Curriculum, which was perceived as imperfect, was quickly replaced by a new curriculum, creating a sense of instability in the educational system (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Such rapid changes predominantly impact students, who effectively become experimental subjects in these systemic transformations. This ongoing educational volatility motivated researcher to investigate the implementation challenges at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh.

Several significant obstacles to implementing the Merdeka Curriculum were identified during preliminary conversations with the school's instructors. Among these difficulties is a lack of knowledge about suitable teaching techniques, which makes it difficult to present curricula effectively (Nugroho, 2020). Additionally, teachers have a limited ability to build teaching modules, which makes it challenging to produce thorough and interesting learning resources (Imelda, 2023). Furthermore, a lack of proficiency in teaching techniques exacerbates these problems and has an impact on the curriculum's overall execution (Yulia, 2013).

Teachers' different reactions and perceptions as a result of these implementation difficulties underscore the difficulty of curriculum acceptance (Priestley, 2012). The Merdeka Curriculum's implementation in Indonesia has been the subject of several studies, however the majority of them concentrate on policy analysis, general implementation issues, or student outcomes (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Particularly in Islamic junior high school settings in Banda Aceh, very little research has explicitly examined English instructors' perspectives, lived experiences, and difficulties throughout the shift from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. Investigating how English instructors understand and react to this curriculum shift in their particular teaching situation is therefore necessary.

During the 2022–2023 school year, *Kurikulum Merdeka* was independently implemented. Early in 2022, MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh started to be implemented in stages. In the first phase, the curriculum was introduced in grades 7 through 9. This school was chosen by the researcher specifically because it was managing the difficulties of implementing two curriculum frameworks at the same time.

The MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh case serves as a reminder of the larger issues surrounding Indonesian educational reform. This illustration highlights how important it is to provide instructors with all encompassing support systems in order to guarantee the successful execution of new educational initiatives. To give teachers the information, abilities, and self-assurance they need to successfully manage curriculum changes, professional development programs must be given top priority. Additionally, in order to meet the various demands of schools, instructors, and students, a more thoughtful and organized approach to curricular

transformation is necessary. Educational reforms can accomplish their intended goals and establish a more fair and productive learning environment nationwide by addressing these crucial areas.

B. Research Question

Based on the background, the research problem is formulated as follows. This study explores teachers' views on the transition from the *Kurikulum 2013* (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, focusing on how they perceive and adapt to the changes and the factors affecting its implementation.

1. What are teachers' voices on the curriculum transformation at their school?
2. What significant challenges do teachers face during the curriculum implementation process?
3. What adaptive teaching strategies are educators developing to meet the new curriculum requirements?

C. Research Objective

The objectives of this research are developed to address the key issues identified in the background and problem statement. These objectives provide a framework to guide the study and focus on understanding teachers' perspectives and experiences during the transition from the *Kurikulum 2013* (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*

1. To analyze teachers' voices of curriculum change
2. To identify challenges in implementing the new curriculum

3. To understand teachers' adaptation strategies in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*

D. Terminology

1. 2013 Curriculum

The 2013 Curriculum (K-13) in this research refers to the national curriculum implemented in Indonesia prior to the *Merdeka* Curriculum. It integrates knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a scientific and thematic approach, while also emphasizing character education and authentic assessment. Within the context of this study, K-13 represents the curriculum framework previously applied by English teachers before the transition occurred.

2. *Kurikulum Merdeka*

The *Merdeka* Curriculum is understood in this study as the current national curriculum introduced to replace K-13. It promotes flexibility, competency-based learning, and student-centered instruction. This curriculum grants teachers greater autonomy in selecting teaching materials, designing learning activities, and conducting assessments based on students' needs and local contexts. In this research, the term specifically relates to its implementation by English teachers at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh.

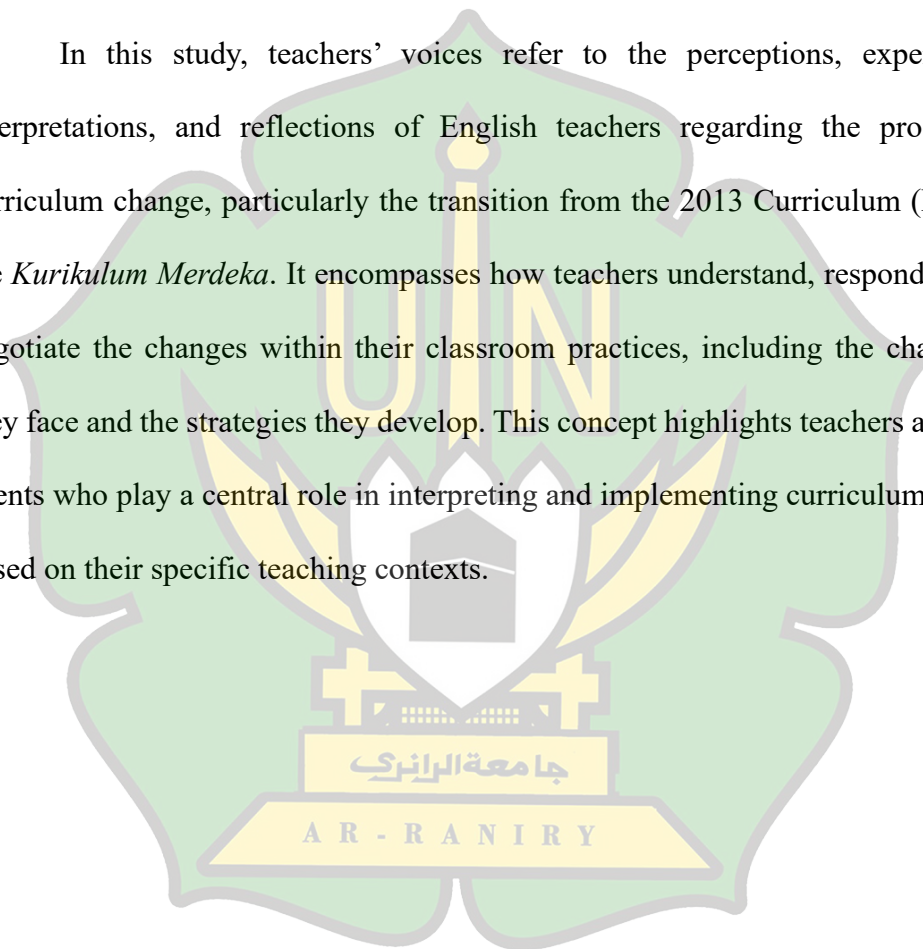
3. Curriculum Change Theory

Curriculum Change Theory refers to conceptual perspectives that explain how educational reforms are introduced, implemented, and sustained within institutions. The present study draws upon change theories such as Fullan's

educational change framework and Lewin's three-stage model (unfreeze, change, refreeze) to examine how teachers respond to and navigate the shift from K-13 to the *Merdeka* Curriculum. These theories provide a lens for interpreting teachers' reactions and adaptation processes.

4. Teachers' Voices in Curriculum Change

In this study, teachers' voices refer to the perceptions, experiences, interpretations, and reflections of English teachers regarding the process of curriculum change, particularly the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. It encompasses how teachers understand, respond to, and negotiate the changes within their classroom practices, including the challenges they face and the strategies they develop. This concept highlights teachers as active agents who play a central role in interpreting and implementing curriculum reform based on their specific teaching contexts.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review serves to provide a theoretical foundation for the study by analyzing relevant research, theories, and concepts related to curriculum transformation. This section helps to identify gaps in existing studies, justify the significance of the research, and support the development of the research framework. By reviewing previous findings, the literature review also offers insights into key challenges, best practices, and factors influencing the implementation of the new curriculum.

A. Overview of K13 (*Kurikulum* 2013)

The *Kurikulum* 2013 (K13) was created in response to the growing need for educational reform in the wake of fast technological innovation and globalization. K13 was introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture with the goal of creating knowledgeable, competent, and morally upright pupils. In line with the idea of character-based education, this curriculum represented a change from a content-heavy approach to a competency-based framework (Kemendikbud, 2013).

1. Foundation of K13

K–13 incorporates a number of educational philosophies, most notably constructivism, which stresses learning as an active process in which children build their own knowledge and understanding of the world via experience and introspection. Additionally, the curriculum integrates humanistic education, which

fosters emotional and personal development, with progressivist ideas, which emphasize student interaction and real-world problem solving (Mulyasa, 2014).

Kurikulum 2013 was developed as a national effort to enhance educational quality by integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains into a competency-based framework. Grounded in constructivist and humanistic principles, K13 emphasizes active learning, character education, and the development of higher-order thinking skills (Mulyasa, 2014). Rather than focusing solely on content mastery, the curriculum promotes holistic student development through the integration of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

While this framework was theoretically comprehensive, its implementation required teachers to adopt new pedagogical approaches and assessment systems. These structural demands significantly shaped teachers' professional experiences, influencing how they interpreted and enacted the curriculum in classroom practice.

2. Organization of K13

Kurikulum 2013 (K13) is structured around *Kompetensi Inti* (Core Competencies or KI) and *Kompetensi Dasar* (Basic Competencies or KD), which guide the educational process for each grade level. *Kompetensi Inti* (KI) represent broad, overarching competencies that span all subject areas and are divided into four main domains:

- a. Spiritual Attitudes (KI-1): This domain focuses on the development of students' spiritual values, encouraging them to grow in their understanding and practice of faith, ethics, and respect for religious beliefs.

- b. Social Attitudes (KI-2): This domain emphasizes the development of social values, such as cooperation, respect for others, empathy, and social responsibility.
- c. Knowledge (KI-3): This competency refers to the development of cognitive skills, including understanding and applying knowledge in various subject areas.
- d. Skills (KI-4): This domain focuses on the development of practical and intellectual skills, enabling students to use what they have learned in real-world situations and activities.

Based on these core competencies, *Kompetensi Dasar* (KD) are developed for each subject area, providing specific learning targets that guide the learning objectives for each grade level. These KD help ensure that learning is focused and aligned with the broader competencies, and they serve as clear benchmarks for students' progress.

3. Teaching and Learning Methods in K13

One of the defining characteristics of the 2013 Curriculum (K13) is its adoption of the scientific approach (*pendekatan saintifik*), which is designed to foster active, critical, and inquiry-based learning. Inspired by the processes of scientific investigation, this approach is structured into five interconnected stages: observing, questioning, experimenting (or exploring), associating (or reasoning), and communicating. These stages are not merely procedural steps but represent a pedagogical shift toward student-centered learning. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2014), the scientific approach aims to

develop learners who are independent, creative, and capable of higher-order thinking. Consequently, the teacher's role transforms from knowledge transmitter to learning facilitator, requiring greater instructional flexibility and classroom orchestration.

In English language teaching, the scientific approach is operationalized through structured engagement with texts and communicative practices. For example, students may begin by reading or listening to a descriptive text during the observing stage, followed by generating questions related to its meaning, structure, or vocabulary in the questioning phase. The experimenting stage involves interactive activities such as discussions, role-plays, or writing tasks that enable learners to explore language use in meaningful contexts. During the associating phase, students analyze grammatical patterns, infer meanings, and connect textual elements to broader communicative purposes. Finally, in the communicating stage, learners articulate their understanding through oral presentations, group discussions, or written compositions. This cyclical process not only reinforces comprehension but also promotes reflective learning and active participation (Hosnan, 2014).

Beyond the scientific approach, K13 also incorporates a genre-based approach rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This framework conceptualizes language as a social semiotic system, emphasizing how texts function within particular contexts. Each genre such as narrative, recount, report, procedure, and exposition is taught with attention to its social function, schematic structure, and linguistic features (Emilia, 2017). Through this explicit scaffolding,

students develop awareness of how language choices shape meaning. Feez and Joyce (1998) argue that genre-based pedagogy supports literacy development by linking form, meaning, and context in systematic ways.

However, the simultaneous implementation of the scientific and genre-based approaches requires substantial pedagogical competence and preparation. Teachers must design lesson plans that align with the five scientific stages while also ensuring explicit instruction of genre conventions. This dual demand can increase instructional complexity, particularly in classrooms with diverse student abilities and limited time allocation. Therefore, examining teachers' experiences in applying these approaches becomes essential. Their perspectives help reveal how the intended pedagogical ideals of K13 are translated into classroom realities and how feasible these instructional models are in practice.

4. Assessment of K13

In *Kurikulum 2013* (K13), assessment is designed to be authentic and holistic. It moves beyond traditional methods like multiple-choice tests and focuses more on real-life tasks and student development. The goal is to evaluate not only what students know, but also how they behave and what they can do in practice.

Assessment in K13 is grouped into three main types:

- a. Attitudinal Assessment (*Penilaian Sikap*): This type of assessment looks at students' behavior and character. Teachers observe how students act during classroom activities, such as showing respect, responsibility, and cooperation.

- b. Knowledge Assessment (*Penilaian Pengetahuan*): This includes written or oral tests that measure what students know about a topic. It can be done through quizzes, exams, or question and answer sessions.
- c. Skills Assessment (*Penilaian Keterampilan*): This focuses on what students can do. It includes tasks like making presentations, doing projects, participating in group work, or submitting portfolios.

Unlike traditional systems that use numbers or scores, teachers in K13 are expected to give descriptive feedback. This means instead of just giving a score, the teacher explains what the student did well, what needs improvement, and how they have progressed. This kind of formative assessment is meant to help students learn and grow continuously, not just prepare for exams (kemendikbud, 2013).

However, putting this into practice has been challenging. Many teachers found the system to be complex and time-consuming. Writing detailed comments for each student, especially in large classes, requires a lot of time and effort. Some also felt confused about how to create or use assessment rubrics effectively. Another challenge is the lack of digital support systems, which could help with managing data and giving feedback more efficiently (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020).

5. Challenges and Criticisms of K13

Although *Kurikulum* 2013 (K13) was introduced with the aim of improving educational quality through competency-based and student-centered learning, its implementation encountered several significant challenges. One frequently discussed issue concerns the centralized nature of its rollout. Curriculum policies were primarily formulated at the national level, and several studies report that

teachers and school administrators experienced limited involvement in the early stages of policy formulation (Mulyasa, 2014). Consequently, many educators felt insufficiently prepared to translate policy expectations into effective classroom practices. This limited consultation contributed to varied interpretations and inconsistencies in implementation across different schools.

Another prominent challenge relates to the administrative demands imposed by the new assessment system. K13 introduced a multidimensional evaluation framework assessing students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. While conceptually aligned with holistic education principles, the practical application of this system significantly increased teachers' administrative workload. Teachers were required to produce detailed narrative feedback, maintain observational records, and complete descriptive reports for each student. For educators managing large class sizes, these responsibilities often reduced the time available for instructional planning and reflection (Supriyadi & Yuwana, 2019).

In addition, difficulties emerged in implementing the scientific approach, particularly in English language classrooms. Although the five-step structure observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating was designed to promote inquiry-based learning, its systematic sequence was not always easily adaptable to communicative language teaching contexts. Language learning often requires spontaneous interaction, immediate feedback, and flexible classroom dynamics. Some studies suggest that teachers struggled to balance the structured procedural stages with the interactive nature of language instruction (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). These challenges were further compounded by insufficient

and uneven professional development opportunities. Many teachers were expected to adopt new pedagogical models and assessment practices without sustained training or ongoing mentoring support (Yulia, 2013).

Taken together, these pedagogical and administrative challenges shaped teachers' lived experiences under K13. While the curriculum introduced progressive educational ideals, its implementation highlighted the importance of contextual readiness, institutional support, and teacher involvement in curriculum reform. The accumulation of these experiences later informed discussions surrounding the need for a more flexible and adaptive curriculum framework, which eventually materialized in the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

B. Overview of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KM)

Kurikulum Merdeka (KM) was officially introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2022 as part of a broader educational reform initiative following the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy was developed to provide greater flexibility in curriculum implementation and to address limitations identified in previous curricular frameworks, including *Kurikulum* 2013 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Rather than emphasizing uniform standards across schools, KM promotes adaptability, contextual relevance, and differentiated learning pathways.

The philosophical foundation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* is rooted in the concept of *merdeka belajar* (freedom to learn), which emphasizes meaningful learning experiences and increased autonomy for schools and teachers. Within this

framework, educators are encouraged to design learning activities that align with students' needs, interests, and local contexts. This shift reflects a broader move toward decentralization in curriculum practice, positioning teachers not merely as implementers of policy but as active designers of instructional processes.

1. Principles and Vision of KM

Kurikulum Merdeka is guided by several key principles, including student-centered learning, contextualized instruction, project-based learning, curricular flexibility, and a focus on essential competencies. By reducing content overload and emphasizing core learning outcomes, the curriculum aims to allow deeper conceptual understanding rather than surface-level coverage of materials.

Central to this vision is the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, which outlines the expected characteristics of Indonesian learners, including faith and morality, global awareness, independence, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). These attributes reflect an effort to integrate academic competence with character development.

However, while the principles of KM emphasize autonomy and personalization, their successful implementation depends largely on teachers' ability to interpret curriculum guidelines and translate them into effective classroom practices. The increased flexibility offered by KM simultaneously expands professional freedom and professional responsibility, requiring teachers to exercise pedagogical judgment in designing learning experiences.

2. Implementation in English Language Teaching (ELT)

In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), *Kurikulum Merdeka* introduces several notable adjustments. The curriculum framework grants teachers greater discretion in selecting learning materials and designing instructional modules that correspond to students' interests, cultural backgrounds, and global issues. According to Kemendikbudristek (2022), English learning under KM emphasizes communicative competence, contextual language use, and meaningful interaction rather than isolated mastery of grammatical structures.

Furthermore, KM promotes differentiated instruction to address diverse student abilities and learning profiles. This approach aligns with contemporary language education principles that recognize the importance of adapting instruction to varied learner needs (Tomlinson, 2014). Authentic learning activities such as presentations, storytelling, collaborative projects, and media production are encouraged to support communicative and functional language use (Sari & Pratama, 2023).

Under this framework, English teachers are no longer strictly bound to standardized textbooks. Instead, they are expected to develop *Modul Ajar* aligned with the *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP) for each phase of education (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). These modules integrate language competencies with the values embedded in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and global awareness.

While this autonomy enhances professional flexibility, it simultaneously increases teachers' responsibility in curriculum planning and material development. Studies suggest that successful implementation depends heavily on teachers'

curriculum literacy, pedagogical competence, and access to sustained professional development (Putri & Rohim, 2023). Therefore, examining teachers' experiences in adapting ELT practices under KM is essential to understanding how policy intentions are translated into classroom realities.

3. Assessment System in KM

Assessment in KM is formative in nature, with an emphasis on feedback and continuous learning progress. The key aspects include:

- a. Diagnostic assessment at the beginning of each phase or unit;
- b. Formative assessment throughout the learning process to monitor and support students;
- c. Summative assessment, when necessary, to evaluate achievement of learning outcomes;
- d. Descriptive feedback, highlighting students' strengths and areas for improvement;
- e. Portfolio and self-assessment, to develop student metacognition and autonomy.

Overall, teachers are guided to move away from grading every task, and instead to focus on providing qualitative, constructive feedback that supports students' learning journeys. This feedback is intended not just to point out mistakes, but to help students recognize their strengths, understand areas that need improvement, and take meaningful steps toward growth. By shifting the focus from scores to learning progress, students are more likely to feel motivated, take

ownership of their learning, and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Utami & Wulandari, 2023).

4. Challenges and Opportunities

While *Kurikulum Merdeka* offers promising innovations, its implementation has not been without challenges:

- a. Variability in teacher readiness: Not all teachers are familiar or comfortable with designing their own teaching modules or project-based learning.
- b. Infrastructure gaps: Some schools, especially in rural areas, lack access to resources that support digital or creative learning environments.
- c. Inconsistent support systems: Although the government has developed platforms like *Merdeka Mengajar*, their adoption varies across regions.

Despite these challenges, a growing number of teachers value the increased autonomy that *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides. The flexibility to design lessons that are relevant to students' needs and local contexts is seen as a positive shift. In fact, research by Putri and Rohim (2023) suggests that educators with strong backgrounds in professional development tend to adapt more easily and effectively to the new curriculum.

C. Differences Between K13 and *Kurikulum Merdeka*

1. Curriculum Structure and Organization

Kurikulum 2013 (K13) and *Kurikulum Merdeka* differ in the way their curriculum components are organized. In K13, curriculum planning is closely associated with *Kompetensi Inti* (KI), *Kompetensi Dasar* (KD), syllabus, and lesson

plans (RPP). In contrast, *Kurikulum Merdeka* uses *Capaian Pembelajaran (CP)*, *Tujuan Pembelajaran (TP)*, and *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)* as important components in planning learning. Aulia et al. (2023) explain that these differences affect how teachers plan, implement, and evaluate learning. Thus, the transition to *Kurikulum Merdeka* requires teachers to understand a different curriculum structure and adjust their planning practices accordingly.

The difference in curriculum organization also reflects a change in the way learning competencies are formulated. K13 organizes competencies through KI and KD, whereas *Kurikulum Merdeka* organizes learning achievements through phases and *Capaian Pembelajaran*. Pratyca et al. (2023) note that the two curricula differ not only in their structure but also in their characteristics, objectives, competencies, assessment, and the roles involved in implementation.

2. Learning Content and Focus

K13 and *Kurikulum Merdeka* also differ in their learning content and educational focus. K13 emphasizes the development of students' knowledge, understanding, abilities, values, attitudes, and interests. Meanwhile, *Kurikulum Merdeka* places greater emphasis on learning that is adapted to students' abilities while providing broader opportunities for the development of character and competencies (Pratyca et al., 2023).

A further difference can be seen in the emphasis placed on the depth and relevance of learning. The comparison presented by Aulia et al. (2023) indicates that the two curricula have different orientations and content within their respective curriculum components. *Kurikulum Merdeka* gives teachers greater opportunity to organize

learning around the intended learning outcomes and students' learning needs, while K13 provides a more established framework through KI, KD, syllabus, and RPP.

3. Learning Approaches and Flexibility

The learning approaches used in K13 and Kurikulum Merdeka also demonstrate an important difference. K13 is associated with the scientific approach, commonly implemented through the 5M activities of observing, questioning, collecting information, associating, and communicating. *Kurikulum Merdeka*, in comparison, provides greater flexibility in selecting and organizing learning approaches according to students' needs and the learning context. Pratycia et al. (2023) describe *Kurikulum Merdeka* as providing broader space for learning that corresponds to students' abilities and for developing character and competencies.

This difference is also reflected in teachers' understanding of the two curricula. Afgany et al. (2023), in a qualitative study involving an English teacher, found that the teacher understood differences between the two curricula particularly in their general characteristics and learning methods. The study also found that the teacher perceived the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* as requiring adjustment and faced challenges related to supporting facilities and infrastructure.

4. Assessment Practices

Assessment is another area in which K13 and *Kurikulum Merdeka* demonstrate differences. Pratycia et al. (2023) identify assessment as one of the important aspects distinguishing the two curricula. The difference is related to how assessment is positioned within the broader curriculum and learning process. Recent comparative research by Parade et al. (2025) also identifies assessment as

one of the major areas of difference between K13 and *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Their study reports that K13 was implemented with a more structured approach, while *Kurikulum Merdeka* places greater emphasis on formative assessment as part of the learning process. This difference requires teachers to adjust not only the assessment instruments they use but also the way they interpret assessment results and connect them with subsequent learning activities.

5. Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

The transition from K13 to *Kurikulum Merdeka* also affects teachers' roles and responsibilities. Under K13, teachers work within a relatively established curriculum structure and implement learning based on the competencies and learning framework provided by the curriculum. *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides greater flexibility for teachers to interpret curriculum requirements and adapt learning according to students' needs. Pratyca et al. (2023) identify the role of teachers as one of the aspects that differs between the two curricula.

Afgany et al. (2023) found that teachers' understanding plays an important role in curriculum implementation. Their study showed that an English teacher had a better understanding of several aspects of *Kurikulum Merdeka* than of K13, although the teacher had already implemented many aspects of K13 in practice. The study also identified challenges related to facilities and supporting factors in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*. These findings indicate that curriculum change does not simply involve replacing one curriculum with another but also requires teachers to develop new understandings and adapt their existing practices. Parade et al. (2025) similarly report a shift in the teacher's role toward that of a more active

facilitator under *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Their comparative study identifies teacher roles, alongside structure, pedagogy, and assessment, as important areas distinguishing the implementation of the two curricula.

D. Curriculum Change

Curriculum development in Indonesia has always been closely connected to the nation's educational, political, and social dynamics. The curriculum is not merely a formal document that regulates teaching content; rather, it reflects how a country defines the purpose of education, the competencies expected from learners, and the type of citizens it aims to cultivate. As educational demands continue to evolve shaped by globalization, technological advancement, and internal reform agendas curriculum change becomes an inevitable and strategic response (Nurhadi, 2004). In the Indonesian context, curriculum reform has occurred repeatedly as part of broader efforts to improve educational quality and relevance. Each reform reflects the government's attempt to address emerging challenges, ranging from low student achievement to the need for character education and 21st-century competencies. However, despite these intentions, the process of implementing curriculum change often reveals a gap between policy design and classroom realities (Rahmawati, 2019).

1. Historical Patterns of Curriculum Reform in Indonesia

Since gaining independence in 1945, Indonesia has experienced several curriculum reforms, each shaped by the sociopolitical climate and educational priorities of its time. Early curricula, such as the 1947 Curriculum, emphasized

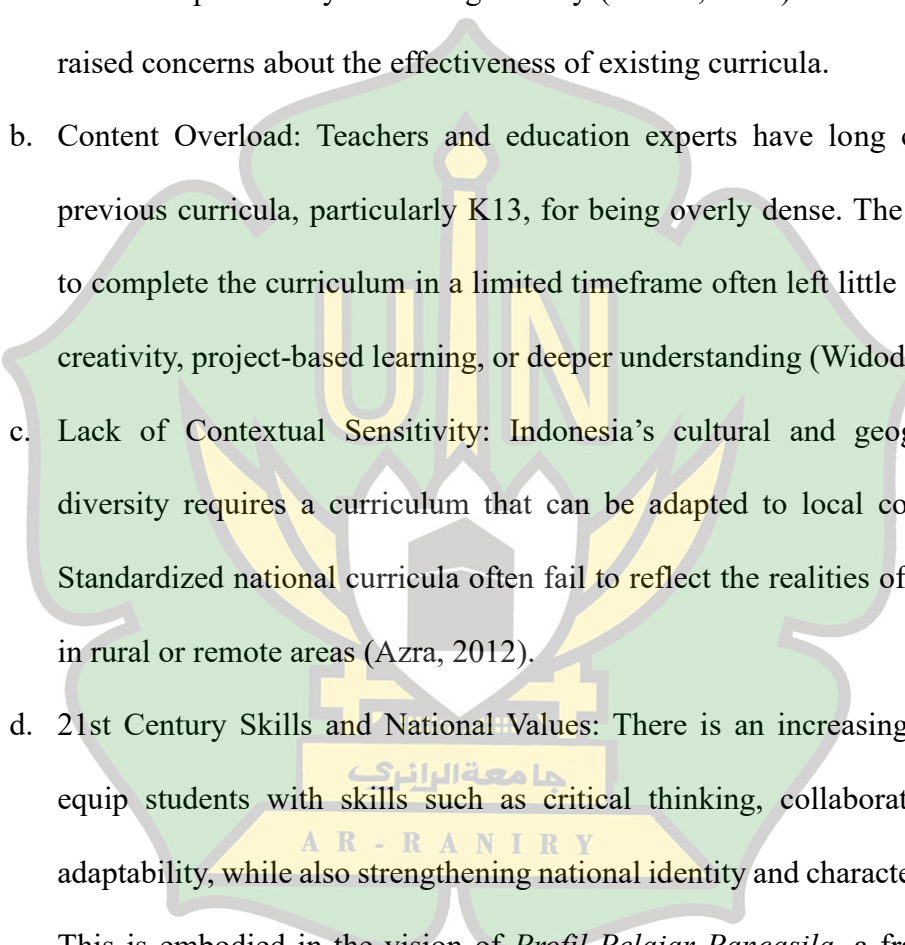
knowledge transmission and national identity formation. Subsequent reforms in 1975 and 1984 introduced more structured instructional planning and behavioral objectives, reflecting a more centralized and efficiency-oriented approach (Mulyasa, 2014).

The 1994 and 2004 curricula marked a shift toward competency-based education, aligning Indonesia with global trends that prioritized measurable learning outcomes and student competencies (Majid, 2014). This direction was further developed in the 2006 Curriculum (KTSP), which granted schools greater autonomy to design syllabi based on national standards, signaling a move toward decentralization (Mulyasa, 2007).

The 2013 Curriculum (K13) introduced a scientific approach to learning (5M: observing, questioning, experimenting, reasoning, and communicating), strengthened character education, and emphasized higher-order thinking skills (Kemendikbud, 2013; Kurniasih & Sani, 2014). Most recently, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, officially implemented in 2022, promotes flexibility, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning aligned with the vision of Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Each of these shifts reveals the state's continuing effort to balance national identity, global relevance, and localized educational needs (Mulyasa, 2014).

2. Reasons Behind Curriculum Change

The decision to reform the national curriculum in Indonesia has been driven by several interconnected factors. These include both internal challenges within the education system and external pressures such as international benchmarks.

- 
- a. Low Academic Performance: International assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) consistently show that Indonesian students perform below average in reading, mathematics, and science. In PISA 2018, over 70% of 15-year-olds failed to reach minimum proficiency in reading literacy (OECD, 2019). These outcomes raised concerns about the effectiveness of existing curricula.
- b. Content Overload: Teachers and education experts have long criticized previous curricula, particularly K13, for being overly dense. The pressure to complete the curriculum in a limited timeframe often left little room for creativity, project-based learning, or deeper understanding (Widodo, 2017).
- c. Lack of Contextual Sensitivity: Indonesia's cultural and geographical diversity requires a curriculum that can be adapted to local conditions. Standardized national curricula often fail to reflect the realities of students in rural or remote areas (Azra, 2012).
- d. 21st Century Skills and National Values: There is an increasing need to equip students with skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability, while also strengthening national identity and character values. This is embodied in the vision of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, a framework introduced in *Kurikulum Merdeka* to guide the development of students who are independent, collaborative, and globally competent while maintaining Indonesian values (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).
- e. Global Educational Trends: The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning has influenced curriculum development globally.

Indonesia's reforms mirror these international trends by promoting autonomy, inquiry-based learning, and technology integration (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010).

These factors reveal that curriculum change is not merely administrative but deeply pedagogical and philosophical in nature.

3. Problems Arising from Curriculum Changes

Although curriculum reforms in Indonesia aim to improve educational quality and relevance, their implementation often brings about significant challenges. These problems highlight the complexity of translating national policy into classroom practice and reveal structural and contextual issues within the education system.

a. Teachers Are Not Fully Ready

One of the main obstacles in implementing curriculum change is the lack of sufficient training and support for teachers. Curriculum reforms such as the transition from *Kurikulum* 2013 to *Kurikulum Merdeka* require new pedagogical skills, including differentiated instruction, student-centered learning, and the integration of project-based approaches. However, many teachers report feeling unprepared to adopt these changes due to limited access to professional development and insufficient mentoring (Imelda & Susanto, 2023). As a result, the effectiveness of the new curriculum is often compromised by inconsistent classroom practices.

b. Unequal Access to Educational Resources

Curriculum implementation requires adequate infrastructure and learning materials, which are not evenly distributed across the country. In particular, schools in rural or remote regions may lack access to internet connectivity, digital devices, updated textbooks, or even qualified teaching staff. This inequality poses a serious threat to the equitable realization of curriculum goals and further widens the learning gap between urban and rural students (Suharti, 2012). Without addressing these disparities, curriculum reform may unintentionally reinforce educational inequality.

c. Misalignment Between Curriculum and Assessment

A frequent issue in Indonesian curriculum reform is the disconnect between the intended learning outcomes and the national assessment system. While recent curricula especially *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasize holistic education, character development, and 21st-century skills, assessments often continue to focus narrowly on academic content and rote learning (Raihani, 2017). This misalignment discourages teachers from adopting innovative teaching methods, as they remain pressured to "teach to the test" in order to meet performance standards.

d. Resistance to Change

Curriculum reform can encounter resistance from various stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, and parents. This resistance is often rooted in a preference for familiar teaching methods, a lack of understanding of the new curriculum's purpose, or skepticism about the feasibility of implementation. Cultural beliefs and long-standing educational traditions may also conflict with

reform initiatives, leading to superficial compliance rather than genuine transformation (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010).

e. Bureaucratic and Policy Problems

Effective curriculum reform depends not only on strong design but also on efficient governance. In practice, however, many schools face bureaucratic obstacles such as delayed distribution of curriculum materials, unclear implementation guidelines, and limited involvement of teachers in policy-making. Moreover, frequent leadership changes at the national level often disrupt the continuity of curriculum policy, creating confusion and a lack of long-term direction (Darmaningtyas, 2006).

These problems suggest that curriculum change in Indonesia is a complex and multi-layered process. Without addressing foundational issues such as teacher capacity, infrastructure, and governance reforms risk becoming nominal rather than impactful.

E. Teachers' Voices in Curriculum Change

Curriculum change is not only a transformation of educational policy but also a process that directly influences teachers' professional practices and classroom experiences. In curriculum implementation, teachers are not merely passive recipients of policy; instead, they actively interpret and respond to curriculum changes based on their classroom realities and teaching experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Therefore, understanding teachers' voices becomes

important in examining how curriculum change is experienced and implemented in educational contexts.

1. The Concept of Teachers' Voices

Teachers' voices refer to teachers' perspectives, experiences, beliefs, interpretations, and reflections regarding educational practices and curriculum changes. The concept emphasizes that teachers are not merely implementers of educational policy, but active participants who construct meaning from their classroom realities and professional practices. According to Clandinin and Connelly (1995), teachers' voices emerge from lived experiences and professional narratives developed through everyday teaching practices. Similarly, Goodson (2003) explains that teachers' voices are closely connected to teachers' professional identities, experiences, and life histories, which influence how they understand and respond to educational change. These voices provide meaningful insights into how educational policies are interpreted and practiced in real classroom contexts.

Recent studies also emphasize the importance of teachers' voices in understanding educational practices and classroom realities. Suryanto and Brawijaya (2024) explain that teachers' voices reflect teachers' perspectives, experiences, and challenges encountered during teaching and learning processes. Similarly, Harmawati et al. (2024) state that teachers' voices represent teachers' understandings, concerns, and experiences regarding educational challenges and classroom implementation. Therefore, teachers' voices become important sources of information in understanding how teachers respond to educational change and curriculum implementation.

a. Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' perspectives refer to how teachers view and understand educational policies, curriculum implementation, and classroom practices. These perspectives are influenced by teachers' professional backgrounds, teaching experiences, and interactions within the educational environment (Suryanto & Brawijaya, 2024).

b. Teachers' Experiences

Teachers' experiences refer to teachers' direct involvement in teaching and learning activities, particularly during periods of curriculum change. These experiences provide insights into the practical realities, challenges, and opportunities encountered in classroom implementation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

c. Teachers' Beliefs

Teachers' beliefs relate to teachers' personal and professional values regarding teaching, learning, and education. These beliefs influence how teachers respond to curriculum reform and make decisions in their instructional practices (Goodson, 2003).

d. Teachers' Interpretations

Teachers' interpretations refer to how teachers understand and reconstruct curriculum policies based on their classroom contexts and students' needs. Ball (1994) argues that educational policies are not implemented uniformly, but are interpreted differently by teachers according to their professional understanding and contextual realities.

e. Teachers' Reflections

Teachers' reflections refer to teachers' evaluations and considerations regarding their teaching practices and curriculum implementation. Through reflection, teachers assess the effectiveness of their instructional approaches and identify necessary adjustments to improve the learning process (Priestley et al., 2012).

2. Teachers' Roles in Curriculum Change

Teachers play an important role in the implementation of curriculum change because they are directly involved in applying curriculum policies in classroom practices. Although curriculum reforms are designed at the national level, their success depends on how teachers understand, interpret, and implement the curriculum in real teaching situations. According to Ball (1994), educational policies are not implemented in a fixed and uniform way, but are interpreted and reconstructed by teachers based on their professional understanding and classroom realities. Therefore, teachers become the main actors who connect curriculum expectations with students' needs and classroom conditions.

In the process of curriculum transition, teachers are not only responsible for delivering learning materials, but also for adjusting teaching methods, classroom management, learning activities, and assessment practices to meet new curriculum demands. Teachers are also expected to create meaningful and student-centered learning environments that support students' learning development. In the transition from *Kurikulum 2013 (K13)* to *Kurikulum Merdeka*, teachers are required to become more flexible and creative in designing learning activities and teaching materials (Putri & Rohim, 2023).

Furthermore, teachers' professional competence and readiness strongly influence the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Suhartini (2021) explains that teachers' creativity, adaptability, and professional understanding are important factors in supporting successful curriculum reform. Similarly, Rahmawati (2019) states that teachers play a crucial role in responding to

curriculum challenges because they directly experience the realities of classroom implementation. Therefore, teachers' active involvement and professional readiness are essential in ensuring the successful implementation of curriculum change.

3. Teacher Agency in Curriculum Change

Teacher agency refers to teachers' capacity to make professional decisions and act purposefully in responding to educational change (Priestley et al., 2012). In the context of curriculum reform, teachers are not merely passive recipients of policy, but active agents who interpret, adapt, and implement curriculum changes based on their classroom situations and students' needs. According to Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015), teacher agency reflects teachers' ability to make professional judgments and take active roles in shaping teaching and learning processes. Therefore, teacher agency becomes important because teachers play a central role in determining how curriculum policies are practiced in real educational contexts.

During periods of curriculum transition, teachers are expected to adjust their teaching methods, learning activities, classroom management, and assessment practices to align with new curriculum demands. In the transition from *Kurikulum* 2013 (K13) to *Kurikulum Merdeka*, teachers are required to apply more flexible and student-centered learning approaches. This shift encourages teachers to become more creative and independent in designing instructional materials and meaningful learning experiences (Putri & Rohim, 2023). Similarly, Mulyasa (2023) explains that *Kurikulum Merdeka* requires teachers to have greater flexibility and innovation in managing classroom learning activities.

Furthermore, teacher agency is influenced by several factors, such as professional competence, teaching experience, institutional support, and access to professional development. Priestley et al. (2012) explain that teachers are more likely to adapt successfully to curriculum change when they receive adequate support and opportunities for professional learning. Likewise, Suhartini (2021) states that teachers' readiness, adaptability, and professional competence strongly affect the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in classroom practice. Rahmawati (2019) also highlights that institutional support and collaboration among teachers contribute significantly to teachers' ability to respond to curriculum challenges.

In addition, teacher agency allows teachers to respond to classroom challenges and make adjustments based on students' learning conditions. Teachers continuously negotiate and reconstruct their teaching practices to ensure that curriculum objectives can be implemented effectively. Therefore, teacher agency plays an important role in supporting successful curriculum change and improving the quality of teaching and learning processes.

4. Challenges Faced by Teachers During Curriculum Change

Curriculum change often presents various challenges for teachers because they are required to adapt to new educational policies, teaching approaches, and classroom demands. In the transition from *Kurikulum* 2013 (K13) to *Kurikulum Merdeka*, teachers face difficulties in understanding new curriculum concepts, adjusting instructional practices, and implementing student-centered learning approaches. According to Rahmawati (2019), curriculum reform requires teachers

to continuously adapt their professional practices, which can create challenges in classroom implementation. Similarly, Ball (1994) explains that curriculum policies are often interpreted differently in practice, creating adjustment difficulties for teachers during implementation.

One of the major challenges faced by teachers is the development of teaching modules and instructional materials. Under *Kurikulum Merdeka*, teachers are expected to design more flexible and contextualized learning activities that suit students' needs and learning conditions. This requirement increases teachers' responsibilities in preparing learning materials and instructional strategies (Putri & Rohim, 2023). (2023) also states that *Kurikulum Merdeka* demands teachers to become more creative and independent in designing meaningful learning experiences.

In addition, teachers often experience technological and administrative challenges during curriculum implementation. Teachers are required to complete various digital-based administrative tasks, such as preparing online teaching documents, assessment reports, and learning modules. According to Suhartini (2021), limited technological skills and inadequate training may affect teachers' readiness in adapting to curriculum changes. Rahmawati (2019) further explains that technological adaptation can become a significant obstacle, particularly for teachers who are less familiar with digital learning systems and online administration.

Furthermore, teachers may face challenges in adapting classroom management and assessment practices to align with the principles of *Kurikulum*

Merdeka. The shift toward student-centered learning requires teachers to apply more interactive and flexible teaching methods while also addressing diverse student abilities and learning needs. Priestley et al. (2012) explain that educational change often requires teachers to reconstruct their professional practices and continuously negotiate classroom realities. Therefore, curriculum change is not only an administrative transformation but also a pedagogical and professional challenge that requires continuous learning, adaptation, and institutional support.

5. Teachers' Strategies in Responding to Curriculum Change

In responding to curriculum change, teachers employ various strategies to adapt to new educational demands and curriculum expectations. These strategies are important because curriculum reform requires teachers to continuously adjust their instructional practices, professional responsibilities, and classroom management. According to Priestley et al. (2012), teachers actively negotiate and reconstruct their professional practices in order to respond effectively to educational change. Similarly, Biesta et al. (2015) explain that teachers play active roles in adapting teaching and learning processes through professional decision-making and continuous professional adjustment.

One common strategy used by teachers is participating in professional development activities to improve their understanding of curriculum implementation and educational changes. Training programs, seminars, and educational workshops can help teachers strengthen their professional competence and readiness in implementing new curriculum policies (Putri & Rohim, 2023). In addition, Suhartini (2021) states that continuous learning opportunities and

institutional support are important in helping teachers adapt to curriculum reform effectively.

Teachers also develop various forms of professional adaptation in responding to curriculum change. Rahmawati (2019) explains that teachers often adjust their instructional practices and professional responsibilities according to classroom conditions, students' needs, and curriculum expectations. This adaptation process requires teachers to continuously learn, evaluate, and improve their teaching practices in order to support effective curriculum implementation. Furthermore, collaboration and professional communication among teachers also contribute to the adaptation process during curriculum transition. Through sharing experiences and discussing educational challenges, teachers can gain new insights and broaden their understanding of curriculum implementation. Mulyasa (2023) explains that collaboration and professional support can strengthen teachers' readiness and confidence in responding to curriculum reform.

Overall, teachers' strategies in responding to curriculum change reflect their adaptability, professional commitment, and willingness to improve the quality of teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the success of curriculum implementation is influenced not only by educational policy itself, but also by teachers' ability to adapt, interpret, and respond to curriculum demands effectively.

CHAPTER III

METODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this study to explore English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and responses to the curriculum change (Creswell, 2014). This chapter describes the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures used to address the research objectives..

A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. A qualitative approach was appropriate as it allows the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and responses within their natural context (Creswell, 2014).

The descriptive design was used to present teachers' views as they are, focusing on how they experience, interpret, and respond to curriculum change in their classroom practices. This approach enabled the researcher to identify key themes related to teachers' challenges and strategies in adapting to the new curriculum. Therefore, this design is suitable for examining teachers' voices in real educational settings (Patton, 2002).

B. Research Participants

The participants of this study were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). This study was conducted at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh, and the participants consisted of English teachers who had experience in implementing both the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The selection criteria included teachers who had at least three years of experience teaching using the K13 curriculum and had implemented the *Kurikulum Merdeka* for at least one semester. These criteria were important to ensure that the participants had sufficient experience to provide meaningful insights into the curriculum transition (Patton, 2002).

A total of 4 teachers from grades 7, 8, and 9 were involved in this study. The inclusion of teachers from different grade levels aimed to provide varied perspectives on the curriculum change, as each level may present different challenges and teaching approaches. This sample size was considered sufficient to obtain in-depth data while maintaining the focus and depth required in qualitative research (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

C. Method of Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews as the primary method to explore English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provide flexibility for participants to express their experiences,

opinions, and reflections in depth, while still allowing the researcher to focus on specific topics relevant to the research objectives (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Creswell, 2014).

Prior to the data collection process, the researcher arranged interview schedules with each participant based on their availability. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a quiet and comfortable environment to ensure effective communication and minimize distractions. Before the interviews began, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time, in accordance with ethical considerations in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

During the interviews, the researcher used a set of guiding questions to explore teachers' experiences in implementing both the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The questions focused on key aspects such as the differences between the two curricula, the challenges faced during implementation, and the strategies used by teachers to adapt to the curriculum changes. The semi-structured format also allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions to gain deeper insights into participants' responses (Kvale, 2007).

Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 40 minutes, allowing sufficient time for participants to elaborate on their perspectives. All interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to ensure accuracy in data collection and transcription. In addition, field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information that could support the interpretation of the data. This method

enabled the researcher to obtain rich and detailed information relevant to the objectives of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

D. Method of Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a flexible and systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data. Therefore, this method was considered appropriate for analyzing the interview data in this study, particularly the English teachers' experiences, perceptions, challenges, and strategies during the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the Kurikulum Merdeka.

The data analysis followed the six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. These six phases provided a systematic framework for analyzing the interview data and identifying meaningful patterns related to the research questions.

The first phase was familiarizing oneself with the data. After conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher transcribed the recorded interviews and read and re-read the transcripts to become familiar with the data. During this process, the researcher noted important ideas and recurring information related to

the teachers' experiences with the transition from K13 to the Kurikulum Merdeka. This phase was conducted to develop an overall understanding of the interview data before proceeding to the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The second phase was generating initial codes. The researcher examined the interview transcripts and identified meaningful statements and information relevant to the research questions. Initial codes were assigned to relevant segments of the data. The coding focused on information concerning teachers' experiences and perceptions of curriculum change, challenges encountered during the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, and strategies used by teachers to adapt to the new curriculum. This process corresponds to Braun and Clarke's (2006) second phase, in which relevant features of the data are systematically coded across the dataset.

The third phase was searching for themes. After generating the initial codes, the researcher examined relationships and similarities among the codes and grouped related codes into potential themes. The researcher looked for recurring patterns across the participants' responses and organized the codes into broader categories that represented meaningful aspects of the teachers' experiences. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase involves collating codes into potential themes and gathering relevant data for each potential theme.

The fourth phase was reviewing themes. The researcher reviewed the potential themes by examining the coded data and comparing them with the interview transcripts as a whole. This process was conducted to determine whether the themes adequately represented the data and were relevant to the research

questions. Where necessary, codes were reorganized and potential themes were refined to ensure that each theme had a clear and coherent meaning. This process followed the fourth phase of thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves reviewing themes against the coded extracts and the entire dataset.

The fifth phase was defining and naming themes. After reviewing and refining the potential themes, the researcher identified the central meaning and scope of each theme and assigned an appropriate name to each theme. The themes were defined based on the main ideas represented in the participants' responses and their relevance to the objectives of the study. This phase follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendation that researchers refine the specifics of each theme and clearly define and name them.

The final phase was producing the report. In this phase, the researcher organized and presented the findings according to the themes developed during the analysis. Relevant excerpts from the interview transcripts were used to support the interpretation of the findings. The identified themes were then discussed in relation to the theoretical framework and previous studies presented in Chapter II. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe this final phase as the stage in which the researcher selects relevant extracts, conducts the final analysis, relates the analysis to the research questions and literature, and produces the research report.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews with English teachers at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh. The findings are organized into several themes that emerged from the data analysis, focusing on teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. These themes include teachers' perceptions, challenges, and strategies in responding to the curriculum change.

A. Research Findings

This study explored English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh. The findings were obtained through semi-structured interviews with selected participants who had direct experience in implementing both curricula in their teaching practice. The participants' responses revealed a range of perceptions, challenges, and strategies related to the curriculum transition. These findings reflect how teachers interpret, adapt, and respond to changes in curriculum policy within their specific classroom contexts.

The data collected were categorized into three major themes in alignment with the research objectives: (1) teachers' voices of curriculum change, (2) challenges faced by teachers during the transition, and (3) teachers' strategies in adapting to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Each sub-section below presents detailed insights supported by direct interview excerpts. These excerpts highlight the

participants' lived experiences and provide a deeper understanding of how curriculum change is experienced at the classroom level.

1. Teachers' Voices of Curriculum Change

a. Teacher' Perceptions on *Kurikulum Merdeka*

One of the most prominent findings in this study is that teachers perceive *Kurikulum Merdeka* as both a progression and a challenge in the context of curriculum change. While the curriculum provides greater flexibility and opportunities for student-centered learning, it also requires significant adaptation, particularly for teachers who are accustomed to the previous system. AS described his perspective as follows:

“For us as teachers, curriculum change is not something to be feared. Basically, what we teach is the language, not the curriculum itself. The curriculum is merely a tool or guideline. Therefore, whether it is the 2013 Curriculum or the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the ultimate goal remains the same, which is to educate students. If asked whether this is progress or a challenge, I would say it is both. In terms of flexibility, it is a form of progress, but in terms of adaptation, especially for senior teachers, it is also a challenge.”

This was further emphasized by AD, who highlighted both the advantages and the challenges of the new curriculum:

“I perceive the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* as a form of progress, as this curriculum provides greater flexibility for teachers to adapt learning to the actual conditions in the classroom. Under K13, teachers tended to be more bound to completing content targets, whereas in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the focus shifts toward ensuring that students truly understand the material. However, on the other hand, this change also presents a significant challenge. Teachers are required to change their mindset...”

The interview responses from the participants highlight that *Kurikulum Merdeka* is generally perceived as a more flexible and student-centered curriculum compared to the previous curriculum. AS emphasized that curriculum change is not

inherently problematic, as the core objective of teaching remains the same educating students effectively. However, he acknowledged that the increased flexibility introduced by *Kurikulum Merdeka* brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly in terms of adaptation, especially for senior teachers who are more familiar with structured systems such as K13.

Similarly, AD emphasized that *Kurikulum Merdeka* allows teachers to tailor instruction based on students' needs and classroom realities. This reflects a shift from a content-oriented approach toward a more learning-centered perspective, where understanding becomes more important than simply completing the syllabus. However, this shift also requires teachers to change their mindset and teaching practices, which can be demanding, especially during the early stages of implementation.

Overall, these findings indicate that teachers' perceptions of *Kurikulum Merdeka* are complex and multifaceted. While the curriculum is widely recognized as a positive development due to its flexibility and emphasis on meaningful learning, it also presents challenges related to teacher readiness, adaptation, and changes in pedagogical orientation. This dual perception underscores the dynamic nature of curriculum change in educational practice.

b. Teachers' Interpretations of Curriculum Change

One of the key findings of this study is that teachers identified significant differences between the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, particularly in terms of structure, flexibility, and teaching orientation. While K13

was perceived as more centralized and teacher-directed, *Kurikulum Merdeka* is viewed as more flexible and student-centered. AS explained:

“The most significant difference lies in flexibility. Under K13, learning is highly centralized at the national level. In contrast, under the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, schools and teachers are given the authority to adapt learning to students’ conditions. The differences cover various aspects, including teaching methods, materials, and assessment. However, the consequence is that administrative work becomes more demanding.”

This was further emphasized by SH, who highlighted the shift in instructional approach:

“The most noticeable difference lies in the instructional approach. Under K13, learning tends to be more teacher-directed. In contrast, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes student centered learning...”

The interview responses from the participants clearly illustrate the contrast between the two curricula. AS emphasized that K13 was more centralized, where teaching practices were largely determined at the national level. In contrast, *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides greater autonomy for teachers and schools to adapt teaching methods, materials, and assessment based on students’ needs and classroom contexts. However, the participant also pointed out that this flexibility comes with increased administrative responsibilities, particularly in the preparation of teaching documents and learning modules.

Similarly, SH highlighted that *Kurikulum Merdeka* promotes a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Under K13, teachers tended to dominate classroom instruction, whereas *Kurikulum Merdeka* encourages active student participation and engagement. This shift reflects a broader transformation in pedagogical orientation, where teachers act more as facilitators rather than sole knowledge providers. Overall, these findings indicate that the transition from K13

to *Kurikulum Merdeka* represents both structural and pedagogical changes. While the new curriculum offers greater flexibility and supports more meaningful learning experiences, it also introduces new demands for teachers, particularly in terms of adaptation and increased responsibility in curriculum implementation.

c. Teachers' Experiences During Curriculum Transition

Another important finding of this study concerns teachers' experiences during the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum. The interview responses revealed that the implementation process involved not only professional adjustment but also emotional adaptation. Most participants explained that they initially experienced confusion, uncertainty, and concern when the new curriculum was introduced. However, over time, they gradually adapted through learning processes, training, discussions, and classroom practice. RU described her initial reaction as follows:

“To be honest, when I first heard about it, I was a bit confused and a little worried. In my mind, ‘This is a new curriculum again, how is it different from the old one?’.... If you were asked if you were ready or not, you were actually not very ready. But after participating in MGMP and training, I began to understand what the direction of the Independent Curriculum would be.” - R A N I R Y

RU's response shows that the transition process initially created uncertainty, particularly because teachers had to deal with new concepts, terminology, and instructional systems. The participant explained that understanding the curriculum required time and gradual adjustment. Nevertheless, participation in professional discussions and training helped build confidence and understanding regarding curriculum implementation. Similarly, SH also shared mixed feelings during the early stage of implementation:

“At first, I was a bit surprised and confused. Because it feels like we haven't really mastered K13 yet, a new curriculum has emerged. So the first feeling is mixed, there is worry, there is confusion, but there is also curiosity.”

SH explained that curriculum change brought emotional responses such as confusion and concern, especially because teachers had experienced several curriculum transitions throughout their teaching careers. However, the participant also showed openness and willingness to continue learning despite the challenges faced during the transition process. In addition, participants described their experiences in implementing the Independent Curriculum as an ongoing learning process. SH stated:

“We are still groping, trying, making mistakes, and then improving again.”

This response indicates that teachers viewed curriculum implementation as a gradual process that involved experimentation, reflection, and continuous improvement. Teachers were not immediately able to fully understand or implement all aspects of the curriculum, but instead learned through direct classroom experience and professional practice. Likewise, AD explained that the first year of implementation was still focused on adjustment and understanding:

“My experience in running the Independent Curriculum can be said to be still in the learning and adjustment stage. In the first year, many things are still not fully understood, so the implementation is not optimal.”

AD's response suggests that curriculum transition required teachers to continuously adapt their teaching practices and professional understanding. Although teachers faced difficulties during the early implementation stage, they gradually became more familiar with the curriculum through repeated practice and experience. Overall, the interview responses demonstrate that teachers' experiences

during curriculum transition involved both emotional and professional adaptation. The findings reveal that the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum was not an instant process, but rather a gradual journey that required teachers to continuously learn, adjust, and reconstruct their teaching practices.

2. Challenges Faced by Teachers

a. Challenges in Adapting to Curriculum Change

One of the major challenges faced by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum was the process of adaptation. The interview responses revealed that teachers needed time to adjust to the new curriculum system, particularly in understanding new approaches, terminology, and instructional expectations. Several participants explained that the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum required not only technical adjustment but also changes in mindset and teaching habits. AS explained:

“When I first knew that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum, I felt mentally ready. But technically, of course it takes time. Because there are many new terms that are different from K13... For those of us who are seniors, this needs extra adjustments, but that doesn't mean it can't be done.”

AS emphasized that although teachers were willing to accept curriculum change, the implementation process still required gradual adaptation. The participant highlighted that senior teachers particularly needed additional time to adjust to new systems and instructional structures that differed from the previous curriculum. Similarly, AD also described feelings of uncertainty during the early stage of implementation:

“At first, I was quite surprised and confused. The information we received was still limited, while the demand to implement the new

curriculum was quite large. At that time, I could not say that I was fully prepared.”

AD’s response suggests that limited information and sudden implementation demands created difficulties for teachers during the transition process. The participant explained that teachers initially experienced confusion because they had not yet fully understood the new curriculum system while simultaneously being expected to apply it in classroom practice. This experience was also expressed by SH, who explained:

“At first, I was a bit surprised and confused. Because it feels like we haven't really mastered K13 yet, a new curriculum has emerged.”

SH highlighted that repeated curriculum changes created additional adjustment challenges for teachers. The participant felt that teachers were still in the process of understanding the previous curriculum when another curriculum reform was introduced. This situation required teachers to continuously learn and readjust their professional practices. Overall, the interview responses indicate that adaptation difficulties became one of the primary challenges during the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers needed to adjust not only to new curriculum structures and terminology but also to changes in instructional orientation and professional responsibilities. These findings demonstrate that curriculum transition is a gradual process that requires continuous learning, adjustment, and professional readiness from teachers.

b. Challenges in Understanding New Curriculum Concepts

Another challenge faced by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum was understanding the new concepts and terminology introduced within

the curriculum. The interview responses revealed that teachers needed time to understand various new instructional approaches, assessment systems, and curriculum components that differed from those used in K13. Several participants explained that unfamiliar concepts initially created confusion and uncertainty during the implementation process. AD explained:

“Teachers must also understand various new terms and concepts, such as diagnostic assessment, learning differentiation, and project-based learning.”

AD emphasized that the Independent Curriculum introduced several new educational concepts that required teachers to adjust their understanding and teaching practices. The participant explained that teachers were no longer focused only on delivering learning materials, but also on understanding students’ learning processes and individual needs. This situation required teachers to continuously learn and develop their professional competence. Similarly, RU also shared difficulties in understanding the structure and terminology of the new curriculum:

“Because in the past in K13 the syllabus and basic competencies were provided, now in the Independent Curriculum teachers have to compile more themselves, such as CP, ATP, and teaching modules.”

RU’s response indicates that the shift from a more structured curriculum system to a more flexible curriculum created challenges for teachers in understanding and preparing curriculum components independently. The participant explained that teachers needed to learn unfamiliar concepts and curriculum structures that were not commonly used in K13. In addition, several participants explained that training and workshops helped them gain a basic

understanding of the curriculum, although the learning process was still ongoing.

RU stated:

“According to me, the training is quite helpful, especially to understand new terms and how to structure teaching tools. Although it is not perfect, it at least gives a basic overview.”

This response suggests that teachers still required continuous learning and practical experience to fully understand the curriculum concepts. Although professional development activities provided initial guidance, teachers still needed to interpret and apply the concepts independently within their classroom contexts. Overall, the interview responses demonstrate that understanding new curriculum concepts became one of the significant challenges during the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers were required to learn unfamiliar terminology, instructional approaches, and curriculum structures while simultaneously adapting them to classroom practice. These findings indicate that curriculum change involves not only procedural adjustment but also conceptual and professional adaptation for teachers.

c. Challenges in Developing Teaching Materials and Learning Modules

Another challenge experienced by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum was the development of teaching materials and learning modules. The interview responses revealed that teachers were required to prepare, modify, and adjust instructional materials independently according to students' needs and classroom conditions. This process demanded additional time, creativity, and professional effort from teachers. RU explained:

“There are books, but they are not complete enough. So often you compile your own teaching materials or modify them from other sources.

Sometimes from the internet, sometimes from the results of MGMP discussions.”

RU’s response indicates that the available teaching materials were considered insufficient to fully meet classroom needs. As a result, teachers needed to independently search for references and adapt learning materials based on students’ conditions and learning objectives. This situation increased teachers’ responsibilities in preparing instructional resources. Similarly, AD also emphasized the importance of modifying teaching materials:

“In general, teaching materials are available, both from the government and other sources. However, often these materials still need to be adjusted to the context of students and the school environment. Therefore, I often compile or modify my own teaching materials.”

AD explained that although teaching resources were accessible, teachers still needed to contextualize the materials to make them more suitable for students’ abilities and classroom realities. The participant viewed this process as necessary in order to ensure that learning activities remained relevant and understandable for students. In addition, AS highlighted that teachers could not depend entirely on textbooks in implementing the curriculum:

“But teachers cannot only rely on books. Teachers must be creative. Teachers can be a ‘walking book’ for students.”

AS emphasized that teachers were expected to become more creative and flexible in delivering learning materials. The participant explained that teachers needed to expand and enrich classroom materials beyond what was written in textbooks in order to support students’ understanding and engagement during the learning process. The interview responses demonstrate that developing teaching materials and learning modules became a significant challenge for teachers during

curriculum implementation. Teachers were not only responsible for delivering lessons, but also for designing and adapting instructional resources independently. These findings suggest that the Independent Curriculum requires teachers to play more active and creative roles in preparing learning materials that align with students' needs and classroom contexts.

d. Challenges in Managing Technological and Administrative Demands

Technological and administrative demands also became significant challenges for teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum. The interview responses revealed that teachers were required to adapt to various digital systems, online administrative tasks, and technology-based learning processes. For several participants, particularly senior teachers, these changes required considerable adjustment and continuous learning. AS explained:

“The biggest challenge for us who are old is IT-based administration. There are many reports, teaching modules, and forms that have to be filled out online. Sometimes one application has to be studied over and over again so that I don't make mistakes.”

AS highlighted that technology-based administration created difficulties for teachers who were less familiar with digital systems. The participant explained that online platforms and applications required repeated practice and adjustment in order to avoid mistakes during administrative processes. Similarly, RU also described challenges related to technology adaptation:

“The main challenge is technology and the preparation of teaching tools. Not all teachers are familiar with computers or the internet.”

RU's response suggests that differences in technological skills among teachers affected the implementation process. Teachers who had limited experience

with digital tools required more time and effort to adapt to online systems and technology-supported learning activities. In addition, several participants explained that administrative responsibilities under the Independent Curriculum became more demanding compared to K13. SH stated:

“The adaptation to the new administration is also a challenge, because the teaching modules are more detailed and there are quite a lot of components that must be prepared.”

SH emphasized that the preparation of teaching modules and curriculum documents required additional effort and time. Teachers were expected to complete more detailed administrative components while simultaneously managing classroom learning activities. The interview responses demonstrate that technological and administrative challenges became important issues during the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers needed to continuously adapt to digital systems, online administration, and detailed curriculum requirements. These findings indicate that curriculum change involves not only pedagogical adjustment but also technological and administrative adaptation within teachers' professional practices.

e. Challenges in Managing Diverse Student Characteristics

Another challenge faced by teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum was managing diverse student characteristics and learning abilities. The interview responses revealed that students showed different levels of motivation, participation, and understanding during the learning process. As a result, teachers were required to continuously adjust instructional approaches and classroom management strategies to accommodate students' varying needs. AD explained:

“There are students who are highly motivated and quickly understand the material, but there are also students who need more intensive mentoring. Teachers must be able to manage these differences so that all students still get optimal learning services.”

AD emphasized that differences in students' abilities and learning motivation became a significant challenge in classroom implementation. The participant explained that teachers needed to provide different levels of support and guidance to ensure that all students could participate effectively in the learning process. Similarly, SH also highlighted the challenge of applying student-centered learning in classrooms with many students:

“In one class there can be up to 40 students, so it is quite overwhelming to implement active learning and differentiation.”

SH's response suggests that managing diverse student characteristics became more difficult when combined with large class sizes. The participant explained that implementing differentiated learning and maintaining active student participation required additional classroom management effort from teachers. In addition, several participants explained that some students adapted more quickly to the Independent Curriculum, while others still experienced confusion. AD stated:

“There are also students who are still confused because they are not used to learning that requires activeness.”

This response indicates that not all students were immediately comfortable with the student-centered learning approach emphasized in the Independent Curriculum. Teachers therefore needed to provide gradual guidance and support to help students adjust to more active learning environments. The interview responses demonstrate that managing diverse student characteristics became one of the important challenges during curriculum implementation. Teachers were required to

address differences in students' abilities, motivation, and learning participation while maintaining effective classroom learning processes. These findings suggest that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires teachers to continuously adapt their instructional approaches according to students' varying learning needs.

3. Teachers' Strategies in Adapting to Curriculum Change

a. Self-Learning and Continuous Adaptation

In adapting to the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, teachers demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous learning and self-improvement. Rather than relying solely on formal guidance, teachers actively engaged in various learning activities to better understand the new curriculum and its requirements. RU explained:

“Yes, I have participated in several training sessions and MGMP activities. In my view, these trainings have been quite helpful, especially in understanding new terminology and how to develop teaching materials. Although my understanding is not yet perfect, they at least provide a basic foundation.”

This was further supported by AS, who emphasized that learning does not stop at training but must be continued through real classroom experience:

“The training helped us understand the concept of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and its administrative aspects. However, classroom practice still needs to be adjusted to students' conditions. Training cannot address all situations encountered in the field.”

The interview responses from the participants indicate that teachers view professional development as an ongoing process rather than a one-time activity. RU emphasized the importance of participating in training sessions and MGMP activities as a foundation for understanding new terminology and developing

teaching materials. RU's response shows that formal training provides initial guidance, even though it may not fully prepare teachers for all aspects of curriculum implementation.

Similarly, AS highlighted that learning should not stop at training but must be continued through classroom practice. AS pointed out that while training helps teachers understand the concepts and administrative aspects of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, real teaching situations require further adjustment based on students' needs. This reflects the idea that practical experience plays a crucial role in deepening teachers' understanding. Overall, these findings indicate that self-learning and continuous adaptation are essential strategies for teachers in responding to curriculum change. While formal training offers a basic foundation, teachers need to actively construct their own understanding through experience and reflection. This suggests that adaptation to *Kurikulum Merdeka* is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires both professional learning and practical engagement.

b. Collaboration and Peer Support

Another important strategy adopted by teachers in adapting to *Kurikulum Merdeka* is collaboration with colleagues. Teachers actively engaged in discussions, shared experiences, and supported each other in understanding and implementing the new curriculum. AS explained:

“The school provides full support, and colleagues also help one another. MGMP plays a very important role here. It has truly become a place for learning, not just a formal gathering. We even have our own independent MGMP by inviting trainers from religious training programs, making it more relevant to teachers' needs.”

This was further emphasized by AD, who highlighted the importance of collaboration among teachers:

“Yes, I collaborate with other teachers, both through informal discussions and formal school activities such as MGMP or teachers’ meetings. We usually share experiences, teaching strategies, and instructional materials. This collaboration is quite helpful, as we can exchange feedback and solutions, which helps improve the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.”

The interview responses from the participants indicate that collaboration plays a significant role in helping teachers adapt to curriculum change. AS emphasized the role of MGMP as an active and meaningful learning platform, where teachers not only gather but also engage in continuous professional development. AS’s response shows that collaboration is not merely formal, but has evolved into a structured and purposeful activity that supports teachers in understanding the new curriculum. With support from both the school and colleagues, teachers are able to share knowledge, gain new insights, and improve their instructional practices in a more relevant and contextualized manner.

Similarly, AD highlighted that collaboration occurs through both formal and informal interactions, such as MGMP sessions, teacher meetings, and everyday discussions with colleagues. AD emphasized that through these collaborative activities, teachers are able to exchange ideas, share teaching strategies, and discuss challenges they encounter in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This ongoing interaction allows teachers to learn from each other’s experiences and develop practical solutions that can be directly applied in the classroom.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that collaboration also contributes to creating a supportive professional environment. By working together, teachers can reduce individual difficulties, build mutual understanding, and strengthen their confidence in implementing the new curriculum. This support system becomes

particularly important in the context of curriculum change, where teachers are required to continuously adapt and refine their practices. Overall, these findings indicate that collaboration and peer support are essential strategies in facilitating successful curriculum implementation. Collaboration not only enhances teachers' knowledge and skills but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility in navigating curriculum change. As a result, teachers are better equipped to respond to the challenges of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and implement it more effectively in their teaching practices.

c. Classroom-Based Adaptation and Instructional Adjustment

In addition to self-learning and collaboration, teachers also adapted to *Kurikulum Merdeka* through direct classroom practices by adjusting their teaching strategies based on students' needs and responses. This approach reflects how teachers learn through experience and continuously refine their instructional methods. AS explained:

“I use a mixed-method approach. It is not possible to rely on only one method. Sometimes I apply student-centered learning, and at other times I use Total Physical Response (TPR), depending on the topic. For example, when teaching descriptive text, I begin with brainstorming by asking students about their experiences, such as describing their family, animals, or places.”

This was further supported by AD, who emphasized the importance of adjusting teaching based on students' abilities:

“I usually begin the lesson with a simple diagnostic assessment to identify students' initial abilities. Based on the results, I adjust the learning materials and teaching methods according to their level of understanding. In addition, I also conduct reflection at the end of the lesson to evaluate whether the learning objectives have been achieved.”

The interview responses from the participants indicate that teachers actively adapt their instructional practices through direct classroom experience. AS emphasized the use of flexible teaching methods, demonstrating that teachers do not rely on a single instructional approach. Instead, AS applies a combination of methods, such as student centered learning and Total Physical Response (TPR), depending on the topic and classroom context. This reflects a dynamic and responsive teaching style, where instructional decisions are adjusted based on students' needs and the nature of the learning material.

Similarly, AD highlighted the importance of using diagnostic assessment and reflection as part of the teaching process. AD explained that identifying students' initial abilities allows teachers to adjust both learning materials and teaching methods accordingly. In addition, AD emphasized the role of reflection at the end of the lesson to evaluate whether learning objectives have been achieved. This shows that teaching is not only about delivering content but also about continuously monitoring and improving the effectiveness of instruction.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that classroom-based adaptation is an ongoing and reflective process. Teachers are required to make continuous adjustments based on students' responses, learning progress, and classroom dynamics. This process enables teachers to create more meaningful and effective learning experiences that are aligned with the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Overall, these findings indicate that teachers' strategies in adapting to *Kurikulum Merdeka* are closely connected to their classroom practices. Through flexible teaching methods, continuous assessment, and reflective practices, teachers are able

to align their instruction with students' needs and enhance the overall effectiveness of the learning process.

B. Discussion

1. Teachers' Voices on Curriculum Change

The findings of this study show that teachers viewed the transition from K13 to the Independent Curriculum as both progress and challenge. Teachers perceived the curriculum as more flexible and student-centered, allowing them to adjust learning according to students' needs and classroom conditions. However, the transition also required teachers to adapt to new concepts, teaching approaches, and professional responsibilities. These findings are in line with Clandinin and Connelly (1995), who state that teachers' voices are shaped through their professional experiences and classroom practices. The participants in this study expressed their perspectives and interpretations based on their direct experiences during curriculum implementation. Similarly, Ball (1994) explains that curriculum policies are interpreted differently by teachers depending on their classroom contexts and professional understanding.

In addition, the findings also reflect the concept of teacher agency proposed by Priestley (2012), which emphasizes teachers' active roles in responding to educational change. Although teachers initially experienced confusion and adjustment difficulties, they gradually adapted through learning processes and classroom experiences. Therefore, the findings suggest that teachers are not passive

recipients of curriculum policy, but active participants who continuously interpret and adapt curriculum change within their teaching practices.

2. Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

The findings of this study reveal that teachers experienced various challenges during the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, particularly in adapting to new concepts, preparing teaching materials, managing administrative tasks, and addressing diverse student characteristics. Teachers explained that the transition process required continuous adjustment because the curriculum introduced unfamiliar terminology, instructional approaches, and learning expectations. These findings support Rahmawati (2019), who states that curriculum change requires teachers to continuously adapt their professional practices and classroom implementation. Similarly, Ball (1994) explains that educational change often creates adjustment difficulties because teachers must reinterpret new curriculum policies within real classroom contexts. In this study, teachers experienced confusion and uncertainty during the early stage of implementation, especially when dealing with new curriculum concepts and administrative requirements.

The findings also show that technological and administrative demands became major challenges, particularly for senior teachers who needed more time to adapt to digital systems and online administration. In addition, teachers faced difficulties in managing students with different abilities and learning characteristics. This finding is consistent with Suhartini (2021), who argues that teachers' readiness and adaptability strongly influence the effectiveness of

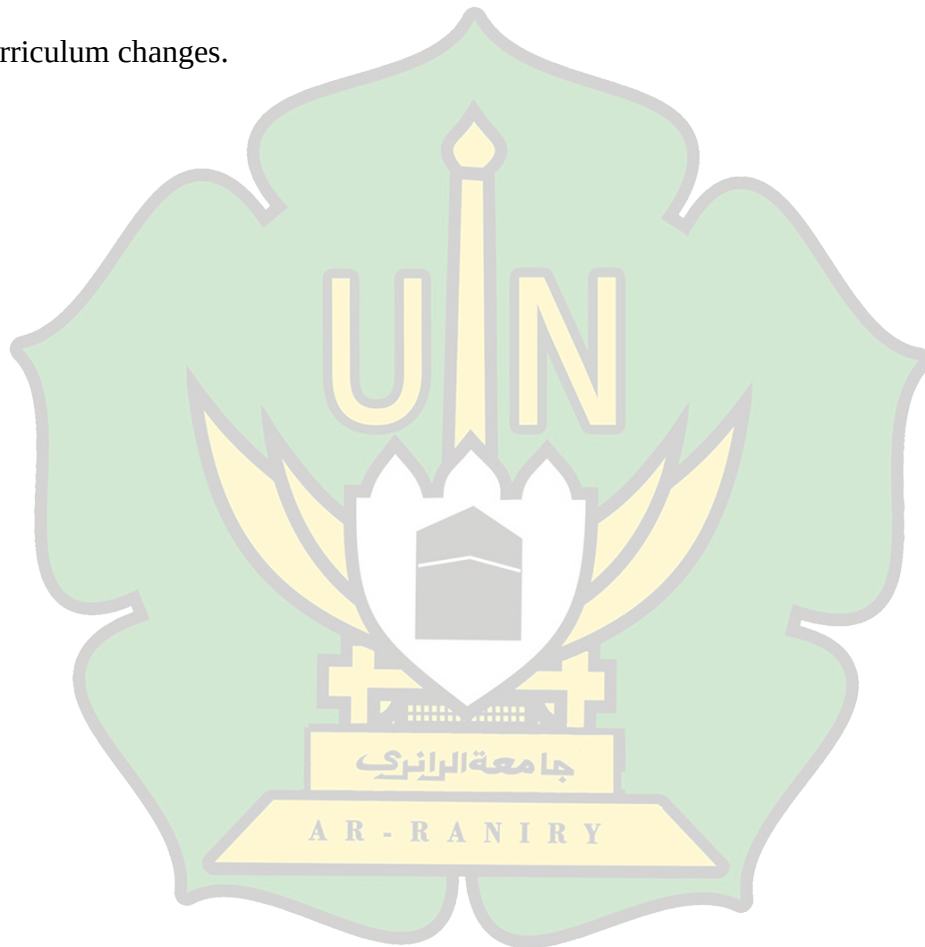
curriculum implementation. Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum involves not only pedagogical adjustment but also professional, technological, and administrative adaptation. Therefore, teachers require continuous support and learning opportunities in order to effectively respond to curriculum change.

3. Teachers' Strategies in Adapting to Curriculum Change

The findings of this study show that teachers employed various strategies in adapting to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers actively improved their understanding through self-learning, training, discussions, and classroom practice. In addition, collaboration among teachers also played an important role in helping them share experiences, solve problems, and develop teaching strategies together. These findings are consistent with Priestley (2012), who explain that teachers actively reconstruct their professional practices in responding to educational change. The participants in this study demonstrated their willingness to continuously learn and adapt through both individual and collaborative efforts. Similarly, Putri and Rohim (2023) state that professional development and collaboration are important in supporting teachers' readiness during curriculum implementation.

The findings also reveal that teachers adjusted their instructional methods and learning activities according to students' needs and classroom conditions. Teachers applied flexible approaches and continuously evaluated their teaching practices in order to improve learning effectiveness. This finding supports Mulyasa (2023), who explains that the Independent Curriculum encourages teachers to

become more creative and adaptive in designing student-centered learning. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' adaptation strategies reflect their professional commitment and willingness to continuously improve their teaching practices. Therefore, successful curriculum implementation is influenced not only by educational policy, but also by teachers' ability to adapt and respond effectively to curriculum changes.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

This study explored English teachers' voices on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum (K13) to the Independent Curriculum at MTsN 1 Model Banda Aceh, particularly focusing on teachers' perspectives, challenges, and strategies in responding to curriculum change. The findings revealed that teachers viewed the curriculum transition as both a form of progress and a challenge. The Independent Curriculum was perceived as more flexible and student-centered, allowing teachers to adapt learning according to students' needs and classroom conditions. However, the transition also required teachers to adjust their mindset, teaching approaches, and professional responsibilities.

The study also identified several challenges faced by teachers during curriculum implementation, including challenges in adapting to curriculum change, challenges in understanding new curriculum concepts, challenges in developing teaching materials and learning modules, challenges in managing technological and administrative demands, and challenges in managing diverse student characteristics. Teachers experienced confusion and adjustment difficulties during the early implementation stage, particularly in understanding unfamiliar terminology, preparing instructional materials independently, and adapting to digital administrative systems. In addition, differences in students' abilities and learning participation also became important classroom challenges during implementation.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated adaptability and professional commitment in responding to curriculum change. Teachers employed various strategies, such as continuous self-learning, collaboration with colleagues, and classroom-based instructional adjustment. Through training, discussions, independent learning, and direct classroom practice, teachers continuously improved their understanding and adapted their teaching approaches according to students' needs and learning conditions.

Overall, this study highlights that curriculum change is not only a structural or policy transformation, but also a continuous process of professional adaptation for teachers. The successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum depends not only on curriculum policy itself, but also on teachers' readiness, adaptability, and support systems. Therefore, teachers' voices provide important insights into how curriculum reform is interpreted and implemented in real classroom contexts.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that teachers' adaptation plays a central role in the successful implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. While teachers face various challenges such as technological difficulties, administrative demands, and the need to independently develop instructional materials, they also demonstrate the ability to adapt through continuous learning, collaboration, and reflective teaching practices. Therefore, several suggestions are proposed for

relevant stakeholders in order to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of curriculum implementation.

Teachers are encouraged to continuously develop their professional competence by actively participating in training programs, engaging in collaborative activities such as MGMP, and independently exploring various learning resources. In addition to formal training, teachers should also cultivate self-directed learning habits, such as seeking new teaching strategies, experimenting with different instructional methods, and reflecting on their classroom practices. Being open to change and maintaining a growth mindset are essential for successfully adapting to curriculum transformation. Teachers should also make use of diagnostic assessment and reflection to better understand students' needs and continuously improve their teaching effectiveness.

Schools play a crucial role in supporting teachers during curriculum change. Therefore, schools are expected to provide consistent and structured support by organizing regular training sessions, strengthening professional learning communities such as MGMP, and encouraging collaboration among teachers. Schools should also ensure the availability of adequate technological facilities and provide assistance for teachers who experience difficulties in using digital platforms. In addition, school leaders should create a supportive environment that encourages innovation, experimentation, and open communication among teachers, so that they feel confident and motivated in implementing the new curriculum.

For policymakers, it is important to ensure that curriculum implementation is supported by clear, practical, and accessible guidelines. Training programs

should be designed not only to introduce theoretical concepts but also to provide practical examples that can be directly applied in the classroom. Policymakers should also consider the diverse conditions of schools and teachers, particularly in terms of technological readiness and teaching experience. Continuous mentoring, follow-up training, and evaluation are necessary to ensure that teachers are not left to navigate curriculum changes independently. In addition, policies should aim to reduce excessive administrative burdens so that teachers can focus more on the teaching and learning process.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of this study by involving participants from different schools, regions, and educational levels to gain a broader understanding of curriculum implementation. Researchers may also consider using mixed methods by combining interviews with classroom observations, document analysis, or student perspectives to obtain more comprehensive data. Furthermore, longitudinal studies that examine teachers' adaptation over time would provide valuable insights into how curriculum change influences teaching practices and professional development in the long term. Exploring the role of digital technology and professional learning communities in supporting teachers' adaptation would also be a meaningful direction for future research.

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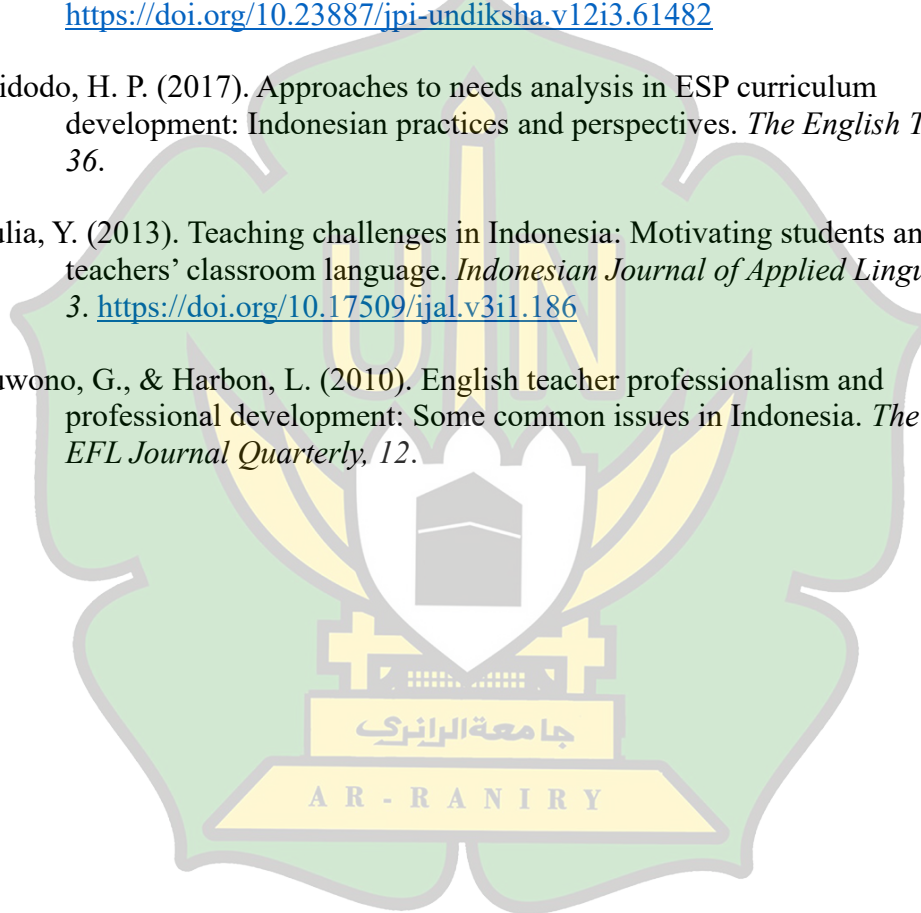
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APPENDICES

Appendix A : Appointment Letter of Supervisor


KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 321 TAHUN 2025
TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH

Menimbang :

- bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
- bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
- bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

Mengingat :

- Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
- Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
- Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
- Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
- Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
- Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
- Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
- Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
- Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
- Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Kmk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai Instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
- Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.

MEMUTUSKAN

Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.

KESATU : Menunjuk Saudara :
Siti Khasinah, S.Ag., M.Pd

Untuk membimbing Skripsi

Nama : **Fuad Mardhatillah**
NIM : **210203007**
Program Studi : **Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris**
Judul Skripsi : **Exploring English Teachers' Voices on the Curriculum Change from K13 to Kurikulum Merdeka**

KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;

KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember 2024 Tahun Anggaran 2025;

KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;

KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 04 Maret 2025
Dekan,


(Safrul Muluk)

Tembusan

1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.


pusaka

**Appendix B : Recommendation Letter from Fakultas Tarbiyah dan
Keguruan to Conduct The Research**



**KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS**

Jl. Syekh Abdul Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
Telp. 0651 7553020, website: <https://fkk.ar-raniry.ac.id/programstudi/pendidikan-bahasa-inggris/>

SURAT KETERANGAN
Nomor: B-025/Un.08/PBI/PP.00.9/01/2025

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh *menunjuk* Bapak/Ibu: Siti Khasinah, S.Ag., M.Pd untuk membimbing Proposal Skripsi mahasiswa/i yang namanya tersebut dibawah ini:

Nama : Fuad Mardhatillah
NIM : 210203007
Judul Proposal : Teachers' Views on the Transformation from K13 to Independent Curriculum

Demikian Surat Keterangan ini kami buat untuk dapat ditindaklanjuti sebagaimana mestinya. Atas kerjasama yang baik kami ucapkan terima kasih.

Banda Aceh, 16 Januari 2025
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,



Syarifah Dahliana

Note:
Pembimbing Proposal secara langsung menjadi Pembimbing Skripsi

Appendix C : Transcripts of Interview

Interviewer : Fuad Mardhatillah

Partisipant : AS

FM	How do you view the change in the curriculum from K13 to the Independent Curriculum? Is this change a progress or a challenge?
AS	For us as teachers, changing the curriculum is not something scary. Because basically what we teach is the language, not the curriculum. The curriculum is just a tool or guideline. So whether it's K13 or the Independent Curriculum, the ultimate goal remains the same, which is to educate children. If you teach English, the target is that children can speak English, can understand and use it in their daily lives. If asked if this is progress or challenge, I think it's both. In terms of flexibility, this is progress, but in terms of adaptation, especially for senior teachers, this is also a challenge.
FM	How did you feel when you first found out that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum? Do you feel ready?
AS	When I first knew that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum, I felt mentally ready. But technically, of course it takes time. Because there are many new terms that are different from K13. If in K13 there used to be core competencies and basic competencies that were determined nationally, now education units are given the freedom to compile their own. For those of us who are seniors, this needs extra adjustments, but that doesn't mean it can't be done.
FM	What has been your experience in running the Independent Curriculum so far? Is there anything that has been most memorable?
AS	The most memorable experience was the change in learning patterns. The <i>Merdeka</i> curriculum emphasizes more on learning completeness. In my opinion, this is like <i>mastery learning</i> . Children must understand first before moving on to the next material. There is no pressure to complete several chapters in one semester. This is different from K13 where the target material has been set nationally.
FM	What are the significant differences between K13 and the Independent Curriculum in teaching approaches?
AS	The most significant difference is in flexibility. In K13, learning is very centralized nationally. Meanwhile, in the Independent Curriculum, schools and teachers are given the authority to adapt learning to the conditions of students. The differences include methods, materials, and evaluation. But as a consequence, there are more administrations.

FM	How do schools and peers respond to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AS	The school fully supports. Colleagues also help each other. MGMP plays a very important role here. Now MGMP is really a place to learn, not just a gathering place. In fact, we have an independent MGMP by bringing in speakers from our own religious training, so that it is more in line with the needs of teachers
FM	What are the main challenges that you face in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AS	The biggest challenge for us who are old is IT-based administration. There are many reports, teaching modules, and forms that have to be filled out online. Sometimes one application has to be studied over and over again so that I don't make mistakes. I even have to record the steps so that I don't forget. This is our weakness, but it should not be a reason to stop learning.
FM	How do you assess the availability of teaching materials and supporting resources for the Independent Curriculum?
AS	There are actually a lot of teaching materials. There are books, there are also a lot of digital media. But teachers cannot only rely on books. Teachers must be creative. Teachers can be a "walking book" for students. For example, the theme <i>of ability</i> , it can be directly practiced with students, not just read from books. If there is material that is not written in the book but is important, teachers still have to add it.
FM	Did you attend any training or workshops before the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AS	There is training and mentoring, both from the office and through MGMP. The training helps us understand the concept of the Independent Curriculum and its administration. However, practice in the classroom must still be adjusted to the conditions of students. Training cannot answer all situations in the field.
FM	How do students respond to the Independent Curriculum learning approach?
AS	Students actually don't really understand the differences in curriculum. They only know how to learn as usual. What is important to them is how the teacher teaches. As long as the learning is in accordance with their abilities, students can follow well. In addition, students do not experience curriculum changes along the way. If they enter grade VII with K13, they will use K13 until completion. Likewise with the Independent Curriculum.

FM	What strategies or approaches have you developed in the Independent Curriculum?
AS	Sometimes <i>student-centered learning</i> , sometimes <i>Total Physical Response</i> (TPR), depending on the theme. For example, for descriptive <i>texts</i> , I start with brainstorming, asking questions about students' experiences, such as describing a family, animal, or place.
FM	How do you adapt the materials and methods to the needs of students?
AS	The material must be adjusted to the student's ability. Junior high school children cannot be equated with high-level students. If they are immediately given material that is too high, they can get bored and have difficulties. In the past, there were exam questions that were too high, almost like the TOEFL. Junior high school students certainly have difficulties, even teachers sometimes have to think hard. So adjustment is very important.
FM	Do you collaborate with other teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AS	Yes, collaboration is very important. Through MGMP, we help each other. There are teachers who understand administration and IT better, they help other teachers. In our place, there are Mrs. Dewi and Mrs. Selasri who are used to administration, so they often help. If there are IT problems, in addition to teachers, sometimes students can also help. In principle, don't be silent, you have to work together.

Interviewer : Fuad Mardhatillah

Partisipant : AD

FM	How do you view the change in the curriculum from K13 to the Independent Curriculum? Is this change a progress or a challenge?
AD	I view the change from K13 to the Independent Curriculum as a progress, because this curriculum provides a wider space for teachers to adapt learning to the real conditions in the classroom. If in K13 teachers tend to be more attached to the target material that must be completed, then in the Independent Curriculum the focus is more on how students really understand the material. However, on the other hand, this change is also a considerable challenge. Teachers are required to change their mindset, from being more oriented to delivering material to being oriented to the student learning process.

	Teachers must also understand various new terms and concepts, such as diagnostic assessment, learning differentiation, and project-based learning. So, in my opinion, this change is an improvement in terms of educational philosophy, but at the same time a challenge in terms of the readiness of human resources, especially teachers.
FM	How did you feel when you first found out that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum? Do you feel ready?
AD	At first, I was quite surprised and confused. The information we received was still limited, while the demand to implement the new curriculum was quite large. At that time, I could not say that I was fully prepared. However, as teachers, we realize that curriculum changes are part of the dynamics of the world of education. Therefore, even though we are not fully prepared, we try to open ourselves up to learning. We started participating in trainings, webinars, and discussions with fellow teachers. From that process, we slowly developed a sense of confidence and readiness to try to implement the Independent Curriculum in the classroom
FM	What has been your experience in running the Independent Curriculum so far? Is there anything that has been most memorable?
AD	My experience in running the Independent Curriculum can be said to be still in the learning and adjustment stage. In the first year, many things are still not fully understood, so the implementation is not optimal. The most memorable thing for me was the P5 project. Through this project, students not only learn from books, but also do real activities, such as getting to know the local culture, the surrounding environment, and working together in groups. I see students becoming more active and more courageous in expressing ideas. This has been a quite positive experience.
FM	What are the significant differences between K13 and the Independent Curriculum in teaching approaches?
AD	In terms of methods, there are actually many similarities, because in K13 PBL, PJBL, and inquiry are also known. However, the difference lies in the emphasis. In the Independent Curriculum, teachers are highly recommended to conduct diagnostic assessments at the beginning of learning. From the results of the assessment, teachers know the students' initial abilities and then adjust the learning strategies. In addition, differentiation is more emphasized, so teachers must prepare a variety of assignments according to students' abilities.
FM	How do schools and peers respond to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
	The school basically provides support, for example by holding internal training and facilitating teachers to participate in workshops.

AD	Colleagues also share experiences, especially related to the preparation of teaching modules and learning strategies. Although there is still confusion and differences in understanding, in general the atmosphere of cooperation is quite felt. We realize that the successful implementation of the new curriculum cannot be done alone, but requires collaboration.
FM	What are the main challenges that you face in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AD	The main challenge is to understand new concepts in the curriculum and adapt them to the real conditions in the classroom. In addition, the diverse character of students is also a challenge in itself. There are students who are highly motivated and quickly understand the material, but there are also students who need more intensive mentoring. Teachers must be able to manage these differences so that all students still get optimal learning services.
FM	How do you assess the availability of teaching materials and supporting resources for the Independent Curriculum?
AD	In general, teaching materials are available, both from the government and other sources. However, often these materials still need to be adjusted to the context of students and the school environment. Therefore, I often compile or modify my own teaching materials. This does take time and effort, but I feel more satisfied because the materials used are really in accordance with the needs of students.
FM	Did you attend any training or workshops before the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AD	Yes, I have participated in several trainings and workshops. The training is quite helpful in providing an overview of the Independent Curriculum. However, some of the training is still theoretical, so teachers still need to learn independently and try directly in class. In my opinion, training will be more effective if it is accompanied by real practice examples.
FM	How do students respond to the Independent Curriculum learning approach?
AD	The response of students is quite diverse. Students who have high motivation to learn usually show enthusiasm, especially during project activities. However, there are also students who are still confused because they are not used to learning that requires activeness. For students like this, teachers need to provide direction and assistance gradually.
FM	What strategies or approaches have you developed in the Independent Curriculum?

AD	In the Independent Curriculum, I try to combine several learning strategies. One of them is project-based learning, because through projects students can learn directly and relate the material to their daily lives. In addition, I also apply learning differentiation, which is adjusting tasks and activities to students' abilities. Students who are already able to be given more challenging tasks, while students who are still struggling are given simpler and more gradual tasks. I also often use group discussions and questions and answers so that students are more active and brave in expressing their opinions.
FM	How do you adapt the materials and methods to the needs of students?
AD	I usually start learning with a simple diagnostic assessment to find out the students' initial abilities. From these results, I adjust the learning materials and methods according to the student's level of understanding. In addition, I also do reflection at the end of the learning to see if the learning goals have been achieved or not. The results of this reflection are the basis for me to improve the learning at the next meeting.
FM	Do you collaborate with other teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
AD	Yes, I collaborate with other teachers, both through informal discussions and in school activities such as MGMP or teacher meetings. Usually, we share experiences, learning strategies, and teaching materials. This collaboration is quite helpful because we can give each other input and solutions, so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can run better.

Interviewer : Fuad Mardhatillah

Partisipant : RU

FM	How do you view the change in the curriculum from K13 to the Independent Curriculum? Is this change a progress or a challenge?
RU	According to you, the change from K13 to the Independent Curriculum can be said to be both, there is progress, but there are also challenges. In terms of progress, the Independent Curriculum provides a wider space for teachers and students. Teachers are more free to develop learning according to classroom conditions, and students are also more active. But on the other hand, the challenge is quite big, especially for teachers who have been teaching for a long time. Because in the past in K13 the syllabus and basic competencies were provided, now in the Independent Curriculum teachers have to compile more themselves, such as CP, ATP, and teaching modules. So, it does feel that the burden is more than before.

FM	How did you feel when you first found out that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum? Do you feel ready?
RU	To be honest, when I first heard about it, I was a bit confused and a little worried. In my mind, "This is a new curriculum again, how is it different from the old one?" The problem is that several times the curriculum changes are similar in content, only the terms are different. So at first, I couldn't imagine what the practice would be like. If you were asked if you were ready or not, you were actually not very ready. But after participating in MGMP and training, I began to understand what the direction of the Independent Curriculum would be. From there, I slowly felt more confident to try to apply it in the classroom.
FM	What has been your experience in running the Independent Curriculum so far? Is there anything that has been most memorable?
RU	My experience in running the Independent Curriculum can be said to be still in the learning and adjustment stage. In the first year, many things are still not fully understood, so the implementation is not optimal. The most memorable thing for me was the P5 project. Through this project, students not only learn from books, but also do real activities, such as getting to know the local culture, the surrounding environment, and working together in groups. I see students becoming more active and more courageous in expressing ideas. This has been a quite positive experience.
FM	What are the significant differences between K13 and the Independent Curriculum in teaching approaches?
RU	In terms of methods, it's actually not too different, such as greeting, introduction, and exercises are still the same. But what makes the difference is the emphasis. In the Independent Curriculum, there is more emphasis on student activity. Teachers are no longer too dominant in explaining, but more as facilitators. In addition, now they also make more use of technology, such as searching for learning videos on YouTube or materials from the internet. In the past, this kind of access was not as much as it is now.
FM	How do schools and peers respond to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
RU	Alhamdulillah, the school is quite supportive. There is direction, there is also the opportunity to participate in MGMP and training. Fellow teachers also help each other. If someone does not understand, it is usually discussed together. Indeed, there are some who complain because it feels more complicated, but still try to adjust. So the atmosphere is more towards strengthening each other.

FM	What are the main challenges that you face in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
RU	The main challenge is technology and the preparation of teaching tools. Not all teachers are familiar with computers or the internet. Sometimes searching for materials on Google is also not always immediately suitable. In addition, the age factor also has an effect. Young teachers may adapt faster, while those of us who have been teaching for a long time take longer.
FM	How do you assess the availability of teaching materials and supporting resources for the Independent Curriculum?
RU	There are books, but they are not complete enough. So often you compile your own teaching materials or modify them from other sources. Sometimes from the internet, sometimes from the results of MGMP discussions. So you can say that most of the teaching materials are prepared independently.
FM	Did you attend any training or workshops before the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
RU	Yes, you have participated in several trainings and MGMP. According to you, the training is quite helpful, especially to understand new terms and how to structure teaching tools. Although it is not perfect, it at least gives a basic overview.
FM	How do students respond to the Independent Curriculum learning approach?
RU	In general, students are more enthusiastic. They are more often involved in class activities. Although some are still confused, especially at the beginning. But over time they start to get used to it.
FM	What strategies or approaches have you developed in the Independent Curriculum?
RU	I try to use activity-based learning, such as hands-on practice, simple conversations, and small tasks. Sometimes it is also in the form of simple projects, such as making a self-introduction video.
FM	How do you adapt the materials and methods to the needs of students?
RU	Usually at the beginning of the lesson, you do simple assessments, such as questions and answers or short exercises. From there, you can see the students' abilities. If there is something slow, they are guided more intensively. If they are fast, they are given additional challenges.
FM	Do you collaborate with other teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?

RU	Yes, often. Through MGMP and discussions between teachers in schools. This collaboration is very helpful because we can share experiences and solutions with each other.
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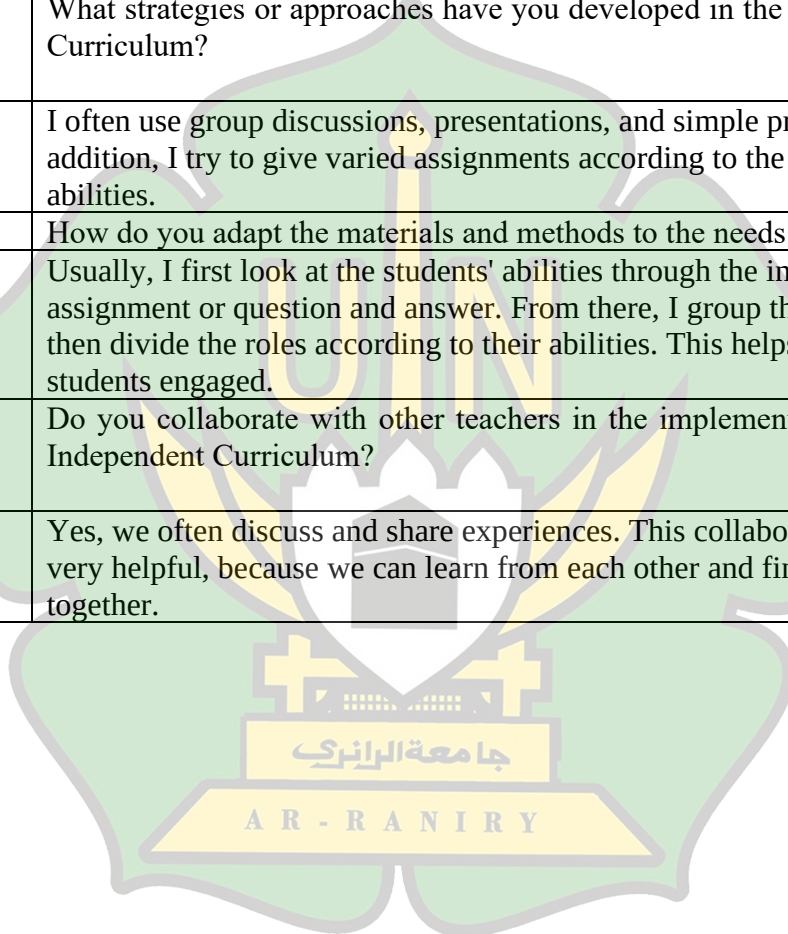
Interviewer : Fuad Mardhatillah

Partisipant : SH

FM	How do you view the change in the curriculum from K13 to the Independent Curriculum? Is this change a progress or a challenge?
SH	Personally, I think this change is a mixture of progress and challenges. It is said to be progress, yes, because the Independent Curriculum gives more space for teachers and students to be more creative. We are not as rigid as we used to be, and children are also given wider opportunities to express themselves, discuss, and try new things. But on the other hand, to be honest, this is also a challenge, because since I started being a teacher, I have changed the curriculum several times. From KTSP, then K13, now the Independent Curriculum. So every time we change the curriculum, we have to learn again, adjust again, understand new terms, and rearrange the way we teach. So in my opinion, this is progress that we must face with readiness and willingness to continue learning.
FM	How did you feel when you first found out that the school would implement the Independent Curriculum? Do you feel ready?
SH	At first, I was a bit surprised and confused. Because it feels like we haven't really mastered K13 yet, a new curriculum has emerged. So the first feeling is mixed, there is worry, there is confusion, but there is also curiosity. If you say you are ready, maybe you are not fully ready. But we are aware, inevitably we have to be ready. Because this is a national policy and it will definitely be implemented. So finally we started to slowly look for information, participate in discussions at MGMP, participate in training, and study together with colleagues.
FM	What has been your experience in running the Independent Curriculum so far? Is there anything that has been most memorable?
SH	I can say that the experience so far is still in the learning stage. We are still groping, trying, making mistakes, and then improving again. The most memorable thing is when we see the students being more active. They discuss more often, work in groups, and express their opinions. Although not everything is perfect, there is a change in the classroom

	atmosphere. The children are more courageous to speak, and we as teachers also play more of a role as facilitators, not just as material givers.
FM	What are the significant differences between K13 and the Independent Curriculum in teaching approaches?
SH	The most noticeable difference is in the approach. In K13, learning still tends to be more directed by teachers. Meanwhile, in the Independent Curriculum, learning is more student-centered. In addition, there is now an emphasis on projects and character strengthening, such as through P5. The material is also more flexible, not too much chasing, but more focused on understanding. In terms of evaluation, it is also more varied, not only written tests, but can be in the form of projects, presentations, or certain products.
FM	How do schools and peers respond to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
SH	Alhamdulillah, the response from the school was quite positive. The school tries to facilitate training and discussion. If there are difficulties, we can convey it to the curriculum representative, then a solution will be found later. Colleagues also support each other. Some take part in the training first, later share it with other friends. So the atmosphere is more about collaboration, not blaming each other.
FM	What are the main challenges that you face in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
SH	The main challenge is to understand new concepts in the curriculum and adapt them to the real conditions in the classroom. In addition, the diverse character of students is also a challenge in itself. There are students who are highly motivated and quickly understand the material, but there are also students who need more intensive mentoring. Teachers must be able to manage these differences so that all students still get optimal learning services.
FM	How do you assess the availability of teaching materials and supporting resources for the Independent Curriculum?
SH	Teaching resources actually exist from the government, but we also often compile them ourselves or modify them according to the needs of students. Sometimes we search for them from the internet, then adjust them to the conditions of the class. So it doesn't just depend on one source.
FM	Did you attend any training or workshops before the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
	Yes, I have participated in the training several times, both from school, the Ministry of Religion, and online. I think it is quite helpful,

SH	even though I can't immediately master everything. But at least it gives an idea and direction.
FM	How do students respond to the Independent Curriculum learning approach?
SH	Most students seem more enthusiastic, especially during group work or projects. Although there are also those who are confused at first because they are used to waiting for the teacher's explanation. But over time they start to get used to it.
FM	What strategies or approaches have you developed in the Independent Curriculum?
SH	I often use group discussions, presentations, and simple projects. In addition, I try to give varied assignments according to the students' abilities.
FM	How do you adapt the materials and methods to the needs of students?
SH	Usually, I first look at the students' abilities through the initial assignment or question and answer. From there, I group the students, then divide the roles according to their abilities. This helps to keep all students engaged.
FM	Do you collaborate with other teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum?
SH	Yes, we often discuss and share experiences. This collaboration is very helpful, because we can learn from each other and find solutions together.



PERSONAL INFORMATION

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