

## CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN DELIVERING ENGLISH INSTRUCTION WITHIN INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS AT SMAN 1 TAKALAR

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### ABSTRAK

Pendidikan di Indonesia menggunakan kurikulum merdeka sebagai pedoman dalam proses belajar mengajar. Kurikulum merdeka dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris masih menjadi tantangan bagi para guru bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tantangan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Inggris dalam menyampaikan pengajaran bahasa Inggris dalam kerangka kurikulum merdeka dan strategi yang digunakan untuk mengatasi tantangan guru bahasa Inggris dalam menyampaikan pengajaran bahasa Inggris dalam kerangka kurikulum merdeka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan melakukan observasi, wawancara semi-struktur dan dokumentasi. Sampel penelitian ini adalah guru bahasa Inggris di SMAN 1 Takalar. Penemuan di penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris memiliki tantangan dalam menyampaikan pengajaran bahasa Inggris dalam kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka, yaitu kurangnya kemampuan guru dalam menggunakan teknologi, alokasi waktu yang tidak cukup, aktivitas dalam proses belajar dan mengajar bahasa Inggris, karakteristik siswa dan yang terakhir tantangan dalam menyesuaikan media ajar dengan materi ajar.

**Kata Kunci:** Kurikulum Merdeka, Tantangan Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Strategi Mengatasi Tantangan.

### ABSTRACT

*Education in Indonesia used the independent curriculum as a guidance in the teaching and learning process. The independent curriculum in delivering English instruction still be a challenge for the English teachers. The research was aimed to find out the challenges faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum and to overcome the challenges of English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum. This research used a qualitative method and the data was collected by conducting observation checklist, semi-structured interview and documentation. The sample of this research was English teachers in SMAN 1 Takalar. The finding showed that the English teachers have challenges in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum there are the lack of teachers' abilities in using technology, time allocation, the activities in English learning and teaching process, the characteristic of students and the last challenges in selecting media that suitable with materials.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Independent Curriculum, Challenges in Teaching English, Strategies to Overcome Challenges.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important thing in human life, it means that every people have a chance to get it and people can get develop their self by education. Besides that, education also a primary need for all human beings in the world. Education is a formation process of characteristics of human itself. They learn since they were born until they become adults. No matter they have become adults; they must increase their skills to enable them facing the globalization era. Education will never end. Education generally has the meaning of a life process in developing their live. Thus, it is very important to be an educated person. According to one of famous philosophers it is Aristoteles said that he interpreted that education is one of the functions of a state that is done for the purpose of the state itself. He viewed that education is a provision for some activities or worthy jobs. Hence, education should be guided by law to make it in accordance with psychological analysis results and follow developments step by step. This is reinforced by the understanding of education contained in UU Sisdiknas No. 20 of 2003 that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential to have spiritual strength, religious, self- control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, as well as the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state.

In education, there is one important component that cannot be left out, which is the curriculum. Curriculum is an educational framework; it is important in the world of education that include outline and content that need to be achieved for each value of each subject. Curriculum is designed flexible so it can adapt to the culture, socio-economic and regional backgrounds of each school. The curriculum is one of the most important things because it is the overall plan or plan of the course and how the course content is converted into an overview of teaching and learning that can be used to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Richards, 2013). Various changes and additions have been made to the implementation of the curriculum in Indonesia, many times curriculum changes that give effect of the learning style since the beginning of independence.

Launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture under the supervision of Nadiem Makarim, Merdeka Belajar adds that in less than 10 years, Indonesia has updated its curriculum 3 times (Sugiri and Priatmoko, 2020). These changes are a response to the challenges and changes occurring in Indonesia from time to time, all designed to improve the Indonesian educational and learning goals, models, and strategies consistent with the implementation of learning. With these changes, Indonesia hopes to prepare students with good potential in both academic and non- academic fields.

The shift from the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum has resulted in many changes at the stages of planning, implementing and evaluating learning. One of them is the existence of new terms such as Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), Modul Ajar (MA), Capaian Pembelajaran (CP), Kriteria Ketercapaian Tujuan Pembelajaran (KKTP), Profil Pelajar Pancasila, diagnostic assessments, student reflections and teacher reflections, all of which aim to strengthen the competence of both students and teachers (Hardanie, 2022). This change indeed encourages teachers to continue learning and adapting to effectively implement the new learning paradigm of the Independent Curriculum.

Minister of Education Nadiem mentioned several advantages in implementing of the Independent Curriculum. One of them is simpler and more in- depth because this curriculum will focus on essential materials and the gradual development of student competencies. The teacher will teach according to the stages of student achievement and development. In the Independent Curriculum, a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students is called Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). Teaching at the right level (TaRL) does not refer to the class level, but refers to the student's ability level (Kemendikbud, 2022b). In the Independent Curriculum there is Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP)

which contains all plans for the learning process to be held in educational units. Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP) is used as a guideline for all implementation of learning in educational units and is developed according to the needs of students and educational units so that they become more meaningful. The school has the authority to develop and manage curriculum and learning in accordance with the characteristics of the education unit and students (Kemendikbud, 2022).

The implementation of Independent Curriculum in teaching English requires a lot of processes, time, and readiness which causes some changes in the learning system. The implementation of Independent Curriculum is carried out as comfortably as possible in order to facilitate the process of interaction between teachers and students. This is in accordance with the Independent Curriculum where the attainment of at least six English language skills refers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching Assessment (CEFR). CEFR reflects the visible specifications of the student's ability to maintain interaction and convey something desired. In implementing the Merdeka curriculum, teachers must understand the Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), Modul Ajar (MA), Project Modules, to evaluating student progress (Nurhidayat et al., 2022). This shows that a teacher has a strategic role in realizing national education goals in terms of teaching and educating, so it needs to be focused on developing the potential of the teacher as a profession that is moral, obeys rules, upholds professionalism and competent. Other parties that have influence to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum are educational institutions, or more precisely the school principals. In the Independent Curriculum, students serve as learning centers or are called Student Centers. Students are considered as the essence of education so that they become the main target when the learning process must have a facilitator to develop their talents, interests and potential in the field of English. Facilitators are teachers, principals and staff.

Education in Indonesia is currently experiencing learning loss. Learning loss occur in Indonesia before the pandemic occur and it is exacerbated when the pandemic occurs to overcome learning loss, an independent curriculum is hold, so that teachers don't chase material too fast and don't chase the material too quickly. In this case, the Independent Curriculum simplifies the curriculum at lot to suit the needs of students. In education, teacher competence is needed to create success in planning, implementing, evaluating learning activities, and the work of students (Ciechanowska, 2010). Besides, teachers must always keep abreast of changing times, such as current advances in science and technology. Teachers must also create a pleasant atmosphere and provide opportunities for students to use their own minds in seeking knowledge from several available sources, in order to create independent learning. Next, as a response to the challenges of education in today's digital age, the government make a revision from 2013 curriculum to independent curriculum. This curriculum applies to all levels of school, one of which is Senior High School. The beginning of this independent curriculum existed due to the low literacy and numeracy abilities of students (Rohimajaya et al., 2022).

Therefore, the government seeks to advance students' literacy and numeracy skills by updating the curriculum. The independent curriculum is a curriculum that was developed as a curriculum framework that is more flexible than the idea of learning renewal that focuses on essential material, behavior development, and also students' skills (Kemendikbud in Rohimajaya et al., 2022). In essence, the curriculum is something that must be mastered by teachers, so that teacher professionalism can be achieved. Teachers who have professional expertise can implement concepts and think well about independent curriculum because they have to be creative and innovative in developing subject matter. In the current era, teacher competence is required to be able to adapt to every change in curriculum, master material in depth and critically, have a lot of knowledge, master technology, and solve problems encountered during teaching and learning activities taking place (Farouk Imam Arrasyid &

Istiqomah, 2021). It means that existence of developing the professional competence of teachers to prepare them for better performance. However, in reality, there are still many teachers who find it difficult to be professional in their field. Some of these difficulties are related to material development, adjustment of subject matter, utilization of learning resources, and so on.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design was used as a framework to identify solutions to research problems. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach. This type is used by researcher because it is the right method to describe research findings. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach is “a process of inquiry to understand a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and carried out in a natural setting”. In other words, qualitative methods involve the study of social phenomena in which the environment, circumstances, and problems are naturally based on what is happening. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe the phenomenon thoroughly, deeply, and accurately.

The researcher used qualitative techniques to analyze the challenges encountered by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks at SMAN 1 Takalar. The results of the data analysis is presented in description of words.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION FINDING**

English teachers’ challenges in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks at SMAN 1 Takalar

According to Cholif (2023) a challenge is a problem that exists in an activity such as a teaching and learning process, using appropriate and quality solutions. Based on the theory of Zulaiha (2022), the researcher finds out there are challenges that faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum framework such as: the characteristic of students, the English teachers’ activities, teaching method and teaching media, time allocation and the last was the teachers’ abilities in using technology.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a challenge can also be defined as a goal or personality that encourages ability (the situation of being confronted with) something that requires significant mental or physical effort to do successfully and consequently tests a person's ability. Malone (1981) in Çalikoğlu (2019) challenge as a "task that requires effort and whose outcome is not guaranteed.

Based on the finding, the first challenges that faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum was the characteristic of students. The students have a different characteristic and ability, which significantly influences their learning styles, motivation and interest in learning English. Because of the differences in learning styles, English teachers must think of teaching methods that suitable with students' learning styles to achieve the desired learning achievement and learning objective. Challenges become from the lack of student motivation and support from parents. Therefore, teachers must provide motivation to students so that they are interested in learning English. Futhermore, the level of student ability is also a challenge. Students who have high ability understand the material more easily than students who have low ability. This challenges that by English teachers using teaching approaches so that all students can understand the material and can applied it in daily life. Within the framework of an independent curriculum, English teachers are faced with the complex task of managing students’ abilities while ensuring the effectiveness of learning and achievement of learning achievement and learning objective.

The second challenges were the English teachers' activities in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks. Delivering English instruction in the Independent Curriculum is challenging for English teachers in achieving the desired learning achievements. The challenge that faced by English teachers in delivering instruction within independent curriculum frameworks is understanding and adapting a student-focused learning approach, where this curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning. English teachers need to facilitate a learning environment where students are actively involved in the learning process, exploring concepts, collaborating with friends, and applying knowledge in the context of daily life. Additional challenges include developing teaching methods that suit students' needs and interests, effective time management to cover a broad curriculum, and assessing learning achievement holistically and continuously. Limited resources, whether in terms of time, equipment, or support, can also be a challenge in teachers' efforts to achieve desired learning objective.

The third challenge that encountered by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks. In an independent curriculum, teachers must be more creative and understand well how to use technology. The challenges were the teacher's abilities to choose teaching media or teaching methods that suit the material and students' needs so that learning outcomes and learning objectives can be achieved. In addition, students become more active when English teachers used teaching methods or media. The first teacher who did not use teaching methods and media made students feel bored and not interested in learning English. This is different from the second teacher who uses media and teaching methods to make students care more about learning English. Students become more interested and more active in learning English so that teaching objectives can be achieved and teachers can apply the Pancasila student profile in the teaching process. Besides that, the English teachers also don't have enough time to make teaching media especially in independent curriculum the teachers must use technology in teaching process.

The fourth challenges that faced by English in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks was time allocation. English teachers faced challenges in managing time when using teaching media or teaching methods. Using teaching media or teaching methods makes teachers focus more on teaching methods or media so that teachers pay less attention to student's ability or characters in class. The challenges faced by English teachers are insufficient time allocation for preparing teaching modules, designing teaching methods, and choosing teaching media. which is in accordance with the independent curriculum framework. This leaves English teachers with limited time to focus on creating creative teaching methods and teaching media. The challenges are the main obstacle in achieving learning goals within an independent curriculum framework. Without sufficient time for preparation, English teachers may face difficulties in adapting teaching methods to diverse learning styles and utilizing available teaching media to improve students' abilities.

The challenges faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Takalar in using technology in the independent curriculum are significant. These challenges include difficulties in operating technological tools such as LCDs, speakers, and laptops, as well as creating teaching media using technology such as Canva, PowerPoint, and Google Forms. In addition, the challenge that English teachers face is the digital divide among students, which creates differences in access to technology and internet connectivity. These disparities hinder student engagement with technology-facilitated learning materials, exacerbating disparities in learning outcomes. In addition, selecting and applying appropriate technological tools to learning is also a challenge, as it requires pedagogical knowledge and technical skills.

English teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges of teaching English within independent curriculum framework at SMAN 1 Takalar

To overcome the challenges encountered by English teachers in delivering English

instruction within independent curriculum frameworks, the English teachers used some strategies. Based on the findings, five strategies were used by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum that were related with the Zulaiha (2022) such as understand the students' characteristic, using a teaching media or method to achieve the teaching achievement and teaching objective, using a teaching module, using assessment to improve students' ability, adjusting the time allocation, the teacher more creative to make class more interactive and the last the English teachers ability in using technology.

The first strategies to overcome the English teachers challenges in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks in students' characteristic was the English teachers create an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected. English teachers also use a variety of teaching methods and media and alternative assessment methods to develop students' abilities. The English teachers use cooperative learning and personalized learning to engage students with different preferences and learning styles. The English teachers also encourage a growth mindset among students, encouraging them to face challenges and believe in their ability to improve themselves. In addition, the English divided the students into a group. They divided students into groups to ensure all students understand the material. Apart from that, the English teachers motivate students to stay involved in learning. These strategies are important for effective English language teaching within an independent curriculum framework.

The second strategies was achieving learning objective in an independent curriculum, the English teachers used various strategies that center on student involvement, innovative methods such as Project Based Learning and Collaborative Learning, technology integration, and involving parents and the community. This approach encourages interactive and comprehensive learning experiences, increasing students' opportunities to achieve the learning achievement and learning objective. Project Based Learning encourages students' experience, while Collaborative Learning promotes teamwork to achieve learning objectives. The English teachers creatively used technology, including applications and multimedia, to enhance learning materials. The student-centered approach allows for personalized learning and adaptation to individual needs. Collaboration with parents and the community extends learning beyond the classroom. Assessment strategies include formative assessments for ongoing feedback, learning portfolios for reflection, competency tests for understanding, and self-assessments for personal growth. Summative assessment within this context typically refers to assessments conducted at the end of a learning period or unit to evaluate students' overall understanding and mastery of the material. These assessments often take the form of exams, projects, or presentations and are used to assign grades or determine students' progression to the next level. These diverse assessment methods ensure a holistic evaluation of student achievement, covering cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of learning. Overall, these strategies contribute to meaningful and relevant learning experiences consistent with independent curriculum goals.

The third strategies were English teachers use various strategies in choosing teaching methods and media in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum. The English teachers prioritize the use of a variety of methods that suitable of students' learning styles and abilities, including textbooks, multimedia resources, and educational software. The English teachers are also adapting their approaches to create interactive, student-centered learning environments, by incorporating group discussions, collaborative projects, and technology. Additionally, the English teachers recognize the importance of adapting strategies based on student feedback and evolving educational. By using this method, teachers increase student engagement and participation, which can improve students' abilities and can achieved learning objectives and learning achievement.

The fourth strategies were English teachers in time allocation in delivering English

instruction within independent curriculum framework. The English teachers used a various strategy to allocate time effectively for creating teaching materials and make a teaching module. First, the English teachers identified the learning achievement and learning objective in the independent curriculum to guide the English teachers in teaching process. Besides that, the English teachers make efficient used of available resources, such as educational websites, textbooks, and digital tools to deliver the process of developing the materials. Furthermore, the English teachers collaborate with other teachers to discuss about teaching module. However, the other strategies to overcome the time allocation the English teachers can optimize their time allocation and effectively develop teaching materials and instructional modules within the independent curriculum framework.

And the last strategies to overcome the challenges that faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum frameworks in teachers' abilities using technology. Technology can help teachers to create interesting teaching materials. Using technology can build students' interest in learning so that learning achievement and learning objective can be achieved. The English teachers looking for professional development opportunities, collaborate with peers, and adapt teaching methodologies to effectively integrate technology. These efforts demonstrate a commitment to improving English language learning and ensuring that students receive quality education in line with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results observation, interview and document analysis, it can be concluded that there were some challenges that faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction within independent curriculum. The English teachers are faced with various challenges because the students have different characteristics and abilities. This causes English teachers need to used flexible teaching strategies. Changes in the way students learn, namely more student-centered, are also a challenge due to limited resources and lack of support. The use of teaching modules is also a problem due to time constraints and it needs to suitable with the students' need. Apart from that, student assessment is also challenges because it has to measure practical skills and incorporate local values. Technology integration offers opportunities also was a challenge such as the digital divide and the need for training for teachers. Time allocation was a challenge for the English teachers because that affects teacher preparation in teaching. Thus, English teachers are faced some challenges in an independent curriculum that require comprehensive support and adaptation strategies.

Based on the results of interview and document analysis, the researcher finds out some strategies to overcome the challenges that faced by English teachers in delivering English instruction in independent curriculum. Based on the findings, the English teachers in SMAN 1 Takalar used various strategies such as such as forming groups, involving students with high abilities, providing motivation to students, creating creative teaching media, and using teaching methods that are appropriate to the material and students' abilities. Although teachers strive to meet students' needs, further support and resources are needed to ensure effective implementation of these strategies in an independent curriculum. In addition, teachers adopt a student-center approach, innovative learning methods such as Project Based Learning and Collaborative Learning, creative use of technology, and collaboration with parents and the community to achieve learning achievements and learning objective. The English teachers also face challenges in evaluating learning, managing time, and integrating technology, but actively pursue solutions such as training and collaboration. With these efforts, the English teachers create a more interesting and effective learning experience for students, and ensure that English learning runs in line with the objective of the Independent Curriculum.

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