

## Curriculum for Elementary Schools in The Merdeka Curriculum

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### Abstract

The Merdeka curriculum provides a special space for English lessons at the elementary school level. The government pays special attention by again giving English space to be studied in elementary schools. The method used in this research is Systematic Literature Review (SLR). (1) planning (determining the object of research); (2) literature search; (3) assessment of inclusion and exclusion criteria; (4) quality assessment; (5) data collection; (6) data analysis. The result English is one of the elective subjects in elementary schools in the independent curriculum, even though there are many obstacles to its implementation but that does not mean that there are no solutions that can be proposed.

**Keywords:** elementary school, english, merdeka curriculum

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## INTRODUCTION

Global conditions that are rapidly developing have an effect on all segments. One of them is in terms of communication, the demands have changed from national to international level communication. The need to master foreign languages, in this case, English, has also increased. English has become a global necessity in the process of communicating. English has an important role in communicating between countries today. Several countries have chosen English as their second language. The increasingly massive movement of individuals along with globalization has made English spread rapidly so that many are learning English to meet their communication needs. The Merdeka curriculum provides a special space for English lessons at the elementary school level. The government pays special attention by again giving English space to be studied in elementary schools (Kusumaningtyas & ..., 2022). Various curricula and methods have been developed to improve students' ability to master English. Even so, the results are still not maximal in making students able to communicate well through that language (Az Zahra & Sya, 2022).

The Independent Curriculum as an alternative curriculum overcomes learning setbacks during the pandemic which gives the freedom of "Freedom to Learn" to learning implementers, namely teachers and school principals in compiling, carrying out the learning process, and developing curricula in schools paying attention to the needs and potential of students (Angga, cucu suryana,

ima nurwahidah, 2022). Nadiem Makarim changed and established the Independent Curriculum as an improvement to the 2013 curriculum on December 10, 2019.

Starting with the four Free Learning policies presented by the Ministry of Education and Culture, (2021a), among others, first, in 2020 changing the National Standardized School Examination (USBN) to a test or assessments carried out by schools with student competence assessments can be carried out in a variety of more comprehensive forms that give freedom to teachers and schools to assess student learning outcomes. Second, in 2021 the National Examination will change to a Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) and a Character Survey that focuses on literacy, numeracy and character abilities as an effort to encourage teachers and schools to improve the quality of learning that refers to good international assessment practices such as PISA and TIMSS. Third, Simplification in the preparation of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), which originally consisted of 13 components to become 3 core components covering learning objectives, learning activities and assessments. This is intended so that teachers have more time to prepare and evaluate learning in addition to effectiveness and efficiency. And fourth, policies in New Student Admissions that are more flexible so as to be able to support inequality in terms of access and quality in the regions. The issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Implementing the Curriculum in the Context of Recovery of Learning Development & Learning (2022) as a form of full support for curriculum improvement in Indonesia to realize an Advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent and has personality through the creation Pancasila students who reason critically, are creative, independent, have faith, fear God Almighty, and have noble character, work together and have global diversity through the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is an option for schools that are ready to implement it in the context of recovering learning from 2022 to 2024 due to the pandemic. However, for schools that are not ready to implement the Independent Curriculum there are still other options, namely continuing to use the 2013 Curriculum, or continuing with the Emergency Curriculum until an evaluation of the learning recovery curriculum is carried out in 2024 (Kemendikbud, 2019).

The structure of the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools is as follows: a) Writing systematics is divided into 4 structure tables, namely: class 1; grade 2; combined class 3,4, and 5; as well as grade 6; b) The study load for each subject is written in Study Hours (JP) per year. Schools can manage the time allocation every week flexibly in 1 school year; c) Religious Education subjects are followed by all students according to their respective religions; d) Organizing learning content using a subject or thematic approach; e) Natural and Social Sciences (IPAS) began to be taught to students starting in grade 3, even though the learning outcomes already existed for grades 1 and 2; f) Art and culture content is provided by the school at least 1 type of art (music, fine arts, theater arts, and/or dance) and students can choose 1 type of art; g) Local content can be added by each school in accordance with government regulations and regional characteristics/local wisdom flexibly in 3 ways, including: 1) Integrate it into other subjects; 2) Integrate it into the project theme of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students; and 3) Develop it into a separate subject; h) English subjects can be chosen depending on the readiness of the school. If the school is not ready, it can be integrated into other subjects, and/or extracurriculars by involving the community, school committee, student volunteers and/or parental guidance; i) English and Local Content as elective subjects with a maximum of 2 JP weekly or 72 JP per year; j) The total JP in the curriculum structure table does not include English, Local Content, and/or additional lessons organized by the school; k) Elementary schools that organize inclusive education can provide program services for students with special needs according to the needs of students (Angga et al., 2022).

Based on the result of observation done in Gugus Diponogoro in Jembrana, it was found that English teaching for elementary school which was less innovative. English teaching is still dominated by memorization and less on comprehension or ability for communication. In terms

materials, it focuses mostly on vocabulary, grammar dan certain short text. The exercise is also matching and multiple choice which is lack of activity to guide the students understanding content of text. In other hand, the learning process must be interspersed with the context of language use naturally which the students could learn to understand the meaning in context. In addition, the material must also involve feelings of pleasure, enthusiasm, imagination, critical and creative thinking of the students. In Kurikulum Merdeka, English is taught since elementary school. Some schools have implemented English subject at first and fourth grade. As an example, in Gugus Diponogoro Jembrana. Some schools here have implemented Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. However, English subject has to insert to the learning process. Here, the writer found that English subject is taught by the teachers who have not English education background. This subject is only taught by the teachers who have basic education background. From the preliminary observation, the teachers have problems in teaching English to young learners. First, the teachers' ability to write, master the structure and pronounce English word is an obstacle in learning English in elementary school. Second, the teacher starts learning directly on the topic without giving brainstorming. Third, learning facilities and parental support for student learning progress. The teachers says that English is very important to teach in this era. It can be seen from the technology advances. The students are nessessary to teach English since young in order they do not experience shock culture when being in advance level. Providing English at elementary level can make students to have basic knowledge of English vocabularies from an early age. In addition, English learning requires habituation for students. When they study at a higher level, they will have good basic English knowledge (Artila Dewi\* et al., 2023). This paper aims to examine the English curriculum for elementary schools in the independent curriculum.

## **METHODS**

The method used in this research is Systematic Literature Review (SLR). SLR is a well-plannedreview to answer specific research questions using a systematic and explicit methodology to identify, select, and critically evaluate the results of the studies included in the literature review(Rother, 2007). So according to Rother, Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a planned review activity to answer research questions that are carried out systematically and explicitly to identify, select and critically evaluate the results of previous studies. There are six stages in the SLR method, namely: (1) planning (determining the object of research); (2) literature search; (3) assessment of inclusion and exclusion criteria; (4) quality assessment; (5) data collection;(6) data analysis (Triandini et al., 2019). The details of the SLR stages in this research are as follows; Planning (determining the object of research)Before conducting a review, the object of research must first be determined. The object of research in this article is the about English curriculum for elementary schools in the “kurikulum merdeka” in Indonesia. The details of the SLR stages in this research are as follows:Planning (determining the object of research)Before conducting a review, the object of research must first be determined. The object of research in this article is the English curriculum for elementary schools in the “kurikulum merdeka” in Indonesia. Then determine the research questions (Research Questions / RQ) related to the research object that has been determined previously. The research questions (Research Questions/RQ) in this article are as follows:

RQ1: what are the differences in English subjects in elementary schools in the “kurikulum merdeka” compared to the previous curriculum?

RQ2: what are the obstacles in teaching English in elementary schools in “kurikulum merdeka”?;

RQ3: what are the solutions to overcome obstacles in teaching English in “kurikulum merdeka”?;

## Literature search

The literature search process is a step taken to answer predetermined research questions. To get relevant sources in order to answer these questions, researchers used the Google Chrome search engine and chose Google Scholar (site address: <https://scholar.google.com/>). The search results for the keyword “kurikulum bahasa inggris untuk ssekolah dasar dalam kurikulum merdeka” obtained 9.640 related articles published since 2019 as shown in Figure 1.

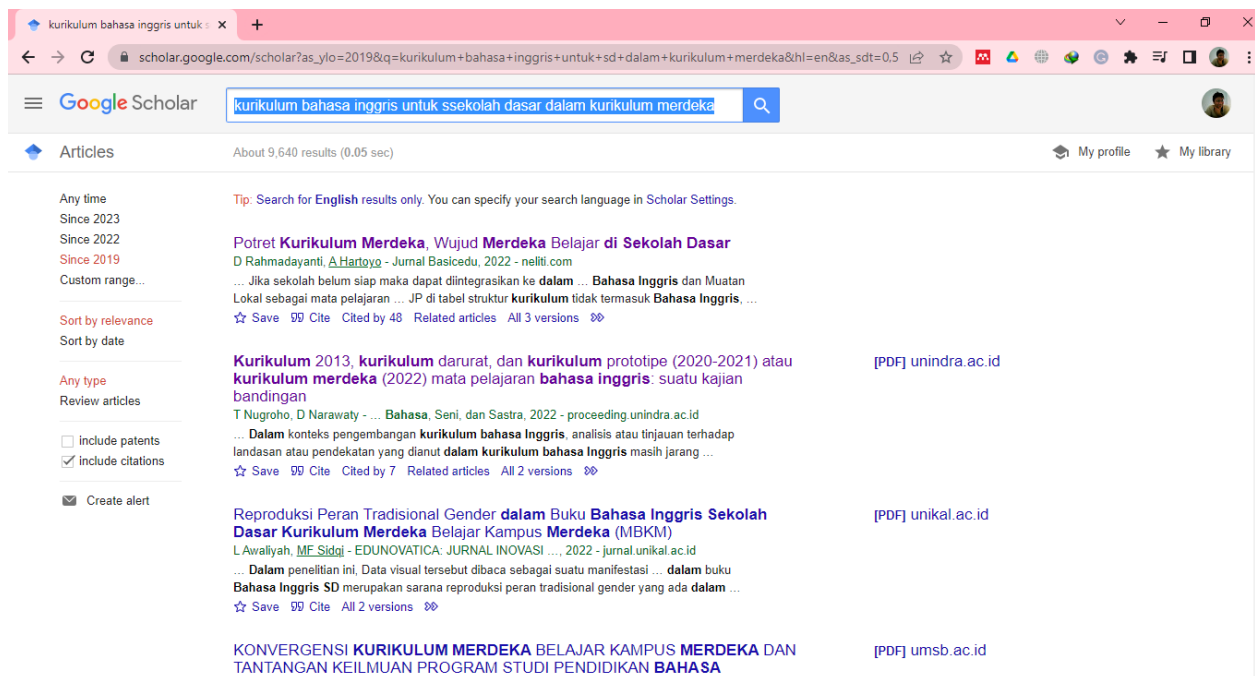


Figure 1. Search results for journal articles with the keyword “kurikulum bahasa inggris untuk sekolah dasar dalam kurikulum merdeka” on the Google Scholar/Google Scholar site.

## Assessment of inclusion and exclusion criteria

The next step is checking the scientific articles found whether they are in accordance with the objects and research questions and the criteria used, namely: 1) the data used are articles published in 2019-2022 only; 2) the data used are articles that discuss the implementation of the English Curriculum for SD in the “Kurikulum Merdeka”. After obtaining articles containing the the implementation of the English Curriculum for SD in the “Kurikulum Merdeka”, a quality assessment (study quality assessment/QA) was carried out from the results of a literature search. Quality assessment in this study includes the following criteria:

QA1: Does the journal article contain information about differences in English subjects in elementary schools in the “kurikulum merdeka” compared to the previous curriculum?

QA2: Does the journal article contain information about obstacles in teaching English in elementary schools in “kurikulum merdeka”?

QA3: Does the journal article contain information about the solutions to overcome obstacles in teaching English in “kurikulum merdeka”?

## Data collection

The next step is to select a journal based on the results of the quality assessment for further analysis.

### Data analysis

The last step is to analyze the data that has been obtained by answering research questions based on the literature that has been collected.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

When a literature search process was carried out on the Google Scholar website, search results were obtained for the keyword The search results for the keyword “entrepreneurship program in high school” obtained 9.640 related articles published since 2019 -2022. After the inclusion and exclusion assessments were carried out, a quality assessment was then carried out referring to the three criteria (QA1, QA2 and QA3) previously described.

Table 1. Quality assessment results

No	Title & writer(s)	QA1	QA2	QA3
	Kurikulum 2013, Kurikulum Darurat, dan Kurikulum Prototipe (2020-2021) Atau Kurikulum Merdeka (2022) Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris: Suatu Kajian Bandingan; Taufik Nugroho, Dede Narawaty	√		
	Potret Kurikulum Merdeka, Wujud Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar; Dewi Rahmadayanti, Agung Hartoyo	√		
	Angga, A., Suryana, C., Nurwahidah, I., Hernawan, A. H., & Prihantini, P. (2022). Komparasi Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Dasar Kabupaten Garut	√		
	Az Zahra, A. S., & Sya, M. F. (2022). Permasalahan dan Solusi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di Sekolah (SD)		√	
	Kurikulum, P., Kepemimpinan, D. A. N., & Ahmad, S. (2014). <i>Instruksional Kepala Sekolah</i>		√	
	Nugroho, T., & Narawaty, D. (2022). Kurikulum 2013 , Kurikulum Darurat ( 2020-2021 ), Dan Kurikulum Prototipe Atau Kurikulum Merdeka (2022) Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris			√

As for the explanation for RQ1: what are the differences in English subjects in elementary schools in the “kurikulum merdeka” compared to the previous curriculum?

They are as follows; Although English has existed since the curriculum before the independence curriculum, there are some differences and similarities between the 2013 Curriculum English Subject Curriculum, the Emergency Curriculum, and the Prototype Curriculum (2020-2021) or the Merdeka Curriculum (2022). Several differences and similarities between the 2013 Curriculum for English Subjects, the Emergency Curriculum, and the Prototype Curriculum (2020-2021) or the Merdeka Curriculum (2022). These differences and similarities include the basic framework, the intended competencies, curriculum structure, learning, assessment, teaching tools provided by the government, curriculum tools. In terms of the prominent differences in the terminology used, in the 2013 curriculum and the emergency curriculum, the term competency is translated into Core Competence (KI) and Basic Competence (KD).

In the 2013 curriculum, KI and KD are classified into KI-1 to KI-4, as well as KD, from KD-1 to KD-4. KI-1: Religious Attitude; KI-2: Social Attitudes; KI-3: Knowledge, and KI-4 Skills. In learning in KI and KD classes it is manifested in an integrated manner, in general the material taught

in class is based on KD-3 and KD-4 (direct teaching), while KI-1 and KI-2 are not taught directly, which is the impact of the learning carried out (nurturant effect). Unlike K-13 and KUDAR, the term competence in KURMA is translated into Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes (CP) includes a combination of competencies that will be taught in each phase that students will go through. In KURMA, students are classified into 5 phases, namely: Phase A: Grades 1 and 2; Phase B: Grades 3 and 4; Phase C; grades 5 and 6; Phase D; class 7,8,9; Phase E: class 10, and Phase F; class 11 and 12. Another difference in terms of approach, learning model and learning steps, K-13/KUDAR and KURMA in English subjects. K-13 and KUDAR use a scientific approach (Scientific Approach) which consists of 5 M: Observing (Observing), Asking (Questioning), Trying /Gathering information (Experimenting), Processing information (Associating), and Communicating (Communicating). Then to support the scientific approach, teachers are advised to apply 3 learning models: Project-Based Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Discovery Learning. Whereas in the KURMA document, the approaches, learning models and learning steps are more entrusted to teachers to adapt to the complexity and flexibility of teaching materials in CP which are important characteristics of 21st century learning.

However, specifically for the English subject, it is recommended to use a text-based approach: Building Knowledge of the Field (BKoF), Modeling of the Text (MoT), Joint Construction of the Text (JCoT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICT). One other thing that is important from the differences between K-13/KUDAR and KURMA in English subjects is learning assessment. Assessment of K-13/KUDAR learning is carried out proportionally, both assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes. What is important is the cumulative and summative achievement of the KI/KD that is determined and ended by each individual with the National Final Examination. While the KURMA learning assessment emphasizes more on process assessment. In addition to assessments such as in K-13/KUDAR, formative and summative, diagnostic assessments are highly prioritized. This is intended so that from the start, the teacher can see the weaknesses and strengths that exist in students so that they have implications for teaching materials, approaches/models and learning media. Apart from the essential differences from the 3 curricula above, of course similarities and similarities are also found. The similarities and similarities found in the design of the three main foundations of the Curriculum are the goals of the National Education System and National Education Standards and building the personality characteristics of Pancasila. In terms of curriculum content for English subjects for junior high and high school/vocational school levels, the three curricula, K-13/KUDAR and KURMA are all text-based learning. (Genre-Based Approach)(Nugroho & Narawaty, 2022).

**For answer RQ2: what are the obstacles in teaching English in elementary schools in “kurikulum merdeka”? is;**

1. There is no evaluation format yet, we only got information from training courses, so now it's just a project evaluation format. Assessment of the Independent Curriculum includes: (1) Assessment for learning, namely diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment; 2) For now the assessment refers to the learning process, namely formative assessment; 3) The form of the assessment is the same as the 2013 curriculum with a scale of 1 to 100 filling in a rubric regarding the assessment of attitudes A, B, C, D or scores of 1, 2, 3, 4 with different levels of indicators. Examples of project module assessment: not yet developed, have started to develop, have developed, and have mastered. Some of the assessments for subjects were trimmed, for example two subjects combined between Science and Social Studies to become Science and Social Sciences or SBdP only focused on one skill to be developed at school, for example fine arts, painting or. dance. Mulok must only speak Sundanese and mulok choose English (Angga et al., 2022)
2. The obstacle came from the teacher who acted as a facilitator in the learning process because of the five subjects in one school they stated that they were less sensitive to learning English.

Perceptions about English which is local content and the difficulties they face in delivering the material. Their sensitivity is still lacking due to the minimal exposure of teachers to English and the notion that English is only local content which means only additional knowledge. This activity is expected to increase teacher awareness about English so that teachers are able to improve the quality of learning English. (Kusumaningtyas & ..., 2022). Ini juga penelitian temukan dalam penelitian lain (Kurikulum et al., 2014)

3. However, some teachers experience problems due to the lack of available textbooks for them. Not all students have textbooks so they have to share with other students. From the results of observations in other schools it was found that the availability of textbooks was only found in private schools with very good quality. The problem mentioned above is also compounded by the teacher not having guidelines which books are appropriate and meet the standards to be used as learning materials in class (Az Zahra & Sya, 2022)
4. Another problem is the lack of teaching media. Teachers must prepare teaching media which indirectly adds to their own expenses. Even so, the teacher really enjoyed teaching her students. It is the responsibility of the school to provide an ideal teaching atmosphere. Other drawbacks are the absence of language laboratory facilities which are disappearing (non-existent) and libraries that meet the standards in elementary schools. (Az Zahra & Sya, 2022)

For answering RQ3: what are the solutions to overcome obstacles in teaching English in “kurikulum merdeka”? is Teachers The first thing that must be done is to increase the teacher's knowledge and skills in terms of handling classes and students because the students are still very young and therefore they must be treated accordingly even though most of them already have good qualifications. In addition, teachers also in the teaching and learning process must use more appropriate learning media for students. Therefore, it is hoped that more participation from schools and the community, especially parents, will provide teaching media and supporting facilities for learning foreign languages in schools. Finally, it is necessary that this research be continued on a wider scale so that we all get a true picture of teaching English (Az Zahra & Sya, 2022)

## CONCLUSION

English is one of the elective subjects in elementary schools in the independent curriculum, even though there are many obstacles in its implementation but that does not mean that there are no solutions that can be proposed.

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