

REFLECTION ON TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 2013 CURRICULUM AND THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM FROM A TESOL PERSPECTIVE

Ananda Suraiya Ramdani¹, Kalayo Hasibuan²
22590824668@students.uin-suska.ac.id¹, kalayo@uin-suska.ac.id²
Universitas Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau

ABSTRACT

Curriculum modifications have a direct impact on students' learning and teachers' methods of instruction. Elementary school English instruction was also impacted by these modifications. The purpose of this study was to contrast my experiences teaching English in primary schools using the Independent Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. The TESOL framework, which comprised the supra, macro, meso, micro, and nano levels, served as the basis for the comparison. My actual classroom experiences served as the basis for my preselective. The result demonstrated that compared to the 2013 curriculum and Independent curriculum offered a more flexible, relevant, and transparent English learning experience that better suited the needs of students in primary schools
Keywords : Teacher Reflection, Elementary School English, 2013 Curriculum, Independent Curriculum, TESOL.

INTRODUCTION

As an elementary school English teacher, I experienced the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to Independent curriculum firsthand. This change was not limited to curriculum documents or administrative adjustments. It also transformed my role as a teacher and had a meaningful impact on my students' learning experiences. Established learning goals and planned instructional processes served as a major guidance for my teaching techniques within the framework of the 2013 curriculum. Although this method offered consistency and clarity, I eventually realized its shortcomings when it came to young learner studying English as a second language. While several students exhibited proficiency in writing assignments, they often showed hesitation and low confidence in using English for oral communication.

The implementation of the Independent curriculum highlighted a critical point of reflection in my teaching practice. Using the TESOL framework I started looking at how curriculum policy (supra level), curriculum design (macro level), school context (meso level), classroom practices (micro level) and individual learner experiences (nano level) interacted to shape English language learning using the TESOL framework of levels supra, macro, meso, micro, and nano. This reflection caused me to reconsider the fundamental goals of English.

The purpose of this reflective study was to compare my experiences teaching English under 2013 curriculum and Independent curriculum and examine how their impacts on both the learning process and outcomes of elementary school students. The purpose of this reflection aimed to provide more deeper insights into how curriculum modifications affected English language instruction at various TESOL levels in a primary school context.

METODOLOGI

This study used a qualitative reflective research design. The research focused on the teachers' personal teaching experiences in primary school English classes under two different curricula: the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This reflective study explored the differences between the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum in teaching English at the primary school level using the TESOL framework. The findings revealed that curriculum changes influenced English language teaching and learning across multiple interconnected levels, including policy orientation, school culture, classroom practices, and students' individual learning experiences.

At the supra and macro levels, the results showed that the 2013 Curriculum positioned English learning as a subject driven by predetermined competencies and content coverage. Based on the teacher's reflection, this orientation often created pressure to complete materials within a limited timeframe, which reduced opportunities for meaningful language use. English learning tended to focus on achieving formal outcomes rather than developing students' communicative confidence. In contrast, the Independent Curriculum demonstrated a more flexible and humanistic policy direction. Teachers were given greater autonomy to adapt learning objectives, materials, and activities according to students' needs and local contexts. This finding supports Widodo's (2020) argument that English language policies for young learners should be sensitive to learners' realities and sociocultural contexts.

At the meso level, the comparison indicated a clear shift in school culture. Under the 2013 Curriculum, schools emphasized administrative compliance, such as detailed lesson plans and assessment documentation. While this ensured accountability, it often limited teachers' time and energy to develop creative instructional practices. With the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, schools became more supportive of teacher collaboration and reflective practices. Teachers were encouraged to share experiences, experiment with new methods, and engage in professional discussions. This supportive environment contributed to improved instructional confidence and innovation, highlighting the crucial role of institutional support in effective curriculum implementation.

At the micro level, differences between the two curricula were most evident in classroom practices. Under the 2013 Curriculum, English lessons were largely teacher-centered and task-oriented, focusing on vocabulary memorization and written exercises. Although students completed assigned tasks, opportunities for oral communication were limited. In contrast, the Independent Curriculum enabled the use of more interactive and communicative activities, such as role-plays, games, songs, storytelling, and simple conversations. These practices encouraged active participation and reduced students' fear of making mistakes. This finding aligns with Sato and Loewen (2019), who emphasized that meaningful interaction and communicative practice are essential for successful second language acquisition.

At the nano level, students' emotional responses and learning experiences differed significantly. Under the 2013 Curriculum, some students appeared anxious and passive, especially during speaking activities. Their fear of making errors limited their willingness to use English. However, under the Independent Curriculum, students showed higher levels of confidence, enjoyment, and engagement. They were more willing to participate, express ideas, and interact using English. This result reinforces the importance of affective factors in young learners' language development, as emotional safety and enjoyment play a critical role in encouraging meaningful language use.

Overall, the combined results and discussion demonstrate that the Independent Curriculum provided a more flexible, student-centered, and emotionally supportive environment for English language learning. By addressing instructional practices and learner experiences across TESOL levels, the Independent Curriculum showed stronger potential to support communicative competence and positive learning engagement

compared to the 2013 Curriculum. However, the findings also suggest that the effectiveness of curriculum reform depends largely on teachers' reflective practices and their ability to adapt instruction to students' needs within specific classroom contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This reflective study examined the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum in teaching English at the primary school level through the lens of the TESOL framework. By analyzing teaching experiences across the supra, macro, meso, micro, and nano levels, this study demonstrated that curriculum changes significantly influenced instructional practices, school culture, and students' learning experiences.

The findings indicated that although the 2013 Curriculum provided structured learning objectives and clear instructional guidance, it often limited teachers' flexibility and reduced opportunities for meaningful communicative practice. As a result, students tended to focus more on task completion than on developing confidence and practical English language use. In contrast, the Independent Curriculum offered greater autonomy for teachers to design contextualized, interactive, and student-centered learning activities that better matched young learners' needs.

Across all TESOL levels, the Independent Curriculum showed stronger potential in supporting effective English language learning. At the policy and curriculum levels, it promoted flexibility and contextual relevance. At the school level, it encouraged collaboration and professional reflection. At the classroom level, it fostered communicative and engaging instructional practices. Most importantly, at the individual learner level, it created a more emotionally supportive environment that enhanced students' confidence, motivation, and willingness to use English.

However, this study also emphasized that the success of the Independent Curriculum depends greatly on teachers' reflective abilities and their commitment to continuously adapting instruction based on students' responses and classroom realities. Therefore, ongoing teacher reflection and institutional support are essential to maximize the benefits of curriculum reform.

In conclusion, this reflective inquiry confirms that the Independent Curriculum provides a more holistic and learner-centered approach to English language teaching in primary schools. When implemented thoughtfully and reflectively, it holds strong potential to improve the quality of English learning and to support young learners' communicative development within the Indonesian educational context

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Sato, M., & Loewen, S. (2019). Do teachers practice what SLA research recommends? *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 16(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy048>.
- Widodo, H. P. (2020). Teaching English to young learners in Indonesia: Policy, practice, and challenges. *TEFLIN Journal*, 31(2), 119–142. <https://doi.org/10.47766/seulanga.v6i2.6194>