

Teachers' Challenges on Implementing EFL Curriculum in Indonesian Rural Area

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Abstract: The making of curriculum aims to improve the quality of education in the country. In line with the situation in Indonesia, the curriculum has always been created with the aim to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Changes occur within a certain period due to the needs in the education field to change, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which must be owned by the young generation. The implementation of this curriculum is expected to produce productive, creative, innovative and affective Indonesians through strengthening attitudes, skills and integrated knowledge. Unfortunately, in fact there were lost of challenges faced by teachers on implementing this curriculum especially in English language teaching. This study aimed at finding out the challenges faced by the teachers and their effort to solve that obstacle. The data were collected through interview and classroom observation of teachers in pilot project schools of 2013 curriculum in Alor regency, one of regencies located in Indonesian rural area. The findings showed some difficulties faced by the teachers in making lesson plan, implemented scientific approach in the classroom, doing authentic assessment and lack of learning resources. Hopefully, the problems which happen related could give more information to the stakeholder to give best solution for the better education process in Indonesia, especially in rural area.

Keywords: Curriculum, Teachers' challenges, EFL, Rural Indonesian School

Introduction

Education plays an important role for country development. Good quality of education is expected to encourage the formation of a reliable human resources potential, independent and intelligent for the future of the country in the future. Therefore, efforts are needed in relation to the development of education in line with the development of 21st century which needs its learners to think critically, creatively, innovatively, and communicatively. One of the efforts of the government is developing a curriculum that can reflect and answer the needs of learners in the 21st century.

Curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the content and lesson materials and ways used as guidelines for the implementation of teaching and learning activities (Chapter 1, point 9, in Hamalik, 2014: 18). At this time the country of Indonesia has created and implemented the Curriculum 2013. This curriculum is applied on the basis of reflection and refinement of the application of the previous curriculum, the curriculum 2006 (School-Based Curriculum). The learning process of the Curriculum 2013 supports the creativity gained through observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating, which is then referred to as a scientific approach. The learning process is entirely directed towards developing affective, cognitive and psychomotor spheres. It aims to make the learner will not only have good cognitive ability but also have good attitude and behavior in society, (Regulation of Minister of Education and Culture No. 22 of 2016 on Standard Process of Primary And Secondary Education).

In Indonesia, not many people use English in their daily communication. The exposure of English in the various different part in Indonesia, from high exposure (metropolitan cities or tourism cities with high access to technology) to low exposure (remote areas with low access of technology) (Manara, 2014). Alor Regency is an part of East Nusa Tenggara Province which is included in Outermost, Leading, Underdeveloped area. The curriculum of 2013 in Alor Regency has begun to be implemented in several schools of the 2013 curriculum project in the 2015/2016

academic year. The implementation of learning using the 2013 curriculum itself has lasted for 4 semesters in the pilot project of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum in Alor Regency.

Based on the above explanation, the learning process plays an important role in achieving the success and competence of learners as well as teachers as educators. The learning process which involves the holistic aspects of learning (affective, cognitive and psychomotor) is expected to provide space for the development of creativity and critical thinking of the students. On the other hand in this learning process, teachers are able to develop themselves to be models of critical thinking, innovation, leadership, communicative and collaborative as part of educational characteristics in the 21st century. This study aims to describe the challenges faced by the teachers on implementing 2013 curriculum especially in language teaching and their effort to tackle this problems.

Literature Review

Indonesia has a demographic bonus in the number of productive age population in the period 2010-2040, (Papararan Mendikbud, 2014: 4). In an effort to improve the quality of the curriculum in Indonesia, the Government of Indonesia has created and implemented the 2013 curriculum. The curriculum is applied on the basis of improvement or reflection and refinement of the application of the previous curriculum, the 2006 curriculum (School-Based Curriculum).

The government conducts development processes focusing on universal secondary education, qualified and competitive education, quality and equitable quality education and character education as its priorities. The government also ensures that all school-age children can go to school as they should. Another aspect in the implementation of this curriculum is expected to produce productive, creative, innovative and affective Indonesians through strengthening attitudes, skills and integrated knowledge. It is expected to provide space for the development of creativity and critical thinking of the students. On the other hand, in this learning

process, teachers are able to develop their students to be models of critical thinker, innovator, leader, communicator and collaborator as part of educational characteristics in the 21st century. Referring to the Core Competency formula for SMP / MTs (Secondary school) (Minister of Education and Culture , No.22, Tahun 2016), language learning is designed to provide experience in using English texts to understand and apply factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge related to eye-catching phenomena and events, through the activities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the realm of concrete. The use of texts also aims to develop an attitude of appreciation and appreciation of religious and social values, including honest behavior, discipline, responsibility, care (tolerance, mutual assistance), courteous, confident, in interacting effectively with the social and natural environment within reach association and existence.

Maulidia (2014) stated that the teacher as the executor in the learning process has a very important role for the achievement of a learning goal therefore the teacher's perceptions and views on aspects in a learning worthy to be considered. This happens because the teacher is most aware of the condition of his students and what aspects can help and influence the students in learning. In this article it is explained that teachers are an important part in the development of the curriculum itself. Therefore, teachers are guided to be able to improve the creativity and innovation in learning.

On the other side, the readiness and willingness to adopt educational change (curriculum change), as emphasized by Fullan in Sundayana (2015) will determine the successful implementation of that change. In the curriculum published by the government has included any parameters that can be used as teacher references in learning. But it can not be denied that there are many obstacles faced by teachers due to the application of a learning curriculum.

In implemented this curriculum there were lots of problems faced by the teachers. These problems include, lack of teaching and learning resources, parents' requests

(for their children to be finished with good grades of English), system tests, etc. These condition, in turn, encourage teachers to create and internalize their own maps that serve as a basis for making decisions and, in practice, to be curricula that teachers implement. On the other side, Febriana et al (2017) found that there were some obstacles which faced by the teachers in rural areas such as language barriers, parents mindset of the importance of study, students competence and student mindset of learning language because their did not interest with the subject.

Method

There were two groups of participants in this study: teachers and school principals. This research was conducted in Alor regency, precisely at junior high school which became the pilot project schools of 2013 curriculum in spesification of English language learning. The teachers participants had qualification in teaching English. From the teachers in pilot project school of 2013 curriculum in Alor regency, six teachers from 3 different schools participated in this study. Most of the teachers were aged between 25 and 42 years old. The teachers had different lenghts of teaching experience one the teachers had been teaching for more than 10 years and the majority of teachers in fact had only 2 or 3 years experience in teaching.

The data for this study was collected through interviews and classroom obsevation. Data of classroom observation was the activities of teaching and learning process in the classroom, which includes the initial activities, core activities and also the end of learning activities and data interviews were included general description of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum and specific overview of implementation in the planning, process, assessment and constraints and efforts of the teacher to overcome them at Junior High School Pilot Project K-13 in Alor Regency; In addition, interviews are also conducted to obtain an overview of the environmental conditions in which teaching and learning activities take place. The interview guidance in this study were contained questions relating to how the implementation of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum is carried out at the junior pilot project in Alor District. Item questions asked by researchers include about planning,

implementation, assessment and obstacles and efforts in implementing the 2013 curriculum.

The classroom observation were conducted for 160 minutes for each school. The time allocation for teaching and learning activities in junior high school was two times by 40 minutes in each meeting. During the observation, the observer sat behind the classroom in order not to disrupt the teaching activities. This strategy helped the researcher to observe teachers' in implementing 2013 curriculum in the classroom activities and their way to tackle the challenge faced in the classroom. This data was analyzed by adapted interactive analysis model's of Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono 2016: 91) consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions.

Result and Discussion

From the observation and interviews, there were several challenges facing by teachers on implementing EFL curriculum in Alor Regency, one of rural areas in Indonesia, namely : (1) lesson plans, (2) learning process, (3) authentic assessment and (4) lack of learning sources. This challenges are describe as follows:

Lesson Plan

2013 curriculum is design by using scientific approach as the part of teaching and learning, but on the other hand, teachers still found any difficulties in design the teaching material by adding the scientific plans because they had lack of knowledge to management the class using scientific approach. It is happened because teacher still did not understand where they should add this steps in the appropriate teaching activities. Ekawati (2017) stated that it is happen because of teachers' readiness to face the new curriculum.

*I try to make the good teaching plans by adding the scientific steps, but I still confused to where should I added that steps. It is may happen cause that is a **new curriculum**, so we should to understand and **repractice it again and again** (T-1, March 2018).*

If I found some difficulties in design the teaching plan, then I will ask the senior teachers or teachers who known well about this steps to taught me about this. I am new teacher (fresh graduate) in this school so I need to learn more about this curricullum and I need to be invited in workshop related to this thing (T-3, March 2018).

T-1 already taught for more that ten years but she still faced the difficulties because she taught that that curricullum and regulation is new for her, so sometimes she teach by using her previous knowledge about how to make teaching plans and slowly added this scientific approach in her teaching plan. In addition, T-3 also feels her difficulties in designing the teaching plans because she is a fresh graduate teacher so she need to learn more about this curricullum in order to create a good teaching activities.

In line with this fact, most teachers in this study perceived that this challenges should be solve by doing an intesinve workshop about how to make a good teaching plan by using this regulation.

Learning Process

In the learning process teachers should implemented the saintific approach by doing several steps namely: observing, questioning, experimenting, associating, and communicating. Most of teachers in this study said that they were still confused of which steps should be done first in the teaching activities, so they only followed what they had write in the teaching plan. In the implementasion not all the steps could be done well in one class meeting, it was happened because teachers had lack of time and also they should repeat the material if the students still did not understand.

I teaching as usual. Only projects assesment that I did not run well. That is because I don't understand what it should be like, there is no teachers' handbook, the textbook only exists for students'. I may have the project sometimes. I make it a daily task. We have limited timeso sometimes it has not apply all (the steps) only a few (students) write fast no more than 5, so they spend to much time to write the materials they learn that day (T-4, March 2018).

The time allocation of teaching is limited, so if I have to do it all in one meeting it's very difficult to be implemented (T-4, March 2018).

In the core activities the teacher only acts as a facilitator who facilitates students when they experience obstacles or lack of understanding of learning. Students are invited to be able to complete and understand the theme of learning with their own creativity and understanding and confirm it to the teacher. Although in its implementation not all aspects of the scientific approach can be carried out by teachers due to technical constraints in the field. This is also emphasized by Zaim (2017) that there are steps in the scientific approach that are difficult for teachers to carry out in learning.

Authentic Assessments

Authentic assessment become one of the characteristics of 2013 curriculum. This assessment including several items which should be done in the teaching activities as the measurement tools of student understanding and capability. Unfortunately, these also became challenges which faced by teachers because they can not implemented all kinds of these assessments in the teaching activities. Teachers found it were difficult to apply all the assessment components that are part of the authentic assessment so that assessments such as portfolios and projects are very rare do in learning. In line with the principals, they also thought that the authentic assessment were the most difficult part to be implemented in curriculum 2013.

*In 2013 curriculum, it consists of cognitive, performance and attitude value. The most difficult is **attitude value** because we have to teach and also try to pay attention to student related to their behaviour in the teaching activities (T-5, March 2018).*

According to Gambari, et al (2015) assessment activities using authentic assessments provide very good benefits, especially in language learning, including: increasing students' understanding of vocabulary in the target language, students become more

communicative in learning and increase motivation and learning attitudes learners both in class and outside class.

Lack of Teaching Sources

Actually textbook really help teachers as a guidance of teaching. But in fact, the school has limited amount of books. In classroom activities, not every students get their own textbook, they have to share it with another students sometimes the textbooks are not fully complete so teachers should download the soft copy form then print it out to the students. This was revealed by T-6 as follow:

The textbook was a big challenges for us. The book sources available at this school did not complete, there did not KD-3.7 material, so we had to print it again from the soft copy (the teaching material and the worksheet) (T-6, March 2018).

Another problem found in this reserach is not every students have their own dictionary even if they have, its not a fully good dictionary so teachers have to help them to tranlate and ask them to write the words on their own book.

Not all students have their own dictionaries, only a few and that is not complete so I ask them to write the words learned that day on their notes (T-2, March 2018).

The absence of books and lack of others source such as internet make another problem for teachers to fullfil the needs of regulation and student to get better education and experience. The Indonesian government tends to change the curriculum over time, which also affects the books being used,(Febriana et al, 2017). From the findings, it clear that textbook and other supplemetary source like internet have important role in teaching to be the guidance of teacher in order to support them in teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

We can not deny that there are still lots of problem faced by the teachers on implementing the 2013 curriculum in language teaching at the classroom but in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum not only encountered obstacles but also efforts made by teachers and schools in implementing the curriculum 2013 well. Teachers have to follow all the components by developing the learning plan based on the condition and learning situation in the classroom. Teachers made improvements to the purpose of learning, do specific classification and add some fun activities to the students. On the other side, teachers prepared additional learning resources to built up students knowleage and motivation. In line with this, teachers need to improve their ability in implementing 2013 curricullum so the goal of teaching itself can be reach well.

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