

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

In the world of education, the curriculum has a crucial role as the basic framework that shapes the learning process. A well-designed curriculum not only organizes what students learn, but also provides guidance for educators in delivering the material effectively. The Independent Curriculum, which was introduced in response to changes in educational needs, aims to enhance student-centred learning and provide more autonomy to teacher in designing teaching strategies. In this reflection, we will discuss how English textbooks align with Independent Curriculum standards and modern educational goals. The curriculum is often considered the "heart" of an educational institution as it determines the structure and direction of the learning process. According to Rahmawati and Widiati (2020), a Modern Curriculum should focus on student-centred learning, real world tasks, and skills needed in the 21st century. Similarly, the Independent Curriculum Ministry of Education and Culture, (2022) also encourages customized learning. Recent research by Putri and Siregar (2023) also states that a good English textbook should have content that is culturally appropriate, trains critical thinking, and uses learning materials that are relevant to students' daily experiences.

On the other hand, English textbooks play an important role in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, as they provide materials that are organized according to the core competencies of the curriculum, Rohimajaya & Hamer (2023). These books are designed to stimulate active learning, critical thinking and communication skills all aspects that are indispensable in today's globalized world. By integrating authentic materials, real life contexts and competency based assessments, English textbooks not only teach language, but also equip students with essential skills for lifelong learning. Despite its many advantages, the integration of English textbooks with the Independent Curriculum is faced with several challenges. One of the main challenges is to ensure that textbooks reflect the diverse backgrounds of Indonesian students while maintaining international standards. In addition, educators need to be equipped with sufficient skills to effectively utilize these learning resources and adapt them to the diverse learning styles and ability levels of students.

English textbooks play an important role in the primary school establishment as key educational resources that support students' learning process to develop in learning English and teacher educational strategies. In the Indonesian education system, well placed textbooks are indispensable to help students develop reading, writing and listening in line with the Independent Curriculum and wider educational goals. In addition, textbooks act as a bridge between the theory and practice of language use, giving students the skills they need to communicate effectively in their daily lives.

In addition to the development of the world of education, textbook quality and relevance must be continuously assessed to meet modern learning needs.

The alignment of the Independent Curriculum and textbooks with students' needs remains an important issue. Various studies have shown that many textbooks do not fully meet the requirements of the curriculum or pay attention to the cognitive, social and cultural aspects of students. These inconsistencies may hinder the development of student learning and the achievement of expected skills. Therefore, analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of English textbooks is important to identify various gaps and provide recommendations for improvement.

In learning or differentiating teaching materials, including textbooks, must be designed in such a way as to support students' abilities without providing excessive burden. This is in line with the principle contained in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 286, which states:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ
رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا
حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ
وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

This verse explains the basis of Allah SWT's justice and compassion towards mankind, whereby Allah does not burden His servants beyond their capabilities, while emphasizing individual responsibility for every good and bad deed. In addition, this verse teaches believers to humbly ask not to be

punished for negligence or forgetfulness, not to be burdened with overly harsh laws as experienced by previous nations, and not to be subjected to trials they can't bear, ending with a plea for forgiveness, mercy, and help from Allah as the true protector.

This verse teaches the importance of suitability and balance in giving responsibility or burden to someone, including in the context of education. In its application to curriculum development or teaching materials, this principle is in line with the purpose of education, which is to create a learning atmosphere that is conducive, fair, and supports optimal student development without exceeding the limits of their abilities.

In a previous study conducted by Yuliana (2025) entitled “The Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and Its Impact on Student Learning Outcomes at MTs. As’adiyah Putra Sengkang,” this research examined how the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum was implemented in English language teaching and its impact on students’ learning outcomes. The results of the study showed that the implementation of this curriculum encouraged diverse learning, student independence, cooperation, and communication skills. Furthermore, this study indicated that this curriculum had a positive impact on students’ cognitive, affective, and social development, including increased motivation, creativity, self confidence, and engagement in academic activities.

The difference between the previous research and the current one is that my research is more directed at analyzing English textbooks adapted to

the standards of the Independent Curriculum and current educational goals. The focus of the research is not only on teachers' implementation of the curriculum but also on how the textbooks support learning in accordance with modern educational policies. Thus, while my research is geared towards the analysis of learning materials, the previous study focused more on teacher experiences when using the Independent Curriculum in the classroom.

This study aims to analyze the suitability of English textbooks with the Independent Curriculum standards and how the textbooks support the achievement of current educational goals. The main focus of this research is on assessing whether the textbook material meets the learning needs in accordance with the Independent Curriculum, from the perspective of content and in terms of content, and in relation to the relationship between the skills developed and educational development.

Furthermore, this study aims to raise the pros and cons of textbooks to improve English language skills with the title "***REFLECTION ON ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS WITH INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM STANDARD AND CURRENT EDUCATIONAL GOALS.***" Using qualitative methods, content analysis, and interviews, this study was conducted at "UPTD SDN 1 JORONG" to obtain data on the effectiveness of textbooks in supporting Independent Curriculum and current educational goals.

B. Definition of Key Terms

To understand this research more clearly, the researcher defines important terms related to the research title as follows:

1. Reflection

Reflection means conducting a structured review of English textbooks to assess the extent to which their content complies with the Independent Curriculum standards and current educational objectives. In this research, reflection involves observing the learning materials, activities provided, and assessment methods in the textbook, with the aim of determining the extent to which the book supports the English learning process. This process aims to determine whether the textbook meets curriculum requirements and contributes positively to the achievement of educational objectives.

2. English Textbooks

Textbooks are learning aids that are frequently used as the primary resource in the teaching and learning process. The textbook examined in this study is *My Next Words: Student's Book for Elementary School (Year 6)*, which contains learning materials, texts, exercises, and activities designed to help develop students' language skills. In this study, an analysis and evaluation were conducted on an English textbook for Year 6 elementary school students used in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, as well as the extent to which it supports the achievement of predetermined educational objectives. To provide a clearer theoretical foundation and link

this research to existing textbook theory frameworks and previous research, several key terms are defined based on relevant literature and the context of this study.

3. Independent Curriculum

Independent Curriculum is a framework within the Indonesian education system comprising a set of principles and guidelines that govern learning objectives, teaching materials, teaching methods, and methods of evaluating learning outcomes. These Curriculum emphasize competency based learning, a student-centred approach, and the ability of teacher to deliver material flexibly. In this research, the Independent Curriculum standards were used as the primary reference to analyse the extent of their implementation. Which English textbook material, learning activities, and assessment tasks were in line with these standards. Using this framework, the study aimed to determine whether the textbooks were able to support meaningful learning processes and help implement the curriculum effectively in classroom learning.

4. Educational Goals

Educational goals are the outcomes of the learning process that is, the skills and goals that students aim to achieve through education. These objectives serve as a guide for the learning process, assessment, and curriculum development to ensure that education supports the academic, learners' academic, personal, and social development. Within the framework of the Independent Curriculum, educational objectives focus on

student-centred learning, critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, communication, and character building to prepare students to face future challenges.

5. Differentiated Learning

Differentiated learning refers to the variations in the ways students engage in learning activities, including differences in learning styles, strategies, preferences, and ways of understanding information. It indicates that students do not have a uniform way of learning, as some may prefer visual, auditory, or kinesthetic methods, while others may benefit more from collaborative or individual learning. These variations affect how students receive, process, and apply knowledge in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to implement diverse and flexible teaching methods to accommodate these differences. In this study, differentiated learning emphasizes the importance of providing varied learning experiences to support all students in achieving the best academic outcomes.

6. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking refers to the skill of examining, assessing, and understanding information thoughtfully and systematically to reach informed conclusions. This skill encompasses abilities like recognizing issues, evaluating data, and forming judgments. Within this framework, critical thinking serves as an essential ability that aids learners in grasping intricate ideas and addressing actual challenges.

7. Collaboration

Collaboration refers to the capability of cooperating successfully with others to reach common objectives. It involves engaging actively, communicating well, valuing different viewpoints, and sharing accountability in accomplishing tasks. This research considers collaboration a vital ability that strengthens learning via interaction and teamwork among learners.

C. Research Questions

The main questions to be addressed in this research are:

1. How do the content, materials, and activities in English textbooks match up with the Independent Curriculum standards and today's educational goals?
2. How do English textbooks support the alignment of current educational goals?

D. Research Objectives

According to the research questions, the research aims to investigate:

1. To determine and explain whether the content, materials, and activities in English textbooks are in line with independent curriculum standards and educational objectives.
2. To identify and explain how English textbooks support the achievement of current educational goals

E. Research Significance

This research is important for improving the quality and effectiveness of English textbooks by analyzing whether the content, material, and activities in the books are in line with the principles and standards of the Independent Curriculum. In particular, this study evaluates the extent to which these textbooks support student-centered learning and are able to adapt to students' varying learning abilities. By analyzing English textbooks, this research provides an overview of the level of suitability of the material in helping students develop English skills in line with current educational objectives.

1. Improving the Quality of English Language Learning

By evaluating how English textbooks support the development of students' language skills, this study identifies gaps between the Independent Curriculum and the textbooks used in schools. These findings can serve as a basis for improving learning materials to make them more meaningful, relevant, and responsive to students' learning needs.

2. Evaluation of Suitability with Independent Curriculum

This study assesses the extent to which textbooks conform to the key principles of Independent Curriculum, such as competency-based learning, differentiation in teaching, and flexibility in the use of materials. The findings provide theoretical insights into the role of textbooks as fundamental teaching tools in achieving curriculum objectives.

3. Contribution to Textbook Development

The results of this study provide recommendations for publishers, teacher and stakeholders in compiling or improving textbooks to better suit students' needs and curriculum demands. Thus, textbooks can support a more engaging and student-centered learning experience.

4. Supporting the Achievement of Educational Objectives

By understanding the relationship between textbooks, Independent Curriculum, syllabi and current educational objectives, this research ensures that learning materials are not only academically relevant, but also support the development of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and creativity.

5. For Further Research

This research is expected to be a reference for other researcher who want to conduct further studies in the field of textbook evaluation and implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and support the achievement of broader national education goals. Hopefully the results of this study will benefit readers and stakeholders in the world of education.