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Readiness of Elementary School Teachers in Pajo District to Implement English Language Learning under the National Curriculum

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Abstract: This research aimed to analyze the readiness of elementary school teachers in Pajo District in implementing English language learning based on the National Curriculum. The study focused on three main aspects that influenced teacher readiness: knowledge about the curriculum, teaching skills possessed, and challenges faced during the implementation process. Using a descriptive approach and a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the research involved surveys and interviews with 10 teachers from several elementary schools in Pajo District. The results showed that, although most teachers had a basic understanding of the National English Curriculum, many felt they were not fully ready to implement it effectively. This readiness was hindered by limited access to relevant training and a lack of teaching materials aligned with the curriculum. In addition, teachers faced challenges in adapting their teaching to the diversity of students' abilities, as well as difficulties in managing time due to high workloads. The study suggested that authorities, especially the government and educational institutions, provide greater support in the form of continuous and targeted training programs and the provision of adequate facilities. With this increased support, it is hoped that the implementation of the English curriculum in elementary schools will be more effective and align with national education goals.

Keywords: teacher readiness; curriculum implementation; English; elementary school; learning challenges

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesiapan guru sekolah dasar di Kecamatan Pajo dalam mengimplementasikan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris berdasarkan Kurikulum Nasional. Penelitian ini fokus pada tiga aspek utama yang mempengaruhi kesiapan guru, yaitu pengetahuan tentang kurikulum, keterampilan mengajar yang dimiliki, dan tantangan yang dihadapi dalam proses implementasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif dan metode kombinasi kuantitatif serta kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan survei dan wawancara dengan 10 guru di beberapa sekolah dasar di Kecamatan Pajo. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun sebagian besar guru memiliki pemahaman dasar tentang kurikulum Bahasa Inggris, banyak guru yang merasa belum sepenuhnya siap dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum tersebut secara efektif. Kesiapan ini terhambat oleh terbatasnya akses terhadap pelatihan yang relevan, serta kurangnya bahan ajar yang sesuai dengan kurikulum. Selain itu, guru juga menghadapi tantangan dalam menyesuaikan pengajaran dengan keberagaman kemampuan siswa, serta kesulitan dalam pengelolaan waktu akibat beban kerja yang tinggi. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar pihak berwenang, terutama pemerintah dan lembaga pendidikan, memberikan dukungan yang lebih besar berupa pelatihan berkelanjutan yang lebih terfokus dan penyediaan fasilitas yang memadai. Dengan adanya peningkatan dukungan ini, diharapkan implementasi kurikulum Bahasa



Inggris di sekolah dasar dapat berjalan lebih efektif dan sesuai dengan tujuan pendidikan nasional.

Kata Kunci: kesiapan guru; implementasi kurikulum; Bahasa Inggris; sekolah dasar; tantangan pembelajaran

INTRODUCTION

Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology Number 12 of 2024 provides a strong legal basis for regulating the curriculum at the levels of early childhood education, primary education and secondary education in Indonesia. This regulation was issued to ensure that the curriculum implemented is relevant to current developments, provides fair opportunities for every student, and strengthens student character and competence in line with the needs of the global world. Moreover, this regulation aims to align the education process with Pancasila values and answer challenges in the digital era and globalization. On this basis, the curriculum that has been prepared is expected to be able to create a generation that is not only academically intelligent, but also has strong character and high social skills.

The more specific legal basis in this Ministerial Regulation includes adjusting the curriculum according to local and national needs, as well as integrating technology and competency-based learning. This regulation also regulates strengthening literacy, numeracy and deeper character development at all levels of education. The reforms carried out also include structuring the curriculum to make it more flexible and adaptive to changes occurring in society and the world of education. Thus, the existence of this regulation is a strategic step in ensuring better and more equitable quality of education throughout Indonesia, in accordance with the mandate of the National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003.

Teachers' readiness to implement English language teaching at the elementary school level is significantly influenced by various factors, including their understanding of the national curriculum, pedagogical skills, and the availability of supporting facilities. According to Setiawan (2020), teachers' readiness to implement a new curriculum does not solely depend on training and their competence but also on their understanding of the philosophy and objectives behind the curriculum. Similarly, Wijayanti (2021) highlights the challenges of implementing the national curriculum in elementary schools, emphasizing that teachers must effectively adapt to integrating a foreign language into teaching in ways that align with the characteristics of young learners. This readiness involves not only the ability to teach English but also the capacity to create a learning environment that fosters the optimal development of students' language competencies. Factors such as educational background, teaching experience, and professional training also play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of curriculum implementation (Suwarti & Darmawan, 2022).

Several empirical studies indicate that teachers' readiness to implement English language teaching at the elementary school level varies significantly, depending on factors such as the level of training, curriculum understanding, and school support. Research conducted by Iskandar (2023) in several elementary schools in Pajo found that although most teachers have a basic understanding of the national curriculum, there remain gaps in terms of effective English teaching skills.



Additionally, a study by Prasetyo and Jamil (2022) revealed that many teachers feel unprepared to teach English due to limited resources and facilities that support such instruction. Similar findings were reported by Ningsih (2021), who highlighted the lack of adequate training for teachers in remote areas like Pajo, which affects their ability to design and implement English lessons in accordance with the new national curriculum.

Although many studies have examined teachers' readiness to implement the national curriculum, most have focused on secondary or higher education levels, with little attention given to elementary school teachers, particularly in remote areas such as Pajo District. Previous research generally highlights common challenges like a lack of training and facilities but rarely delves into the local social and cultural contexts that influence teacher readiness. Furthermore, the adaptation of the national curriculum for English language learning at the elementary level is often overlooked in the literature, despite the growing need to develop foreign language skills from an early age. Thus, this study contributes new insights by exploring unique factors affecting teacher readiness in Pajo District, offering a local perspective that has been largely underrepresented, and providing practical recommendations to support more effective English language teaching implementation in elementary schools.

Field observations reveal significant challenges in implementing English language teaching at the elementary school level in Pajo District. According to initial observations and local education reports, many elementary school teachers in the area lack specialized qualifications or adequate training to teach English in line with the National Curriculum. Data from the Dompu Education Office (2023) indicate that only around 30% of teachers have an English education background, while the rest come from other disciplines, making it difficult for them to adapt teaching materials and methods. Additionally, the lack of supporting facilities, such as curriculum-based textbooks and interactive teaching media, poses a major obstacle to creating an effective teaching and learning process. This situation underscores the need for systematic efforts to improve teachers' competencies and readiness to meet the increasingly complex demands of English language teaching at the elementary school level.

The research objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1. To determine teachers' knowledge of the English curriculum at the elementary school level.
- 2. To analyze the teaching skills possessed by teachers.
- 3. To identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the English curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' readiness to implement English language learning in the national curriculum is influenced by a number of factors, including professional training, access to resources, and the teacher's own personal readiness. International research shows that effective implementation of an English curriculum requires adapting teaching to student needs as well as a deep understanding of curriculum goals and strategies. For example, research in Thailand shows that ongoing teacher training and teacher involvement in curriculum reform are critical for successful implementation of the English curriculum (Suwanarak & Wongsurawat, 2017; Lee & Kim, 2020).



Other research in Indonesia also highlights the importance of training to improve teachers' understanding of the existing curriculum, as well as the use of appropriate teaching materials (Hasyim & Abdullah, 2018).

Apart from training, another factor that influences teacher readiness is the availability of adequate teaching resources, such as textbooks, teaching aids and learning facilities. A study in Pakistan identified that the lack of these resources is a major obstacle in implementing the English curriculum, especially in rural areas which have limited access to modern teaching materials (Ali & Abbas, 2016). This is exacerbated by lack of support from government policies which are often not aligned with real needs on the ground (Kumar & Mishra, 2020).

Another challenge faced by teachers is the gap between the curriculum's intended goals and the realities in the classroom. A study conducted in India found that while English curricula are often idealistic, many teachers feel hindered by external factors such as large class sizes and insufficient time to prepare lessons (Sharma & Gupta, 2019). Furthermore, teachers often lack confidence in implementing new teaching strategies, particularly when they do not receive adequate support from schools or the wider educational community.

To enhance teacher readiness, research highlights the importance of institutional support through mentoring programs and ongoing professional development. For instance, a study in China revealed that mentoring can help novice teachers better understand and adapt the curriculum effectively. These mentoring programs also provide opportunities for teachers to share experiences and learn from peers, which in turn improves classroom teaching quality (Li & Xu, 2021). Such support is crucial in building teachers' confidence, enabling them to deliver more effective English language instruction.

Based on these findings, the readiness of teachers in Pajo District to implement English language teaching can be improved through more intensive training, enhanced access to relevant resources, and strong institutional support. These international studies offer valuable insights into the challenges teachers may encounter and propose strategies to address them, ensuring the successful implementation of the English curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach used referred to both quantitative and qualitative research, employing methods that combined surveys and in-depth interviews. This research method utilized a descriptive and exploratory design, aimed at examining teachers' readiness based on their knowledge of the curriculum, teaching skills, and the challenges they faced in its implementation. According to Creswell (2014), a descriptive design was suitable for illustrating specific characteristics or conditions within a research group, while an exploratory approach allowed researchers to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of complex issues.

The study adopted a mixed-methods design, integrating surveys and interviews as data collection instruments. Surveys were used to gather quantitative data on teachers' knowledge and readiness to implement the curriculum, whereas in-depth interviews provided richer insights into the challenges, barriers, and efforts made by teachers in applying the English curriculum. This approach aligned with Creswell's



(2014) recommendations, advocating for mixed methods to offer a more comprehensive perspective.

The research sample was drawn from elementary school teachers in Pajo District who were involved in teaching English. This study employed purposive sampling to select teachers with experience teaching English within the national curriculum and who were willing to participate in the research. According to Neuman (2014), purposive sampling is used to select individuals with information relevant to the research topic. The sample size was adjusted to meet the analytical needs, involving 10 teachers.

The instruments used in this study consisted of two main components: a survey questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire contained questions related to curriculum knowledge, teaching strategies, and readiness to implement the curriculum. In-depth interviews used a semi-structured interview guide focusing on the challenges teachers faced in implementing the English curriculum, as well as the efforts and support they required. These instruments were validated through content validity and piloted with a small group of teachers before broader use, as recommended by Creswell (2014).

Data collection was conducted using two main techniques: surveys and interviews. Surveys were distributed directly to elementary school teachers selected as the sample. The surveys were delivered in the form of questionnaires that could be completed independently or through online interviews to avoid geographical barriers. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing applications, depending on the teachers' convenience and availability. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), in-depth interviews allow researchers to explore deeper information about individual experiences and perceptions.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the readiness of teachers in implementing the English curriculum. This analysis involved calculating frequencies, means, and percentages to evaluate various aspects of teacher readiness. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involved identifying key themes or patterns in the interview responses. This process followed steps such as data coding, theme categorization, and interpretation of interview results, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The combination of these two types of analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of teacher readiness in the context of the national curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teacher Knowledge of the English Curriculum at the Elementary School Level

Teacher knowledge of the English curriculum at elementary schools in the Pajo subdistrict shows significant variation. Based on survey results, most teachers demonstrated a basic understanding of the general objectives of the national curriculum, which includes the development of English language skills in students. However, there are indications that this understanding is often superficial, especially when it comes to integrating the curriculum into daily teaching practices. This is consistent with research by Sudjana (2019), who found that teachers' understanding of the curriculum is often limited to theoretical aspects, while its practical implementation in the classroom remains suboptimal.



The following will be presented in Table 1 regarding teacher knowledge of the English curriculum at the elementary school level.

Table 1. Teacher Knowledge of the English Curriculum

Aspects	Main Findings	Details
Basic	Most teachers understand the	Their understanding tends to be
Understanding	general objectives of the national	superficial, especially when integrating
of the	curriculum, such as the	the curriculum into daily teaching
Curriculum	development of English language	practices.
	skills.	
Awareness of	Teachers lack understanding of	Many teachers admitted to not receiving
Specific	competency-based assessment and	sufficient training to comprehend the
Aspects	project-based teaching.	curriculum details.
Knowledge	There is a gap between teachers'	Although attending workshops, teachers
Imbalance	knowledge and the curriculum	still face challenges in applying new
	content they are expected to teach.	concepts in teaching.
Teachers'	Teachers with more experience and	Theoretical knowledge of the curriculum
Experience	training tend to have a deeper	does not always translate to successful
and Training	understanding of the curriculum.	application in teaching practices.
Need for	Ongoing training is needed to	A lack of support affects the quality of
Continuous	enhance effective curriculum	education received by students in
Support	implementation.	resource-limited areas like Pajo.

Interviews with several teachers also revealed a lack of awareness about specific aspects of the curriculum, such as competency-based assessment and project-based teaching. Most teachers admitted that they did not receive sufficient training to understand the details of the curriculum. Research by Widodo (2017) highlights the importance of continuous training for teachers to ensure they have adequate knowledge of the curriculum being implemented. Without proper training, teachers will struggle to implement the curriculum effectively, which affects the quality of education received by students.

Additionally, the data collected indicates an imbalance between the knowledge teachers possess and the curriculum content they are expected to teach students. This is in line with findings presented by Saputra (2020), who identified that although teachers are often involved in workshops or training about the curriculum, the application of new concepts in teaching still remains a major challenge, especially in areas with limited access to adequate educational resources.

Teachers with a deeper understanding of the curriculum typically have more teaching experience and have participated in more intensive training programs. However, this is not always an indicator of success in curriculum implementation. For instance, while some teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the curriculum theory, they struggle to apply it in practical teaching. This is supported by research from Goh & Burns (2012), which shows that theoretical knowledge of the curriculum alone is insufficient without practical skills in managing the classroom and developing teaching materials that meet students' needs.

Overall, while there is a basic understanding of the English curriculum at the elementary school level among teachers in the Pajo subdistrict, significant challenges remain in terms of a deeper understanding of its implementation. To improve the quality of English education, there is a need for more in-depth training and continuous support for teachers, especially in areas with limited resources like Pajo. This study aligns with the findings of Richards (2001), who emphasized that



teachers' knowledge of the curriculum must be accompanied by the development of better pedagogical skills to ensure effective teaching.

Teaching Skills of Teachers

The teaching skills possessed by teachers in the Pajo subdistrict in implementing the English curriculum show significant variation, although most teachers already have the basic skills needed for teaching. Based on the survey results, the majority of teachers in this area demonstrated skills in planning and conducting learning activities that cover basic teaching aspects such as delivering material, classroom management, and using varied teaching methods. However, interview results indicated that not all teachers could apply these skills effectively in the context of the new English curriculum. This aligns with research by Harmer (2007), which states that good teaching skills require mastery of various techniques and approaches relevant to the learning objectives.

The following will be presented in Table 2 regarding teaching skills of teachers at the elementary school level.

Table 2. Teaching Skills of Teachers

Table 2. Teaching Skins of Teachers		
Aspects	Main Findings	Details
Basic Teaching	Most teachers possess basic	Skills include delivering material,
Skills	teaching skills required for	classroom management, and using
	implementing the curriculum.	varied teaching methods.
Reliance on	Teachers predominantly use	Limited use of media and technology;
Traditional	traditional methods, such as	lack of familiarity with digital tools.
Methods	lectures and written assignments.	
Communication	Teachers generally build effective	Effective classroom management is
and Classroom	communication but face	critical for creating a conducive learning
Management	challenges in managing diverse	environment.
-	student proficiency levels.	
Adapting to	Teachers struggle with confidence	Difficulties include adjusting teaching
Communicative	and skills in implementing	materials and emphasizing speaking and
Curriculum	competency-based,	listening skills.
	communicative approaches.	•
Need for	Intensive and continuous training	Training is needed to enhance teachers'
Professional	is essential to align teaching skills	ability to balance traditional and modern
Development	with curriculum demands.	teaching techniques effectively.

Teachers in the Pajo subdistrict tend to rely on traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and written assignments, in teaching English, although some have begun trying to use media and technology to enhance student engagement. Despite this, the use of technology in teaching remains limited, as most teachers are not yet familiar with digital tools that could enrich students' learning experiences. According to Richards (2001), effective pedagogical skills in teaching English include the ability to blend traditional methods with more modern techniques, including the use of technology as a supportive learning tool that can enhance interaction between teachers and students.

In addition, teachers in the Pajo subdistrict generally have the skills to build effective communication with students, although there are some challenges related to classroom management, particularly in managing students with varying levels of proficiency in English. This is consistent with the findings of Celce-Murcia (2001), who stated that effective classroom management is one of the keys to success in teaching English. Teachers with skills in managing classroom dynamics can create a



conducive learning environment that allows students to develop according to their abilities.

However, in adapting the more communicative and competency-based English curriculum, some teachers admitted to feeling less confident. They often struggle to adjust teaching materials to accommodate the diverse abilities of students and to implement various approaches that emphasize the development of speaking and listening skills in English. This aligns with the findings of Goh & Burns (2012), who emphasized the importance of teachers' skills in designing lessons that not only focus on reading and writing abilities but also actively develop speaking and listening skills.

Overall, while many teachers possess basic teaching skills in English, their greatest challenge is to develop these skills to better align with the demands of a competency-based curriculum and more communicative learning. Therefore, more intensive and continuous training and mentoring are essential to improve teachers' teaching skills in the face of the ever-evolving English curriculum.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the National English Curriculum

The main challenge faced by teachers in the Pajo District in implementing the English curriculum is the limited resources and supporting learning facilities. Most teachers report difficulty in obtaining teaching materials that align with the established curriculum, especially in areas with limited access to modern educational resources. According to Richards (2001), one of the key challenges in language teaching is the lack of relevant and high-quality teaching materials that can support competency-based teaching. This exacerbates the situation, considering that the new English curriculum requires the application of communicative and competency-based approaches, which demand more varied and engaging teaching materials.

The following will be presented in Table 3 regarding challenges faced by teachers in implementing the English curriculum.

Table 3. Challenges of the Teachers

Aspects	Main Findings	Details
Limited	Difficulty accessing curriculum-	The communicative, competency-
Resources and	aligned teaching materials, especially	based curriculum requires varied and
Materials	in resource-limited areas.	engaging materials, which are often
		unavailable.
Lack of	Insufficient training to understand	Teachers struggle with technical
Professional	and implement curriculum	aspects like competency-based
Training	effectively.	assessments and the development of
		speaking skills.
Student	Adapting teaching to accommodate	Managing students' diverse abilities
Proficiency	varying levels of English proficiency	requires tailored strategies to ensure
Diversity	among students.	equitable learning outcomes.
Time	Limited time for lesson preparation	Excessive workload affects the
Management and	due to administrative tasks.	ability to focus on curriculum
Workload		implementation, lowering the quality
		of teaching.
Need for	Lack of adequate training, resources,	Effective implementation requires
Institutional	and administrative support hampers	more practical skill development and
Support	curriculum implementation.	sufficient teaching materials.



In addition to the issue of teaching materials, another challenge that arises is the lack of ongoing professional training for teachers. Although there are some workshops or training sessions available, many teachers feel that these are not sufficiently comprehensive to help them understand how to effectively implement the curriculum. For example, teachers in Pajo often face difficulties in understanding the technical aspects of the new curriculum, such as competency-based assessments and the development of speaking skills. This aligns with findings from Harmer (2007), which indicate that while teacher training is important, many teachers feel unprepared to face the demands of the new curriculum without more intensive and practical training.

Another issue faced by teachers is the diversity in students' proficiency levels in English. Some teachers report difficulties in adapting their teaching to the individual needs of students, which vary widely from those who are already proficient to those who are just beginning to learn. Celce-Murcia (2001) explains that effective classroom management becomes a significant challenge for teachers who must deal with students of uneven abilities. In this context, teachers are required to have the skills to create teaching strategies that accommodate these differences in ability, ensuring that every student can benefit maximally from the learning process.

On the other hand, challenges related to time management and workload are also strongly felt by teachers in Pajo. Limited time for preparing teaching materials, combined with administrative tasks that must be completed, often prevent teachers from focusing fully on implementing the curriculum in a more effective manner. According to Widodo (2017), poor time management and excessive workload can reduce the quality of teaching, which ultimately affects students' learning outcomes. In this regard, it is essential to provide administrative support and adequate time for teachers to plan and deliver optimal teaching.

Overall, these challenges create significant barriers in the process of implementing the English curriculum at the elementary school level. Therefore, greater efforts are needed from local governments and educational institutions to provide more relevant training and better resources to support teachers in effectively implementing the curriculum. This is in line with research by Goh & Burns (2012), which suggests that in order to improve the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, training focused on developing practical skills and providing adequate resources is crucial.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that teachers' readiness to implement English language learning at the elementary school level in Pajo District still faces various challenges, both in terms of knowledge about the curriculum, teaching skills, and the real conditions faced in the field. Even though most teachers have a basic understanding of the English curriculum, they still need further training to master teaching techniques that are more effective and in line with the demands of a competency-based curriculum. The biggest challenges faced are limited resources and facilities, as well as difficulties in adapting teaching to the diversity of student abilities. Apart from that, time management and high workloads also influence the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.



Therefore, it is important for the government and educational institutions to provide more intensive support in the form of relevant training, providing adequate resources, and creating an environment that supports the development of teacher professionalism. In this way, it is hoped that the implementation of the English curriculum can run more effectively and provide maximum results for students in Pajo District. This also supports the national goal of improving the quality of English education in Indonesia, especially at primary school level.

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