

## 2013 Curriculum: The Challenges Based on Vocational English Teachers' Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at describing and identifying the challenges faced by vocational English teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum. This study used qualitative research approach conducted in four vocational high schools in Trenggalek and Kediri town, East Java, Indonesia. The data were collected by conducting interview and questionnaire. The results of this study shows a number of challenges faced by English teachers deal with designing the lesson plan, preparing and implementing the materials, learning assessment and classroom management. These challenges, therefore, need more attentions and solutions to succeed teaching and learning process and give better impacts for the English teachers in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2013 curriculum has been remarkable issue these years. Mulyasa (2014) says that, the 2013 curriculum is difficult to implement because most teachers are not ready yet. He added that the not readiness of teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum not only on the competence and the creativity matters, the understanding of the approach used in 2013 curriculum, but also on the complexity assessment system of the 2013 curriculum. On the other side, teachers are the spearheads in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum (Mulyasa, 2014). Meanwhile, Marbun (2015) states that, "without the active roles of teacher, the policy of the education reform (included 2013 curriculum) will be useless". Teachers play big roles in teaching and learning process to assist, facilitate, and stimulate their students to have a good attitude, motivation and enthusiasm against English language (Derakhsan, 2015). Thus, teachers' existence in the 2013 curriculum is important and strategic and they may determine the success of the 2013 curriculum implementation. The full supports and the creativities of teachers are needed in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum in order to make the students succeed in the learning activities.

Furthermore, the 2013 curriculum brings some changes. The changes are on the curriculum structure, especially in the form of courses and time allocation. As Fadhillah (2014) says that, the curriculum structure at the whole schools levels is changed, especially in the senior high school level (including vocational high school). It is changed significantly. In the curriculum structure of senior high school level, English is included in the compulsory course that is taught two hours learning per week in which 45 minutes per hour learning (Fadhillah, 2014). In conclusion, the 2013 curriculum gives little chance to the teachers and students in TLP of English subject in senior high school. The lesser time allocation of teaching and learning English in senior high school may also affect the chance of English teachers doing assessment on students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor thoroughly.

Specifically, vocational high school is a senior high school that prepares its students to be able to work at a certain occupation/work field. It consists of vocational high school and Vocational Islamic high

school (National Education System Law number 20 year 2003 verse 15). Thus, learning material for vocational high school students may be specific since the students are prepared to be able to work at a certain occupation/work field or majority that differs one majority to others. Consequently, English, as one subject taught in vocational high school may also be seen as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Gatehouse in Arani (2014) describes “ESP is first designed to meet specific needs of the learners; second, ESP is related in content to the particular disciplines, occupations and activities it serves; third, ESP focuses on the linguistic descriptions (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres analysis which are appropriate to those activities”.

Interestingly, most vocational high schools have various majorities. One vocational high school may have more than three or four majorities. Thus, the varieties of majority claim the different learning materials, teachers, facilities, curricula, etc. The English curricula, learning materials and activities may be designed and based on the learners’ needs and reason for learning to equip the learners with a certain English proficiency level for a situation where the language is going to be used in a work place/occupation for each of majority taken over by the school.

Considering the background description above, henceforth, the researcher is interested to know and describe what the challenges faced by the vocational English teachers based on their perceptions in implementing the 2013 curriculum. In accordance with it, statement of the problem of this research is what are the challenges of 2013 curriculum implementation based on the vocational English teachers’ perspectives? Most importantly, this research aims at knowing and describing the vocational English teachers’ perceptions on challenges of the 2013 curriculum implementation.

This research, however, is expected to be useful for people especially in vocational school of educational setting in Indonesia, for some stakeholders; the government and policymakers in all levels, the teachers, the school management, parents and students. For the government and policymakers, findings or the research is to transform the policies into an operational term as the policy implementation. For the teachers, they would have prepared for the curriculum changes to create a new learning atmosphere, fulfill learning needs for students in a modern pedagogic dimension, and to achieve better. For the school management, they should have prepared the supportable school environment for students to learn better and for teachers to teach more creatively. For parents and students, parents should also have changed their perspectives as private individuals in managing their children’s formal education. The learning targets of their children should also change from merely to achieving certain competences in specific subject matters or passing the national examination to anticipating the future by preparing their children with multidimensional competence that are expected to further take over sciences and technology in this global era.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is qualitative research approach. As stated by Lambert & Lambert (2012), a descriptive qualitative research design is acceptable in obtaining data on behavioral and social phenomenon rather than experimental settings because this research design gives more emphasize on the experiences, meanings and views of the participants. Since it dealt with teacher’s experience in implementing the 2013 curriculum, the researchers, therefore, identified and described the challenges of vocational high school English teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum.

This study was carried out in four vocational high schools in different area that is in Trenggalek and Kediri town, East Java, Indonesia. They are SMKN 1 Trenggalek, SMKN 2 Trenggalek, SMKN 1 Pogalan Trenggalek and SMK Kesehatan Bhakti Wiyata Kediri. The participants of this study were eight English teachers who have been implementing the 2013 curriculum and having the challenges or obstacles in implementing it. The researchers chose these schools based on the reason of geographically location in different areas and various majorities.

In collecting the data, the researchers used interview and questionnaires as the instruments. The researchers proposed an interview to the English teachers, as the source of primary data, with a number of open-ended questions about the challenges and obstacles faced by them. Moreover, the researchers then set a questionnaire to support and gain more data. This instrument performed to the English teachers as well. The questionnaire was a closed-ended questionnaire that consists of fifteen statements with five options. It explored the teachers’ experiences and opinions in conducting teaching and learning process by implementing the 2013 curriculum.

To assess the validity and reliability of the instruments, the researchers had piloted them before they were implemented. By incorporating the Pearson Product Moment correlation at 5% level of significance ( $\alpha$ ), the researchers randomly took 50 respondents consisted of teachers and headmasters as the samples to test the validity of 15 items of the questionnaire. As a result, the coefficient of Pearson Product Moment correlation resulted from  $r_C$  (count) 0.275 which was higher than the  $r_T$  (table). Thus, it can be said that the

instruments were valid. In addition, the reliability of the instruments was tested by incorporating Alpha Cronbach Formula. It is relevant to the instruments that need scaled or dichotomous answers. The result of the reliability test of 15 question items was 0.82. The questions (instruments), they are said reliable if their Alpha Cronbach's score is higher than 0.7. Therefore, the research instruments were valid and reliable.

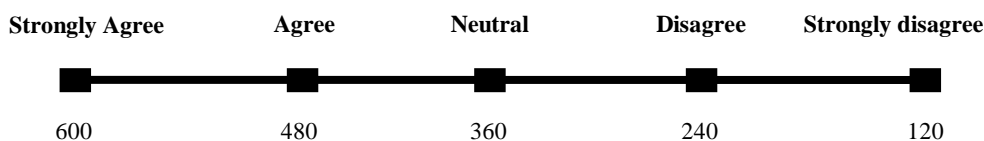
The researchers analyzed the data from the instruments in a different way. From the teachers' questionnaire, the data was analyzed quantitatively using the Likert scale. The researchers made the use of Likert scale in response to the English teachers' perceptions or opinions in the form of five statements (Riduwan, 2008): Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) towards the implementation of the 2013 curriculum and its obstacles.

The researchers then carried out the following steps in analyzing data from the Likert scale. First, scoring each item in the scale; 5 (SA), 4 (A), 3 (N), 2 (D) and 1 (SD). Second, calculating the score range for each set of questionnaire as follows; maximum score =  $8 \times 5 = 40 \times 15 = 600$ , Minimum score =  $8 \times 1 = 8 \times 15 = 120$  and Score range (R) =  $600 - 120 = 480$ . Third, determining the criteria of score interpretation of each questionnaire set;

**Table 1.** Total Score Interpretation

Score	Interpretation
600 – 481	Strongly agree
480 – 361	Agree
360 – 241	Neutral
240 – 121	Disagree
120	Strongly disagree

Fourth, drawing a continuum diagram for the score interpretation as the following:



**Figure 1.** Continuum Diagram in Total

Meanwhile, the data from the interview was analyzed qualitatively. The researchers, in this study, adapted and combined the steps of qualitative analysis by Sugiyono (2011) and Hancock, et.al (2012). They included three steps: keeping records or organizing, representing or displaying, and summarizing or interpreting the data.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to find out the answer of the research question about the opinions, challenges or obstacles faced by vocational high school English teachers; the researchers proposed an interview and administered questionnaires to them. Here is the result.

**Table 2.** English Teachers' Perspectives

ITEM	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)	Item Score
1 Implementing the 2013 curriculum in teaching English is appropriate to the students' condition nowadays	0	1	1	5	1	30
2 Teaching English by implementing the 2013 curriculum is better than the previous curriculum	0	0	1	6	1	32
3 The 2013 curriculum demands the teachers' creativity	0	0	0	1	7	39
4 Teaching English by implementing 2013 Curriculum takes more time in learning process.	0	0	0	2	6	38
5 Teachers need skills to use ICT in implementing the 2013 curriculum	0	0	0	7	1	33
6 The scientific approach are suitable for English lesson.	2	5	1	0	0	15
7 Teachers need to attend in training and seminar to	0	0	2	5	1	31

	increase knowledge and ability regarding the 2013 curriculum						
8	Students are being challenged to be more actively participated in learning process	0	0	0	6	2	<b>34</b>
9	Authentic assessment is appropriate to measure the strong and the weakness of the students in acquiring the competence of certain themes	0	1	1	4	2	<b>31</b>
10	The English textbook of vocational high school which based on the 2013 curriculum is suitable with the students' needs	0	0	0	5	3	<b>35</b>
11	The 2013 Curriculum is effective to establish the future generations who have a good character, strong sense of norms and moral values that can apply in real time context	0	0	0	4	4	<b>36</b>
12	Teachers are confident in teaching students using scientific approach.	0	4	1	3	0	<b>23</b>
13	Students are more interested and being motivated in learning using the 2013 curriculum	1	5	0	2	0	<b>19</b>
14	Institutions/schools strongly support the implementation of the 2013 curriculum	0	3	1	4	0	<b>25</b>
15	Scientific approach challenges English teachers	0	0	0	2	6	<b>38</b>
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>34</b>	
	<b>TOTAL Score X Option Value (1,2,3,4,5)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>170</b>	
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>				<b>459</b>		

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree (D); 3 = Neutral (N); 4 = Agree (A); 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

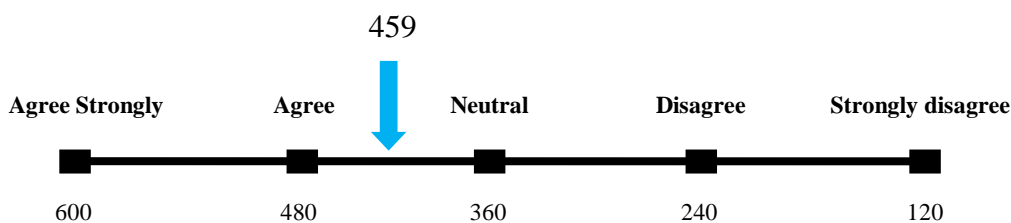


Figure 2. Continuum Diagram of English Teachers' Perspectives

In addition, from the interview, the researchers gained some predominant information. The results showed that the considerable items during the interview with the English teachers related the 2013 curriculum and its challenges as in the following table.

Table 3. The Challenges faced by the English Teachers

No	The Challenges	Findings
1	Designing the lesson plan	Teachers have difficulty in developing standard competency; especially in determining the right indicators.
2	Preparing and implementing the materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teachers have less time to implement learning models.</li> <li>b. Teachers need more time to prepare the materials since a large number of materials should be taught.</li> <li>c. Teachers admit the difficulty in adjusting the allocation time, indicators and learning methods.</li> <li>d. Teachers have difficulty in connecting the students' prior knowledge towards the given materials since the different intake of the students and their various background knowledge.</li> <li>e. Teachers have difficulty in conducting pre activity. They need to engage students and make them more motivated during TLP</li> <li>f. Teachers have difficulty in adjusting learning medias and materials</li> <li>g. Teachers need to use ICT more often</li> <li>g. Teachers feel confused in applying scientific approach including observing, questioning, associating and communicating.</li> </ul>
3	Learning assessment	Teachers had difficulty to assess the students' skills and

		knowledge in which the 2013 curriculum point at authentic assessment. The various intake of the students, the limited time and the students' low motivation are the obstacles to conduct learning assessment.
4	Classroom management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Teachers have difficulty to engage students participation either to ask questions or give their opinions during TLP</li> <li>b. Teachers have difficulty to manage the learning activity since they do not get support from their schools, such as free and stable internet connection, the spacious classroom with good comfortable chairs and tables, speakers for audio listening and LCD.</li> <li>c. Teachers face difficulty to conduct team teaching since they could not adjust their time schedule with the partner.</li> </ol>

According to the results of questionnaire and interview, the vocational high schools English teachers faced some obstacles or challenges in implementing the 2013 curriculum. According to table 2 and figure 2 above, it can be assumed that the English teachers who have been participating in the questionnaire accepted the items given to them. It then proved by the result of the questionnaire with the total score 459, which was interpreted as the agreement from the English teachers. Based on the table 2, it showed that the items number 3, 4 and 15 gain the most supportive responses. From the questionnaire, the majority of English teachers remarked the agreement that implementing the 2013 curriculum was appropriate to the students' condition nowadays yet it took more time in the learning process. Most of them stated that the 2013 curriculum was better than the previous curriculum in teaching English. All of them stated that they should be more creative in TLP. Teachers admitted that the implementation of this curriculum needed the skills to use information and communication technology (ITC) to support the TLP. Meanwhile, they acknowledged that scientific approach was not suitable for English lesson and this approach challenged them more in TLP. Another supportive response based on the questionnaire was the teachers claimed that the English textbook of vocational high school based on the 2013 curriculum was suitable with the students' needs. Moreover, they strongly agreed that the 2013 curriculum was effective to establish the future generations with a good character, strong sense of norms and moral values that could apply in the real time context. Most of them agreed that students should be more actively participated in learning process. On the contrary, teachers had consideration that students should be engaged and motivated in learning using this curriculum. Yet, they also admitted that schools or institutions should support strongly in TLP using the 2013 curriculum. To sum up, from the teachers' opinion in the questionnaire, implementing the 2013 curriculum prompted challenges to them and there should be solutions to these obstacles.

Furthermore, to gain more information about the challenges in implementing the 2013 curriculum, the researchers then conducted an interview with the English teachers. From the results of the interview, there are four main problems faced by teachers, they are challenges related to designing the lesson plan, preparing and implementing the materials, learning assessment and classroom management practices as shown in table 3. The first obstacle was dealing with designing the lesson plan. All of the teachers stated that on the first time they have adapted and used the 2013 curriculum, they faced difficulty in understanding it. As the time went by, they had already understood this curriculum. Most of them felt confused in reviewing the 2013 syllabus of curriculum version due to the different version with the previous one. Regarding the curriculum, in designing the lesson plan, teachers admitted that most of them had difficulty in deciding the suitable indicators due to their prior knowledge and the students' intake or different background. Determining the correct indicators was the most difficult step, according to the teachers.

In addition, the second challenge was preparing and implementing the materials. From the interview, teachers had difficulty in conducting pre activity and challenged on the reflection in the closing activity as well. They acknowledged that they had less time to implement learning models. They needed more time to prepare the materials since a large number of materials should be taught. The allocation of time managed by the teachers in TLP was not match with the real situation. Adjusting the indicators, the allocation of time, the learning materials, media, and the learning process were included as the challenges as well. These findings was in line with the previous study by Noviwati (2017) that revealed the challenges faced by English teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum. She added that the teaching process, teachers perceive that they just have limited time to conduct English teaching and learning activities.

Given the fact that the 2013 curriculum demanded teachers' creativity, since the students were not interested in the teacher-made teaching media, therefore the teachers should be creative in utilizing the learning media and adjusting it with the materials although teachers had difficulty in it. Two out of 8 English teachers got problems in selecting the learning media and the materials. They stated that the media should be suitable with the materials and be interesting to the students. Moreover, teachers faced difficulty in ELT

process that dealt with Strengthening Character Education since the 2013 curriculum concerning on this. It was in line with their opinion that they felt confused in applying scientific approach including observing, questioning, associating and communicating since this approach was not suitable for English subject, according to them. Most of the teachers used problem-based learning and project-based learning more often rather than scientific approach. On their opinions, scientific approach could not be used in the language subject since language was not scientific. These findings corresponded to Albana (2016) who stated that regarding the scientific approach, teachers do not apply this approach completely.

In addition, teachers also had difficulty in connecting the students' prior knowledge towards the given materials since the different intake of the students and their various background knowledge. As teachers' experiences in TLP, not all students were brave and actively participated in speaking. Some students did not pay any attention to the teachers during TLP, therefore teachers needed to engage students and make them more motivated during TLP. Apparently, students also challenged in working on 4C (Critical thinking, Collaborative, Creative and Communication skills) and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) due to their different ability and background. The homogenous class with different level of the students made a few challenges to the teachers. Additionally, there was a teacher had a problem in using ICT due to her experience as the beginner using platforms/devices that support TLP.

Another challenges faced by the English teachers was the learning assessment. According to the teachers, they had difficulty to assess the students' skills and knowledge in which the 2013 curriculum pointed at authentic assessment. Most of the teachers stated that they had difficulty in covering all aspects of the assessment in the 2013 curriculum. The various intake of the students, the limited time and the students' low motivation were the obstacles to conduct learning assessment. These findings were supported by previous study conducted by Firdaus (2016) that it was difficult to determine the subject materials, the authentic assessments in designing the lesson plan as demanded by the curriculum. Moreover, most of studies revealed that it is difficult for teachers to implement scientific assessment (Madkur & Nur, 2014), (Albana, 2016), (Firdaus, 2016), (Noviawati, 2017) referring to the students' competences such as social competence, knowledge competence, and skill competence.

Furthermore, teachers also had challenges in administering the classroom management. Most of them stated that they got difficulty to engage students' participation either to ask questions or give their opinions during TLP. As the previous explanation, students' different level of ability was also the challenges to the teachers. It was really demanding for the teachers to make their students with different abilities understand the materials. Four out of 8 teachers stated that they had difficulty to manage the learning activity since they did not get support from their schools, such as free and stable internet connection, no spacious classroom, no speakers for audio listening and LCD. The rest of the teachers stated that they provided sufficient facilities by their schools. Some teachers also acknowledged that they had difficulty to conduct team teaching since they could not adjust their time schedule with the partner. A research by Habibi et.al (2017) in Usman & Tresnadewi (2020) added that in the classroom management practice revealed the problems or challenges such as lack of knowledge of the teachers toward the using of technology, lack of the newest school facilities, large number of students in one class, less opportunity for the students to practice and situational problems.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Realizing the presented data and findings above, it then could be concluded that the vocational English teachers faced a number of obstacles or challenges in implementing the 2013 curriculum. These challenges then need more attentions and solutions to succeed the teaching and learning process and give better impacts for the English teachers in implementing the 2013 curriculum. Some suggestions are addressed to the principals, stakeholders and future researchers. The principals should alternately supervise and evaluate their English teachers on the process of designing the lesson plans, teaching and learning process, the assessment and the classroom management. The stakeholders are expected to give more concerns in the development of the 2013 curriculum implementation and accommodate the teachers to attend workshops, seminars or training dealt with this curriculum. For future researchers, it can be suggested to conduct the similar study with more area coverage with relevant subjects.

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