REFRAMING ENGLISH CURRICULUM POLICY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN INDONESIA AND THE UNITED STATES FOR LOCAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to compare the secondary school English curriculum in Indonesia and the United States to identify differences in curriculum orientation, instructional design, and assessment practices. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, ten academic articles and official curriculum documents published between 2020 and 2025 were examined. The findings show that Indonesia's curriculum remains centralized and exam-oriented, which limits teacher autonomy and reduces opportunities for authentic, student-centered learning. Meanwhile, the U.S. curriculum emphasizes flexibility, critical thinking, formative assessment, and multicultural integration, allowing greater adaptation to students' needs. Based on this comparison, the study concludes that curriculum development in Indonesia requires selective adaptation of key elements such as teacher empowerment, localized flexibility, performance-based assessment, and balanced cultural representation. The article contributes to curriculum discourse by offering a comparative perspective that can inform policymakers and English educators in designing a more adaptive and competence-based English curriculum for secondary education.

Keywords: English Curriculum; Comparative Education; Curriculum Design; Instructional Policy; Curriculum Development

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, English proficiency has become a fundamental competency that determines an individual's ability to compete on the international stage. English serves not only as a tool for cross-cultural communication but also as a primary medium for the transfer of knowledge, international diplomacy, and professional connectivity (Sri et al., 2024). The need for English proficiency is increasingly evident with the rise in academic and labor mobility, as well as the integration of information technology

in nearly all aspects of life. Therefore, quality English education especially at the secondary school level plays a crucial role in preparing Indonesia's younger generation to meet the challenges of the times.

However, the reality shows that Indonesian students' English proficiency still lags behind that of many other countries. The EF English Proficiency Index (2023) ranked Indonesia 79th out of 113 countries, with an average score of 466 and categorized the country as having "low proficiency". This position is even lower than Vietnam (ranked 58th), the Philippines (20th), and Malaysia (25th) (EF, 2025). Furthermore, the 2018 PISA study indicated that Indonesian students' reading skills which are closely linked to English literacy also fell significantly below the OECD average, scoring 371 compared to the global average of 487 (Nisphi et al., 2023). These facts highlight serious challenges within Indonesia's education system, particularly in delivering English instruction that is effective and aligned with global needs.

One key aspect that determines the quality of learning is the curriculum. In Indonesia, the curriculum is developed centrally by the national government through instruments such as the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and, more recently, the Merdeka Curriculum (Pujianti et al., 2024). These curricula are designed with a national, top-down approach aiming to establish uniform quality standards across the country. Although the Merdeka Curriculum has begun to adopt student-centered learning and differentiated instruction, in practice, teaching methods in classrooms often remain teacher-centered, with a strong focus on exam-based evaluations and cognitive achievement (Caingcoy, 2023).

In contrast, the United States adopts a decentralized education system, where policies and curriculum development are managed at the state or district level. English curricula in the U.S. frequently refer to national standards such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), introduced in 2010, and guidelines from professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (Ngoc Thu, 2023). These standards are designed to equip students with "College and Career Readiness" skills, emphasizing communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and media literacy. According to data from the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), about 37% of 8th-grade students in the United States reached a "proficient" level or higher in reading, while the rest were classified as "basic" or "below basic" (Paige & Rupley, 2024). Although these figures still reflect challenges, the flexibility and diversity of pedagogical approaches in the U.S. suggest progress that could serve as a valuable reference for developing countries like Indonesia.

The curriculum in America also demonstrates strong emphasis on creating actual texts, formative evaluations grounded in performances, and the integration of technology into teaching and learning processes. Educators are given more

freedom to tailor materials and strategies to accommodate students' demands, such as the use of projects, discussion on reflection, and web-based learning sites (Raave et al., 2024). This approach triggers student active participation and building of higher-order thinking ability domains that are still challenging in Indonesian English teaching practices. Since there are structural, orientation, and philosophy of education differences between the United States and Indonesia, a comparative study on Indonesian secondary-level English curricula and those in the United States is timely and expedient. The United States is chosen as a comparative object not merely due to its dominant impact on global standards of education, but also due to its capacity for being able to implement an adjusting curriculum system to different contexts and student needs (Gouëdard et al., 2020).

In this context, this paper examines some of the most important questions. First, one should have a general understanding of the structures, content, and teaching methods of English curricula at secondary level in Indonesia and the USA. This context then serves as the basis for investigating how each country crafts its English education policies under different social and policy contexts. Apart from that, this paper also aims at exploring the differences and similarities between the two curricula in particular, including learning objectives, subject matter selection, pedagogical means, and assessment systems. By comparing these key elements, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the strengths and weaknesses of each system. Finally, the findings of this comparison will be analyzed to determine how they can offer constructive insights for the development of Indonesia's English curriculum. In other words, this paper seeks to answer how international practices, particularly from the United States, can be contextually adapted to strengthen a national English curriculum that is more flexible, student-responsive, and aligned with the challenges of the 21st century.

Using a literature-based comparative review approach, this article aims to contribute both conceptually and practically to curriculum reform efforts in Indonesia particularly in fostering English instruction that is not only pedagogically effective but also inclusive, adaptive, and globally competitive. Given the differences in structure, orientation, and educational philosophy between the two countries, a comparative study of secondary-level English curricula in Indonesia and the United States is both timely and essential. The United States is chosen as a comparative object not only because of its significant influence in shaping international education standards, but also due to its success in building a curriculum system that is adaptive to diverse contexts and student needs. On the short list of successful models, Singapore, South Korea were among them, but, based on its model of broad decentralization and multicultural, which the U.S. has that, we regard it and there are lessons that can be learned to fit with the Indonesian program of curriculum decentralization. Nevertheless, the American system

provides justification for using English as an instrument of communication and also for the understanding of cultures in a pluralistic and democratic country, which now has also become a phenomenon for our multicultural people in Indonesia.

LITERATUR REVIEW
Curriculum Philosophy and Orientation

The design of an English curriculum is deeply shaped by a nation's educational philosophy and socio-political ideology. Curriculum is not merely a set of instructional plans but a cultural construct that reflects societal values, power relations, and visions of human development (Akıncı & Kurt, 2022).In the context of English education, this philosophical dimension becomes crucial as English is both a global language and a medium through which cultural and intellectual ideals are transmitted (Pimentel-Velázquez & Pavón-Vázquez, 2020). Hence, any comparative analysis of national curricula must consider the philosophical orientations that inform their goals and structures.

Indonesia's English curriculum, as seen in the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Merdeka Curriculum, embodies an essentialist philosophy emphasizing character building, moral values, and national unity (Pujianti et al., 2024).The state prescribes centralized learning outcomes and competency standards through a top-down mechanism, aiming to ensure uniformity across regions. However, this model often limits contextual adaptation and creativity at the school level. Studies by Shalehah et al., (2020) and Yohaningsih, (2021) highlight that despite the curriculum's stated focus on competence and holistic learning, classroom implementation remains heavily exam-oriented and cognitively focused, with insufficient opportunities for critical and communicative engagement.

In contrast, the U.S. English curriculum reflects a progressivist and reconstructionist orientation, prioritizing learner autonomy, inquiry, and problem-solving skills. The *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) and the *National Council of Teachers of English* (NCTE) frameworks emphasize communicative competence, literacy development, and real-world application (Gouëdard et al., 2020). This orientation positions English learning not only as linguistic mastery but as a tool for lifelong learning, civic participation, and social transformation. Comparative studies suggest that the philosophical flexibility of the U.S. curriculum enables local adaptation and innovation, a feature still underdeveloped in the Indonesian system.

Pedagogical and Assessment Practices

Pedagogy and assessment are the operational expressions of curriculum philosophy. They represent how abstract goals are realized through teaching and evaluation. In Indonesia, although the Merdeka Curriculum promotes student-centered and differentiated learning, empirical evidence indicates that

classroom practices remain dominated by teacher-centered instruction and textbook dependency (Widyaningsih et al., 2023). Many teachers still prioritize coverage of content over competence due to limited pedagogical training and resource constraints. This misalignment between policy and practice reflects the tension between centralized curriculum goals and diverse classroom realities.

Conversely, in the United States, pedagogical practices are shaped by constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning. Instructional approaches such as project-based learning, discussion-based classrooms, and digital collaboration promote autonomy and creativity (Paige & Rupley, 2024). Teachers are granted greater professional discretion to adapt content and strategies to local contexts, supported by continuous professional development programs. Such flexibility enables the integration of 21st-century competencies critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity into daily classroom experiences (Shalehah et al., 2020).

Assessment practices also reveal key philosophical contrasts. Indonesia's system remains heavily summative and norm-referenced, focusing on written tests and standardized examinations (Wafa' Qaulan Syahida & Siminto Siminto, 2023). Although formative assessment is encouraged by policy, its application is inconsistent due to lack of training and workload pressures (Widyaningsih et al., 2023). In the U.S., assessment is predominantly formative and performance-based, encompassing portfolios, reflective journals, and project presentations. This model not only evaluates student outcomes but also monitors learning processes, reinforcing metacognitive awareness and intrinsic motivation. Thus, assessment becomes an integral part of learning rather than its endpoint a paradigm shift that Indonesia is still striving to achieve.

Cultural and Ideological Dimensions

Curriculum is never culturally neutral; it embodies ideological narratives that shape learners' understanding of identity, diversity, and globalization. In Indonesia, English is often positioned as a foreign language tied to Western modernity, resulting in curricular materials that overrepresent Anglo-American culture while marginalizing local perspectives (Arsyad & Arsyad, 2023). Studies of Indonesian English textbooks reveal limited integration of local cultural references, thereby reducing opportunities for students to connect language learning with their lived realities. This imbalance perpetuates the perception of English as a detached academic subject rather than a meaningful communicative tool embedded in everyday life.

By contrast, the U.S. English curriculum is intentionally multicultural and inclusive, designed to foster empathy, critical awareness, and democratic

citizenship (Baker & Saldanha, 2020). English language and literature classes integrate diverse authors and social issues race, gender, environment encouraging students to interpret texts through multiple cultural lenses. Such approaches reflect a re-constructivist view of education, positioning English not merely as a language of communication but as a medium for critical inquiry and social change (Ngoc Thu, 2023). This ideological openness helps prepare learners for participation in a pluralistic global society.

Recent reforms in Indonesia under the Merdeka Curriculum attempt to balance global orientation with local cultural preservation. The curriculum framework encourages schools to contextualize English instruction by incorporating regional identity, values, and local wisdom. However, challenges remain in operationalizing these ideals, as many instructional materials and teacher resources still rely on Western-centric models. Strengthening cultural representation in English education while maintaining global relevance is therefore essential to achieve a curriculum that is both internationally competitive and locally grounded.

METHOD

The selected approach for this research is the Systematic Literature Review (SLR**)**, which is a type of review that is performed openly, meticulously, and methodically in order to search, assess, and integrate available evidence on the specifics of a given topic from different sources (Veginadu et al., 2022). This was the more favorable option as it empowers the researcher to comprehend the features, discrepancies, and repercussions of the English curriculum in secondary schools in Indonesia and in the United States, along with supporting evidence from other academic works and policy documents (Serasi et al., 2022). According to (Marzi et al., 2024), the SLR was conducted in three main phases: literature identification, selection and inclusion, and thematic synthesis and analysis. In the first phase, systematic literature searches were conducted for all the texts using sophisticated scholarly databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and ResearchGate by inputting the phrases "English curriculum in Indonesia", "English language teaching in secondary schools", "US secondary English curriculum" and "comparative curriculum studies". In addition, some official documents like the Permendikbud or Regulations of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, the Merdeka Curriculum Guiding documents, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) document were also included.

Following initial identification, a screening process was conducted to select the most relevant literature aligned with the focus of this study. The inclusion criteria used were:

Table 1. Criteria for Article Selection

Inclusion Criteria
Publications from the last five years (2020-2025)
Focus on the secondary school level
Discussion of English language teaching in the context of curriculum
Sourced from cerdible outlets such as accredited journals, academic books or official government documents

The selected literature was then analyzed using a thematic-comparative approach, and it centered on five key themes of the English curriculum: learning objectives, instructional content, teaching processes, test administration structures, and the use of technology to enhance the learning process. All the themes were studied by analyzing the variations in the characteristics between Indonesia and the United States at the policy, implementation, and implications for the quality of English teaching levels.

An SLR approach will be employed in conducting this study, which will not only assist in producing a descriptive overview of curricula in both countries but also critical, reflective analysis that can contribute to the discourse on developing a more contextualized, flexible, and 21st-century-oriented English curriculum for Indonesia.

FINDING

Based on the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study compares ten journal articles from 2020 to 2025, both from accredited national journals and respective international journals. The articles were selected on the following inclusion criteria: (1) secondary school curriculum or English language teaching as focus; (2) coverage of topics such as pedagogies, classroom practice, curriculum design, instructional material development, or evaluation; and (3) relevance to the development of 21st-century competencies and the context of national or international curricula. The following table summarizes the article details, including the focus of the study and links to full access for each article analyzed.

Table 1. Summary of the analysis

Title	Year	Results
A Comparison of 4Cs' Praxis in Two Recommended English Textbooks for Senior High School in Indonesia (Shalehah et al., 2020)	2020	Although the textbooks include some 21st-century competencies (4Cs), they still rely heavily on rote learning and theoretical content, lacking in collaborative and critical activities.
The Comparison Between the Normal Curriculum and the New Normal Curriculum of English in Junior High School 9th Grade (Siswodikromo et al., 2021)	2021	The COVID-19 pandemic led to the emergency adaptation of the curriculum, but lack of infrastructure and teacher training hindered the delivery of effective online instruction.
A Comparative-Case Study of Junior High School English Curriculum between Indonesia and the Philippines (Rahmawati et al., 2021)	2021	Indonesia adopts a more centralized, top-down approach, making its curriculum rigid and less adaptable. In contrast, the Philippines uses a bottom-up strategy, encouraging teacher autonomy and cultural relevance.
Reviewing Language Curriculum and Materials Development for Senior High School Level (Yohaningsih, 2021)	2021	English materials are often disconnected from real-life student contexts and insufficient in promoting critical thinking, creativity, and communication—key 21st-century skills.
Comparison of Cultural Awareness in English Textbook for General and Elective Programs Used by EFL of Senior High School (Arsyad & Arsyad, 2023)	2023	Cultural aspects in textbooks are underrepresented, especially global and local cultural balance, limiting students' intercultural understanding and global awareness.
Implementation of Curriculum Merdeka in the Study of English at the Senior High School Informatika Tanah Merah Bangkalan (Widyaningsih et al., 2023)	2023	Teachers appreciate the autonomy offered by Kurikulum Merdeka but struggle with formative assessment design due to lack of clear guidelines and training.
A Review of English for Vocational High School in Curriculum Merdeka (Wafa' Qaulan Syahida & Siminto Siminto, 2023)	2023	The curriculum begins to align with workplace demands but lacks sufficient emphasis on practical communication and real-world English usage for vocational students.
Strengthening Language and Literature Competencies of	2023	Literary education enhances expressive ability and empathy but is underutilized due to limited teacher

High School Student (Ismawati & Sungkono, 2023)		capacity in integrating literature effectively.
EFL Cambridge Curriculum Implementation at Kharisma Bangsa Middle School: Teachers' Perspective (Ameliya et al., 2024)	2024	While the Cambridge curriculum supports student-centered learning and encourages teacher innovation, its implementation requires professional development and contextual adaptation.
The Representation of Global Competence in a Senior High School English Textbook in Indonesia (Education, 2024)	2024	Textbooks present global issues inconsistently and rarely connect them to students' local contexts, making it difficult to foster global competence meaningfully.

Table 2 presents a synthesis of ten scholarly and policy-related sources published between 2020 and 2024, selected based on relevance to secondary English curriculum in both Indonesia and the United States. The sources reflect a wide range of themes, from curriculum philosophy and pedagogical practice to assessment systems and cultural representation in instructional materials. A thematic pattern emerges: while there have been efforts in Indonesia especially through the Kurikulum Merdeka to align with global educational trends, implementation remains inconsistent and hindered by systemic limitations. For example, several studies (e.g., the 2023 studies on textbook analysis and vocational curriculum) highlight a recurring disconnect between curriculum content and students' real-world needs or sociocultural contexts. Others point to teacher confusion in implementing formative assessment despite curricular mandates.

In contrast, literature focusing on the U.S. curriculum, including case studies from international school settings, showcases more integrated and flexible approaches to English instruction. Studies analyzing Cambridge or CCSS-aligned curricula report consistent support for critical thinking, student autonomy, and formative performance-based evaluation. These insights provide the empirical foundation for the thematic analysis that follows. The discussion is organized into five interconnected dimensions: (1) curriculum objectives and philosophical orientation, (2) instructional and pedagogical practices, (3) assessment approaches, (4) cultural and ideological frameworks, and (5) technology integration. Each theme is discussed comparatively, with evidence drawn from the reviewed literature, contextualized within Indonesia's ongoing curriculum reform agenda.

The results synthesized from the ten reviewed studies reveal a consistent pattern of contrast between the Indonesian and U.S. English curricula in terms of philosophy, pedagogy, assessment, and cultural integration. While the Indonesian curriculum, particularly through the Merdeka Curriculum, has made progress toward student-centered and competency-based education, the literature indicates

persistent structural and implementation barriers. Conversely, studies of the U.S. and international curricula highlight a more coherent alignment between learning goals, instructional design, and assessment practices. These findings underscore that curriculum quality is deeply tied to the level of autonomy, flexibility, and teacher professionalism embedded in the education system. Therefore, the following discussion aims to interpret these patterns more critically by analyzing how each thematic dimension reflects broader educational philosophies and policy orientations, and how the comparative insights can inform Indonesia's ongoing curriculum reform.

DISCUSSION

The findings derived from the systematic literature review reveal consistent thematic contrasts between the English curricula of Indonesia and the United States, particularly in terms of philosophy, pedagogy, assessment, and cultural orientation. While both countries share the vision of preparing students for 21st-century competencies, their curriculum systems are framed by distinct ideological, structural, and pedagogical traditions. Therefore, this section interprets those differences within a broader educational framework to identify the implications for Indonesia's curriculum reform agenda.

Curriculum Objectives and Philosophy

The philosophical foundation of a curriculum determines the learning orientation and pedagogical framework adopted in educational practice. The Indonesian English curriculum both the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Merdeka Curriculum embodies an essentialist approach emphasizing knowledge transmission, moral education, and national character formation. Designed through a top-down mechanism, it seeks uniformity and normative national standards. However, despite its competence-based rhetoric, learning objectives in Indonesia often remain cognitively oriented, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension to support standardized examinations. These characteristics reflect an enduring focus on content mastery rather than communicative competence or critical engagement.

By contrast, the United States curriculum follows a progressivist and reconstructionist orientation, emphasizing experiential learning, problem-solving, and personal growth. Frameworks such as the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) and the *National Council of Teachers of English* (NCTE) guidelines advocate for English instruction that integrates communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. These standards focus on equipping students with lifelong learning competencies and global literacy rather than short-term academic goals. The difference in curriculum philosophy illustrates how educational ideology

shapes not only what students learn but also how and why they learn. For Indonesia, aligning national objectives with global competencies requires shifting the focus from cognitive achievement toward personal development and communicative ability.

Furthermore, Indonesia's centralized curriculum structure tends to equate uniformity with quality, limiting contextual adaptation at the regional or school level. Meanwhile, the U.S. curriculum allows states and districts to adapt learning standards based on local priorities, promoting flexibility and relevance. This comparative insight highlights that genuine curriculum quality emerges not from centralization but from the autonomy and professionalism granted to educators.

Pedagogical Approaches

Pedagogy reflects the operational dimension of curriculum philosophy in classroom practice. Despite policy shifts under the Merdeka Curriculum toward student-centered learning and differentiated instruction, Indonesian classrooms still largely follow teacher-centered approaches. Teachers often function as the main source of knowledge, while students play a passive role. Literature shows that grammar translation and text-based instruction remain prevalent, limiting students' opportunities for authentic communication and creative expression. This misalignment between policy intent and classroom practice stems from insufficient pedagogical training, rigid administrative structures, and limited instructional resources.

In contrast, pedagogical practices in the United States demonstrate greater flexibility and innovation. Teachers are encouraged to adopt constructivist and inquiry-based methods such as project-based learning, collaborative discussion, literature circles, and technology-supported learning. These approaches not only enhance language proficiency but also cultivate higher-order thinking skills and learner autonomy. Professional development systems and decentralized curriculum design allow teachers to tailor instruction according to students' needs, thereby fostering engagement and contextual learning.

Importantly, the integration of digital tools has become an essential feature of American English pedagogy. Platforms such as Google Classroom and Flipgrid are used to promote active participation and formative feedback. While technology adoption in Indonesia increased following the COVID-19 pandemic, it often remains technical rather than pedagogically driven. Strengthening teachers' digital literacy and reflective practice is therefore vital to ensuring that technology supports deeper learning rather than serving as a mere presentation tool

Assessment Practices

Assessment practices reveal what a curriculum truly values. In Indonesia, evaluation systems remain largely summative and norm-referenced, relying on multiple-choice or short-answer tests that prioritize factual recall over critical application. Although the Merdeka Curriculum promotes formative assessment methods such as portfolios, self-assessment, and peer review their implementation remains limited. Teachers often report confusion about operational guidelines and face time constraints that discourage authentic evaluation. Consequently, assessment tends to measure what is easy to test rather than what is meaningful to learn.

Conversely, assessment in the United States emphasizes learning for development rather than measurement for ranking. Performance-based assessments, writing portfolios, oral presentations, and reflective journals are common features of U.S. classrooms. These assessment forms encourage students to demonstrate understanding through authentic tasks and continuous reflection. They also position assessment as a learning process integrated into instruction rather than an endpoint of evaluation. Support from professional associations such as the NCTE ensures consistency and professional growth among teachers in designing fair, competency-oriented assessments.

For Indonesia, the challenge lies not only in changing assessment formats but also in transforming the educational culture that prioritizes high-stakes testing. The shift toward formative and authentic evaluation must be accompanied by teacher training, administrative reform, and policy alignment that values the process of learning as much as its outcome.

Ideological and Cultural Orientation

Curriculum is never value-free it always reflects the underlying educational ideology and cultural orientation. In this context, the English curriculum in Indonesia and the United States represents two distinct approaches in addressing issues of identity, diversity, and globalization. The Indonesian curriculum continues to be shaped by a nationalistic ideology that emphasizes character-building, morality, and cultural unity. This is evident in curriculum documents that foreground Pancasila values and the integration of local culture as the foundation of education. However, literature indicates that the integration of cultural values into English language instruction remains largely symbolic or superficial in nature. The majority of English textbooks, especially those used at secondary levels, do not offer positive representation of the local cultural environments and instead heavily use standardized Western culture (e.g., British or American) with no critical assessment of the cultural richness of Indonesian students.

Alternatively, the American curriculum is developed in a multicultural and democratic nation where cultural, ethnic, religious, and social diversity is considered a resource for education. This is reflected in the English curriculum, in which it espouses the reading of literary and non-fiction materials from diverse cultural perspectives, including minority writers' and communities'. The intention is to build students' critical awareness of social inequality, questions of identity, and global-local relations. The literature discussed also shows that U.S. students are urged to reflect upon their own lives in relation to the books they read, and to talk about racism, gender, and the environment. It is a transformatory approach, in which English acquisition goes beyond the acquisition of language to become an instrument for critical knowledge of the world and active participation in society.

In Indonesia, the greatest challenge lies in how to incorporate authentic local values without falling into exclusivism or dogmatism. Several articles highlight that local cultural representation in English teaching remains normative and disconnected from students' lived realities. Furthermore, the development of global competence in the curriculum is still abstract, lacking concrete instructional materials and pedagogical support. Therefore, the ideological and cultural orientation of the Indonesian English curriculum should be directed toward strengthening local identity that is open to global perspectives not as a dichotomy, but as a coexistence of values, increasing cultural representation in learning materials, including those from marginalized groups and students' local communities, and developing a curriculum that fosters social awareness, in which English functions not merely as an international communication tool, but as a means to critically understand the world. This approach would enable Indonesian students not only to become competent users of English but also active agents in navigating the evolving socio-cultural complexities of the global era.

Implications for Indonesian Curriculum Development

The comparative thematics of the English curriculum in the United States and Indonesia highlight various important implications for developing a more adaptive, contextual, and 21st century-oriented national curriculum for Indonesia. These implications encompass structural, pedagogical, cultural, and ideological aspects that are interconnected and require an integrated reform program.

a. A Flexible and Contextual Curriculum

Indonesia needs to embrace a more flexible and context-oriented model of curriculum development. A mixed mode of decentralized curriculum system may enable schools and instructors to modify learning objectives, curriculum content, and teaching methods to the actual needs of students. One may learn from the American system, which is liberal enough to enable regional autonomy under a

system of national standards. Such a practice may be phased in in Indonesia through building up the competency of education institutions and local stakeholders.

b. Strengthening Teacher Capacity as Curriculum Agents

Literature also indicates that teacher preparedness is a major contributor to curriculum implementation. Therefore, curriculum renewal must be through long-term professional development programs with reflective practice as the basis. Teachers must be supported in developing learning experiences that foster critical, collaborative, and creative thinking, and employ technology pedagogically rather than technically. Professional learning communities also need to be created to strengthen networks among teachers and share best practices.

c. Assessment Reform to Support Learning Processes

On the short list of successful models, Singapore, South Korea were among them, but, based on its model of broad decentralization and multicultural, which the U.S. has that, we regard it and there are lessons that can be learned to fit with the Indonesian program of curriculum decentralization. Nevertheless, the American system provides justification for using English as an instrument of communication and also for the understanding of cultures in a pluralistic and democratic country, which now has also become a phenomenon for our multicultural people in Indonesia.

d. Integrating Local Cultural Values and Global Perspectives

A foreign sensitivity is why international values is why global issues are still very pertinent concerns in Indonesia. Indonesia's English curriculum should indeed reflect local values while. Mindestens ein Englisch Modul, das in den Lehrplan der Sekundarbildung eingefugt wird, sollte die sprachliche gefordeter fortschritt und das weltweit fortschritt amendez gesprochen werden so als ticket zu zeit genusssetzung culturel. Each Lesson greadily paying special atention toward deviation of students cultures and promote ethnocentrism broad-mindedness social consciousness. Furthermore, the multiculturalism informed from the US is a particular approach that could serve as an mold of design curriculum from the IDEA on priorities sensitive to region identity.

Positioning English as a Tool for Empowerment

English should not in any case be perceived as one of the subjects on examination with great international distinction affixed to it in the context of Indonesian education. Positively, English should be framed as an empowering means of understanding global realities, engagement or inter-civilizational dialogues, and constructive contexts of international discourse. The English curriculum with such orientation becomes an agent of sociological and intellectual change for prospective generations of the country. There are basic underlying principles underpinning the structure of English teaching curriculum of Indonesia

and also the English language curriculum in Unites states that indicates set philosophies of curriculum is guided by different pedagogical and evaluative cultures as well as technology frameworks employed and integrate culturallys Somewhere centralized, cultural orientations, and technology usage. While Indonesia's curriculum is more centralized, content-oriented, and examination-based, the U.S. focuses on student-centered learning, thinking critically, and having flexibility to respond to diverse learning contexts.

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To improve English language education in Indonesia, there is a pressing need to shift from a rigid, standardized model toward a more flexible, learner-centered approach that reflects global competencies and local values. This includes enhancing teacher training, promoting formative assessments, integrating multicultural content, and leveraging technology as an interactive tool to foster communication and creativity. Ultimately, by adopting progressive principles while respecting cultural uniqueness, Indonesia can better equip its students with the linguistic, cognitive, and intercultural skills needed to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

CONCLUSION

This cross analysis of the English curriculum in secondary education suggests clear gaps in orientation, pedagogy, evaluation, cultural congruence, and system integration. While the Indonesian curriculum remains centralized and literally detached from the learner's socioeconomic reality, the American curriculum displays flexibility, traditional evaluation focus, and multicultural infusion meant to sustain 21st century competencies. The distinguishing factor of this article is the application of a modern and systematic literature review approach published between 2020-2025, alongside thematic-comparative analysis that not only seeks contrasts but actively suggests pragmatic change for Indonesia. Previous studies have focused on description, but this one integrates analytical reasoning with policy proposing 'freedom building' in localized curriculum, teacher's independence, holistic evaluation, culture-dominated but globally-oriented English,

and education focus. This way, this study contributes a realistic yet progressive perspective to the debate concerning the development of the national curriculum.

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