

COMPARING THE LISTENING SKILLS OF THE 2013 CURRICULUM AND MERDEKA CURRICULUM OF THE ELEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS OF SMAN 1 MALINAU AND SMAN 3 MALINAU

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine whether there was a significant difference in the listening skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Malinau, which used the 2013 Curriculum, compared to those at SMAN 3 Malinau, which adopted the Merdeka Curriculum. A causal-comparative research design was employed, with a sample size of 100 students selected using a purposive sampling technique. The research instruments included listening tests and interviews, in which the listening test questions were adapted from Collins' TOEIC listening skills. Due to the non-normal distribution of the data, the Mann-Whitney test was utilized to determine the differences between the groups. The results revealed a significant difference in the listening skills between the two groups. The mean score for students at SMAN 1 Malinau, which implemented the 2013 Curriculum, was 241.00, placing them at the B1-Intermediate level according to the CEFR levels. In contrast, students at SMAN 3 Malinau, who learned English under the Merdeka Curriculum, had a mean score of 185.40, also within the B1-Intermediate level but notably lower. The Mann-Whitney test results showed a P-value of 0.001, which was less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference. Furthermore, the effect size was calculated at 0.3339, indicating a medium-level difference between the groups. This disparity in listening skills could be attributed to differences in the learning systems, with the 2013 Curriculum being more systematic compared to the Merdeka Curriculum being more flexible.

Keywords: Listening, Listening Skills, The 2013 Curriculum, The Merdeka Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

In English language instruction (ELT), there are two categories of skills such as receptive skills and productive skills. Since language is received through our ears, listening is referred to as a receptive skill. Furthermore, because it includes the knowledge and information required for language learning, it is a receptive skill (Bao, 2015). Receptive skills involve the ability to grasp a language, which includes listening. In essence, listening is the process of having the speaker make sounds for the listener to comprehend. Among the four language skills most frequently utilized in communication is listening. When it comes to learning a language, listening comes first (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015). Furthermore, according to (Lervåg et al., 2018), children's listening comprehension is a critical component of their success in speaking, reading, and writing.

Each time it comes to learning a language, listening is more crucial than speaking or writing, which are skills that can develop organically with practice (Akkaya & Doyumğaç, 2023). A person who has excellent listening comprehension skills can explain what they listen to in their language based on what they understand. This is consistent with the statement that listening is a fundamental ability for a person's communicative competency while teaching English as a second language. This suggests that to support success in the oral communication

process when creating a foreign language, one must first understand something intellectually from auditory information.

In order for EFL students to understand the subject that their teachers are teaching them, they must have this listening ability (N. Sari & Fithriyana, 2019). According to (Wolfgramm et al., 2016), listening comprehension is one of the most crucial English language skills for students to have without even realizing it because, initially, they are expected to have listened to all of the teacher's instructions in the classroom. Listening has become crucial in language classrooms since it gives students high-quality feedback (Djaborova, 2020).

As an important skill, listening becomes one of the English language skills taught to students in the 2013 curriculum in high school in Indonesia. This can be seen from the curriculum at the educational level which shows the existence of listening teaching activities for the high school level. Its matters mostly are texts related to transactional and interpersonal texts. Here students will be given listening and speaking material about various transactional and interpersonals. This means that lessons should start with listening activities and then be integrated into speaking activities (A. P. Sari, 2019).

Through research carried out in Malaysia, (Rashid et al., 2017) stated that teaching English in one way is inappropriate for learning the language, particularly when it comes to listening. However, learning must be designed interactively by involving students because they must not only experience but also practice directly (Masinde et al., 2023). From here, project-based learning can be trusted to give a live experience to the learners. This is then in line with the spirit of an independent curriculum that urges teachers to innovate to create modules that meet the demands of the twenty-first century. Any student who uses this curriculum can learn independently according to the instructions contained in it for each skill including listening in it.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to learn more about how students' listening skills are impacted by the 2013 curriculum's implementation as well as the Merdeka curriculum in two senior high schools, particularly in Malinau. Since the government changed the curriculum in response to student needs, a new stand-alone curriculum was created to replace the 2013 curriculum. This new curriculum is being implemented in all schools, including Malinau. However, some differences in the new curriculum affect students' ability to acquire language skills, including listening skills, which are hardly ever addressed in the process of teaching and learning English. The researcher is unsure of the precise difference even though they are aware that there is a distinction at the end. As a result, the researcher's focus in this study is on the listening component, namely the correctness of the student response to the researcher's listening test, which is intended to be evaluated from the comparative results. Therefore, the researcher assessed the students' capacity to listen and complete tasks with the correct responses based on the test questions that were provided. Researcher expect that the study's findings will demonstrate which curriculum are most effective in enhancing student listening skills. Afterward, the researcher verifies the outcomes of the information gathered via interviews with English teachers inside the representative classrooms. Interview questions about curriculum implementation in the classroom were presented to the teachers, and their responses were utilized to support the researcher's data collection. Before all of that, though, the researcher had used purposive sampling to identify the sample members by conducting an initial study in the intended location.

Based on the results of the preliminary study, the application of this Merdeka Curriculum has started to be implemented at various levels of education, including the high school level which is the focus of this research. Nevertheless, the previous curriculum was not immediately replaced with the new one. So, therefore, one school and another may have differences in the placement of the application of this new curriculum, such as SMAN 1 Malinau and SMAN 3 Malinau. At SMAN 1 Malinau, they choose to fully implement the

Merdeka Curriculum only in class X, while class XI still applies independent learning which is still classified as the 2013 curriculum. This is different from SMAN 3 Malinau, which chose class X and class XI to be able to directly implement this new curriculum. These two differences mean that class XI SMAN 1 Malinau and class XI SMAN 3 Malinau have different ways of teaching and learning processes.

In considering this, the researcher ultimately contrasts which curriculum are best at enhancing students listening abilities. To assess which curriculum is better for the listening skills of grade XI high school students at SMA Negeri 1 and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, the researcher in this case uses the TOEIC as a research instrument. Even though the level of students who have not yet stepped into the world of lectures, the test was chosen according to the ability of students so as not to make them feel burdened by the difficulty of English words. That is then the reason why TOEIC is taken by the researcher to measure students' listening skills with a total of 100 questions without being reduced to avoid invalidity of the instrument. Although it is not very common to choose this instrument to be applied to high school students who lead to continuous study, it does not rule out that the question words contained in the TOEIC listening test are words that are often encountered in everyday conversation. This is then in line with the concept of an independent learning curriculum that provides flexibility to learners (Shalehah, 2023). Therefore, it is appropriate for the researcher to formulate research entitled "comparing the listening skills of the 2013 curriculum and Merdeka Curriculum of the eleventh-grade students of SMAN 1 Malinau and SMAN 3 Malinau".

METHOD

In this study, causal-comparative research is used. This causal-comparative research is one type of quantitative approach. This research design was chosen because the researcher wanted to compare which curriculum is suitable for improving students' listening skills. According to Ary et al., (2010), quantitative research used objective measurements to collect numerical data used to answer questions or test predetermined hypotheses. In general, a well-controlled environment is needed for this research.

According to (Gay et al., 2010), causal-comparative research aims to identify the causes, or explanations, for current variations in the status or behavior of groups or individuals. In another way, the groups already differ in a few areas, and the researcher's goal is to determine what is primarily responsible for these differences. Causal-comparative research is a variant of this type of study that focuses on causes first before consequences.

A basic causal-comparative design is defined by (Gay et al., 2010) as choosing two groups that differ in relevant factors and comparing the two based on some dependent variables. The experimental group and comparison group are the two participant groups that the researcher chose. Although to varying degrees or proportions, both groups have the same characteristics.

The researcher used research instruments as tools to collect data in this study. The instruments used were a listening test and an interview. The listening test was adopted from TOEIC with a total of 100 questions in 45 minutes. To pass this test, students must answer a variety of photographs, question-response, short conversations, and short talks that have been recorded in English. This test aims to measure which listening skills are better between students who use the K-13 curriculum and those who use the Merdeka curriculum. Then, interviews conducted with English teachers in the sampled classes were used by the researcher to get more information about students' listening skills in the implementation of the curriculum used, as well as how teachers teach in class according to the curriculum implemented at school. There is no need to be concerned about the discrepancy between TOEIC and curriculum implementation as a research variable in this study because based on

the development of the Merdeka curriculum, the learning context is related to everyday life to make it more meaningful (Shalehah, 2023).

FINDINGS

This study includes SMA Negeri 1 Malinau as one of its target schools. Jalan Tanjung Belimbing No. 120A RT. 06, Malinau Kota, Kabupaten Malinau, Kalimantan Utara is where the school is located. Despite the widespread implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, the school, which is the first public senior high school in Malinau, continues to teach its grade XI students using the K–13 Curriculum. Teachers do not feel pressured to implement the new curriculum right away because of the school's A accreditation. One of the grade XI English teachers claims that sticking with the 2013 curriculum won't cause students to feel out of touch with modern educational practices. This is because, while having to be teacher-centered, teachers still offer complete services in terms of material delivery and make an effort to establish a pleasant learning environment. Teachers continue to support and develop each student's potential through the extracurricular activities that are currently offered. Teachers do not operate in a self-serving manner when they instantly require their students to adhere to curriculum adjustments. Here, though, the teacher is more concerned with gradually acquainting students with the *Merdeka* Curriculum beforehand. That way learning in the classroom continues systematically.

In addition, SMA Negeri 3 Malinau is also one of the two schools targeted in this study. This school is located on Jalan Aji Pentas RT. 09, Malinau Utara, Kabupaten Malinau, Kalimantan Utara. This school was chosen by the researcher because it is comparable to SMA Negeri 1 Malinau which is still implementing the K-13 Curriculum. Although it is still accredited 'B', this school possesses the courage to directly implement the new curriculum in their grade XI students. According to one of the English teachers who teaches grade XI, the school purely only applies the provisions of the Ministry of Education and Research. Once more, teachers at the school consider that the *Merdeka* Curriculum brings a new revolution in the world of Indonesian education. This causes the school to have the freedom to design their curriculum. In addition, teachers can also design more creative and innovative teaching methods. That way, teachers can adapt their approach to students' learning styles.

Descriptive statistics are used in the findings of the research to show how the mean scores of SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau differ from one another. The mean score at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau is greater than the mean score at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, as can be seen in the table below. The following attachment contains the mean scores and standard deviations for SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau:

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
2013 Curriculum	50	385	105	490	241.00	96.653
Merdeka Curriculum	50	370	100	470	185.40	73.024
Valid N (listwise)	50					

The listening skill scores, along with their mean and standard deviation, are displayed above for students at SMA Negeri 1 and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau. 50 students represented the population of SMA Negeri 1 Malinau, with a minimum score of 105, a maximum score of 490, and a score range of 385. There is also an average of 241.00, a standard deviation of 96.683, and a standard error of 13.669 according to the statistics. The listening skills results obtained from students at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau then indicate a score range of 370, with a minimum score of 100 and a maximum score of 470. In addition, there was a standard

deviation of 73.024 and a standard error of 10.327, with an average score of 185.40. These findings demonstrate that, when compared to the results of the listening test that was administered, the listening skills of students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau are valued more highly than those of students at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau.

The researcher then used Collins' scoring rubric to rectify the test findings. According to the standards, a score of 5 is the minimum, and a score of 495 is the maximum. After obtaining the scoring results, the researcher evaluated the proportion of students' listening scores from each school to compare the two. This process is explained below.

Table 1. 1 The rate percentage of students' listening on the overall part

Classification	Range	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
		SMAN 1 Malinau	SMAN 3 Malinau	SMAN 1 Malinau	SMAN 3 Malinau
A1 (Beginner)	5-60	0	0	0%	0%
A2 (Elementary)	65-110	2	5	4%	10%
B1 (Intermediate)	115-275	35	40	70%	80%
B2 (Upper Intermediate)	276-400	8	4	16%	8%
C1 (Advanced)	401-490	5	1	10%	2%
Total		50	50	100%	100%

Based on Table 4.3, the first column is classification. Then in the second column is the range. After that, the third column is frequency which shows the number of students who got the score in the first column. Then the last is the percentage. The percentage is the realization of frequency in the form of percentages. As is evident from the table above, specifically from the SMA Negeri 1 Malinau column, which indicates that 0% of the students are categorized as A1. Rather, 2 students (4%) out of all the students had the lowest score assigned to them in the A2 classification. Then, with 35 students (70%), B1 is the most prevalent classification. Eight more students (16%) out of them, though, had higher grades or were classified as B2 students. Following that, five more students (10%) obtained the highest score, placing them in the C1 classification. This shows that there are no SMA Negeri 1 Malinau grade XI students who come into the beginner group, but the lowest is only the elementary group (A2) with a very small percentage of only 4%.

DISCUSSION

In comparing curriculum implementation at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, the researcher found that the listening skills of grade XI students in Curriculum

2013 were better. This can be seen from the calculation of the final listening test scores organized in both schools. The students' final scores show that SMA Negeri 1 Malinau has a greater frequency in the C1 classification.

The results show that SMA Negeri 1 Malinau received a mean score of 241.00. In addition to that, SMA Negeri 3 Malinau got a mean score of 185.40. When compared, students using the 2013 Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau have a mean score higher than those using the *Merdeka* Curriculum at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau in the eleventh grade. However, the researcher's data was not normally distributed, which caused problems when utilizing the independent sample t-test to evaluate the hypothesis. As a result, non-parametric analysis continues to be utilized by the researcher here. In comparing them, the researcher used the Mann-Whitney test to find whether there was a significant difference in students' listening skills between those who used Curriculum 2013 and those who used *Merdeka* Curriculum in eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau as well as SMA Negeri 3 Malinau.

Based on the results, it appears that eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and those at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau differ significantly in their listening skills. An indication of this could be found in the mean listening skills scores of students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau compared to those at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, where the former students received greater mean scores. The outcomes of computations using non-parametric analysis further support this. At that point, a P-value of 0.001 was found in the Mann-Whitney test results. Thus, if the P-value $< 0,05$, then H_a is accepted, and H_0 is rejected. With a comparison result of $0.001 < 0.05$, it was discovered that the P-value was less than the α -value. This result implies that the two-variable hypothesis shows that there is a significant difference in the overall scores for the two schools sampled in this study. This means that Curriculum 2013 is better than the *Merdeka* Curriculum in terms of honing students' listening skills. So, in conclusion, teaching listening using the 2013 Curriculum is a better way than the current curriculum.

This is supported by an interview with one of the English teachers who teaches grade IX students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau. From the information provided by the teacher, students in grade IX at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau are applying competency-based learning. So, in learning listening skills, they focus on developing basic competencies which include attitudes, skills, and knowledge. This is what then defeats the learning system in the *Merdeka* Curriculum, especially in teaching listening skills to students. This is certainly in line with teachers and school staff who are not fully prepared for changes in the existing curriculum (Prameswari, 2023). Teachers and school staff had challenges at first adopting the learning and teaching process with a new paradigm and needing to prepare school administration based on *Merdeka* Curriculum requirements (Sumarsih et al., 2022). The teachers there did not consider their readiness before following the Ministry of Education and Culture's instructions. According to Wiguna & Tristaningrat (2022), the lack of skilled human resources is another reason why the *Merdeka* Curriculum's implementation is not yet ready. All of this affects students who are not receiving the instruction they require, in this case, listening skills.

But the fact that the students from the two schools come from different backgrounds also lends substance to this. The majority of students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau, which followed Curriculum 2013, are from urban areas. In general, this school's students have better access to learning resources including tutoring, a well-stocked library, and a setting that encourages concentrated study. Conversely, the majority of students at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, which choose to use the *Merdeka* Curriculum, are from the Malinau Seberang region, which is more rural and would have less access to contemporary educational resources. This geographic aspect affects both the teaching strategy used by the school and the traits of the students. The differences in curriculum implementation in these two schools are not only influenced by

education policy but also by the different characteristics and backgrounds of the students they serve.

The study's conclusions further claimed that there are significant disparities between the *Merdeka* Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum, particularly concerning their instructional strategies (Azita et al., 2023). Naturally, this will have an impact on the students listening skills in the two schools with differing curriculum. Moreover, the 2013 Curriculum is more effective in improving students' listening skills, therefore it makes sense that students' listening skills would improve as a result (Rahimah & Widiastuty, 2023).

For this reason, Almarisi (2023) lists the following as weaknesses in the *Merdeka* Curriculum that make it inadequate to the 2013 Curriculum:

1. The *Merdeka* Curriculum has not yet reached a level of maturity in terms of execution that will allow many schools to adopt it.
2. There has been inadequate realization of the intended education and teaching system.
3. The implementation is less structured due to a lack of human resources (HR).

Comparatively, Jumadi (2020) states that the 2013 Curriculum is a curriculum that has a history of fostering a culture of learning in schools. The 2013 curriculum combines a variety of active learning activities with a scientific approach throughout its implementation in the field of education. Students' English proficiency is subsequently enhanced by this, especially for their listening skills, which are hardly ever used in classroom instruction. Changing aspects of attitudes is what then increases students' interest in continuing to learn this listening skill. This interest in the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum then has an impact on the test results obtained by SMA Negeri 1 Malinau students.

Based on the information mentioned above, the researcher concludes that students in the eleventh grade at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau who follow the 2013 Curriculum and students in the eleventh grade at SMA Negeri 3 Malinau who follow the *Merdeka* Curriculum differ fairly significantly in terms of listening skills. This indicates that the 2013 curriculum, as compared to the new *Merdeka* curriculum, is still better at helping students improve their listening skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research related to the application of the 2013 Curriculum and *Merdeka* Curriculum to listening skills in eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau, it is concluded that the use of the 2013 Curriculum provides better results for students. The results of this study are evidenced by the calculation of the average value and non-parametric analysis of student listening test results, which then stated that students' listening skills are better using the 2013 Curriculum. The results of this study are evidenced by the interviews of the two teachers in both schools who both highlighted different learning systems. The creativity and innovation emphasized in the *Merdeka* Curriculum will not always be as systematic as those in the 2013 curriculum, so the results are inconsistent and difficult to measure.

In addition, the calculation of the average value and non-parametric analysis of student listening test results, which then states that students' listening skills are better using the 2013 Curriculum. The researcher generated this claim by considering the mean student score of 241.00 at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau. This is not the same as the SMA Negeri 3 Malinau student average of 185.40. Thus, there is a 55.6-point gap between the mean score of students at SMA Negeri 1 Malinau and SMA Negeri 3 Malinau. To calculate these results, non-parametric analysis was used. It was found that the P-value was smaller than the α -value with a comparison result of $0.001 < 0.05$. H_a is considered to be accepted as such. The results concluded that there was a significant difference in the listening skills of students who used the 2013 Curriculum and those who used the *Merdeka* curriculum. In other words, students in the 2013 Curriculum performed listening skills better than those in the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

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