

***Evaluation of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English Learning  
at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu***

**Evaluasi Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di  
SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu**

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Received : 18 March 2025, Revised : 14 Mei 2025, Accepted : 15 Mei 2025

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational policy in Indonesia that grants schools autonomy to design and implement curricula based on their conditions, potential, and student needs. This study evaluates its implementation in English learning at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu using a descriptive qualitative method with interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection techniques. The CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, and Product) is used for evaluation. In terms of context, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu has developed its Operational School Curriculum (KOSP) in alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum, ensuring flexibility and student-centered learning. The Vice Principal and teachers confirmed that KOSP integrates Pancasila-based character education. Regarding input, the school has improved facilities, teacher competencies, and learning materials. Teachers have received training, although challenges remain in diversifying teaching resources to accommodate students' diverse needs. In the process evaluation, teachers have adopted differentiated instruction and project-based learning, yet managing students' varying abilities remains a challenge. Assessment methods (diagnostic, formative, and summative) are applied effectively but require further refinement. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) has positively influenced students' teamwork, responsibility, and social awareness. Overall, the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu has been progressing well with strong institutional support. However, continuous improvements in teaching strategies, assessment methods, and resource allocation are needed for greater effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, curriculum evaluation, English language learning, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, CIPP model

**ABSTRAK**

Kurikulum Merdeka adalah kebijakan pendidikan di Indonesia yang memberikan otonomi kepada sekolah untuk merancang dan menerapkan kurikulum berdasarkan kondisi, potensi, dan kebutuhan siswa. Penelitian ini mengevaluasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Evaluasi dilakukan dengan menggunakan model CIPP (*Context, Input, Process, and Product*). Pada aspek konteks, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu telah menyusun Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP) yang selaras dengan Kurikulum Merdeka, memastikan fleksibilitas dan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa. Wakil Kepala Sekolah dan guru mengonfirmasi bahwa KOSP mengintegrasikan pendidikan karakter berbasis Pancasila. Dalam aspek input, sekolah telah meningkatkan fasilitas, kompetensi guru, dan bahan ajar. Guru telah mendapatkan pelatihan, meskipun masih ada tantangan dalam mendiversifikasi sumber belajar agar sesuai dengan kebutuhan siswa yang beragam. Pada evaluasi proses, guru telah menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dan berbasis proyek, namun masih menghadapi tantangan dalam mengelola kemampuan siswa yang bervariasi. Metode asesmen (diagnostik, formatif, dan sumatif) telah diterapkan secara efektif tetapi perlu penyempurnaan lebih lanjut. Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) memberikan dampak positif terhadap kerja sama, tanggung jawab, dan kesadaran sosial siswa. Secara keseluruhan, implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu berjalan dengan baik dengan

dukungan institusi yang kuat. Namun, peningkatan berkelanjutan dalam strategi pengajaran, metode asesmen, dan pengelolaan sumber daya masih diperlukan untuk efektivitas yang lebih optimal.

**Kata kunci:** *Kurikulum Merdeka, evaluasi kurikulum, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, model CIPP*

## **1. Introduction**

The rapid development of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has significantly impacted education, requiring students and teachers to adapt to new technological advancements, problem-solving methods, and critical thinking approaches (Mubarak & Selimin, 2023). However, traditional memorization-based learning often limits students' ability to develop essential 21st-century skills such as collaboration, creativity, and communication (Husain, 2023). This challenge has led to the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, project-based activities, and flexible assessment methods.

The Merdeka Curriculum aims to provide greater autonomy for schools and teachers, allowing them to design contextual and adaptive learning experiences (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024). In this system, teachers have the freedom to choose relevant materials and develop interactive learning strategies that align with students' needs and abilities (Orlich et al., 2010). Research highlights that curriculum flexibility enhances teacher innovation, leading to improved student engagement and learning outcomes.

In the context of English learning, the Merdeka Curriculum promotes a communicative approach, integrating real-life language use and interactive activities to improve students' proficiency (Intiana et al., 2023). However, despite its potential, its implementation faces several challenges, including teacher readiness, student adaptation, and assessment practices. At SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, the transition to the Merdeka Curriculum has presented both opportunities and obstacles, requiring a comprehensive evaluation to determine its effectiveness in improving English language learning.

Despite the innovative approach of the Merdeka Curriculum, several issues arise in its implementation at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, particularly in English learning. These challenges include low student engagement, as many students struggle to adapt to new learning methods. Additionally, there are inconsistencies in teaching strategies, as teachers face difficulties in aligning their instructional approaches with student-centered learning models (Krahenbuhl, 2016). The integration of project-based learning and communicative activities in English lessons also remains a challenge, affecting students' overall language development. Given these concerns, further investigation is required to assess how effectively the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in English learning, examining both its successes and limitations.

This study analyzes the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu, identifying challenges faced by teachers and students, and evaluating its impact on students' English proficiency. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in improving instructional strategies under the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for future studies on curriculum innovation, contributing to the ongoing development of effective and engaging English learning approaches in Indonesia.

## **2. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative case study approach (King & Grace, 2005). Data were collected through, interviews with English teachers and vice principle, observations of classroom activities and instructional methods, Document Analysis including lesson plans and assessment reports (Kristiawan & Asvio, 2018). The study applies the CIPP evaluation model, which assesses the implementation of the curriculum from four aspects:

Table 3.1 CIPP Test Types

Context	Educational Unit Operational Curriculum
Inputs	Facilities and infrastructure Teacher Learners Teaching Module
Process	Learning Activities. Assessment and Reflection Implementation P5
Products	Learning Results Report P5 report card

### 3. Result and Discussion

This study evaluates the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model. Data were collected through interviews with teachers and school administrators, classroom observations, and document analysis related to curriculum implementation.

#### 1. Context

The results the study show that SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu has successfully implemented the school vision and objectives, learners’ characteristics, availability resources and equipment, teachers’ facilities, learning capacity (teachers’ unity) and the school policy on implementing Merdeka curriculum. The results the study show that the implementation Merdeka curriculum is well supported the school’s vision and strong performance, deep learners’ attitude, adequate facilities and resources and good teachers’ attitude towards the implementation the new curriculum plan. The availability adequate learning resources and flexible school policy contribute to the progres implementing Merdeka curriculum in SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu.

#### 2. Inputs

The results an evaluation study to select appropriate interventions for the implementation a self-directed learning program in SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu indicate a strong commitment to creating conditions that support the success the curriculum. The evaluation included several important aspects including the availability facilities and resources, teacher skills, availability learning materials, student facilities and school policies. The current facilities in SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu are generally supportive but some schools still need improvement, particularly in the use educational technology. However, this school is committed to making the facilities more accessible to support interactive technology-based learning. The school teachers are willing to support the implementation the self-directed learning program. However, they need to be more skilled in selecting and creating learning materials in many areas. Further training and supervision teachers would be great help in developing effective and efficient learning plans that meet the needs their students.

#### 3. Process

According to the results, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu successfully implemented its independent learning system despite the students' varying abilities and some challenges associated with participating in the P5 project. The school's efforts such as providing teacher training and using the Merdeka Belajar method have proven effective in addressing some of the existing challenges. Going forward, the school should increase students' participation in the P5 project and continue to adapt assessment tools to support students' strong thinking and character development as goals of the Merdeka learning system.

#### 4. Product

The evaluation shows that the implementation of the Learning Outcomes Report is an educational assessment tool that not only measures student achievement but also assesses the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and character. Teachers use this report to monitor student progress and adapt their teaching methods to their needs. When implementing the P5 Report Card, the evaluation shows that this report is an important tool for measuring student behavior using Pancasila-based strategies. The P5 Report Card assesses how students apply values such as cooperation, responsibility, and independence in their work. Although many students have shown progress in these areas, there are still challenges in ensuring that all students participate.

The evaluation of the Merdeka curriculum in SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu used the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model developed by Daniel Stabelbem. This model helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in various related aspects (Joseph, 2021). The ecological aspect of the evaluation of the Merdeka curriculum focuses on examining the needs and objectives of the curriculum. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the Merdeka curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the students, the school, and the development of the time. Through observation and interviews, it was found that SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu supports the learning needs of the students. The Merdeka curriculum was developed as a solution to address past learning challenges such as inability to participate in the mainstream school curriculum (Aryani et al., 2022). One of the challenges faced by teachers in the context is that teachers' understanding of the concept of the Merdeka curriculum still needs to be improved, especially in preparing the curriculum (KOSP) and the learning unit that is appropriate for the characteristics of the students (Vivekanantharasa et al., 2022).

In terms of methodology, the assessment focuses on the implementation of the curriculum in Merdeka schools and how well it is implemented. The indicators that can be assessed include learning activities, assessment activities, and the implementation of the Pancasila Student Prile Enhancement Project (P5). The SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu assessment process describes how learning, assessment, and the implementation of the Pancasila Student Prile Enhancement Project (P5) are implemented in schools. In terms of learning activities, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu has started to use a structured and active teaching approach, but some teachers still find it difficult to differentiate teaching that meets the needs of each student. In terms of assessment activities, SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu uses formative assessment to assess student progress. However, there are still challenges in creating an assessment that focuses on the overall development of students' abilities rather than just the results. In the implementation of the P5 program, it was noted that SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu is implementing a P5 project with themes such as cooperation, global diversity, and independence. Students showed interest in the project, but not all students actively participated in it.

The product evaluation examines the final results of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in terms of academic aspects and character development of students. The product evaluation examines the final results of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, assessing the academic achievements and human development of SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu. In terms of student learning outcomes, the student report cards show that students' understanding of the subject has improved, especially due to the interactive teaching method. In terms of human

development, the P5 report cards show progress in students' behavior in terms cooperation, independence, and teamwork. The product evaluation shows that the Merdeka curriculum has had a positive impact on students' intelligence and character development (Syahrir et al., 2024). However, there is still room for improvement in the various teaching methods, P5 engagement, and easy support to promote digital learning (Rindaningsih et al., 2023).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 20 Kota Bengkulu has brought positive changes to English learning, particularly in terms of flexibility, student engagement, and project-based learning. However, challenges remain in teacher readiness, student adaptation, and assessment methods. While students show improvement in critical thinking and collaboration, difficulties persist in developing speaking skills and independent learning habits. To improve its implementation, schools should enhance teacher training, provide better digital resources, and develop clearer assessment guidelines. Teachers need to adopt innovative teaching strategies to accommodate different learning styles, while students should take a more active role in their learning process. Further research should explore long-term effects of the Merdeka Curriculum and investigate alternative assessment methods to better measure students' language proficiency. By addressing these aspects, the curriculum can be further refined to create a more effective and engaging learning environment.

#### **Acknowledgment**

Alhamdulillah rabbil 'alamin, all praises be to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for His guidance and blessings in completing this study. May peace and blessings always be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, the greatest teacher and guide.

The author expresses sincere gratitude to:

1. Prof. Dr. KH Zulkarnain, M.Pd., Rector of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, for his support in academic pursuits.
2. Dr. Mus Mulyadi, M.Pd., Dean of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Tadris, for his encouragement.
3. M. Hidayatturrahman, M.Pd.I, Head of the Tadris Department, and Hanura Febriani, M.Pd, Head of the English Education Study Program, for their guidance.
4. Feny Martina, M.Pd., as the first advisor, and Anita, M.Hum., as the second advisor, for their valuable insights and patience in guiding this research.
5. All lecturers and staff of the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Tadris, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, for their knowledge and support.
6. All individuals who have contributed to this research, whose names may not be mentioned one by one, but whose support is greatly appreciated.

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