

***An Analysis of The Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in English Teaching Learning SMPN 14 Bengkulu***

**Analisis Implementasi Curriculum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris SMPN 14 Bengkulu**

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Received : 29 July 2024, Revised : 28 August 2024, Accepted : 3 September 2024

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the merdeka curriculum in English teaching learning at SMPN 14 Bengkulu City and what were challenges and opportunities that they were faced by them in the learning process. This research was based the greater flexibility for teachers and students in the teaching learning process with a focus on developing students competencies, characters and also many teachers were still inconsistent for implementing the merdeka curriculum in the learning process because of there were certain factors that made it difficult for teachers to implement it such as, the lack of teacher readiness in implementing the merdeka curriculum, limited training or understanding of teachers, lack of resources and facilities, old habits that are difficult to abandon, and lack of student readiness. This study used qualitative descriptive research. Research data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. This study also used reduction data analysis techniques, data display, and conclusion or verifying data. Researchers also used trustworthiness of the data to get a reliable data to collect valid data. The results of the study showed that the implementation of the merdeka curriculum in English learning has a positive impact on student motivation and participation. Teachers has more freedom in designing and adapting learning materials according to their needs and asking students. However, this study also found several challenges and opportunities, such as limited resources and technical support, as well as the need for further training for teachers to understand and apply the principle of merdeka curriculum effectively. Meanwhile, the opportunity obtained is that teachers are required to be proficient in using digital and can utilize technology in learning.

**Keywords:** *English Teaching, Merdeka Curriculum, Qualitatif Research*

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi kurikulum merdeka dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMPN 14 Kota Bengkulu dan apa saja tantangan dan peluang yang mereka hadapi dalam proses pembelajaran tersebut. Penelitian ini di dasarkan pada fleksibilitas yang lebih besar bagi guru dan siswa dalam proses belajar mengajar dengan fokus pada pengembangan kompetensi dan karakter siswa, juga banyaknya guru yang masih belum konsisten dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum merdeka dalam proses pembelajaran dikarenakan adanya factor-faktor tertentu yang membuat guru kesulitan dalam penerapannya yaitu kurangnya kesiapan guru dalam menerapkan kurikulum merdeka, terbatasnya pelatihan dan pemahaman guru, kurangnya sumber daya dan fasilitas, kebiasaan lama yang sulit ditinggalkan, serta kurangnya kesiapan siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini juga menggunakan Teknik analisis data reduksi, data display, dan kesimpulan atau verifikasi data. Peneliti juga menggunakan keabsahan data untuk mengumpulkan data yang valid. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan kurikulum merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris memberikan dampak positif pada motivasi dan partisipasi siswa. Guru memiliki lebih banyak kebebasan untuk merancang dan mengubah materi pembelajaran sesuai keinginan dan kebutuhan siswa. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan beberapa tantangan dan peluang. Salah satunya adalah keterbatasan sumber daya dan

dukungan teknis, serta kebutuhan pelatihan lebih lanjut bagi guru untuk memahami dan menerapkan prinsip kurikulum merdeka secara efektif. Di sisi lain, guru harus mahir dalam menggunakan digital dan dapat menggunakannya dengan baik dalam pembelajaran didalam kelas.

**Kata Kunci:** Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Kurikulum Merdeka, Penelitian Kualitatif.

## **1. Introduction**

Basically, every school has rules and references for how to implement the school academic system called the curriculum. The ministry of education and culture has established the curriculum system itself with various reasons and objectives for the establishment of the curriculum. Currently, the government itself has set the Merdeka curriculum as a reference that underlines the running of teaching and learning activities in schools. Seeing these conditions, the ministry of education culture and technology tries to make efforts to restore learning. One of the efforts made to overcome existing problems is to launch the “Merdeka Curriculum”. The Merdeka curriculum has a variety of learning content so that children can explore learning in order to strengthen their competence (ministry of education, culture, research, and technology, 2021). In line Ki Hajar Dewantara statement that the principle of Merdeka curriculum can be means of increasing self competence according to children character, to maintain children morals or attitude in instilling character education values (Ainia, 2020). The basic concepts in the Merdeka curriculum holistically view learning as a whole. Learning must begin with competency mapping, learning planning process and the implementation of initial, formative, and summative assessment (Nugraha, 2022).

From pra-observation it can be found that one of the stages of implementing the Merdeka curriculum is the school mover (sekolah penggerak) program. However, in this case, SMPN 14 Bengkulu city has not been included in the category of school mover, because the criteria have not been achieved as the provisions to become a school mover itself. In addition, there are also teacher mover (guru penggerak) is as learning leaders who encourage overall student growth, are active and proactive in helping other teachers implement student-centered learning and change the educational environment to reflect the Pancasila student profile. SMPN 14 Bengkulu has a teacher mover where this teacher has attended program trainings as a teacher mover. But, the english teacher there is not one of the teacher mover (guru penggerak) because some of the teachers among them have not attended trainings or workshops in terms of implementing the Merdeka curriculum. Before the existence of an merdeka curriculum, the school had implemented the K13 curriculum for several years, from the beginning of the K13 curriculum out until 2020. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum itself has been implemented in the school for about two years and is applied to students from the seventh and eighth grades. Then for the next year Merdeka curriculum will be applied to all classes in the school. However, among the positive impacts of implementing the Merdeka curriculum in schools, many teachers have experienced difficulties in implementing the Merdeka curriculum in schools, especially for English teachers. The main obstacle experienced is the lack of special training for the Merdeka curriculum so that teachers are still confused about the proper application of the Merdeka curriculum. Furthermore, teachers are only armed with self taught learning because of the lack of access to preparatory training for the implementation of Merdeka curriculum so that they find it difficult to adapt to new learning methods. The government now provides lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum, which teachers are allowed to utilize, adapt, or create their own modules based on the requirements and characteristics of their students (Pancasila Student Profile). In addition, the lesson plans in the prior curriculum had an excessive number of components, and teachers were expected to complete every task that had an outcome. In Merdeka Belajar curriculum, teachers now can focus only on 3 main components; teaching and learning objectives, learning process and assessment that can be shortened into a page of lesson plan, while the other components are complementary (Aulia, 2021).

Several researchers have previously researched related to this Merdeka curriculum including first, from a journal with the title “application of learning methods in the Merdeka curriculum in madrasah” the result of their research which showed the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum was carried out optimally even though there were still many shortcomings and obstacles in implementation. The success of the school in implementing the Merdeka curriculum is from the principal and teachers who have the willingness to make changes, so that the Merdeka curriculum can be implemented. Second, “analysis of Indonesian teacher strategies in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at SMKN 11 Malang” include that the teachers strategy Indonesia in implementing the Merdeka curriculum in grade X of SMKN 11 Malang in planning IKM teachers have received learning outcomes from the government, the learning objectives flow was made by MGMP Indonesia. So, that the teachers only need to create teaching modules, prepare teaching materials resources, and learning media in the learning process using IKM is divided into three stages, namely introduction, core, and closing. The strategy includes the selection models, approaches, methods, and technique. Overall, the strategies implemented are quite good according to the learning manual.

## **2. Research Method**

In this study the researcher use the descriptive qualitative as a approach. According to Creswell (2020) qualitative research is used to study and appreciate the significance of a social or human problem that individuals or group recognize. This technique is usually done for several reason for instance. The reason is limited is time, manpower, and funds so that its not possible to make a large and distant sample. In this study, researchers make English teachers who taught in grade 7 as research subjects. The researchers collected data using primary data and secondary data. In this research the will teachers as a human instrument of the data and combings collecting the data in sequiring the data, the researcher employed the observation, interview, and documentation. This study evaluated the data trustworthiness using theoretical triangulation, dependability, and credibility. The technique in this study is descriptive qualitative. The analysis data used will relate from the beginning to the end of the study. Researchers use data analysis techniques is data reduction, display data, conclusion/verifying. The technique is in accordance with what the researcher will examine.

## **3. Result And Discussion**

### **A. Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in English Teaching Learning**

Speaking about the merdeka curriculum at SMPN 14 Bengkulu city, Annisyah S.Pd, Gr as the principal revealed that SMPN 14 Bengkulu city is one that has been established for quite a long time and has implemented an merdeka curriculum since the last two years, although it has not been part of the driving school, but this school still follows the latest curriculum rules and system, namely the merdeka curriculum. As a school that has begun to implement an merdeka curriculum, of course, SMPN 14 Bengkulu has implemented an merdeka curriculum in the learning process in the classroom or extracurricular and intra-curricular. In the context of the merdeka curriculum, there is a Pancasila (P5) student profile. The strengthening of the profile of Pancasila students has been stated in the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 20 of 2018 concerning the determination of the profile of Pancasila students with a vision and mission to prioritize divine values, strong character and noble character, and excel in innovation and technology.

The merdeka curriculum is a new approach developed by the government and focuses more on developing students in its essential contents and also intra-curricular and extracurricular learning according to the profile of Pancasila students. Another opinion about the independent learning curriculum is a new curriculum that is implemented, this certainly

needs adjustment and of course there are obstacles in the implementation of the merdeka curriculum (Suryani et al., 2023). According to (Rosad, 2019) He said implementation is a process to carry out new ideas, processes or sets of activities in the hope that others can accept and make adjustments in the bureaucracy in order to create a goal that can be achieved with a reliable network of implementers. The implementation of the merdeka curriculum is an implementation or plan that has been prepared in such a way that it includes a certain activity in order to achieve certain goals. The purpose of the merdeka curriculum is to provide flexibility and make it easier for teachers to implement more in-depth learning according to the needs of students and focus on strengthening character. Planning, implementation, and assessment are part of the concept of learning implementation.

The implementation of the merdeka curriculum is quite successful when viewed from its planning, implementation, and evaluation. Although there are some problems that teachers face on a daily basis, these problems should be a guideline for subsequent improvement. The results of research from the implementation of the merdeka curriculum in English language learning show that the application carried out by teachers into English subjects is in accordance with phase D that has been formed, namely listening-speaking, reading-speaking, writing-presenting. This is certainly felt by the teacher, how to see the activeness of their students in the classroom when asking, completing the tasks given and their cooperation in groups. The implementation of the merdeka curriculum in learning has been said to be almost carried out thoroughly even though there are some English teachers sometimes still use old methods when teaching in class. In line with research (Damayanti et al., 2022), it is stated that, in order to achieve the implementation of an merdeka curriculum, schools as facilitators in student learning must prepare adequate facilities, provide services, assistance in learning experiences, and encourage the emergence of learning that is in line with the needs of students and student desires so that learning takes place correctly and according to plan. So that is the implementation of an appropriate merdeka curriculum, there must be encouragement from schools and principals as leaders who must be able to guide teachers to make changes.

In accordance with the results of observations and interviews, the researcher obtained the results of interviews regarding the implementation of the merdeka curriculum from the perspective of teachers, principals, and waka. This result is in accordance with the principal's answer but represented by the deputy principal/curriculum waka of SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu city, that according to Mrs. Lucy Evriani, SE, M.Pd *"In the merdeka curriculum, there are things called intra-curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular. Intra is a process that involves learning in the classroom, while co-curricular is an activity outside the classroom that supports student development, and extracurricular is an activity that focuses on students' interests and talents. Well, so in my opinion, these three things have a very good and positive impact on the implementation of this merdeka curriculum. This is in accordance with the needs of students to be more directed and flexible."*

Furthermore, the teacher's own views in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the classroom. As said by Mrs. Hengki Reni, S.Pd as a teacher of English subject in grade VII, said *"what I know from you about this new curriculum is that the merdeka curriculum prioritizes skills or abilities in student self-development."* After looking at the implementation of the merdeka curriculum in the English learning process in the classroom, the researcher found several findings, namely the learning approach: the merdeka curriculum used by English teachers When teaching in the classroom using a more flexible and student-centered learning approach. Teachers can also apply methods that are interactive, collaborative, and in accordance with the P5 project stated in the merdeka curriculum.

#### 1. Planning and Learning Process

Teachers also prepare learning plans in the classroom based on the standards of the merdeka curriculum process. This is in line with the goals that will be applied in the learning process in the classroom. Before the process that occurs in the classroom, the teacher will

prepare all the learning tools first, in order to harmonize the teaching materials and teaching materials that will be applied and accepted by students later. In the teaching module, there are learning outcomes, core components consisting of learning objectives, learning activities. This is made so that the learning process is more directed and in accordance with the plan that has been made previously. As said by Mrs. Tri Ramadhaniarti as a grade VII English teacher, she gave her opinion about the teaching module and learning objectives, "*in this independent curriculum, teachers are required to be able to make teaching modules. The teaching module is a teaching material that contains teaching materials, daily assignments, and exercises to support learning. Meanwhile, the learning objectives themselves are the achievement of three aspects of student competencies that need to be developed, namely critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and collaboration.*" By using this lesson plan, teachers will have a complete knowledge of teaching materials and materials, learning techniques and tools, and how to manage the time available to students. Initial or preminiary activities, core activities, learning media, and closing is the part of learning process in the English teaching learning.

## 2. Learning Evaluation

Formative assessments are carried out at the beginning and throughout the learning process. Formative assessment helps reflect on the learning strategies used by teachers, increasing the effectiveness of design, Teachers can also get information about student development and student learning needs. Meanwhile, the use of summative assessment is to achieve learning objectives and learning outcomes as a basis for determining grade increase later. Students are considered complete when they are able to complete, master competencies, or achieve learning objectives, namely being able to get predetermined grades in KKM.

## 3. Challenges and opportunities

Based on interviews that have been conducted, most teachers do not receive workshops or technical guidance held by the government. On the other hand, the lack of teacher readiness in implementing the merdeka curriculum, limited training or understanding of teachers, resources and facilities, old habits that are difficult to abandon, lack of student readiness are factors that trigger the difficulties that teachers faced by teachers in the process of implementing merdeka curriculum. In addition to challenges, the implementation of an merdeka curriculum can also provide an opportunity for teachers and students:

- a) Creativity and learning, Curriculum Merdeka gives teachers the freedom to design learning that suits the needs, interests, and learning styles of students. This allows teachers to be more creative in choosing learning methods, learning resources, and adjusting learning approaches according to the characteristics of their classroom.
- b) Increased student engagement, Teachers can encourage students to take an active role in learning, ask questions, discuss, and collaborate on learning projects.
- c) Professional development, The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum can also be an opportunity for professional development for teachers. They can attend relevant trainings, collaborate with fellow teachers, and utilize available resources to improve their skills in designing and implementing student-oriented learning.
- d) Teacher empowerment, This provides an opportunity for teachers to feel more valued and have greater influence in making decisions related to curriculum, learning methods, and assessment.

Teachers can strengthen their role as agents of change in education by making good use of these opportunities to create a more inspiring, relevant, and meaningful learning environment for their students. Based on the observations of researchers, to overcome these challenges and take advantage of existing opportunities, commitment and hard effort from teachers are needed. It involves a deep understanding of merdeka curriculum, the ability to design relevant and student-centred learning, as well as skills in utilizing available resources. Thus, the implementation of an independent curriculum can be a positive step in improving the

quality of English learning in schools, giving students a better opportunity to develop their language skills.

#### 4. Conclusion

The implementation of the merdeka curriculum in SMP Negeri 14 Bengkulu city brings changes and differences from the previous curriculum in the learning process. This new curriculum introduces a teaching module that can be created by teachers according to the circumstances and needs of their students. This allowed them to create flexible teaching plans that covered the whole specific learning phase D. the Merdeka curriculum emphasized character building through the strengthening project of the Pancasila student profile(P5). The implementation of the merdeka curriculum of at SMPN 14 in Bengkulu has followed the concept in accordance with the merdeka curriculum. Then, the learning approach also uses project-based learning so that students can learn actively and collaboratively to find solutions or create useful products. English teachers have used the learning model approach or project-based learning in teaching and learning activities in the classroom as well as teachers also apply the learning model in accordance with the procedures that have been made.

Conversely, there are several challenges that must be overcome when implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and also opportunities that have a positive impact on teachers. To overcome this challenge, all relevant parties, especially teachers and educational institutions must be committed to improving their understanding of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, and providing maximum training to teachers and all school parties. Meanwhile, the impact of the opportunity to implement the merdeka curriculum is that the Merdeka Curriculum opens up many opportunities to improve education in Indonesia with a more flexible and relevant approach. With the right support from policies, teacher training, and educational resources, Curriculum Merdeka can develop students who are ready to face future challenges.

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