

Teachers' Perceptions Of The Implementation Of English Language Learning In The Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract. The introduction of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia brought significant changes to English language learning. This study investigates English teachers' perceptions of the implementation of this curriculum, exploring their experiences, challenges and opportunities within the new framework. Through descriptive research methods, we seek to understand how teachers adapt to a focus on student-centered learning. Our findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the ongoing implementation process and provide valuable insights to support teachers and optimize English learning outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum, Teacher Perception, And English Language Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum is based on Permendikbudristek no 56 of 2022 which contains guidelines for implementing the curriculum in the context of restoring independent curriculum learning in early education, basic education and secondary education (Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, 2022). The independent curriculum has different characteristics from the previous curriculum. The difference lies in the basis of learning and the character to be achieved, learning materials and the flexibility of teachers and students.

The Merdeka learning curriculum contains project-based learning. The learning model applied refers to inquiry, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and recovery learning. In this case, learning has the main objective of developing students' critical reasoning and creativity through various learning activities. In addition, the character achievements of students in this independent curriculum are guided by the Pancasila Student Profile. There are five characters of educational goals through the application of independent learning; First, faith, devotion and noble character. Second, global diversity. Third, critical reasoning. Fourth, creative. And fifth, independent. These character outcomes are a refinement of character education in the previous curriculum. In this independent curriculum, character achievements are adjusted to the development of science and technology that is developing at the moment. By not getting rid of the essence of character that is worth Pancasila. The wind of educational reform has swept Indonesia, ushering in the era of "Merdeka Belajar" and its flagship curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum. This bold new wave

has transformed the learning landscape, particularly in the field of English education. At the heart of this transformation are the teachers, the skippers navigating the uncharted waters of this curriculum. Their perceptions, challenges and triumphs hold the key to unlocking Merdeka's full potential for English language learning.

This journal delves into the intricate tapestry of teacher experiences woven into the fabric of Merdeka Curriculum for English implementation. We embark on a journey of discovery, exploring the depth of teachers' perceptions around the curriculum's core principles: flexibility, student-centeredness and differentiation. We charted their course, navigating the currents of curriculum design, assessment strategies and integration of Pancasila values. Our expedition also encountered treacherous reefs of challenge, where teachers grappled with limited resources, evolving technologies and the need to adapt their pedagogical practices. However, amidst these obstacles, there were glimmers of hope. We witnessed the tenacity and ingenuity of teachers in creating innovative learning experiences, fostering student independence and celebrating the blossoming of diverse talents. The Merdeka curriculum learning process focuses on student activities or learning activities. With learning activities that occur in the classroom, it shows that the conditions for curriculum implementation occur in the classroom. In general, this learning process is divided into several phases. This study will discuss Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of English Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum.

METHODS

The research method uses descriptive research. The main purpose of this study is to find out how the Teacher's Perception of the Implementation of English Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. This research uses data collection instruments through learning style tests and observation of learning activities. The technique used by researchers to obtain data is by distributing questions about the perceived implementation of the independent learning curriculum through learning styles. The data sources or subjects used in this study are teachers from junior high schools. The data collection technique is carried out by asking written questions in the form of a google form to the research subject related to the topic under study. This technique will be very effective if the researcher knows well the variables to be measured and the wishes expected by the respondent or research subject. The instruments used in this study include using tests in the form of several questions like as What are the perceptions of English teachers towards the implementation of the independent curriculum in English language learning (1)What are the challenges faced by English teachers

towards the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum (2)How to overcome the problems of implementing the Merdeka curriculum in Indonesian language learning (3)How can the Merdeka curriculum improve the quality of English language learning at school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The concept of an "Merdeka curriculum" encourages freedom and flexibility for educators to develop an appropriate learning curriculum. It gives teachers of both English and other subjects the opportunity to customize lessons based on students' needs, interests and abilities. Gone are the days of rigid teaching frameworks where teachers felt constrained by a one-size-fits-all model. Now, with an "merdeka curriculum", teachers have the freedom to explore creative teaching methods that engage students effectively. This approach not only encourages innovation in the classroom, but also promotes a more personalized learning experience for students. By giving teachers the autonomy to design their curriculum, it ensures that education becomes more dynamic and reflects real-world challenges. Ultimately, this student-centered approach leads to improved knowledge retention and overall academic performance, making education fun and meaningful for all parties involved. Not only that, the Merdeka curriculum also provides a very important opportunity for students to learn independently and develop their potential in a planned and effective way. In this environment, students are given the freedom to explore their own interests and have a more open-ended learning experience. They are not only encouraged to master the subject matter, but also encouraged to become independent learners. In an independent curriculum, students are taught critical skills such as problem-solving, cooperation, and strong communication skills. Furthermore, they can apply this knowledge outside the school environment in the context of their daily lives. Overall, it provides a holistic approach to education with a focus on students' personal development and preparing them for a successful and sustainable future.

Apart from some of the positive opinions above, there are also teacher perceptions that point to teacher weaknesses in the implementation of English language learning. Some teachers still lack a deep understanding of the independent curriculum and the skills needed because this is a new approach to education. The independent curriculum gives teachers the freedom to develop learning materials according to the local context and student needs. Therefore, teachers must understand the core concepts of this curriculum so that they can create meaningful learning experiences for students. In addition, teachers also need to have skills such as communication skills, effective classroom management, problem solving and quality leadership. Teachers using the independent curriculum must be able to foster students'

interest and motivation to learn and help them develop essential skills such as creativity, collaboration, digital literacy and critical thinking. With in-depth knowledge of the independent curriculum and these skills, some teachers find it difficult to have access to adequate resources such as teaching modules and materials. These resources play a crucial role in improving teaching effectiveness and facilitating student learning. Having well-designed and comprehensive modules allows teachers to structure their lessons effectively, ensuring that they cover all necessary topics and provide students with a clear roadmap for their learning journey. In addition, having the right teaching materials allows teachers to present concepts and ideas in a variety of engaging formats, catering to different learning styles and preferences among their students. Be it textbooks, multimedia presentations, or interactive activities, these resources help create an enriched learning environment that stimulates curiosity and increases student engagement. Ultimately, providing these essential resources to teachers empowers them to deliver high-quality educational experiences that encourage knowledge retention and inspire lifelong learners.

CONCLUSION

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that gives teachers freedom and flexibility to develop a learning curriculum that suits students' needs, interests and abilities. This curriculum also provides opportunities for students to learn independently and develop their potential. The Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to improve the quality of English language learning. This is because this curriculum encourages learning innovation, provides opportunities for students to learn independently, and emphasizes the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills. However, there are several challenges faced in implementing the Merdeka curriculum, namely: Teachers still do not understand the concepts and skills required to implement this curriculum. Teachers find it difficult to access adequate resources, such as modules and teaching materials. To overcome these challenges, the government and other stakeholders need to provide support to teachers, including: The government needs to provide adequate outreach and training comprehensive information to teachers about the Merdeka curriculum. The government needs to provide quality teaching modules and materials that suit teachers' needs. The government needs to collaborate with universities and other educational institutions to develop professional development programs for teachers. With adequate support, teachers will be better prepared to implement the Merdeka curriculum and achieve English learning goals.

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