

TEACHER PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTING MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM IN SMKN 3 PEKALONGAN A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstrak

Kurikulum Merdeka memiliki banyak pilihan pembelajaran intrakurikuler dan dirancang lebih fleksibel untuk guru dan peserta didik. Karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan tentang perspektif guru terhadap masalah dalam penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di sekolah. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian studi kasus yang menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan narrative inquiry. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya problematika yang menjadi kendala untuk guru di sekolah. Dalam kurikulum merdeka belajar ini, guru harus mampu beradaptasi dengan perubahan kurikulum dan perkembangan teknologi yang pesat. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru Bahasa Inggris di SMK N 3 Pekalongan mengalami kesulitan dalam menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka belajar pada pengembangan Modul Pembelajaran, merumuskan Perangkat Pembelajaran menjadi Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran, ketidaktahuan guru tentang pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, dan kurangnya pelatihan Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata kunci: *Teacher's Perspective, Problematics, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*

Abstract

The Merdeka Curriculum has many intracurricular learning options and is designed to be more flexible for teachers and students. Therefore, This research aims to describe the teachers' perspectives on the problems implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at school. This research is a case study research that uses qualitative methods with a narrative inquiry approach. The results of this study show that there are problems that become obstacles for teachers at school. In this Merdeka Belajar curriculum, teachers must be able to adapt to curriculum changes and rapid technological developments. The results of this study indicate that English teachers at SMK N 3 Pekalongan have difficulty in applying the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum to the development of Learning Modules, formulating Learning Tools into a flow of Learning Objectives, teachers' ignorance of differentiated learning, lack of Merdeka Curriculum training.

Keywords: *Teacher's Perspective, Problematics, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia is still relatively new and will continue to develop after 2022. Curriculum renewal and improvement are significant to keep up with the times so that it remains relevant and responsive to the demands of the times and changing needs as well as adjusting the conditions of the learning system to overcome the learning crisis in Indonesia because it requires a series of comprehensive and interrelated efforts. The implementation and development of the Merdeka Curriculum can continue to change from time to time, so it is necessary to monitor, evaluate, and adjust continuously.

The Merdeka Curriculum is built on diverse intracurricular learning, the

content of which is optimized so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Ariga, 2023). This curriculum also emphasizes the development of 21st-century skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. Therefore, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum certainly provides changes that can be felt by students, teachers, and other education personnel. Teachers play an important role in guiding students to develop these skills during the learning process.

In implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, of course, it is not easy. Schools that have just implemented the Merdeka Curriculum still have obstacles such as the lack of really clear

information related to implementation in the field. Moreover, the Merdeka Curriculum has not yet been made a national curriculum. According to (Riskianto, Surono, and Inawati, 2023), there are several problems faced by English teachers, including the lack of teacher understanding in understanding student characters, the lack of equipment that supports English learning in the Merdeka Curriculum, the need for changes in parents' mindsets about implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, and the lack of understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning.

In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the barriers experienced by English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and the factors that influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum for learning at SMK N 3 Pekalongan. By utilizing qualitative research methods such as interviews, this study aims to collect teachers' perspectives regarding the barriers experienced in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

The findings of this study can explain the problems experienced by teachers and the factors that cause them. Finally, based on the problems presented above, the researcher concludes several problem statements as follows:

1. What difficulties do English teachers experience in implementing the Merdeka curriculum?
2. What are the factors that influence the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in class?

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research, which aims to find out the obstacles experienced by English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and to find out what factors influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMK N 3 Pekalongan. This study focuses on the

problems experienced and factors that influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum from the perspective of the English teacher, thus facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon under study.

This research uses a qualitative method with a narrative inquiry approach. According to (Bogdan & Taylor, 1992:21), qualitative research is a research procedure that can produce descriptive data in the form of speech, writing, and behavior of the people observed. This research also uses a narrative inquiry approach that describes the story based on the experiences experienced by participants (Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

This research was conducted at a vocational high school that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the school's academic program, namely SMK N 3 Pekalongan. The subjects taken from this study were 2 English teachers. The data collection technique used was interviews. The interviews conducted in this study were conducted in an open and unstructured manner but still referred to the research topic. In-depth interviews with English teachers at SMK N 3 Pekalongan were conducted to gain insight into their perspectives on implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

Qualitative data analysis will be used to find out the obstacles experienced by English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and to find out what factors influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the classroom. The data analysis technique begins with transcription, where the interview data is transcribed into written text. The transcribed data is then subjected to thematic analysis, and patterns, themes, and categories are identified and organized. Thematic findings are interpreted in the context of relevant theories or concepts, providing insight into teachers' perspectives on the issues

of implementing the independent learning curriculum. The process of analysis is literature, allowing for ongoing refinement and validation of emerging themes until a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon is achieved.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Difficulties Faced by English Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

1. Teachers' Difficulties in Understanding the New Curriculum Merdeka Curriculum

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, it was found that teachers have difficulty understanding the Merdeka Curriculum. Their understanding of this curriculum is still inadequate and not fully in line with the learning paradigm being promoted, thus creating various obstacles and challenges in the learning implementation process.

This situation is to the theory conveyed by Ihsan (2022: 37), which states that if teachers realize their lack of experience in using learning tools during the teaching process, this experience should be used as capital to improve professionalism. In addition, the new experience can help teachers update their skills and abilities. Another study conducted by (Mukhlisina et al. , 2023) also revealed that the Merdeka Curriculum is still relatively new for most teachers, so many of them do not have enough experience in using relevant learning tools. The facts on the ground show that most teachers do not fully understand the importance of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

The research results at SMK N 3 Pekalongan show that English teachers are more accustomed to the implementation of the K13 Curriculum and have no experience in adopting the Merdeka Curriculum. This results in them still being in the process of learning to understand the essence of the new curriculum. Due to limited understanding

and not yet being in line with the expected learning paradigm, teachers face several challenges in implementing learning. To overcome this obstacle, teachers try to improve their competence by attending training on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This step is taken to improve their quality and professionalism in implementing learning based on the new curriculum.

2. Teacher Difficulties Due to the Lack of Merdeka Curriculum Training

Based on interviews with two English teachers at SMK N 3 Pekalongan, it is known that the main difficulty lies in the preparation and understanding of teaching modules. Respondent 1 mentioned that the lack of understanding of the components in the teaching module, such as the Pancasila learner profile, learning outcomes, flow of learning objectives, as well as learning models and methods, caused difficulties in preparing teaching materials. The teacher overcame this obstacle by conducting discussions with colleagues to determine appropriate learning materials and methods. Respondent 2 also stated that the transition process to the Merdeka Curriculum brought challenges, especially in developing teaching modules because there were no standardized technical provisions at the beginning of its launch. Teachers are required to adapt to the new curriculum even though they are still in the learning stage of understanding and implementing it.

This finding is in line with (Rahimah, 2022) opinion, which states that teachers do not have adequate training in preparing Merdeka Curriculum teaching modules and lack the initiative to study independently. Respondent 1 stated that the challenges he faced made him need to discuss with other teachers. This approach is in line with the concept of the zone of proximal development, which states that teachers

can get help from more competent individuals by utilizing their prior knowledge. This assistance can come from peers, external teachers, or other resources (Postholm, 2012).

B. Factors Affecting Curriculum Implementation in the Classroom

1. Factors Phase and Learning Outcomes

Based on the results of interviews with two respondents, it was found that teachers face challenges in preparing lesson plans in the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in analyzing and formulating Learning Outcomes (CP) that must be achieved by students. One aspect that is a major obstacle is the organization of CP by phase, which is then formulated into Learning Objectives (TP) and arranged in the form of a Learning Objective Flow (ATP). Respondent I said that the CP provided is still too general, making it difficult to break down into a systematic flow of learning objectives. This confuses determining the right action during the learning process. Meanwhile, Respondent II also emphasized that the understanding and application of ATP preparation still need further study to be applied effectively in the classroom.

Researchers found that this difficulty is not only related to lesson planning but also to determining appropriate methods and strategies so that learning can take place in a fun way and encourage student activeness. Teachers admit that there are often differences between the plans that have been made and the reality in the field, so continuous adjustments are needed. According to (Nurcahyono, 2022), teachers' difficulties in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are largely due to a lack of understanding in translating CP into a more specific and applicable TP. This is in line with the results of research at SMK N 3 Pekalongan, where the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which has just started, still presents challenges for teachers in

understanding the CP provided by the center. These challenges include formulating CP into TP, preparing ATP, and determining appropriate learning methods and strategies to create an effective and enjoyable learning process.

2. Factors Differentiated Learning

Based on the interviews conducted by the researchers, it was found that the teachers experienced some difficulties in implementing differentiated learning. One of the main problems is the limited time teachers have, which affects the effectiveness of learning. In addition, ignorance or lack of understanding of the concept of differentiated learning is also an obstacle. Teachers' views on differentiated learning greatly affect its implementation, as each teacher has a different perception of this approach. These views are often related to their understanding of differentiated learning itself.

This finding is also shared by Digna and Widyasari, who stated that many teachers do not fully understand the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum program, including important aspects such as "Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Products," the application of different learning methods, and the complexity of existing lesson modules (Digna and Widyasari, 2023). This suggests that teachers' inability to understand the characteristics of the new curriculum affects the implementation of differentiated learning in the classroom. The first respondent also revealed that the large number of students in the class makes individual guidance less optimal. This view is in line with (Moosa and Shareefa 2019) opinion, which states that learning becomes ineffective if the number of students is too large, making it difficult to accommodate the individual needs of each learner. In addition, the second respondent said that certain materials are difficult to teach using

different learning methods, especially in more technical or mathematical materials. This finding is consistent with (Putra, et al. 2023) research, which showed that some teachers felt that mathematical topics are more difficult to implement with differentiated learning methods compared to more conceptual materials.

Research conducted at SMK N 3 Pekalongan shows that teachers face difficulties in time and class management, as well as in developing media, methods, and materials that are in line with the principles of differentiated learning. Learning media, methods, and materials must be tailored to the interests and learning styles of students, so teachers need to provide different types of media and methods. However, the limited time teachers have makes it difficult for them to optimize these approaches, which ultimately affects the quality of learning provided.

3. Factor Lack of Teacher Knowledge

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, it was found that teachers had insufficient knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum. This is due to the lack of training related to the Merdeka Curriculum, the lack of

socialization from the government, and the limited references available regarding the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. This finding is in line with the theory put forward by (Ahid & Sufirmansyah, 2022), which states that many teachers still do not have sufficient knowledge to implement the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. They argue that there are no workshops, training, or similar events that can equip them. As a result, many teachers feel unprepared to implement the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

Research conducted at SMK N 3 Pekalongan shows that the lack of training related to the Merdeka Curriculum is one of the main obstacles to its implementation. These teachers have difficulty understanding the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum thoroughly. In addition, there is a lack of enthusiasm and a deep understanding of the content of the curriculum. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan, implement, and manage learning according to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. In other words, the lack of adequate training and understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum is a major obstacle to its implementation in schools.

which impacts their professionalism as educators. Some of the main problems faced by English teachers when implementing the Merdeka Curriculum include a lack of understanding of the curriculum, difficulty in developing teaching modules, lack of preparation to understand the curriculum, difficulty in creating learning tools that match learning objectives, ignorance about differentiated learning, and lack of training related to the Merdeka Curriculum. Overall, these results show that teachers need training in the Learning Merdeka Curriculum to thoroughly understand the philosophy, objectives, and principles of the independent curriculum. This helps

CONCLUSION

The findings and discussions highlight the problems experienced by English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Kurikulum. The results of research on teachers' perspectives on Merdeka Belajar Kurikulum show that English teachers have inaccurate perceptions and difficulties in understanding and implementing new curriculum policies in Indonesia. Teachers who enter the world of education must be able to adjust to technological developments and rapid curriculum changes. These curriculum changes have an impact on changes in the quality that teachers must achieve,

teachers to be better prepared to implement the curriculum well and meet students' needs.

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