

## TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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### Abstract

This research paper aims to determine Teachers' Perceptions on the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in English Learning at Phase E of Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes Pandeglang – Banten In Academic Year 2023/2024. This research paper uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis design. The data collection method used was triangulation, namely observation, interviews and documentation. Data obtained from observation. Interviews were conducted with the principal, deputy principal for curriculum and English teachers. Documentation is carried out by immortalizing the interview process activities. Data analysis was carried out to analyze important findings as expected by the research objectives. Research findings show that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum received a positive perception. Apart from that, the structure of the Merdeka Curriculum is different from the previous curriculum. Based on the findings of this research, the Merdeka Curriculum received a positive perception because it focused on increasing student creativity. These findings also hope that other researchers will analyze or maximize research on implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning.

**Keyword:** *Perception, Merdeka Curriculum, English Subject.*

### INTRODUCTION

English has a significant impact especially in the field of education. According to Gumelar (2018:8) who suggests that English is an important language in the world because it is used as an international language. English has a significant impact on the world because it can be used to carry and receive a lot of information, especially in the field of education. English language education in schools aims to provide students with

the fundamentals of English language skills to communicate effectively in everyday life, as well as help students to access English knowledge and information.

English Subject is the main key to increasing resources. Smart, dedicated, and qualified human resources (HR). Along with the development era, ideas that are creative and innovative can be acquired through process education. According to Rahayu et al. (2022:2), in the world of education, quality or not depends on the learning process a person goes through. A quality learning process will be obtained if there is a curriculum that is in accordance with the process and goals of education it self.

This statement is in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 52 of 2022 concerning the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. In 2020, education in Indonesia experienced a decline in learning due to the impact of outbreak the virus COVID-19. Thus, the Minister of Education launched a new curriculum to catch up, namely the Merdeka Curriculum.

According to Saputra & Hadi, (2022:14) The Merdeka Curriculum as a form of improvement to the 2013 Curriculum certainly received various perceptions from teachers, students and parents. Each of them has support and support not a few people complained about curriculum changes which they felt were replacing the 2013 Curriculum too quickly. until now the Independent Cuticle concept has received a variety of perceptions from various educational institutions that facilitate students' learning, both in primary, secondary and higher education levels.

Perception is a person's understanding in interpreting something. Kottler (in Saputra & Hadi 2022:19) suggests that perception is the process of how a person selects, organizes and interprets information that creates a meaningful conception. Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum need to be studied, because it will have a significant impact on teacher learning practices in the classroom.

Teachers are key actors in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in schools. Specifically in the context of this study is an English teacher. Therefore, it is necessary to study further the perceptions of English teachers regarding the implementation of

the Independent Learning Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research uses a qualitative approach. The method of this research is content analysis. According to Octavia et al., (2021:86) qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of words and language. Penjelasan ini sejalan dengan Creswell (2016:35), defines qualitative research as a kind of study that aims to comprehend the significance of several persons or groups of individuals who are connected to the issue at hand sosial

### **Research Subject**

The research subject of Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes was carried out on the Principal, Deputy Principal for the Curriculum, and two English teachers. Meanwhile, the object of the research is the analysis of perception, structure and methods in English Language Learning at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes in academic year 2023/2024.

### **Instruments**

A research instrument is a tool used to measure observed natural and social phenomena, according to Sugiyono (2018:55). the researcher in this research makes use a number of instruments:

#### 1. Field Note Observation

This research instrument uses field notes to record the results of interviews regarding teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

#### 2. Interview sheet

The second research instrument here uses an interview sheet containing a list of questions about teachers' and students' perceptions of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This aims to find out information from participants. Researcher will examine the perceptions of the principal, deputy principal and two English teachers

In this research, the researcher used a field note observation as a form of initial information related to the object being research. Meanwhile, the interview sheet is used to answer several questions asked to participants.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection techniques in this research are; (1) Observation, in this study data was obtained from observation; (2) Interviews, (3) Documentation, in this case documentation of data sources is carried out by capturing activities during interviews at Madrasa Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes in the Academic Year 2023/2024.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study follows an approach based on the theory of Milles and Huberman (1994:20) which states that qualitative analysis activities are carried out interactively and continue continuously until they reach the point of disgust. Then, the display data is in a visual form related to the information collected. Finally, the conclusion. The final form of the analysis is because while in the field, this procedure needs to be followed progressively.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Findings**

#### **a) Analysis of Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English subject**

##### **1. Definition**

The initial stage of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is for the teacher to know the definition of the Merdeka Curriculum because it relates to things that need to be prepared in the learning process. Based on the results of observations, the preparations made by teachers before starting learning using the Merdeka Curriculum are that teachers carry out training in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum which is carried out by the government.

- a) This can be known according to the Principal statement, which is as follows: "The Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that has been implemented since Pak Nadeem became Minister of Education. An Merdeka Curriculum is where the teacher is only the facilitator, and the students are the center".
- b) This statement is similar to the statement expressed by teacher 1 "The Merdeka Curriculum is a refinement of the prototype curriculum and is also dominant for students during learning. It also focuses on character building, so that children learn more essential material".
- c) This statement is supported by Teacher 2's opinion that" Merdeka Curriculum is A Studies differentiated learning in a more creative way"
- d) The definition according to the deputy principal of the curriculum section states that "The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that changes into phases for the senior high school phase there is phase e and phase f".

Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that the Participants have broad knowledge regarding the Merdeka Curriculum. the teachers are of the opinion that the Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that was implemented when Mr. Nadiem Makarim was Minister of Education. The Merdeka Curriculum is a refinement of the prototype curriculum, in the Merdeka Curriculum the class groupings are changed to be gradual and students are required to be more creative, the curriculum is independent tends to educate children's character, in the Merdeka Curriculum the student is now at the center of the learning process and the teacher is only a facilitator.

## 2. Perceptions

The conditions for implementing learning using the Merdeka Curriculum are slightly different from learning in the K-13 curriculum. This can be seen from the fact that teachers are not yet familiar with the

new curriculum implemented at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar.

- a) This can be seen from the results of the interview with the school principal as follows: "Yes, here we are just trying to implement it, but so far the children seem more active and their creativity is starting to emerge and learning doesn't have to be in class so the children don't get bored in class, so far I agree with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum".
- b) This perception is similar to the perception expressed by teacher 1 "The Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum where this curriculum is made to make children more creative and now the students are the center so the teacher only becomes a facilitator, yes that is very good for the students"
- c) This is confirmed by Teacher 2's perception that "This Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that replaces Curriculum K-13, so I am still not familiar with this Merdeka Curriculum, but so far the students enjoy learning and I also enjoy teaching, moreover teachers have to be more creative than students, so i have to learn more to Become the quality teacher that students want. That's what i like about this Merdeka Curriculum"
- d) The Deputy principal for Curriculum also added in my opinion, the Merdeka Curriculum is too focused on civics learning so it does not adhere to religion. Apart from that, i support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum here, because the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that prioritizes technological knowledge according to current developments.

Positive perceptions were also expressed by the deputy principal of the curriculum department that "In my perception, the Merdeka Curriculum is too focused on civics learning so it does not adhere to religion. Apart from that, i support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum here, because the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that

prioritizes technological knowledge according to current developments.

Based on the interview results, it can be seen that all Participants have the same perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The perception obtained from the interview results is a positive perception, because the Merdeka Curriculum brings differences that require children to be more creative.

**b) Structure of Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes in academic year 2023/2024**

In this section the researcher will explain the curriculum structure that changed when the Merdeka Curriculum was implemented, namely as follows:

1) Materials

Based on the results of interviews regarding materials in English language learning since the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum as follows:

- a) Teacher 1 explained that "There has been a change in the hours of learning activities. English usually takes 3 hours, now it takes 2 hours because one hour is transferred to the P5 project."
- b) Teacher 2 has the same perception that "it's true, there has been a reduction from the previous year, therefore I am not optimal in teaching" Teacher 2 also added that "Not only has the learning time changed, the teaching materials have also changed from lesson plans to teaching modules."
- c) This is confirmed by the statement of the deputy principal for curriculum section that "Yes, there is indeed an hour cut for teaching and learning activities, one hour of which is diverted to project P5. In this way, the number of learning hours remains the same, three hours, only one hour is transferred, this is specifically for grade ten because the new Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in grade ten or called phase E. Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar has 5 classes which are called Phase E1, E2, E3, E4, E5".

Based on the results of interviews with the deputy principals for curriculum, Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, structural changes occurred after the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Central Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Menes. Differences occurred in the structure of hours for teachers' teaching and learning activities which were reduced by one hour in the P5 project, changes also occurred in the division of classes which were changed to Gradual and apart from that changes also occurred in learning tools. that must be made by the teacher, namely the lesson plans is converted into a teaching module.

**c) Know the steps to determine the Method of learning English in the Merdeka Curriculum**

**1) Learning Strategies**

The requirements for implementing learning in the Merdeka Curriculum are slightly different from the previous curriculum, judging from the learning schedule, there are differences in time reduction and the learning process is carried out differently. Therefore, according to the Minister of Education and Culture, teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are required to be more creative in order to continue to provide optimal learning. The learning strategy applied by the teacher in delivering the material is as stated by

- a) Teacher 1 as follows: "Teachers must have a strategy, for me the most important thing is that children don't feel pressured when learning so that children are happy"
- b) This statement is different from Teacher 2 who has his own learning strategy. It was explained that "First, the teacher must provide directions before starting learning, which is the day before the material is taught, students must look for information related to the material that will be taught the next day."

The application of learning strategies carried out by English

teachers after implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes can be seen from the opinions above that teachers have their own strategies to achieve optimal learning.

## 2) Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out to determine the level of student understanding and measure students' ability to understand the material. The assessment or evaluation carried out by the teacher during the learning process is as follows:

- a) This is in accordance with the results of the interview with Teacher 1, she stated: "Assessments are taken from daily grades plus end-of-semester assessments."
- b) This statement was also supported by Teacher 2: "Yes, of course the daily value and then there is the addition of the final value."

It can be seen that the evaluation carried out by the teacher is related to students' assessment of understanding the material that has been studied.

## 2. Discussion

### a. Analysis of Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning.

#### 1. Definition

In Knowledge Related to the Merdeka Curriculum, the teachers are of the opinion that the Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that was implemented when Mr. Nadiem Makarim was Minister of Education. The Merdeka Curriculum is a refinement of the prototype curriculum, in the Merdeka Curriculum the class groupings are changed to be gradual and students are required to be more creative, the curriculum is independent tends to educate children's character, in the Merdeka Curriculum the student is now at the center of the learning process and the teacher is only a facilitator.

This view is in line with the statement from the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, who stated that the Merdeka Curriculum is student-centered learning, so that the Merdeka Curriculum regulates learning according to the interests and talents of the children being assessed. Apart from that, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is more flexible and focuses on developing students' abilities.

This is also the same as the theory related to freedom of learning put forward by Rogers (in Safitri & Aulina 2022) who argues that the learning process is student-centred; This is known as student center learning, therefore the teacher's role here is only as a facilitator, not as a full teacher. This is one of the principles that Roger finds effective. According to him, a good learning process is completely left to the student's initiative, so that it can produce outcomes that are fully mastered and firmly fixed in the student's memory.

Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that the definition stage regarding the Merdeka Curriculum includes ideas from every teacher who has knowledge of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## 2) Perceptions

Based on the results, it can be seen that all Participants have the same perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The perception obtained from the interview results is a positive perception, because the Merdeka Curriculum brings differences that require children to be more creative.

This is supported by Robbins' theory (in Aditya & Hasibuan, 2020: 97), that positive perception is an individual's assessment of an object or information with a positive view. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Aransyah, et al., (2023:311) that learning is a process carried out by humans to acquire various abilities, skills and attitudes, which are acquired gradually and continuously.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with varied intracurricular learning so that each learning content becomes more optimal. The aim is to ensure students are more creative to deepen character and strengthen competence.

Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Madrasah Aliyah Mathlul Anwar Pusat Menes has received a positive perception.

**b. Structure of Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes in academic year 2023/2024**

1) Materials

Structural changes occurred after the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Central Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Menes. Differences occurred in the structure of hours for teachers' teaching and learning activities which were reduced by one hour in the P5 project, changes also occurred in the division of classes which were changed to Phases and apart from that, changes also occurred in the learning tools that had to be made by teachers, namely lesson plans changed to teaching modules.

This is supported by a statement from the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, that "The allocation of lesson hours in the curriculum structure is written for a total of one year and is accompanied by recommendations for the allocation of each lesson hour if delivered regularly at each learning meeting or weekly. Apart from that, there are adjustments subject arrangements are explained in detail to carry out the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila.

This is in line with the opinion of Rohimajaya, N.A, et al., (2022:828) who stated that "In both the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum, teaching tools use textbooks and non-text books. Additional teaching tools used in the Merdeka curriculum are

teaching modules, flow learning objectives (ATP), and the project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile”.

After the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, there were many changes in terms of learning, learning tools and learning time. It can be concluded that at this stage, teachers are still in the process of adapting the current K-13 curriculum to an Merdeka Curriculum

**c. Know the steps to determine the Method of learning English in the Merdeka Curriculum**

**1) Learning Strategies**

The application of learning strategies carried out by English teachers after implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes can be seen that teachers have their own strategies to achieve optimal learning.

This is in accordance with the recommendations put forward by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Permendikbud Research No. 12 of 2024 that English language learning has an achievement element that must be mastered at stage E so that students can know, understand and do what is expected after completing a learning period.

This statement is in line with the opinion of Harahap, et al., (2023:114) that learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is more meaningful, not rushed and gives an impression and learning feels more enjoyable. It can be concluded that there is no special strategy recommended by the Merdeka Curriculum for English teachers during learning.

**2) Evaluation**

At this stage the teacher carries out a learning evaluation to find out the extent to which students understand the material by asking what difficulties students experience with the material that has been presented.

This is in accordance with the assessment recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the Research Regulations of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 21 of 2022 that English language learning has learning outcomes (CP). Learning Outcomes (CP) are learning competencies that students must achieve at the end of each phase.

This is also in line with the opinion of Rohimajaya, et al., (2022:828) that in the Merdeka curriculum, there is an assessment of the project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile. Assessment of attitudes, knowledge and skills is a characteristic of assessment in the 2013 curriculum, whereas in the Merdeka curriculum, there is no separation between assessment of attitudes, knowledge and skills. It can be seen that the evaluation stage is carried out to improve the next process.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research regarding Teachers Perceptions on the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in English Learning at Phase E of Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes Pandeglang – Banten in academic year 2023/2024, the following conclusions were obtained:

1. Based on the results of research conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Mathla'ul Anwar Pusat Menes, researchers concluded that the overall perception of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is good. This can be seen from the results of interviews regarding the many expressions that support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This good and supportive perception is reflected in the willingness of teachers to follow policies related to the Merdeka Curriculum concept, especially English teachers and even feel helped by the Merdeka Curriculum because this curriculum prioritizes student and teacher creativity.
2. In terms of structure, there have been changes in reducing lesson hours,

learning methods have been changed from teacher center to student center and learning tools have been changed to teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum.

3. Each teacher has their own learning methods and strategies to achieve optimal learning.

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