

ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE ON THE TRANSITION FROM CURRICULUM 13 TO MERDEKA CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at investigating, (1) english teacher's perception and practice in implementing Curriculum 13 and Merdeka Curriculum, (2) the realization and correlation between implementing Curriculum 13 and Merdeka Curriculum. The research was mixed method. Data were collected by using document, questionnaire, observation class, and interview. The results showed that the perception of English teachers in Lamongan regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum stated that the results were positive in the English language learning process and were well received by the *Guru Penggerak* in Lamongan. Based on this research, it is recommended that English teachers get used to implementing the learning approaches and methods that have been recommended in Merdeka curriculum. School principals should consider the availability of learning media and teacher needs to support the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. Other researchers are advised to conduct research related to the assessment process in the Merdeka curriculum.

Keyword: English Teacher, Perception, Transition Curriculum, Implementing Merdeka Curriculum.

I. INTRODUCTION

Submission In the 21st century, the development of advanced technology and information has changed various aspects of life, including education. The education system needs to adapt to produce a generation that is competent, innovative and ready to face global dynamics. One of the efforts made by the world of education in Indonesia is through curriculum reform, namely the Merdeka curriculum. The transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum not only affects the structure and content of the curriculum, but also has an impact on the way teachers teach and practice, especially in English subjects (Nuranisa 2024). Hunaepi and Putu Suharta (2024) assumes that the Merdeka curriculum transition is expected to contribute to students exploring knowledge continuously and contextually. However, this transition causes obstacles to adaptation and implementation for teachers in the learning process. The main topic in this writing is the perceptions and practices of English teachers regarding the differences in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in pedagogical and evaluation approaches. Lestari et al. (2023) added that the 2013 Curriculum adopts a scientific approach which focuses on achieving competency, while the Merdeka Curriculum provides freedom and flexibility in the learning process by adopting a genre-based learning approach.

A series of studies have investigated the use of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in the English language learning process. Prahastina et al. (2024) found that most

educators face difficulties in understanding and implementing the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum because there is no adequate training and available resources. The researchers found that teachers need more intensive support and training to implement the Merdeka Curriculum properly. The Merdeka Curriculum gives students the freedom to choose lessons according to their interests and talents with P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project) which allows students to acquire skills, critical thinking and life skills that are relevant to the challenges of the 21st century. In the same way, Aprilia et al. (2024) also investigated the application of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning. Research found that there were changes to the Merdeka curriculum as an answer to the weaknesses of the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 Curriculum, especially in terms of a learning approach that was too rigid and structured. Apart from that, the 2013 curriculum also emphasizes conceptual understanding and basic skills, but does not provide enough freedom for them to do activities they are interested in. Therefore, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to address the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by placing more emphasis on flexible learning that is centered on students' unique needs. The study explained that many teachers believe that the Curriculum is too formal and structured, making it less flexible to meet students' unique needs. In addition, the Curriculum tends to burden teachers with many administrative responsibilities, such as creating complicated learning tools. In contrast, the Merdeka curriculum is considered more appropriate to the needs of flexible students and provides space for regular collaboration between teachers and students. Apart from that, teachers can choose methods and materials that suit students' interests so that students can be encouraged to participate in P5-based learning (Projek Penguatan Profil Pancasila). This results in a more significant and real-world relevant learning experience. However, limited infrastructure and uneven teacher training are major issues in its implementation. Many educators admit that it takes time to truly understand the ideas and applications of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Taking into account the changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, which has a significant impact on the education system. Teachers play an important role because they are directly involved in the teaching process, from their perspective there are various perceptions or views regarding this Merdeka curriculum transition, so that we can know What is the english teacher's perception and practice in the implementing between Merdeka Curriculum and 13 Curriculum. We can also find out Why do most English teachers still use a scientific approach in the curriculum 13. The Merdeka Curriculum significantly assists in learning planning, learning development, and helps teachers and students achieve learning goals that are adapted to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, so that we can describe How English teachers realize and related between perception and practice the Merdeka curriculum in learning practice.

English Teacher Perception and Transition Curriculum

The previous curriculum transition was deemed less suitable to be implemented again in the conditions following the COVID-19 pandemic, the government issued a new curriculum announcement to achieve more effective learning goals in the education system. "The findings can inform future curriculum reforms and teacher training programs, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of education systems in responding to evolving societal needs" (Gouedard, P., Pont, B., Hyttenen, S., & Huang, P. 2020). The demand for education to provide the best to always innovate the progress of the Indonesian nation which is driven by 21st century technological developments as expressed by Smith, J. A., & Johnson, L. M. (2020) that "the transition from a standardized traditional curriculum to an independent and flexible curriculum model has become

a global phenomenon in the world of education, driven by the need to align education with the demands of the 21st century. The previous curriculum used a scientific approach, which was very different from the needs of English language learning. Teachers feel that the Merdeka curriculum has been updated with a genre-based learning approach that adopts building, modeling and construction, joining, and independent as learning stages that are in accordance with the components of language skills. There are four stages in the procedure for implementing the Genre-Based approach by Hammond, J. 1992; Liang, E. 2015 conveyed, namely, building the field of knowledge or activities to build kots, modeling or deconstructing the genre or studying models/deconstruction of texts, joint construction or guided practice and independent writing or independent performance.

The curriculum transitions in Indonesia have given rise to various perceptions of English teachers regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers are an important role that influences the learning process and responsibility for student learning (Giawa, H. N. 2024). The important role of teachers is their form of adaptation in the form of methods or determining open material given to students so that they can more easily adapt to material that is more complex and easy to understand. However, in this case it is not easy for teachers to meet competency standards that continue to change. They must be able to integrate relevant material according to the needs of the new curriculum, but they often face the problem of not receiving the training or support necessary to understand the changes. A study conducted by Baker (2020) found that teachers believed that these curriculum changes were sometimes made too quickly, leaving them without enough time to adjust. However, some teachers are optimistic about the transition curriculum, especially because of the flexibility it offers. This Merdeka Curriculum allows for more approaches centered on student and teacher collaboration, which, according to Hargreaves, A., & Shirley, D. (2012), can increase student engagement and understanding of English. With the curriculum transition, English teachers are expected to be more creative in teaching and more involved in the process of assessing student development, so that the educational transition can run more smoothly.

English Teacher Practice and Implementing Merdeka Curriculum

The development of education plays an important role in producing a superior and quality generation of the nation. This significantly designs the renewal of the previous curriculum, namely that the new curriculum can meet the needs of English as a second language (*lingua franca*), where English is a tool for education and personal development of the nation's children (Octa, V. 2020). The practice and implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum for English teachers focuses on the teacher's freedom to design learning that is contextual and relevant for students, both determining methods and non-rigid teaching materials. Apart from that, the role of teachers is very important, especially in creating a conducive learning environment that encourages behavior change (Mulyasa, 2003).

In practice, the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum does not require the possibility that there will be obstacles or obstacles and challenges that teachers must face, one of which was expressed by Emawati et al. (2024) noting that some find it difficult to balance the freedom to innovate and the need to achieve the basic competencies contained in the provisions of the Merdeka Curriculum. During the learning process, the English language component is very important for successful educational outcomes at school (Supena et al. 2021). In the Merdeka Curriculum component there are learning objectives, steps, assessment and reflection which are vital things that greatly influence students' understanding of the material presented

(Kemdikbud). The author notes that activities are systematically divided into three phases, namely opening, core activities, and closing during the learning process.

This study answers the following research question before implementing the Merdeka Curriculum above: how did the 2013 Curriculum change to the Merdeka Curriculum in english learning process?

II. METHOD

This study used a mixed methods approach. The research design combined quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to collect rich data from their positive and negative perspectives. Participants in this study included English Subject Teacher *Guru Penggerak* in Lamongan. The questionnaire, all English Subject teachers taken as a sample of ($n=50$) were asked to provide their positive and negative perceptions about the Merdeka Curriculum transition. The survey was conducted with *Guru Penggerak* of english language to collect quantitative data on their perceptions of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. The survey instrument was designed based on relevant literature and previous studies on curriculum evaluation. Questions covered various aspects such as satisfaction with the curriculum, to gather information about the Merdeka curriculum, there are some questions about opportunities, challenges, and obstacles, to give Subject of Teacher (*Guru Penggerak*).

The technique of collecting data used the analysis data of documentation between Merdeka Curriculum (*Capaian Pembelajaran, Tujuan Pembelajaran, Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran, Modul Ajar*) and Curriculum 2013 (*Kompetensi Isi, Kompetensi Dasar, Silabus, Rencana Perencanaan Pembelajaran*). The questionnaire used by google form to share 50 *Guru Penggerak* with a Likert scale and were analyzed using the percentage of positive and negative English teacher perceptions of statements. The Likert scale has a score of 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 undecided, 2 disagree, and 1 strongly disagree. The research conducted observation class with sampling technique was used to ensure representation from urban and rural areas, as well as from public and private educational institutions, namely SMP NEGERI 2 DEKET and MTS PUTRA PUTRI LAMONGAN. The researcher will ask questions by zoom meeting, to get valid information from the respondents, the researcher recorded it during the interview process completed.

Survey data would be analyzed using statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, would be calculated to summarize responses to survey questions. The results of the questionnaire were also tabulated and categorized into diagram form so that they were easy to understand and the documentation study was analyzed using stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of this research is to (1) to understand english teacher implementing a scientific approach in the curriculum 13, (2) to explore teachers' perceptions and practice, challenges, and opportunities, (3) to describe relization and correlation between teachers' perception and practice in implementing meredeka curriculum of English subject. Therefore, descriptive statistics are calculated as a step in analyzing the data. The likert scale for collecting

data of questionnaires *Guru Penggerak* of english language. Data from the questionnaire research obtained statistical data on the overall perception of 50 *Guru Penggerak* of english language in Lamongan table 1.

Table 1 Perception and Practice in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
VAR00001	20	72	153	225	196,35	4,114	18,397
Valid N (listwise)	20						

Table 1, overall data analysis shows that the percentage of 100% (20 statements) regarding the perception of English Language *Guru Penggerak* at the Junior High School level, Lamongan regarding the transition to implementing the Merdeka Curriculum was obtained in the range 72, minimum 153, maximum 225, mean 196.35, standard error 4.114 and standard deviation is 18.397.

In this research, questionnaires were distributed via Google Form to 50 respondents who work as English teachers, *Guru Penggerak*, at Junior High School Lamongan to find out two main pieces of information, namely English teacher perception and transition curriculum, and English teacher practice and implementing Merdeka Curriculum.

Teacher Perception and Transtition Curriculum

From related research regarding the teacher perception of English Language *Guru Penggerak* in Lamongan at the Junior High School level, it was found that 78% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" were inconsistent with the application of the Merdeka Curriculum. As many as 88% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are the creation of inclusive and student-centered classes. As many as 87% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are contextual methods and pedagogical strategies connected to real life. As many as 48% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" work individually and as many as 84% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" have an impact on students in terms of personality.

Table 2. Teacher Perception

No.	Category	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	The incompatibility of teachers' practices and perceptions in applying the Merdeka Curriculum results in a lack of clarity on educational goals.	15 (30%)	24 (48%)	4 (8%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)
2.	Teacher practice in accordance with the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum can create an inclusive and student-centered classroom feel	11 (22%)	30 (60%)	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	0

3.	Application of contextual learning can connect students' real-life experiences	11 (22%)	33 (66%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	0
4.	Each teacher's perception of the Merdeka Curriculum makes them work individually without collaboration, causing isolation in learning practices	5 (10%)	19 (38%)	9 (18%)	17 (34%)	0
5.	The Merdeka Curriculum is considered capable of fostering self-identity, respecting and tolerating student differences in the learning process.	17 (34%)	25 (50%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)	0

From related research on the Transition Curriculum for *Guru Penggerak* of english language in Lamongan at the Junior High School level, it was found that 68% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" were having difficulty adjusting to administration. As many as 80% of respondents expressed the unequal implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in all Indonesian schools. As many as 66% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" said there was a lack of Merdeka Curriculu training. As many as 64% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are obstacles to student development caused by traditional methods. As many as 76% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" said there was a lack of seriousness in studying due to the absence of national exams. And as many as 62% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" is a gap in the vision and mission of the Merdeka Curriculum for teachers.

Table 3. Transition Curriculum

No.	Category	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	The adjustment of the Merdeka Curriculum, both administration and the process of teaching and learning activities, is difficult, especially in terms of assessment and evaluation.	14 (28%)	20 (40%)	10 (20%)	6 (12%)	0
2.	Inequality and inconsistency in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in various schools, especially remote or rural schools.	19 (38%)	21 (42%)	6 (12%)	4 (8%)	0
3.	Lack of support and training for teachers in developing the learning process based on the Merdeka Curriculum.	11 (22%)	22 (44%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	0
4.	Teachers who do not apply the Merdeka Curriculum tend to prioritize traditional teacher-	6 (12%)	26 (52%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	1 (2%)

	centered methods, which will hinder student development in the 21 st century					
5.	The transition of the national exam to the school exam as a graduation determination on the part of the school makes students neglect and underestimate the seriousness of learning in educational purposes	17 (34%)	21 (42%)	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)
6.	There is a significant gap in the concept and vision of the Merdeka Curriculum mission between teacher perceptions and classroom learning practice.	4 (8%)	27 (54%)	11 (22%)	8 (16%)	1 (2%)

Teacher Practice and Implementing Merdeka Curriculum

From related research regarding the teacher practice of *Guru Penggerak* in Lamongan at the Junior High School level, it was found that 94% of respondents who "strongly agree and agree" are teachers as facilitators and motivators. As many as 98% of respondents provided feedback to students. As many as 80% of respondents "strongly agree and agree" are teachers' limitations such as knowledge, age and skills. As many as 42% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" were reluctant to try new methods.

Table 4. Teacher Practice

No.	Category	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	Teachers are more optimistic as facilitators and motivators of student needs	14 (28%)	33 (66%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	0
2.	Teachers provide feedback to students in order to foster courage and critical thinking	26 (52%)	23 (46%)	1 (2%)	0	0
3.	Some teachers have limited age, knowledge, and skills, making it difficult to accept changes in the Merdeka Curriculum	15 (30%)	25 (50%)	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)
4.	Stuck in conventional learning methods so that they are reluctant to try new methods based on the recommendations of the Merdeka Curriculum	4 (8%)	17 (34%)	12 (24%)	14 (28%)	3 (6%)

From related research regarding the Merdeka Curriculum for *Guru Penggerak* in Lamongan at the Junior High School level, it was found that 96% of respondents "strongly agreed and agreed" saw Kurmer as an opportunity for local values and local wisdom. As many as 92% of respondents

were able to accommodate students' abilities with a flexible approach. As many as 90% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are developing creativity and innovation both inside and outside the classroom. As many as 94% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are an integration of national values and character to foster a positive personality. As many as 80% of respondents from "strongly agree and agree" are producing competitive and sustainable human resources.

Table 5. Implementing Merdeka Curriculum

No.	Category	SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	The independent curriculum is seen as an opportunity to integrate local values and local wisdom in the learning process	17 (34%)	31 (62%)	1 (2%)	0	1 (2%)
2.	The independent curriculum is considered to be able to accommodate students' personal needs with a more flexible approach	14 (28%)	32 (64%)	4 (8%)	0	0
3.	The independent curriculum requires students to develop more creativity and innovation in the learning process both inside and outside the classroom	30 (60%)	15 (30%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	0
4.	Integration of national values and student characteristics can help students' positive personalities	17 (34%)	30 (60%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	0
5.	The Merdeka curriculum is able to produce competitive and sustainable human resources.	13 (26%)	26 (52%)	9 (18%)	2 (4%)	0

Discussion

The aim of this research is to find out the perceptions of English language teachers in Lamongan regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, stating positive results in the aspect of creating inclusive classes, which can develop students' character, even though the implementation is felt to be less appropriate to the field which is an obstacle and the efforts of English teachers to alignment of the goals of Merdeka Curriculum, with the local needs of each school. A recent study by Safrudin, & Wijaya, E. (2024) observed the positive impact on creativity and inclusive learning. The researchers observed the use of interactive media or differentiation approaches tailored to student needs, how teachers implemented Merdeka Curriculum in appreciating a flexible curriculum, how teachers shared practices in applying the Merdeka Curriculum such as workshop activities. The researchers also revealed that there were adjustments related to assessment, such as modifying teaching materials to suit certain periods, which had an impact on not achieving the Merdeka Curriculum and teaching in schools. Furthermore, Tiyani, T. A. & Ramadan, Z. H (2024) investigated how P5 of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening

Project enabled students to understand the diversity of religious values, collaboration, mutual cooperation in schools.

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum makes a contribution to teachers for students in learning English, the teacher's role is the main thing in achieving the goals of Merdeka Curriculum, both as a facilitator or motivator and providing significant feedback for student development. This was conveyed by Senduk, M. (2023) which emphasizes that teachers play an important role in building a comprehensive learning process and atmosphere in the classroom. The role of the teacher is not only to teach but also to provide assistance to students to guide and direct students to explore student potential, including cooperation, collaboration and interaction between teachers and students. Apart from that, Ardianti & Amalia (2022) argue that implementing the Merdeka Curriculum has an important role for a teacher. In other words, this means that not all teachers have the same potential, with limitations such as knowledge, age, skills, reach and relationships, so that teachers who initially play the main role in learning activities feel that they are doubtful and not ready to try new things such as more innovative and effective methods, techniques and approaches to support student needs. More importantly, because teachers play such a vital and large role, Little, P. (2011) emphasize the importance of ongoing training and support. Training must be regular and continuous. Researchers also found that family and community support helped students create responsive and comprehensive learning strategies.

The researchers' findings suggest that the Merdeka Curriculum was well received and provided a positive perception of learning for students. Merdeka Curriculum is felt to be able to accommodate local wisdom, flexible teaching, student creativity, shape student character, and explore deeper student potential to be able to make students into competitive human resources in the future. The Majority *Guru Penggerak* of english language in Lamongan agree that the Merdeka Curriculum helps students. This is clearly visible in various educational settings. There are many schools that effectively use the Genre Based Approach (GBA), but only a few do it poorly. Merdeka Curriculum also encourages teachers to be creative in their teaching methods, giving them the freedom to choose teaching resources that suit students' interests, and supporting a more individualized approach to learning. Despite its drawbacks, especially those related to the need for continuous teacher training, it is important to ensure that each element of Merdeka Curriculum is used in the most effective way over time. It will be difficult for educators to adapt new teaching methods to student needs. This requires continuous training and assessment

IV. CONCLUSION

The perceptions of English language teachers in Lamongan regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum are mostly positive, especially in the aspects of creating inclusive classes and developing students' personalities. However, discrepancies in curriculum implementation are still a challenge. Several main challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in the aspects of administrative adjustments, inequality in implementation, and lack of training for teachers. On the other hand, obstacles in terms of student motivation and gaps in teacher vision in implementing this curriculum show that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum requires comprehensive readiness, both in terms of policy, government

support, and the readiness of teachers to understand and implement the principles of this curriculum as a whole.

English teachers have an important role in carrying out their duties, namely providing feedback on student development apart from being a facilitator and motivator. However, not all English teachers are able to carry out in accordance with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum due to limitations such as knowledge, age, skills and relationships, so English teachers in Lamongan feel doubtful about their abilities, so ongoing support and training is needed. The aim of the Merdeka Curriculum is to meet students' needs with innovative and successful teaching strategies. Overall, the research results show that *Guru Penggerak* of english language in Lamongan are satisfied with the Merdeka Curriculum. Overall, the research results show that the Merdeka Curriculum was well received by *Guru Penggerak* of english language in Lamongan. Merdeka Curriculum is considered capable of accommodating local wisdom, facilitating flexible teaching, encouraging creativity, and forming the character and competencies needed by students to become competitive human resources. To maintain the effectiveness of implementation, ongoing support, training and periodic evaluations are needed to ensure that every aspect of Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented optimally in the teaching and learning process

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