



Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English Learning at MA Al Amiriyyah in the Academic Year 2023/2024

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di MA Al Amiriyyah dengan fokus pada kelas X dan XI. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menilai efektivitas berbagai model pembelajaran yang diterapkan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dengan mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model pembelajaran berbasis masalah di kelas XI kurang efektif karena ketidakcocokannya dengan kondisi siswa yang menyebabkan ketidakaktifan dan kebosanan di kalangan siswa. Sebaliknya, model pembelajaran berbasis proyek dan pembelajaran kooperatif di kelas X sangat efektif menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang aktif, kreatif, dan bertanggung jawab. Model-model ini memungkinkan siswa untuk lebih terlibat dengan materi pelajaran dan mengambil tanggung jawab lebih besar atas proses pembelajaran mereka. Temuan ini menyoroti kebutuhan kritis untuk memilih dan menerapkan model pembelajaran yang tepat guna memaksimalkan keterlibatan siswa, motivasi, dan hasil belajar secara keseluruhan sesuai dengan tujuan Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci: Implementasi; Kurikulum Merdeka; Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at MA Al Amiriyyah, focusing on classes X and XI. The objective is to assess the effectiveness of different learning models applied by the English teachers. A qualitative approach was employed, collecting data through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results indicate that the problem-based learning model in class XI was less effective due to its mismatch with student conditions, leading to disengagement and boredom among students. Conversely, the project-based learning and cooperative learning models in class X were highly effective, fostering an active, creative, and responsible learning environment. These models allowed students to engage more deeply with the material and take greater ownership of their learning process. These findings highlight the critical need for selecting and implementing appropriate learning models to maximize student engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes in line with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: English Learning; Implementation; Merdeka Curriculum.

PENDAHULUAN

The curriculum is a vital component of education, serving as a guideline for teachers in the learning process. Over time, Indonesia's curriculum has undergone numerous changes to enhance educational quality. The latest change is the Merdeka Curriculum, initiated by the Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim in 2020, aiming to provide greater freedom for teachers and students in the learning process tailored to their needs and interests. This curriculum reform seeks to address long-standing issues within the Indonesian education



system by promoting a more flexible and student-centered approach to learning (Al Fajri & Andarwulan, 2023).

The philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum is fundamentally different from the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 Curriculum. While the 2013 Curriculum emphasized a standardized, competence-based approach, the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on flexibility, autonomy, and personalized learning. It encourages teachers to design learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives and interests, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and independence (Riskiyah et al., 2024). This shift represents a move away from rigid, one-size-fits-all instruction towards a more holistic, student-centered pedagogy (Amelia & Rahmanto, 2024).

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum has faced several specific challenges, particularly in the context of English language learning. Firstly, inadequate teacher training has been a significant barrier. Many English teachers are not fully equipped with the skills and knowledge required to effectively implement the new curriculum, which demands innovative teaching methods and a deep understanding of student-centered learning (Safitri et al., 2022). Secondly, resource constraints in many schools, such as a lack of appropriate teaching materials and technological tools, have hindered the effective adoption of the curriculum (Pratikno et al., 2022). Additionally, there is resistance to change among some educators and administrators who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and skeptical of the new approaches (Hasibuan, 2022).

Previous studies have explored various aspects of curriculum implementation in Indonesia. For instance, research by Chen et al. (2022) highlights the benefits of project-based learning in fostering student engagement and creativity, and Mahmudah & Nugraha (2024) investigated the effectiveness of problem-based learning in enhancing critical thinking skills. However, these studies often focus on specific learning models without considering the broader context of the Merdeka Curriculum. This gap in the literature underscores the need for comprehensive research that examines the practical implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on student learning outcomes (Aeni et al., 2024). Specifically, Irawati et al. (2022) found that the flexibility of the Merdeka Curriculum allows for better adaptation to students' individual needs, though it requires significant adjustments in teaching practices. Additionally, Dwiputra et al. (2023) reported that the Merdeka Curriculum's



emphasis on student autonomy and creativity has led to increased student motivation and engagement, despite challenges related to teacher preparedness and resource availability.

The novelty of this research lies in its detailed analysis of the practical implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at MA Al Amiriyyah, focusing on the effectiveness of different learning models in classes X and XI. By providing empirical evidence on how various pedagogical approaches influence student engagement, motivation, and academic performance, this study offers valuable insights that address the existing gap in the literature and contribute to the ongoing discourse on curriculum reform in Indonesia (Marzuki, 2023).

MA Al Amiriyyah, located in Blokagung, Banyuwangi, has been selected as the research site due to its experience and offers valuable insights into the practical challenges and successes of adopting a more flexible and student-centered curriculum. Background information indicates that despite the potential benefits, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has faced various hurdles, including inadequate teacher training and resource constraints (Safitri et al., 2022).

METODE PENELITIAN

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method to explore the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at MA Al Amiriyyah. Qualitative research is particularly suited for this study as it allows for an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena within their natural settings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The study focuses on English teachers in classes X and XI, aiming to capture their experiences and perspectives on the curriculum's effectiveness. Class X consists of 40 students, while class XI consists of 35 students.

Data were collected through multiple methods to ensure triangulation and enhance the validity of the findings (Patton, 2014). Interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with the English teachers to gain detailed insights into their implementation strategies and challenges. This approach allows participants to express their views freely and provides rich qualitative data (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Additionally, observations were carried out to directly witness the classroom learning process, enabling the researchers to contextualize the interview data and identify any discrepancies between reported practices and actual behaviors (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Documentation was also a key data source, including syllabi, JUPE2: Jurnal Pendidikan & Pengajaran

teaching modules, and other relevant materials. These documents provided a concrete basis for understanding how the Merdeka Curriculum is structured and implemented in practice.

The data analysis involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Mezmir, 2020). Data reduction entailed selecting, simplifying, and transforming interview and observation data to identify key themes related to the Merdeka Curriculum. The reduced data were then organized into matrices and charts to reveal systematic patterns and relationships, particularly regarding the impact of different learning models on student engagement and outcomes. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified by repeatedly reviewing the data to ensure the findings were robust and reliable.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

The findings of this study on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MA Al Amiriyyah are presented through a combination of verbal descriptions and visual data representations. The results are organized to illustrate the effectiveness of various learning models employed in classes X and XI.

Table 1: Learning Models Applied in Classes X and XI

Class	Learning Model	Effectiveness
X	Project-Based Learning	High
X	Cooperative Learning (Jigsaw)	High
XI	Problem-Based Learning	Moderate

The table 1 above summarize the primary findings. In class X, project-based learning and cooperative learning (jigsaw) models were applied, both showing high effectiveness in fostering student engagement and active participation. In contrast, the problem-based learning model in class XI demonstrated moderate effectiveness, as it did not fully engage students, leading to some levels of disengagement and boredom.

Discussion

The results indicate that the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation through project-based learning and cooperative learning (jigsaw) models in class X was highly effective. These models encouraged a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment, allowing students to take greater responsibility for their learning. This finding aligns with Chen et al. (2022), who noted that project-based learning significantly enhances student creativity and engagement.



Conversely, the problem-based learning model used in class XI showed only moderate effectiveness. This model's limited success may be attributed to its mismatch with student needs and interests, leading to disengagement. This observation is consistent with Safitri et al. (2022), who argued that problem-based learning's effectiveness heavily relies on its relevance to students' real-life contexts.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of aligning learning models with students' learning styles and interests to maximize effectiveness (Khalil & Elkhider, 2016). The findings from MA Al Amiriyyah support this, suggesting that a more flexible approach, such as project-based or cooperative learning, better suits the Merdeka Curriculum's goals of fostering independent and active learners. Furthermore, the moderate success of the problem-based learning model in class XI underscores the need for continuous adaptation and training for teachers to effectively implement these models (Mahmudah & Nugraha, 2024). Providing adequate resources and support can help mitigate these challenges and enhance the overall effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. Firstly, the number of participants was limited to English teachers and students from only two classes (X and XI) at MA Al Amiriyyah. This limited sample size may not fully represent the broader population of students and teachers, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the duration of the study was relatively short. A longer study period might have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts and effectiveness of the different learning models implemented under the Merdeka Curriculum. Thirdly, there is the possibility of bias in data collection. The data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation, which may be influenced by the researchers' perspectives or the participants' willingness to share honest opinions. Efforts were made to minimize this bias by using multiple data sources and triangulation methods; however, some degree of subjectivity may still be present.

These limitations highlight the need for further research with a larger sample size, extended study duration, and more rigorous methods to validate and expand upon the findings of this study. By understanding these constraints, readers can better contextualize the results and consider the findings more thoughtfully.

KESIMPULAN



The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning at MA Al Amiriyyah has shown varying levels of effectiveness across different learning models. In class X, project-based learning and cooperative learning (jigsaw) models have been highly effective in fostering an active and responsible learning environment, significantly enhancing student engagement and participation. In contrast, the problem-based learning model in class XI has been only moderately effective, as it did not fully align with the students' needs and interests, leading to disengagement and boredom.

These findings highlight the importance of selecting appropriate learning models that cater to the specific needs and contexts of students to maximize the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum. They suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable, and flexibility in choosing and adapting learning models is crucial. Educational policymakers and curriculum developers should consider these insights to provide clearer guidance on the selection and implementation of learning models that can be adapted to various student needs and classroom contexts.

Furthermore, these findings underscore the critical importance of ongoing professional development for teachers. Continuous training and support are essential to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement various curricula and learning models. By investing in teacher professional development and fostering an environment of continuous improvement and responsiveness to student feedback, the Merdeka Curriculum can better achieve its goals of fostering independent, engaged, and motivated learners, ultimately contributing to the overall enhancement of the educational system in Indonesia.

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