UTILIZATION OF ENGLISH INTERACTIVE LEARNING MEDIA IN THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM FOR THE TENTH GRADE STUDENTS OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

(A Descriptive Qualitative Study at SMA 3 Bengkulu City)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the use of interactive learning media in English learning for tenth grade students at SMA 3 Kota Bengkulu. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews with English teachers, headmasters, deputy heads of curriculum, and students, supported by classroom observations and document analysis. Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman method, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This process allows researchers to organize, filter, and interpret data systematically, ensuring the accuracy and depth of analysis. The research findings revealed that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasized student-centered learning, contextual materials, project-based activities, and technology integration. Teachers mainly used project-based learning and blended learning methods in implementing interactive learning media, utilizing various digital tools and platforms to increase student engagement. While the implementation showed positive results in promoting student independence and creativity, there were challenges in student readiness and technology adaptation. This study contributes to understanding effective strategies for implementing modern curriculum approaches and interactive learning media in secondary education, particularly in English language teaching.

Keywords*: Merdeka Curriculum, Interactive Learning Media, English Learning, Technology Integration, Project-Based Learning.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dan penggunaan media pembelajaran interaktif dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa kelas sepuluh di SMA 3 Kota Bengkulu. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan guru Bahasa Inggris, kepala sekolah, wakil kepala kurikulum, dan siswa, didukung oleh observasi kelas dan analisis dokumen. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode Miles dan Huberman, yang terdiri dari tiga tahap: reduksi data (data reduction), penyajian data (data display), dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi (conclusion drawing/verification). Proses ini

memungkinkan peneliti untuk mengorganisir, menyaring, dan menginterpretasikan data secara sistematis, memastikan keakuratan dan kedalaman analisis. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka menekankan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada siswa, materi kontekstual, kegiatan berbasis proyek, dan integrasi teknologi. Guru terutama menggunakan metode project-based learning dan blended learning dalam mengimplementasikan media pembelajaran interaktif, memanfaatkan berbagai alat dan platform digital untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa. Sementara implementasi menunjukkan hasil positif dalam mempromosikan kemandirian dan kreativitas siswa, ada tantangan dalam kesiapan siswa dan adaptasi teknologi. Penelitian ini berkontribusi untuk memahami strategi yang efektif untuk mengimplementasikan pendekatan kurikulum modern dan media pembelajaran interaktif dalam pendidikan menengah, khususnya dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Merdeka, Media Pembelajaran Interaktif, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Integrasi Teknologi, *Project-Based Learning*.

A. Introduction

English plays a crucial role in global communication and competitiveness in the era of globalization. Warniati and Hanum (2020) emphasized the importance of early English education to improve children's communication skills in the current era of globalization. However, many students still face difficulties in learning English. Ameliani (2019) identified difficulties in understanding grammar as one of the main obstacles. Tambunsaribu and Galingging (2021) further highlighted students' difficulties in understanding English learning materials, especially certain topics that are considered difficult.

Internal and external factors contribute to the challenges of learning English. Silalahi et al. (2022) showed that low interest in learning, poor physical health, and lack of opportunities to practice can hinder learning. Tambunsaribu and Galingging (2021) also noted that less enjoyable teaching methods and a lack of teacher expertise can make it difficult for students to learn English.

To address these challenges, the education curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several changes. The latest Merdeka Curriculum gives teachers and educational units the freedom to design and implement their own curriculum, including English language learning. In this context, the use of interactive learning media is becoming increasingly important. Martati (2022) emphasizes the role of teachers in choosing teaching tools that suit the needs and interests of students.

Rahmah and Rahayu (2019) added that through media, students can understand the material given more quickly, so that learning objectives can be achieved.

However, the implementation of interactive learning media also faces challenges. Rizki (2022) identified technological constraints such as accessibility, internet connectivity, and technology infrastructure in schools as major obstacles. Sutarno and Mukhidin (2013) added that building students' interest in learning interactive learning media is also a challenge in itself.

Based on observations at SMA Negeri 3 Kota Bengkulu, it was found that grade X students experienced significant changes in their learning process with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers switched from textbooks to interactive media to meet the demands of more interactive and contextual learning. However, this transition presents challenges for teachers and students, including students' lack of English vocabulary and teachers' difficulties in organizing students to listen to learning materials.

This study aims to explore the "Utilization of English Interactive Learning Media in the Merdeka Curriculum for Tenth Grade Students of the Senior High School." The focus of the study on this topic and the location that has not been widely studied is expected to provide new contributions to the understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum from the perspective of learning technology.

B. Research Design

The researcher used qualitative methods in this research. Qualitative research, which originates from postpositivism, is used to examine natural things. Different from experiments, this research uses a researcher as the main tool. Purposively and snowballing, samples from data sources were taken. Data collection uses a combination of various techniques, such as observation, interviews, and documentation. By considering field data, data analysis can be inductive or qualitative. Qualitative research focuses more on meaning than generalizations (Sugiyono, 2021).

Meanwhile, for this type of research, researcher use descriptive-qualitative research. Qualitative descriptive research is a type of research that aims to tell stories of events, facts,

circumstances, phenomena, variables, and circumstances that occurred during research by providing a better picture of what actually happened. Without providing further explanation, this research is interesting as to what actually happened. Therefore, in qualitative descriptive research, all activities, circumstances, events, aspects, components, or variables occur as they are. There is no need for administration or control over a particular treatment of a variable or the design of the expected results from that variable (Sugiyono, 2021). So, in the research, a qualitative descriptive method is used to describe in depth the use of interactive learning media in learning English in the Merdeka Curriculum for tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City. This method is used to explore the phenomenon by conducting in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis.

C. Result and Discussion

The results of data analysis on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning for tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City, with a focus on the use of interactive learning media. This research seeks to shed light on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning as well as the method teachers employ to incorporate interactive learning media. This research involved many important informants, including the headmaster, the deputy head of curriculum, two English teachers, and five tenth grade students. Through in-depth interviews with participants, this research produced important findings that comprehensively describe how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in English learning in high schools. This research not only provides an overview of existing teaching methods but also shows creative ways used by teachers to use interactive media in the Merdeka Curriculum to teach English better.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City was analyzed using Miles and Huberman's qualitative data analysis method, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data Reduction

In analyzing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning, the data reduction process revealed several

key themes. The implementation of the curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, where teachers act as facilitators rather than traditional instructors. This approach is evident in Teacher 1's statement: "We provide space for students to explore the subject matter according to their interests, while we guide and provide direction according to their needs." The principal's observation that "students become more responsible for their learning process and more creative in completing assignments" further strengthens this finding. Through data display, these themes are organized to show the interconnected nature of the curriculum implementation, revealing how student-centered learning is connected to the development of 21st century skills and technology integration. Regarding the second research question about teachers' methods in implementing interactive learning media, the analysis revealed that teachers mainly use two main methods: project-based learning (PBL) and blended learning. Through data reduction, it becomes clear that these methods are not implemented in isolation but are carefully integrated with various multimedia principles. The implementation of PBL was evident in Teacher 1's statement about the video assignment project: "I once asked students to create a video assignment project for learning, such as a conversation in English but still in a real context, and made with their group friends." This approach combined traditional project work with digital media creation, demonstrating the blended nature of the learning environment. The blended learning method emerged as a significant finding through the data analysis process. Teachers utilized a variety of digital platforms and tools while maintaining face-to-face instruction. The vice principal of curriculum noted, "Sometimes in English learning, teachers have brought small speakers to facilitate the learning process, such as listening." This combination of traditional and digital approaches was further supported by the school's infrastructure, as evidenced by the principal's statement about providing WiFi access and supporting various technology tools for learning. The

study identified two main methods used by teachers in implementing interactive learning media: project-based learning (PBL), where teachers utilized PBL as the main method to engage students with interactive media, including video creation projects, group presentations, and collaborative assignments using digital tools; and blended learning, where teachers combine traditional classroom instruction with digital learning tools, including the use of the Pijar app for online learning, integration of YouTube videos for listening and speaking practice, PowerPoint presentations with multimedia elements, and online collaborative platforms for group work.

2. The data display

Through the data display, the relationship between teaching methods and interactive learning media principles became clear. The analysis showed that teachers incorporated multimedia principles such as spatial proximity, coherence, and modality in project-based learning (PBL) and blended learning approaches. For example, Teacher 2's approach to creating learning materials demonstrated the application of the spatial proximity principle: "In the videos I use, I place subtitles and related graphics in the same area or close to the main information to maintain consistency and connectedness of the information." The analysis revealed interrelated relationships between implementation methods and outcomes, including the integration of methods and media where project-based learning activities are enhanced through digital tools and platforms, blended learning approaches combine face-to-face instruction with online resources, interactive media support both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities, and teachers adapt their methods based on student needs and technological capabilities.

However, several challenges and adaptations were also identified, such as varying student engagement with different types of media, technical infrastructure that supports learning but requires ongoing maintenance, teacher training and support that are essential for effective implementation, and students' limited vocabulary that affects

comprehension of online materials. This analysis emphasizes the importance of a balance between teaching innovation and addressing practical challenges to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and the use of interactive learning media at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City.

3. The conclusion drawing and verification

From the data analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City has been running effectively with a holistic approach, especially in English learning for grade tenth students. This implementation has succeeded in creating a more adaptive, dynamic, and student-centered learning environment with the support of appropriate technology.

The methods used by teachers in implementing interactive learning media, especially through project-based learning (PBL) and blended learning, have proven effective in supporting curriculum objectives. The combination of these methods not only improves students' understanding of English learning materials but also develops their digital and soft skills. The use of PBL allows for increased student engagement through practical projects, while blended learning facilitates improvements in digital literacy through technology integration. Both methods successfully accommodate different learning styles and increase opportunities for authentic language practice. Teachers continue to make continuous adaptations, adjusting their methods based on student feedback and learning outcomes, demonstrating curriculum flexibility and responsiveness to student needs. The success of this implementation depends on teachers' ability to balance technology integration with traditional teaching approaches, supported by adequate school infrastructure and a commitment to professional development.

However, several challenges were identified, such as the need to continuously improve teachers' digital competencies and ensure equitable access to technological resources for all students. These conclusions were verified through triangulation of data from various sources of informants and direct

observation and supported by positive responses from students who felt more motivated and engaged in the learning process. The analysis suggests that continuing to refine and develop these methods, while maintaining a balance between technology integration and traditional teaching approaches, will be critical to the continued success of English language education at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City.

This section presents a discussion of research results. The purpose of this research is to explore the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning and teacher methods in implementing interactive learning media for grade tenth students at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City. This research involving English teachers and students is supported by classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. Based on Miles and Huberman's analysis framework, the researcher aims to discuss in depth the findings of this study with related theories and previous research regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the use of interactive learning media in English learning.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City shows a shift towards more flexible and student-centered learning, aligning with the curriculum's main objectives of fostering student independence, creativity, and innovation. Through data reduction and analysis, it was found that teachers have adopted two primary methods: project-based learning (PBL) and blended learning, which provide practical contexts for students to develop their English skills. The integration of interactive learning media, including PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, and the Pijar application, has been initiated to enhance student engagement and comprehension in learning activities. This finding aligns with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2014), which emphasizes the importance of using multiple media channels to enhance learning effectiveness.

Data display through Miles and Huberman's framework reveals that although the implementation of the

Merdeka Curriculum shows positive potential, the main challenge in implementing interactive learning media lies in the readiness and adaptability of students. Although the school's technological infrastructure is adequate, including WiFi access in the classroom and the availability of projectors and other teaching aids, some students still have difficulty following technology-based learning. This situation is exacerbated by students' lack of vocabulary, which hinders their understanding of learning materials, especially in educational videos, and teachers face difficulties in motivating students to watch learning videos.

To overcome these challenges, teachers apply various methods in implementing interactive learning media. Project-based learning (PBL) is used to encourage students to engage in projects that are relevant to the learning material, often involving the use of interactive media to present their assignments. This method not only helps students understand English concepts in a more practical context but also develops their language skills along with collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

Through conclusion drawing/verification, it was found that blended learning, combining face-to-face instruction with digital media use, has become increasingly popular. It aids in the transition from conventional learning to technology-based learning, providing students with more opportunities to practice their English skills both in class and through online platforms. The use of multimedia has helped teachers present materials in a more visual and structured way, although challenges persist in encouraging students to fully utilize these resources, particularly due to lack of motivation and limited vocabulary.

Key findings from Miles and Huberman's analysis reveal that the implementation of project-based learning has proven effective in providing practical contexts for students to improve their English skills. The use of multimedia, despite facing challenges, shows significant potential in supporting students' practice and engagement. However, difficulties in using YouTube as a learning resource highlight the need for additional

strategies to help students effectively utilize online resources for language learning.

These findings align with several relevant theories and research results in the field of education and learning technology. They support the Cognitive Multimedia Learning Theory proposed by Mayer (2014), emphasizing the importance of using various media channels to enhance learning. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, with its emphasis on contextual and student-centered learning.

Comparing this study with previous research, there are similarities and differences in the challenges faced by teachers in implementing new curricula and teaching methods. For instance, the findings of this study echo those of Oktavia (2023) regarding the effectiveness of project-based learning and technology in increasing student engagement. However, unlike the findings of Sirait et al. (2021) on the effectiveness of YouTube in English language learning, this study reveals challenges in its implementation, indicating the need for specific strategies in integrating online resources into the curriculum.

In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to our understanding of the implementation of the new curriculum and the use of interactive learning media in developing students' English skills in the context of secondary education in Indonesia. Through Miles and Huberman's analytical framework, it highlights both the potential of the Merdeka Curriculum and learning technology in improving the quality of instruction and the challenges that need to be addressed to optimize its implementation. The findings pave the way for further studies on effective strategies for integrating technology into language learning and underscore the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers in the digital era.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, several important conclusions can be drawn about the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and interactive learning media at SMA Negeri 3 Bengkulu City. The implementation demonstrates a

successful transition towards student-centered learning, with teachers effectively integrating technology and modern teaching methods. The use of project-based learning and blended learning approaches has created opportunities for authentic language practice and skill development, though challenges remain in ensuring consistent student engagement with digital resources.

The research reveals that teachers' methods in implementing interactive learning media are both innovative and adaptive, combining traditional teaching approaches with modern technology. While technological infrastructure supports these methods, the effectiveness of implementation varies based on student readiness and language proficiency. The findings highlight the importance of balanced implementation strategies that consider both the opportunities and challenges of technology integration in language learning.

Based on the research findings, several suggestions can be put forward to improve the effectiveness of the use of interactive learning media in the Merdeka Curriculum.

1. For English teachers, Teachers should continue developing their technological competencies and exploring innovative ways to integrate interactive media into their teaching methods. They should focus on creating more structured support systems for students struggling with vocabulary and technology adaptation. Additionally, teachers should consider developing supplementary materials that bridge the gap between students' current language abilities and the demands of online learning resources.

2. For students, Students are encouraged to take a more active role in their learning process by engaging fully with the interactive learning media provided. They should focus on developing their vocabulary systematically and practice using English through the various digital platforms available. Students should also communicate their learning challenges and preferences to teachers to help optimize the learning experience.

3. For the next researchers, Future research should explore more specific aspects of interactive media implementation in the

Merdeka Curriculum, particularly focusing on strategies to overcome vocabulary limitations and technology adaptation challenges. Researchers could investigate the long-term effectiveness of project-based and blended learning methods in English language acquisition, as well as develop and test specific interventions for improving student engagement with online learning resources.

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