

Exploring the relationship between English teachers' beliefs and their practices in implementing the merdeka mengajar platform

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Abstract

Merdeka Mengajar Platform (MMP) was released to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. While this platform aims to improve teacher competence and learning effectiveness, research into the extent to which English teachers adopt and practice MMP is limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze English teacher's beliefs and practices in implementing MMP, identify the alignment and misalignment between beliefs and practices, identify the challenges faced, and explore the strategies used in adapting teaching practices to MMP principles. This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of learning documents. The results showed that English teacher has a positive belief in MMP as a useful tool in improving pedagogical skills, facilitating differentiated learning, and enriching teaching methods. However, there were challenges in implementing MMP include low active student participation, limited facility support, and varying levels of teacher understanding of the platform. To overcome these challenges, the English teacher applied strategies such as the use of diverse learning media, differentiated assessments, and intensive communication with parents. The results of this study confirm the need for continuous support in the form of professional training and provision of adequate infrastructure to optimize the use of MMP. Further studies are recommended to examine the long-term impact of MMP on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes in English language learning.

Keywords: Teachers Beliefs; Teaching Practices; Merdeka Mengajar Platform; English Language Learning; Professional Development

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Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak pushed the government to simplify the curriculum. This simplified curriculum was later codified as a new curriculum, replacing the prior one. The curriculum was known as the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka curriculum requires teachers to be able to keep up with the digital era that is expected to create quality human resources. However, teachers require a significant amount of time to understand the curriculum. To help teachers grasp the autonomous curriculum, the government established the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This platform was created to catch up with other countries due to the loss of learning time during the pandemic (ditpsd kemdikbud, [2022](#)).

The Merdeka Mengajar platform offers equal possibilities for all teachers in Indonesia to study and enhance their skills (Arnes et al., [2023](#)) that were not previously perceived due to covid 19 (Syah, [2020](#)). Research on Merdeka Mengajar [W11.1] Platform [ER2.1][SB2.2][SB2.3] had been studied by several researchers. Alamsyah & Gandana ([2023](#)) conducted research about challenges faced by English teachers in applying their knowledge in teaching speaking, particularly through the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The focus of this research is to examine and describe the

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challenges faced by a teacher in applying the knowledge about teaching speaking gained through the use of Merdeka Mengajar platform in a junior high school in Bombana, Southeast Sulawesi. This study highlighted linguistic factors, such as vocabulary deficiency, difficulty memorizing material, and incorrect pronunciation and psychological factors, including students' lack of confidence and motivation in speaking English as barriers to the implementation of PMM in the classroom.

Marisana (2023) conducted research about the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform (MMP) to improve the competence of elementary school teachers. This study found that teachers do not fully understand how to optimally utilize this platform. Susilawati et al. (2021) conducted a study about internalization of Pancasila values in education through the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile with the assistance of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The focus of this research is to determine the application of the utilization of Merdeka Mengajar Platform in internalizing Pancasila values through the development and implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile. The existence of challenges such as internet access and teachers' ICT competencies is one of the findings of this study. However, innovative solutions and specific strategies to overcome these barriers more broadly and comprehensively were not explored in detail.

The previous research related to the implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar platform mentioned above generally examines the extent to which the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is utilized for learning improvement, especially in relation to the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum as the latest curriculum published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, very few have examined the extent of English teachers' involvement in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This is certainly important for improving learning, especially English lessons where English remains the main subject at the junior and senior high school levels and is also an elective subject that has been determined in the draft Learning Outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran) formulated by the ministry of education and culture. This is different from the previous curriculum, where there was no specific push from the government for English to be taught from the primary level. Moreover, research related to teachers' beliefs and practices in implementing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is still very rare.

Beliefs and practices are two important topics in learning that cannot be separated. Teachers' beliefs about how learning should happen, including the technology used, directly influence the way they teach. Borg stated that teachers' beliefs are shaped by their prior experiences and influence their classroom practices (Borg, 2015). Belief is also defined as an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition (Wilkins, 2008). Teachers' beliefs about something can be influenced by experience, but can also be reshaped through professional development programs (Ha & Murray, 2020). Understanding the alignment between teachers' beliefs and practices is essential for implementing changes in teaching approaches.

In relation to research on teachers' beliefs and practices, there were mixed findings. Some studies reported a strong alignment between teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices. However, other studies revealed significant mismatches between beliefs and practices.

Badash (2020) found inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and declared practices. Teachers tend to claim that they believe in the importance of teaching grammar communicatively, but in practice, they adopt more traditional methods that focus on frontal teaching and explicit rules. Another research on beliefs and practices also shows the dissonance between teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching grammar in EFL classrooms in Sweden. Although the teachers recognized the importance of teaching grammar in meaningful contexts and with clear goals, their teaching practices tended to focus more on explicitly form-oriented grammar activities (Wassén, 2023).

A study by (Wilkins, 2008) found alignment between beliefs and practices, where 63% of the total data showed alignment between beliefs and practices related to inquiry-based learning while

the remaining 37% showed misalignment. Meanwhile, other related research show that Daphne has a strong belief in an explicit and formal approach to grammar teaching, and her teaching practices are in line with this belief, providing formal explanations of grammar (Farrell & Lim, [2005](#)).

The study intends to investigate English teacher's beliefs regarding the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This research also aims to explore the gap between teachers' beliefs and practices, which has not been specifically addressed in the context of PMM. This study is also expected that the findings of this research will have a beneficial impact on teachers, students, and also future researchers as a basis of conducting future research.

Method

This research is a case study research. Case study is research method involving a thorough, in-depth analysis of an individual, group, institution or other social unit (Denise F Polit & Cheryl Tatano Beck, [2004](#)). The purpose is to explore and understand the dynamics of a specific situation, event, or individual within its real-world context. This research applied single participant as the data source. Many researchers conducted case study research with a single participant, such as research on nursing care for schizophrenic patients with low self esteem (Martin & Satriyandari, [2024](#)), communication styles in EFL class interactions (Jusriati et al., [2020](#)), Muntasir's father's style and strategy in the successful management of education in pesantren (Bakar & Abdullah, [2022](#)), and early childhood social skills raised by parents with hearing loss (Adzani et al., [2022](#)).

In this research, the English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Barong Tongkok in Kutai Barat district is the participant where the researcher collected the data. The participant in this study was selected due to her extensive experience and active involvement in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM). As an English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Barong Tongkok—the first school in Kutai Barat to adopt the Merdeka Curriculum—she has been teaching since 2012 and holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in education. Beyond her classroom teaching, she served as a lecturer at Politeknik Sendawar and has shown consistent dedication to professional development by participating in and facilitating the Program Guru Penggerak. Her roles as a certified Guru Penggerak and Pengajar Praktik demonstrate her deep engagement with educational reform and teacher empowerment initiatives.

Her selection is also based on her active utilization of the PMM platform. She has completed more than 20 topics on the platform and is frequently invited as a speaker at seminars and webinars on differentiated learning, facilitation strategies, and PMM optimization. The participant's combination of practical teaching experience, leadership roles in national education programs, and consistent platform engagement makes her a highly relevant and credible source for exploring the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices in the context of Merdeka Mengajar Platform implementation.

Some common instruments used in qualitative research include: interview, observation (participant, non-participant observation), document analysis (content analysis and archival research), visual method (photo voice and mapping), diaries or journals, and field notes (Creswell & Creswell, [2018](#)). Data of this research was collected through three main methods: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of learning documents. First, an interview was conducted with the participant at the school. An interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a participant (Ary, et al, [2010](#); Yin, [2016](#)). The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview in this study. Semi-structured interviews are used to explore information related to teachers' views and beliefs on PMM, as well as how they utilize the platform in their daily teaching practices. The list of interview questions asked is summarized in [Table 1](#).

Table 1
Research interview guideline

Variables	Aspect	Indicator
Teachers' beliefs and practices on the implementation of PMM	Teachers' background	Teachers' background experience and knowledge
	Teachers' beliefs	Teachers' beliefs about PMM
	Teachers' roles and responsibilities	How teachers perceive roles and responsibilities
	Teachers' challenges and strategies	Challenges and strategies in implementing PMM
	Teachers' practices	Alignment with PMM principles

Second, classroom observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of PMM in learning. In this observation, the researcher records various interactions that occur between teachers and students, as well as teachers' efforts in facilitating student-centred learning. Observation (Ary, et al, [2010](#); John W. Creswell, [2009](#)) refers to a qualitative research method where the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site. The data from this observation provides a more real picture of the conditions in the classroom and the effectiveness of the teaching methods applied. Third, the analysis of learning documents is carried out to evaluate the teaching materials and lesson plans used. By analysing this document, researchers can assess the extent to which the content taught is in line with the pillars in PMM and Merdeka Curriculum.

The data collected was then analysed using a case study analysis. Case study analysis is a qualitative research technique that involves an in-depth exploration of a specific case (or cases) within its real-life context. This method is particularly useful for understanding complex phenomena, processes, or events in detail (Adrijana Biba Starman, [2013](#); Creswell & Creswell, [2018](#)). To increase the validity and reliability of the data, this research also used data triangulation from multiple data sources (interview, observation, and document analysis) (John W. Creswell, [2009](#)).

Finding and Discussion

The results indicated four main themes, namely, teachers' beliefs, teachers' practices related to the implementation of PMM, alignment or misalignment between beliefs and practices, and challenges and strategies or support used in implementing PMM in the classroom.

Teacher's Belief

The findings reveal that the teacher harbors a robust belief in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (MMP) as a transformative tool for enhancing pedagogical knowledge, indicating a strong conviction that this platform has the potential to significantly improve teaching practices and educational outcomes. This belief emerges from various factors highlighted in the research data.

"The English teacher applies the understanding of the restitution triangle by explaining to students that boredom with learning at school is normal. The English teacher then provides an understanding that if you don't go to school because you are bored or whatever, the students themselves bear the risk." (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

Firstly, the teacher perceives PMM as an essential resource that provides comprehensive materials, guidelines, and innovative strategies designed specifically for contemporary teaching. The ease of access to these resources empowers her to not only enrich her lesson plans but also to expand her pedagogical repertoire, allowing for the introduction of diverse instructional methods.

"I can enrich my knowledge. Enrich my knowledge and study and study everywhere that I want and about the time is flexible." (Interview, TB, line 67-69)

"And the easiest way to learn." (Interview, TB, Line: 79)

This shift towards a more varied approach to teaching is rooted in her recognition that modern classrooms require flexibility and adaptability to cater to the diverse needs of learners. Moreover, the teacher emphasizes hands-on activities that reinforce learning through experiential engagement. She encourages students to participate in collaborative projects where they can explore concepts through experiments, group discussions, or creative assignments. This method not only fosters teamwork and communication skills but also allows students to apply their knowledge in practical contexts, deepening their understanding. Such hands-on experiences are essential for kinaesthetic learners who thrive when learning through doing, ensuring that her teaching accommodates various learning styles. This flexibility not only nurtures student autonomy and motivation but also acknowledges the individual identity of each learner, which is crucial for fostering a sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom.

"The teacher plays a video related to the material being taught to accommodate students' learning style needs." (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

"The English teacher provides process and product differentiation where students are given a choice of writing assignments, making comics, recording their own voices via devices, making videos, and reading/presenting in front of the class related to the topic studied (quantifying determiners)." (field note observation 2, February 9th, 2025)

Moreover, the PMM facilitates an ongoing professional development journey. The teacher expresses that the platform encourages continual learning, enabling her to stay abreast of the latest educational trends, methodologies, and technologies. This aspect of PMM is particularly valued as it positions her not merely as a transmitter of knowledge but as a lifelong learner who is committed to improving her practice. Previously, the participant positioned herself as a teacher who conveys knowledge to her students. After accessing PMM and learning about the topics in it, he realized that his position in the classroom is not just a deliverer of lessons, but rather a learning facilitator who encourages his students to grow into independent learners.

"In my opinion, every subject of teacher Every teacher in the school has a role for the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. Why? Why? What is the why? The reason is because we are teachers as a role model and facilitator. in learning, right? The teacher is his role model and as a learning facilitator." (Interview, TR, Line: 191-197)

"The English teacher invites students to have a group discussion as an effort to develop students' resilience competencies through collaborative learning in group discussions." (field note observation 2, February 9th, 2025)

Additionally, the teacher's belief in PMM's transformative potential is supported by her successful experiences in implementing its strategies in the classroom. She notes how the platform's emphasis on student-centered learning aligns with her educational philosophy, reinforcing the importance of fostering independent and active learners.

"Students are encouraged to find their own answers to the hypothesized questions, the teacher provides assistance by directing them to page 63 of chapter 4 to find the answers." (field note observation, November 23rd, 2024)

"It's (student-centered learning) related to differentiated learning, because we teach based on the student's need." (Interview, TR, Line: 510-512)

"The change is now studying learning based on the student." (Interview, TR, Line: 213-214)

Another key aspect of her belief in PMM as a transformative tool is its capability to facilitate differentiated instruction. The teacher appreciates the resources available on PMM that allow her to tailor her teaching to meet the varying needs and learning styles of her students.

"We use video for visual students or picture and then speaker for audio students and then games. Games ... moving around the class for the kinesthetic students." (Interview, TR, Line: 516-519)

The application of differentiated learning is shown from the beginning of learning where teachers map students' learning styles and needs through initial assessments.

"The English teacher divided the students into groups based on the results of the initial assessment at the beginning of the lesson." (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

Teachers' Practices

In line with her beliefs, the teacher's practices demonstrate an effective implementation of MMP. She utilizes a variety of teaching strategies, including multimedia resources and hands-on activities that cater to students' different learning modalities. For instance, students are given options to demonstrate their understanding through various forms of expression, such as creating videos or comics, thus reaffirming her dedication to differentiation.

"There is some modification based on the student needs. There is modification based on the student's needs." (Interview, TR, Line: 225-227)

The teacher's practices also demonstrate an effective implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (MMP), showcasing her commitment to embracing innovative teaching methods that align with contemporary educational philosophies. Her approach is characterized by a deliberate incorporation of a variety of teaching strategies that not only enhance student engagement but also recognize the diverse learning modalities present in her classroom.

"Yes, I use the project-based learning method for the assignment. Yes, project-based learning right. The previous one was problem-based learning." (Interview, TR, Line: 532-535)

"The English teacher tried to build student interaction and active participation by asking about the condition of one of the absent students. However, there is a lack of active response from the students." (field note observation 2, February 9th, 2025)

"When students are less active in responding to questions, the teacher tries to provoke them with trigger questions." (field note observation 2, February 9th, 2025)

Alignment/Misalignment

A complex relationship is revealed when the teacher's beliefs and practices are examined for alignment or misalignment. On the one hand, the PMM principles of engagement, facilitation, and a move toward differentiated learning are all significantly aligned. For instance, the teacher's methods align well with her philosophy in encouraging student activity as she actively attempts to engage the class through strategies like employing trigger questions.

"And this trigger question to encourage or to encourage students to be more active in the class. Yes, kalimat pemantik." (Interview, Line: 294-296)

However, a number of discrepancies show up, mostly related to how these ideas are used in the classroom. There are still issues in spite of her dedication to differentiation and active learning. According to the teacher's views, children frequently exhibit fatigue and unwillingness, which undercuts her attempts to create a lively learning environment. This discrepancy implies that there is an outside force affecting student involvement that the English teacher's belief in active learning cannot resolve on its own.

Her admission of insufficient PMM paperwork (Aksi Nyata) suggests further misalignment and a difficulty to properly apply all facets of the new curriculum structure. This lack of documentation implies that although she adheres to the framework in theory, her abilities to demonstrate them are limited because her practical implementation does not always match it exactly.

The necessity of parental involvement in supporting students' development at home is another area where there is mismatch between beliefs and practices on the implementation of PMM. The English teacher notes that "the active participation of students is caused by...the lack of parental support," pointing to a lack of parental support as a contributing reason to student disengagement. This demonstrates that her conviction that teachers, parents, and students must work together to overcome obstacles stemming from the parents' disengagement, which in turn affects student engagement.

Overall, both integration and complexity are revealed by the analysis of the alignment and misalignment of the English teacher's beliefs and practices in applying PMM. Although her positive attitude, curricular knowledge, emphasis on differentiated instruction, and facilitation role lay a foundation for successful practices, outside obstacles obstruct the smooth implementation of these principles. Parental involvement, student interactions, and teacher engagement all have a big impact on how her educational views are actually implemented.

Challenges and Strategies

Despite the alignment or misalignment of beliefs and practices, the teacher faces significant challenges. One major challenge noted is the difficulty in fostering active student participation. Observations detail that some students hesitate to engage fully during group discussions, which undermines the intended collaborative and inquiry-based learning experiences.

"The English teacher does not get any response from the students when asking about the topics covered in chapter 3." (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

The lack of active role of students in the learning process also appeared during the group discussion session where three out of five groups did not complete the task of compiling hypothesis questions related to the material being discussed, namely Simple Past Tense.

Groups 1, 2, and 5 did not provide/create answers to the questions they created. (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

"When asked to formulate questions related to the topic studied, there were three groups that made questions not according to the topic discussed (Simple Past Tense)." (field note observation 1, November 23rd, 2024)

The effectiveness of collaborative learning is compromised when students are reluctant to participate. In order to foster abilities like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, group conversations are essential.

In addition to the challenge of encouraging active student participation, the English teacher encountered a number of additional difficulties when implementing the Merdeka Mengajar

Platform (MMP) into practice. Parental support comes first. Parental involvement and support are important for students' learning. The English teacher encountered difficulties in promoting parental participation, which is crucial for establishing a nurturing educational atmosphere. For example, pupils' enthusiasm and involvement in class may be impacted by the disparity in parents' parenting philosophies and backgrounds.

"It is because the difference of background knowledge of the parents also background .. background knowledge how to parenting students. (Interview, CS, Line: 253-256)

"Background knowledge, parenting, different parenting. make the behavior of the student different." (Interview, CS, 261-263)

The second is reluctance and fatigue. The English teacher mentioned personal difficulties, such as a sense of exhaustion from the numerous demands of putting new teaching ideas into practice and a reluctance to finish some PMM-related paperwork. This hesitation may have an effect on the motivation of the teacher and the quality of execution.

"There are three, four, five that I haven't done the aksi nyata yet. Six! Six. Six that haven't done it yet. Even though there are materials, I'm really lazy since last year." Interview, CS, Line: 59-62)"

Differentiated learning comes in third. The English Teacher must constantly adjust and change their teaching methods, even if the PMM promotes varied instruction based on the requirements of various student populations. Accurately determining the needs of the students and modifying the strategies accordingly takes time and effort.

The last is utilization of resources. The English teacher have a hurdle since the PMM lacks subject-specific materials for English language instruction. To improve their lesson plans, they must find new materials or make inventive use of the ones that are already accessible.

The teacher uses a number of successful strategies that greatly improve her students' learning experiences in order to overcome the challenges encountered when implementing the Merdeka curriculum.

The first is the incorporation of interactive learning resources and a variety of media. The English Teacher is aware that different students learn differently; some may learn best visually, while others learn best auditory or kinaesthetically. She accommodates these varied preferences by including a range of media, including videos, interactive presentations, and instructive games. In addition to engaging students' attention, this multimodal approach meets the many needs of the classroom. For example, interactive exercises can promote teamwork and peer learning, while video content can produce a visually exciting experience that helps with memory recall. Additionally, adding components like tests or gamified instruction can encourage active participation from students, enhancing the dynamic and pleasurable nature of learning.

The focus on interactive learning is the second. Students are able to actively interact with the content when collaborative learning environments are used. Lessons that are organized around group projects or conversations allow students to express their ideas and insights, which fosters a deeper comprehension of the material. In addition to improving critical thinking abilities, this method boosts students' self-esteem, especially for those who might be reluctant to engage in typical lecture-style settings. Peer teaching and brainstorming sessions are two ways that students can benefit from each other's knowledge and enhance their educational experience.

Effective communication with parents is the third. The English teacher places a high priority on keeping open lines of communication with parents because they understand how important they are to their kids' education. This could entail frequent updates via parent-teacher conferences,

phone conversations, or newsletters. By cultivating this relationship, the English teacher makes sure that parents are aware of the curriculum requirements and classroom activities, enabling them to offer the right kind of assistance at home. This partnership helps parents better understand their children's learning requirements and how to support them, in addition to reinforcing what is taught in the classroom.

The final strategy, effective communication with parents, will encourage positive feedback for teachers. The teacher consistently seeks feedback on her teaching strategies from parents and students. Through this constant communication, she can determine which tactics are working and which may need to be modified. She can improve her methods and ensure that they continue to be applicable and successful in meeting the changing needs of her students by being open to criticism. In brief, the description related to research findings is summarized [Table 2](#).

Table 2.
Thematized research findings

Theme	Findings
Teachers' beliefs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PMM is viewed as a valuable tool for enhancing pedagogical skills. 2. Belief in the importance of differentiation and student-centered learning.
Teachers' practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporates varied teaching strategies and multimedia resources. 2. Implements differentiated assessments catering to diverse learning styles.
Alignment between beliefs and practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively uses PMM tools reflecting a positive belief in its effects. 2. Differentiated instruction in practice aligns with her educational beliefs.
Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulties in fostering active student participation 2. Parental support 3. Reluctance and fatigue 4. Differentiated learning
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of diverse learning media and interactive content 2. Intensive communication with parents to enhance student engagement outside the classroom.

The belief of the English teacher that MMP is a valuable tool for enhancing pedagogical knowledge and understanding of Merdeka curriculum is in line with Borg's (2015) theory on teacher cognition. Borg stated that teachers' beliefs are shaped by their prior experiences and influence their classroom practices. This study demonstrated that the English teachers' engagement with PMM reinforced her belief in differentiated learning and student-centered approaches, both of which are core principles of Merdeka curriculum. This aligns with Tomlinson's (1999) framework of differentiated instruction, which emphasizes tailoring teaching to meet diverse student needs. The differentiated learning approach includes adjusting content (what students learn), process (how they learn), and product (how they demonstrate their learning) (Tomlinson, 1999). In this regard, the English teacher took a differentiated approach by, for example, allowing students to complete assessments in video, written, oral, or other forms according to their learning styles.

Finding related to the implementation of differentiated learning are also reported by Amaliyah & Setiono (2024) that differentiated learning recognized and accommodated the varied characteristics, interests, and motivations of students. This inclusivity helps ensure that all students,

regardless of their starting point, can achieve their learning goals. Differentiated learning also encourages student cooperation and collaboration in diverse groups (Nasriah et al., 2024). This helps to improve students' social and collaboration skills which is in line with the concept of learning in the independent curriculum. The concept of differentiated learning is one of the main characters of Merdeka curriculum which is also an important topic in the PMM where teachers need to learn and apply it in classroom learning activities.

The presence of MMP is also believed to bring collaboration among educators through its various features. Professional networks in learning communities formed by MMP and encouraging collaboration between teachers play an important role in increasing teachers' adaptive capacity to changes in education, as well as accelerating the implementation of new pedagogical approaches oriented to the needs of students in the digital era (Hasibuan, 2023; Musa et al., 2022).

The English teacher highlighted the accessibility and flexibility of PMM as significant advantages, allowing teachers to learn independently at their convenience. This supports Knowles' theory (Suhendi Syam, et al., 2022) of self-directed learning for adult education. He emphasized autonomy in learning for adult learners. The concept of learning through MMP is in line with adult learning needs where lecture methods are replaced with hands-on learning rather than just listening.

The Merdeka curriculum emphasizes the concept of education for the purpose of student independence in the learning process (Angga et al., 2022). Learning in Merdeka curriculum, which emphasizes student activeness in the classroom, also poses challenges for teachers, one of which is how to encourage students to be more active in the classroom. This was experienced by the English teacher in several learning activities. Although the number of students who are less active is small, it needs to be a concern. This kind of challenge is also a finding of research conducted by (Sánchez et al., 2019) where the lack of learning motivation is the main source of students' inactivity in the classroom. The strategy implemented by the English teacher is by fostering strong relationships with families to support students' learning and participation. Participant invited parents into a meeting to discuss this challenge. Involving parents can create a more inclusive environment and reinforce the importance of education.

Reluctance to involve in learning is one of the findings related to challenges on the implementation of MMP in learning. Learning reluctance is a common problem for students (Berg, 2011). There are various factors that can cause learning reluctance. There are external factors and internal factors. The findings during observation where one student seemed less interested in participating in learning could be caused by internal factors, namely the lack of student learning motivation.

In response to the challenges faced by teachers related to students' learning needs and learning styles, the participant implement project-based learning as a step to fulfill students' different needs and learning styles. This is related to differentiated learning where the participant was required to accommodate these differences in the classroom. Project-based learning is proven to be able to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Ayu et al., 2024). The implementation of project-based learning by the participant is also related to the provision of differentiated assessment. This approach has proven to have a positive impact on students. Varied assessments encouraged students to be actively involved in the learning process, which in turn increased their motivation and understanding of the learning material. By tailoring assessment methods to meet the different learning styles and individual needs of students, differentiated assessment can help every student show their full potential, including previously low-achieving students (Koshy, 2013).

The English teacher strategies, including parent-teacher communication and parents, providing trigger questions to stimulate students, reflective problem-solving approaches are effective

strategies to stimulate student activeness in the classroom. Techniques such as stimulant questions and problem-solving approaches can help attract students' attention and participation in learning (Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015). These techniques, including clues, models, prompts, hints, partial solutions, think-aloud modeling, and direct instructions are part of scaffolding to increase student engagement in the classroom (Nhan, 2020).

The important role of institutional and government support in facilitating the effective use of MMP was another concern of participants. The English teachers' call for more training, workshops, and resources aligns with (Kamarullah et al., 2024) assertion that the importance of providing targeted training to assist teachers in using MMP effectively and mitigating the challenges faced. Without adequate infrastructure and professional development opportunities, the transformative potential of platforms like PMM may remain underutilized.

Conclusion

This research discussed English teacher's beliefs and practices in the implementation of Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The purpose of this research is to explore and analyze English teacher's beliefs, English teachers' practices in implementing the MMP, the alignment between beliefs and practices, and also the challenges and strategies used by the English teacher to solve the challenges.

The finding showed that MMP is a useful tool for comprehending and applying the Merdeka curriculum's principles, such as student-centred and differentiated learning. It helped teachers to modify their lessons to accommodate diverse student needs and promote independent learning. Nevertheless, there are no subject-specific resources for English language instruction in its content.

Although this study provides an in-depth understanding of an English teacher's beliefs and practices in implementing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, there are some weaknesses that need to be noted. First is limited generalization. Because it only involves one participant, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of English teachers. The findings only represent the experiences, views, and practices of a particular individual who may differ from other teachers in different contexts. Second is data subjectivity. Single case studies rely heavily on the researcher's interpretation of data from one individual. This can lead to subjective bias from both the participant and the researcher, which can affect the interpretation of the findings. Third is limited perspective. With only one main source of data, this study does not capture a variety of perspectives from other teachers who may have different approaches or experiences in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Fourth is dependence on individual context. Results are strongly influenced by the personal background, school environment, and professional experience of the participants. Thus, a small change in the profile of a participant can result in very different findings. However, this weakness can be compensated for by the depth of analysis, data triangulation, and clear description of the context, so that readers can assess the extent to which the findings are relevant to other contexts.

Further research is recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of MPM on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Further research could also explore how MMP can be expanded or adapted to meet the needs of specific subjects, especially for English language education, to ensure more comprehensive support for teachers. It is also hoped that the weaknesses of this study can also be used as a topic for future research.

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