

English Language Assessment in Indonesia Secondary High School : Implementation and Challenges

Rafifah Fadhilah Sari

English Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

* Corresponding Author

rafifah@ump.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the execution of English language evaluation in Indonesian secondary schools under the Merdeka Curriculum, emphasizing strategies, obstacles, and educators' opinions. Data were acquired through interviews with English teachers using a qualitative narrative method to provide insights into their experiences. The results indicate that although the curriculum provides flexibility and autonomy, educators encounter obstacles including insufficient training, excessive class numbers, and inadequate resources. Diversity among students and inequitable access to technology further complicate evaluations. Notwithstanding these challenges, educators perceive formative and summative exams as advantageous for facilitating significant learning. This study underscores the necessity for enhanced training, resource distribution, and support mechanisms to refine

assessment processes and match them with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keyword : Assessment, Merdeka Curriculum, Secondary High School.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's education system has experienced substantial revisions recently, highlighted by the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which seeks to foster comprehensive and adaptable learning. The curriculum is a fundamental element that serves as the basis of an educational system. This phrase may also denote the execution of the learning process, the objectives to be attained, the requisite supporting tools, and the timing and methodology of the learning assessment. Numerous adjustments and improvements have been made to the curriculum implementation in Indonesia (Juli Astari 2023). The adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia's secondary high schools signifies a substantial change in educational policy, especially regarding English language instruction. This curriculum seeks to promote student-centered learning and improve communication ability, in accordance with international educational norms. Nonetheless, its implementation has encountered difficulties, as educators grapple with the intricacies of modifying their instructional approaches to fulfill the new standards (Mubarok and Sofiana 2022).

Widiastuti and Saukah (2017) and Lan and Fan (2019) highlight Assessment is conducted to evaluate the student's proficiency and understanding of the instructional information presented. Furthermore, that evaluation can bolster kids' academic accomplishments. and inspire students to engage with and enhance their understanding of the learning material in innovative and more profound manners. It can also ascertain whether students have achieved their learning objectives or whether further rigorous development is necessary. Assessment is a systematic and ongoing procedure to gather information regarding student learning

processes and outcomes, facilitating decision-making based on specific criteria and considerations (Nasution, Lubis et al. 2021). The assessments conducted within the Merdeka curriculum are classified as diagnostic, formative, and summative (RISET 2023). A diagnostic assessment is an evaluation conducted to ascertain the characteristics, skill levels, strengths, and shortcomings of student learning models. In addition, formative assessment involves gathering data on pupils' advancement in mastering competencies. Formative assessment is conducted continuously during the learning process. Furthermore, the summative evaluation is conducted to evaluate the attainment of learning objectives. Summative evaluation is conducted at the conclusion of the learning process, including daily tests, midterm examinations, and final semester assessments (Menéndez, Napa et al. 2019, Treve and studies 2021). According to Juli Astari (2023) Assessment is crucial, particularly in the instruction of English as a second language. Implementing assessment in language instruction serves to evaluate a student's proficiency in a particular language. It may be either the primary or secondary language. When assessing English as a second language, the educator examines the skills and components of the language. Language assessment evaluates an individual's proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Certain sections also analyze vocabulary and syntax (Islam, Hasan et al. 2021). The article seeks to explore the execution of English language evaluation in secondary schools following the Merdeka Curriculum. By recognizing the challenges encountered by educators and examining teachers' opinions, we can acquire insights into the present condition of English language evaluation methods in Indonesian secondary high schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a qualitative narrative methodology, which is optimal for in-depth exploration of individual educators' experiences and perceptions (Clandinin, Connelly et al. 2000). Qualitative research is esteemed for its ability to elucidate intricate realities, especially within educational contexts (Creswell and Poth

2016). Semi-structured interviews were used as the principal data collecting method, providing flexibility while ensuring the coverage of essential themes. This study involved two English teachers from secondary high schools around Indonesia. The selection criteria required a minimum of three years of teaching experience and the current use of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language instruction. Data Acquisition, The interview protocol of open-ended questions that concentrated on educators' experiences, perceptions, and issues with English language evaluation within the Merdeka Curriculum. Data Analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to discern patterns and themes from the interview transcripts.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews with secondary high school English educators uncovered numerous significant conclusions. Educators, possessing an average of five years of experience, predominantly instruct 10th and 11th-grade students, emphasizing preparation for standardized assessments and the enhancement of practical communication skills. The Merdeka Curriculum is viewed favorably for its adaptability and student-centric methodology; nonetheless, modifications are required to synchronize assessments with competency-based goals. Educators employ a blend of formative, summative, and genuine assessments, including quizzes, debates, role-plays, and project-based tasks, that align with the curriculum's values yet necessitate considerable organization and resources. Challenges encompass inadequate training in creative tactics, excessive workloads, varying student competence levels, test anxiety, restricted access to technology, and substantial class sizes, all of which impede successful assessment practices. Notwithstanding these hurdles, educators endeavor to guarantee equity and validity via varied assessments, explicit rubrics, and consistent feedback. They foster student autonomy by engaging learners in peer assessments, goal-setting, and self-reflection, consistent with the curriculum's focus on student-centered learning. Educators underscore the necessity for further

professional development workshops, training in assessment design, and assistance in the appropriate utilization of technology. Despite recognizing technology's promise to improve assessments, disparities in access continue to pose a substantial obstacle. Educators advocate for enhanced resource allocation, diminished class numbers, and specialized training initiatives to successfully tackle these challenges.

The findings indicate that although the Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes flexible, competency-based assessments in accordance with contemporary educational goals, its effective execution is obstructed by systemic and resource-related obstacles. Educators strive to comply with curricular standards by employing many techniques, including formative, summative, and authentic assessments such role-plays and projects that enhance practical language proficiency. Nonetheless, obstacles such as inadequate training, technology disparities, and oversized class sizes undermine the efficacy of these examinations. The acknowledgment of technology's potential highlights the necessity for equal access and educator training, while professional development becomes a vital element in enabling teachers to confront these difficulties. Furthermore, involving students in peer and self-assessments corresponds with international trends that advocate for autonomy and active learning. To improve English language assessments in the Merdeka Curriculum, policy interventions must focus on specialized teacher training, resource distribution, and methods to address classroom diversity, ensuring that assessments appropriately represent students' language abilities

CONCLUSION

The Merdeka Curriculum's implementation has introduced flexibility and student-centered methodologies in English language education inside Indonesian secondary schools. This study emphasizes the opportunities and obstacles presented by this program. Educators employ several assessment methodologies, such as formative, summative, and genuine assessments, to

correspond with the curriculum's goals. Nonetheless, they encounter substantial challenges, including insufficient training, poor resources, and inequitable access to technology, which impede effective implementation. Notwithstanding these limitations, educators acknowledge the advantages of cultivating student autonomy and integrating many evaluation techniques that enhance practical communication skills. The results highlight the necessity for policy measures to improve professional development programs, ensure equal resource distribution, and tackle classroom diversity. By resolving these challenges, the educational system can more effectively assist instructors in administering assessments that appropriately represent students' competencies and align with the overarching objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. This conclusion corresponds with the study's findings and highlights the essential areas for enhancement in the effective implementation of English language assessment techniques in Indonesian schools

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