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# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM AND DEEP LEARNING AS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT MAN 1 PRAYA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to describe the planning, implementation, challenges, and solutions in English language teaching through the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning at MAN 1 Praya. This study employs a descriptive qualitative design. The research subjects consisted of the school principal, English teachers, and students. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and interviews, and analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings demonstrate that through training, workshops, Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) or participation in the Subject Teacher Consultation Forum, and the creation of educational resources like Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP) or Operational Curriculum of Educational Units, teachers have prepared for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning, Capaian Pembelajaran (CP) or Learning Outcomes, Tujuan Pembelajaran (TP) or Learning Objectives, Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP) or Learning Trajectory, and teaching modules. Learning implementation is conducted through three stages: initial, core, and closing activities, incorporating inquiry-based strategies, collaborative discussions, and authentic problem-solving to promote student engagement and critical thinking. Assessment is carried out through varied methods, including assignments, written tests, and oral tests, reflecting authentic assessment practices. However, several challenges remain, including difficulties in changing teachers' mindsets, suboptimal implementation of differentiated instruction, limited resources, and the complexity of administrative tasks. The study proposes solutions such as continuous professional development, collaborative practices, and the integration of technology. Overall, the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning demonstrates positive progress, although further refinement is still needed.*

**KEYWORDS:** Merdeka Curriculum Implementation, Deep Learning in English Language Teaching, English Language Teaching at MAN 1 Praya, Curriculum Integration, Teacher Professional Development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, English has become a global lingua franca used for international communication. Most people use English for interpersonal communication, such as exchanging information during conversations. English is widely recognized as a global language, used by millions of native and non-native speakers across various domains worldwide. Therefore, English teaching and learning must adapt in order for it to be used as a global language. Teachers are required to adapt their instructional strategies to accommodate diverse learner needs (Sari, 2024). English's status as an international language is the reason behind this. As a result, lecturers or educators carry out their duties in the field of education by instructing. The process of giving knowledge or abilities to others is called teaching. Thus, the role, job, or career of an educator. This includes education in methods and strategies to bring students to the required material, while also challenging them to consider the thoughts they form. These elements are crucial in instructing children to grow into fully functioning adults with strong cognitive abilities, so they can succeed in an increasingly complex world. According to Vygotsky (2025), children learn optimally through social interaction with peers or more experienced adults. Meanwhile, other research shows that effective early stimulation can enhance children's cognitive intelligence. Brown (2023) also emphasizes the importance of child-centered learning and promoting creativity and innovation.

What does "English language teaching" entail? It is essential to teach English to Indonesians so that they can speak and write clearly in a way that is appropriate for their social contexts. In elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, universities, or classes, this might be done formally or informally. The curriculum is very important in the realm of education, especially when it comes to teaching languages. A successful curriculum should be able to meet the needs and interests of pupils while also preparing them to deal with increasingly difficult global issues. A flexible curriculum that may be modified to meet the needs of pupils is crucial, according to Widjaja (2024). Without an appropriate curriculum, students will not be able to meet the necessary learning objectives.

All elements are tailored to meet the needs of students in their own historical context. These changes aim to facilitate the integration of each student into future society. Individuals involved in education must understand the complexity of the curriculum. Hamdi (2023) states that the term

curriculum originates from the Greek word's "curer", meaning "runner", and "curere", signifying "racecourse". Thus, the term curriculum in ancient Rome denoted the distance to be covered by a runner from the starting line to the finish line. The term curriculum was first used in education in 1855, signifying a collection of disciplines in higher education. From a classical perspective, curriculum is regarded as a lesson plan within an educational institution that outlines teaching and material to be delivered. Curriculum is defined as a written resource designed for educators to instruct their students. In a modern perspective, curriculum encompasses more than just a lesson plan or academic disciplines; it includes all elements of education within the school environment (Olusegun et al., 2022). In conclusion, curriculum has a varied scope, as one perspective considers curriculum as a collection of experiences realized through activities both inside and outside the school environment.

In schools, the curriculum has a dynamic quality. To address each nation's unique educational demands, curricula must be modified. Indonesia's curriculum has changed as a result of shifting social dynamics and global demands. The teaching and learning process in Indonesia is affected in a number of ways by the 2013 Curriculum. Additionally, during the application process, evaluation and research on the current curriculum's implementation are still required. Since July 2013, the 2013 Curriculum has been in use. The 2013 Curriculum, according to Sudarisman (2023), is intended to raise the standard of education in Indonesia by emphasizing the growth of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. According to Madina & Kardenia (2021), the 2013 Curriculum aims to improve emotional attitudes, abilities, and integrated knowledge for Indonesians in order to create productive, creative, and innovative individuals. To put it another way, the 2013 Curriculum emphasizes the development of integrated attitudes, abilities, and knowledge in order to create holistic individuals (Suharto & Rasyid, 2024). The 2013 Curriculum places a strong emphasis on character development, the use of thematic concepts that support cognitive development, and the development of skills pertinent to students' interests and needs. This idea is consistent with Hartono & Dewi's (2024) assertion that the 2013 Curriculum is intended to develop pupils holistically with an emphasis on character development, skills, and thematic learning.

The Merdeka Curriculum is the updated version of the 2013 Curriculum. The goal of Indonesia's

curriculum changes is to raise educational standards. The goal of curriculum reform in Indonesia is to raise educational standards and make it more relevant to both technology advancements and societal demands (Fahmi & Nur, 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum seeks to transform Indonesian education in order to produce a remarkable future generation. Merdeka means "independent" in English. The Merdeka Curriculum, often called the Independent Curriculum, is a cutting-edge educational framework that aims to allow students more freedom to choose how they want to learn. This method acknowledges that every student is distinct and has various learning needs, indicating that a typical curriculum might not work for every kid. The Merdeka Curriculum seeks to address the limitations of traditional curricula, which can be too rigid and primarily focused on academic needs. It gives students greater flexibility to pursue their interests and talents, promoting active engagement in learning and developing skills that match their preferences (Agus, 2023).

Candrasari (2022) refers to the Merdeka Curriculum as a program that investigates teachers' and students' potential to innovate and improve classroom learning. Depending on each school's preparation and unique conditions, the Merdeka Curriculum is currently being created for application in all schools. On February 11, 2022, the Merdeka Curriculum went live online. The Merdeka Curriculum, which addresses post-pandemic issues and the changing global environment, is a major educational change. The Merdeka Curriculum is intended to improve students' capacity to acquire skills pertinent to contemporary demands and international competition (Rizaldi & Sinta, 2024). The K13 Curriculum is still in use, however it has been greatly streamlined, while the Merdeka Curriculum is being adopted. For educational institutions, the Merdeka Curriculum is an optional option. Schools that are not yet ready to implement the Merdeka Curriculum may still choose the 2013 Curriculum as their first option.

Deep Learning is one method of instruction that can be incorporated into the Merdeka Curriculum. The goal of deep learning is to help students strengthen their critical thinking abilities and gain a deeper comprehension of things (Fuller, 2023). It is anticipated that Deep Learning will improve students' comprehension of the material and enable them to use it in real-world situations. Additionally, deep learning can assist pupils in developing higher-order thinking abilities including analysis, evaluation, and innovation (Krathwohl, 2022). This

is consistent with the Merdeka Curriculum's objective of enhancing pupils' capacity for critical and creative thought. Deep Learning can enhance students' critical and creative thinking abilities in addition to their English language proficiency (Nunan, 2022).

English teachers, students, and the principal of the school were given questionnaires and interviews as part of the researcher's preliminary observation. The purpose of this first observation was to learn more about English language instruction at MAN 1 Praya utilizing the Merdeka Curriculum along with deep learning. According to the first observation, MAN 1 Praya started implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in July 2023. Deep learning as an integrated approach followed in April 2025. According to Putranom, an English instructor, MAN 1 Praya has blended deep learning with the Merdeka Curriculum.

The application of deep learning and the Merdeka Curriculum has flaws despite its positive outcomes: Not all teachers are aware of this differential approach. According to Putranom, an English teacher, MAN 1's use of deep learning and the Merdeka Curriculum Praya is still in the development stage and contains flaws. Despite their poor knowledge of deep learning and the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers' performance has to be greatly improved. Additionally, all educational resources and tasks have different levels, categorized as low, medium, and high. He also stated that educators often neglect diagnostic evaluation; this evaluation is a test given at the beginning of instruction to ascertain students' potential, nature, needs, developmental stage, and learning performance level. Therefore, this poses problems, obstacles, and challenges for educators. They must provide instruction tailored to their students' attributes. This will certainly result in a different learning approach or model for each student presenting educational content.

**Thus, the research questions are:**

1. How are the preparation, implementation, assessment, challenges, and solutions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in English teaching at MAN 1 Praya?
2. How are the preparation, implementation strategies, challenges, and solutions in applying deep learning at MAN 1 Praya?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. *The Merdeka Curriculum and Deep Learning*

One initiative by the Indonesian government to

raise educational standards in the country is the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is a positive move toward raising Indonesia's educational standards. According to Suharto and Widjaja (2024), the curriculum's flexibility enables teachers to create more contextual and relevant lessons that better meet the requirements of their students and foster critical and creative thinking. Students are allowed to select learning pathways that best fit their interests and skills thanks to this curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is a positive move toward raising Indonesia's educational standards. Giving kids the flexibility to learn enables them to build original and creative problem-solving techniques (Lestari & Prabowo, 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum is supposed to help pupils become more proficient communicators in English. The Merdeka Curriculum is a positive move toward raising the standard of English language instruction in Indonesia. Giving educators and students autonomy can improve their capacity for autonomous, critical, and creative thought (Sari & Kusuma, 2024).

By offering a more contextual and pertinent learning strategy, the Merdeka Curriculum can boost students' desire and engagement in learning English (Kristanto & Supriadi, 2024). In the meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum uses deep learning as one of its learning strategies. Students can enhance their problem-solving abilities and gain a deeper understanding of English ideas through deep learning. By employing this strategy, we may raise the standard of English language instruction in the Merdeka Curriculum and improve students' capacity for clear communication and comprehension of social and cultural situations (Rahayu & Kusuma, 2024). In addition to developing critical and analytical thinking abilities, deep learning enables students to comprehend deeper and more complicated ideas. Deep learning is a useful strategy for enhancing students' comprehension of difficult ideas and their capacity for critical and analytical thought. A student-centered learning strategy can help them develop lifetime learning skills and improve their capacity for self-regulation (Wibowo & Sari, 2024).

Deep learning is currently incorporated into the Merdeka Curriculum. Students' capacity to evaluate and resolve complicated issues can be improved by deep learning that emphasizes conceptual comprehension (Hadi & Prabowo, 2024). Teachers' capacity to create successful deep learning programs and raise learning standards can be strengthened with professional assistance and access to sufficient

resources (Sutanto & Widjaja, 2024). Deep learning can help students become more proficient English communicators within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Students' capacity to utilize English successfully and confidently in a variety of situations can be improved by deep learning that emphasizes communication (Fitriani & Hartono, 2024). By using deep learning techniques, educators may create more engaging and productive learning exercises that help students hone their analytical and critical thinking abilities. Interactive deep learning can enhance students' critical and analytical thinking skills, preparing them to face complex challenges (Suharto & Rasyid, 2024).

## **2.2. Challenges In Implementing Deep Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum**

The implementation of deep learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum faces various fundamental challenges in the field. First, difficulties in designing effective learning are often caused by educators' lack of understanding of students' diverse characteristics and learning needs (Astuti & Gunawan, 2024). The second challenge is that the availability of adequate resources is a crucial factor in enhancing the quality of learning and supporting in-depth concept exploration (Rahardjo & Setiawan, 2024). Lastly, changing teachers' mindset from an administrative approach to an innovative approach is key to improving the quality of learning and achieving educational goals (Suryadi & Wahyuni, 2024).

## **2.3. Addressing Challenges in Implementing Deep Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum**

Implementing Deep Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is an essential step to shift the paradigm from rote learning to meaningful conceptual understanding. However, in practice, educators often face obstacles such as limited technical competence, inadequate facilities, and unreadiness of mindset.

**To overcome these challenges, several strategic steps can be taken:**

1. Participating in effective training can enhance teachers' ability to design learning that sparks high-level thinking and improves education quality (Kristanto & Supriyadi, 2024).
2. Teacher collaboration through KKG and Kombel can improve learning quality and achieve educational goals (Sutrisno & Hartono, 2024).
3. Organizing workshops and utilizing PMM can enhance teachers' ability to design

contextual and differentiated learning (Widodo & Kusuma, 2024).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative and uses descriptive methodology. Descriptive methodology allows researchers to understand the phenomenon being studied more deeply and contextually (Johnson, 2024). Qualitative research is designed to collect non-numeric data to produce insights. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand the meaning and context behind the data, thus producing more in-depth insights (Thompson, 2024). This research is non-statistical and semi-structured or unstructured. In this context, qualitative research typically involves data represented by words rather than numerical values. Qualitative research emphasizes in-depth understanding of social phenomena through words, meanings, and participants lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2024). In other words, qualitative research focuses on in-depth understanding of phenomena through word data.

This study was carried out at MAN 1 Praya. Two English teachers, two students, and one school principal were among the participants in this study. Both primary and secondary data are used in this study. While secondary data is information that has previously been gathered or produced by others, primary data is information that the researcher obtains directly from the source. Surveys, observations, experiments, questionnaires, and in-person interviews are examples of primary data sources. On the other hand, government publications, the internet, books, journal articles, and internal records are examples of secondary data collecting sources (Ajayi, 2023).

Using one or two teachers, or one or two students, and one school principal as research subjects is acceptable in qualitative research. This is based on Denzine & Lincoln's (2023) view that qualitative research often involves a small number of research subjects selected purposively to allow for in-depth analysis and a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Denzin (2023) further states that in qualitative research, the sample size does not need to be large, because what matters is achieving "saturation" or data adequacy.

This research uses three data sources: English teachers teaching under the Merdeka Curriculum, students enrolled in classes using the Merdeka Curriculum, and school administration. In other words, this research uses primary data sources from teachers, students, and school administration. The

researcher serves as the research instrument. The researcher as an instrument allows for more in-depth and contextual data collection. The researcher as an instrument allows for more flexible and adaptive data collection, thus capturing richer nuances and context (Mason, 2024).

The researcher employed a three-stage data gathering technique while conducting the study. Questionnaires, observations, and interviews are some of the techniques used to collect data. The validity of study findings is improved by triangulating data collection techniques. By using a variety of data collection techniques, researchers may confirm and validate their findings, which boosts their confidence (Flick, 2024). When analyzing the data, the researcher prioritized field processes using descriptive analysis. Researchers can produce rich and detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under study by using descriptive analysis to comprehend the substance and context of the data (Schwandt, 2024). In order to improve the transparency and authenticity of research findings, the qualitative descriptive technique focuses on presenting findings in a way that stays true to participants' experiences and observable phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2024).

The results of the analysis are presented as a narrative description of the state of affairs being studied. The qualitative analysis process consists of three components: (1) reduction, (2) display, and (3) conclusion drawing or verification to understand the data. Qualitative analysis involves an iterative process that allows researchers to understand the data in its own context, and present it in a rich and in-depth narrative form (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2024).

### 4. RESULTS

Based on the research conducted at MAN 1 Praya, the researcher can present the results in the form of several things related to the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning as follows:

#### *4.1. The Preparation, Implementation, Assessment, Challenges, And Solutions of English Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Praya*

##### *4.1.1. Preparation Of English Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.*

English teachers at MAN 1 Prayahas attended training and guidance in order to get ready to adopt the Merdeka Curriculum. The Operational Curriculum for Education Units (KOSP), Learning

Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), and Teaching Modules are only a few of the educational resources they have created. This demonstrates that MAN 1 Praya's English teachers are prepared to apply the Merdeka Curriculum to English language instruction.

#### ***4.1.2. Implementation Of English Language Teaching Based on the Merdeka Curriculum***

**The implementation of English language teaching based on the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Praya has been carried out in three stages, namely:**

- a. Initial activities: Teachers activate students' prior knowledge and communicate learning objectives clearly.
- b. Core activities: Teachers use varied learning methods, such as inquiry-based learning, collaborative discussions, and problem-solving tasks.
- c. Final activities: Teachers conduct reflection and summarization, allowing students to internalize their learning experiences.

These findings indicate that teachers have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning well.

#### ***4.1.3. Assessment Of Merdeka Curriculum***

Learning Assessment of Merdeka Curriculum learning at MAN 1 Praya has been carried out by giving assignments, written tests, and oral tests. English teachers have made efforts to make assessments fair and in accordance with students' abilities. This shows that English teachers at MAN 1 Praya have conducted learning assessments well.

#### ***4.1.4. Challenges And Obstacles in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.***

**The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning at MAN 1 Praya has faced several challenges and obstacles, such as:**

- a. Difficulty in changing mindset or old habits.
- b. Less-than-optimal implementation of differentiated learning.
- c. Excessive learning tools.

These findings indicate that teachers still face several challenges and obstacles in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

#### ***4.1.5. Solutions And Strategies in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum***

**English teachers at MAN 1 Praya have sought solutions and strategies to overcome the challenges and obstacles faced, such as:**

- a. Attending internal and external workshops.

- b. Sharing knowledge with fellow educators.
- c. Enhancing their ability to use learning methods.

This shows that English teachers at MAN 1 Praya have made efforts to overcome the challenges and obstacles faced.

#### ***4.2. The Teacher's Preparation, Implementation Strategies, Challenges, And Solutions in Applying Deep Learning at MAN 1 Praya***

##### ***4.2.1. Teacher Preparation for Deep Learning Implementation***

English teachers at MAN 1 Praya prepare for deep learning implementation by attending training programs, workshops, and MGMP activities. These professional development efforts aim to enhance teachers' understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning principles. Teachers also develop learning tools such as KOSP, CP, TP, ATP, and teaching modules to support meaningful learning activities.

##### ***4.2.2. Implementation Of Deep Learning Strategies in the Classroom***

In implementing deep learning, English teachers at MAN 1 Praya use deep learning strategies evident in classroom practice. During initial activities, teachers activate students' prior knowledge and communicate learning objectives clearly. In core activities, teachers use inquiry-based learning, collaborative discussions, and problem-solving tasks, encouraging students to analyze texts, express ideas, and present learning outcomes. Closing activities involve reflection and summarization, allowing students to internalize their learning experiences.

##### ***4.2.3. Challenges In Implementing Deep Learning***

In implementing deep learning, English teachers at MAN 1 Praya experienced difficulties in designing effective learning activities, lack of adequate resources, and difficulty in changing mindset or old habits. Deep learning has challenges such as difficulty designing effective activities, lack of resources, and changing mindset.

##### ***4.2.4. Overcoming Challenges in Deep Learning***

**Solutions to Main Challenges in Deep Learning implemented by MAN 1 Praya teachers are as follows:**

- a. Teacher Training: Providing training on active learning strategies and technology use.

- b. Collaboration: Teachers can collaborate to share ideas and resources.
- c. Technology Use: Utilizing technology to increase access to learning resources and facilitate collaboration.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that teachers' participation in professional development enhances their readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. In educational organizations, training is conceptually considered as a methodical process to enhance individual competence and performance (Mishra & Singh, 2023). According to recent research, ongoing professional development greatly enhances student learning outcomes and teaching efficacy (Jones et al., 2024; OECD, 2023). Improving teacher capacity becomes crucial to the achievement of educational change in the context of curriculum transformation (Harris, 2023). Therefore, training and mentorship are a capacity-building technique that directly affects learning quality rather than just being administrative formalities (OECD, 2023).

In addition to individual competency enhancement, implementation readiness is also reflected in the preparation of learning tools such as KOSP, CP, TP, and teaching modules. The preparation of these tools demonstrates systematic and learning-outcome-based planning. Effective learning planning has been proven to increase coherence between objectives, activities, and assessments (Smith & Ragan, 2023). In order to execute the Merdeka Curriculum, the Indonesian government, via the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, highlights how important it is to link differentiated instruction with diagnostic tests. Teachers can create focused learning interventions and thoroughly determine students' competency profiles with the help of comprehensive diagnostic tests (Walker, 2024). According to recent studies, schools are more structurally prepared to integrate competency-based curriculum when instructional planning is clear (Prasetyo & Huda, 2024).

In learning practice, the structure of initial, core, and final activities reflects a systematic approach aligned with the 21st-century learning paradigm. The student-centered learning approach is increasingly reinforced in recent literature emphasizing the importance of active student engagement in building conceptual understanding (Johnson, 2023; Wang, 2024). The implementation of inquiry strategies, collaborative discussions, and problem-based learning has been proven to enhance

critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Lee, 2023). Recent empirical findings also show that participation-based learning has a positive impact on students' intrinsic motivation (Ramadhan & Saputra, 2024).

Reflection activities in the final stage of learning strengthen the metacognitive dimension, which plays a role in deepening conceptual understanding (Tan & Hung, 2023). Authentic assessment practices through project assignments, presentations, and oral tests reflect a more comprehensive and contextual evaluation of competencies (Kim, 2024). Recent studies confirm that formative assessments integrated into the learning process improve the quality of feedback and student self-regulation (OECD, 2023). However, the validity and reliability of instruments remain a primary prerequisite for effective evaluation (Siregar & Nasution, 2023).

Although showing conceptual and structural readiness, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum still faces challenges in changing teachers' mindset towards a differentiated approach. This transformation requires adaptive instructional leadership and a collaborative school culture (Bush & Glover, 2023; Schein, 2023). Recent international reports highlight that administrative burdens and the complexity of teaching tools can hinder pedagogical innovation if not accompanied by systemic support (OECD, 2024). Therefore, strengthening professional learning communities becomes an important strategy in ensuring the sustainability of change (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2023; Wulandari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the implementation of deep learning shows efforts to improve students' cognitive quality through project-based approaches and critical reflection. Contemporary literature confirms that deep learning is oriented towards conceptual understanding and knowledge transfer across contexts (Fuller & Taylor, 2023; Marton & Säljö, 2023). This approach is relevant to strengthening 21st-century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Robinson, 2023). However, limited resources and resistance to change remain major challenges (Nugroho & Setiawan, 2024). Therefore, integrating educational technology and continuous training becomes part of a long-term professional support system (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023; Prasetyo & Huda, 2024).

Taken together, these findings not only highlight the level of readiness and challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, but also indicate the need for concrete actions from various

stakeholders to ensure its effective and sustainable implementation. Therefore, the discussion leads to several practical implications as follows.

### 5.1. Practical Implications

**Based on these findings, several practical implications can be drawn:**

#### 1. For Teachers

Teachers should continuously develop their competencies in designing differentiated and deep learning-based instruction. Emphasis should be placed on diagnostic assessment, reflective teaching practices, and the integration of technology to support meaningful learning.

#### 2. For Schools

Schools need to foster a collaborative and supportive culture, encouraging knowledge sharing through MGMP, workshops, and internal training programs. School leaders should also reduce administrative burdens to allow teachers to focus on instructional innovation.

#### 3. For Policymakers

Policymakers should provide sustained professional development programs, adequate resources, and clear guidelines for integrating deep learning into the Merdeka Curriculum. Policy support should also address structural challenges, including workload management and infrastructure development.

#### 4. For Future Research

Further studies should explore the long-term impact of deep learning integration on students' language proficiency and 21st-century skills using mixed-method or longitudinal approaches.

### 5.2. Synthesis

In line with the practical implications above, the overall findings can be synthesized to provide a broader understanding of curriculum implementation in context.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning at MAN 1 Praya is conceptually aligned with global educational trends emphasizing

student-centered learning, critical thinking, and competency development. However, its effectiveness depends on systemic support, teacher readiness, and sustained professional growth. Thus, curriculum reform should be viewed as a holistic transformation involving pedagogy, mindset, and institutional culture, rather than merely a change in instructional documents.

## 6. CONCLUSION

English teachers have demonstrated good readiness by participating in training, workshops, MGMP, and the preparation of learning tools like KOSP, CP, TP, ATP, and teaching modules as a form of professional commitment to adapt to a more flexible and student-centered learning paradigm, according to the research findings and discussion regarding English language teaching based on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum integrated with deep learning at MAN 1 Praya. In order to improve active engagement, critical thinking abilities, and students' communicative competence, learning is implemented methodically through initial, core, and closing activities by incorporating deep learning strategies like inquiry, group discussions, and authentic problem-solving. This is supported by a variety of authentic assessments.

However, implementation still faces challenges in the form of difficulty changing mindset, less-than-optimal differentiation implementation, limited resources, and complexity of learning administration, especially in designing activities that encourage deep conceptual exploration. Teachers use a variety of tactics to get around this, including using instructional technologies, professional collaboration, and ongoing training to improve competency. Although it is still in the development stage, the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum and deep learning in English language instruction at MAN 1 Praya has generally advanced favorably. Its success is mostly dependent on teacher preparedness, institutional support, resource availability, and consistency in applying learning principles focused on the development of 21st-century competencies.

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