
THE PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS TOWARD *MERDEKA BELAJAR* CURRICULUM IN SMPN 4 MUARA BUNGO

Dea Andiro¹⁾, Levandra Balti²⁾, Winda Trisnawati³⁾

Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Muhammadiyah Muara
Bungo

e-mail: deaandiro2911@icloud.com¹⁾, levandrabalti@gmail.com²⁾,
trisnawatiwinda@gmail.com³⁾

ABSTRACT

This research was about current topics with the implementation of the new curriculum implemented in Indonesia, especially in Muara Bungo. Namely *Merdeka belajar* curriculum that was implemented. The purpose of this study is to know the teacher's perception toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The *Merdeka belajar* curriculum is a new curriculum that was implemented at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo especially in grade 7.

This type of research is a research design that applies Descriptive qualitative with Qualitative Methods. The participants in this study were English teachers in SMPN 4 Muara Bungo. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. The instrument used in this study was open-ended-questions and semi structured for interviews.

The result show of the study reveals that teachers have positive and negative perception on the implementation of *Merdeka belajar* curriculum. There are several factors that influence the teacher's positive perception of the implementation of *Merdeka belajar* Curriculum, namely teacher teaching experience, educational background, and teacher training. But the negative perceptions that teachers have was in the form of a lack of teaching media, lack of support from schools in fulfilling teaching media that can help the learning process, and also teachers' difficulties in grouping students based on their hobbies and characteristics.

Keywords: *Perception, Merdeka belajar curriculum, Teacher*

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that has hit Indonesia for the last two years since March 2020 has had an extraordinary impact on various areas of life, one of which is the field of education. This impact arises as a result of a direct and sudden change in the learning system from face-to-face to *daring* (online learning) without proper preparation and expert competence from educators. The change in the learning system as instructed by the Kemendikbud through letter Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/ 2020 raises various unusual problems in learning, both in the teaching and learning process, the evaluation process in learning, and in the provision of infrastructure for the implementation of the learning activities themselves.

Based on the results of research conducted by Asmuni, it is known that problems related to the absence of online learning facilities are common problems. This is because not all parents and students have mobile phones, computers or laptops that they can use to take part in online learning, so they inevitably have to share them with other friends. This is compounded by the phenomenon of difficulty accessing the internet network for those who live in rural, remote and underdeveloped areas (Asmuni, 2020). To take part in online learning, they have to walk for kilometers in order to find a place where there is internet network access, even though the network conditions tend to be

unstable and stuttering so that learning becomes ineffective (Khoiriyah, 2021).

In addition to the problems above, the interaction between educators and students in online learning is very limited. Educators cannot control what students do during class hours. Online learning that is carried out for too long causes learning to be uninteresting and boring so students are lazy to learn (Basar, 2021). These problems cause students to lose learning momentum and cause learning loss. Learning loss is a condition in which students experience a decrease in knowledge and skills academically as a result of the learning process being implemented at school is not optimal (Andriani et al., 2021). To respond to the emergence of the learning loss phenomenon that has occurred in Indonesia as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has made various efforts to overcome this problem. One way is to design a curriculum that can cover these problems, namely the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a curriculum with various intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competence (Kemendikbud-Ristek, 2022). Teachers have the flexibility to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be adapt to the learning needs and interests of students (Tohir, 2020). Projects

to strengthen the achievement of *Pancasila* student profiles are developing based on certain themes set by the government (Kemdikbud, 2022). The project is not directing to achieve certain learning achievement targets, so it is not tie to subject.

In this *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, the government established a learning achievement phase system to describe the ability level of each student. In one class, it could be that the learning achievement phase of the students is different. Phases at the elementary school level are divided into three, namely phase A, phase B, and phase C. Phase A is intended for grades 1 and 2, phase B is intended for grades 3 and 4, and phase C is intended for grades 5 and 6. Based on the rules in The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, SMP/equivalent is included in phase D, namely grades 7, 8 and 9. The SMA/SMK/equivalent level is divided into two phases, Phase E is for grades 10 and Phase F is for grades 11 and 12 (Kemendikbud-ristek, 2022).

It makes everyone have their own perception of the phenomena that occur, perceptions that occur are very diverse ranging from perceptions of new curriculum, teachers perception and other. While this study was focused on teachers perception toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

Perception is a way of looking at a problem that occurs, or a certain point of view used in a phenomenon. Perception is the

identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory information to represent and understand the information provided, or the environment (Berg, 2012). Teacher perception is a process of how the teacher selects, organizes and interprets existing information inputs and experiences and then interprets them to create a meaningful overall picture.

There are positive and negative perception, (Walgito, 2004) as follow :

1. Positive Perception

Positive perception is perception that describes all of information, knowledge (known or unknown) positively. In addition, positive perception is positive interpretations that involve human evaluating something around them. In this case, if someone has positive perception, he will accept and support the object that is perceived.

- 1) Good response or reaction to objects
- 2) Show progress on yourself
- 3) Can receive understanding about an object to be assessed
- 4) Receive and benefit from what you do
- 5) Acknowledge and agree that the object's actions are in accordance with applicable norms.

2. Negative Perception

Negative perception is perception that describes information (known/unknown) negatively or not suitable with the object that is perceived. In other

words, negative perception is negative interpretations that involve human evaluating something around them. In this case, if someone has negative perception, he will reject and defy every effort that is perceived.

- 1) An unfavorable response or reaction to an object
- 2) Show no progress on either yourself
- 3) An acceptable understanding of an object to be assessed
- 4) Do not accept and take advantage of the things you do
- 5) Cannot acknowledge and disagree that the object's actions are in accordance with applicable norms.

RESEARCH METHOD

It was qualitative research design and descriptive qualitative approach. The data of this research was transcription of the interview of English teachers in SMPN 4 Muara Bungo. This research used purposive technique sampling. The method of collecting data used interview. The technique of collecting data used open-ended-questions and semi structured for interviews. In analyzing data, the writer used data reduction, data presentation/display and data verification (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are two findings in this research.

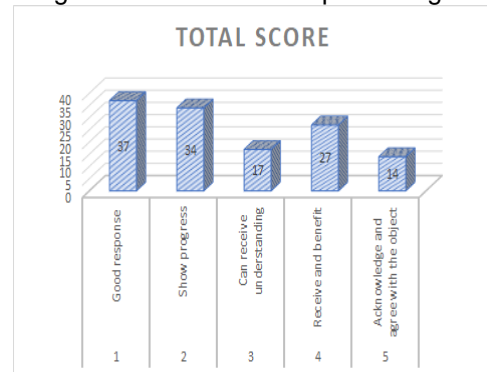
First, the researcher analyzes positive perception of

english teachers toward *Merdeka belajar* curriculum. Second, the researcher analyzes negative perception of english teachers toward *Merdeka belajar* curriculum.

1. Result of positive perception.

This research saw that the total of good response in this research were 37. For the total of show progress were 34, the total of can receive understanding about an object to be assessed were 17, also the total of receive and benefit from what you do were 27 and then the total of acknowledge and agree that the object's action are in accordance with applicable norms were 14.

Diagram 1. Positive Perception Diagram



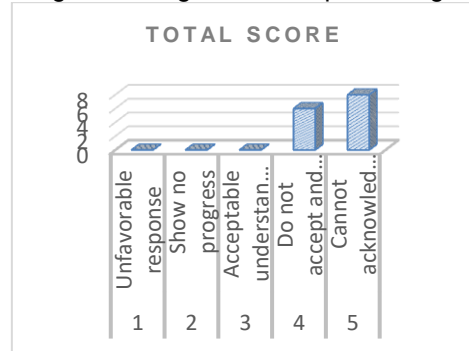
The researcher found many statements from the participants such as *sangat membantu, menyenangkan, tentunya senanglah, enak, lebih leluasa, lebih efektif, efisien, lebih sederhana, lebih mendalam, sangat membantu sekali dalam pembelajaran.* The statements above related to Kemendikbud-Ristek (2022) the learning process will be more in-depth, meaningful, not rushed, and fun.

For the statements *trobosan terbaru, lebih efektif, efisien, benar-benar sesuai, memberikan teknik yang menarik, berdeferensiasi dikelas*, the statements above related to Kemedikbud-ristek (2022) In addition to teaching tools, teachers are also given the flexibility to carry out differentiated learning, so that they can accommodate the learning needs of their students. And for the statements give the freedom, *siswa lebih kreatif, mengeluarkan ide-ide kreatifnya, beraneka ragam kreatifitas, berpikir kritis dalam belajar*. The statements above also related to Kemedikbud-ristek (2022) The flexibility of the teacher to carry out differentiated learning based on the abilities of the students.

2. Result of negative perception

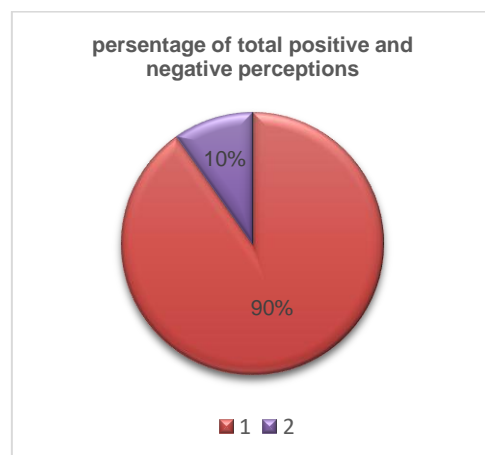
This research saw that the total of an unfavorable response or reaction to an object in this research was 0. For the total of show no progress on either yourself was 0, the total of an acceptable understanding of an object to be assessed was 0, also the total of do not accept and take advantages of the things you do were 6, and then cannot acknowledge and disagree that the object's action are in accordance with applicable norms were 8.

Diagram 2 Negative Perception Diagram



The researcher found many statements from the participants such as *keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana, kendalanya di alat-alat, seharusnya sekolah juga punya andil, kurang dipahami oleh guru, belum adanya secara terstruktur item-item*. The statements above related to Kemendikbud-Ristek (2022) the preparation for this new curriculum is still immature, so a more in-depth study and evaluation is needed so that its implementation is effective and appropriate.

This is the total percentage of teacher's positive perception and negative perception toward *Merdeka belajar* curriculum in SMPN 4 Muara Bungo.



Based on the diagram above the positive perceptions of 90%. Because the teacher's teaching experience has a very important role, the more experienced the teacher is teaching, the more experienced the teacher will give a positive view of curriculum changes. Then the background of the teacher who is in the city makes them often access information about the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum, so that the teacher knows the essence and mindset of the teacher who is open to this curriculum, especially learning English. Also, the presence of teachers who attended training on the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum had a significant influence in building positive perceptions of teachers about the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum.

Based on the diagram above, the negative perception is 10%. Because the teacher welcomes the implementation of the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum in schools, especially in the learning process in class. But the negative perceptions that teachers have was in the form of a lack of teaching media, lack of support from schools in fulfilling teaching media that can help the learning process, and also teachers' difficulties in grouping students based on their hobbies and characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The application of the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo has a

positive perspective, related to this curriculum is very helpful for classroom learning for students, because the learning system used is student-centered learning and is in accordance with the characteristics of the students and the students' own hobbies. Also, *Merdeka belajar* curriculum fun for students and students are free to determine what method they want to learn. Another statement stated that *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum is fascinating, and actually very easy to apply to the students.

Researcher also found the negative perception of application of the *Merdeka belajar* curriculum at SMPN 4 Muara Bungo has a negative perspective, related to this curriculum teachers were in the form of a lack of teaching media, cannot create the learning media very well and the school did not give support for media learning for learning process, and also teachers' difficulties in grouping students based on their hobbies and characteristics.

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