

## English Teachers' Perception in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum At Senior High School

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research aims to find out and describe what is English teachers' perception in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, what are the problems faced by English teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, and what are the teachers' strategies for overcoming problems faced in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek. This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Rancaekek and used qualitative descriptive methods. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The participants in this research were four English teachers. The data results from the questionnaire are divided into 5 indicators; launch of Merdeka Curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum priority stage, design principles and implementation mechanism of Merdeka Curriculum, direction of change in Merdeka Curriculum, and structure and framework of Merdeka Curriculum. The results of the study show that teachers have a positive perception of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek. However, in its implementation, English teachers face several problems such as designing lesson plans, students with low learning motivation, and limitations of Merdeka Curriculum-based textbooks as learning resources. To overcome this problem, English teachers use several strategies, such as adjusting in preparing teaching modules, participating in the English Subject Teacher Deliberation (MGMP) forum, and increasing students' learning motivation in learning English. Therefore, even though English teachers have positive perceptions, they still need adaptation in their implementation.*

**Keywords :** *Merdeka Curriculum; Teacher's Perception; Teacher's Problems; Teacher's Strategies.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan mendeskripsikan apa persepsi guru bahasa Inggris dalam penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMAN 1 Rancaekek, apa saja permasalahan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Inggris dalam penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMAN 1 Rancaekek, dan apa saja strategi guru dalam mengatasi permasalahan yang dihadapi dalam penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMAN 1 Rancaekek. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMAN 1 Rancaekek dan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah empat guru bahasa Inggris. Data hasil kuesioner dibagi menjadi 5 indikator; peluncuran Kurikulum Merdeka, tahapan prioritas Kurikulum Merdeka, prinsip perancangan dan mekanisme pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka, arah perubahan Kurikulum Merdeka, serta struktur dan kerangka Kurikulum Merdeka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMAN 1 Rancaekek. Namun dalam implementasinya, guru Bahasa Inggris menghadapi beberapa kendala seperti perancangan RPP, rendahnya motivasi belajar siswa, dan keterbatasan buku ajar berbasis Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai sumber belajar. Untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, guru bahasa Inggris menggunakan beberapa strategi, seperti penyesuaian dalam penyusunan modul pengajaran, mengikuti

forum Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) Bahasa Inggris, dan meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, meskipun guru bahasa Inggris memiliki persepsi yang positif, namun tetap memerlukan adaptasi dalam penerapannya.

**Kata Kunci** : Kurikulum Merdeka; Persepsi Guru; Permasalahan Guru; Strategi Guru.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Culture always makes developments in the curriculum with the aim of maximizing the development of education in Indonesia. The latest policy from the Ministry of Education and Culture establishes a new curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum. Several factors that influence curriculum changes: (a) a shift in educational paradigm; (b) changing needs in the education sector; and (c) government policy [1]. With a good education system, of course this will be able to provide transmission and transformation in developing community values, morals and knowledge so that awareness of good behavior will be created. Therefore, the existence of a new policy will certainly give rise to opinions or perceptions from various parties, including teachers.

English is one of the subjects that can be learned through formal education. In accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements whose contents include the objectives of education, content, learning materials, and also learning methods which are intended to be a guideline in carrying out the educational process and learning process. teaching to achieve predetermined goals because good education depends on the curriculum.

The implementation of this new policy will of course have the perception of teachers because of course there are differences between the Merdeka Curriculum and the previous curriculum like in the learning outcomes, the flow of learning objectives, and twenty percent of the project-based learning process [2]. Based on the researcher's experience at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is indeed good to implement because of course this curriculum change is adjusted to current developments. Policies in the Merdeka Curriculum such as the delivery of essential materials, project-based learning, strengthening student character are good things to implement. However, because this is still new, it still needs development and adjustments that must be made. In the process of implementing Merdeka Curriculum teachers' somehow face some problems for example limited teaching time because the teaching learning activity using Project-Based Learning. Then, learning resources such as textbooks are not fully based on the Merdeka Curriculum.

There are several studies on English teachers' perception in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. As in research conducted by Sumito, (2023), this research uses a qualitative research approach. Three English teachers at Mts Miftahul Huda Curah Kates Jember were used as research subjects. The results of this research show that English teachers and students are enthusiastic in implementing the

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Merdeka Curriculum in the learning process even though there are times when students experience feelings of laziness and a lack of references from teachers due to lack of facilities. Apart from that, English teachers are required to be more innovative, creative, practical and critical in carrying out the process of teaching and learning activities in class and assessment to achieve curriculum targets. The new model learning plan is one of the problems faced by talents and abilities in line with the Merdeka Curriculum learning concept to explore students' individual competencies, which is the next obstacle faced by teachers [3].

This research tries to investigate English teachers' perception in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, to examine the problems faced by English teachers' in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, and to find out teachers' strategies in overcoming the problems faced in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek. The result of this research is expected can show how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented, especially in English subjects at the high school level.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Rancaekek in the 2023/2024 academic year. Located on Jalan Walini Number 55, Bandung Regency, West Java. SMAN 1 Rancaekek is a state school and is accredited. The research method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method. In data collection activities, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis techniques can be used. The selection of this school was based on the research topic and its relevance to the problem to be studied. Apart from considering the possibility of access in conducting research, this is also because this school has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching learning process.

This research uses several data collection techniques, namely questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. After collecting the data, to simplify the data analysis process, all data obtained is arranged based on the instruments used. The data obtained from the questionnaire and interview are further strengthened by using document analysis with respondents to obtain more reliable results. Then, researchers conducted data reduction. The results of data reduction will provide a clearer picture, making it easier for researchers to carry out further data collection. The data reduction process continues after the researcher has conducted the research, until the final report is completed. After performing data reduction, the next stage is data display. Data display in the qualitative method is the presentation of data which is usually done in the form of descriptions, charts, flowcharts and the like. This step is carried out by presenting structured data and then concluding. The data is compiled with an explanation of the data reduction results from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis that have been conducted.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### English Teachers' Perception in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek

In response the first research question, the questionnaire was adapted from Triskia et al., (2023) [4]. This data collection was carried out using 15 questionnaires as an instrument for collecting data on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek. Based on the results of data collection and the results of the questionnaire, teachers' perception in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek can be categorized as follows:

#### 1. Launch of Merdeka Curriculum

The table below will show the results of the questionnaire data regarding the launch of Merdeka Curriculum, there are three statements in this indicator, the data results show:

**Table 1. Data Percentage Launch of Merdeka Curriculum**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
Merdeka Curriculum provide a more inclusive, flexible, and forward-thinking learning experience for students	29,4%	70,6%	0%	0%	0%
Designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, and independence among students, preparing them for the challenges of the future	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Emphasizes personalized learning pathways, competency-based education, and the integration of local culture and values into the learning process.	55,6%	44,4%	0%	0%	0%

Based on the table above, in the first statement the results show that the highest answer was agree, namely 70.6%, then there were those who answered strongly agree with a percentage of 29.4%. Meanwhile, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree answers have a percentage of 0%. In the second statement, the answers with the highest percentage were 79% strongly agree, 21% agree, while the neutral, disagree and strongly disagree options were 0%. Likewise for the third statement, the highest answer results were strongly agree with a percentage of 55.6%, agree with 44.4%, and for neutral, disagree and strongly disagree answers with a percentage of 0%. Referring to the results above, this shows that teachers have a positive perception of the launch of the Merdeka Curriculum. This teacher's perception is important in implementing a curriculum because teachers are the implementers of this new policy. The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational program with an interactive learning system where the content will be more flexible, teachers will have the freedom to choose various teaching tools

so that they can be adapted to students' needs and interests [5]. This is also the same as the perception of the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek obtained through interviews, namely:

*Kutipan 1*

*Saya setuju juga sih dengan Kurikulum Merdeka. Kenapa? Karena guru itu diminta, di apa ya... dibuat lebih kreatif gitu. Agar apa? Agar anak itukan, emm apa namanya... bagaimana caranya mengeluarkan kemampuan anak dengan itu tea... bukan hanya about writing tetapi juga speaking skill nya juga digali. Terus bukan hanya speaking skill, tetapi juga reading skillnya, dan menurut saya, sangat baik sekali meskipun materinya itu itu aja kelas 10 dan 11 tapi disini ada reinforcementnya, jadi lebih kuat ya, (T1).*

*Excerpt 1*

I also agree with the Merdeka Curriculum. Why? Because the teacher was asked to... what is it... to make it more creative. So what? So that the child, um, what's the name... how to bring out children's abilities with those... not only about writing but also speaking skills are also explored. Then it's not just speaking skills, but also reading skills, and in my opinion, it's very good, even though the material is just class 10 and 11, but here there is reinforcement, so it's stronger, (T1).

From the excerpt above, it is the same as what has been explained that this curriculum change requires teachers to be more creative, innovative, critical and also practical in carrying out teaching and learning activities to achieve curriculum targets. The launch of the Merdeka Curriculum is an opportunity to modernize teaching practices, as well as to increase the focus on students' critical thinking, creativity, and student-centred English learning. It is similar to research conducted by Sumito, (2023) where the results show that teachers are required to be more creative, innovative, critical and practical in carrying out the process of teaching and learning activities and assessments to achieve curriculum targets [3].

**2. Primacy of Merdeka Curriculum**

The data below shows the results of the questionnaire regarding the primacy of Merdeka Curriculum, there are three statements in this indicator, namely:

**Table 2. Data Percentage Primacy of Merdeka Curriculum**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
The learning system becomes more in-depth, meaningful, not rushed and more fun	29,4%	70,6%	0%	0%	0%
Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD

Teachers can teach according to the stages of achievement and development of students	55,6%	44,4%	0%	0%	0%
Project-based learning provides broad opportunities for students to actively explore learning issues	55,6%	44,4%	0%	0%	0%

The results in the third statement show that the highest answer is the agree option, namely 70.6% and the strongly agree option, 29.4%. Then, the fourth and fifth statements have the same percentage, namely the strongly agree option is 55.6%, agree is 44.4%. For the three statements above, there are 0% for neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. Based on these results, this shows that in the Merdeka Curriculum teachers have the freedom to teach according to the stages of achievement and development of students. In the Merdeka Curriculum there is also project based learning which gives students the opportunity to learn and practice English as well as to develop critical thinking, presentations and teamwork. One of the main characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum is project-based learning which aim to develop students' soft skills and character according to the Pancasila student profile [6]. These results are also in line with the results of interviews conducted by researchers with English teachers, namely:

*Kutipan 2*

*Belum lagi kan sekarang ada project, kalo yang dulu K-13 kan tidak ada project jadi disitu harus dipelajari lagi, jadi adaptasi sih intinya. Tapi sebenarnya project itu bagus untuk melatih kemandirian siswa supaya siswa bisa produce something, (T3).*

*Excerpt 2*

*Not to mention that now there are projects, in the past K-13 there were no projects so there you have to study again, so adaptation is the point. But actually, the project is good for training student independence so that students can produce something, (T3).*

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes student independence and flexible learning. This allows English teachers to design lessons that are more interesting and more relevant to the interests and abilities of their students. Thus, teachers have a positive perception of the Merdeka Curriculum which gives English teachers the freedom to adapt classroom teaching to the level of achievement and stage of development of their students. Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes project-based English learning which allows students to be actively involved in learning English while also honing critical thinking, presentation and teamwork skills. Even so, in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, one of which is the existence of this project in English language learning, English teachers still feel they have to learn more so they can optimize its implementation.

3. Design Principles and Mechanisms Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum  
Below the table shows the results of the questionnaire regarding design principles and mechanisms implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, there are also three statements in this indicator, the data results show:

**Table 3. Data Percentage Design Principles and Mechanisms**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
Strengthen the independence of educators as controllers in the learning process	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Letting go of control standards that are too binding and demand a homogeneous learning process in all educational units in Indonesia	38,4%	30,8%	0%	30,8%	0%
Strengthen student agency or the rights and abilities of students to determine their learning process according to their abilities	33,3%	53,4%	0%	13,3%	0%

In the table above, the seventh statement gives answers of strongly agree with a percentage of 79%, agree with 21%, and neutral, disagree and strongly disagree with 0%. Meanwhile, in the eighth statement, 38.4% strongly agree, 30.8% agree, 0% were neutral, 30.8% disagree, and 0% strongly disagree. Then in the ninth statement, 33.3% strongly agree, 53.4% agree, 13.3% disagree, while neutral and strongly disagree were 0%. This means that teachers have a positive perception of the Design Principles and Implementation Mechanisms of Merdeka Curriculum, where Merdeka Curriculum also gives teachers independence in controlling classroom learning. These results are also confirmed by the results of an interview with the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek who said:

*Kutipan 3*

*Menurut mrs kalo Kurikulum Merdeka itu kaya guru dikasih kebebasan ya, jadi guru itu bebas dalam merancang pembelajaran dikelas kaya gimana. Karena sekarang kan Merdeka Belajar ya. Tapi karena masih baru ya penerapannya di sekolah ini tuh jadi masih perlu penyesuaian, (T4).*

*Excerpt 3*

In my opinion, the Merdeka Curriculum is like giving teachers freedom, so the teacher is free to plan what kind of learning in the classroom. Because now is Merdeka Belajar, right? But because it is still new in this school, adjustments still need to be made, (T4).

From the data above, it can also be seen that in Merdeka Curriculum, English teachers have freedom in designing classroom learning. English teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum are not only limited to being English teachers who prepare lesson plans, explain the material, but must also have the ability and

intention to innovate, lead the class, and make changes. Merdeka Curriculum is to explore the great potential possessed by teachers and students, as well as improving the quality of learning by giving teachers the freedom to choose how to deliver the curriculum or teaching methods that suit their students' competencies [7].

#### 4. Direction of Change in Merdeka Curriculum

The questionnaire results table below regarding direction of change in Merdeka Curriculum. There are 2 statements, namely:

**Table 4. Data Percentage Direction of Change in Merdeka Curriculum**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
Learning outside of project-based subjects Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles	55,6%	44,4%	0%	0%	0%
Focus on competencies and essential materials	29,4%	70,6%	0%	0%	0%

The results from the table above show that in the tenth statement, respondents answered strongly agree with a percentage of 55.6%, agree with 44.4%, and 0% for other options. In the eleventh statement, the answers produced were 29.4% strongly agree, 70.6% agree, while the other options were 0%. This shows that the direction of change in the Merdeka Curriculum is focused on student competencies, core material, and there is also the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles (P5) program, teachers have a positive perception of this. These results are also the same as the perception of the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek who said:

##### *Kutipan 4*

*Terus hal lain yang menonjol dari Kurikulum Merdeka ini adalah pembelajarannya dikaitkan dengan penguatan karakter siswa, itu dibilangnya P5, ini bagus juga ya buat siswa karena karakter yang kuat itu kan akan sangat dibutuhkan oleh mereka kedepannya, (T2).*

##### *Excerpt 4*

Then another thing that stands out about the Merdeka Curriculum is that learning is linked to strengthening students' character, it is called P5, this is also good for students because strong character will be really needed by them in the future, (T2).

From this data, the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum is towards a competency-based learning model which includes value-based education through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) which aims to produce students who are broad-minded and have academic abilities and are in line with national values so that students can prepare themselves to face the demands of the modern world while maintaining a strong connection to their cultural and ethical roots in everyday life.

## 5. Structure and Framework of Merdeka Curriculum

The table below shows the results of the questionnaire regarding the structure and framework of Merdeka Curriculum. There are 4 statements that show data results as follows:

**Table 5. Data Percentage Structure and Framework of Merdeka Curriculum**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
The curriculum structure and learning principles set by the government are very general and abstract so that educational units have a lot of flexibility to develop them	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
The curriculum framework set by the government is minimal and more guiding than regulating precisely	33,3%	53,4%	0%	13,3%	0%
Plan, implement, and asses the results of learning or mentoring	55,6%	44,4%	0%	0%	0%
Guiding/training students, carrying out additional tasks and carrying out main tasks	29,4%	70,6%	0%	0%	0%

These results show the teacher's positive perception that the curriculum structure and framework for learning using the Merdeka Curriculum set by the government is general. Therefore, in implementing learning in the classroom, teachers are free to design their own methods and strategies.

## Problems Faced by English Teachers in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek

As we know, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to foster independent learning and a more adaptive educational approach. To find answers regarding problems faced by English teachers, researcher use theory from Baker & Westrup, (2000). After researcher conducted interviews with English teachers at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, there were several problems they faced in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, including:

### 1. Designing Lesson Plans

A learning plan is a tool for formulating learning activity goals, the contents of which include what methods will be used to assess the achievement of these goals, what materials will be presented, how to deliver them, and what tools or media are needed or will be used. Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, the results obtained were that there were problems in designing Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) or teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum. The problem is that the teacher must first know the extent of the abilities and knowledge possessed by the students so that the teaching modules created can be in accordance with the abilities of the students. This can be seen

from the statement of the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek who was interviewed.

*Kutipan 5*

*Kalo administrasinya mau detail sesuai dengan requirement mulai dari printilan memang kudu bener gitu, yaa lebih detail gitu lebih banyak yang harus disesuaikan dengan aturan, (T2).*

*Excerpt 5*

If the administration wants details according to requirements, starting from the details it has to be correct, Yaa the more details there are, the more things have to be adjusted to the rules, (T2).

From all data, this is also in line with the theory from Baker & Westrup, (2000) that states the first problem faced by English teachers comes from the difficulty of creating a different syllabus due to the new curriculum in the country. This is also experienced by other English teachers.

## 2. Students with Low Learning Motivation

English teachers face problems in terms of classroom management which are related to low student learning motivation [8]. Students who lack motivation will think English is a difficult subject to learn so they ignore their potential to learn English. The problems faced by this teacher are proven by the results of interviews with English teachers, the results of the interviews are:

*Kutipan 8*

*Justru masalahnya itu adalah dari motivasi siswanya sendiri, keinginan siswanya sendiri untuk belajar. Misalnya bagaimana kita bisa liat itu tuh dari indikatornya apa? Nah indikatornya seperti ini, misalnya ketika reading, kan seharusnya gitukan, kalo siswa kelas 11 atau siswa maksudnya siswa SMA itu readingnya sudah bagus ya, karena anak-anak sekarang itu belajar baca, belajar bahasa Inggris itu udah dari SD, bahkan TK aja sudah mulai diperkenalkan. Seharusnya gitukan dari SD, SMP, dan SMA tu udah bagus banget readingnya. Tapi ini justru readingnya masih kacau balau gitukan, masih kacau balau, jadi kamana we macana teh sakahayang, gitu, (T1).*

*Excerpt 8*

In fact, the problem is the students' own motivation, the students' own desire to learn. For example, how can we see it from what indicators? Well, the indicators are like this, for example when reading, if you are a grade 11 student or I mean a high school student, your reading should be good, right? because today's children are learning to read, learning English from elementary school, even kindergartens are starting to be introduced. You should have read really well from elementary school, middle school and high school. But in fact, the reading is still messy, it's still messy, so the reading is not appropriate, like that, (T1).

Based on this data, this is one of the problems faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Rancaekek in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, they try to increase their students' learning motivation so that students do not lose

their learning potential. The challenges faced by English teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum are students' lack of interest and ability in learning English or low student motivation in learning [2].

### 3. Limitations of Merdeka Curriculum-Based Textbooks as Learning Resources

As previously discussed, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to provide a more flexible learning approach and the student as the centre of the learning. However, in its implementation English teachers face problems such as the use of Merdeka Curriculum-based textbooks, which are still limited in number. This limitation can have an impact on the effectiveness of the continuity of the English teaching and learning process in the classroom. This can be seen from the results of the interview with the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek:

#### *Kutipan 10*

*Kebanyakannya yang dari pemerintah yang ada di library kita itu teu enakeun gitu ternyata, untuk praktiknya ga enakeunlah gitu. Sedangkan yang bagus, baru kemaren dapet yang bagus, sumbernya terbatas, cuman ada 40 buku. Sedangkan untuk LM (Lintas Minat) aja... eh... untuk kelas wajib saya ngajar 7 kelas, buku ngan aya 40, kumaha tah? Kan kekurangan gitu, (T2).*

#### Excerpt 10

Most of the books from the government that are in our library are not comfortable, in practice they are not that comfortable. Meanwhile, the good ones, I only got the good ones yesterday, the sources are limited, there are only 40 books. As for LM (cross-interests) alone... eh... for classes I have to teach 7 classes, only have 40 books, how? It's lacking, (T2).

Based on the interview data, it can be seen that another problem faced by English teachers at SMAN 1 Rancaekek is that the availability of learning resources, namely Merdeka Curriculum-based textbooks, is still limited. This is because the use of the Merdeka Curriculum in this school has only just been implemented. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Madani, (2024) which shows that several English teachers experience difficulties in utilizing school facilities, especially for the learning process [9].

## **Teachers' Strategies in Overcoming Problems Faced in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek**

To answer the third research question, namely regarding English teachers' strategies to overcoming problems faced in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, researchers conducted interviews with English teachers at SMAN 1 Rancaekek. They expressed their own ways of dealing with the problems they faced. From the results of the interview, several strategies were obtained, namely:

### 1. Adjusting in Preparing Teaching Modules

In overcoming problems regarding the Merdeka Curriculum teaching module which is more detailed compared to the previous curriculum. They use is to

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make adjustments in preparing teaching modules. As the English teacher said in the interview:

*Kutipan 12*

*Dalam penyusunan modul ajarnya selalu ada adjustment yang bisa disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan, paling itu, (T2).*

*Excerpt 12*

In preparing the teaching modules there are always adjustments that can be adjusted to suit needs, that's it, (T2).

Based on the data from the interview results above, the solution is to make adjustments and adapt the material for the teaching and learning process. Teachers must know about the abilities and needs of each student. Therefore, in compiling teaching modules, teachers make adjustments according to the conditions in the field. Adjustments were made to the preparation of this teaching module to simplify the problems faced by teachers. This is in line with research conducted by Madani, (2024) which said that the strategy used by English teachers was to adjust the teaching modules with material that was more suitable [9].

## 2. Participate in the English Subject Teacher Deliberation (MGMP) Forum

Another strategy used by the English teacher at SMAN 1 Rancaekek in overcoming problems in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum was by participating in English Subject Teachers' Conference (MGMP) activities. It can be seen from the results of the interview, namely:

*Kutipan 14*

*Emm kan suka ada MGMP ya, Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran itu biasanya kan guru-guru bahasa Inggris berkumpul cari problem solving mengenai administrasinya, lalu materinya, cara mengajarnya kan itu pasti berbeda. Biasanya sih diadakan rapat-rapat kaya gitu. Kalo untuk sekolah ya semua guru bahasa Inggris berkumpul gitu, lebih ke discuss sebenarnya, (T3).*

*Excerpt 14*

Emm there is MGMP, Subject Teachers' Conference, usually English teachers gather to look for problem solving regarding administration, then the material, the way of teaching is definitely different. Usually, meetings like that are held. If for school, all the English teachers get together, it's more like a discussion, (T3).

Based on the results of the interview, in solving these problems, English teachers said that they used discussion forums such as MGMP. This is also done by other English teachers. Through this MGMP forum, it becomes a place for English teachers to develop creativity, innovation, communicate with each other, share information, and also coordinate with each other between English teachers with the aim of improving the quality of learning activities.

### 3. Increasing Students' Learning Motivation in Learning English

Students who have low motivation often experience difficulties in the process of learning English, even getting poor grades. Therefore, teachers have a role to increase students' learning motivation so that they can achieve learning outcomes. The results of interviews with English teachers stated:

#### *Kutipan 15*

I made a little trick by mixing students into groups and divide all of the group and spread the legend one at least according to my assessment, according to my point of view, those students in that group will have variation, compare based on their ability. *Gakan cuman yang rajin-rajin hunkul, engga. Dalam tanda kutip ya nu males hunkul gakan jalan. Jadi yang pinternya satu, yang menengah satu, yang jago ngomong satu, yang paling galak satu, baru ditambahin anak bawang dua, biar mereka ke push.* At least they have to do something to get the score, (T2).

#### Excerpt 15

I made a little trick by mixing students into groups and divide all of the group and spread the legend one at least according to my assessment, according to my point of view, those students in that group will have variation, compare based on their ability. Not just the diligent ones, no. In quotation marks, if the lazy ones put together, they won't work. So, there's one smart one, one medium one, one good at speaking, one fiercest one, then add two lazy ones, so they can push. At least they have to do something to get the score, (T2).

Thus, the teacher's role here is very important to help increase students' learning motivation in order to create more optimal results in learning English. To deal with students who have lack motivation in learning, one of them is teachers have a very important role as role models and sources of knowledge for their students. This role gives teachers more responsibility regarding the condition of their students, so that teachers can determine appropriate learning approaches and strategies to increase student motivation in learning [10]. In this case, the English teacher overcomes this by communicating with students to discuss their problems in learning English. As well as, forming study groups to help encourage student learning motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Research conducted regarding the perceptions of English teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek showed that English teachers had positive perceptions of the implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The data results from the questionnaire are divided into 5 indicators namely launch of Merdeka Curriculum, primacy of Merdeka Curriculum, design principles and implementation mechanism of Merdeka Curriculum, direction of change in Merdeka Curriculum, also structure and framework of Merdeka Curriculum. From the results of the questionnaire based on all of these indicators, English teachers have a positive perception in implementing this Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers are

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given more freedom in teaching their students. However, they still need to adapt to this new policy as they said from the interview results. Then, English teachers also face several problems, such as designing lesson plans, students with low learning motivation, and limitations of Merdeka Curriculum-based textbooks as learning resources. In addition, to overcome the problems faced by English teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 1 Rancaekek, teachers use several strategies, namely adjusting in preparing teaching modules, participate in the English Subject Teacher Deliberation (MGMP) forum, and increasing students' learning motivation in learning English.

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