

The Impact of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum on English Language Teaching in International Institute of Business and Tourism.

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to the impact of freedom learning curriculum on English language teaching in International Institute Of Business And Tourism. This research uses descriptive qualitative. Data collection methods are interviews and documentation. Data analysis using data reduction, data display, data verification. research results The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has had a significant impact on English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute. In this context, there are several important points that can be drawn as conclusions. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has significantly improved English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute by providing flexibility in learning, emphasis on practical skills, use of technology, increased international mobility of students, and improved quality of education. This prepares students to compete in the global business and tourism environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important foundation for the progress of a nation, and in the current era of globalization, the ability to communicate in international languages such as English is a very important skill. To meet this demand, the Indonesian government introduced the Free Learning Curriculum, an educational innovation that aims to improve the quality and relevance of higher education in the country. In 2020, Indonesia introduced the Merdeka Learning Curriculum as an educational innovation that aims to improve the quality and relevance of higher education in this country. This program is part of the Higher Education Reform whose main aim is to reform Indonesia's higher education system. One of the main objectives of the Freedom to Learn Curriculum is to improve the quality of higher education (Setiyaningsih & Wiryanto, 2022).

This includes changing curricula, teaching methods, and improving educational resources. In addition, this program also aims to make higher education more relevant to the needs of the labor market and the latest economic and technological developments. Flexibility is one of the important points in this program. Students are given greater freedom to choose courses and study programs according to their interests and career goals. This gives them the opportunity to develop their creative potential. In addition,

this program also focuses on increasing access to higher education. This includes providing financial assistance to students in need, making higher education more affordable (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

The development of soft skills such as communication, leadership and collaboration skills is also a major concern in the Free Learning Curriculum. Lastly, the program also promotes teacher development by providing training and professional development. It aims to improve the quality of teaching at all levels of higher education in Indonesia. The Merdeka Learning curriculum is a significant step in modernizing Indonesian higher education. It is hoped that this program will produce graduates who are better prepared to face the challenges of the world of work and can contribute to the country's development. In addition, this program also reflects the Indonesian government's commitment to increasing access to higher education for all citizens, so that everyone has the opportunity to get a quality education (Anis & Anwar, 2020).

The Merdeka Learning curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, provides more freedom in choosing courses, and promotes the use of modern technology and learning resources. One area that has been significantly affected by the implementation of the Free Learning Curriculum is teaching English, especially in higher education institutions such as the International Business and Tourism Institute (Krishnapatria, 2021).

In a global context, English is not only a tool of communication, but also a gateway for access to international information, knowledge and opportunities. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of the Independent Learning Curriculum on English language teaching at this institution. The Independent Learning curriculum introduces various changes in teaching and learning approaches, which in turn can impact the teaching of English. Changes in teaching and learning approaches that emerge in the Free Learning Curriculum Context can have an impact on the teaching of English in Indonesia. Some of the changes and impacts that may occur are: First, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum encourages project-based learning (Tricahyati & Zaim, 2023).

Students are expected to work on projects that are relevant to real life. In teaching English, this can mean students have to produce materials such as papers, presentations or creative projects in English, which will improve their communication skills in this language. Second, there is an emphasis on the use of technology in learning (EdTech). In the context of English, this could include using English learning apps, online resources and e-learning platforms to improve understanding and speaking skills in English. Third, the Independent Learning Curriculum encourages skills-based teaching (Skills-Based Teaching). Curriculum enhancement focuses on developing skills relevant to students' lives and careers. In teaching English, this can mean putting more emphasis on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills that are useful in everyday and work situations. Fourth, there is an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills. This can influence the teaching of English by encouraging students to analyze English texts, formulate arguments and participate in more in-depth discussions in English. Fifth, the Free Learning Curriculum gives more freedom to teachers and students to choose learning materials that suit their interests and needs (Fathurrahman et al., 2022).

Some of these changes include curriculum flexibility, use of technology, project-based learning, and international collaboration. In this context, this research will explore more deeply these impacts and challenges that may arise in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum in teaching English at the International Business and Tourism Institute. Through a deeper understanding of this impact, we can identify effective strategies and solutions to maximize the benefits of the Free Learning Curriculum in improving English language skills in these institutions, as well as preparing students to compete in an increasingly competitive global market (Weda et al., 2023).

2. METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is a research method used to understand and explain social phenomena or human phenomena in an in-depth way. This research focuses on understanding the context, meaning, and subjective interpretation of the information found, rather than measuring or calculating phenomena quantitatively (Maipita et al., 2020). Data collection

methods are interviews and documentation. Data analysis using data reduction, data display, data verification.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Changes in Teaching Approach

Changes in teaching approaches are one of the key aspects that need to be considered when analysing the impact of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum on English language teaching at the Institute of International Business and Tourism. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum encourages a student-centered approach, meaning that the focus is not only on the teacher who teaches, but also on how students learn. In English teaching, this can mean encouraging students to actively participate in learning, such as speaking, writing, and active listening in English, as well as providing opportunities for students to ask questions, express opinions, and contribute to class discussions.

In addition, the Independent Learning Curriculum promotes cooperation and collaboration between students, between students and teachers, as well as with various learning support resources. In English teaching, this can take the form of group projects where students work together on English language assignments or group discussions that encourage students to collaborate in solving English problems. The use of technology is also an important part of this change. The use of online learning platforms, applications and software can support English language learning. Utilizing online resources such as videos, podcasts and websites focused on teaching English can also enrich the learning experience (Irawati et al., 2022).

Personalization of learning is another aspect emphasized by the Independent Learning Curriculum. In English teaching, this can mean adapting learning materials to students' interests and learning goals, as well as providing individual guidance to improve English language skills according to each student's level of proficiency. This approach also allows for more contextual learning, where learning materials are adapted to real-world situations, such as international business case studies or tourism scenarios. In addition, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum encourages continuous formative evaluation, which means providing regular feedback to students so that they can continue to improve their English skills. This change in teaching approach can also strengthen the development of soft skills such as critical thinking, effective communication, teamwork, and leadership, which are critical in the ever-changing world of business and tourism. All of this will create a more dynamic, responsive and relevant learning environment for students, better preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the world of business and tourism.

Adjustment of Learning Materials

Adapting learning materials is a crucial element in analyzing the influence of the Free Learning Curriculum on teaching English at the International Business and Tourism Institute. This concept refers to the process of compiling, selecting, and presenting English subject matter to suit the needs and context of student studies in business and tourism.

Within the Free Learning Curriculum framework, teachers have the flexibility to choose the material that best suits the interests and needs of their students. The selection of this material should focus on its relevance to the world of international business or tourism. For example, materials could focus on vocabulary and communication situations that are common in hotel management if most students are interested in that area (Sampelolo & Kombong, 2022).

In addition, the development of special learning modules can also support the Free Learning Curriculum. This module can include English language materials designed according to the curriculum of the main subjects taken by students, such as international business subjects. In addition to modules, the use of open source resources is also encouraged. This allows teachers to search for English learning materials that are available online and can be accessed for free, such as relevant text, video and audio.

The ability of students to choose material is also an important element in the Independent Learning Curriculum. In the context of English, this allows students to choose learning materials that suit their

interests and goals in business and tourism (Nisa'Khusnia, 2023). Finally, it is important to consider continuity in material development. English learning materials must be constantly updated to reflect the latest developments in the international business and tourism industry. By focusing on adapting learning materials, institutions can improve the quality of their English teaching in accordance with the principles of the Free Learning Curriculum.

Competency-Focused Evaluation

Competency-focused evaluation is an approach to measuring student abilities that assesses the extent to which they have developed skills, knowledge, and capacities that match the competencies expected in accordance with the curriculum (Agustini, 2023). In the context of the Free Learning Curriculum, competency evaluation is very relevant because this curriculum emphasizes the development of practical skills and abilities that can be applied in real life.

The importance of a clear definition of expected competencies cannot be ignored. In teaching English, this includes the ability to speak, write, listen, read, as well as the ability to communicate effectively in various situations, both in business and tourism contexts. The use of various assessment methods such as projects, presentations, portfolios, simulations, and case studies is key in measuring student abilities. This ensures that students face assignments that reflect real-world situations they will encounter in their careers, such as giving business presentations in English or writing reports relevant to the tourism industry (Rohiyatussakinah, 2021).

In addition, formative assessment (feedback during the learning process) and summative assessment (final assessment) help in measuring student achievement over time. Rubrics are used to describe evaluation criteria in detail, ensuring specific feedback and consistency in scoring. Competency evaluation also builds practical skills, measuring students' ability to apply their English knowledge in real-world situations such as writing business letters, conducting negotiations, or preparing tourism proposals in English.

The use of technology, such as recorded video presentations, automated assessment software and online learning platforms, can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation process. The competency-focused evaluation aims to measure students' ability to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the curriculum, ensuring that they not only understand the theory of English, but are also able to use the language effectively in real-world situations in business and tourism.

Increasing Student Independence

Increasing student independence is a key element in analysing the impact of the Independent Learning Curriculum on English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute. It includes a series of steps aimed at empowering students to take an active role in their learning. First of all, students are asked to understand their personal learning goals, which include identifying needs and goals in the context of English, both in business and tourism. They are also invited to play a role in planning their learning, including selecting materials, resources and learning methods that suit their learning preferences. The ability to manage time and resources is also emphasized, so that students can manage assignments and time efficiently (Apoko et al., 2022).

In addition, student independence also means learning that occurs outside the classroom environment. Students are encouraged to seek additional opportunities to study, such as joining an English club or taking online courses (Hadi et al., 2023). Developing metacognitive skills is important, because students need to be aware of how they learn and have the ability to assess and improve their learning strategies. Instructor support is invaluable, including suggestions, resources, and feedback. Teachers can provide assignments that encourage initiative, such as an independent research project or developing an English portfolio.

Finally, increased independence involves self-evaluation by students. They must be able to assess their progress in learning English and determine the next steps necessary to achieve their goals. Overall, increasing independence is not just about academic achievement, but also about preparing students to

become lifelong learners who can meet the challenges of an ever-changing world of work. This is in line with the spirit of the Independent Learning Curriculum which gives students greater control over their education, increases their engagement in learning, and enables them to develop relevant skills in English as well as effective learning skills.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges and opportunities in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum for English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute have a significant impact on education. Key challenges include time management that requires independence, the possible need for additional support for some students, and limited resources that can create inequities in learning. However, on the other hand, there are valuable opportunities (Hutami & Putro, 2023). A customizable curriculum enables more relevant learning, increasing student motivation and understanding. Developing independent skills such as time management and problem solving can provide long-term benefits in the world of work. The use of technology in English learning is a great opportunity, as is higher engagement and diversification of teaching approaches. In addition, the Merdeka Learning Curriculum also supports the development of soft skills that are important for future success. So, while there are challenges that need to be overcome, this opportunity provides the potential for the development of education that is more responsive, relevant and enables lifelong learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has had a significant impact on English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute. In this context, there are several important points that can be drawn as conclusions. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has significantly improved English language teaching at the International Business and Tourism Institute by providing flexibility in learning, emphasis on practical skills, use of technology, increased international mobility of students, and improved quality of education. This prepares students to compete in the global business and tourism environment.

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