

## The Analysis Of English Teachers' Readiness In Implementing English Media Instruction Based On Independent Curriculum At UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli

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### ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kesiapan guru dalam mengimplementasikan perangkat pembelajaran berdasarkan Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini memberikan gambaran tentang apa yang dilakukan dan dipersiapkan oleh guru selama proses implementasi kurikulum Mandiri di sekolah. Penelitian ini dilakukan di UPTD SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Data penelitian ini diperoleh melalui observasi, kuesioner, wawancara dan studi dokumen. Hasil dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesiapan guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum Merdeka dapat dilihat dari: Guru memanfaatkan perangkat pembelajaran terkait dengan pemahaman implementasi kurikulum Merdeka; Guru belajar lebih banyak tentang persiapan dan perencanaan proses pembelajaran; Pada tahap pelaksanaan pembelajaran, guru telah mengimplementasikan media instruksi kurikulum Mandiri; Ketersediaan sarana dan prasarana mendukung proses implementasi perangkat pembelajaran kurikulum Merdeka. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris di UPTD SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli berusaha semaksimal mungkin untuk mempersiapkan implementasi kurikulum Merdeka di sekolah.

*This study aims to describe teacher readiness in implementing Media Instruction based on the Independent Curriculum. This research provides an overview of what teachers do and prepare for during the process of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka at school. This research was conducted at UPTD SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli. The research approach used is descriptive qualitative research approach. The data of this study were obtained through observation, questionnaires, interviews and document studies. The results in this study indicate that the readiness of English teachers in implementing the Independent curriculum can be seen from: Teachers make the most of instruction media related to understanding the implementation of the Independent curriculum; Teachers learn more about the preparation and planning of the learning process; At the learning implementation stage, teachers have implemented the Independent curriculum instruction media; The availability of facilities and infrastructure supports the process of implementing the Independent curriculum instruction media. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that English teachers at UPTD SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli make every effort to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at school.*



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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Directorate of Elementary Schools, the Independent Curriculum (Curriculum Merdeka) is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, where content is optimized to provide students with sufficient time to deepen concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the flexibility to choose a variety of teaching materials, allowing learning to be tailored to students' learning needs and interests.

The Independent Curriculum provides educators with the freedom to create quality learning that suits the needs and learning environment of students.

Characteristics of the Independent Curriculum

1. Soft Skills and Character Development
2. Focus on Essential Material
3. Flexible learning

Projects to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile are developed based on specific themes established by the government. These projects are not directed at achieving specific learning outcomes and are therefore not tied to subject content.

Independent Implementation Options for the Independent Curriculum

1. Independent Learning
2. Independent Change
3. Independent Sharing

Independent Curriculum is an innovative educational approach designed to provide flexibility to students and teachers. Essentially, this curriculum recognizes that each individual has unique learning needs and interests. Therefore, the Independent Curriculum provides the freedom to customize the learning process to make it more relevant and engaging for each student. Rahimah (2022:97) specifically emphasizes that the Independent Curriculum is a curriculum rich in diverse intracurricular learning. This means that learning content will be optimized so that students have sufficient time to go beyond memorization, but also to explore various concepts in depth and strengthen their competencies holistically.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Independent Curriculum is an intracurricular learning system that fundamentally aims to develop the interests and meet the unique needs of each student. Through this approach, it is hoped that students will gain optimal conceptual understanding and master various competencies relevant to their future. This flexibility allows teachers to design more personalized and meaningful learning experiences, moving away from uniform and rigid learning models.

Teachers may have a basic understanding of the concepts and philosophies of the Independent Curriculum, such as differentiated learning, the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), or Learning Outcomes (CP). However, a deeper understanding of the pedagogical implications and flexibility of the curriculum is often lacking (Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 5 of 2022).

Most teachers are likely proficient in using traditional media such as flashcards, posters, whiteboards, or projectors for PowerPoint presentations (Hamalik, 1994, who refers to media as teaching aids). Basic computer skills, searching for materials on the internet, or using word processing/presentation applications are probably common.

Gaps often occur in the use and creation of more interactive and sophisticated digital media, such as Learning Management System (LMS) platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Moodle), interactive quiz applications (Kahoot!, Quizizz), graphic design tools (Canva), or simple video/audio editing software to create educational content (Arsyad, 2011, emphasizing interactive media).

Some teachers may be enthusiastic about trying new things, but many show resistance or anxiety towards changes and technological demands, especially if they feel less competent (Sudjana & Rivai, 2002, discuss psychological factors of teachers in technology adoption).

Teachers' confidence in adapting, creating, and managing classrooms with new media may vary, often being low among teachers with limited exposure to technology. Teachers' ability to proactively

seek out, learn, and independently develop learning media may be limited by workload or lack of intrinsic motivation.

The availability of devices such as computers, laptops, smartphones, projectors, and stable internet access in schools is often a constraint, especially in remote areas (OECD, 2021, highlights the importance of digital infrastructure). The availability and quality of technical support or IT staff in schools to assist teachers with media technical issues may be minimal. Access to repositories or resources for high-quality, ready-to-use English language learning media relevant to the Independent Curriculum may remain limited.

According to P5 of Permendikbudristek No. 7 of 2022 concerning the Independent Curriculum Content Standards, teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy and implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and are able to specifically identify how each type of media can enrich and facilitate English language learning to achieve Learning Outcomes and objectives. Teachers are able to creatively design and integrate learning media to support differentiated learning strategies and the Pancasila Student Profile project in the context of English teaching.

Teachers are skilled at selecting, adapting, using, and even modifying or creating various types of English learning media, both conventional and interactive digital, that are relevant and effective for the material and the students' context (Susanto, 2013, emphasizing teacher creativity in media). Teachers are able to manage the learning process effectively when using digital media, including managing student interactions and overcoming basic technical problems.

Schools provide adequate, stable, and easily accessible technology infrastructure (fast internet, sufficient and well-maintained devices). Effective technical and pedagogical support systems are in place to assist teachers with technical issues and media content development (UNESCO, 2018, on technology support in education). Easy access to a variety of high-quality, curated, and relevant English language learning media resources, perhaps through a sharing platform or the school's digital library, is available.

This research can formulate concrete recommendations for action to fill this gap. These can serve as suggestions for policies, training programs, or interventions at the school/district level.

Training designs that focus on integrating media with Learning Outcomes and P5 in the English context, not just technical training (Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 5 of 2022). Hands-on workshops that teach specific skills in using LMS platforms, interactive applications (e.g., creating digital escape rooms or interactive presentations), and content production tools (videos, podcasts) relevant to English teaching (Arsyad, 2011; Susanto, 2013).

Establish a mentor-mentee program where teachers who are already proficient in technology and the Independent Curriculum can mentor their colleagues (Sudjana & Rivai, 2002). Individual or small-group coaching sessions are provided to address specific technical and pedagogical challenges. Encourage the formation of English Teacher Working Groups (KKG) focused on developing and sharing best practices in utilizing learning media in accordance with the Independent Curriculum. Hold regular seminars, webinars, or sharing sessions featuring expert speakers or inspiring teachers who have successfully implemented innovative media.

Advocacy for increasing internet bandwidth and providing adequate and well-functioning ICT devices in schools (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2018), development or curation of a repository of quality, relevant, and easily accessible English learning media for teachers, which may be online or offline.

## **METHOD**

To produce comprehensive research on teacher readiness in implementing media instruction based on the Independent Curriculum at UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli, this research applied a qualitative approach. According to Arikunto (2019: 136), the research method was the main method used by the researcher to achieve goals and determine answers to the problems posed. Thus, qualitative research could explore thoroughly, complexly, and dynamically, with full meaning, a phenomenon experienced by the research subject, namely the phenomenon of teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum media instruction.

The main objective of this research was to describe the readiness of teachers in implementing English media instruction in the Independent Curriculum implemented by UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli. Based on this main objective, the scope of variables to be studied included teachers'

understanding of the Independent Curriculum media instruction, implementation of the Independent Curriculum, and English teachers' constraints in implementing media instruction in the Independent Curriculum.

The general purpose of this study is to evaluate or analyze the level of readiness of English teachers at UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli in implementing English learning media that is aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. This research seeks to:

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of the actual condition of teacher readiness related to media use.
2. Identify factors that influence this readiness (both supporting and inhibiting).
3. Provide relevant input or recommendations for schools or education agencies in improving the quality of English language learning through the use of media.

The specific objectives of this research may include:

1. Identifying the knowledge of English teachers at UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli regarding various types of English learning media relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum.
2. Analyzing English teachers' technical skills in using or operating English learning media (for example, applications, software, hardware, or digital platforms).
3. Explore English teachers' perceptions or attitudes towards the use of learning media in the English teaching and learning process in the Merdeka Curriculum era.
4. Determine the availability and accessibility of English learning media in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum at UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli.
5. Identifying challenges or obstacles faced by English teachers in implementing English learning media based on the Merdeka Curriculum.
6. Presenting suggestions or recommendations to improve the readiness of English teachers in utilizing effective and innovative learning media in accordance with the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The researcher used observation sheets as one of the research instruments to collect the required information from the English teachers. Based on the results of the researchers' observations at UPTD SMPN. 4 Gunungsitoli shows that UPTD SMPN. 4 Gunungsitoli has implemented independent curriculum, the understanding stage related to the implementation of an independent curriculum, researchers found the fact that some English teachers understand the independent curriculum, this is evidenced by the initial explanation of English teachers regarding the mechanism, concept, objectives of the independent curriculum which is quite good, but there are some English teachers who find it difficult to adapt and learn the independent curriculum learning media. This is evidenced by the teachers' answers to the questions in the table above. Researchers also found that UPTD SMPN. 4 Gunungsitoli lacks teaching materials such as student handbooks, especially English, projectors and infocus screens so that the use of various learning media (videos, presentations, etc.) is not achieved and is not in accordance with the media instructions listed in the teaching module.

The researcher was conducting interviews with English teachers. The interview conducted by the researcher was a structured interview, that is the researcher first prepared questions and asked them one by one when conducting the interview. Researcher interviewed English teachers at UPTD SMP Negeri 4 Gunungsitoli. Researchers conducted interviews with two English teachers who taught VII-A, VIII-A classes. The two of them are Mr. Niscahyaman Bawamenewi, S.Pd and Mrs. Amrina Hura, S.Pd.

Based on the findings of the researchers, it is concluded that in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at UPTD SMPN 4 Gunungsitoli, there is 1 honorary educator who has difficulty using technology. Educators provide complaints related to the difficulty of learning the Independent Curriculum instruction media such as using teaching modules and adjusting to the material. Teachers also have difficulty using technology such as using projectors in class, so that the media and material do not match what is stated in the teaching module. Teachers also have obstacles in teaching in class due to the lack of student handbooks. Efforts made to deal with this are by working with other educators who understand technology and asking for direction and guidance through the closest people who understand technology. Another finding that the researchers obtained was that two English teachers were ready to accept the Independent Curriculum, this was evidenced by the excellent understanding of

educators regarding the mechanism for implementing the Independent Curriculum, using instructional media such as teaching modules and other media in the classroom, knowing what the concepts and objectives of the Independent Curriculum are, understanding how to use and utilize instructional media in learning the Independent Curriculum, and also always participating in socialization activities organized by the government

### **Discussion**

The successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum is strongly influenced by many factors such as support from the school, the readiness of the education government, and the readiness of the educators themselves as figures who play a major role in implementing this Independent Curriculum in the field. The implementation of independent learning encourages the role of educators in developing the curriculum, the contribution of educators in the curriculum development process is of course very important to adapt the curriculum content to the needs of the community (Alfath, Azizah and Setiabudi, 2022: 44). In line with this opinion Dhani (2020: 45) argues that teachers are said to be the spearhead of the success of the world of education because they are directly involved in developing, observing and implementing the curriculum so that learning can run smoothly and be able to obtain the desired goals.

Understanding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is the main thing that needs to be done by educators so that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can run optimally. During the curriculum development and implementation process, the intensity of educators in implementing the curriculum at school is very important, for this reason, educators are expected to always be involved in curriculum development so that it can be implemented appropriately and effectively (Mantra et al., 2022: 6317). The government provides understanding and socialization to educators so that educators can find out how the Independent Curriculum is and what changes have occurred from the previous curriculum. We can see the government's efforts in implementing the Independent Curriculum in the form of providing various supports for educators to learn to understand how the Independent Curriculum through the Independent Teaching Platform. The Independent Mengajar Platform was built to support the practice of the Independent Curriculum and provide space for educators to learn and gain various inspirations, references, and understandings in applying the Independent Curriculum (Wardhani, et al, 2022; 65). The government also conducts webinars conducted by the central or regional governments to share good practices and the latest information for educators, heads of education units and elements of education stakeholders. Furthermore, there are learning communities that provide facilities such as reflection, learning, sharing together in studying and implementing the Independent Curriculum, which can be formed by educational units, regional levels or online communities. The government also provides resource persons for sharing good practices recommended from the center, which are of course qualified resource persons who have undergone various stages of selection, these resource persons can be contacted through the independent Mengajar platform.

The government's hard efforts in providing socialization for educators to understand and learn the Independent Curriculum are very good, but as previously described, it can be seen that in general the socialization process is mostly carried out online by utilizing technology, of course. This is actually a problem for some educators because they are faced with various obstacles that have an impact on the less than optimal implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The obstacles faced by educators in the field include a lack of understanding in using technology or known as Non Tech Savvy educators. The rapid development of science and technology requires educators as educators to be more literate in technology, information and communication (Sole, & Anggraeni, 2018: 17). During this era of globalization, it is often discussed that technological literacy is very important for educators not only in receiving information but in designing and providing the learning process technology is also very important. Munthe (2019: 444) said that educators are required to be smarter in processing learning resources and educators are expected to be able to adapt to the rapid development of information access in order to be able to change the manual learning system with the use of technology, educators can also be creative and innovate in developing media and learning resources with technology. Generally, this problem is faced by elderly educators which causes educators to often be confused in using technology and lazy to learn new technology so that it will have an impact on not being ready to accept change.

Based on the findings of the researchers, it is concluded that in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at UPTD SMPN 4 Gunungsitoli, there is 1 educator who has difficulty using technology, and also difficulty in adjusting the teaching module when teaching in class. Educators also

have difficulty understanding technology well. Efforts made to deal with this are by cooperating with other educators who understand technology and asking for direction and guidance through the closest person who understands technology. Another finding that the researchers obtained was that 2 educators were ready to accept the Independent Curriculum, this was evidenced by the excellent understanding of educators regarding the mechanism for implementing the Independent Curriculum, knowing what the concept and objectives of the Independent Curriculum were, understanding how the learning structure in the Independent Curriculum was, and also always participating in socialization activities organized by the government.

An educator is required to be able to use and utilize instructional media so that the learning process can run smoothly and optimally. The provisions in designing learning cause a lot of confusion for educators, including the difficulty of determining the components of components in designing teaching modules such as formulating learning outcomes, then determining or decomposing learning outcomes (CP) into learning objectives (TP) and educational personnel learning objectives into a flow of learning objectives (ATP). UPTD SMPN 4 Gunungsitoli educators are indeed faced with various obstacles in the preparation of this teaching module, but educators remain responsible and strive to prepare teaching modules by collaborating with other classroom educators and conducting ATM activities (observe, imitate and modify from module examples provided by the government until finally educators begin to be skilled in interpreting the learning outcomes (CP) set by the government and begin to be skilled in developing learning objectives (TP) and compiling them into a flow of learning objectives (ATP). The solution to overcome these obstacles is often hold meetings between teachers with one another, exchange ideas and share between one teacher and another to discuss the implementation of the independent curriculum media instruction which includes a project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students or P5 and the last solution is to increase qualified and skilled human resources in implementing the Independent curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented by the researcher in the previous chapter on “The Readiness of English Teachers in Implementing English Media Instruction Based on Independent Curriculum at UPTD SMPN 4 Gunungsitoli”, it can be concluded that the teacher's readiness to implement media instruction based on the independent curriculum can be seen from the results of observations and interviews in accordance with the indicators and sub-indicators, which show that there is still a lack of understanding regarding the structure of the independent curriculum and still needs training related to the use of teaching modules, and still needs the readiness of facilities and infrastructure to support success in implementing the independent curriculum. The level of preparation delivered is very important so that schools can immediately respond to teacher concerns such as the availability of student English textbooks, equipping projectors screens.

For English Teachers, the results of the study will provide a clear picture of teachers' areas of strength and weakness in the use of learning media. This can encourage teachers to focus on self-development in areas where they are lacking, either through self-training or school initiatives. Findings about lack of preparedness in certain aspects (e.g., mastery of certain software, media integration strategies) can be the basis for designing training programs or workshops that are more relevant and specific to the real needs of teachers in UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli. When teachers realize the importance of media and are supported to use it, this can increase their motivation and confidence in teaching, which ultimately has a positive impact on the learning process.

For UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli, the research results can be concrete data for school principals and management to make strategic decisions related to the procurement of media facilities, budget allocations for teacher training, and the development of a school curriculum that is more adaptive to the Merdeka Curriculum. Schools can design more targeted English learning quality improvement programs, for example by forming a media development team, providing access to digital media resources, or facilitating a forum for sharing good practices between teachers. By knowing what media are most effective and needed, schools can optimize the use of existing learning facilities and tools and plan more targeted procurement.

This research provides valuable insights into the readiness of English teachers at UPTD SMP N. 4 Gunungsitoli. To enrich and complete this understanding, future researchers can consider the following aspects:

1. Expansion of the Scope and Population of the Study  
Wider Reach: This study focused on one school. Future researchers can expand the scope to several other schools in Gunungsitoli or even in other districts/cities in North Sumatra. This will provide a more representative picture of English teacher preparedness on a larger scale, as well as allow for inter-regional comparisons.
2. Comparison of Education Levels: Researching English teacher preparedness at different education levels (e.g., primary school or senior secondary school) could also be very useful to understand the dynamics of preparedness at each level, given that Merdeka Curriculum is implemented at all levels.

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