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Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German Language Learning at XI Class of SMA Negeri 6 Malang

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Abstract

Research related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning carried out in class XI of SMA Negeri 6 Malang aims to gain a better understanding of how the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of German language learning in the Merdeka Curriculum are carried out. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with the research subject being 11th grade German 1 students. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation sheets, questionnaires, and interviews with German teachers as resource persons. The results revealed that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning had a diverse impact. Teachers have succeeded in preparing learning tools (lesson plans and teaching modules) according to the principles of the curriculum, although it takes longer. Learning has adopted a student-centered approach, but still faces limitations in the variety of methods, utilization of technology, and facilities. Assessment designed holistically in lesson plans has not been fully implemented, still focusing on cognitive aspects. In general, the majority of students responded positively, stating that the material was relevant and motivated by the flexibility of the curriculum. However, some students had difficulty adapting and needed more intensive assistance.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum. German language learning, student perceptions, teacher challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main foundations for the progress and development of a nation. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education aims to shape the younger generation into knowledgeable, ethical, and competent individuals. The law states that education aims to develop students' potential to become faithful, pious, noble, healthy,

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knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent individuals, and democratic and responsible Indonesian citizens; therefore, a dynamic and adaptive curriculum is needed to achieve these goals (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022). According to Yunus, et al. (2024), the curriculum is a very important element or like the heart of education that determines the learning materials that will be taught to students. A comprehensively designed curriculum plays a role in facilitating students to realize the learning outcomes that have been set. To ensure the development of student competencies, the curriculum can be implemented systematically, measurable, and relevant to the needs and challenges of the times. Therefore, the development of students abilities must be implemented programmatically through the learning curriculum that will be applied to students to face the 21st century, so the curriculum needs to be modified as well with the aim of equipping individual skills (Kan & Murat, 2018).

Merdeka Curriculum is a new innovation in Indonesian education introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2022, as a result of the evaluation and improvement of the 2013 Curriculum. This curriculum is designed to give schools and teachers the freedom to create learning that meets the needs and characteristics of students. This curriculum provides flexibility for schools and teachers in developing learning that suits student needs. Merdeka Curriculum is designed to produce a learning atmosphere that is fun, pressure-free, and focuses on developing students natural talents (Rahayu, et al., 2022). However, its implementation is not free from challenges, especially in foreign language learning such as German. German has a strategic role in both academics and professionals, so it is necessary to study how the Merdeka Curriculum affects the learning process in high schools.

According to Haupts-Beier and Beier (in Sobara, 2019), German is the second most commonly taught foreign language in Indonesian high schools after English. This is because German, alongside Japanese, French, Mandarin, and Arabic, is included in the foreign language curriculum in secondary schools, and as noted by Sobara (2021), it has been taught for a long time at the high school level in Indonesia. There are four main skills that need to be mastered, namely: *Schreibfertigkeit* (writing skills), *Sprachfertigkeit* (speaking skills), *Hörverstehen* (listening skills), *Leseverstehen* (reading skills). These four skills are not independent, but interrelated and complementary, so a balanced mastery of all aspects is very important to achieve comprehensive German language proficiency.

Research by Sari et al. (2024) identified six effective models: (a) lecture approach, (b) group discussion, (c) project-based learning, (d) game-based learning, (e) collaborative learning, and (f) problem-based learning. These learning models have in common that they place students as the center of learning (Student Centered Learning), so that students are not only passive recipients of information, but are actively involved in the learning process. Based on previous research by Lubis et al. (2024) on the “Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 2 Percut Sei Tuan,” the curriculum has been implemented optimally and is currently ongoing at the driving school. However, despite its implementation, there are still many shortcomings and obstacles encountered in the process. The key to successful curriculum implementation in the driving school lies in the active commitment of the principal and teachers to embrace change. As a leader, the principal must be able to shift the mindset of the school’s human resources to adapt to changes, ensuring that the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented effectively. Further research was conducted by Redana and Suprpta (2023) with the title “Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja”, there are four variables that influence the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja, namely: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. With the existence of these four variables, the Merdeka Curriculum can be successfully

implemented effectively at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja. Supporting factors for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja are the availability of resources to implement the curriculum, as well as the ease of understanding of the curriculum content. On the other hand, the inhibiting factor is the low ability of the implementing parties, especially the lack of understanding of the teachers at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja towards the Merdeka Curriculum, so they have difficulty in applying it during learning. Lastly, research by Baity et al. (2023) on the “Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the Learning Process at SMA Negeri 3 Surakarta” found that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the school is running smoothly, although it is not yet perfect. Teachers have applied the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in their teaching, such as using a dialogical approach and providing students with opportunities to express their opinions freely.

The main findings of the three references show similarities with the research objectives, which focus on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in public high schools. This confirms the direction of research that is in line with the interest and focus on the topic. However, what makes the difference is the focus of the research. The first study focuses on the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, the second study on the influence of the Merdeka Curriculum on supporting and inhibiting factors, while the third study focuses in general. This study focuses on one class to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning in class XI German 1 SMA Negeri 6 Malang. Although the findings cannot be fully generalized to the entire population, the study results can serve as a basis for internal evaluation or follow-up research with a broader scope.

This research began with a brief interview with a German teacher at SMA Negeri 6 Malang, the teacher stated that learning was student-centered and the teacher only acted as a facilitator. Teachers are given freedom in determining teaching modules so that they can adjust learning materials according to student needs. Teachers have also implemented group work-based learning by providing materials in the form of texts and videos, so that students can collaborate, exchange ideas, express opinions, and discuss together. However, there are still shortcomings in the implementation, such as passive students. This condition shows that students interest in learning German, which has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, still needs to be improved.

2. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach research method with a case study type. Qualitative research methods are used to examine events as a whole, while case study methods are used in understanding phenomena in the classroom with a predetermined time. This research was conducted on April 22, 2025 in Class XI German 1 SMA Negeri 6 Malang, which is located on Jl. Mayjen Sungkono No. 58, Buring Village, Kedungkandang District, Malang City, East Java 65136.

The data contained in this study are the perceptions of 11th grade German 1 students of SMA Negeri 6 Malang towards the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning. The data sources for this study are German 1 XI class students on even semester and the process of learning and teaching activities when students study with the theme *Schulsachen*. The data collection instruments used in this study are observation sheets which will be filled in by two observers and questionnaire sheets which will be filled in by students. The observation sheet is used to observe the implementation of German language learning activities with the Merdeka Curriculum and the questionnaire sheet is used to ask for students responses or perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in this learning. The questionnaire sheet used is a

closed questionnaire. Data collection techniques are obtained by observation, interviews, documentation, and distributing questionnaires.

Observation is carried out directly to obtain data on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in learning. The stages of activities observed regarding preparation, implementation, learning assessment, student involvement, and the learning environment are detailed on the observation sheet for two peers, namely Ismi Ninda Annisa and Maula Zahra, both German Language Education students class of 2018 who served as observers. The observation sheet was distributed to the observers prior to the data collection process. Observers are responsible for monitoring the German language learning process with the Merdeka Curriculum. Other information is collected through the results of a questionnaire designed to describe students' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The questionnaire sheet contains 11 statement sentences related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning and there are five answer options, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Interview activities are carried out directly after the lesson ends from the questions that have been prepared regarding general questions regarding the Merdeka Curriculum, planning, implementation, learning evaluation, support and challenges, and student involvement with the subject who is the source of data without any intermediaries, namely the German teacher of SMA Negeri 6 Malang.

The data analysis technique in this study used the Miles and Huberman model (in Ainin, 2016) with: (1) Data collection, (2) Data condensation, (3) Data presentation, and (4) Conclusion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classroom Practices in German Language Learning under the Merdeka Curriculum

This section presents research findings that respond to questions in the research focus, with an in-depth discussion of the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning at SMA Negeri 6 Malang. The data were obtained through comprehensive data collection by researchers, with research subjects including German language teachers and students of class XI German 1. Data collection was carried out using several methods, namely observation, interviews, documentation, and questionnaires.

The German language learning planning stage in class XI German 1 includes the preparation of materials, teaching materials, and evaluations to support the teaching and learning process. This is in accordance with the statement of the German language subject teacher of SMA Negeri 6 Malang through an interview, that in lesson planning, he compiles lesson plans (lesson plans) into teaching modules that are aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. Class XI German 1 has implemented the Independent Curriculum since 2023, which presents various challenges for German teachers at SMA Negeri 6 Malang in implementing the curriculum into German language learning. The obstacles faced by teachers in implementing German language learning based on the Independent Curriculum include/include variations in methods, technology utilization, and facilities. In terms of learning methods, teachers still rely on conventional approaches such as lectures and limited discussions, with minimal application of innovative methods such as project-based learning or game-based learning. Student participation is also uneven, where only some are actively involved, while others tend to be passive. In terms of technology, the utilization of digital tools such as interactive learning platforms is still limited due to the lack of stable internet access and limited devices. Supporting facilities such as language laboratories, audio-visual devices, and authentic digital teaching materials are also often not available.

Students who experience adaptation difficulties in learning German language based on the Merdeka Curriculum need holistic and structured assistance. Academic assistance can be provided through remedial classes or additional sessions that focus on mastering basic competencies, such as vocabulary, grammar, and simple conversation, with more interactive methods such as language games or role-play. As for the non-academic side, psychological support such as learning counseling is important to overcome anxiety or insecurity, while a simple reward system (such as praise or points) can motivate active participation. In addition, collaboration with parents to monitor learning progress at home and the formation of small study groups can create a supportive environment. With this multidimensional approach, students are expected to more easily adapt to the demands of Merdeka Curriculum, which is centered on independence and creativity.

In the preparation of teaching modules, German language teachers at SMA Negeri 6 Malang design modules that include three main components, namely: (a) general information which includes school identity, initial competence, Pancasila learner profile, facilities and infrastructure, learner characteristics, and the learning model used; (b) core components consisting of learning objectives, meaningful understanding, triggering questions, learning steps, assessment, and enrichment and remedial activities; and (c) attachments as a complement to the teaching module document.

The assessments designed in the lesson plans by German teachers include types of assessments, assessment techniques, and instruments. The types of assessments applied are initial assessments to determine student readiness before learning new themes and formative assessments during learning in the form of observation, oral tests, and written tests through Quizziz. The assessment techniques carried out are through observation and oral tests. The form of the assessment instrument is a rubric for performance and observation of student participation in learning. Based on the results of the interview, the assessment used must be based on the learning objectives and the needs of students while studying a particular theme. For example, when students learn the *Schulsachen* theme, assessment is taken through observation and oral tests which include students speaking skills in using *Redemittel* and *Wortschatz* as well as skills in writing simple short texts according to the theme. Although assessment activities support students to actively participate in learning, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning still requires evaluation so that the application of holistic assessment in learning can take place optimally and is tailored to learning objectives and student learning needs.

The learning materials taught to students of class XI German 1 during the semester are *Schulsachen und Gegenstände in der Schule*, *Stundenplan*, and *Lehrer und Schulaktivität*. German learning implementation activities are carried out with an allocation of 5 lesson hours x 45 minutes a week with 3 lesson hours x 45 minutes in the first meeting and 2 lesson hours x 45 minutes in the second meeting.

The learning method applied to students of German 1 elective XI class is based on Student-Centered Learning, which focuses on student involvement, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. With the method used, students are expected to find concepts directly. German teachers apply group work-based learning by providing materials in the form of texts and videos, so that students can collaborate, exchange ideas, express opinions, and discuss together. For independent practice, teachers use game methods, such as role-play (playing dialog), *Stationenlernen*, and other digital and conventional games.

Based on interviews with German teachers, the modules used in learning are compiled independently by referring to sources from German language books. The module includes the main materials that focus on the theme of "School Life" or "*In der Schule*". The module is then

distributed to students in PDF format and sent via WhatsApp application to each student in the class group. In making teaching materials, German teachers make modules that contain a summary of all teaching materials for class XI, which are adjusted to the independent curriculum.

On April 22, 2025, the researcher conducted research during German language learning activities once in class XI German 1. The activity took place from the 8th to the 10th lesson hour with an allocation of 3 x 45 minutes. In the 10th lesson hour, the teacher gave time for researchers to distribute questionnaires to students. The number of students who attended the German lesson was 26 students. During the research, the researcher was accompanied by a German subject teacher and two UM German Language Education study program students as observers. In accordance with what is stated in the teaching module component, learning activities are divided into three stages, namely introduction, core, and closing. The following is table 1 of the observation results of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum with 15 statement items.

Table 1. Observation Results of Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

Activity Stage	Aspects observed	Yes	No	Description
Learning Preparation	1. Teachers develop lesson plans (RPP) in accordance with the principles of Merdeka Curriculum.	O1 O2		O1: Yes, teachers make lesson plans based on Merdeka Curriculum principles, incorporating differentiation and student projects as part of the planning. O2: The lesson plans contain diagnostic assessments to determine student characteristics and needs in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.
	2. Teachers use teaching modules or teaching materials that are in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum.	O1 O2		O1: Teachers use teaching modules based on the Merdeka Curriculum which have been adapted to the learning outcomes of German. O2: Yes, teachers use a variety of teaching materials in the form of printed books, <i>Landeskunde</i> reading materials, and provide examples of <i>Stundenplan</i> .
	3. Teachers consider students learning needs (differentiated learning).	O1 O2		O1: Yes, the teacher explains the material based on the students mastery level. O2: Teachers use teaching materials that suit students needs. In addition, there is a follow-up plan on enrichment and remedial to find out students needs.
Learning Implementation	1. Student-centered learning.	O1 O2		O1: Yes, but only some students are active, the rest still tend to be

	<p>2. Teachers provide opportunities for students to develop independent projects or assignments.</p> <p>3. Teachers use varied learning methods such as discussions, projects, or game-based learning.</p> <p>4. Teachers utilize technology in learning.</p>	<p>O1 O2</p> <p>O2</p>	<p>O1 O2</p> <p>O1</p> <p>O1 O2</p>	<p>passive and wait for the teacher's direction.</p> <p>O2: In class, the teacher only guides, directs, models and corrects students. But there are some students who need further explanation.</p> <p>O1: Students are only given independent assignments to work on practice questions.</p> <p>O2: There is no project, there is only an independent work assignment.</p> <p>O1: The teacher only explains the learning material, there is no group discussion or game.</p> <p>O2: Quite varied. at first the teacher explains the material and conducts questions and answers. then the voice practices dialogue. after that students work independently. for toy-based learning methods there is none.</p> <p>O1: During the learning process teachers use conventional media such as whiteboards and printed books, without the use of digital technology such as projectors or learning apps.</p> <p>O2: In this meeting no technology is used. The teacher tends to do conventional learning using the blackboard and books.</p>
Learning Assessment	<p>1. The assessment includes cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.</p> <p>2. Teachers use formative and summative assessments equally.</p>	<p>O1</p>	<p>O1 O2</p> <p>O2</p>	<p>O1: During the lesson, there was no assessment that covered these three aspects. The teacher is more focused on delivering the material.</p> <p>O2: There is a rubric for this assessment in the lesson plan, but in the classroom, it does not appear to be done.</p> <p>O1: Yes, the teacher explained that the summative assessment is conducted at the end of the theme, while the formative one is more reflective and informal in nature.</p> <p>O2: It was not visible during the lesson, but it is included in the lesson plan (RPP)..</p>

	3. Assessment is carried out authentically (for example, through projects, portfolios, or presentations).		O1 O2	O1: There were no project or portfolio activities during the observation. There were only material discussions and oral reflections. O2: There were no projects or presentations during the lesson.
Activity Stage	Aspects observed: Student Engagement	Yes	No	Description
	1. Students appeared active and enthusiastic during the lesson.	O2	O1	O1: Only some students were actively engaged, particularly those seated in the front rows. The other students tended to be passive and were not directly involved. O2: Students listened to the lesson quietly. After about 15 minutes, six students began to feel drowsy, but the teacher called them by name to wake them up.
	2. Students had the opportunity to express their opinions or ask questions.	O1 O2		O1: Yes, the teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions, but only a few take advantage of it. O2: The teacher checks students understanding by asking, 'Habt ihr Fragen?' after explaining. She also walk around the classroom while students work on assignments.
	3. Students are involved in the learning reflection process.	O1 O2		O1: Yes, the teacher guides students in reflecting on the lesson by asking what part was most challenging and what they learned that day. O2: References were made when the teacher offered re-explanations, but there was no reflection in this session.
Activity Stage	Aspects observed: Learning environment	Yes	No	Description
	1. The classroom environment supports inclusive and collaborative learning.	O2	O1	O1: No, because the classroom facilities are inadequate – lacking teaching aids, technology, and still using conventional seating arrangements. O2: The classroom environment has limited resources (like LCD projectors and reading books), but students are given opportunities to learn and discuss freely.
	2. Learning resources (books, media, and	O1	O2	O1: Yes, the teacher uses the textbook as the primary reference

	teaching aids) are available and utilized effectively.		during lessons, though other visual media haven't been utilized much yet. O2: Both teachers and students use only modules during learning.
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Note:

O1 = Observer 1

O2 = Observer 2

From Table 1, it can be explained that observations of the implementation of German language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum revealed several key findings, which can be grouped into three main stages: preparation, implementation, and assessment. According to O1, during the preparation stage, the teacher had developed the Lesson Plan (RPP) in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes learning differentiation and student projects. Meanwhile, according to O2, the lesson plan (RPP) also included diagnostic assessments to identify students characteristics and needs, demonstrating alignment with the student-centered principles of the curriculum. Further, according to O1, the teacher used a teaching module based on the Merdeka Curriculum, adapted to the learning outcomes of German language instruction. Meanwhile, O2 noted that the teacher utilized varied teaching materials such as textbooks, *Landeskunde* materials, and provided example of *Stundenplan*. According to O1 and O2, the teacher also considered students learning needs (differentiated learning) by tailoring material explanations based on individual requirements. Additionally, O2 noted that there was a follow-up plan for enrichment and remedial activities to assess further student needs.

During the implementation stage, the learning process was student-centered. Although the teacher acted as a facilitator by providing guidance and direction, O1 and O2 observed that only some students actively participated, while others tended to remain passive and waited for instructions. According to O2, the teacher employed sufficiently varied teaching methods. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher explained the material and conducted a Q&A session. Subsequently, students practiced dialogue exercises. Following the dialogue practice, students worked on assignments independently. However, according to both O1 and O2, the teacher did not implement innovative methods such as group discussions or game-based learning. Furthermore, the use of technology in the learning process remained limited. According to both O1 and O2, the instruction predominantly relied on conventional media such as whiteboards and textbooks. Nevertheless, O2 noted that the teacher provided opportunities for students to ask questions and engage in discussions, although only a portion of students actively participated in these interactions.

Regarding assessment, O1 observations revealed that the teacher had not yet fully implemented holistic assessment encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains during the learning process. Similarly, O2 noted that while the lesson plan (RPP) included assessment rubrics, their classroom implementation remained unclear. According to O1, both formative and summative assessments were mentioned in the RPP, but their execution appeared more informal and reflective, lacking structured instruments. Furthermore, both O1 and O2 observed no authentic assessments such as project-based or portfolio evaluations being conducted during the observation period.

Student engagement during the learning process varied. According to O1, some students appeared enthusiastic and active, particularly those seated in the front rows, while others tended to remain passive. O2 noted that the teacher attempted to boost participation by randomly calling

on students to answer questions, which successfully helped refocus the class. O1 further observed that students were given opportunities to voice opinions or ask questions, though only a few took advantage of these opportunities. Based on O2 observations, the teacher explicitly asked "*Habt ihr Fragen?*" (Do you have any questions?) after explanations. During independent work sessions, the teacher also circulated the classroom to check on students' difficulties. Regarding lesson reflection, O1 reported that it was conducted in a simple manner students were asked about their challenges, which parts they found most difficult, and what they had learned that day. As observed by O2, reflection occurred when the teacher offered to re-explain concepts if questions arose. However, structured reflection on the lesson's key takeaways was notably absent.

According to O1 and O2, the physical learning environment was less supportive of inclusive and collaborative learning due to limited facilities such as teaching aids and technology. However, O2 noted that the non-physical learning environment, particularly equal learning opportunities and freedom for discussion was effectively established. According to both O1 and O2, the learning resources utilized were limited to textbooks and modules, with no incorporation of visual media or other technologies.

Overall, these observations reveal that while teachers have made efforts to implement the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in their planning, classroom implementation still faces challenges particularly in method diversity, technology integration, and holistic assessment. Uneven student participation and limited facilities also present obstacles that need to be addressed to achieve truly student-centered learning aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum's vision.

To ensure the optimal implementation of German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum, a series of sustained teacher training initiatives is required, supported by appropriate technology integration and readiness for holistic assessment. Furthermore, students active participation plays a crucial role in the sustainability of Merdeka Curriculum-based German language instruction. Equipping students with both knowledge and skills can enhance their preparedness, enabling them to learn independently and participate actively throughout the learning process.

Based on classroom observations of German language instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum, it can be concluded that while teachers have made efforts to implement curriculum principles during the preparation phase including the development of lesson plans (RPP) incorporating differentiated learning, diagnostic assessments and varied teaching materials the actual classroom implementation still faces significant challenges in execution. In the implementation phase, the learning process has adopted a student-centered approach. However, student participation remains uneven, and the teaching methods observed lacked innovation and technology utilization remains limited. Regarding assessment practices, teachers have not yet fully implemented holistic and authentic evaluation methods, despite the inclusion of assessment rubrics in the teaching modules. Student engagement varied significantly, with some actively participating while others remained passive. Furthermore, the physical learning environment was not fully conducive to inclusive education. In conclusion, comprehensive teacher professional development programs, enhanced technology integration, and student skill-building initiatives are essential to foster more active participation and optimize the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum can be fully optimized to achieve its intended objectives.

Student Perceptions of Merdeka Curriculum in German Learning at SMA Negeri 6 Malang

The students responded regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in German language learning were collected after the completion of the instructional process through printed questionnaires that had been distributed and completed by the students. The questionnaire contained 11 statement items related to students understanding and motivation in learning German under the Merdeka Curriculum, completed by 26 attending students. Eight students were absent without notice, and one was absent due to illness. The student questionnaire results are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Students Perceptions of German Language Learning Using the Merdeka Curriculum

No.	Statements	5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 D	1 SD
1	The taught material aligns with my needs in learning German language.	18	6	2	0	0
2	The teacher employs various innovative strategies in teaching German language.	17	8	1	0	0
3	I am more active in learning German language because of the teaching approaches used.	4	12	10	0	0
4	I find it easier to understand German language with the teaching methods used in the Merdeka Curriculum.	1	10	15	0	0
5	The Merdeka Curriculum encourages me to learn German language independently.	1	7	13	2	3
6	I have the freedom to choose learning topics that match my interests.	1	14	9	1	1
7	I feel more motivated to learn German language because of this curriculum's flexibility.	4	6	15	1	0
8	Assessments in the Merdeka Curriculum help me track my progress in German language proficiency.	5	9	11	1	0
9	I feel more confident using German language because of the implemented evaluation system.	4	5	14	3	0
10	I am having difficulty adjusting to the new learning methods.	0	6	13	3	4
11	I need more guidance from teachers in learning German language under the Merdeka Curriculum.	11	6	9	0	0

Based on Table 2, the first statement indicates that the taught material aligns with students needs in understanding German language, demonstrating the Merdeka Curriculum's success in accommodating learner requirements. The majority of respondents provided positive feedback, reflecting the successful implementation of the curriculum's principles of flexibility and relevance. This aligns with the perspective of Khoirurrijal, et al. (2023), who assert that the Merdeka Curriculum is designed as a student-centered learning framework with the flexibility to adapt content according to students needs and interests. Regarding teaching strategies on statement two, 25 students agreed with their teacher's use of innovative approaches. Students perceptions align with the findings of Sari, et al. (2024) and Junaidi, et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of interactive methods such as Game-Based Learning (GBL) and group discussions for mastering the four German language skills: listening (*Hörverstehen*), speaking (*Sprachfertigkeit*), reading (*Leseverstehen*), and writing (*Schreibfertigkeit*). The use of varied teaching methods not only makes learning more engaging but also effectively helps students achieve learning objectives.

Statement three reveals that 16 students became more actively engaged in learning due to this curriculum's approach. The Merdeka Curriculum has successfully enhanced participation, although some students have not yet experienced significant impact.

Statement four indicates that 11 students agreed this curriculum's methods facilitate German language comprehension. The Merdeka Curriculum is proven effective in streamlining the learning process.

Statement five reveals that 8 students agreed the curriculum promotes independent learning, while 5 students still struggle with self-directed study. Although the curriculum successfully fosters autonomy, targeted guidance remains necessary for learners facing adaptation challenges.

Statement six indicates that 15 students felt they had the freedom to choose learning topics aligned with their interests. These findings align with Nuriah et al. (2022), who argue that the Merdeka Curriculum aims to foster student autonomy and creativity through flexible learning. This is further supported by Hermansyah (2024), who found that topic choice and student-centered approaches create a learning environment that promotes active participation and accountability in the learning process.

Statement seven reveals that 10 students felt motivated to learn due to the curriculum's flexibility. This aligns with Fernando et al. (2024) theory of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, where curriculum flexibility significantly fulfills students' basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness—key factors in supporting effective learning. An autonomy-supportive learning environment can enhance intrinsic motivation while optimizing extrinsic motivation through the internalization of learning values.

Statement eight indicates that 14 students perceived the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system as instrumental in tracking their German language proficiency development. This aligns with Hijjah et al. (2025) conceptualization of authentic and continuous evaluation focused on learner progress, and corroborates Firdaus et al. (2022) assertion that such assessments enable educators to identify curricular strengths/weaknesses and adapt teaching strategies to enhance learning experiences.

Statement nine reveals that 9 students reported increased confidence due to the implemented evaluation system. The Merdeka Curriculum's assessment framework is perceived as transparent and conducive to student growth.

Statement ten reveals that 6 students reported difficulties adapting to new teaching methods. These student responses reinforce existing research on the critical need for teacher training. This aligns with Redana & Suprpta (2023) findings that curriculum implementation faces challenges such as limited teacher comprehension.

Statement eleven reveals that 17 students expressed needing more teacher guidance. This finding resonates with Ismanto et al. (2024) research highlighting the necessity of dialogic communication approaches to facilitate student adaptation. Consequently, the teacher's dual role as facilitator and mentor becomes pivotal in helping students overcome these challenges.

Based on the questionnaire results, it can be concluded that the Merdeka Curriculum has generally succeeded in accommodating students' needs in German language learning through its principles of flexibility and relevance. The majority of respondents provided positive feedback regarding the suitability of materials, innovative teaching strategies, and increased participation and learning independence. The curriculum's flexibility also enhances student motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically, by allowing freedom to choose topics of interest. The authentic and continuous assessment system helps students understand their progress and builds confidence. However, some students still face difficulties adapting to new methods, indicating the need for

more intensive teacher guidance. These findings align with various studies emphasizing the teacher's crucial role as a facilitator and the need for teacher training to optimize curriculum implementation. Thus, the Merdeka Curriculum has positively impacted student-centered learning environments, though improvements in mentoring and method adaptation are needed to ensure all students benefit optimally.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion outlined, it can be concluded that the Merdeka Curriculum has several strengths, including flexibility in accommodating student needs, improved participation and learning autonomy, as well as an authentic and relevant assessment system. This curriculum also promotes student-centered learning and motivates students through the freedom to choose topics based on their interests. However, there are shortcomings in its implementation, such as uneven student participation, a lack of innovative teaching methods, limited use of technology, and difficulties some students face in adapting to new approaches. Additionally, holistic assessment and an inclusive learning environment have not yet been fully achieved. Therefore, continuous teacher training, intensive student mentoring, and increased use of technology are needed to optimize the Merdeka Curriculum in line with its objectives.

To optimize implementation, teachers should increase variety in teaching methods through game-based learning and collaborative projects, while consistently applying authentic assessment. Schools need to support this by providing technology facilities and regular teacher training. For future researchers, it's recommended to further explore implementation obstacles and develop project-based learning models suited to the Merdeka Curriculum context. Collaboration between teachers, schools, and researchers is necessary to create a truly student-centered learning ecosystem that aligns with this curriculum's vision.

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