

Merdeka Curriculum Implementation in TEFL at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas

¹Windi Tri Apriyani, ²Maria Ramasari, ³Hamdan

^{1,2,3}English Education Study Program
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
PGRI Silampari University

Correspondence email: *windi.3apriyani@gmail.com, mariaramasari@gmail.com,
hamdangh123@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to describe the implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum and to identify English teachers' difficulties during the implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum in TEFL at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas. This research is descriptive qualitative. The sample of this research are English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah. The data were gathered by using observation checklist, interview, documentation and were analysed by Miles and Huberman Theory in the form of description. The findings showed that the English teachers made their own learning objectives and teaching modules based on the format from the government and then modified and adapted to the needs of students, *Pembelajaran Terpadu* and schools. Differentiated learning and Project Strengthening of Pancasila Students (P5) have been implemented by English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah. The difficulties faced by teachers were complicated administration, implementing differentiated learning, adjusting project hours to strengthen the Pancasila student profile, and having to prepare backup plans when using electronic media. To overcome these difficulties, the school provides extensive support to English teachers by involving teachers in learning committees, workshops, and inviting speakers from outside the school. In conclusion *Merdeka* curriculum has been implemented in TEFL at SMP IT Al Qudwah.

Keywords: Implementation, *Merdeka* Curriculum, TEFL, Teacher

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dan mengidentifikasi kesulitan guru bahasa Inggris selama implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada TEFL di SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah dua guru bahasa Inggris di SMP IT Al Qudwah. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan daftar observasi centang, wawancara, dokumentasi dan dianalisis dengan teori Miles dan Huberman dalam bentuk deskripsi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru bahasa Inggris membuat Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran dan Modul Ajar mereka sendiri berdasarkan format dari pemerintah dan kemudian dimodifikasi dan disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan siswa, *Pembelajaran Terpadu* dan sekolah. Pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dan Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) telah diterapkan oleh guru bahasa Inggris di SMP IT Al Qudwah. Kesulitan yang dihadapi guru bahasa Inggris adalah administrasi yang rumit, menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, menyesuaikan jam proyek dengan profil siswa Pancasila, dan harus menyiapkan rencana cadangan ketika menggunakan media elektronik. Untuk mengatasi kesulitan-kesulitan tersebut, sekolah memberikan dukungan yang besar kepada para guru bahasa Inggris dengan melibatkan para guru dalam komite pembelajaran, lokakarya, dan mengundang pembicara dari luar sekolah. Kesimpulannya, kurikulum Merdeka telah diimplementasikan dalam TEFL di SMP IT Al Qudwah.

Kata Kunci: Implementasi, Kurikulum Merdeka, TEFL, Guru

INTRODUCTION

One of the important components in education is the curriculum, without a curriculum education cannot be implemented. According to Khoirurrijal (2022), the curriculum is the vision, mission, and educational goals of an institution, and is the main source of value that will be transformed to students to achieve educational goals. In simple words, the curriculum is a guideline for a school in carrying out education. The importance of the curriculum in the education system makes the existence of the curriculum necessary to be constantly updated in order to keep up and adapt to the times. The urgency of curriculum development is useful to help students and teachers in carrying out the education and teaching process. According to the 2018 PISA test results, Indonesia is ranked low, out of 79 countries that took the test Indonesia was in the lowest 10th place. Only 25% of students in Indonesia have minimum-level reading skills, 24% have minimum-level math skills, and about 34% have minimum-level science skills, from these tests it can be classified that Indonesia is facing a learning crisis (Kemendikbud, 2021).

Furthermore, the problem of education in Indonesia is not only a learning crisis, the phenomenon of learning loss, and learning gap for example of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. These phenomena happened in almost all over the world including Indonesia because of the closing of schools and online learning that occurred during the pandemic (Engzell et al. 2021). Therefore, education in Indonesia needs learning recovery to overcome this problem. The government has made several policies such as simplifying, developing a new curriculum, and launching the "*Merdeka Curriculum*" to be able to adjust to the conditions of the education system and learning methods after the pandemic.

The policy of developing *Kurikulum 2013 Revisi* to the *Merdeka Curriculum* is based on the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 56/M/2022 on February 10, 2022 about guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the context of Learning Recovery. The decree serves as a legal basis and reference for implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* in public schools, *madrasah*, and other educational institutions in Indonesia. Since the launch on February 11, 2022, the *Merdeka curriculum* has been implemented in almost 2500 schools registered as *Sekolah Penggerak* and 901 as *SMK Pusat Keunggulan* (Oktaviani & Ramayanti, 2023).

There are several things that need to be emphasized in the *Merdeka Curriculum*, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), such as requires a lot of processes, time, and teacher readiness in changes in the education system. The relevant study that has been conducted related to the *Merdeka Curriculum* is by Fitra and Tiarina (2023), about analyzing the challenges of English teachers in implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* at SMA Negeri 3 Solok Selatan. The results showed that English teachers faced five challenges in implementing the *Merdeka curriculum*. They are designing lesson plans, conducting lessons, using media, managing the classroom, and assessment.

In this research, the researcher conducted the research at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas. SMP IT Al Qudwah is an Islamic school located in Tugumulyo, Musi Rawas, South Sumatra. Based on the results of pre-observation conducted by researcher, there are 2 English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah who teach in grades 7th and 8th and have implemented the *Merdeka Curriculum* and in the 2023/2024 school year, the *Merdeka Curriculum* is currently implemented in grades 7th and 8th, while grade 9th is still using *Kurikulum 2013*. In

implementing both curricula, SMP IT Al Qudwah uses *Terpadu* approach based on JSIT (*Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu*) guidelines.

In addition, the researcher interviewed one of the English teachers and she explained that in her class she conducted a test first to see students' learning styles and students need to determine the learning design. This shows that teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas have a strong willingness to implement teaching and learning processes based on *Merdeka Curriculum* according to the characteristics and students' need. According to Oktavia et al (2023), in the previous curriculum, the 2013 Curriculum, not all schools made English as a compulsory subject at the elementary level, so that teaching English as a foreign language at the junior high school level became one of the main focuses.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "*Merdeka Curriculum Implementation in TEFL at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas*" with the aim to identify and analyze the process and the difficulties faced by the teachers during implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas in grade 7th and 8th.

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas in the 2023/2024 academic year. SMP IT Al Qudwah is located in Ngadirejo, Tugumulyo, Musi Rawas, South Sumatra. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach in this research. Creswell (2014) identifies the key features of qualitative research as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and carried out in a natural setting. In simple words, descriptive qualitative research is a type of research in which data is collected in the form of words and pictures. The purpose of this descriptive research is to describe situations and conditions or phenomena based on facts or reality. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research methods to analyze and describe the implementation process of *Merdeka Curriculum* in TEFL at SMP IT Al-Qudwah where the data generated is in the form of written words from the observed research subjects.

In this research, the researcher used several techniques to collect data, including observation (check list), interview, and documentation. According to Abdussamad (2021), Observation is a data collection technique that is carried out systematically and purposely through observing and recording the symptoms being investigated. The observation checklist is used to facilitate data organization and ensure that nothing is missed when the researcher observes the research subject. Interview is a data collection technique carried out by question and answer between the researcher and the object of research (Abdussamad, 2021).

The researcher used semi-structured interview with the aim of finding the required data more openly and trying to get more in-depth information about the subjects. Semi-structured interview is more flexible than structured interview because they use an interview guide from developing topics and asking questions. The subjects interviewed were 2 English teachers of grade 7 and 8 at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas. Documentation is to find data about things or variables in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, meeting notes, and etc (Abdussamad, 2021).

The researcher used data analysis techniques based on the theory of Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2021), there are 4 stages of analysis. (1) data collection; the researcher collects data from observations, interviews and documentation (2) data reduction; the researcher sorts, categorizes, and eliminates the results of data collection; (3) data display; the researcher presents the results of his findings in the form of descriptions, charts, and others to get conclusions as a result of the research; (4) conclusion; the researcher concludes the research findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted observations, interview, and documentation with English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas to collect the data. The researcher uses name codes to keep the English teachers' privacy in research findings, such as: Mr. VA and Mrs. HZ.

The Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in TEFL at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas

Based on the guidelines for implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture's BSKAP there are three stages of implementation: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Planning

The planning stage in the *Merdeka* curriculum includes teachers' preparation for the design and creation of Learning Objectives, and Teaching Modules. The result of interview with Mrs. HZ as English teachers will be present below:

“For the Learning Objectives (ATP) and teaching modules, there are indeed examples provided by the government, and we can access in the Merdeka Mengajar application. From this example, we make our own and then modify it according to the needs of our students and school, so we do not take it from the government directly but we modify it by looking at and adjusting to the conditions and needs of the students. Moreover, because we are an integrated Islamic school, we have Pembelajaran Terpadu. There is an addition that is named duniawi and ukhrawi so in the learning process we will relate it to their world and hereafter. For example, in the English subject there is material on self-introduction, then we will look for hadiths or verses of the Qur'an related to the material”.

Based on the interview above, it shows that English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah make their own learning objectives (ATP) and Teaching Modules based on the format and examples provided by the government and then modified and made based on the needs of students and schools, and there are additions such as adding *Pembelajaran Terpadu* in the design of learning objectives and teaching modules, namely including *ukhrawi* and *duniawi*. *Ukhrawi* relates the learning material to the contents of Al Qur'an and Hadith, while the *duniawi* relates to the surrounding environment of the students.

Implementation

This stage contains the process of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum. The 2023-2024 school year is the second year of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum at SMP IT Al Qudwah since it was launched by the government. The implementation of the *Merdeka*

curriculum at SMP IT Al Qudwah has been running quite well as stated in interview with Mr. VA:

“The implementation of Merdeka curriculum at SMP IT Al Qudwah since the 2022-2023 school year and it has been going quite well even though this is a new curriculum, in the implementation it still needs a lot of practice both personally as a teacher and the school itself but welcoming by the teachers and students. In the 2023-2024 the Merdeka curriculum was implemented only in grades 7th grade 8th, while grade 9th is still using the 2013 curriculum”.

Based on the results above, Mr. VA stated that the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum has been running well and is being welcomed by teachers and students. The *Merdeka* curriculum in the 2023-2024 school year has only been implemented in grades 7th and 8th, while grade 9th continues to use the previous curriculum, the 2013 Curriculum.

There is differentiated learning in the Basic framework for implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum based on the national education standards. Related to this differentiated learning, Mr. VA explained that:

1) Interview with Mr. VA

“For differentiated learning, at the beginning of the learning year we map students based on their learning types, some are auditory, kinesthetic, and visual. From the data that has been obtained, it will be given to all teachers and become a reference for designing the teaching modules they will use; to map it, we use the website link akupintar.com recommended by the school supervisor and on the website, students are asked to answer several questions and then the results will come out”.

It can be concluded that SMP IT Al Qudwah implements differentiated learning by mapping students' learning styles through tests from akupintar.com website recommended by school supervisors. This mapping will become a reference and guideline for teachers in designing the teaching modules that will be used.

In implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, there is also P5 (*Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*). Mr. VA explained that:

“The application of P5 will be related to the material to be taught, in the teaching module, it is organized about what material will be taught to relate to which P5 points. then it will be included and used as an assessment in the form of observation. for the English project, for example, we have a project to make crackers from rice, in the packaging of these products there are many items needed such as composition etc., for the application of English, it is included in making packaging stickers in English”.

P5 is related to student character and competence, consists of six dimensions, namely: 1) believe, fear God Almighty, and have noble character, 2) Independent, 3) work together, 4) have global diversity, 5) critical thinking, and 6) creative. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the teacher relates classroom learning by adjusting the six dimensions of P5 in learning, while for the application in the project, the teacher directly relates English learning to the products produced by students.

In implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, of course it cannot be separated from the support provided by the school. Without support, the implementation of this curriculum will not run optimally. In this case, here are the results of interviews with Mrs. HZ

1) Mrs. HZ stated that:

“The school is very support, especially since our school was chosen as one of Sekolah Penggerak that must implement the Merdeka curriculum. Each teacher is regularly involved in

workshop programs, teacher training for the implementation of differentiated learning and inviting guest speakers from outside. The facilities are very good, the most important thing is the projector in each class and the internet, which all classes try to be able to reach the connection”.

From the results of interview, it shows that SMP IT Al Qudwah strongly supports the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, especially prioritizing facilities, such as projector in each class, and the internet network. In addition, SMP IT Al Qudwah also facilitates teachers by including teachers in workshop programs on a regular basis, conducting training for teachers such as learning committees and inviting guest speakers from outside.

To find out the process of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas, the researcher conducted classroom observations using an observation checklist. The researcher conducted observations in class 7 An Najm and class 8 Al 'Araf.

Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in class 7 An Najm

Table 4.1 Observation Checklist Class 7 An Najm (Meeting 1)

No	Observation statements	Observation Result	
		Yes	No
1	Teacher prepares teaching modules by considering students' needs	✓	
2	The teacher greets and asks the student's condition in the class	✓	
3	Teacher checks the student's attendance list	✓	
4	The teacher stimulates and build students' knowledge by asking questions and connecting them with the material to be learned.	✓	
5	Teacher delivers the learning objectives	✓	
6	Teacher utilizes technology in learning	✓	
7	The teacher relates the material to be learned with real-life examples,	✓	
8	Teacher gives feedback (appreciation or correction)	✓	
9	Teacher gives motivation for students		✓
10	Teacher use learning media and references from the internet	✓	
11	Teachers use innovative teaching materials	✓	
12	Teachers can build discipline, authority.	✓	
13	Teachers use differentiated learning	✓	
14	The teacher delivers the material clearly	✓	
15	Teacher provides opportunities for students to be active in learning	✓	
16	The teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions if they do not understand	✓	
17	The teacher provides a summary or short explanation of the material learned.		✓
18	The teacher gives assignments or homework to students.	✓	
19	The teacher conducts self-reflection to the students		✓
20	The teacher closes the lesson with a blessing and greeting.	✓	

Table 4.2 Observation Checklist Class 7 An Najm (Meeting 2)

No	Observation statements	Observation Result	
		Yes	No
1	Teacher prepares teaching modules by considering students' needs	✓	
2	The teacher greets and asks the student's condition in the class	✓	
3	Teacher checks the student's attendance list	✓	
4	The teacher stimulates and build students' knowledge by asking questions and connecting them with the material to be learned.	✓	
5	Teacher delivers the learning objectives		✓
6	Teacher utilizes technology in learning	✓	
7	The teacher relates the material to be learned with real-life examples, environment, and culture.	✓	
8	Teacher gives feedback (appreciation or correction)	✓	
9	Teacher gives motivation for students	✓	
10	Teacher use learning media and references from the internet	✓	
11	Teachers use innovative teaching materials	✓	
12	Teachers can build discipline, authority, and safety in organizing the learning process	✓	
13	Teachers use differentiated learning	✓	
14	The teacher delivers the material clearly	✓	
15	Teacher provides opportunities for students to be active in learning	✓	
16	The teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions if they do not understand the material learned.	✓	
17	The teacher provides a summary or short explanation of the material learned.	✓	
18	The teacher gives assignments or homework to students.		✓
19	The teacher conducts self-reflection to the students	✓	
20	The teacher closes the lesson with a blessing and greeting	✓	

From the observations of the first and second meetings in class 7 An Najm, the material to be learned is sign, notice, caution, and it can be explained that the teacher conduct a pre-test through the website akupintar.com to made teaching modules based on the needs of students, namely learning style. In the opening activity the teacher greets students, asked about the condition of the students, checked attendance, and gave trigger questions and related the material to be learned with examples in the environment around students with the aim of stimulating students' knowledge and interest in learning (*duniawi*), and the teacher conveyed learning objectives.

In the main activity the teacher explained the material clearly, besides that the teacher implemented differentiated learning in process, which uses innovative learning media in the form of learning videos (the teacher accommodated differentiated learning through listening to the sound in the video for auditory students and displaying animated images in the video for visual students), and differentiation in the form of products (the teacher gave assignments from student worksheets that have different instructions for each group). To support the process of implementing differentiated learning, teacher used technology such as laptops, projectors, speakers, and smartphones.

In addition, teacher implemented P5 by directly connecting learning materials with P5 elements, such as believing and fearing God Almighty (connecting materials with Qur'an verses), teamwork (group assignments), and critical thinking (students analyzed the additional material information get from internet sources) and creativity (different assignments require students to think creatively in completing their tasks). In the closing activity, the teacher conducted self-reflection with the students and closes the meeting with praying and greeting.

Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in class 8 Al 'Araf

Table 4.3 Observation Checklist Class 8 Al 'Araf (Meeting 1)

No	Observation statements	Observation Result	
		Yes	No
1	Teacher prepares teaching modules by considering students' needs	✓	
2	The teacher greets and asks the student's condition in the class	✓	
3	Teacher checks the student's attendance list	✓	
4	The teacher stimulates and build students' knowledge by asking questions and connecting them with the material to be learned.	✓	
5	Teacher delivers the learning objectives.	✓	
6	Teacher utilizes technology in learning	✓	
7	The teacher relates the material to be learned with real-	✓	
8	Teacher gives feedback (appreciation or correction)	✓	
9	Teacher gives motivation for students	✓	
10	Teacher use learning media and references from the internet	✓	
11	Teachers use innovative teaching materials	✓	
12	Teachers can build discipline, authority, and safety.	✓	
13	Teachers use differentiated learning	✓	
14	The teacher delivers the material clearly	✓	
15	Teacher provides opportunities for students to be active in learning	✓	
16	The teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions if they do not understand the material learned.	✓	
17	The teacher provides a summary or short explanation of the material learned.	✓	
18	The teacher gives assignments or homework to students.	✓	
19	The teacher conducts self-reflection to the students		✓
20	The teacher closes the lesson with a blessing and greeting.	✓	

Table 4.4 Observation Checklist Class 8th Al 'Araf (Meeting 2)

No	Observation statements	Observation Result	
		Yes	No
1	Teacher prepares teaching modules by considering students' needs	✓	
2	The teacher greets and asks the student's condition in the class	✓	
3	Teacher checks the student's attendance list	✓	
4	The teacher stimulates and build students' knowledge by asking questions and connecting them with the material to be learned.	✓	
5	Teacher delivers the learning objectives		✓

6	Teacher utilizes technology in learning	✓
7	The teacher relates the material to be learned with real-life examples, environment, and culture.	✓
8	Teacher gives feedback (appreciation or correction)	✓
9	Teacher gives motivation for students	✓
10	Teacher use learning media and references from the internet	✓
11	Teachers use innovative teaching materials	✓
12	Teachers can build discipline, authority, and safety in organizing the learning process	✓
13	Teachers use differentiated learning	✓
14	The teacher delivers the material clearly	✓
15	Teacher provides opportunities for students to be active in learning	✓
16	The teacher gives students the opportunity to ask questions if they do not understand the material learned.	✓
17	The teacher provides a summary or short explanation of the material learned.	✓
18	The teacher gives assignments or homework to students	✓
19	The teacher conducts self-reflection to the students	✓
20	The teacher closes the lesson with a blessing and greeting	✓

From the first and second observations of class 8 Al 'Araf, it shows that the teacher made teaching modules by considering students' learning interests which had previously been tested through the website *akupintar.com* and always opened the lesson by saying greetings, asking students' conditions, checking attendance, and giving trigger questions related to the material and students' daily experiences (*duniawi*). The teacher conducts differentiated learning process by using video. From the video the teacher accommodates auditory students to listen to the audio recording of the video and visual students observe the animation in the video given.

P5 is also implemented by the teacher, the main components of P5 in this "invitation" material is creativity and teamwork. Creativity and teamwork are needed by students to be able to create invitation designs that they often encounter in their daily lives by using the Canva application. To support P5, teachers utilize school facilities such as laptops, Chromebooks, projectors, microphones, internet connections, and speakers. This technology is used to facilitate students in developing their potential. In the closing activity, teachers and students summarize the material that has been learned, do self-reflection together and end the learning by saying greetings and praying.

Evaluation

The evaluation stage contains how the assessment process carried out by the teachers is based on what has been determined in the *Merdeka* curriculum. Based on interview conducted by Mrs. HZ explained that:

1) Interview with Mrs. Hz

“There are formative and summative assessments in the Merdeka curriculum. Formative is carried out at the beginning of learning and during the learning process, while summative at the end. The emphasis on formative assessment means that teachers can design learning

according to the stages of students, so this assessment can improve, change, or modify the learning process to make it more effective”.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the *Merdeka* curriculum uses formative and summative assessments. Formative is carried out at the beginning of learning and during the learning process which aims to enable teachers to design learning according to the stages of students, so that through formative assessment teachers can improve, change, or modify the learning process to make it more effective, while summative at the end of learning.

Teachers' Difficulties in Implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum

Difficulties and challenges will always exist, especially when implementing new things like *Merdeka* curriculum. In this case, the researcher interviewed the English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah to find out what difficulties they faced when implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum during the learning process and answer the second research question in this research. Mr. VA and Mrs. HZ explained the difficulties they faced in the learning process as follows:

1. Difficulties faced by Mr. VA

“Merdeka curriculum is new and we still cannot learn it well and perfectly, it means that we need to learn more, such as with regard to learning differentiation which is new, then the P5 project, which at the beginning of teaching hours was still confusing, and for administration there may be a slight change from lesson plans to teaching modules, the point is that adaptation is needed”.

2. Difficulties faced by Mrs. HZ

“If we look at the administration, it's quite complicated. But back again if we want to learn, Inshallah, we can. when at the beginning of the implementation, it may be more about the P5 project. One of the difficulties I faced was that in this Merdeka curriculum, teachers must be understand about digital/technology. When the teacher enters the classroom, he must be ready for the situation at that time, if we use PowerPoint and it is not working or there is an error, we need to prepare a plan B.

From the results of the interview above, it can be concluded that English teachers at SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas face several difficulties in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, such as quite complicated administration, matching lesson hours with P5 projects, differentiated learning, understanding technology, and needing to prepare a backup plan when using technological media that requires electricity.

In addition, Mr. VA explained that the school has a big role in supporting the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum at Al Qudwah IT Junior High School, as he explained in the interview:

“To overcome these difficulties, Alhamdulillah, the school facilitates and supports teachers to, for example, attend training independently or training provided by the school”.

CONCLUSION

From the previous findings and discussions, it can be concluded that SMP IT Al Qudwah Musi Rawas has been registered as *Sekolah Penggerak* and the *Merdeka* curriculum has been implemented in TEFL. The teachers make their own Learning Objectives (ATP) and Teaching

Modules based on the format and examples provided by the government and then modified based on the conditions and needs of the students. Teachers always asked trigger questions for students with the aim of linking the material to be learned with the students' surrounding environment and stimulating students' interest and knowledge. Teachers implement differentiated learning by mapping students based on their learning. Teachers implement Pancasila Student Profile (P5) in learning English with verses of the Qur'an and hadith, using innovative learning such as Canva application to increase student creativity. Teachers use several media and technology in order to support the differentiated learning process, such as videos, PowerPoints Chromebooks, and the use of the Canva application. Teachers conduct assessments based on *Merdeka* curriculum guidelines, namely formative and summative assessments.

Teachers faced several difficulties, such as complicated administration, implementing differentiated learning, adjusting project hours to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and having to prepare a backup plan. To overcome the teachers' difficulties, the school strongly supports teachers by providing internal and external training, inviting guest speakers from outside and conducting workshops for teachers to equip teachers with the knowledge of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum.

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