



Journal of English Teaching and Applied Linguistic
<http://jurnal.stkipgribl.ac.id/index.php/jeta>

ANALYSING TEACHERS' STRATEGIES FOR EFL CLASSES IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS IN THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM

KADEK ERNA YANTININGSIH¹, LUH PUTU ARTINI², A.A GEDE YUDHA PARAMARTHA³

1,2,3) GANESHA UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

ernyantningsih079@gmail.com

Abstract: English as a foreign language should be taught in Indonesia, both formal and informal, as it is essential for competing in this globalisation era. The study proposed to (1) analyse the strategies applied by teachers in the Merdeka curriculum during the learning and teaching of EFL learners and (2) analyse students' perception towards teachers' strategies. It focused on analysing an English teacher and three students who role as the research subject. The study was specifically conducted at SMK Restumuning through a qualitative approach. The data were obtained qualitatively with a questionnaire, observation and documentation. The obtaining data were analysed and described qualitatively. The findings revealed that teachers applied two teaching strategies; autocratic teaching strategies and democratic teaching strategies. Students also perceive positively on teachers' strategies during English learning in the Merdeka curriculum. Conclusively, autocratic and democratic strategies are appropriate for teaching English in vocational high schools.

Keywords: EFL teaching, Merdeka curriculum, teaching strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The role of English language education in Indonesia, as in many countries, is pivotal as it serves as a

foreign language taught both formally and informally (Ariyanti et al., 2021). Education itself is fundamental to securing a sustainable future and enhancing quality of life by equipping

individuals with systematic knowledge and skills necessary to navigate life and the workforce (Priyanti, 2021; Saragih et al., 2023; Simamora et al., 2019; Trisnawati & Kurniawan, 2022). The central to delivering effective education is the curriculum, which not only guides the educational system but also shapes the characteristics and competencies developed within society.

Decisions regarding the curriculum, as highlighted by Anggraeny and Dewi (2023) wield significant influence over the entire education process. An innovative curriculum is essential to effectively meet the evolving needs of society. Innovation in education, as emphasized by studies plays a crucial role starting from the curriculum itself (Karimatunisa et al., 2024; Mutmainah & Widhiatama, 2024). This innovation encompasses the design of learning experiences, integration of new technologies, adaptation to changing educational paradigms, and alignment with societal demands.

In the context of English language education in Indonesia, an innovative curriculum is particularly vital. It should not only focus on linguistic proficiency but also on

fostering critical thinking, communication skills, cultural understanding, and global competencies (Ariastawan & Herman, 2021). Such a curriculum empowers learners to effectively engage with the globalized world and contribute meaningfully to their communities (Karimatunisa et al., 2024).

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum involves extensive procedures, time, and preparation, resulting in significant changes in the learning process, including the teaching of English (Latifa & Ratih, 2023; Retnaningrum et al., 2023). It is crucial that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out effectively to foster a positive relationship between teachers and learners (Anisah & Qamariah, 2023). Prior to implementing this curriculum, teachers need to familiarize themselves with elements such as Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), Modul Ajar (MA), Project Modules, and methods for assessing student progress (Nurhidayat et al., 2022; Retnaningrum et al., 2023). This transition reflects a shift in teaching strategies from those used in the previous curriculum, implemented before the pandemic, to new strategies

necessitated by the need for adaptability during this unprecedented global situation. Teaching strategies involve the methods teachers use to engage and interact with children during learning activities (Ishak & Nahdhiyah, 2020; Mustika & Wardah, 2021; Wibowo et al., 2020; Wulandari et al., 2024). It's essentially how teachers facilitate learning experiences by creatively and effectively guiding and interacting with their students.

Roy (2022) distinguishes between two primary teaching strategies: autocratic and democratic. In the autocratic strategy, the teacher assumes a more active role and maintains full control over classroom activities, while students typically play a passive role as listeners with limited opportunities for independent action (Roy, 2022). Teaching methods aligned with the autocratic approach include storytelling, textbook instruction, lecturing, demonstrations, and tutorials.

Conversely, according to Roy (2021), democratic teaching strategies prioritize placing students at the center of the learning process. Educators employing this approach strive to tailor their teaching methods

to align with the interests, attitudes, capabilities, and needs of their students. Democratic teaching strategies aim to foster development in both the affective and cognitive domains of learning. They encompass a diverse array of effective teaching methods such as question and answer sessions, discussions, heuristic approaches, discovery learning, project-based learning, role-playing, brainstorming, and Bloom's mastery learning strategies.

Several studies have explored teaching strategies within the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly at the junior high school level, Felani et al., (2022) specifically discusses strategies employed by English teachers during speaking lessons in junior high schools under the Merdeka Curriculum, emphasizing the use of role play and answering strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Similarly, Azizah (2023) investigates teaching strategies employed by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in junior high schools implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Sinaga et al., (2022) also analysed teaching strategies in writing lesson.

However, there is a notable gap in research concerning teaching strategies within the Merdeka Curriculum at the vocational high school level, particularly in the context of English language instruction. This represents a novel area for further research, as understanding effective teaching strategies specific to vocational education under the Merdeka Curriculum could significantly benefit educational practices and outcomes in this sector.

Based on the research background, the study examines on two research questions including what strategies are used by teachers and how students perceive their EFL teachers' teaching strategies in the English classes they experienced. Regarding the research objectives, it is expected that the findings of this study can provide both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the findings of this research are capable of providing a comprehensive description for future teachers regarding appropriate teaching strategies during the Merdeka Curriculum period, especially in English language learning. Practically, the results of this study contribute to practical implementation for teachers

in the process of teaching English. Additionally, future researchers can use these practical findings as a reference in implementing similar techniques or researching related topics.

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive method as its research design. The focus was to explore teaching strategies employed by teachers during the English language learning process, particularly within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. The study involved teachers and three 10th-grade students from SMK Restumuning, chosen for their willingness to participate and provide insights into teaching strategies.

The data collection methods included observations and questionnaires. Observations aimed to identify strategies employed by English teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum, utilizing indicators such as autocratic and democratic teaching strategies across pre-instructional, instructional, and evaluation phases (adapted from Nana Sudjana, 1989). Questionnaires, consisting of 13 open-ended questions, were administered to both teachers

and students. They sought detailed information on the effectiveness and perceptions of these strategies.

The data analysis will follow Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model (1994), involving three main stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification. This approach will help in systematically processing and interpreting the collected data to derive meaningful results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study provide information of what teachers' strategies in teaching and learning process; and students' perceptions towards teachers' strategies. The description of the results can be explained as follows.

The Strategies used by Teachers in Learning Process during Merdeka Curriculum

The result indicates that the researcher conducted observations on four occasions. The observations focused on two topics: Hobby and Interest, and Asking and Giving Opinion. Throughout these observations, the teacher implemented

three stages in the teaching and learning process: pre-instructional, instructional, and evaluation. During these stages, the teacher employed two teaching strategies: autocratic and democratic.

Under the autocratic teaching strategy, the teacher utilized the following methods: 1) lecture method 4 times, 2) demonstration method 1 time, and 3) tutorial method 1 time, totaling 6 instances across the four observations. On the other hand, under the democratic teaching strategy, the teacher utilized the following methods: 1) question-answer method 5 times, 2) discussion method 8 times, 3) discovery method 5 times, 4) project method 2 times, 5) brainstorming 5 times, and 6) Bloom's mastery learning strategy 5 times. It can be concluded that the teacher predominantly employed democratic teaching strategies, as evidenced by the higher frequency of methods used. The most frequently used method among these was the discussion method.

Further, based on the results of questionnaire illustrates that teachers employ various methods in the teaching and learning process for English subjects under the Merdeka Curriculum. These methods encompass

both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies. According to the results of the questionnaire filled out by teachers, methods in the autocratic teaching strategy include storytelling, lecture, demonstration, and tutorial methods. Teachers opt for these methods for specific reasons: storytelling facilitates understanding through narrative, lectures clarify complex topics, tutorials facilitate hands-on learning, and small-group guidance enhances comprehension.

On the other hand, within the democratic teaching strategy, teachers utilize the question-answer, discussion, discovery, project, role-playing, brainstorming, and Bloom's mastery learning strategies. These methods are chosen because: question-answer assesses student comprehension, discussions promote idea exchange and critical thinking, discovery fosters deeper understanding through self-directed learning, projects encourage independent work based on understanding, role-playing enhances speaking skills, brainstorming develops critical thinking, and Bloom's mastery learning provides immediate feedback for correction. In contrast, Iskandar and Lusiana (2023) claimed on their study that the English teacher has

implemented various strategies to facilitate the teaching and learning process for eleventh-grade students. She integrates the K-13 teaching approach with diverse teaching methodologies in English education, including the Grammar Translation Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-Based Language Teaching.

Overall, the questionnaire reveals that teachers integrate both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies in teaching English within the Merdeka Curriculum. However, it is noted that not all methods within these strategies are uniformly utilized by teachers in their instructional practices. This dual approach allows for varied and effective engagement with students within the educational framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. As what Sari (2024) mentioned that Merdeka curriculum was designed to achieve the ideas of developing innovative and creative critical thinking.

This indicates that teachers not only rely on traditional-based learning strategies when teaching English in the Merdeka Curriculum, as evidenced by their use of not only autocratic teaching strategies. According to Sitti and Selamet (2019), autocratic strategies

are traditional teaching methods also known as convergent approaches. However, teachers also incorporate student-centered learning, specifically through the democratic teaching strategy. Besides, the findings in line with a study by Mutmainah and Widhiatama (2024) who reveal that pre-service teachers utilize several strategies including searching for information from the internet, reading, engaging in discussions, and practicing.

The democratic teaching strategy prioritizes students' interests, attitudes, capabilities, and needs, as emphasized by Roy (2022). In practice, this strategy is more frequently employed than autocratic teaching in English learning at SMK Restumuning. This student-centered approach aligns well with the concept of the Independent Curriculum, which focuses on guiding students towards independent learning, as noted by Sistermans (2020).

In essence, the Merdeka Curriculum promotes a shift towards student-centered approaches, where learning activities are structured to encourage active student participation and cater to individual learning needs. This approach contrasts with traditional methods by placing greater

emphasis on empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey. The appropriate teaching strategy is effective to develop and fulfil the need of Merdeka curriculum.

Students' Perceptions towards Teachers' Strategies in Merdeka Curriculum

Based on the theory proposed by Roy (2022), the strategies employed in the learning process can be categorized into two main types: autocratic teaching strategy and democratic teaching strategy. These strategies encompass various methods that teachers are expected to utilize effectively. To assess students' perceptions regarding the strategies used by teachers within the Merdeka Curriculum, three students participating in English learning activities at X Hospitality and Culinary SMK Restumuning were selected as the research subjects.

The students' perceptions regarding these strategies were gathered through a series of 13 open-ended questions formulated by the researcher. These questions were designed to elicit comprehensive insights into how students perceive the teaching approaches implemented

under the Merdeka Curriculum. The results of this research provide valuable understanding into:

From the results of students' questionnaire, it is evident that students perceive both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies as necessary in their learning experiences under the Merdeka Curriculum. The finding reflects students' responses indicating their preference for certain teaching methods and their reasons for considering them essential.

In the autocratic teaching strategy, students identified 4 out of 5 methods as necessary:

1. The storytelling method was deemed necessary because it allows students to gain new experiences or knowledge.
2. The lecture method was seen as necessary because it facilitates learning.
3. The demonstration method was considered necessary because it helps students understand difficult concepts more easily. In the same perspectives, Surayatika (2022) found that there were three teaching and learning strategies employed by teachers in teaching English to young learners:

demonstrating, describing, and singing song strategies.

4. The tutorial method was regarded as necessary because it provides additional clarification on the lesson.

However, students indicated that the textbook method is unnecessary due to concerns about its efficiency in time management. This is in line with Sari and Zainil (2020) that teaching strategy should offer innovative and effective in time management so that the results of English learning process will be maximum.

Regarding the democratic teaching strategy, students checked the necessary column for all methods included in this approach:

1. The question-answer method was deemed necessary because it allows students to seek clarification on unclear concepts. This is aligned with Saputri et al., (2021) who claimed that the strategy was effective to create better understanding of English learning, specifically reading comprehension.
2. The discussion method was seen as necessary because it facilitates understanding through collective sharing of ideas.

3. The heuristic method was considered necessary because it helps students identify important sources and information.
4. The discovery method was regarded as necessary because it encourages students to explore and discover information independently.
5. The project method was seen as necessary because it fosters creativity.
6. The role-playing method was deemed necessary because it simplifies lesson material.
7. Brainstorming was considered necessary because it enhances critical thinking skills.
8. Bloom's mastery learning strategy was seen as necessary because it provides immediate feedback on correct and incorrect answers.

Overall, students perceive both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies positively, highlighting their preference for methods that facilitate engagement, understanding, creativity, and critical thinking in the learning process under the Merdeka Curriculum.

There are several reasons why students find methods from both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies beneficial: (a) Storytelling

method lead that students can increase their knowledge and understanding, as well as gain new experiences through stories, making complex material more accessible; (b) Lecture method helps clarify textbook material by providing explanations from the teacher, aiding in easier comprehension of the content; (c) Demonstration method provides a clearer visualization of concepts, making it easier for students to understand and grasp the material being discussed; (d) Tutorial method facilitates better understanding of study material, particularly beneficial for students who may be hesitant to ask questions in larger groups.

Furthermore, (e) Question-answer method allows students to seek clarification on topics that were not fully understood during initial learning, thereby improving comprehension; (f) Discussion method encourages information sharing among students, facilitates correction of misconceptions, and promotes collaborative learning; (g) Discovery method empowers students to independently seek and discover information, fostering a sense of satisfaction and deeper retention of knowledge; (h) Project method promotes teamwork, enhances creativity, and allows students to apply

theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios; (i) Role-playing method provides a practical understanding of concepts, boosts learning efficiency, and builds confidence in applying new skills; (j) Brainstorming improves critical thinking by encouraging students to generate and develop ideas collaboratively, enhancing their problem-solving abilities; (k) Bloom's mastery learning strategy provides immediate feedback on student responses, ensuring clarity and facilitating correction of misconceptions.

These methods, drawn from both autocratic and democratic teaching strategies, cater to diverse learning styles and needs, fostering a comprehensive and engaging learning environment under the Merdeka Curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the study concludes that the teaching and learning process in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum unfolds across three distinct stages: pre-instructional, instructional, and evaluation. Within these stages, teachers employ two main

teaching strategies: autocratic and democratic. The democratic teaching strategy, particularly through methods like the discussion method, was found to be most frequently utilized by teachers.

The study also revealed positive perceptions from students at SMK Restumuning regarding the teaching strategies employed since the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum. This suggests that strategies focusing on teacher-student interaction and engagement are well-received by students.

However, the study acknowledges limitations such as the relatively small number of participants and the specific focus on one school, SMK Restumuning. Therefore, the researchers recommend further studies to broaden the scope and deepen the understanding of teaching strategies within the Merdeka Curriculum. Future research could explore a larger sample size across different schools or regions, and delve into more specific aspects of teaching strategies and their impacts on student learning outcomes.

In summary, while the current study provides valuable insights into teaching strategies under the Merdeka Curriculum, it highlights the need for

continued investigation to enhance the effectiveness and applicability of these strategies in diverse educational settings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present study was supported by Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha and two supervisors of English Language Education major.

REFERENCES

Anggraeny, T. F., & Dewi, D. N. (2023).

An analysis of teacher strategies in teaching english using differentiated learning. *EJI (English Journal of Indragiri): Studies in Education, Literature, and Linguistics*, 7(1), 129-146.
<https://ejournal.unisi.ac.id/index.php/eji/>

Anisah, S., & Qamariah, Z. (2023). The

teacher ' s role in the implementation of curriculum merdeka in english classroom. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nasional*, 1(1), 111-117.
<https://doi.org/DOI : https://doi.org/10.59435/jipnas.v1i2.xx>

Ariastawan, D., & Herman. (2021). EFL teachers' strategies in implementing the 21st century

skills applied in 2013 curriculum: a case study at sman 1 pringgarata, lombok tengah. *Pioneer*, 13(2), 227-242.

<https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v13i2.1278>

Ariyanti, A., Mahakam, W. G., & Fauzan, U. (2021). Teacher ' s strategy in solving efl students ' problems in learning english. *ASIAN TEFL*, 4(2), 129-139.

<https://doi.org/10.21462/asianteftel.v4i2.97>

Felani, W. A., Arwemi, & Yustina, L. S. (2022). An analysis of teacher ' s strategies in teaching speaking at smp n 31 padang. *RiELT Journal*, 8(2), 55-63.

Ishak, & Nahdhiyah. (2020). The strategies of english language teaching at iain bone. *English Education Journal*, 2(1), 83-94.
<https://doi.org/10.24252/elties.v>

Iskandar, D., & Lusiana. (2023). An Analysis of teacher strategies on the eleventh grade students learning activities in efl classroom at sma babus salam tangerang. *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan*, 3(1), 43-49.

Karimatunisa, M. F., Sartika, E., Inggris, T. B., Artikel, I., Implementation, M. C., & Readiness, T. (2024). An

- analysis of english teacher readiness in implementing merdeka curriculum at mts negeri 3 banyumas. *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 3(2), 187–195. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v3i2.2408>
- Latifa, H., & Ratih, K. (2023). Implementing the merdeka curriculum in english language teaching: a study of teacher learning steps. *Voles: Voices of English Language Education Society*, 7(3), 640–651. <https://doi.org/DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.29408/veles.v7i3.24049>
- Mustika, U., & Wardah. (2021). An analysis of teacher ' s strategies in teaching english. *JEEP*, 2(1), 21–29. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.26418/jeep.v2i1.43003>
- Mutmainah, A., & Widhiatama, D. A. (2024). Unveiling success : exploring strategies of pre-service teachers in implementing merdeka curriculum in indonesia. *Asian Journal of Applied Education (AJAE)*, 3(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.55927/ajae.v3i1.7833>
- Priyanti, H. (2021). An analysis of the teachers ' strategies in teaching english vocabulary at the seventh grade of mts n 7 kebumen in the academic year 2019 / 2020. *E-Jou (English Education and Literature Journal)*, 01(02), 72–84.
- Retnaningrum, E., Widyatiningtyas, R., Sari, A. R., Sapulete, H., Solissa, M., & Sujana, I. G. (2023). Teacher ' s paradigm in interpreting the birth of the merdeka curriculum policy. *Journal of Education Research*, 4(2), 435–442.
- Saputri, Y. A., Rizal, S., & Afriani, Z. L. (2021). An analysis on english teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension. *Jadila: Journal of Development and Innovation in Language and Literature Education*, 1(3), 353–361.
- Saragih, D., Lidya, T., Hutajulu, R., & Girsang, S. P. (2023). A literature review : strategies to teach english as a foreign language. *Journal on Education*, 06(01), 4756–4768. <http://jonedu.org/index.php/joe>
- Sari, C. R., & Zainil, Y. (2020). Teaching teachers ' strategies in teaching speaking english at sman 15 padang. *Journal of English Language*, 9(4), 733–739.

- <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v9i4.110335>
- Sari, T. V. (2024). The implementation of the merdeka curriculum in learning english in senior high school: case study. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 10(1), 28–35.
- Simamora, A. R., Sitanggang, D., & Ginting, M. B. (2019). An analysis of teachers' questioning strategies in efl classroom at smp mulia pratama medan. *JEELL*, 6(1), 78–84.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32682/jeell>
- Sinaga, E., Damayanti, N., Hutabarat, B., Panjaitan, T. M., & Strategies, W. T. (2022). An analysis of writing teaching strategies by english teacher in junior high school. *ULIL ALBAB: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 1(3), 232–238.
- Surayatika, D. (2022). Teachers' strategies in teaching english for young learners. *Global Expert*, 10(1), 47–58.
- Trisnawati, W., & Kurniawan, R. (2022). An analysis of teachers' strategies in teaching english speaking skill at sma negeri 1 bungo. *Journal Of Language Education Development Vol. 4 No. 2 (2022) AN*, 4(2), 1–14.
- ejournal.stkip-mmb.ac.id/index.php/pbi
- Wibowo, Y. E. W., Syafrizal, & Syafradin. (2020). An analysis of english teachers' strategies in teaching reading comprehension. *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)*, 4(1), 1–8.
- Wulandari, J. A., Wahab, A. A., & Ferdianto, F. (2024). An analysis on the english teacher strategies in teaching reading comprehension of the twelfth grade students. *IJoEEL: International Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 06(01), 50–61.

