

The challenges faced by English teachers of the elementary schools in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*

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ABSTRACT

Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka. Some schools find its implementation quite challenging. This study aims to discover the challenges English teachers face at SD Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka and how they overcome them. The research method used is a descriptive research design with a qualitative approach. This research used purposive sampling. This research was conducted at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School. Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School. The research participants consisted of 2 English teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan. Data were collected using semi structure interviews and interview guide. This study uses the Miles and Huberman model method for data analysis. The results showed that the challenges experienced by English teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan were increasing teacher load, different learning implementation, learning media, student participation, time allocation, and outing class implementation. The teachers have several ways to overcome these challenges.

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1. Introduction

English is an international language that people worldwide use to communicate. Considering the vital role of English as an international language and the current state of information technology development, many people need to be able to master this language (Arumi, 2022). Therefore, English has become a subject of learning in various countries. One of them is Indonesia. English has been made mandatory for elementary to high school/vocational school students and even kindergarten children. Learning English starts when we are children because learning English will be more accessible when we are still children. As stated by (Oktavia et al., 2023) children at elementary school age are in the critical phase of learning, where they learn quickly. If introduced early, English will be much easier to learn because it is a perfect phase for learning a new language, including English as a foreign language.

English has been taught in elementary school in Indonesia and is a subject in the curriculum. As stated by (Ardaya et al., 2022) students begin to be introduced to English when they enter elementary school. English is an international language; therefore, students can access broader knowledge by mastering it. English can be used to communicate with people from various countries and cultures. A

lot of information and literature in various fields is written in English, and it can increase career opportunities and help one pursue higher education abroad.

English learning in Indonesia has experienced many changes due to the many changes to the Indonesian education curriculum. The curriculum is constantly updated regularly to meet the needs of the world of education. Since Indonesia's independence, the curriculum has undergone numerous revisions (Oktavia et al., 2023). Recently, the Indonesian Minister of Education updated the curriculum. In 2013 curriculum became a Kurikulum Merdeka. According to (Reza et al., 2023) this curriculum is a simplified modification of the existing curriculum in 2013. The structure of the Kurikulum Merdeka is more flexible and the time interval is intended to be shorter during the year. The curriculum attempts to raise the standard of English spoken in Indonesia while highlighting the value of learning English as a global language.

The Kurikulum Merdeka differs from the 2013 curriculum because schools can determine their curriculum. As stated by Sapitri (2022) by implementing this emergency curriculum, schools have the freedom to determine a curriculum that suits learning needs. Schools in Indonesia have the freedom and independence to choose their methods in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Teachers can use various teaching aids based on students' needs and characteristics. Teachers can choose various teaching approaches to accommodate students' interests and learning styles. Teachers can use creative and innovative approaches in their learning process. This is in line with the statement of (Angga et al., 2022) that in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, teachers must be creative in learning methods, media, and techniques and changes in the teacher's mindset about carrying out learning.

Kurikulum Merdeka is applied from kindergarten to high school / vocational school, but the government allows it to be implemented based on school readiness. This is in line with the statement of (Almarisi, 2023) that the Kurikulum Merdeka is used after a period of time in all schools in Indonesia. It is done in stages, depending on the readiness of each school. The government provides a questionnaire to help educational institutions assess the stage of readiness to implement the Kurikulum Merdeka.

However, English learning in Indonesia is through a Kurikulum Merdeka, the number of English teachers in elementary schools still needs to grow. English and local content are chosen as elective subjects, and no more than 2 JP each week or 72 JP a year (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). English lesson hours are 2 hours a week at maximum. English language teaching in elementary school must be taught by a teacher who can teach the language to young learners such as English language education graduates. According to Cahyati & Madya (2019) egocentric, imaginative, active, selfish, quickly bored, have difficulty distinguishing between concrete and abstract things, low concentration, like to do their tasks and enjoy learning new things are the characteristics of elementary school learners. Therefore, teaching English to young learners takes work because they have diverse characteristics, limited attention, and get bored quickly.

Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School also implemented Kurikulum Merdeka. However, there are several differences in the application of English learning. Teacher A, an English teacher at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, said there are differences between learning using the 2013 curriculum and the Kurikulum Merdeka. The difference is that the RPP or learning implementation plan changes into a teaching module. The learning module is a simplification of the RPP. As stated by Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo (2022) RPP is simplified from 13 components into three core components: learning objectives, learning activities and assessments. According to Hr & Wakia (2021) it is hoped that by simplifying administration, teachers' time will be diverted to learning activities and improving competence. This Kurikulum Merdeka teaching module gives the freedom to adapt learning to students.

Teacher B is also an English teacher at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, stated that the difference in teaching English between the independent curriculum and the 2013 curriculum is that in learning using the Kurikulum Merdeka teachers are required to be more creative in teaching materials, media and LKPD. As stated by Jannah et al. (2022) there is a problem in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Namely, teachers must be more creative in designing teaching modules, objectives and teaching flows. Therefore, the teacher should not carelessly make RPP for learning activities every week, school work is only aimed at improving the profile of Pancasila students, PS is given to students every day not only in learning in the classroom, but learning must also be done outside the classroom too so that students are more active and innovative.

Apart from that, teacher A also states that English language learning at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School in the Kurikulum Merdeka uses differentiated learning according to the student's stage of achievement. According to Tomlinson (2001) as cited by Trisno (2023) differentiated learning is where the teacher teaches material by considering students' readiness, interest and learning style. Meanwhile, according to Wulandari (2022) differentiated learning accommodates, serves, and recognizes students' diversity in learning according to their readiness, interests, and preferences for learning.

Therefore, differentiated learning allows teachers to accommodate, cater to and acknowledge students' diversity according to their readiness, interests, and learning styles. By implementing this learning process, teachers can meet the needs of each student. Another change in learning is outing classes. According to Rahmawati & Nazarullail (2020), the learning process carried out outside the classroom is an outing class. So, outing class is learning that is done outside the classroom. Outing class requires more preparation and in its implementation, requires more attention to maintain and control the students (Nababan et al., 2023). Apart from that, according to Heriyati (2022) the Independent Curriculum is based on student-centred learning (SCL). The SCL method is a continuous transformational learning process that focuses on improving and encouraging students to improve their critical thinking skills.

The change in curriculum from the 2013 curriculum to the Kurikulum Merdeka experienced various challenges in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Several previous studies have examined the challenges of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. The first study by Reza et al., (2023) conducted a study entitled Challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for EFL Teachers. The study involved middle school teachers and high school teachers. This study discusses common difficulties English teachers face in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka, such as difficulty understanding the Kurikulum Merdeka, insufficient IT proficiency, difficulty translating CP, TP and ATP in the Kurikulum Merdeka, difficulty in creating teaching modules, no adequate government support, difficulties due to different students' backgrounds, financial constraints, lack of facilities or resources, difficulty in understanding and applying differentiated learning, time allocation and management.

The second study (Pratiwi et al., 2023) entitled The Teacher's Obstacles in Implementing The Merdeka Curriculum in Teaching English at Primary Schools in Pacitan. The study aims to determine the challenges that the Merdeka curriculum implementation faces. The research results show that many teachers need help implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. These challenges are the absence of English teachers, increasing teacher load, low teacher competency, students' poor English language skills and inadequate facilities.

Another study conducted by Rohim & Rigianti (2023), Obstacle of Grade VI Teacher in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka in Elementary School. The research aims to identify the obstacles in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SDN 31 Tanjungpandan, focusing on the readiness of teachers in terms of their knowledge and skills related to Kurikulum Merdeka, as well as the school's role in supporting the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka. The results show that there is a challenge in implementing the Independent Curriculum due to the lack of independent curriculum training, so understanding of making teaching materials is lacking, some teachers experience difficulty in the learning process because of difficulty finding learning material and media that suit the Kurikulum Merdeka.

From the previous study and the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are only a few studies that have examined the implementation of English language teaching using the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools and there has been no research on the challenges faced by English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, the researchers decided to use this opportunity as the research subject. This research investigates the challenges that English teachers in Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School face in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka and how Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School English teachers overcome these challenges.

Research question :

1. What challenges did Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School English teachers face in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka?

2. How did Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School's English teacher overcome these challenges?

By identifying the problems teachers face, learning ineffectiveness can be reduced, and learning goals can be achieved. In addition, this study can help school institutions improve the quality of teachers in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka, especially English teachers, school principals, teacher educators, and other education departments.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Sakkir et al. (2021), qualitative research is a research approach with qualitative and descriptive data. Qualitative research aims to describe phenomena comprehensively and accurately. Therefore, the research uses qualitative techniques to describe the challenges Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School English teachers face in implementing the Merdeka curriculum and how they face the challenges in depth, comprehensively, and accurately. This research was conducted at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School. Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, located in Jl. Purwodiningratan No.902 C, Ngampilan, Kota Yogyakarta, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55261. This school has implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka.

According to Arikunto, as cited by Amin et al. (2023), the population is all research elements, including objects and subjects with specific characteristics and traits. The population of this research were all English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School. Meanwhile, according to Amin et al. (2023), part of the population that is the actual data source in research is the sample. The research sample is two English teachers from Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School. The two English teachers teach lower and upper grades respectively. This research used purposive sampling. According to Firmansyah et al. (2022) deliberately selecting certain people or events to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices is known as purposive or judgmental sampling. The criteria are that the participant is an English teacher at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School and implementing Kurikulum Merdeka.

Data collection techniques, using interviews. Researchers use semi-structured interviews to collect data to obtain comprehensive and easy-to-understand participant responses. The research instrument is an interview guide. According to Pujastwa (2016), a planned interview must be accompanied by an interview guide in the form of a list of previously prepared questions. The interview was conducted to find out the challenge faced by English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School in implementing the independent curriculum.

This study uses the Miles and Huberman model method for data analysis. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the three most essential steps in data collection are reduction, analysis, and verification (Ainiyah et al., 2023). Data reduction is the process of condensing or identifying the essential information. Data analysis combines structured data that makes it possible to identify trends and generate insights. The presentation is a brief explanation chart, or correlation between groups, as given in narrative form in qualitative research. Data collection aims to help researchers understand what is happening so they can analyze the data further. The next step in the information-gathering process is developing and validating the data.

3. Findings and Discussion

The interviews revealed that English teachers at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School experienced several challenges in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka and had several ways to overcome these challenges.

3.1. Teacher load increases

Based on interviews with English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, some teachers feel their burden has increased because of Kurikulum Merdeka. The burden of teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, which is a challenge in teaching English in this Kurikulum Merdeka, is that English teachers in teaching using this Kurikulum Merdeka teacher must be creative in providing teaching materials and LKPD that are suitable for students

learning styles and abilities. This statement is reflected in their answers in the interview. This challenge experienced by teachers in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka is in line with the results of Pratiwi et al. (2023) which is increasing teacher load.

*"Then, does an independent curriculum increase the teacher's burden? Actually, from an assessment perspective, it makes it easier, but from a teaching and learning perspective. It is enough to test teacher creativity. With the various learning styles and abilities of students, we are asked to provide teaching materials and LKPD according to each character and ability." **Teacher A***

In the Kurikulum Merdeka, a teacher must be more creative in providing teaching materials and LKPD because the Kurikulum Merdeka lessons are differentiated learning. Differentiated learning is a method in which the teacher accommodates, serves and recognizes the diversity of students according to their readiness, interest and learning style. This aligns with the theory of Angga et al. (2022) in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, teachers must be creative in learning methods, media, and techniques and changes in the teacher's mindset about learning.

Therefore, teachers must be more creative in providing teaching materials and LKPD to suit different students' characters, learning styles and abilities. LKPD is a student worksheet that is a guide that students use to perform problem-solving or investigation tasks. This also follows the theory of Jannah et al. (2022) that there is a problem in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Educators are expected to be more creative in compiling teaching modules, learning flows and objectives.

To overcome challenges to providing teaching material and LKPD according to each character and ability, the English teacher at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School applies different learning models with various teaching materials at each meeting. Besides that, teacher A also uses creativity in teaching material and LKPD. In the interview, teacher A explained how overcoming challenges in providing teaching material and LKPD depends on character, learning style, and abilities. As a teacher, she must be creative because of the differences in the characters of different students, learning styles, and abilities of the students. Therefore, if students want to avoid writing and reading, she uses songs as teaching material. According to Ranuntu and Tulung (2018), with songs, students will be happy and understand the material presented more efficiently.

*"Because students have different learning styles. Some students can't sit still, some have to use teaching media, some are bored with writing all the time, and some like watching videos. It struggles. To overcome it usually, one subject, for example English, is only one weekly meeting. One meeting has two hours of lessons. In a month there are 4 meetings and from The 4 x meetings what must be achieved in the 4 meetings. I'll share it later. For example, in the meeting one is no one wrote. The material is introduced. The student will given a video show or something in the first week. The second meeting introduces how to write, namely how to recognize vocabulary. Like how to write cat? How to write rabbit?. The second meeting usually involves writing and reading. Students are called one by one to read, and students are called one by one to write. Try reading what is written here. How does it sound?. Even if it's wrong, correct it. Later, at the third meeting, we usually start to complete sentences, for example, rabbits, and then there are letters missing. What letter is it? So start memorizing. Then, the last 4th week goes into the summative. So we have to divide it per meeting so that we don't end up having to do just the same thing." **Teacher A***

*"I am still learning to be a creative teacher because sometimes the students demand it. Demanding means no liking to write, some don't like to write and want to read because they can't. So teachers have to be intelligent and clever to deal with it. For example, if the student wanted to read, I gave the student the song's lyrics and told them to memorize it. After memorizing it, I asked the students to practice in front of the class. If one student doesn't dare, then two or three students do. From there I can see whether they are fluent or not." **Teacher A***

3.2. Differentiated learning

According to the theory of Tomlinson (2001) as cited by Trisno (2023) and Wulandari (2022) differentiated learning is a learning method in which teachers accommodate, serve and acknowledge

the diversity of students according to their readiness, interests and learning styles. This adjustment involves students' interests, learning profile and readiness to achieve better learning outcomes. In implementing differential learning at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, the English teacher experienced several challenges.

"Yes, that's right. Now, differentiated learning is already a challenge for me. Because my focus becomes a lot. Thinking about student interests, student learning styles and student achievements/abilities. At one time, I have to be able to create or apply various learning models in the classroom. Even then, if it goes well. Sometimes, when I group students based on their learning style or by considering the student's abilities, there will be children who refuse to be in that group. Moreover, I hold lower grades, grades 1, 2 and 3. The simplest way of implementation is grouped. As mentioned, they are grouped based on students' abilities, learning styles, and interests. The challenge is more about how to condition students, it is difficult to adjust the needs of students, and also because 1 class is handled by 1 teacher, it is sometimes overwhelming. In addition, although the evaluation method is generally more straightforward, because of the differences in student abilities, it makes the assessment standards more difficult." **Teacher A**

"This is learning that we look at the needs of students. For example, there are auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. students. We will have to facilitate everything. But for a time maybe we can move for example there are children who ... We give... For example, we ask them to solve 10 questions. The speed of children finishing is different. So sometimes children go at different speeds or they finish quickly and after that many of their friends have not finished. Then the child who finishes quickly we have to give another task. Because if not, he will go around the class, and walk around. So sometimes some have finished the second question. We give them more. So it's not equalized. It's the same with slow children. With slow children, sometimes here some children are slow learners. So they can't speak English. So I usually only give copying tasks. So the child just copies. Because there aren't any special children here. So we just tell them to copy this. Because if you can't even do this... Even reading is still difficult. Because if the students' curricula also have to go up. Whether he can read or not, he has to go up anyway. So for children like that, we just copy it. For fast children, we give them more work. Like that usually. The difficulty is time. Because some are fast, some are slow. So the delivery of the material is not complete. So for really fast children, it can be finished. But for the ones who are less, the material is not delivered in full." **Teacher B**

From the statements of the interview, the challenges experienced by English teachers at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School in conducting differentiated learning are creating or applying various learning models, lack of time, how to condition students and complex assessments. Teacher A experienced a challenge create or apply various learning models, how to condition students and difficulties in assessment. To overcome the challenge of creating or applying various learning models, teacher A implemented a different learning model in every meeting because each student has a different character and ability. This is done so that students do not get bored. This is also in line with the meaning of differentiated learning as stated by Tomlinson (2001) as cited by Trisno (2023) and Wulandari (2022) that differentiated learning is a learning method in which teachers accommodate, serve and acknowledge the diversity of students according to their readiness, interests and learning styles. The learning model differs because it adjusts to diverse students according to readiness, interests, and learning style.

"Maybe it's almost the same as before, every meeting is made with a different learning model. Sometimes writing does the exercises. For example in the third meeting, it completes the word. Because yesterday the student worked individually then later in the third meeting I asked the student to work in a group." **Teacher A**

Additionally, Teacher A experiences challenges controlling students during the learning process. According to Utama (2016) the success of teachers in learning is not only seen from the ability to master the material, strategies, method and the use of learning media in the learning process but the teacher must have the ability to organize the learning atmosphere, encourage the student to learn,

utilize learning tools and media and control a pleasant classroom atmosphere to achieve learning goals. This ability is known as classroom management. Therefore, to overcome the challenges of conditioning students, Teacher A conditions them by giving them understanding and sometimes allowing students to choose their group members, but still according to the criteria given by the Teacher.

“For the problem of students who do not want to be in the group determined by the teacher. That could be because one student does not fit in with another student because they are crowded or lack understanding. How to overcome it is slowly giving the understanding that this is still a learning process. So it's okay to learn with friends. Sharing knowledge with friends. Of course, it also depends on the teacher's help and supervision, especially for low grades. I also give the student to choose their group. For example, in three meetings, two meeting the group is chosen by the teacher and in one meeting, the children are free to choose, but there are still criteria. The criteria are it cannot be all girls. There must be two or three boys. If it is all girls, usually the boys have difficulties when they are asked to make a table or write. They chat more and joke around. So there must still be equal gender group members.” **Teacher A**

Next, to overcome the difficulty of the assessment, teacher A creates assessment questions that contain easy and difficult questions. The easy questions usually use pictures to make it easier for students to answer.

“Ya, sometimes if we give an assessment, if we give it difficult then children who are less capable in the sense of less knowledge will score badly but from some children who may have been able to run in the quote they have master English, the assessment is easy. I overcame this challenge by, for example, there are 10 multiple choice. I made it some are difficult and some are just based on pictures. But there are also those that, for example, have a description sentence and then there is a choice of picture based on the description. So the student will choose the picture based on the description, and which animal to address. It needs reasoning and English vocabulary. So it can be more challenging for children who may have good English.” **Teacher A**

Apart from that, Teacher B experiences challenges in implementing differentiated learning, which is students' differences in understanding the material due to a lack of time in the learning process. Teacher B does peer teaching and gives differentiated tasks to overcome this challenge. Smart children teach children who are still struggling to work or understand. The assignment is also based on the child's ability. According to Hertavi & Kesaulya (2020), the peer teaching-learning method can overcome problems due to lack of time.

“In the class, there are differences in understanding the material. Usually for the smart ones. I have several options. Firstly, when they finish understanding the material and then there is an assignment, they finish quickly. So I give them additionnal assignment. However, sometimes it is also like peer tutoring. Sometimes, I ask the intelligent student to help their friends who are still lacking. However, sometimes, some students still have difficulty in reading and writing. For students like that, I usually differentiated the task. I do not equate them. For example, it is enough for them to copy the writing because in the Kurikulum Merdeka, we cannot force student/s achievements.” **Teacher B**

3.3. Learning Media

In implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, teachers must be creative in learning methods, media, and techniques and changes in the teacher's mindset about carrying out learning (Angga et al., 2022). From the results of interviews with both English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School, one teacher is experiencing challenges in providing learning media.

“The teaching media that I often use include flashcards, PPT, and sometimes videos. If there are obstacles or constraints, for example, it is difficult to find videos that suit the capacity and duration of the KBM. For example, I want to find a video about animal names, but on average there are too many animals introduced, while children only need to know

10-15 animals that they often see. In addition, sometimes the duration of the video is too long. For flashcards, the obstacle is the making and the time, so there are some materials for which I make the flashcards myself." **Teacher A**

From the interview result, one of the two English teachers at Purwodiningratan Muhammadiyah Elementary School experienced challenges in learning media. The challenge is finding videos that suit the capacity and duration of the KBM and the time-making flashcard; because of this difficulty, teacher A sorted out material suitable for elementary school children and cut the duration of the video.

"There are many videos, there are many videos on YouTube that can be used but it is difficult to adjust to the material in the book. For example, in the book, the vocabulary about family members is only ten but on YouTube the average is already 20-30 were is too many for an elementary school size. So it is quite difficult to sort it out even though I have used elementary school keywords but sometimes there are still many vocabulary words that exceed the vocabulary of elementary school children. So that is my difficulty. I want to make it by myself, but I the difficulties in time. It's better to take it on YouTube but that's the minus. Sometimes I cut it, for example when the YouTube video is 7 minutes long. Seven minutes and then I cut the last 2 minutes of the difficult vocabulary. So only the first five minutes are aired." **Teacher A**

For the challenge of making flashcards, teacher A also sorts out the material to be made into flashcards. However, if it is impossible, teacher A replaces the learning media with pictures or other learning media.

"The way to overcome is sometimes I try to buy it but.... It's an investment for me, but not all materials can be. For example, a job. If it's a profession, the picture is small. If the picture of the children's work is not very visible if I want to make flashcards about work just show it instead of making flashcards. I sort out which materials could be more easily made into flashcard, so I made them. If not, I show it using projector." **Teacher A**

3.4. Student Participation

According to Heriyati's (2022) theory, the Independent Curriculum is based on student-centered learning (SCL). So, students are expected to be more active in learning. As an active student, will make learning run optimally. From the interview results, some students need more motivation to learn English. Low motivation to learn English makes English learning not optimal and impacts understanding and learning outcomes in class. According to Teacher A, student participation is low because they are bored. This is in line with Cahyati & Madya (2019), that egocentric, imaginative, active, selfish, quickly bored, difficulty distinguishing between concrete and abstract things, low concentration, liking to do their tasks, and enjoying learning new things are the characteristics of elementary school learners. Meanwhile, according to Teacher B, low motivation to learn English is also caused by English learning being placed in the afternoon when students are tired. This is a challenge for teachers because teachers must be more creative in delivering the material, as shown in the interview results.

"If student participation is lacking, I think maybe the student is bored. The student is bored with the class activities. It is just the same thing, so it must be boring. No doubt I must have been like that too. Once, the student said, "Why is the lesson always written? Sometimes, the teacher does not realize that been writing all the time. So when I asked the student to do something in front of the class to write, the student said, " I do not want to; I am bored because I keep writing. " **Teacher A**

"Yes, there are obstacles, because the English hour is often placed at the end of the lesson/afternoon, so children are sometimes already sleepy, and tired." **Teacher B**

Student participation is a challenge when implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. This aligns with the study's results (Falah et al., 2023). Teacher B is frequently ice-breaking and switching classes to overcome the challenge because student participation is low. Ice breaking can increase student motivation in learning. As stated by Harianja & Sapri (2022), benefits learning by making the

atmosphere fun and conducive and arousing student interest and motivation. With increased interest and motivation in learning, student participation will also increase.

"Ya, usually I give the student ice breaking. Then how to get the child to move. Sometimes I move the class, for example to the library. Move the place to study so the learning is not in the classroom. There are many places here. Many places can be an option besides the classroom, for example in the library, sometimes to the canteen. So let the children move the point. If you move, the student won't be sleepy." Teacher B.

Besides that, Teacher A overcame the challenge of student participation by learning through play and storytelling. According to Debora & Syeba (2023) learning that can increase student learning motivation to learn English is by playing games. The result of the interview by Teacher A supports this:

"I have to think about how to do it. If the activity was already written, then what is the next activity? Maybe tell stories in front of the class, or the teacher can tell stories too. Moreover, I am a lower-grade teacher, so I do the whole lesson in 2 hours. There must be play, chatting or storytelling." Teacher A

3.5. Time allocation

English and Local Content are elective subjects. These subjects have a maximum lesson time of 2 JP/week or 72 JP/year. English and local content are chosen as elective subjects, and no more than 2 JP each week or 72 JP a year (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). In this case, English teachers at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School experience obstacles due to the limited time. This situation is a challenge in teaching English in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Due to the lack of learning time, the learning material needs to be delivered optimally.

"In terms of time, plus and minus, because sometimes in some classes that need more assistance, 2JP (70 minutes) is not enough, not to mention if it cuts into the break, so the material/activities are lagging" Teacher A

"Less hours, less time. So the material is not conveyed in its entirety. So even though the material is only a little, if the time is also small, it's difficult." Teacher B

Time allocation is a challenge when implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, which aligns with the study results (Reza et al., 2023). Therefore, to overcome the limited time challenge, the teacher gives students summaries of the material through social media, such as WhatsApp. In this case, the role of parents is needed. Parents can help their children learn from home because they act as teachers at home (Sari & Ain, 2023).

"The way to overcome it is I give them a summary of the learning material through WhatsApp group. For example after today's learning. On Wednesdays, the learning in the class is..... I will convey this to the group. Sometimes some have not finished writing even though the learning time is over and then change to another lesson, I send it to the group, and then the parents will check the notebook for those who have not finished writing this material. For homework, even though in the class I have ark the homework the students sometimes forget. I reminded them again in the group. So the function of the group, for me personally as a subject teacher is to convey information like that." Teacher A

Apart from that, teacher B overcame the challenge of limited time by explaining the material first. Then, if there is spare time, the practice is done. Her statement in the interview proved it.

"About time, the limit of time. Usually, if the material is not finished there is also exercise. I compact the material first. The exercise will be practiced if there is spare time left, but if the time is limited the important thing is that the material has been conveyed." Teacher B

3.6. Outing Class.

Muhammadiyah Prurwodiningratan implement outing class. However, there is a challenge faced by the English teacher at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School in implementing outing classes in the English learning subject. The first challenge is that the school is in the middle of

the city, making it difficult for teachers to maintain or condition students. This is in line with Nababan et al. (2023) that outing class requires more preparation and, in its implementation requires more attention to maintain and control the students.

"The new challenge is the location of the school in the center of town. On the other hand, for example, if I want an out class. There are many places close to the school, such as museums, markets or public places like that. But on the other hand, because it is in the middle of the city if we want to outing class we have to be careful because there are many vehicles and a crowded street. For example want to go out for an outingclass, we have to invite another teacher. So outing class is not possible." **Teacher B**

In addition to the challenges due to the school's location, there is also a lack of time and permission. Outing classes in specific subjects are not yet running, but the school conducts outing classes without specific subjects.

"We wanted to hunt tourists, for example to Malioboro. It was not possible because there were, many things. There was no competition. we also could because the English subject time is limited. It's only one hour. So it was included in the program because it was not prohibited. We have to find a moment. We had planned an outing class but it wasn't possible so we bring overseas students here." **Teacher B**

To overcome some challenges in implementing the outing class, the English teacher at Muhammadiyah Purwodiningratan Elementary School utilizes outgoing classes organized by the school. However, the teacher still gives English assignments to students about the places visited and invites international students.

"There is an outing class that is scheduled but it is not from the subject teacher. It is already on the schedule. For example for the first semester, grades one to three will go to outing class. So we take advantage of it. For example, if the outing is to the zoo we also give English assignments. So that it can be slipped in too." **Teacher B**

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the challenges experienced by the English teacher at Muhammadiyah Purwidiningratan Elementary School are increased teacher workload, implementation of differentiated learning, learning media, student participation, time allocation, and outing class. To overcome the challenge they overcome it by increaasing creativity by implement different teaching model in every meeting, teachers must be more creative in providing teaching materials and LKPD to suit different students' characters, learning styles and abilities, giving the student understanding and sometimes allowing the student to choose their group member according to the criteria given by the teacher, creating assessment questions that contain an easy and complex question, does peer teaching and differentiated task, by shorted out the material suitable for elementary school children and cut the duration of the video, shorting out the material to be made into flashcards, and, if it is not possible to make flashcards, the teacher replaced the learning media, the teacher frequently does ice-breaking, switching classes, learning through play and storytelling, the teacher summarizes the material to the students and explains the material first, the teacher utilizes outgoing classes organized by the school but still gives English assignments to students about the place visited and invites international students.

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