



## The Evaluation of English Teachers' Teaching Module of the New Merdeka Curriculum in Senior High School

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### ABSTRACT

This research evaluated the English Teacher's Modul Ajar in Merdeka Curriculum at the SMAN 1 Pamboang, by evaluating the implementation of the principles of essential, interesting, meaningful and challenging, relevant and contextual, and sustainable in its development. The qualitative evaluation of the English Modul Ajar on the Merdeka Curriculum involved document analysis and student interviews, which provided a detailed explanation of the implementation of the development principles for the five English teacher's Modul Ajars. The results provide an in-depth understanding of the application of its development principles, as well as providing diverse perspectives from 52 students regarding the application of these principles in learning. Five English teachers' Modul Ajars, which include Compulsory English for Grades X, XI, and XII and Advanced English for Grades XI and XII, generally have implemented all the principles of Modul Ajar development, with some recommendations for improvement, according to the findings from document analysis. Students offered a variety of viewpoints on how the ideas of Modul Ajars development are applied in the classroom. The majority of pupils believed that English teachers applied concepts of developing principles to their teachings.

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### INTRODUCTION

The academic curriculum found in schools is formal and enforced on students in a top-down process. A learning paradigm called Merdeka Curriculum allows students the freedom to develop their potential and skills via practical, varied, and progressive learning (Restu Rahayu). Merdeka curriculum is a program in Indonesia that aims to give schools and teachers the freedom to adapt the Education Unit Operational Curriculum (KOSP) to the needs of students and local conditions. Schools and teachers can modify their curriculum and teaching strategies to improve the quality of learning. This curriculum provides for the development of future-oriented abilities. Future-oriented qualities such as the Pancasila Learner Profile of faith, belief in God Almighty and good morals, cooperative, global diversity, independence, critical thinking and creativity are prioritized by educators and schools.

Lesson planning is first step before the learning process takes place. It helps teachers to organize their learning process to achieve the expected goals. With a good planning, teachers will be more confident while teaching. Before beginning any teaching or learning activity; teachers must complete a crucial phase called lesson planning. It provides step-by-step instructions on what will be taught, how, and how best to assess pupils' understanding. Modul Ajar is crucial to learning in a Merdeka curriculum. (Raynesa Noor Emiliari: 2019).

Teachers are guided in carrying out learning by the Modul Ajar in the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers that use efficient Modul Ajar can provide learning process in a suitable manner by following simple and organized procedures. By providing a learning process that is essential, interesting, meaningful, challenging, relevant, contextual and continuous learning process, Modul Ajar serve to increase the affectivity of teaching.

Learning objectives are the competencies that learners are expected to have in a learning unit or topic, all of which must be clearly explained in the Modul Ajar. The Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP), which guides the learning process, is the foundation of the Modul Ajar. Implementing Modul Ajar in the Merdeka curriculum closely relates to raising student performance. A well-designed and successfully implemented Modul Ajar can have a considerable positive impact on student performance. The Merdeka curriculum's Modul Ajar organize and systematically convey the learning elements.

Some teachers may face difficulties in planning and implementing lessons based on the Moduls they have created, and some teachers do not fully follow the Modul Ajar set out in the Modul Ajar. Perhaps for various reasons, they tend not to apply the learning and methods that have been previously designed in the Modul Ajar. It is important to evaluate the Modul Ajar that have been implemented into the Merdeka Curriculum, especially for English language subject teachers. This research has purpose that is to find out about the extent to which the content of the Modul Ajar for high school English teachers meets the principles of preparing of Modul Ajar for the Merdeka curriculum and students' perspectives on the application of Modul Ajar development principles in their learning experience.

## METHOD

This study used Descriptive Qualitative research as its approach. This is because the research aims to explain and provide a better understanding of the experiences, thoughts, and viewpoints of teachers and students regarding the creation of Modul Ajar for the Merdeka Curriculum. It also seeks to gain deeper insights into various aspects, and impacts of implementing these Modul Ajar. Moreover, the research explored qualitative aspects of the Modul Ajar, like how effective, engaging, and meaningful they are. Hence, the methodology chosen for this research is qualitative description. Qualitative research is a way of studying things to understand what people experience, like their behaviours, thoughts, motivations, and actions, using descriptions in words and language. It's done in real-life settings and through various natural methods (Rusandi and Muhammad Rusli: 2014).

This research focused on describing a qualitative evaluation of the development of English Modul Ajar for the Merdeka Curriculum at the Senior high school, with a focus on the principles of making Modul Ajar that include essential, interesting, meaningful, and challenging, relevant and contextual, and sustainable. In addition to evaluating the usefulness and quality of Modul Ajar in supporting English learning under the Merdeka Curriculum in Senior high schools, this study intends to know how English teachers construct and implement Modul Ajar with these principles.

The location of this research conducted at SMAN 1 Pamboang that has been applying Merdeka curriculum in Majene Regency for two years. The researcher analyzed Modul Ajar related documents, such as the sequencing of learning objectives in Modul Ajar. This can help guarantee that the Modul Ajar had been properly integrated in order to follow the development guidelines for Modul Ajar. In this instance, the evaluation of the creation of the Modul Ajar was the main focus of the study.

Five Modul Ajars created by English teachers were the subject of a document analysis by academics as part of this study. The goal of this analysis is to determine how closely the Modul Ajar follows to the accepted guidelines for Modul Ajar development. Two randomly chosen learning objectives from each lesson was the major focus. In each learning aim that was examined, the researcher took into account factors like essential, interesting, challenging and meaningful, relevant and contextual, and sustainable.

Interviewing students is one crucial strategy the researcher used to get a comprehensive grasp of their educational experiences. A wide range of students' opinions and impressions of English learning can be covered by the researcher by interviewing two students from each class for Compulsory English and two students from classes having Advanced English, a total of 19 classes. The use of random sampling in the data collection method helps to assure fairness and representativeness. Students were guided to express their opinions specifically regarding the quality of learning they receive.

One primary group participated in the study that served as the data sources. Students, who are at the centre of the learning process, make up the category of informants. Their views and comments offer a student-centered perspective, outlining how the Modul Ajar affected their learning process. Interviews with students explained on how well the Moduls engaged them, were relevant, and improved their language learning process. A comprehensive and all-encompassing knowledge of this research's focus on evaluating the development of English language Modul Ajars in the Merdeka Curriculum were provided by the viewpoints of students.

Document selection is the first step in the process of gathering data for Modul Ajar through document analysis. In order to identify and comprehend the principles of making Modul Ajar that have been described in the research title, namely essential, interesting, meaningful and challenging, relevant and contextual, and

sustainable, researcher analysed a number of Modul Ajar that have been prepared by English teachers in the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in high schools.

According to Sugiono, interviews are used as a data collection technique if you want to conduct a first study to find problems that must be researched, and also if the researcher wants to know things from respondents that are more in-depth and the number of respondents is small (Herlinda Mar'atusholihah: 2019).

Learning about using the Modul Ajar in English language learning, students were given an interview that is created just for them. The interview included questions about how much students feel the development principles outlined in the research title have been reached by the Modul Ajar.

The analysis of the study centered on these Modul Ajar. Each Modul Ajar was thoroughly examined by the researcher, with an emphasis on the principles of Modul Ajar creation. The applicability of each concept in the Modul Ajar was determined, and the findings of the analysis are categorized according to the principles of Modul Ajar creation. The extent to which the Modul Ajar had reflected or not reflected these concepts are indicated by the research findings. The researcher also explained in detail the results of the document analysis.

The interview was completed by students based on their prior experiences. The interview's questions examined how much the learning activities reflect the principles. Data from the interview was examined subjectively and descriptively when it had been gathered. The researcher noted how each Modul Ajar development principle was received by students.

Researcher gathered information relevant to their objectives, including evaluating the English Modul Ajars created for Merdeka High School Curriculum. This stage primarily focused on and distills the data obtained using interviews and document analysis of the Modul Ajar. Finding the answers from the interviews that are most relevant to the study questions regarding the construction of the Modul Ajar is necessary. This may require reviewing the content that best fits the principles to be assessed in the analysis of the Modul Ajar documents. After screening, the selected data was categorized according to the guiding principles of the Modul Ajar development.

Narrative format displaying answers from students can be used to organize findings from questions relating to the principles of Modul Ajar development (essential, interesting, meaningful, challenging, relevant and contextual, and sustainable). This helped them understand how the Modul Ajar relates to these principles in their minds. When the Modul Ajars are the subject of document analysis, data presentation may include direct quotes from the Modul Ajar relating to the principles of Modul Ajar development. The quotes, which show how each principle is applied across the Modul Ajars, can be presented in narrative form.

Researcher formulated conclusions based on what they learn from looking at Modul Ajar and interview data. This analysis of the Modul Ajar's application of the criteria for creating essential, interesting, meaningful, challenging, relevant and contextual, and sustainable Modul Ajar was included in the conclusion

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the document analysis of the English Modul Ajar, the compulsory English modules for grade X manage to present basic ideas well, provide students with opportunities to practice English in various contexts, and provide activities tailored to students' ability levels. The English modules for grades XI and XII also manage to convey the basic ideas of English effectively, with emphasis on important topics such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. However, there were some views regarding the clarity of the presentation of basic concepts in the Grade XI and XII modules that indicated a need for improvement in the understanding and detailed presentation of basic English concepts. All Teaching Modules demonstrate a strong commitment to providing a well-rounded learning experience for students, with a range of approaches and methods that support the understanding of key concepts in English language learning.

Regarding the application of essential principles in English learning, the results show that there are differences in students' understanding of the basic concepts taught based on interviews with students. Although most students claimed to understand the basic concepts well, some students said that they still need to improve their understanding. Nevertheless, in general, the teacher's approach of providing detailed explanations, relevant tasks, as well as concrete examples has a positive impact on improving students' understanding of English materials, especially in the learning of Advanced English grade XII. Students' speaking ability is also greatly influenced by their understanding of the basic concepts taught in Merdeka Curriculum. This shows that the application of essential principles has a significant impact in improving students' ability in speaking and other language skills. Overall, factors such as interesting learning methods, clear teacher explanations, and a comfortable learning environment also greatly influence students' understanding of Basic English concepts.

This result demonstrates how crucial it is to start teaching fundamental ideas early on in English language instruction. Emphasizing the relevance of teachers' delivery skills in helping students understand complicated topics is implied by a learning paradigm that places a strong emphasis on the clear and detailed presentation of fundamental ideas. Effective English language acquisition also depends on teachers' capacity in detail explain topics and offer real-world examples. These findings demonstrate that a major factor in

raising students' proficiency levels in English language learning is the application of fundamental concepts. This emphasizes how crucial it is to use a comprehensive strategy that incorporates the ideas of clear delivery, suitable learning environments, and interesting learning to help students grasp fundamental English concepts.

Max Wertheimer was one of the pioneers of cognitive theory, particularly Gestalt theory, and he concentrated on observation and problem solving. The idea of transfer in the learning process is one of the key ways that Gestalt theory is applied in a learning environment. When knowledge or behavioural patterns taken in one learning environment may be applied to other similar or unrelated contexts, this is known as learning transfer (Rovi Pahliwandari: 2016). This happens when students grasp the fundamental ideas behind ideas and are able to use those ideas to overcome related problems or new circumstances. In order for students to apply the knowledge they acquire to other situations in their lives, it is crucial that teachers assist students in understanding the fundamentals of the content being taught in the classroom.

From the document analysis of the English Modul Ajar for each grade level, the modules consistently apply the principles of interesting, meaningful and challenging learning. Each module reflects a strong effort to provide learning experiences that are interesting, relevant and encourage students to think critically and improve their English language skills. The modules also adapt to students' level of understanding and provide opportunities for students of different ability levels to learn in the way that suits them best. With a variety of learning strategies, such as the use of games, contextual presentations, competitions, group discussions, as well as student engagement, the modules actively assist students in acquiring English language proficiency in a hands-on manner.

The implementation of the principles of interesting, meaningful and challenging in English learning significantly affected students' engagement and interest based on the interviews with the students. Teaching presenting a relaxed, humorous atmosphere, as well as unconventional teaching methods such as interesting explanations, practical exercises, and fun activities, is positively valued by students. They showed high interest in English learning, especially in terms of conversation, group projects and unusual teaching techniques. This shows that students' motivation in the learning process is greatly influenced by the methods and strategies used by teachers. However, some students also face difficulties in certain aspects such as writing skills, conversation, and correct pronunciation in English. In conclusion, prior experience or knowledge in English affects students' understanding of the current learning materials, but the impact varies among students.

The consequences of these findings show that students' engagement and enthusiasm in learning are significantly impacted when engaging, meaningful, and challenging learning concepts are applied in English language Modul Ajar. The comprehensive development of English language proficiency is supported by the application of a variety of teaching techniques, including the use of games, contextual presentations, contests, group discussions, and active student participation. The findings demonstrate the importance of creative and dynamic learning approaches to maintain students' interest in the English learning process. The application of teaching techniques that promote a relaxed atmosphere, unconventional teaching methods, and approaches that emphasize conversations, group projects, and unique teaching techniques, shows how important the teacher's role is in designing interesting and meaningful learning. However, the findings also highlight that some students have difficulties in certain aspects, such as writing skills, conversation, and correct pronunciation in English. This indicates the importance of a differentiated approach in addressing students' individual needs to support their success in learning English.

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory, a person experiences a condition of mind in which they are fully engaged and focused on a difficult however manageable task (Ihan Martoyo: 2018). Students enter a condition of flow in the learning process when they feel deeply involved, and concentrated, in the tasks being completed. This syndrome frequently lowers anxiety, increases intrinsic motivation and improves the quality of learning outcomes. Students are more likely to be motivated, attentive, and involved in the learning process when learning is structured to produce a flow experience. This can increase the effectiveness of the learning process. This shows how important it is to provide learning that is interesting, demanding and appropriate to the students' ability level to grow the best learning environment.

Linguist Stephen Krashen is famous for his Theory of Language Acquisition. The best way to learn a language, according to Krashen, is through "comprehensible input". He claims that presentation of language that is only a bit above one's current level of comprehension but still understandable will result in an efficient language acquisition process (Andri Warseto). Krashen's concept of "comprehensible input" highlights the need to introduce a person to language that is a bit above their current language proficiency. This may require the use of new vocabulary or structures that are a little more complicated than what one is already familiar with, but still understandable with the help of the right context or presentation.

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "flow" is a condition of mind that arises when a person is completely absorbed in what they are doing (Ihan Martoyo). People who are completely concentrated on an activity will experience deep excitement when they are in a "moment of flow". The feeling of flow in a learning environment can play an important role in developing a positive learning environment, especially

when the learning content is complex or challenging.

The English Modul Ajar has successfully applied the relevant and contextual principles in its development based on the results of the document analysis. The teachers have thoughtfully integrated the learning materials with students' knowledge and experience, showing their awareness of students' diverse knowledge with the division of learning groups according to their respective needs. In learning, the use of different resources and techniques has been applied to align learning with students' needs. Students are also involved in real-world experiences, enriching their learning process. Although there are some parts of the module that do not adequately describe the strategies or tactics used, in general, the module has successfully integrated local resources and students' context into the learning materials, making learning more relevant and contextual for students.

The majority of students felt significant benefits from using real situations or experiences in English learning. They felt an increase in comprehension and stated that the application of this method helped them understand the material. Although there are slight differences among the experiences of each student, in general the use of real situations or experiences in the context of English learning provides great benefits in the understanding of the material.

These research' results highlight how crucial real-world experiences are while learning a language, including English. These methods place a strong emphasis on applying actual circumstances to help students better understand the concepts being covered in class. The application of real-world experiences in English language instruction improves students' comprehension of the subject matter. The results of the interviews indicate that by giving students a more authentic and pertinent background, this approach improves their understanding of the material. More generally, students are better able to connect English concepts to their everyday lives when real-world experiences are integrated into the learning process. Students' comprehension of the subject matter is enhanced, and learning motivation and relevancy are also raised as a result. By enabling students to connect theory with practical application, this approach's implementation enhances their educational experience and may better prepare them to handle obstacles in the real world.

According to Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development, social interactions and cultural background play a crucial part in shaping an individual's cognitive capacities (Jum Anidar). This idea highlights the significance of learning environments that support rich social interactions and foster cognitive growth in the context of relevant and contextual learning. The goal of relevant and contextual education is to make learning directly connected to what students face on a daily life. This method validates the idea that pupils can acquire knowledge more effectively through constructive social interactions, according to Vygotsky's viewpoint.

The learning activities run smoothly and are appropriate to the students' learning phases. Students from grades X to XII can participate in a variety of activities in this module, which are in line with the Learning Outcomes published by the Central Government. Learning also adapts to each student's readiness and learning style. The module is designed with student learning development in mind, which is evident from the relationship between learning activities and student development. Specific measures that consider each student's unique learning needs include grouping students into small groups and differentiating learning materials. By using this method, the module ensures that each student receives exercises according to their ability level, allowing them to progress in English learning more successfully.

The majority of students see a connection between the learning flow taught by the teacher and the general learning stages they experience. Most students from different grades expressed a good opinion about the connection between their learning stages and the teacher's teaching flow. However, some students highlighted inor inconsistencies in the relationship, indicating to diverse learning opportunities and room for improvement in the synchronization of learning flow with students' stages of learning. This suggests that the application of the continuum principle in English language learning has had a positive impact, although there is room for improved consistency in the relationship between the curriculum and students' learning experiences.

This finding shows the importance of continuity in English language teaching, which is in line with the Continual Learning Theory. This theory emphasizes that learning that is closely linked to students' previous experiences will be more successful. The implication of this finding highlights that, while most students see a link between the teacher's teaching methods and their stages of learning, there is room to improve consistency in that link. The results showed that students perceived the benefits of this linkage, despite despite some mismatches were pointed out. This confirms the need for a more consistent approach in linking teaching methods to students' learning stages to achieve better learning outcomes. The results emphasize the necessity of continuous assessments of both teaching and learning in order to make sure that instructional methods are appropriate for the developmental phases of each student. This highlights how crucial it is to have a curriculum that is flexible and sensitive to the requirements of the students, and how learning effectiveness may be increased by maintaining a consistent relationship between teaching strategies and the phases at which students are learning.

In the context of classroom learning, Piaget's theory highlights that while everyone experiences the same phases of cognitive development, they do so at varying rates (Tri Yuni Hendrowati: 2015). This implies

that while the developmental phases are the same, every kid will arrive at that level at a unique rhythm or pace. This point of view implies that individual variances in developmental progress must be acknowledged in the learning context. While each student may have the same end goal in mind, their path to that achievement may differ.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers have applied the Essential principles in the development of Modul Ajar well, although there is still room for improvement. In learning, Teachers have also applied the Essential principles by providing detailed explanations, relevant tasks, and concrete examples, which generally have a positive impact on students' understanding of English materials.

The concepts of Interesting, Meaningful, and Challenging have been effectively implemented by teachers in the creation of the Modul Ajar . This learning process demonstrates consistently how hard work has gone into providing students with engaging, meaningful and challenging learning opportunities and ways to improve their English language skills. Even if some students found studying challenging in certain areas, the application of these principles also had an impact on students' motivation and involvement in learning English.

Teachers have successfully applied the principles of Relevant and Contextual in the development of Modul Ajar and English language learning. In the development of Modul Ajar , teachers wisely integrate learning materials with students' knowledge and experience, and pay attention to students' learning needs by grouping them according to their individual needs. The use of diverse resources and techniques has also been applied, while students engage in real-world experiences that enrich the learning process. This makes learning more relevant and meaningful for students.

Teachers have developed Modul Ajar and English language instruction using the sustainability principle. The Modul Ajar is made to give a range of activities that are appropriate for every student, match learning activities with their developmental phases, and take into account each student's unique learning needs by grouping and differentiating learning materials. However, some students showed small differences in these relationships, indicating an opportunity to be more organized in how the curriculum and student experiences are related.

There is room for further improvement in the consistency of the relationship between the curriculum and students' learning experiences.

Further improvements need to be made in the application of the Essential principles by providing more detailed explanations, more relevant tasks, and more concrete examples. This will further improve students' understanding of English language materials.

Applying the ideas of Interesting, Meaningful, and Challenging to the development of instructional modules requires more focus. Even if these ideas have been well implemented, there should be more opportunities for students to improve their English through challenging but interesting educational experiences.

The use of Relevant and Contextual principles needs to be emphasized more in the development of Modul Ajar. Teachers can be wiser in integrating learning materials with students' knowledge and experience, as well as paying attention to individual students' learning needs. The utilization of various learning resources and techniques, as well as real experiences in the learning process, will further enrich students' learning experiences.

It will take more work to include the sustainability idea into the creation of lesson plans and English language instruction. Modul Ajar s must be created with each student's developmental stage in mind, taking into account their individual learning requirements and providing activities that are appropriate for them. It is important to prioritize creating a more synchronous relationship between the curriculum and the student experience.

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