MERDEKA MENGAJAR PLATFORM IN ELT OF MPLEMENTING KURIKULUM MERDEKA AT SMKN 1 TORAJA UTARA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to find out what the challenges and opportunities are for English teachers in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The background of this research is that as a new platform, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform requires quick adaptation from teachers, but the problem is that currently in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform there are still many teachers who are confused about implementing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach and collected data through interviews and observation. Interview data was obtained from 3 English teachers.

The results of this research are based on the findings that the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform really helps English teachers in creating creative modules and teaching methods in teaching English, becoming content creators or English tutors because in PMM there are lots of inspirational videos, increase teacher competency and have more freedom in teaching students based on their needs and interests. Apart from that, there are also opportunities in using PMM, there are also challenges such as technical challenges no training routine, time management, and unstable internet connection, the teaching module in PMM is not yet available so that the completeness and implementation of PMM features is still low. In the research, it was also found several ways English teachers overcome challenges and how they maximize opportunities in using PMM.

Keyterms :Challenge,Opportunities,Merdeka Mengajar Platform, Teaching English, Independent Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Merdeka Mengajar Platform is a platform that runs concurrently with the implementation of Independent Curriculum. The Minister of Education and Culture said that the Merdeka Mengajar Platform would be a teachers friend in teaching this platform also help teachers innovate to create appropriate learning challenges of the implementation of Independent Curriculum (Kemendikburistek, 2022).

Minister of Education and Culture, at the launch of the independent curriculum and Merdeka Mengajar Platform on February 11 2022, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is a platform for teachers which was developed into a platform that is not just material and content ministry but also truly owned by teachers, from teachers, and for teachers. So this platform for developing an independent curriculum and also develop learning process to become a better teachers (Rahman, n.d.).

The presence of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform was helped teachers in implementing Independent Curriculum in the classroom and in teaching learning a process. This platform provide learning process starting from preparing lesson plans, student assessments, localization in the form of proof of work and as a place to share experiences through videos because the Merdeka Mengajar Platform provides a place to share videos of teaching learning process experience which can be watched by all teachers who also use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, but in a fact the Merdeka Mengajar Platform need to socialize and introduce to all of the educational institutions in Indonesia because there are differences in the readiness of institutions in implementing the Independent Curriculum which is obstacle in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

As a new platform Merdeka Mengajar Platform need a quick adaptation form the teachers but the problem is in Merdeka Mengajar Platform there are still many teachers today who are confused about applying the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in their

teaching learning process in reality base on the previous study there are so many challenges in implementing Merdeka Mengajar Platform in the independent curriculum which are caused by limited teachers competence such as teachers ability in accessing and applying the PMM features are still low, limited mastery in using technology, mastery of technology in utilizing technological tools to guide the millennial generation in the learning process based on their needs/interest, especially the teacher who not from driving school they will difficult to adapt to the application and there is not training routine in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform so that is why the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is not utilized properly to optimize the implementation of Independent Curriculum concept especially in teaching and learning process .

Therefore the writer in this research was helped the teachers in educational unit especially English teachers to find out about how the English teachers can face the challenges and maximize the opportunities in integrating the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in English Language Teaching based on implementation of the Independent Curriculum. SMKN 1 Toraja Utara is one of the school in North Toraja district which have been implemented an Indepedendent Curriculum. The head master of SMKN 1 Toraja Utara said that SMKN 1 Toraja Utara have been implemented 100 % of the Independent Curriculum in teaching learning process, SMKN 1 Toraja Utara was chosen because this school is one of the centers of excellence school that implementing independent curriculum with the help of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, but the problem is the teachers are not fully using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform optimally, which is caused by several factors.

The writer is interested to find out the other challenges which faced by teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform specifically English teachers and also the writer was found out what are the opportunities in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform so they was share their experience about how to face the

challenges and maximize opportunities in using the   Merdeka Mengajar Platform especially in English Language Teaching.

METHOD

Qualitative research is a type of research which explain and also explores deeper insights into real-world about some problems or phenomena (tenny steven, 2023). Qualitative research method gather participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior through interview, focus groups, and observations. The interview may be unstructured, with open ended questions on a topic and the interviewer adapts to the responses. Structured interviews have a predetermined number of questions that every participant is asked. In this research the writer was used qualitative research method in collecting the data from respondents and the writer was used interview research instrument to get information from respondent. This research was conduct at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara, the sample of this research is the English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara who used Merdeka Mengajar Platform .

RESULT

The goal of this research is to find out the challenges and opportunities faced by English teachers in using the Merdeka Mengajr Platform and also to find out how the English teachers faced the challenges and maximize the opportunities in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform. based on interview with English teachers and observation was doing by the writer, the writer find that:

A. Challenges in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform of Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara.

 1) Technical Challenges

Technical challenges is one of the cause why the teachers still low in accessing and applying the PMM, there are three technical challenges faced by english teachers

in using PMM such as unstable internet connection, there is no training routine and Time Management.

2) Challenges in teaching practice

One of the challenges faced by English techers in using PMM is in teaching practice in classroom the writer find that in the PMM there is the teaching module is still not complete in every phase, and also the school does not have books to support the Independent Curriculum, so that the teachers don't applying the teaching module in PMM.

3) Applying the PMM features is still low

Applying the PMM features is still low is the condition which not use some of the features in PMM so that they don't get the benefit from the feature based on the writer finding there are two feature which still didn't open by the teachers such as teaching toolkit and students assessment feature.

B. Opportunities in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform of Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara

1. Fostering the teachers creativities

By using PMM the teachers become more flexible and can adapted to students needs in teaching English through material and teaching method in PMM which can be implemented in classroom for example by video in proof of work feature the teachers can watched the video and become creative with the teachers ideas so that the students are more interested in learning process.

2. Opening opportunities for English teachers to become English language learning content creator

By watching inspiration video on PMM the teachers have motivate their self to try making proof of work by making creative video and uploading it on their YouTube

channel. In this case the teachers have opportunities to becoming content creator in English Language Teaching.

3. More flexible and can be adapted to students needs and interest in teaching English

   By using PMM the teachers become more flexible and can adapted to students needs in teaching English through material and teaching method in PMM which can be implemented in classroom for example by video in proof of work feature the teachers can watched the video and become creative with the teachers ideas so that the students are more interested in learning process.

4. Develop teacher's career competencies.

   Merdeka Mengajar Platform help teachers in develop their career by using the performance management feature teachers are must to improve their performance which is depend on how many points they collect in PMM to get a certificate so the teachers will be more diligent in improving their performance .by using the performance management feature the progress of the teachers career will be monitored.

B. How the English teachers faced with the challenges in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SMKN 1 Toraja .

1. Technical Challenges

   There are three technical challenges faced by English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja in using PMM such as :

a) Unstable internet connection, the English teachers deal with this challenges by using the others way when the internet does not support to the students to login to PMM the teachers share the material to WA group or using LCD to show the students the material,

b) There is no training routine, the English teachers deal with this challenges by following the seminar of how to use PMM and watching to the tutorial on You-tube

c) Time Management.

English teachers SMKN 1 Toraja is still difficult in manage their time in learn more about how to use PMM.

2. Challenges in teaching practice

There are two challenges faced by English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja in using in teaching practice features such as :

Teaching module is still not complete in every phase, and also the school does not have books to support the Independent Curriculum, the English teachers deal with this challenges by search the addeted material and module from Google.

3. Applying the PMM features is still low

Applying the PMM features is still low is the condition which not use some of the features in PMM the English teachers deal with this challenges by learn more and following the independent training about the use of the features in PMM

C. How the English maximize the opportunities in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SMKN 1 Toraja .

1. Opening opportunities for English teachers to become English language learning content creator

By watching inspiration video on PMM the teachers have motivate their self to try making proof of work by making creative video and uploading it on their YouTube channel. In this case the teachers have opportunities to becoming content creator in English Language Teaching

2. Develop teacher's career competencies.

Merdeka Mengajar Platform opening opportunities for the teachers to increasing their performance by using performance management feature if they diligent in collecting the point to get the certification.   Fostering the teachers creativities is

one of the opportunities, by using several features in PMM the teachers have opportunities to become more creative teachers in design the teaching module and method in teaching English.

Table 4.1 Display data of challenges in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform of Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara.

	Display name	Date	Describtion	Sources
Challenges	Technical challenges	January 10th 16th, 1st February, 2024	There are three technical challenges faced by English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja in using PMM such as : 1. Unstable internet connection, the English teachers deal with this challenges by using the others way when the internet does not support to the students to login to PMM the teachers share the material to WA group or using LCD to show the students the material, 2. There is no training routine the English teachers deal with this challenges by	Q3: R1,R2,R3 Q4: R1

		following the seminar of how to use PMM and watching to the tutorial on You-tube 3. Time Management. English teachers SMKN 1 Toraja is still difficult in manage their time in learn more about how to use PMM.	
Challenges in teaching practice	January 10th 16th, 2024	There are two challenges faced by English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja in using in teaching practice features such as : teaching module is still not complete in every phase, and also the school does not have books to support the Independent Curriculum, the English teachers deal with this challenges by searh the addeted material and module from google	Q6: R2 Q5: R3 Q4: R1,R2,R3
Applying the PMM	January 10th 16th, 2024	Applying the PMM features is still low is the condition which not use some of the	Q5: R1 Q11:R1

features is still low	features in PMM the English teachers deal with this challenges by learn more and following the independent training about the use of the features in PMM

Table 4.2 Display data of opportunities in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform of Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara.

Opportunities	Opening opportunities for English teachers to become English language learning content creator	January 16th, 2024	By watching inspiration video on PMM the teachers have motivate their self to try making proof of work by making creative video and uploading it on their YouTube channel. In this case the teachers have opportunities to becoming content creator in English Language Teaching	Q9: R1
	Develop teacher's career competencies.	1st February, 2024	Merdeka Mengajar Platform opening opportunities for the teachers to increasing their performance by using performance management feature if they diligent in collecting the point to get the sertification.	Q2:R3

| | Fostering the teachers creativities | January 10th 16th , 1st February, 2024 | Fostering the teachers creativities is one of the opportunities, by using several features in PMM the teachers have opportunities to become more creative teachers in design the teaching module and mehod in eaching English. | Q2: R1,R2 Q9:R1, R2,R3 Q1 : R1,R3 |

DISCUSSION

Based on research findings above showed that there are several challenges in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform such as Technical challenges are all obstacles and difficulties that originate from supporting tools such as electronic devices and the unstable internet connection. (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Based on the research findings from interviews with English teachers conducted by the writer with English teachers who use Merdeka Mengajar Platform in their teaching, the conclusion drawn from the research found that challenges from technical challenges such as unstable internet connection, there is no training routine and Time Management. One of the factors causing low access to PMM is time Management or time constrains (Shandilia Latunusa Ambawani et al., 2023) the lot of activities doing by the teachers making them don't have a time to learn about how to using the merdeka mengajar platform. The same cases have been haven in English teachers at SMKN 1 Toraja Utara they are must to doing the same activities in the same way for example social activities in society.

Challenges from the completeness of the teaching modules side, the teaching modules provided by PMM is still not complete at each phase in teaching English so the teachers must to find the others sources to complete the teaching modules in PMM such as searching on Google.   The school does not have books to support the Independent Curriculum, so that the teachers don't applying the teaching module in PMM. One of the factors causing low access to PMM is time Management or time constrains (Shandilia Latunusa Ambawani et al., 2023) the lot of activities doing by the teachers making them don't have a time to learn about how to using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform and also the educational unit does not have adequate facilities in supporting the implementation of PMM such as the book in PMM does not ready at school,

The conclusion drawn from the research found that challenges in applying PMM features is still low which caused by the teachers lack knowledge about PMM, the teachers from the result of interviews conducted said that they had not used some of the features and did not even know some of them for example teaching toolkit feature and students assessment feature. These challenges make teachers loss the function of the feature because they didn't use that features in their teaching process.

There are also several opportunities in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform such as Teacher teaching creativity is the teachers ability to continually develop learning materials and be able to create an interesting and calm atmosphere and be able to modify the teaching method (Pentury, 2023). Based on the writer findings from interviews with English teachers conducted by the writer with English teachers who use Merdeka Mengajar Platform in their teaching, this research conclude that by using PMM really help teachers in develop creative modules in ELT because the teachers get lot of example teaching modules from PMM which become inspiration for teachers in making the teaching modules and the teachers developed it by their own creative. Related to this finding it is have the same expectation with (Kemendikbudristek, 2023)

which say there are so many opportunities in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform such as develop creative materials and develop teachers competencies.

Opening opportunities for English teachers to become English language (Admin, 2023) we all realize that the world of education is currecntly facing increasingly complex challenges. The role of educational content creators in learning is using interactive tools and user feedback to create individualized learn experience, making interesting post on social media, and experimenting with new digital tools and techniqies tailored to students need relating to this statement, based on the research findings from interviews with English teachers conducted by the writer with English teachers who use Merdeka Mengajar Platform in their teaching, the conclusion drawn from the research by watching inspiration video on PMM the teachers have motivate their self to try making proof of work by making creative video and uploading it on their YouTube channel. In this case the teachers have   opportunities to becoming content creator in English Language Teaching.

Based on the interview the writer find that Merdeka Mengajar Platform help teachers in develop their career by using the performance management feature teachers are must to improve their performance which is depend on how many points they collect in PMM to get a certificate so the teachers will be more diligent in improving their performance .

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the writer concludes that there are several challenges and opportunities faced by English teacher in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in their teaching. The using of Merdeka Mengajar Platform really help English teachers in creating the creative teaching module and method in teaching English and there are so many opportunities if the teachers maximized the of using PMM such as becoming content creator or English tutor because in PMM there are so many

inspirational video, increasing the teachers competencies and more flexible in teaching students base on their needs and interest beside the opportunities in using PMM there are also challenges such as technical challenges like there is no training routine, time management, and unstable internet connection , the teaching module in PMM is not complete and applying the PMM feature is still low so that the educational units still need to pay attention in maximizing the implementation of Merdeka Mengajar Platform, such as giving motivation to the teachers and training routine so that the teachers as a whole understand in using PMM and they will become feel comfortable.

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