

BAB II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Strategy

1. Teacher's Strategy

A teacher strategy refers to a planned approach or method employed by educators to attain specific learning objectives, manage classroom activities, and facilitate effective teaching and learning experiences. These strategies encompass a wide array of techniques, instructional methods, and approaches used by teachers to engage students, convey information, encourage critical thinking, and address diverse learning needs. Teacher strategies may vary based on the subject matter, grade level, and individual student requirements, and they play a pivotal role in establishing a positive and productive learning environment.

A proficient teacher who adeptly employs creative skills and the ability to instruct students at various levels may discover it less daunting to implement the complete curriculum required for a particular subject or class, as

mentioned by Louarne Johnson (2008). Additionally, according to Aswaja (2016), being a creative teacher is of paramount importance, as it simplifies the development of engaging teaching strategies to involve students actively in the classroom, transforming them into active participants in the learning process. Through captivating teaching strategies, students are inspired to participate eagerly in their education. These strategies may encompass classroom management techniques, methods for lesson planning, strategies for assessment, and instructional techniques designed to align with educational objectives. There is a tendency among some professionals in Indonesia, such as those in the culinary field, leaders, and young people, to mix English with the Indonesian language, even for expressions and words that have equivalents in Indonesian. From a language planning perspective, there is a need for consideration and reevaluation of the role and function of English, which is currently seen as one of the primary foreign languages for international communication and the

advancement of knowledge. (Adhyawardhani, 2018) English is an international language used for communication, understanding scientific books written in foreign languages, journals, or websites in the digital age.

English is taught in many places in Indonesia, including at Pondok Pesantren Al-Madienah Jombang, where activities are conducted to enhance the English language proficiency of the students. (Noviana, 2023) English is also used as a means of communication to promote culture, such as during the International Shadow Puppet Festival in America, where English is incorporated into the performance to make it more appealing to foreign tourists and to provide information and communicate with them. In short, English plays a crucial role as a foreign language in Indonesia, both in terms of communication and education. However, there is a need to reassess its role and function from a language planning perspective to ensure that it contributes to the development of science, technology, and the Indonesian language itself (Adhyawardhani, 2018). Teaching English as a foreign

language involves various strategies and methods to enhance students' ability to communicate using the English language. Here are some trends in teaching English as a foreign language, including the implementation of metacognitive strategies: Research has shown that the application of metacognitive strategies can improve students' speaking abilities in English. Metacognitive strategies involve students' understanding and self-regulation of their own thought processes, which can assist them in comprehending and using English more effectively. Task-Based Teaching: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) offers an opportunity for English teachers to achieve communicative language teaching in the classroom. (Hutagulang, 2017)

2. Latest Trends in English Language Teaching

English and Japanese are two foreign languages widely studied by the Indonesian population. Most research on foreign language learning tends to focus on English. Therefore, research on the perception of the public, particularly students, towards English and Japanese as

foreign languages in Indonesia is highly essential. Research findings indicate that students tend to view English as more promising in terms of career prospects.

a. The Importance of Proficiency in Foreign Languages:

Proficiency in foreign languages, including English, is crucial for the Indonesian populace. Proficiency in foreign languages acts as a gateway to engaging with the global community. The current globalized world has led to a resurgence in the study of various foreign languages within Indonesia. A low proficiency in foreign languages can pose a barrier for local professionals to compete with their international counterparts. (Reswari, 2020)

b. The Role of Technology in Transforming Language Education:

Educational technology has made a significant contribution to enhancing the quality and efficiency of language learning. Educational technology facilitates distance learning through platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, fostering innovation in teaching strategies. However,

the use of educational technology also brings challenges, such as issues related to accessibility and social-psychological impacts on learners. Hence, a well-thought-out strategy is required to effectively integrate educational technology into language education curricula (Purba, 2023)

.Project-Based Learning

The project-based approach is a learning method that involves students in real-life projects that are relevant to their daily lives. This approach emphasizes the application of knowledge and skills in a real-world context, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and cultivate critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills. Some of the fundamental concepts of the project-based approach include:

- a. **Active Learning:** Students are actively engaged in real projects, allowing them to learn through hands-on experiences and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in a real-world context (Kurniadi, 2021).

- b. Collaboration: Students work together in groups to complete projects, enabling them to learn from one another, develop social skills, and solve problems collectively (Aryani, 2017).
- c. Application of Knowledge and Skills: Students apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in real-world contexts, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and cultivate critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills (Raini, 2023).
- d. Relevance: Projects assigned to students should be relevant to their everyday lives, so they can see the value and purpose of what they are learning (Aryani, 2017).
- e. 21st Century Skills Development: The project-based approach helps students develop the skills necessary for success in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities (Arvianto, 2023).

1. The benefits and challenges of using a project-based approach in English language teaching.

Benefits

- a. Increasing Student Engagement: Project-based approaches encourage students to actively participate in learning through interesting and relevant projects related to their daily lives. (Astuti, 2022)
- b. Developing 21st Century Skills: Through projects, students can develop skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, which are crucial in today's workplace. (Satriana, 2021)
- c. Enhancing Language Proficiency: In language-based projects, students engage in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English, which can improve their language proficiency. (Astuti, 2022)
- d. Connecting Learning to the Real World: Project-based projects often involve students in completing tasks relevant to real life, such as creating presentations, writing letters, or participating in discussions, helping

students see the relevance of English language learning to their daily lives. (Kurniadi, 2022)

Challenges

- a. Time Constraints: Project-based projects often require more time to complete compared to traditional teaching methods, which can be a challenge for teachers with packed curricula. (Astuti, 2022)
- b. Student Preparedness: The project-based approach requires active engagement from students, which can be a challenge if students are not familiar with this method or lack the necessary skills to work on such projects. (Kurniadi, 2021)
- c. Complex Evaluation: Evaluating project-based projects is often more complex than traditional evaluation methods because it involves assessing various aspects of student performance, such as language proficiency, 21st-century skills, and the final project outcomes. (Aryani, 2017)

- d. Resource Limitations: Project-based projects often require access to additional resources, such as technology devices or reading materials, which may not be available in all schools or classrooms. (Satriana, 2021)
- e. The relationship between a project-based approach and the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) is a new curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia (Kemdikbudristek) as an effort to improve the education system in the country. (Cahyani, 2023) This curriculum is designed to be more flexible, student-centered, and focused on the development of 21st-century skills. (Riani, 2023) Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of the approaches that can be used to implement KMB. (Nursalam, 2023) Here is the relationship between the project-based approach and Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar:

- a. Implementation of KMB through Project-Based Learning:
PBL can be used as a form of implementation of KMB in various subjects, such as Mathematics and English. In PBL, students work on real-world projects that require them to apply knowledge and skills, collaborate with peers, and think critically. This approach aligns with the principles of KMB, which emphasize active and meaningful learning experiences for students. (Riani, 2023)
- b. Strategies for Teaching with KMB: Teachers need to adapt their teaching strategies to effectively implement KMB. In a study conducted in an elementary school in Kalikepek, teachers were found to use various strategies, such as group discussions, problem-solving activities, and the use of technology, to implement KMB (Cahyani, 2023). These strategies can be combined with the project-based approach to create engaging and student-centered learning experiences.
- c. Relationship between Lesson Plans and Implementation of KMB: Lesson plans play a crucial role in the

implementation of KMB. A study conducted in a junior high school in Jakarta found a positive relationship between the use of well-designed lesson plans (RPP) and the implementation of KMB. Teachers who were able to effectively use RPPs that were aligned with KMB principles were more successful in implementing the curriculum and achieving the desired learning outcomes. (Baadilla, 2023)

2. English Teaching strategies with a Project Based learning

Project-based learning is one of the teaching strategies that can be implemented in English language learning. In this approach, students will learn through projects or tasks that require them to apply their knowledge and English language skills in real-world situations. The project-based learning can help students become more actively engaged in learning, enhance their collaboration and communication skills, and deepen their understanding of the English language (Astuti, 2022). In the implementation of the project-based learning teachers need to consider several

factors, such as selecting project topics that are interesting and relevant to students' lives, providing clear and fair task assignments, and utilizing technology and other resources that can support learning. Additionally, teachers should also offer guidance and constructive feedback to students during the learning process. This way, students can feel more motivated and engaged in learning English with a project-based approach (Nursalam, 2023).

In designing a teaching strategy with a project-based approach, there are several main principles to consider. Here are the main principles in designing a teaching strategy with a project-based approach:

- a. Selection of Relevant Projects: The chosen projects should be relevant to the context and the students' needs.

This will help students connect their learning to real-life situations and enhance their motivation to learn.

(Nursalam, 2023)

- b. Collaboration Among Students: In the project-based approach, students work collaboratively in groups to

complete projects. This collaboration can improve students' social skills, critical thinking abilities, and problem-solving skills. (Nursalam, 2023)

- c. Inquiry Approach: The inquiry approach is used in the project-based approach to encourage students to develop questions, seek information, and explore new concepts. This can enhance students' understanding of the learning material. (Nursalam, 2023)
- d. Use of Technology: In the current digital era, the use of technology can enrich students' learning experiences. Teachers can use technology to facilitate collaboration among students, access a variety of learning resources, and present students' project outcomes. (Nursalam, 2023)

3. Example of implementing a project-based learning in teaching English.

One example of implementing a project-based approach in teaching English is to have students work on a project that involves using English to solve a real-world problem or

create a product. This approach can help students develop their language skills in a meaningful and engaging way, as well as develop important skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving (Astuti, 2022).

Here are some steps that can be taken to implement a project-based approach in teaching English:

- a. Identify a real-world problem or project that students can work on.
- b. Provide students with the necessary language skills and knowledge to work on the project.
- c. Guide students through the project, providing support and feedback as needed.
- d. Encourage students to reflect on their learning and the process of working on the project.

By following these steps, teachers can help students develop their language skills in a way that is engaging and relevant to their lives. Additionally, this approach can help students develop important skills that will be useful in their future academic and professional endeavors. The teaching

of English in Indonesia has undergone several changes in curriculum, including the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum, and the KTSP Curriculum.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools emphasizes the importance of teaching English, but to execute it effectively, English teachers in elementary schools are needed, training for elementary school teachers, as well as facilities and teaching materials that support the teaching of English. Additionally, improving the quality of English language instruction also requires innovation in teaching methods, the provision of educational infrastructure, and the development of technology-based learning media. All of these efforts are expected to help enhance the quality of English language instruction in Indonesia.

4. Evaluation of quality in teaching English as a foreign language

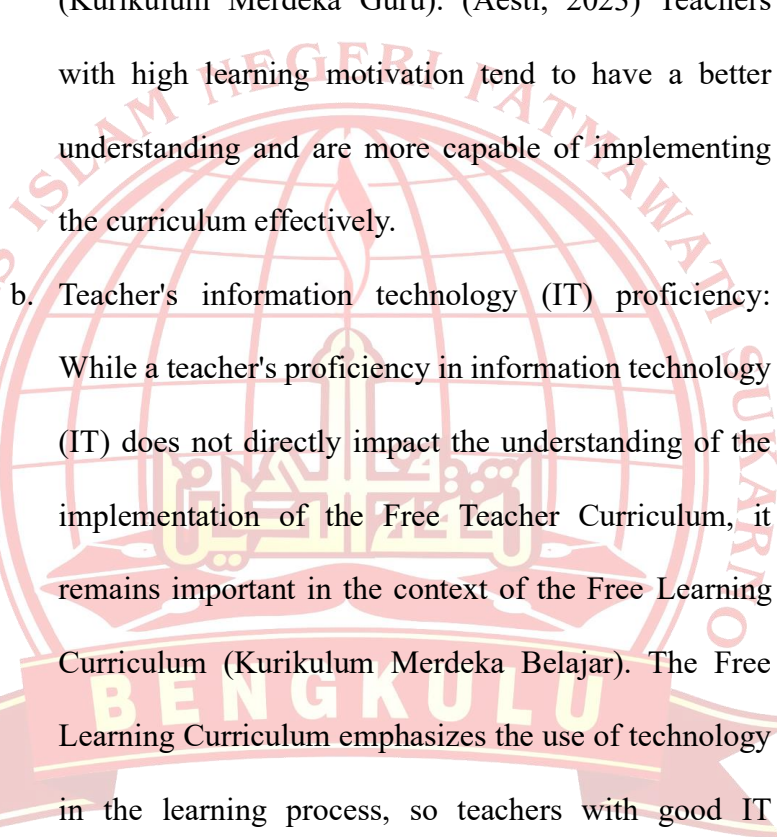
In English language teaching as a foreign language, there are several factors that can be evaluated to improve the

quality of teaching. Some of the factors that can be evaluated include:

- a. Application of metacognitive strategies: Research shows that the application of metacognitive strategies in teaching speaking skills can significantly improve students' abilities. These metacognitive strategies are more suitable for students with at least intermediate-level proficiency.
- b. Use of engaging instructional media: The use of Android-based learning media and local narratives can enhance students' English language competence, the implementation of the PPK (Character Education), and the preservation of local values rich in moral education (Kurniadi, 2021).
- c. A comparison of teaching speaking skills in Arabic and English: This comparative study can provide valuable insights and a positive contribution to the field of foreign language education and practitioners.

d. Teaching English in Elementary Schools: The independent curriculum has begun to be implemented in educational institutions, including elementary schools. This research aims to investigate the needs of schools in implementing English language teaching in elementary schools, following the independent curriculum (Oktavia, 2023).

Schools require several essential elements to effectively carry out English language instruction, such as the need for English teachers in elementary schools, English language training for elementary school teachers, and the provision of facilities to support teaching activities, especially English language teaching materials and instructional media. In the context of the Freedom to Learn Curriculum, there are several quality indicators that can be used to measure the success of the implementation of this curriculum. Some relevant quality indicators in this context include:

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- a. Teacher's learning motivation: A teacher's learning motivation has a positive influence on understanding the implementation of the Free Teacher Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka Guru). (Aesti, 2023) Teachers with high learning motivation tend to have a better understanding and are more capable of implementing the curriculum effectively.
- b. Teacher's information technology (IT) proficiency: While a teacher's proficiency in information technology (IT) does not directly impact the understanding of the implementation of the Free Teacher Curriculum, it remains important in the context of the Free Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar). The Free Learning Curriculum emphasizes the use of technology in the learning process, so teachers with good IT proficiency will be better able to implement this curriculum effectively.
- c. Student's application of literacy: In the Free Learning program, there are various improvements in literacy,

numeracy, administration, and technology adaptation, which are the main criteria for student activities in schools. (Pardede, 2022) The application of literacy by students can be an important quality indicator in measuring the success of the implementation of the Free Learning Curriculum.

d. Student enthusiasm in participating in learning: Student enthusiasm in participating in learning can also be an important quality indicator in the context of the Free Learning Curriculum. The Free Learning Curriculum emphasizes more active and innovative learning, so student enthusiasm in participating in learning can be an indicator of the success of implementing this curriculum.

e. Improvement of learning standards and innovation in the instructional design conducted by teachers together with researchers: Improvement of learning standards and innovation in the design of instruction can also be important quality indicators in the context of the Free

Learning Curriculum. Teachers who can raise learning standards and innovate in lesson planning will be better able to implement the Free Learning Curriculum effectively.

The measurement of project-based teaching quality can be done using several methods, one of which is using assessment rubrics. Assessment rubrics are evaluation tools that provide descriptions of expected performance for each criterion to achieve a specific score (Suwarno, 2021). Furthermore, the use of cutting-edge technology such as multimedia in teaching can enhance the quality of learning and motivate students to learn optimally (Purba, 2019). The implementation of project-based learning with multimedia-based innovative teaching materials has been proven to be highly effective in improving students' learning outcomes (Purba, 2019). Additionally, learning outside the classroom, such as through outdoor learning methods, can also enhance student learning achievement (Tobing, 2023). Therefore, the measurement of project-based teaching quality can be

carried out by considering the use of current technology, the implementation of innovative teaching, and out-of-classroom learning. The concept of teaching English as a foreign language based on projects is a teaching method that focuses on learning through challenging projects or tasks that require students to think critically and creatively in using the English language.

The goal is to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in English and prepare them to face real-world situations. Some key features of this method include project-based learning, group collaboration, contextual learning, self-directed learning, and the use of technology as a facilitator. This teaching method has been adopted in the teaching of English as a foreign language in various countries, including Indonesia, with the aim of improving students' communication skills in English in real-world contexts.

B. Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar

1. Definition kurikulum merdeka belajar

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) is a new curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbud Ristek) of the Republic of Indonesia to enhance the quality of education. According to Gatot (2023), Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) is seen as an innovative step taken by Kemdikbud Ristek to improve the quality of education. Prominent features of KMB include an emphasis on the learning process, flexible learning and assessment, and the Pancasila Student Profile (PPP) with multi-disciplinary project-based learning activities.

KMB is also in line with the constructivist learning paradigm, which assumes that knowledge is constructed by learners and emphasizes collaboration, active learning, and comprehensive assessment. According to Suryaman (2020), the Merdeka Belajar curriculum serves as a

strong foundation for integrated and meaningful learning components, resulting in graduates who are competitive and globally competent. According to Vhalery (2022), KMB brings about several changes in curriculum design, emphasizing both internal and external learning processes through activities such as student exchange programs, internships/work experience, teaching assistance within educational units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent study/projects, and community engagement through thematic real-world learning. It also includes a special emphasis on character assessment.

According to Hasim (2020), online learning has posed challenges for everyone in the realm of education, from elementary to higher education, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud RI), has

introduced the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which is considered suitable for implementation during the current pandemic. Marisa (2021) states that the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a policy adopted based on issues and considerations related to desired goals. The ongoing development of technology continually impacts human life, influencing how people think and behave. The education sector has become a topic of debate over time, requiring significant policy changes. Data for this article was collected using a literature review technique, utilizing references from books, journals, and other sources. Therefore, Indonesia is making strides by transforming the curriculum policy into "Merdeka Belajar" to ensure that this policy does not burden education stakeholders, including educators and students.

2. Concept and Objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar

According to Manalu (2022), the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum, as introduced by the Indonesian Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, is seen as a solution to address the current educational issues in Indonesia. Every research study should be supported by data, as data obtained in research substantiates the validity of the study. This research is qualitative in nature, based on the analysis of issues, which is then elucidated through the researcher's ideas. Data for this research is gathered through observations, including interviews, reading newspapers, journals, and analyzing the learning process implemented in schools.

According to Vhalery (2022), the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum aims to liberate education by promoting free thinking and innovation. The MBKM (Independent Learning, Campus Freedom, and Curriculum) program is frequently publicized, but not many academicians or practitioners fully understand this concept. Therefore, further introduction and insight into MBKM are

required. This study employs a literature review approach. Data collection is based on keyword searches for MBKM, which include independent learning, campus freedom, and curriculum, conducted in various online reference sources.

After selection, the study reviewed 41 articles. The study's conclusion reveals that the MBKM curriculum brings about several changes in curriculum design, emphasizing learning processes both inside and outside the campus through activities such as student exchange, internships, teaching assistance in educational units, research projects, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and community engagement/real-world themed coursework, as well as character-specific assessments.

According to Rahmasyah (2021), the concept of independent learning leads to changes in the curriculum itself, where the curriculum content must have meaning in the context of freedom to think and the ability to skillfully

seek, manage, and communicate information, as well as use information and technology in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila. Initially, the issuance of Circular Letter No. 1 of 2020 on independent learning policies for determining student graduation triggered debates from various parties, revolving around "Independent Learning" or "Freedom to Learn." In the context of the concept of "Independent Learning," it implies that educational institutions have the authority to provide opportunities to encourage students to innovate and foster creative thinking. In the learning process, both teachers and students contribute to sharing their experiences. According to Rusman (2020), the concept of the Independent Learning Curriculum cannot be separated from the role of teachers, who are key figures in education responsible for educating, guiding, training, and developing various aspects of students. The curriculum's application should create a conducive learning environment that is enjoyable, engaging, secure, active, creative, and innovative, allowing

students to achieve their learning goals.

According to Daga (2021), the implementation of the concept of independent learning encourages the important role of teachers in both curriculum development and the teaching process. The contribution of teachers in the curriculum development process is essential to align the curriculum content with the needs of students in society. As learning resources, teachers need to understand student psychology, and apply methods and learning strategies.

According to Nasution (2022), the objective of independent learning is to create a joyful atmosphere for teachers, students, and parents. According to Ulum (2023), the objectives of the independent learning curriculum include providing more freedom and flexibility in the learning process and preparing students to face global challenges by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills.

According to Whyandha (2023), the objectives of the

Independent Learning Curriculum are to enhance the quality of education by encouraging students to be more active and creative in the learning process and promoting the development of students' soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.

3. The Relevance of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB) is a new concept in the Indonesian education system aimed at improving and developing the existing curriculum. The KMB policy places a strong emphasis on character development to instill the values of Pancasila and 'bhinneka tunggal ika,' which are distinctive features of Indonesian nationalism (Wati, 2023).

The KMB policy underscores the importance of learning outside the classroom and encourages students to be more independent in their learning processes. In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, the KMB policy presents opportunities and challenges.

It aims to equip students with problem-solving skills in various fields of study, including learning English

(Bungawati, 2022). The KMB policy also emphasizes the importance of innovation and creativity in learning, which can be applied in teaching English as a foreign language (Anggraeni, 2023). However, the implementation of the KMB policy requires adequate resources, such as well-trained English teachers, English learning materials, and facilities that support English language education. In conclusion, the KMB policy introduces a new concept in the Indonesian education system that focuses on character development, out-of-classroom learning, as well as innovation and creativity in education.

The implementation of the KMB policy in teaching English as a foreign language requires sufficient resources and well-trained English teachers. The implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, KMB) in Indonesia presents both challenges and opportunities. KMB was introduced in 2020 as a response to the challenges facing the education sector, including rapid technological advancements and social changes (Nugraha,

2023). KMB offers several innovations, such as the selection of subjects, project-based learning, extracurricular activities, character development, and educational technology (Sutami, 2021).

The implementation of KMB involves several stages, including socialization, training, and classroom application. The government also provides support through the development of teaching materials and the provision of diverse learning resources. Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents is crucial in supporting effective learning.

Teachers must understand the needs and interests of students and accept input from parents to improve the quality of education (Nugraha, 2023). KMB provides opportunities for flexible and independent learning at various locations, which can be done at any time and with anyone (Alawi, 2022). KMB also emphasizes character development and the instillation of the values of Pancasila

and Bineka Tunggal Ika, which are characteristic of the Indonesian nation (Wati, 2023).

KMB can also help prepare students to face the challenges of the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions by equipping them with problem-solving skills in various fields of knowledge (Bungawati, 2022). However, the implementation of KMB also poses challenges, such as the need for a broader curriculum with shorter learning times, the demand for innovative teaching methods, and the need for teachers to adapt to changing times and technology (Ana, 2022).

In conclusion, the implementation of KMB in Indonesia brings both challenges and opportunities. KMB offers several innovations that can help prepare students for the challenges of the future, but its successful implementation requires collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, as well as the need for innovative teaching methods and adaptation to changing times and technology."

4. Integration of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar

Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar is a curriculum that emphasizes the application of learner-centered teaching methods, fosters student independence, and leads to meaningful and enjoyable learning (Shalehah, 2023). Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is based on the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model, which is also known as PjBL (Megasari, 2022). Project-Based Learning is one of the teaching models that can support the concept of 'independent learning' for students (Shalehah, 2023).

Learning in the Merdeka curriculum is conducted in a way that is more relevant to the child's and the child's environment. Learning is also created to be interactive, involving students with a greater role in the learning process (Shalehah, 2023). The implementation of PjBL needs to be assessed for its alignment with the students' and learning needs (Megasari, 2022). Project-Based Learning can stimulate how students think critically, independently, collaboratively, and in problem-solving, making students more prepared to face challenges in their time and real-life

in society (Shalehah, 2023). The development of a project-based English language teaching model is an approach to learning in which students are engaged in real projects that allow them to apply their knowledge and English language skills in a relevant context. Several studies have been conducted to develop this model, such as the development of an English Language Literacy Module Based on Local Wisdom for Junior High School Students (Setiawan, 2023) and the development of an Interdisciplinary-Based Indonesian Language Teaching Module for Lower Primary School Classes in the Independent Curriculum (Triana, 2023).

The results of these studies indicate that the use of project-based learning models can help students master English language materials and enhance their understanding of concepts and learning process skills. Additionally, the incorporation of local wisdom can assist students in understanding their culture and the local wisdom of their nation. Therefore, the development of a project-based

English language teaching model can be an effective alternative learning strategy in addressing challenges in learning the English language.

5. Effective teaching methodologies

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum emphasizes more flexible and adaptive learning, so effective teaching methods should be able to meet the current needs of students. Here are some effective teaching methodologies in the context of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum:

- a. Project-Based Learning (PjBL): This method emphasizes student-centered learning, where students are given tasks to complete specific projects or problems. PjBL can enhance students' interest in learning and their mathematical abilities (Riani, 2023).
- b. Digital Media: The use of digital media can be a solution to address challenges in education, such as inadequate facilities and less effective teaching methods (Putri, 2023). Digital media can improve students' learning

outcomes and make it easier for them to understand the study material.

- c. Language Teaching Methodology Training: Language teaching methodology training, such as the Steps and Elicits methods, can assist teachers in understanding effective teaching methods and approaches (Rahman, 2019). With a good understanding of these methods, teachers can design teaching materials that align with their characteristics and maximize students' competencies."

In the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, effective teaching methods should be able to meet the current needs of students and take into account student characteristics and the learning situation. Student-centered teaching methods using digital media can be a solution to overcome challenges in learning. Additionally, training in language teaching methodology can help teachers understand language teaching methods and approaches.

Literature Review on English Language Teachers'

Experience with Project-Based Learning Approach Based on the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar"

Here is a summary of relevant literature:

- a. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Indonesia emphasizes student involvement in learning through various projects. Learning in this curriculum is based on the PjBL model (Megasari, 2022). Research conducted on high school students at Muhammadiyah Padangpanjang shows that 38% of students strongly agree that PjBL has a positive influence and helps students become more active in their learning (Megasari, 2022).
- b. The development of English Literacy Modules Based on Local Wisdom for Junior High School students is also carried out using the PjBL approach. The research results indicate that this module is effective in improving students' understanding of English material (Setyawan, 2023).

- c. The development of an Interdisciplinary-Based Indonesian Language Teaching Module for Lower Elementary School classes is also carried out using the PjBL approach. This module is designed to assist teachers in teaching flexibly and contextually, without being confined to a single source, such as textbooks (Triana, 2023).
- d. The implementation of an English Language Learning Model Based on Local Wisdom can also be an effort to construct the character of the nation's children. Learning English that incorporates the local cultural wisdom of Indonesia can help students in going global (Arvianti, 2020).

C. Theoretical Framework

The first research question is about EFL teachers' strategies in developing project-based learning based on the Kurikulum merdeka belajar, and the second one is about its benefits and challenges. To answer these research questions, the researcher employs theory by Jean Piaget and Lev

Vygotsky. The researcher also discusses the theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky to explain the sources of EFL teachers' strategies in developing project-based learning based on the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar.

D. Previous Relevant Studies

The previous research related to this study was conducted by Nanik Indahwati (2019), students of the Physical Education Department at Surabaya State University, Surabaya, Indonesia, and the Physical Education and Kinesiology Department at National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan. Their research, titled 'Developing Project Based Learning (PBL) as a Teaching Strategy in Physical Education for Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers,' discusses learning with a Project-Based Learning approach.

The objective of their research was to develop Project-Based Learning (PBL) as a teaching strategy in Physical Education for Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers. They used a qualitative descriptive analysis approach. The

final outcomes of their research included instruments and teaching materials that can be applied to enhance the quality of teaching, consisting of a syllabus (RPS), handouts, PowerPoint presentations, student worksheets, and assessment instruments.

The research findings indicated that Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method that encourages students to learn how to collaborate in groups to find real-world solutions to problems. Simulation questions were used to spark students' curiosity before beginning the subject. PBL prepares students for critical and analytical thinking and enables them to acquire knowledge accurately and utilize learning resources. In this context, PBL is understood as a learning process that is based on real-world issues, stimulating students to explore problems based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Thus, new knowledge and experiences are formed based on their existing knowledge.

Another previous study conducted by Dewi Anggelia (2022), with the title “Penerapan Model Project-based Learning ditinjau dari Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Mengembangkan Kreativitas Belajar Pendidikan Agama Islam” The purpose of this research was to examine how Project-Based Learning is applied in SMA Muhammadiyah 4 Surabaya from the perspective of the Kurikulum Merdeka and how students' creativity in Islamic Religious Education learning is developed through Project-Based Learning. The research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach.

The results of this research showed that the applied teaching model aligns with the achievement of creativity and the Merdeka Curriculum. Students could embrace Project-Based Learning as a teaching model that helps them develop their creativity in line with the Merdeka Curriculum. The similarity between these two theses and my research lies in the use of a qualitative descriptive methodology. The difference is that the aim of my research

is to understand the strategies of EFL teachers in developing Project-Based Learning based on Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar.

E. Theoretical Framework

This study applies the Miles and Huberman theoretical framework to explore the implementation of project-based learning within the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" framework at SMP IT Khairunnas Kota Bengkulu. Through in-depth interviews with English teachers, classroom observations, and the analysis of student project outcomes, qualitative data is collected and analyzed.

The main steps involve data reduction, creating visual representations, and drawing conclusions. Findings include teacher strategies, benefits, and challenges in project-based learning. Validation is conducted through peer review and member checking. The study concludes with practical recommendations to enhance the implementation of project-based learning within the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" context and highlights potential areas for future research.