The Analysis of English Classroom Management of Islamic-Based Primary Schools in Pangkalpinang

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Abstrak
This study aimed to investigate the English classroom management in both state and private Islamic based-primary schools in Pangkalpinang, bangka Belitung, Indonesia. It was a qualitative descriptive study in which data obtained from interview and class observation. The researcher interviewed two headmasters and two English teachers from both state and private Islamic-based primary schools in Pangkalpinang, schools under Ministry of Religious Affairs. The observation was conducted for eight meetings. Class observations were conducted several times looking for teachers’ way of teaching and any elements included in ideal classroom management. In some aspects of teaching, the schools have had quite good classroom management in which teachers knew what to do in the classroom handling the students. However, when it comes to the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, the schools were got lack of support from the government. Some restrictions were faced by educators due to insufficient quality of teaching facilities, prosperity, large number of students in a class, and many others. Therefore, the findings of the study provide some reflection towards the reality of our education in which the schools and the teachers are not ready yet to implement Merdeka Curriculum. The emphasis on the dissemination and training of Merdeka Curriculum equipped by good quality of school facilities are highly recommended.

Keywrods: classroom management, merdeka curriculum, obstacles

INTRODUCTION
Studies on the teaching of English for young learners have been part of widespread attention by numerous global ELT professionals due to the increasing number of children learning the language (Copland and Garton, 2011). In many countries all around the world, English is taught at primary schools as compulsory subjects (Nikolov, 2009; Pinter, 2006).

In Indonesia, English had no longer been considered as compulsory subject since the issuing of Regulation of Minister of Education and Culture Number 67, 2013 about basic framework and curriculum structure at elementary school/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. However, many schools in Indonesia still implemented the teaching of English at primary education as a local content subject as a result of decentralization policy made by local government (Sikki, Rahman, Hamra, Noni, 2013). In this Merdeka Curriculum, the English teaching at primary school level are reenforced. Therefore, the demand of the current curriculum on some new aspects of education such as project-based learning, student-centered learning, students’ profile of Pancasila and some others motivates teachers to reconsider the quality of the English classroom management.

The word “Merdeka” in Merdeka Curriculum literally means independent. As stated in the Decree of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 008/h/kr/2022 concerning Outcomes Learning in Early Childhood Education, Basic Education Levels, and Secondary Education Levels in the Merdeka Curriculum,
intracurricular learning activities for each subject refer to the Learning Outcomes (CP) determined by the government. In the current curriculum, the teachers are also motivated to customize the teaching and learning process with the value of Pancasila. Pancasila is the formula and guidelines for the life of the nation and state for all Indonesian people. It consists of five valuable precepts namely belief in the one and only God, just and civilized humanity, the unity of Indonesia, democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia. The Pancasila students' soft skills and character profiles are encouraged to grow through learning activities in the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly through Project Based Learning or other learning models that call for more students to participate in the learning process (students centered learning). Learning process focuses on establishing fundamental competency elements, such as literacy and numeracy, in addition to character development. These are two essential skills for someone to master in order to grow personally and contribute positively to society.

Basically, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers in all levels of school to conduct project-based learning implementing student-centered learning approach. Through Merdeka Curriculum, the teachers are highly recommended to put local content in the learning process. There are two types of assessment in this Project-based Curriculum namely formative assessment and summative assessment. This is something new for English teachers in Indonesia because the previous curriculums concerned on the summative assessment only. In the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, the teachers and the schools have to build partnership with external parties. Although there have been several articles discussing the Merdeka Curriculum, but the one that discusses about the curriculum implementation in the teaching of English at primary schools is very limited. Therefore, this research attempts to fill the gap. In the teaching and learning of English at Indonesian schools especially in the primary school levels, has the teachers been ready with the curriculum transformation? How effective is this Merdeka Curriculum to implement in the teaching of English? How do the Primary School English teachers deal with the project-based learning and the two types of learning assessment?

Therefore, this study was interested in exploring the classroom management of English for young learners at primary education due to both the limited studies concerning on this field and the demand of implementing Merdeka Curriculum in primary school level. The conduction of this study was an effort of providing information toward the quality of English teachers at primary schools in managing classroom of English for young learners. It was expected that the local and national government especially the schools could provide professional development training on the teaching of English for children at primary schools.

Classroom management was defined as a quality of managing classroom disciplines, subject matter, and the teaching methodologies (Tahir and Qadir, 2012). The importance of classroom management in the teaching of English for young learners has been the focus of several previous enquiries (e.g., Miranda, 2022; Setiawatari, 2012; Yunita, Abdullah, Mellan, Hidayati, Ardi, 2022; Qodriyah, 2016; Setyaningrum, Sabilah, Sumarsono, 2020). According to Habibi, et al (2018), Classroom Management (CM) has always been integral and pivotal part in education for school teachers, university lecturers, school leaders, system administrators, and any school users. For example, a study conducted by Miranda (2022) that explored the classroom management strategies used by English teacher at SD IT Izzuddin Palembang and found out focused on the classroom physical environment, the body language and tone of the teacher during the teaching
process, the unplanned teaching program, the prevention of students’ misbehavior, teacher’s teaching style, and the way of creating positive English classroom. Then, Qodriyah (2016) conducted a study on analyzing the teachers’ pedagogical competence with the concern of classroom management and the ability of implementing the instructional media in English for young learner context. The result of the study revealed that the English teachers did various things to manage EYL classroom including classroom layout, classroom interaction, error management, and some others.

Based on the preliminary study conducted at random primary schools by doing observation and short interview to the teachers of English in Pangkalpinang, it was found that some teachers of English were not graduated from English Education Study Program. English had been taught by using conventional approach namely the teaching in a classroom by delivering lesson directly to students. The teachers were not really aware of teaching approach such as Project-based Learning, collaborative learning, and others which are supposed to be the implementation basis of Indonesia’ new national curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum. Regarding the knowledge of foreign language acquisition, not all English teachers knew about it. Thus, the teachers’ English proficiency and their quality to implement Merdeka Curriculum is questionable. Therefore, this study focused on the investigation of EYL Classroom Management at primary schools in Pangkalpinang, Bangka Belitung.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative research design. Neuman (2014) states that there is a wide range of formats in which qualitative data can be found, including documents, images, maps, open-ended interviews, observations, and more. In this study, the data were collected by using observation and interview. The observation was conducted for eight meetings in each English class of both MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang. The researcher attended the classes to observe the way teachers managed the class. The interview was conducted twice in each school. First of all, the researcher interviewed two headmasters and the next step was interviewing two English teachers. Some valuable information was obtained through the interview process such as the information about the curriculum used, the teaching rules, the school policy, the challenges faced by both schools and teachers, and the support from the government. The answer of interview was then transcribed in text. The result of the observation and interview were then interpreted descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of Observation to English Teachers Teaching in MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang

The observation and interview phases of the research process were completed by the researcher. One English teacher at MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and one English teacher at MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang were observed by the researcher. Teacher A and Teacher B were then identified as the English teachers. In order to understand the methods English teachers use for classroom management, the researcher observed multiple meetings. The purpose of the interview was to learn more about the issues English teachers were having with classroom management. The following describes the classroom management strategies used by the English teacher during these observations and the interview:
Classroom Management Done by English Teacher in Teaching English at MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang

Physical Design of Classroom

The physical design of the classroom consists of how the furniture is arranged and where the learning spaces are situated. One element of the physical layout of the classroom was the seating configuration. Regarding the seat arrangements, Teacher A and Teacher B had comparable setups based on the activities and the subject matter. Both Teacher A and Teacher B employed orderly rows when instructing students. It also made teaching easier because it made it possible for the instructor to maintain eye contact with every pupil in the room.

In some classroom, the schools and the English teachers provided some colorful pictures with some English lessons especially about vocabularies such as names of fruits, professions, and numbers. The color of walls of the classes were different to motivate the pupils in learning English. Some facilities were provided such as whiteboard, students’ desk, an others. However, the teachers still used colorless English books for students. For the elementary school level, this certainly made students less motivated to learn. In addition, the ICT-based facilities were very insufficient in both schools.

Rules and Routine

The next stage of classroom management was to establish rules and guidelines. The instructor distributed assignments and homework, collected the students’ work, recorded attendance, and used encouraging language. Teacher A called each student's name in attendance one by one, greeted them all, and asked about their health. Before the class concludes, the teacher also issued homework, assignments that were relevant to the content, and things that were about applauding and praising others. She also collected the completed assignments from previous meetings with the pupils. The teacher was encouraging and gave broad pointers. After the pupils answered the question, the teacher gave them a "Clap hands, that's very good, good job." Students that receive positive reinforcement are more likely to engage in class activities and demonstrate interest.

Relationship

Before the session begins, the instructor often asks the class open-ended questions to foster a relationship with the students. This practice was designed to encourage more students to speak. The activity's goal was to start the students chatting. Students were instructed to read one sentence aloud and assist other students in translating it after the teacher had read aloud from the text. After that, the teacher gave the class a chance to ask questions about the assignment they had finished. It was noted that there was regular teacher-student contact in the classroom. Everyone can interact and work together in a classroom where there is a good teacher-student relationship. Every kid stood up to share in a personal presentation to the class.

Engaging and Motivation Instruction

The fourth component of classroom management is engaging instruction, which is the application of teaching techniques that increase students’ motivation and interest in learning. First, make the necessary supply arrangements. Teachers A and B used the textbook and module provided by the school to explain the material based on their initial observations, and students used whatever they had to do role plays. The module's contents were organized in accordance with the lessons that were covered. Every student has a module (LKS) that aids the teacher in delivering lessons or assigning assignments.
The second occurred after being given direction. After explaining the material to the class, teacher A observed the pupils and probed them with questions. The teacher would repeat her explanations and ask the students to locate the difficult assignments they had not been informed about if they still did not comprehend. In addition, instructor B made the lecture more engaging by having someone walk the other students through the exercise. As a result, the teacher would quiz the pupils after going over the subject with the class. In a similar vein, instructor A would repeat instructions to students who did not comprehend them and encourage those who still did not understand to ask.

**Disciplines**

Discipline is the fifth component of classroom management, and it includes both treating kids and preventing and addressing behavioral problems. Based on the observations provided by instructors A and B, teachers generally used treatment or warnings to enforce discipline when pupils disobeyed their directions. The teacher never used physical punishment on the pupils; instead, the teacher employed therapy methods like having the student repeat explanations of the lesson's content. When a pupil interferes with the teacher's lesson, the teacher just has to call out the student's name aloud for them to stop.

**Findings of Interview with Headmasters of MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang**

There were several information that the researcher needed which led to the conduction of deep interview with headmasters of both state and private Islamic based primary schools in Pangkalpinang, MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang. The followings were the questions addressed to the principals of the schools.

*What is the curriculum used by English teachers in your school?*  
“Since 2023, we are encouraged by the government to implement Indonesia’s new national curriculum namely Kurikulum Merdeka. Therefore, the teaching and learning of English should follow the rules of Kurikulum Merdeka.”  
Both principals of the schools supported their teachers to implement Kurikulum Merdeka as suggested by government.

*Do you have special regulation toward approaches to language teaching in your school?*  
“Judging from the teachers’ daily teaching performances and the potentials of the elementary schools in Pangkalpinang, it is truly challenging to implement teaching approach that centralize the activeness of the students. Therefore, most of us keep using teacher-centered learning.”  
It was actually interesting that the schools have implemented project-based curriculum but avoiding the applying of student-centered learning approach which is the basis of Merdeka Curriculum implementation.

*How was the process of English teachers’ recruitment? Is there any requirement of minimum score of English language proficiency level?*  
“The school did the English teacher’s recruitment considering the eligibility of the applicants such as graduating from undergraduate level (S1) majoring in English Education. We believe that the graduate of S1 in English Education will surely be able to teach primary school students properly. We did not put the possessing of certificate English language proficiency level as the requirements.”
Since the students at elementary school level were very good imitator, the schools were supposed to provide very good education stating with the provision of qualified English teachers. An English teachers should have Toefl ITP score of at least 500 in order to transfer knowledge and translate the demands in Merdeka Curriculum properly.

*How often do you provide training of professional development to English teachers?*

“Our school cannot afford the invitation of expert to train our English teacher due to lack of fund that we have. The training programs are usually given by Ministry of Religious Affairs branch of Pangkalpinang. However, their training programs were insufficient for English teachers in Pangkalpinang. I can tell that our English teacher never got such insightful training from the government to increase their teaching motivation and English pedagogical knowledge.”

Training of professional development is needed not only for English teachers but also to all subject teachers. The government is expected to put high concern on this matter to elevate the quality of our Education.

*How do English teacher deal with examination and assessment to the students? Do the English teachers have English teachers’ community in Pangkalpinang?*

“They do have English teachers’ community in our sub-district. The English teachers usually gathered to get the same perception towards the test materials for examination and assessment. They gathered once in a semester.”

This question led the principal of school B to the different answer that the English teacher in MIS Hidayatussalikin does not have such community yet. It was certainly positive movement that English teacher in School A had had the English teaching community to help her arranging the qualified questions for examination and assessment.

*How does your teacher obtain learning materials for teaching?*

“We totally believe in what the English teacher offer to our students. Nourishing our students with knowledge from very good book is actually easy to do. Book stores in Indonesia have provided many kinds of books with variety of quality and prices. The problem that we encounter in the field is that the students’ parents could not afford the books that we consider proper for students’ development. Financial problems that occurred forces us as teachers to use LKS which is actually not enough for our students.”

The students in all levels of education are supposed to be nourished well with learning materials in order to grow intelligently. The schools and the teacher can get the learning materials not only from printed book. People have been living in the era of digitalization that the learning materials can be taken from internet. It is an obligation for educators in Indonesia especially in Pangkalpinang to utilize the development of technology.

*What are the main problems do you face in regarding with the management of English language teaching in your school?*

“The main problems that we face is that the number of English teachers in our schools is insufficient. We only have one English teacher in our schools teaching all levels of students from grade 1 to grade 6 with more than 24 hours of teaching in a week. The teacher has been like robot. There is no way that the teacher could grow personally and professionally. For the time being, it is impossible for us to add more teacher because one teacher must teach for 24 hours per week to get insentif, additional salary, from the government. If we have two teachers, I can guarantee that bot of them cannot get the financial aid from the government due to lack of teaching hours. That is the regulation from the government.”
Discussions and Interpretation

Even while the instructor thinks that classroom management is crucial, it can oftentimes be difficult to put into practice. One of the several difficulties was that schools continued to use crude equipment and teaching aids as they were unable to build facilities that would have satisfied the demands of the pupils. Furthermore, most teachers did not really handle class management since they believed it to be difficult and time-consuming because educators’ ability to manage less diversified media was still restricted, and their ability to create creative media was as well.

In situations where instructional support is inadequate, educators turn to alternative media and adopt strategies and tactics that might interest pupils in learning and keep them engaged. By offering rewards for good attendance, teachers can assist some of their usually absent pupils, which will eventually push them to attend class on a regular basis. The teacher then invites students to participate in making media-rich crafts and classroom decoration.

In some cases, teacher had challenges to communicate knowledge to students who were struggling to understand the topic at each meeting. Additionally, the teacher in this case used less engaging teaching techniques. Students thus had trouble understanding and found it challenging to focus on their academics. In addition, teachers have optimized classroom management based on researcher observation and research conclusions. Prioritizing should be given to organizing, implementing, supervising, and planning classroom management. As part of class management planning, the teacher developed syllabuses, yearly programs, semester programs, and lesson plans. While bearing in mind some of the facilities’ restrictions, the instructor used engaging learning tactics during this preparation step.

The last is that the principals and the government of Indonesia should work hand in hand solving the problems that our education face. All subject teachers require professional development training, not just English teachers. To improve the caliber of our education, the government is supposed to take this seriously.

The headmasters and the English teachers expected the government’s attention toward the availability of ICT-based learning media to support the teaching and learning implementation. It will be great if such learning media were well equipped in each clas that they handle. Then, the provision of more buildings in schools is highly recommended because the teachers handled too many students in each class. Ideally, each class consists of not more than twenty students.

The result of observation and interview revealed that the schools only have one English teachers handling students from the first to the sixth grade. It made the English teachers overwhelemd and did not have time to prepare good learning materials and learning media. The English teacher also did not have enough time to do self-development as the effect of it. It is expected that the government also provide some training on the strategies of implementing Merdeka Curriculum. The demand of Merdeka curriculum motivates the schools to have many parties as the stakeholders for collaboration. So, the schools should do that because this will be beneficial to support the implementation of project-based learning approach.

CONCLUSION

Classroom management as it relates to teaching and learning was divided into a number of categories, such as the physical layout of the classroom, which includes seating arrangements, neat rows and separate tables, rules and routines, student-teacher
relationships, motivational and engaging instruction, and discipline. While teaching English, the five components of the Islamic-based elementary schools of MIN 1 Pangkalpinang and MIS Hidayatussalikin Pangkalpinang facilitate efficient classroom management. However, in relation to the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, the schools still need to work harder to implement project-based learning approach and customize the teaching and learning with the value of Pancasila which is the five principles of the life of the nation of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, the government of Indonesia should provide intensive training for English teachers on the Merdeka Curriculum implementation. Then, educators in all level of education should have upgraded knowledge and potential about current national curriculum to make a change in our educational world.

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