

Teacher Readiness in Implementing The Merdeka Curriculum on Viewing Skills at The Elementary School Level

Rizki Rahma Kusuma^{1,*}, Fitri Puji Rahmawati²

^{1,2} Faculty of Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to assess the readiness of fifth-grade teachers and delineate the incorporation of viewing skills within the Indonesian language curriculum.

Methodology: The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach employing a case study design. The participants include fifth-grade teachers, principals, and additional data sources from teacher guideline materials. Data collection methods encompass observational checks, interviews, and document analysis.

Results: The findings reveal that teachers exhibit limited preparedness in embracing the Merdeka curriculum within the instructional process, consequently impacting the integration of viewing skills. Within classroom settings, the instructional approach towards viewing skills lacks interactivity and is characterised by a lack of technological or non-technological learning aids. Examination of interview transcripts, documentation, and observations of fifth-grade teachers implementing the Merdeka curriculum suggests a reliance solely on the ESPS book publisher endorsed by the school.

Introduction Section

The concept of 21st-century skills is closely integrated into the Merdeka curriculum. According to Yoki Ariyana et al. (2018), the 4C 21st-century skills encompass communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration, deemed crucial for contemporary education. Additionally, as Siti Sulistyani Pamuji (2021) highlighted, language proficiency comprises four fundamental aspects: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Within the Merdeka Curriculum, these language skills are expanded to encompass six elements, with two new additions: viewing and presentation skills.

Viewing skills play a pivotal role in comprehending information conveyed through various modes of communication. Daman Huri, Yeti Mulyati, and Vismaia S. Damaianti (2021) articulated that viewing skills emerge as a response to the rapid technological advancements aimed at facilitating educational adaptation. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) acknowledges the importance of viewing skills due to technological progressions necessitating adaptation, as Mukrimaa et al. (2016) outlined. Consequently, technological utilisation has evolved from auditory to visual systems, requiring individuals to attentively engage with video content, encompassing auditory, written, dialogue, and visual elements, as Ramadhan et al. (2021) noted. Moreover, Wijaya and Salim (2020) affirm the efficacy of retelling skills in Indonesian language learning through video materials.

The skill of retelling videos enhances students' enthusiasm, not solely for video content but also for refining visual literacy skills. As Huri (2023) noted, this visual training offers significant benefits for children in fostering their viewing skills. Moreover, viewing skills contribute to literacy development when approached effectively. Effectiveness entails facilitating the formation of meaning from images, interpreting them as multimodal texts, and critically analysing them within relevant contexts (Daman Huri, Yeti Mulyati, Vismaia S. Damaianti, 2021).

Teacher readiness in learning is a crucial determinant ensuring the efficacy of the educational process. According to Sidiq (2018), enhancing the quality of national education necessitates teachers possessing supporting competencies. As identified by Sulfemi (2019), factors influencing teacher readiness in learning encompass adequate formal education and pertinent qualifications in the teaching domain. Preparedness in learning implies that teachers profoundly understand the subjects they teach. Astutik and Hariyati (2021) advocate maximising teachers' roles in instilling 21st-century skills through suitable pedagogical approaches to cultivate students ready for contemporary challenges and digital requisites.

Supini (2022) underscores the significance of technology readiness in education, particularly in the digital era, whereby educators should comprehend and adeptly utilise technology. Integration of technological tools and resources in

* Corresponding author: Kikikusuma707@gmail.com

teaching enhances educators' competencies and knowledge. Furthermore, robust support from educational institutions, governmental bodies, and colleagues significantly contributes to ensuring teacher readiness, particularly amidst the technological advancements of the digital era.

Implementing viewing skills, a constituent element of the Merdeka curriculum is undertaken by elementary school educators through diverse techniques. For instance, as highlighted by Zyam and Nanang Khoirul Umam (2022), teachers have utilised WhatsApp to deliver folklore learning videos, thereby fostering viewing skills. Enhancing these skills entails restructuring content scope, selecting appropriate models and learning media, and integrating concepts relevant to daily life into the learning process. Moreover, active engagement in research is pivotal for continual improvement.

However, according to Mulyadi and Wikanengsih (2022), the implementation of viewing skills has encountered challenges due to inadequate readiness among teachers and limited utilisation of varied implementation techniques. Given this backdrop, the imperative of this research lies in elucidating teachers' readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly concerning viewing skills at the elementary school level.

Observations at SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan reveal established literacy enhancement programs, including various methods for strengthening viewing skills. This observation piques interest, particularly in assessing teachers' preparedness prior to learning, the fidelity of Merdeka curriculum implementation in viewing skills during learning activities, and the sequential stages of executing viewing skills learning.

Method

Type and Design

This research method employs qualitative methodology. Data triangulation, as described by Wijaya (2018), involves cross-referencing data from multiple sources, employing diverse methods, and collecting data at different points in time. In line with the findings of Mardiani et al. (2021), this approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the real-life situations and phenomena under investigation by documenting the conditions or events of the research object. The objective is to systematically depict the situation, with researchers employing case studies to interpret the intricacies within the field of study, as elucidated by Fadli (2021).

Data and Data Sources

The subject of this research comprises fifth-grade teachers, alongside the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan, and additional data sources stemming from instructional materials guided by these educators.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques encompass observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation entails assessing classroom readiness, specifically scrutinising teachers' proficiency in preparing learning materials for the Merdeka curriculum. Interviews involve direct face-to-face interactions and question-and-answer sessions between researchers and their subjects. Documentation involves gathering data from teachers' instructional materials and the principal's self-assessment analyses during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, particularly concerning viewing skills.

Data Validation

Data validity in this study is ensured through the utilisation of triangulation techniques. As elucidated by Wijaya (2018), data triangulation involves cross-referencing data from diverse sources and employing multiple methods of inquiry.

Results and Discussion

Results

Drawing from observations, interviews, and documentation conducted with the principal and fifth-grade teachers of SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan in Colomadu, Karanganyar, the formulation referenced is derived from expert indicators and field findings.

1. The readiness of teachers to implement the Merdeka curriculum in elementary schools, as per expert indicators outlined by Sulfemi (2019), involves several facets: possessing adequate formal education, relevant qualifications in the teaching field, and participation in the socialisation of the Integrated Learning Management System (IKM). However, findings from the field, as reported by the Principal of SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan, indicate partial readiness. Most teachers hold undergraduate degrees in Indonesian language and literature education, science, and mathematics. While efforts are made to enhance teaching proficiency through ongoing professional education, only 4 out of 14 elementary school teachers have undergone Teacher Professional Education (PPG). Regarding the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, it has been initiated in classes 1, 2, 4, and 5, with preparatory measures taken through school-wide meetings and subsequent classroom-level decisions. However, the training activities preceding the curriculum implementation are deemed insufficient, with teachers expressing inadequate support and

preparation. Despite participating in the IKM socialisation session, the absence of subsequent training sessions organised by the school exacerbates this shortfall. Insights from the fifth-grade teacher of SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjawan further underscore the tentative nature of the Merdeka curriculum implementation. The teacher highlights challenges in aligning learning and assessment practices with the curriculum's framework, attributing this struggle to the lack of comprehensive training. While the teacher has engaged in PGSD (Primary School Teacher Education) professional development, the absence of specific PPG PGSD (Primary School Teacher Professional Education) training diminishes the curriculum's relevance to their teaching profession."

Teacher readiness concerning Indonesian language viewing skills in the classroom involves several critical components. These include the preparation of a systematic learning plan, the planning of learning media and resources, and the administration of student assessments. Field observations indicate that the learning design adopted incorporates teaching modules provided by the publisher, specifically ESPSS.

Pembelajaran 1. Bagian-Bagian Buku Fiksi dan Nonfiksi (6 JP)

Peserta didik mampu:

- 2.5 Mengidentifikasi bagian-bagian buku (membaca dan memirsa)
- 3.3 Menceritakan informasi tentang isi buku berdasarkan sampul buku (berbicara)

- ✦ Peserta didik membaca ciri-ciri buku fiksi dan nonfiksi.
- ✦ Peserta didik memahami bagian-bagian buku fiksi dan nonfiksi.
- ✦ Peserta didik berlatih menggunakan soal yang telah disajikan.

Figure 1. The media used in learning are textbooks



Figure 2. PPT from ESPS issuer

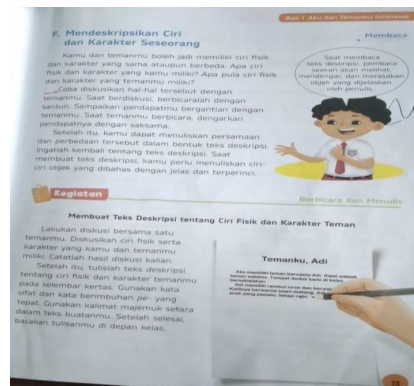


Figure 3. Source of textbooks from ESPS publishers

- In Learning 1, featured in Chapter 1, students engage in activities centred around interpreting description texts. These activities encourage students to visualise, comprehend, and articulate the objects described, honing their viewing skills. Through discussions on physical characteristics and character traits, students delve into creating description texts, enhancing their ability to retell and interpret what they have absorbed.
- Moving on to Learning 1 in Chapter 2, students explore the components of fiction and non-fiction books. Students deepen their understanding of various literary genres by identifying and categorising these components, such as the parts of the book. This viewing activity, integrated into the reading process, facilitates comprehension and engagement with different texts.
- In Learning 3, Chapter 5 introduces students to activities to identify information, including facts and opinions, within texts and advertisements. Through a video presentation showcasing examples and characteristics of

factual and opinionated statements sourced from the ESPS Indonesian Language book, students develop critical viewing skills essential for discerning between factual content and subjective viewpoints.

- Furthermore, Learning 3 in Chapter 8 broadens the scope of viewing skills by incorporating writing and infographic presentation elements. In this segment, students analyse information presented in infographics and learn to create their infographics. Students engage in multifaceted viewing activities by exploring topics related to Child-Friendly Schools, enriching their comprehension and communication skills through visual mediums.

The preparation of teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan for implementing the Merdeka curriculum, as highlighted by Mr Rochman on 17.08.2023, has included participation in professional education programs tailored for non-education graduates. Notably, many cross-curricular teachers at the school hold degrees in fields such as Indonesian language and literature education, science, and mathematics, which may not directly align with elementary education expertise. This discrepancy poses challenges, particularly in the development of learning tools. Hence, the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program, attended by these teachers, serves as a valuable mechanism to bridge the gap and align their expertise with the elementary education requirements.

With 14 teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan, none are Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) graduates. The majority of teachers are non-education graduates. However, data documentation indicates that four teachers have attained educator certification, underscoring the school's efforts to enhance teacher qualifications and readiness for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. These initiatives demonstrate the school's commitment to ensuring teachers possess the necessary formal education and qualifications to implement the curriculum effectively.

Teacher readiness is further evidenced by the school's support activities for the Merdeka Curriculum implementation, as highlighted by Mr. Rochman. The school has proactively established Integrated Learning Management (IKM) systems since the inception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The school conducts comprehensive preparatory measures to ensure readiness, including semesterly school-wide meetings where outcomes are disseminated to individual classes employing the curriculum. Additionally, training sessions are provided for teachers tasked with implementing the curriculum, accompanied by briefings from the administrative office. SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan also organises IKM workshop activities covering various aspects such as report card preparation, assessment methods, and learning techniques tailored to the Merdeka Curriculum.

However, the readiness of fifth-grade teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in the viewing skills element, presents challenges, as per interviews conducted on 6.9.2023. Teachers express difficulties understanding the curriculum's intricacies concerning learning and assessment, compounded by insufficient learning resources and a novel curriculum framework diverging from the previous 2013 Curriculum. Moreover, issues persist regarding assessment techniques due to teachers' limited comprehension. The absence of intensive training sessions at the school and administrative levels exacerbates these challenges, stemming from inadequate preparation and review processes.

The fifth-grade teachers' comprehension of viewing skills within Indonesian language lessons encompasses four key elements: viewing, reading, listening, and writing. Specific strategies are employed within each element to address disparities among students. Variations in reading speeds prompt the creation of a designated reading corner in the classroom, allowing students to read at their own pace. Students who struggle with reading fluency are encouraged to practice reading until improvement is achieved persistently. Concerning listening skills, student concentration levels pose a challenge, as some students tend to become easily distracted during instructional sessions. Despite teacher explanations, some students prefer to engage with peers rather than focus on the lesson content. The writing element correlates closely with students' enjoyment of reading. Those who derive pleasure from reading often exhibit proficiency in writing, effortlessly crafting paragraphs and stories. However, writing proficiency may present a greater challenge for students less inclined towards reading. Regarding viewing skills, students tend to absorb visual content but encounter difficulties articulating their observations in written form. While oral expression may flow more readily, translating these observations into written language remains a hurdle for many students.

Discussion

The readiness of teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum for Indonesian language subjects at Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan Elementary School is currently suboptimal, primarily due to the mismatch between teacher qualifications and the curriculum requirements. The prevalence of cross-disciplinary teachers, rather than graduates from Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD), contributes to this disparity. Consequently, teachers may lack the preparation to effectively deliver classroom instruction, hindering their mastery of the curriculum content. As highlighted by Sulfemi (2019), factors influencing teacher readiness include adequate formal education and relevant qualifications in the teaching field. While some teachers have pursued Teacher Professional Education (PPG) programs, only a minority, including one fifth-grade teacher, have completed PPG PGSD training. This discrepancy underscores the challenge of ensuring educational qualifications aligned with the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition to formal education, participation in socialisation activities is crucial in enhancing teacher readiness. The principal of SD Muhammadiyah Plus Malangjiwan mentioned the provision of training sessions by both the school and administrative office aimed at preparing class teachers for curriculum implementation. However, this perspective contradicts the feedback provided by the fifth-grade teacher, indicating a potential disconnect between school administration and classroom realities regarding teacher preparation.

Participation in socialisation activities, albeit limited, holds significance in enhancing teacher readiness for the Merdeka Curriculum implementation, as highlighted by Wahira et al. (2023). However, the effectiveness of such training hinges on its continuity and the depth of understanding regarding curriculum implementation. Teachers' preparedness appears to be lacking in the context of instruction on Indonesian language viewing skills. They predominantly rely on learning materials provided by the ESPS school publisher, neglecting the creation of teaching modules and customising learning media, as Faridah et al. (2020) emphasised. The importance of incorporating viewing skills development into lesson planning is underscored, emphasising activities that integrate technology, such as retelling skills, as advocated by Huri (2023). Utilising visual media in teaching is deemed effective in honing students' viewing skills, aligning with the insights of Daman Huri, Yeti Mulyati, and Vismaia S. Damaiani (2021), who highlight the pivotal role of technology in enhancing educational adaptability. Beyond the inadequacy in learning tool preparation, classroom teachers encounter challenges with assessment practices within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. As highlighted by Nasution (2021), assessment in this context is a structured and continuous process to gather data on the learning process and students' educational achievements. The ultimate goal is to inform decision-making based on predefined criteria and considerations, underscoring the importance of robust assessment practices in fostering effective learning outcomes.

In implementing viewing skills within Indonesian Language Subjects in the classroom, teachers utilise teaching materials that integrate viewing learning. For instance, in Learning 1 Chapter 1, students engage in activities focused on interpreting descriptive texts, fostering an immersive experience where readers visualise, hear, and feel the objects described. Through discussions on physical characteristics and character traits, students enhance their interpretative and retelling abilities, primarily by creating descriptive texts.

Similarly, in Lesson 1, on Parts of Fiction and Non-fiction Books, viewing activities are incorporated in Chapter 2, where students identify the components of a book. However, viewing skill applications falls short as students are only exposed to PowerPoint presentations from ESPS publishers. The teacher's verbal explanations of book characteristics lack direct engagement with learning media, such as utilising real fiction and non-fiction books in the classroom environment, which could enhance students' comprehension and interaction with textual elements. In Learning 3 Chapter 5, students participate in activity 2.1.1, which involves identifying information in texts and advertisements. However, the application of viewing skills by the class teacher is limited to conveying information solely through the package book on page 80, demonstrating advertisements. The teacher's reliance solely on packaged materials neglects opportunities for more interactive and immersive learning experiences that could deepen students' understanding and engagement with the content.

Class V lacks preparation in utilising real-world or technological advertisements as teaching materials. For instance, teachers could incorporate advertisements from various media platforms such as YouTube or television and outdoor advertisements like billboards into their lessons, as suggested by Gabriela (2021). Research indicates that learning through audio-visual media significantly impacts students' comprehension and learning outcomes. In Learning 3 Chapter 8, activity 2.21 focuses on explaining information and word meanings in infographics. However, the implementation of reading and viewing skills lacks activities that extend beyond the classroom environment. According to Mulyadi & Wikanengsih (2022), the exploration phase of visual literacy includes viewing learning integrated with various strategies to reinterpret information, such as summarising and creating infographics. Therefore, incorporating activities encouraging students to explore real-world advertisements and create visual representations of information could enhance their understanding and engagement with the curriculum content.

Conclusion

Teacher readiness for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum regarding viewing skills appears insufficient, as indicated by interview data, documentation, and observations of Class V teachers tasked with implementing the curriculum. These teachers predominantly rely on materials provided by the ESPS book publisher from the school, showcasing a lack of preparation and limited utilisation of diverse teaching resources. Furthermore, some teachers may lack relevant expertise in their field, further exacerbating the issue.

In terms of classroom instruction, the learning process for visualisation skills lacks interactivity, as teachers seldom utilise technological or non-technological learning media. For instance, while Learning 1 in Chapter 1 and Parts of Fiction and Non-fiction Books incorporates viewing activities, such as interpreting and identifying book parts, the implementation lacks engagement with varied learning materials beyond the standard textbook. Similarly, Learning 3 Chapter 5 and Chapter 8 involve activities focused on identifying information and explaining infographics, respectively, yet teachers fail to prepare supplementary learning materials to enhance student understanding and participation.

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