

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Result

SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli Idanoi, particularly the eighth grade as the research subject, was a study group consisting of eight classes. The implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum in the eighth grade had been carried out since 2023. There were three English teachers assigned to teach in the eighth grade, namely Mrs. Sonarianti Zebua, S.Pd., Mrs. Ervin Artatis Waruwu, S.Pd., and Ms. Maria Dewi Putri Jelita Lumbu, S.Pd. Based on the research focus, which aimed to describe the realization of classroom management and to identify the challenges faced by English teachers during the implementation of *merdeka* curriculum, the researchers collected data through observations, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted to obtain more accurate data in answering the research problems by observing an English teacher teaching in the eighth grade, followed by interviews with the three English teachers. In addition, the researchers also collected supporting documents such as the English teaching module, Flow of Learning Objectives (*Alur tujuan pembelajaran/ATP*), journal articles, and other relevant materials. After gathering all the data, the researchers analyzed them using observation sheets, interview transcripts, and relevant documents. The data were then processed through data analysis techniques, which included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4.1.1 The Result of Observation

The first step taken by the researchers to collect data was conducting observations, using non-participatory and structured observation methods. In this case, the researchers observed without participating in the learning activities that were taking place and used observation sheets that had been prepared in advance. The researcher observed three English teachers from classes VIII-A to VIII-H, where Mrs. Sonarianti taught classes VIII-A to VIII-D, Mrs. Ervin taught classes VIII-E and VIII-F, and Mrs. Dewi taught classes VIII-G and VIII-H. The researcher carried out observations of English Teacher I on May 19–21, English

Teacher II on May 26–27, and English Teacher III on May 14 and 28, 2025. The researcher used an observation sheet (yes/no) accompanied by observation notes. The indicators on the observation sheet were based on the findings of Qorzhah et al. (2024), Puspita (2023), Ferdiansyah (2023), and Mursyid et al. (2023), such as learning planning, classroom organization and activities, flexible and adaptive implementation, classroom evaluation and reflection, and strengthening group interaction and learning. The following were the observation results obtained by the researcher.

4.1.1.1 Learning Planning

The implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum emphasized the importance of learning planning and differentiation to ensure that learning was tailored to students' abilities and needs. Consider table below.

Table 4.1 Results of English teachers' observations on materials according to the abilities of students

Observed aspect	Materials according to the abilities of students								
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
			√		√		√		√
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes				
	Yes	No	Yes	No					
		√		√		Teachers were able to adapt the material to suit the abilities of the majority of students, particularly when explaining learning materials. They used simple language that			

					students could understand.
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		√		√	Students appeared unable to follow the learning flow, and the material presented was not aligned with their abilities.

Based on the observation table presented, English teacher I it was found that the material provided was not fully aligned with their students' abilities. Although the teacher explained the material well, most students appeared passive and lacked focus during the learning process. This lack of interest from students indicates that the teacher had not fully designed learning that was appropriate to the needs and ability levels of the students in her class. In contrast, English teacher II appeared to be able to adapt the material to the abilities of most students, especially in terms of delivery. The teacher used simple language that was easy for students to understand. This indicates that the lesson planning took into account the aspect of differentiation according to student abilities.

Meanwhile, English teacher III the material presented was not aligned with their students' abilities. As a result, students appeared to have difficulty following the learning flow. This indicates that the lesson planning did not accommodate students' needs, resulting in suboptimal learning. Overall, observations indicate that not all teachers are able to adapt their lesson plans effectively. Some teachers have successfully adapted the material to their students' abilities, but others still face challenges in differentiating learning in accordance with the principles of *merdeka* curriculum.

Table 4.2 Results of English teachers' observations on give assignments or projects according to the students' ability level

Observed aspect	Give assignments or projects according to the students' ability level							
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	√		√		√		√	Teachers gave students simple assignments in groups. However, these assignments tend to be general and don't fully address the varying abilities of each student. This is evident in the students' passive responses and lack of active participation in group discussions.
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		Simple assignments were given to groups and individuals, tailored to the students' daily lives.			
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
		√		√	Assignments were individual and monotonous, and some students complained that they were too difficult and uninteresting.			

In the implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum, assigning tasks or projects was considered an important strategy to support learning differentiation based on students' abilities. Observations of English teachers revealed differences in the way they designed and assigned tasks. English Teacher I assigned simple tasks in the form of group work. However, these tasks tended to be general and did not fully address the varying ability levels of the students. This was evident in the students' passive responses and their lack of active participation in group discussions. Thus, the assignments did not fully accommodate the diverse abilities of the learners. In contrast, English teacher II assigned simple tasks both to groups and individuals. These assignments were designed to reflect students' daily lives,

which made them easier to understand and more relevant. This demonstrated that the teacher had attempted to connect learning to students' real-life experiences while tailoring the tasks to their ability levels.

Meanwhile, English teacher III assigned individual tasks that were monotonous. Several students even complained that the assignments were too difficult and uninteresting. This suggested that the tasks had not been designed in alignment with students' abilities and interests, which hindered the creation of a meaningful learning environment. Overall, the observations indicated that not all teachers were able to adapt assignments or projects to their students' abilities. While some teachers had successfully created tasks that were relevant and connected to students' lives, others still struggled to design varied, engaging, and differentiated assignments, as emphasized in the principles of the *merdeka* curriculum.

Table 4.3 Results of English teachers' observations on use of digital media or learning technology

Observed aspect	Use of digital media or learning technology									
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D		Notes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
	√		√		√		√		Technologies such as projectors and laptops for playing instructional videos were used in every classroom.	
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes					
	Yes	No	Yes	No						
	√		√		Teachers utilize projectors and laptops to display instructional videos and PPT's to reinforce the material, particularly in visualization and listening.					
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes					
	Yes	No	Yes	No						
		√		√	Technology was still underutilized in the classroom; teachers predominantly used lectures and writing on the board, and used textbooks solely as learning materials and media.					

In implementing the *merdeka* curriculum, the use of digital media and learning technology was considered a crucial aspect for increasing the effectiveness and attractiveness of the teaching and learning process. Observations of English teachers revealed differences in the extent to which learning technology was utilized in the classroom. English teacher I and English teacher II both made use of projectors and laptops to display instructional videos and PowerPoint (PPT) slides. The integration of digital media specifically supported students' visualization and listening skills, making the material easier to follow and strengthening their overall understanding.

Meanwhile, English teacher III made very limited use of technology. The teacher primarily relied on lectures and writing on the board, with textbooks serving as the sole learning resource and medium. This minimal use of digital media suggested that the learning process remained traditional and did not take full advantage of technology's potential to promote active student engagement. Overall, the observations indicated that while some teachers had successfully utilized learning technology to enhance the delivery of materials, others had not yet optimized the use of digital media, which is an essential component emphasized in the *merdeka* curriculum.

4.1.1.2 Organizing Classes and Activities

Table 4.4 Results of English teachers' observations on organizing classes and activities

Observed aspect	Strategically place learning aids							
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	√		√		√		√	
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		The projector and whiteboard are used alternately, positioned so that all students can easily see them.			

English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes				
	Yes	No	Yes	No					
	√		√		The whiteboard is strategically positioned for students to see and reach.				
Observed aspect	Teachers arrange student seating according to student characteristics.								
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
			√		√		√		√
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes				
	Yes	No	Yes	No					
			√		√	The teacher does not change the seating position according to the students' characteristics and remains in the original position.			
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes				
	Yes	No	Yes	No					
			√		√	Student seating remains in its usual position, without any changes or adjustments to the student's characteristics.			

In terms of physical classroom management, all English teachers had demonstrated awareness of organizing essential materials by placing them in strategic locations. Teachers I and II had used a projector and whiteboard in positions that allowed all students to see the material clearly and comfortably. This strategic placement had supported visual accessibility and contributed to focused learning. Teacher III, however, had relied solely on a whiteboard, which was also placed in a visible location, thereby limiting the variety of media used. Despite appropriate equipment placement, the range of learning media employed had still been minimal.

Furthermore, in terms of seating arrangements, all three teachers had continued to employ conventional layouts, with rows of desks and chairs facing the whiteboard. None of the teachers had arranged seating based on student

learning styles, group size, or individual characteristics. This static configuration could limit interaction among students and hinder the effective implementation of collaborative learning strategies. A more flexible and responsive seating arrangement would have supported differentiated learning and encouraged greater student engagement, particularly in speaking and group activities. Therefore, to align with the student-centered approach promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum, physical classroom management should have involved not only the strategic placement of learning aids, but also more adaptive seating arrangements that addressed various learning needs and fostered active participation.

4.1.1.3 Planning the Rules, Time, and Discipline

All three English teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of rules and discipline in classroom management. They consistently implemented classroom rules such as punctuality, bringing required materials, and greeting the teacher in English. These rules were enforced fairly and with consistency, though the level of firmness and approach varied.

Table 4.5 Results of English teachers' observations on managing the time in teaching and learning process

Observed aspect	Managing the time in teaching and learning process									
	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D		Notes	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		
English Teacher I		√		√		√		√	Time management during learning remains ineffective. Teachers appear to spend more time delivering material and giving assignments, resulting in the closing phase of learning not occurring when the lesson is over. This demonstrates the need for appropriate time planning at each stage of learning to ensure a comprehensive and structured learning experience.	

	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
English Teacher II		√		√	The ineffective distribution of time between explanations, exercises, and assignments requires extra time to conclude the lesson.
	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
English Teacher III		√		√	Time allocation across learning stages has not been implemented effectively. Teachers appear to spend too much time explaining the material, leaving limited time for discussion, practice exercises, or closing remarks. Consequently, the learning process is not fully implemented, and several important aspects are missed.

In terms of time management during the teaching and learning process, the findings indicated that the three English teachers had not managed class time effectively. English Teacher I had tended to spend more time delivering material and giving assignments, which resulted in the closing phase of learning not occurring at the end of the lesson. This reflected the need for proper planning at each learning stage to ensure a comprehensive and structured process. Similarly, English Teacher II also had demonstrated ineffective time allocation, particularly in balancing explanations, exercises, and assignments, often requiring additional time to conclude the lesson effectively. Likewise, English Teacher III had not implemented effective time allocation across learning stages. The teacher had spent too much time explaining the material, leaving limited time for discussion, practical activities, and closing reflection. As a result, the learning process was not fully implemented, and several important aspects were neglected. Overall, the ineffective time management demonstrated by the three English teachers highlighted the need for better planning and time allocation to support a more structured and meaningful learning experience.

Table 4.6 Rules that apply in the classroom

Teachers	Rules in the classroom
English teacher I	1. Used English greetings when the teacher entered the classroom. 2. Each student had an English textbook and dictionary during the lesson. 3. Submitted assignments on time. 4. The students entered the classroom on time.
English teacher II	1. There was no chatting with friends while the teacher was speaking. 2. Before the lesson began, the students ensured cleanliness and tidiness inside and outside the classroom. 3. The students used English greetings when the teacher entered the classroom. 4. The students used English when the teacher took attendance. 5. Each student had an English textbook and dictionary during the lesson. 6. The students did not bring or use cell phones during the lesson. 7. The students entered the class on time.
English teacher III	1. The students submitted assignments on time. 2. The students did not use cell phones during class. 3. The students entered the class on time. 4. Snacking or buying snacks during class was not permitted.

Table 4.7 Results of English teachers' observations on implement class rules clearly and consistently

Observed aspect	Implement class rules clearly and consistently								
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D		Notes
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	√		√		√		√		Classroom rules are consistently implemented in each class, including the use of English greetings upon entering the classroom, ensuring the availability of dictionaries and textbooks,

										and routinely checking assignments.
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes					
	Yes	No	Yes	No						
	√		√		Common classroom rules include not chatting while the teacher is speaking, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and not using cell phones during lessons. Other rules include bringing dictionaries and textbooks, and greeting the teacher in English, which have been agreed upon from the beginning and implemented consistently in each class.					
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes					
	Yes	No	Yes	No						
	√		√		Rules are established and enforced, such as submitting assignments on time, not using cell phones during class, and maintaining classroom cleanliness.					

Observations showed that each English teacher implemented classroom rules clearly and consistently. English teacher I consistently enforced rules, such as greeting students in English upon entering the classroom, ensuring students brought their dictionaries and textbooks, and regularly checking assignments. These practices demonstrated that the rules were being consistently implemented. English teacher II also consistently implemented rules. These rules included prohibiting students from chatting while the teacher was speaking, maintaining a clean and tidy classroom, and prohibiting the use of cell phones during lessons. Other rules, such as bringing dictionaries and textbooks and greeting teachers in English, had been agreed upon from the beginning and were consistently implemented.

Similarly, English teacher III also consistently enforced discipline. These rules included submitting assignments on time, prohibiting cell phone use during lessons, and maintaining classroom cleanliness. These practices demonstrated that rules had been established and adhered to in order to create a disciplined learning

environment. Overall, the findings indicated that all English teachers consistently implemented classroom rules. This consistent enforcement created a disciplined and orderly classroom atmosphere in the teaching and learning process.

Table 4.8 Results of English teachers' observations on Arrive on time and follow the schedule

Observed aspect	Arrive on time and follow the schedule							
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	√		√		√		√	Teachers arrive and begin lessons according to the established schedule.
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		Teachers arrive on schedule and start lessons on time.			

Observations showed that English teachers arrived on time and consistently adhered to the teaching schedule. English teacher I arrived and began lessons according to the established schedule, ensuring that the teaching and learning process began on time. Similarly, English teacher II also arrived on time and began lessons on time. This demonstrated that the teachers showed discipline and commitment to the agreed-upon schedule. Likewise, English teacher III arrived on time and carried out class activities according to the established schedule. This demonstrated that the teachers consistently adhered to the planned schedule in organizing the learning process. Overall, the findings indicated that all English teachers demonstrated punctuality by arriving on time and starting lessons on schedule. This consistency supported the creation of a structured and disciplined learning environment that enhanced the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

4.1.1.4 Classroom Evaluation and Reflection

Table 4.9 Results of English teachers' observations on provide feedback to students after learning activities

Observed aspect	Provide feedback to students after learning activities							
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	√		√		√		√	The teacher provides feedback after students complete the exercise.
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		The teacher provides individual feedback and encourages students to improve their own answers.			
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		The teacher provides general feedback to all students, thus encouraging students to understand individually.			

The results of the observation showed that the English teachers provided feedback to students after learning activities in a consistent manner. English teacher I provided feedback after students completed the exercises. This practice helped students recognize their mistakes and understand the correct answers. English teacher II also provided feedback, but more specifically in the form of individual comments. The teacher encouraged students to improve their own answers, which fostered student independence and responsibility in the learning process. Meanwhile, English teacher III provided general feedback to all students. Through this approach, students were encouraged to reflect on their understanding individually and gained better comprehension of the material that had been taught. Overall, the findings indicated that all English teachers provided feedback after learning activities, either in individual or general form. This consistent practice supported students' reflection, improvement, and deeper understanding of the lesson.

4.1.1.5 Strengthening Group Interaction and Learning

Table 4.10 Results of English teachers' observations on all students actively participate in discussions during learning

Observed aspect	All students actively participate in discussions during learning							
English Teacher I	VIII-A		VIII-B		VIII-C		VIII-D	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	√		√		√		√	Discussion activities do not demonstrate a uniform level of student engagement
English Teacher II	VIII-E		VIII-F		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		Discussion activities are still dominated by only a few students, while others tend to be passive and just follow along.			
English Teacher III	VIII-G		VIII-H		Notes			
	Yes	No	Yes	No				
	√		√		Most students tended to be quiet and only responded when directed.			

The results of the observation showed that not all students actively participated in discussions during the learning process. English teacher I facilitated discussion activities, but these did not demonstrate a uniform level of student engagement. Some students actively contributed, while others showed less participation. Similarly, English teacher II found that discussion activities were still dominated by only a few students, while the majority tended to remain passive and merely followed along without significant contribution. In the same way, English teacher III observed that most students tended to be quiet and only responded when directed by the teacher. This indicated that students were not yet accustomed to engaging fully in group discussions without being prompted. Overall, the findings indicated that classroom discussions had not yet achieved active participation from all students. Student engagement remained uneven, with only a small number actively involved, while others were still passive. This suggested the need for further strategies to strengthen group interaction and encourage broader student participation in discussions.

4.1.2 The Result of Interview

The researcher had used interviews as one of the research instruments to collect the information needed for this research. Three eighth-grade English teachers were interviewed using structured interviews, which had used a list of questions that had been prepared and systematically arranged by the researcher beforehand. The researcher had conducted interviews with English Teachers I and II on May 15, 2025, but at different times and places, and had interviewed English Teacher III on May 21, 2025. The indicators in the interview questions had been arranged based on Permendiknas number 41 of 2007, which stated 10 indicators of classroom management. The following are the results of interviews conducted with English teachers using the 10 indicators in question.

4.1.2.1 Seating Arrangements are Appropriate to Student Characteristics, Subject Matter, and Learning Activities

To examine classroom management related to seating arrangements, researchers focused on how teachers arrange seating based on student characteristics, subject matter, and learning activities. The following section presents findings on how English teachers implement seating arrangements in their classrooms.

Table 4.11 English teachers' responses on seating arrangements according to student characteristics, subject matter, and learning activities

No	Questions	Teacher Response	
1.	Do you rearrange students' seating according to their characteristics during learning or do you stay in the previously assigned seating?	English teacher I	I didn't rearrange the students' seating, as I felt the pre-assigned seating was sufficient to support the learning process. In the context of the <i>merdeka</i> curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, I focused more on varying learning strategies and media to meet diverse learning needs than on rearranging seating.
		English teacher II	I still use the predetermined seating arrangements, as I believe they are sufficient to support learning activities. I prefer to adapt learning methods or media to better suit students' needs.

		English teacher III	I don't regularly change students' seating positions because the existing layout is already quite supportive. I emphasize adaptive teaching techniques to meet the diverse needs of my students.
2.	Do you rearrange students' seating according to their characteristics during learning or do you stay in the previously assigned seating?	English teacher I	In my opinion, seating arrangements influence student engagement in learning. Therefore, I often organize students into groups so that each student can interact and participate in the learning process.
		English teacher II	Of course, seating arrangements matter. I often divide students into small groups so they can work together and be more active in discussions during the lesson.
		English teacher III	I adjust my voice volume to suit the class. If the class is large enough, I raise my voice. I also observe students' expressions to ensure they can hear and understand my explanation.

Based on the interviews, the three English teachers had given similar responses: they had not routinely rearranged student seating because the established arrangement had been sufficient to support the learning process. In line with the student-centered Merdeka Curriculum, they had preferred to adjust learning strategies, techniques, and media to meet diverse student needs rather than change the physical layout. Although the seating remained unchanged, they had formed small study groups to increase interaction and active participation. The teachers had used group discussions to maintain student engagement, reflecting a flexible and adaptive approach to classroom design that prioritized learning functions and social interaction. Furthermore, a clean, tidy classroom with natural lighting and adequate ventilation had been considered important to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment. Overall, the teachers had continued to focus on adaptive, inclusive, and student-centered practices despite not frequently changing seating arrangements.

4.1.2.2 Teacher Volume and Intonation

Table 4.12 English teachers' responses on teacher volume and intonation

No	Questions	Teacher Response	
1.	How do you ensure that the volume and intonation of your voice can be heard well by students?	English teacher I	In my lessons, I naturally adjust my voice volume so that all students can hear me by ensuring they are quiet in class, then adjusting my volume to the size of the classroom. If the classroom is large, my volume will naturally be higher, and vice versa. To ensure students are hearing well, I pay attention to their responses. If a student asks for a repeat or appears confused, I consciously adjust my voice volume or move to a position that can reach the entire room.
		English teacher II	I adjust my voice volume to suit the class size and the students' condition. If students seem confused or unresponsive, I'll evaluate my position and volume. I also avoid loud noises to make my voice more easily heard.
		English teacher III	I adjust my voice volume to suit the class. If the class is large enough, I raise my voice. I also observe students' expressions to ensure they can hear and understand my explanation.
2.	How do you maintain your voice intonation so that it is not boring for students when learning English?	English teacher I	My way of ensuring that students don't get bored listening to the explanation of the material is by using variations in intonation that are appropriate to the context of the material with clear articulation and delivered firmly.
		English teacher II	I use varied intonation according to the situation and the content. Lively intonation helps students stay engaged and prevent them from getting bored during the explanation.
		English teacher III	I use a variety of intonations in delivering the material, depending on the content of the discussion and the atmosphere of the class, so that it remains interesting and not

			monotonous and the students don't get bored.
3	How do you adjust the volume when students are not focused and the classroom atmosphere is noisy during English learning?	English teacher I	When the classroom atmosphere is unconducive and students are lacking focus, I usually slowly lower my voice volume to alert them and make them pay attention to me. In my experience, this method works and is effective.
		English teacher II	If class starts to get tense, I slowly lower my voice so students realize I'm speaking. This usually helps them refocus.
		English teacher III	When the class starts to get noisy or students lose focus, I usually lower my voice slowly. This strategy is quite effective in getting their attention without having to scold them.
4	In learning, can you manage your time according to the planned schedule?	English teacher I	I strive to manage my learning time as closely as possible, according to the planned schedule. However, in practice, I often encounter obstacles that require adjustments. For example, when students need more time to understand certain material. Nevertheless, I utilize my time effectively by focusing on the main learning objectives and maximizing core activities in each meeting.
		English teacher II	I always try to stick to the lesson schedule I've set. However, I often have to adjust my schedule if students need more in-depth explanations on certain material. Even so, I stay focused on the main learning outcomes and ensure I utilize my time optimally.
		English teacher III	I always try to stick to the scheduled timeline. However, during implementation, there are often unexpected things that require adjustments, such as when students need more explanation or discussions last longer than expected.

Based on the interviews regarding teacher volume and intonation, the three English teachers had demonstrated awareness of the importance of clear verbal

communication during learning. English Teacher I had naturally adjusted her voice volume to suit the classroom size and student responses, moving to positions that allowed all students to hear clearly. English Teachers II and III had also adapted their volume according to class conditions and observed student expressions to ensure comprehension. Regarding intonation, English Teacher I had varied her intonation with clear articulation and firm delivery to maintain student interest. Teacher II had applied lively and situationally varied intonation, while Teacher III had used different intonations depending on the content and classroom atmosphere to prevent monotony and keep students engaged. When the classroom became noisy or students lost focus, all three teachers had gradually lowered their voices to regain attention without scolding, a strategy considered effective in maintaining classroom control and student responsiveness. In terms of time management, the three teachers had strived to follow the planned lesson schedules. However, they had occasionally adjusted their time allocation when students required more explanation or discussion. Despite these adjustments, they had focused on achieving the main learning objectives and had attempted to maximize the use of class time effectively. Overall, their strategies in managing volume, intonation, and time had focused on supporting student understanding and creating a comfortable, student-centered classroom.

4.1.2.3 Teacher Speech is Polite and Understandable

Table 4.13 English teachers' responses on teacher speech is polite and understandable

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	In learning, do you use polite and appropriate language?	English teacher I	Of course, in my teaching, I use polite and appropriate language, appropriate to the classroom situation. This is not only easy to understand, but also reflects respect and educating students. I avoid using harsh language or even cornering students as much as possible.
		English teacher II	Yes, I use polite language that is appropriate to the classroom context. Good and correct language reflects respect for students and helps create a positive learning environment.

		English teacher III	When teaching, I maintain good, polite, and easy-to-understand language. I avoid words that could offend or make students uncomfortable.
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Based on the interviews regarding teacher speech, the three English teachers had demonstrated the use of polite, clear, and understandable language during learning. English Teacher I had consistently used polite and appropriate language suited to the classroom situation, avoiding harsh words and treating students respectfully. The teacher had stated that polite language not only facilitated understanding but also reflected a respectful and educational attitude towards students. Similarly, English Teacher II had applied polite language that reflected respect for students and supported a positive learning environment, emphasizing its role in creating a positive classroom atmosphere. English Teacher III had maintained clear, polite, and easy-to-understand language, avoiding expressions that could offend or make students uncomfortable, and had highlighted the importance of respectful communication. Overall, the teachers' responses indicated that they had prioritized respectful and comprehensible communication as part of their classroom management practices. This attitude reflects their professionalism and shows that the language used in learning had been an essential aspect of classroom management, oriented toward ethical values and fostering positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

4.1.2.4 Adjusting lesson material to student learning abilities

Table 4.14 English teachers' responses on adjusting lesson material to student learning abilities

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	When preparing teaching modules, do you adapt them to the abilities and	English teacher I	Yes, when developing teaching modules, I strive to adapt them to the abilities and needs of my students. I pay attention to their level of understanding and their varying learning styles. I often relate the learning to students' daily lives to make it easier to understand.

	needs of the students?	English teacher II	Of course. I adapt the material and learning strategies to the students' abilities. I also try to relate the material to everyday life to make it easier to understand.
		English teacher III	The teaching modules I create always take into account the students' backgrounds and abilities. I strive to incorporate elements of everyday life to make the material more relevant and easier to understand.
2.	Have you ever attended training on implementing the <i>Merdeka</i> curriculum?	English teacher I	Yes, I have. This training is held by the government once a year, and I've attended twice. However, this training is generally conducted, not specifically, and many schools participate.
		English teacher II	I have attended two government-organized training sessions. These provided a general overview of the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum, although further in-depth study at each school level is still needed.
		English teacher III	I once participated in a government-sponsored training program on implementing the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum. The training was quite helpful, although it was general in nature and didn't address the specific needs in the field.
3	If yes/no, do you have a handbook or module for implementing the <i>Merdeka</i> curriculum?	English teacher I	Yes, during the training, we were provided with a module on implementing the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum as supporting material. However, I personally don't have a complete copy of the module for independent use.
		English teacher II	Yes, <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum Module was distributed during training, but I have not saved or have a personal copy for daily reference.
		English teacher III	I have received materials related to the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum during training, including the modules, but I do not yet have the complete modules for personal use.

4	How long has the Merdeka curriculum been implemented in schools? And what are your thoughts on it now that it's been implemented?	English teacher I	The <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum has been implemented at this school since 2023. This curriculum is still relatively new to me, especially since it differs significantly from the previous curriculum. In the <i>Merdeka</i> Curriculum, learning is directed to be more student-centered, where students are expected to be more active in learning. Furthermore, the development of learning tools, such as teaching modules and learning outcomes, still needs to be adjusted and continuously developed. This curriculum also requires me to be more creative in planning enjoyable and varied learning.
		English teacher II	This school has been implementing the new <i>Merdeka</i> curriculum since 2023. From my perspective, this curriculum emphasizes students' active role in the learning process. Because it's still relatively new, there are still many things that need to be adjusted, both in creating and compiling teaching modules and in implementing learning methods that must be aligned with the curriculum. This certainly challenges me to be more innovative and creative in presenting engaging and enjoyable learning, especially in English.
		English teacher III	This school has implemented the <i>Merdeka</i> curriculum since 2023. I believe this curriculum offers an innovative approach because it focuses on students as the primary subject. Although still in the adjustment phase, this curriculum has encouraged me to be more creative in creating engaging and contextual learning.

Based on the interviews, the three English teachers had demonstrated efforts to develop teaching modules tailored to students' abilities and needs, reflecting the student-centered principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. English Teacher I had considered varying levels of understanding and learning styles, linking material to everyday life. English Teachers II and III had similarly adapted materials and

strategies to students' abilities and daily contexts, showing adaptive and responsive learning management. The teachers' efforts had been supported by government-organized Merdeka Curriculum training, which provided an overview of the curriculum. However, all three teachers had noted that the training was too general and did not address English learning specifically. Although they had received the official curriculum module during training, none of them had a personal copy for daily reference, which limited their ability to implement the curriculum fully. Overall, the teachers had perceived the Merdeka Curriculum as a new approach, implemented in their schools since 2023, that emphasized active student participation, creativity, and contextualized learning. While they had embraced its principles, they had acknowledged that implementation was still in the adjustment stage, and access to personal teaching modules was necessary to optimize learning design and delivery.

4.1.2.5 Creating Order, Discipline, Comfort, Safety, and Adherence to Classroom Rules

Table 4.15 English teachers' responses on creating order, discipline, comfort, safety, and adherence to classroom rules

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	Are there any specific rules made in the classroom that help improve discipline and effectiveness of English learning?	English teacher I	Yes, of course. For example, when the teacher enters the classroom, students greet each other in English. Students are required to bring textbooks and dictionaries. Students who don't have a dictionary can borrow one from the library. This includes submitting assignments on time, and getting students used to speaking English, even if Indonesian is the dominant language.
		English teacher II	Yes, for example, greeting teachers in English, bringing study materials, and completing assignments on time. These rules are designed to ensure a more orderly learning process.
		English teacher III	In class, we have simple rules like greeting in English, bringing complete supplies, and submitting assignments on time. These rules

			help maintain discipline.
2.	Do you see that students' compliance with class rules has an impact on the smooth running of the English learning process?	English teacher I	Of course. When students comply with these rules, the English learning process can proceed smoothly and also train their discipline in learning.
		English teacher II	Very influential. If students obey the rules, learning progresses more smoothly and students become more disciplined in participating in learning activities.
		English teacher III	Students' adherence to rules significantly contributes to the smooth running of learning. When they are disciplined, the learning process becomes more focused and orderly.
3	What are the teacher's strategies for guiding students to obey class rules without using physical punishment?	English teacher I	My strategy for ensuring students adhere to classroom rules is to clearly explain the importance of classroom rules and how they can help them learn comfortably. I also offer appreciation or praise to students who demonstrate positive behavior and discipline, so they feel valued and motivated. However, if someone breaks the rules, I engage them in a private conversation and give them a verbal warning.
		English teacher II	I explain the benefits of classroom rules and reward students who comply. If there are any violations, I engage students in dialogue and provide verbal warnings so they are aware without feeling pressured.
		English teacher III	To enforce the rules, I prefer a persuasive approach. I explain the benefits of the rules and personally reprimand anyone who breaks them. I also reward those who demonstrate a positive attitude.
4	Are the facilities and infrastructure available at the school adequate to	English teacher I	Our school facilities are quite supportive, including comfortable classrooms complete with desks and chairs, a library stocked with English dictionaries and textbooks, good electricity access, and devices like projectors that can be used interchangeably. However,

	support learning?		the limited number of devices sometimes presents a barrier when all teachers need technology at the same time.
		English teacher II	School facilities are generally sufficient to support the learning process, such as comfortable classrooms, a library, and projectors. However, limited equipment sometimes requires sharing with other teachers.
		English teacher III	Learning resources are adequate, although not yet ideal. The availability of shared devices can sometimes be a challenge when multiple teachers need them simultaneously.

Based on the interviews, the three English teachers had established specific classroom rules and routines to foster discipline and support learning. English Teacher I had required students to greet the teacher in English, bring textbooks and dictionaries, and submit assignments on time, while Teachers II and III had implemented similar rules to maintain an orderly learning environment. All teachers had involved students in creating these rules at the beginning of the semester, promoting a sense of ownership, responsibility, and mutual respect. The teachers had observed that clear and consistently applied rules improved classroom dynamics and learning outcomes, making lessons more focused and structured. They emphasized that classroom rules were not merely behavioral regulations but strategic tools that supported student engagement and academic success. In addition, the teachers had noted that school facilities and infrastructure, such as classrooms, a library, and technological equipment, supported learning, although limited availability of projectors sometimes posed challenges for lesson delivery. Overall, the implementation of rules, routines, and available resources had contributed to a structured, respectful, and student-centered classroom environment aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum.

4.1.2.6 Providing Reinforcement and Feedback During the Learning Process

Table 4.16 English teachers' responses on providing reinforcement and feedback during the learning process

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	Do you provide reinforcement and feedback to students during learning?	English teacher I	During the learning process, I strive to provide reinforcement to students by praising those who are performing well and motivating those who are still struggling. I also provide feedback, often in writing, hoping that students will continue to improve in their learning.
		English teacher II	I give appreciation to students who show progress or effort in learning, and also provide written and verbal feedback so that they know the progress and things that need to be improved.
		English teacher III	I offer praise and encouragement to students who are achieving and those who are progressing. I also provide feedback notes so they know what's going well and what needs improvement.

Based on the interview results, the three English teachers provided reinforcement and feedback during the learning process. Teacher I gave praise to students who performed well and motivated those who were still struggling, as well as provided written feedback to support learning improvement. Teacher II offered appreciation and both verbal and written feedback so that students could understand their progress and areas that needed improvement. Teacher III gave praise, encouragement, and feedback notes to help students recognize their achievements and aspects that required improvement. Overall, these practices demonstrated that the teachers not only delivered the material but also supported students' individual development reflectively.

4.1.2.7 Respecting each Student

Table 4.17 English teachers' responses on respecting each student

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	In teaching, do you act fairly and respect each student?	English teacher I	I strive to be fair and respectful to every student in the learning process. I provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in learning, regardless of their background or abilities.
		English teacher II	I strive to be fair and give equal attention to all students, regardless of their background or abilities. All students have an equal opportunity to learn and grow.
		English teacher III	In teaching, I strive to be fair. I treat all students equally, and I give each child space to express their opinions and develop according to their abilities.
2.	Are all students involved and active in teaching and learning activities?	English teacher I	Not all students are consistently actively engaged in learning. Many are still accustomed to the previous curriculum's teaching methods, which were more lecture-based and focused on waiting for teacher instructions.
		English teacher II	Not all students are consistently active. Some are still accustomed to lecture-based learning, with students spending most of their time simply listening. Therefore, I believe students still need an adaptation process to become accustomed to actively participating in learning.
		English teacher III	Not all students are equally actively engaged. Some are still passive and accustomed to one-way learning. Therefore, I strive to continuously create a learning environment that supports the participation of all students.
3	In learning, do you allow students to use cell phones or do	English teacher I	In accordance with school regulations, students are prohibited from bringing or using cell phones to school, especially during learning. On the other hand, I use several school facilities, such as a projector,

	you use technology in learning?		a laptop, and speakers to display learning videos.
		English teacher II	Based on school regulations, students are not permitted to use cell phones during learning. However, I personally utilize technology such as projectors and laptops to display videos or other supporting learning materials.
		English teacher III	The school has a clear policy prohibiting students from using cell phones during class. Instead, I use facilities like LCD projectors and speakers to facilitate digital delivery.

One important indicator of effective classroom management in the context of the Merdeka curriculum was the teachers' ability to show respect and fairness toward all students. Based on interviews with the three English teachers, they consistently demonstrated fairness and respect for all students. They stated that they strived not to discriminate against students, either based on social background or academic ability. All students were given equal opportunities to actively participate in learning. This reflected the inclusive principle of the Merdeka curriculum, which emphasized student-centered learning and considered student diversity. The teachers acted as facilitators, providing a safe and equitable space for all students. This attitude was crucial for building healthy relationships between teachers and students and creating a conducive learning environment. Therefore, it could be said that fairness and respect for students were essential foundations in their teaching practices.

However, despite this commitment to equity, challenges related to student engagement were still encountered in classroom practice. Regarding student engagement in learning, each eighth-grade English teacher acknowledged that not all students were actively engaged in learning. From the perspective of English Teacher I, students were still accustomed to the previous curriculum's learning approach, where they waited for instructions from the teacher. Echoing the previous teacher's opinion, English Teacher II stated that students mostly just listened and argued that students still needed time to adapt to actively participating in learning. Similarly, English Teacher III stated that there was an

uneven level of student activity and that students were still passive. These conditions suggested that while teachers respected and treated all students equally, student-centered engagement still needed to be strengthened in actual learning practices.

To address these challenges and accommodate diverse student needs, the three teachers also sought to integrate appropriate technology into their lessons. They explained that school regulations prohibited students from using cell phones during class. Therefore, the eighth-grade English teachers consciously used alternative technologies such as projectors, speakers, and laptops to display materials, including learning videos. This indicated that the teachers not only respected the rules but also demonstrated creativity in ensuring that all students, regardless of their preferred learning styles, could access and engage with the material. It further demonstrated their commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, aligned with the principles of the Merdeka curriculum.

4.1.2.8 Respecting Student Opinions

Table 4.18 English teachers' responses on respecting student opinions

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	Do you involve students in creating and implementing these rules?	English teacher I	Yes, of course. I involve students in developing classroom rules, and we create these rules based on their needs and comfort in learning. We agree on these rules at the beginning of the semester.
		English teacher II	Yes, I invite students to discuss class rules at the beginning of the school year. This way, the rules are mutually agreed upon and easier to follow.
		English teacher III	Yes, I encourage students to participate in setting class rules. By involving them from the start, they feel more ownership and are more willing to follow them.

One way to show respect for students in the context of classroom management was to value their opinions. This was evident in the process of

developing and implementing classroom rules, where all three English teachers stated that students were actively involved. English Teacher I explained that classroom rules were agreed upon at the beginning of the semester based on students' needs and comfort. This fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility for the rules. A similar approach was adopted by the other two teachers, English Teachers II and III, who stated that they involved students in discussions from the beginning of the school year to establish shared rules.

By involving students, teachers not only built discipline but also fostered mutual trust between them. Thus, student involvement in rule-making **was** not only a pedagogical strategy but also a form of democratic approach that encouraged active student participation in classroom management. This approach reflected the importance of student opinions and played a crucial role in creating an inclusive and conducive learning environment, as emphasized in the principles of the Merdeka curriculum.

4.1.2.9 Wearing Appropriate, Clean, and Neat Clothing

Table 4.19 English teachers' responses on wearing appropriate, clean, and neat clothing

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	Do you pay attention to your clothes or attire when teaching in class, like a teacher?	English teacher I	Of course, I dress like a teacher every day when I come to school. I dress neatly and politely, hoping that the students will do the same by dressing neatly and politely.
		English teacher II	Of course. I always try to appear neat and polite as a role model for my students. A professional appearance also influences students' impressions and attitudes toward learning.
		English teacher III	I always maintain my appearance by dressing neatly and politely. This is important because teachers also serve as role models for students in behavior and appearance.

Based on the interviews regarding teacher attire, all three English teachers demonstrated attention to their appearance while teaching. English Teacher I

stated that she dressed neatly and politely every day, hoping that students would follow her example by dressing appropriately. Similarly, English Teacher II explained that she always tried to maintain a neat and polite appearance as a role model for her students, believing that professional attire also influenced students' impressions and attitudes toward learning. English Teacher III emphasized that she consistently maintained a neat and polite appearance, recognizing that teachers serve as role models for students in both behavior and appearance. Overall, the responses indicated that all three teachers prioritized professional appearance as part of their classroom management and teaching professionalism.

4.1.2.10 Delivering the Syllabus for the Subject being Taught

Table 4.20 English teachers' responses on delivering the syllabus for the subject being taught

No	Question	Teacher Response	
1.	Do you convey the subject syllabus to students?	English teacher I	Yes, I provide the course syllabus to students at the beginning of the semester. I explain the outline of the material to be covered, the learning objectives, and the assessment methods that will be used. This way, students understand what they will learn, what they will be taught, and how they will be evaluated.
		English teacher II	Yes, I outline the syllabus at the beginning of the meeting. I usually write it on the board or display it on slides so students know what topics they'll be studying and what assignments they'll be given.
		English teacher III	Yes. I'll just cover general information, such as the topics or material to be covered, class rules, and the learning activities that will be carried out throughout the semester.

Based on the interviews regarding syllabus delivery, all three English teachers conveyed the subject syllabus to their students at the beginning of the semester. English Teacher I explained the course outline, learning objectives, and assessment methods to ensure that students understood what they would learn and

how they would be evaluated. English Teacher II outlined the syllabus at the start of each meeting, often writing it on the board or displaying it on slides so that students knew the topics and assignments in advance. Meanwhile, English Teacher III provided general information, including the topics to be covered, class rules, and planned learning activities for the semester. Overall, the teachers' approaches ensured that students were aware of the learning plan and expectations, supporting structured and transparent classroom management.

4.1.3 The Result of Documentation

These documents were collected because they reflect the conceptual and practical framework of the learning process and directly show how teachers design and implement English language learning in the classroom, including aspects of classroom management, which is the main focus of this study. The use of these documents is very important because they provide authentic and verified data on how classroom management is reflected in daily lesson planning and teaching practices. The ATP (learning objective flow) documents serve as a long-term learning map that summarizes learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP), as well as the elements and structure of learning activities. Based on the analysis results, the ATP used by teachers has been systematically and meticulously designed, taking into account students' competency achievements in the six language skills (listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting). All learning objectives have been aligned with the international CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) standards, specifically at the B1 level, which is targeted for phase D or junior high school level. At the B1 level, students are expected to be able to understand the main ideas of standard texts, write simple and structured texts, and participate in daily conversations fluently. This alignment demonstrates consistency between the learning outcomes in the *merdeka* curriculum and global language proficiency standards, which also plays a role in designing classroom management strategies, including how teachers allocate time, media, and types of learning interactions according to students' ability levels. In addition, the detailed division of learning time also shows the existence of effective and measurable time management strategies by teachers, which are important elements in classroom management

practices. Good time management helps create an efficient learning flow, prevents activities from being too long or too short, and allows students to learn in a regular and focused manner.

Meanwhile, the Teaching Module, specifically Chapter 4 with the topic “No Littering!”, is a concrete representation of the implementation of the plan in the ATP. This module is designed to be implemented in several meetings, with a consistent learning structure consisting of an introduction, core activities, and a conclusion, which shows that teachers have control over time management during teaching and learning activities. In the introduction, teachers use prompting questions and icebreakers that not only serve to build students' interest in the topic but are also a strategy for creating a fun and interactive classroom atmosphere, an important indicator of classroom management. In the core activity, teachers design varied learning activities that encourage active student participation, such as discussions about pictures, group work, and projects. These activities reflect efforts to manage learning interactions dynamically, taking into account the diversity of students' abilities, and encouraging collaboration and communication among students.

The use of media and learning aids is also well integrated into this module. Teachers utilize audio media for listening exercises, visual images to support discussions, and devices such as projectors and LCDs to present material in a more engaging manner. This demonstrates effective management of learning media, which is directly related to the physical classroom environment. This assessment not only serves as a tool to measure student achievement but also as a means for teachers to adjust classroom management strategies according to student development and engagement during the learning process. Thus, both the learning objective flow document (ATP) and Teaching Module Chapter 4 have strong and direct relevance to the focus of this research, particularly in the aspect of classroom management, which includes lesson planning, time management, managing classroom interactions and atmosphere, as well as the use of media and evaluation strategies. The alignment of teaching materials with CEFR Level B1 standards further reinforces that the learning process is designed to achieve language proficiency that is not only contextual but also aligned with international

competency standards. Both documents not only reinforce the data from observations and interviews but also serve as authentic evidence that the principles of the *merdeka* curriculum have been implemented in classroom practice, particularly in English language learning in eighth grade. By using this documentation, the researcher gained a deeper and confirmed understanding of how teachers effectively manage classrooms within the framework of the *merdeka* curriculum.

As part of the data collection technique, researchers utilized official government documents directly related to the implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum in educational institutions, particularly at the junior high school (SMP) level. The first regulation, Permendikbudristek No. 12 of 2024, indicates that this regulation outlines the comprehensive structure of the *merdeka* curriculum, including competencies, subject content, and time allocation designed to develop students' abilities holistically. In the context of classroom management, this document provides guidance to teachers in organizing the learning process, designing learning activities in accordance with the Learning Outcomes (CP) in Phase D, and using flexible and student-centered learning approaches. This regulation also emphasizes the importance of using varied learning media and activities that allow for active student involvement, such as project-based learning. The entire content of the document is highly relevant to classroom management practices, particularly in terms of time management, lesson planning, and managing learning interactions.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 47 of 2023 on Education Management Standards clarifies the responsibilities of educational institutions and teachers in managing effective, efficient, and enjoyable learning processes. The provisions in this regulation emphasize that learning must be designed based on the conditions and readiness of students and must encourage active participation. For teachers, this requires skills in managing classroom dynamics, including classroom arrangement, method selection, and the structuring of learning activity stages. Additionally, this document emphasizes the importance of continuous reflection and evaluation of learning, both by teachers and students, which is directly related to evaluation-

based classroom management and strategy adjustments. This finding reinforces that classroom management is not just about discipline or order, but includes an adaptive process that occurs throughout the learning process.

Furthermore, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 52 of 2022 emphasizes the importance of integrating the values of the Pancasila Student Profile into teaching and learning activities. These values, such as independence, cooperation, creativity, and critical thinking, require teachers to manage classrooms that encourage healthy social interaction, collaborative learning, and project-based activities. In the context of English language learning, this is reflected in activities such as group discussions, oral presentations, and thematic assignments that allow students not only to understand the material but also to develop their character through active and reflective classroom dynamics. This document reinforces that classroom management in the *merdeka* curriculum is inseparable from the affective and socio-emotional dimensions, all of which must be built through the management of a conducive atmosphere and interactions. Overall, these three documents serve as an important foundation for assessing and understanding the classroom management practices of English teachers in eighth grade. They complement each other in providing a normative and conceptual framework for teachers in implementing the *merdeka* curriculum comprehensively: from curriculum structure and lesson planning, standards for managing the learning process, to the character values that must be internalized in the process. Based on an analysis of these documents, it can be concluded that effective classroom management in English language learning at the junior high school level encompasses the dimensions of planning, implementation, evaluation, and character development of students, all of which have been emphasized in these national policy documents.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1. The Realization of Classroom Management of English Learning through the Implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum

Based on the research results obtained, it appears that English teachers manage their classes well, although not optimally in all aspects. The researchers measured English teachers' classroom management skills by conducting

observations and interviews and collecting research-related documents. Based on *Permendiknas* No. 41 of 2007, which is the standard for classroom management, it starts with managing students, classroom interaction, classroom atmosphere, time management, and utilization of available resources. In physical classroom management, the first thing is the arrangement of student seating. English teachers do not arrange seating according to student characteristics but assign seats as previously arranged. As quoted in Ministry of Education Regulation No. 41 of 2007, “seating arrangements should be made according to the characteristics of the students and the subject matter, as well as the learning activities to be carried out.” This means that seating arrangements should be adjusted to the conditions of the students, whether they are short or tall, have poor eyesight, or based on their academic abilities. This ensures that students are comfortable during the learning process. Furthermore, the rigid, straight seating arrangement facing the teacher can limit interaction among students and does not support the implementation of collaborative learning strategies, which are a hallmark of the *merdeka* curriculum. This statement aligns with the opinion expressed by Putra et al. (2025) that conventional seating arrangements tend to limit student interaction, but if arranged more flexibly, students may find it easier to communicate and collaborate.

Additionally, in the placement of learning tools within the classroom, such as projectors, the English teacher has strategically positioned them so that they are accessible to all students, creating a more conducive classroom atmosphere and enabling focus during the learning process. Furthermore, when looking at the teaching module for eighth-grade English teachers, specifically in Chapter 4, there are three learning topic units, which include group discussion activities, role-playing, conversation practice, and project creation. Of course, monotonous seating arrangements will greatly affect the success of learning activities. Therefore, seating arrangements play a significant role in creating a conducive learning atmosphere, not only in terms of students' physical comfort but also in terms of the interaction between teachers and students and among students themselves. Adjusting the learning method to the seating arrangement can increase students' focus and involvement in the teaching and learning process and

make it easier for teachers to monitor students' learning activities (Putra et al., 2025).

The second thing is how teachers create order, discipline, comfort, and compliance with rules in the classroom. Order in this case refers to a condition in which all activities in the classroom run smoothly, according to schedule, and are not disrupted by inappropriate behavior. English teachers have made efforts to ensure that learning runs smoothly by starting lessons on time and organizing learning activities in an orderly manner. However, teachers sometimes need extra time to conclude lessons due to poor time management. This is because students often require more time than planned to complete assignments, as they must first translate the instructions to understand the tasks given. Therefore, classroom order can be achieved if teachers are able to plan and implement clear procedures, establish consistent routines, and manage transitions between learning activities efficiently, so that the class runs in a structured manner with minimal disruption. Effective time management, such as starting and ending activities on time and organizing the learning agenda, significantly contributes to a disciplined and efficient classroom atmosphere (Fitriana et al., 2024). Additionally, discipline is fostered through agreements between teachers and students in establishing classroom rules, such as using English greetings when the teacher enters the classroom and encouraging students to use simple English. Similarly, according to (Wahid et al., 2018), learning will be effective and smooth if it is determined by clear rules and procedures and accommodates learning interests. Therefore, it is important for teachers to convey specific methods and rules applied by teachers so that students can understand and behave accordingly.

This can also involve students contributing to the rules and taking responsibility for the existing rules. Without rules and procedures, the initial learning process will be difficult to carry out effectively. Each student must have a textbook and English dictionary when the lesson begins, so that every student can follow the lesson. Additionally, submitting assignments on time indirectly helps develop individual character by fostering a sense of responsibility. As noted by Yanus et al. (2024), completing assignments and homework effectively helps build a sense of responsibility in fulfilling one's duties and obligations. Therefore,

students have fulfilled their responsibility by completing the tasks assigned by the teacher. Student comfort in learning is also considered, starting from the cleanliness of the environment and classroom, the neatness of desks and chairs, adequate classroom lighting, and the completeness of classroom administration such as class notes, the availability of markers and erasers. At times when students neglect classroom cleanliness, the English teacher takes action by reminding and instructing students to immediately fulfill their responsibility cleaning the classroom before lessons begin which results in lessons starting late. When the teacher reminds students to clean the classroom before learning, it is a form of positive physical climate management. This action supports students' emotional comfort and safety through an organized environment. When the teacher delays the lesson so that students can clean, it is a form of environmental adjustment to meet students' learning needs, fostering motivation and a sense of care (Kanda & Agustin, 2024). Lastly, compliance with classroom rules is important because these rules are mutual agreements, so each student adheres to them, and the English teacher also enforces the rules fairly and firmly for the students.

The third factor is the interaction between teachers and students in the learning process, starting from communication in the classroom, teacher performance, and the provision of reinforcement and feedback. Communication between teachers and students, starting from the volume of the voice adjusted to the size and capacity of the classroom, varied intonation, and the teacher's choice of words when explaining the material, is already quite good. In line with Wiyani's (2017) opinion, teachers use variations in voice intonation, volume, tone, speed, content of speech, and appropriate language use to convey material, which affects students' understanding in learning. With good communication, positive interactions can be established. Then, teachers dress modestly and neatly, as befits an educator. This is in line with the statement by Palunga and Marzuki (2017), that teachers are required to be role models for students through their words, attitudes, behavior, and conduct. This means that teachers act as role models for students, especially in terms of appearance, which must be in accordance with school norms, so that comfortable interactions can be established between teachers and students. Teachers provide reinforcement and feedback to students

on their responses and learning outcomes during the learning process verbally, which is conveyed through spoken or written words, such as giving small notes on each student's assignment. Non-verbal reinforcement is conveyed through body language, natural expressions, and the tone of the teacher's voice. Similar to Wiyani's (2017) statement, there are two types of reinforcement: verbal reinforcement in the form of words and non-verbal reinforcement in the form of physical movements. Through this, student learning motivation can be increased, positive behavior can be strengthened, and a better emotional relationship between teachers and students can be built. Appropriate feedback and reinforcement not only help students understand their achievements and shortcomings but also foster a sense of appreciation and self-confidence in participating in the learning process.

The fourth is to adjust the lesson material to the pace and learning abilities of the students. In practice, teachers strive to design materials that align with their students' abilities, thereby implementing differentiation in instruction. This aligns with Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 56 of 2022, which grants teachers and educational institutions flexibility in selecting instructional materials, methods, and media tailored to students' needs, talents, interests, and characteristics, thereby making the learning process more meaningful. Building on Jamila's (2020) perspective, differentiated instruction is one way teachers meet students' learning needs, such as in designing lesson materials, activities, daily assignments, and final assessments that align with students' readiness. As seen in the teaching module in *Chapter 4: No Littering!*, for example, teachers not only target cognitive skills such as formulating interview questions and writing recount texts but also accommodate students' needs through various activities, including listening to audio, discussing images, matching information, and writing based on real or imaginative experiences. Teachers also use a step-by-step approach from Building Knowledge of the Field to independent Construction of the Text, which gives students space to develop at their own pace. This approach reflects the implementation of differentiated learning, where faster learners are given challenges such as writing factual recount texts independently, while those who need help receive support through pair work or discussions with the teacher. All

of this planning not only aligns with students' abilities but also references the learning outcomes outlined in the 2024/2025 Learning Objective (*alur tujuan pembelajaran*) framework for Phase D, which focuses on developing English language skills in an integrated and meaningful way within the real-life contexts of students' lives.

Fifth, teachers respect every student regardless of their religious background, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Teachers begin each lesson with a prayer and allow students to pray according to their own religion. They then respect, teach, and treat students without discriminating based on gender or socioeconomic status. This aligns in Article 4(1) of *Undang-undang* No. 20 of 2003, which states that education must be non-discriminatory, upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national diversity. As Atthufulah (2021) argues, multicultural education must be instilled from an early age to shape students' characters to be tolerant, inclusive, and able to live together in diversity. Teachers play a central role in creating a learning environment that values differences, whether through their attitudes, language use, or selection of teaching methods that are sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds, religions, and socioeconomic conditions. Thus, teachers not only teach academically but also instill values of diversity, respect the rights of each student, and foster mutual respect as part of nation-building. This approach aligns with the values in the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes faith, piety, noble character, and global diversity.

4.2.2. The Challenges Faced by English Teachers' in Managing Classroom during the Implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English Learning

Based on the research conducted, several challenges faced by English teachers in managing their classes during the implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum have been identified. The first challenge is the lack of deep understanding of concept of the *merdeka* curriculum, which arises due to the transition or change in the curriculum. Although teachers have participated in training on the implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum and been provided with modules for its application, these have not been fully implemented because the

training remains general in nature and does not address the specific needs of English learning instruction. In addition, there are no guidelines or personal copies of the *merdeka* curriculum implementation module. This lack of understanding has resulted in a mismatch between the student-centered principles of the curriculum and teaching practices that are still conventional. In agreement with this, Naibaho et al. (2025) stated that the lack of knowledge about the concept of the *merdeka* curriculum is a major obstacle to its implementation in schools.

The second challenge faced is ineffective time management. English teachers often need additional time to complete learning activities because students need more time to understand the material. One of the causes is that students must first translate the task instructions in order to complete the task. This makes the learning process inefficient and disrupts the planned time allocation. As stated by Isna et al. (2025) in their research, teachers face time constraints in learning due to the varying abilities of students, which causes teachers to have to provide additional time to explain or help certain students. However, using extra time in learning will reduce the focus of some other students, making the learning activity less conducive. In agreement with this, Slavin (2011) underlined that “lost instructional time” or wasted learning time will reduce students' chances of success in achieving learning objectives. Any delays or additional time outside the plan will disrupt the systematic learning process and undermine classroom management. Similarly, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation (*Permendikbudristek*) No. 47 of 2023 mentioned that the planning and implementation of learning activities aim to create an effective and conducive learning environment. If time usage does not align with the plan, it will disrupt the learning structure, weaken discipline, and reduce the efficiency of the teaching and learning process. Adjusting learning time for students who require extra time to complete tasks will impact students who have already finished their tasks.

Third, student participation is still low. Based on research that has been conducted, it has been identified that many students still show passive attitudes in learning. This is because they are accustomed to teacher-centered learning methods. When learning shifts to a student-centered approach in the *merdeka*

curriculum, students are not yet accustomed to being actively involved, discussing, or working together in groups. According to Zuariah et al. (2024), the success of learning in the *merdeka* curriculum depends heavily on how teachers create an environment that encourages student participation. If this is not done effectively, students tend to remain passive or disengaged. This situation makes it challenging for teachers to implement interactive and collaborative learning strategies.

Fourth, there are limitations on the use of technology. School policies prohibiting students from using cell phones in class, as well as limitations on learning aids such as projectors and speakers, which are in limited supply, pose obstacles to the use of technology. Teachers must share school equipment with other teachers, which naturally limit the flexibility and effectiveness of digital or audiovisual learning. According to Karlina et al. (2024), limitations in resources such as technological tools (projectors, computers, networks) hinder teachers from creating innovative learning experiences. Meanwhile, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation (*Permendikbudristek*) No. 16 of 2022 emphasizes that learning should optimally utilize information and communication technology. If schools or teachers face limitations in access or tools, the principle of learning effectiveness is not fulfilled.

Fifth, the physical layout of classrooms is not flexible enough. Teachers do not routinely adjust student seating arrangements based on individual characteristics, such as height, academic ability, or visual needs. However, the *merdeka* curriculum requires a physical classroom environment that supports interaction and collaboration. Monotonous seating arrangements can limit communication among students and hinder project-based or group learning strategies. As stated in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (*Permendiknas*) No. 41 of 2007, seating arrangements for students must be adapted to their characteristics, teaching materials, and the learning activities being conducted.

Finally, not all students have the same abilities. Teachers face challenges in designing learning that is responsive to differences in student abilities. In practice, the learning designs that have been developed do not fully apply the principle of

differentiation, so that some students feel left behind and become passive. This shows that the approach used has not been able to optimally meet all of the students' learning needs. As cited from Br Tarigan (2024), the differences in students' abilities present a real challenge in the learning process. An approach that is not yet differentiated results in students being less actively engaged in learning, which ultimately impacts the low understanding of students with varying abilities. Therefore, a varied and differentiated learning approach is crucial to accommodate differences in students' abilities, interests, and learning styles.

4.3. The Research Results versus the Latest Related Researchers

Fistly the research by Fathurrahman et al., (2022) with the title “The Influence of School Management on The Implementation of The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum”. This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach to analyze the influence of school management on readiness in implementing the *merdeka* curriculum at SMPIT Nurul Islam. The results of the study indicate that school management has a significant influence (76.4%) on the success of curriculum implementation, especially in terms of planning, coordination, and internal policies. The focus of this study is on institutional school management (macro), not on direct implementation in the classroom. The striking difference compared to this study is in the focus and subject: if Fathurrahman's study emphasizes school management readiness, then this study directly examines how English teachers manage classes in the context of the *merdeka* curriculum at the junior high school level. In addition, the quantitative approach used by Fathurrahman is also different from the qualitative approach used in this study.

The second research by Rizki et al., (2024) with the title “Implementation of English in the *merdeka* curriculum at SD Negeri Dlingo”, used a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the strategies of classroom teachers in teaching English amidst limited teaching staff. This study shows that teachers are able to create interactive and enjoyable learning even though they do not have a background as English teachers, by compiling open tools and participating in independent training. The main focus of this study is on the application of English materials at the elementary school level with limited human resources. The difference with this study lies in the subject and context of learning: Rizki and

Soviyah's research focuses on elementary school classroom teachers, while this study focuses on junior high school English teachers who are specifically responsible for classroom management and the implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum. However, both highlight the challenges in implementing the curriculum and the importance of teacher creativity in managing learning.

The third research by Ritan et al., (2023) with the title “Analysis of the Implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum (KMB) in English Learning at SMA Negeri 1 Lewolema”, using a qualitative descriptive approach with a phenomenological method. This study aims to describe the problems experienced by teachers and students in implementing the *merdeka* curriculum, and found that the main obstacles lie in limited facilities, low access to technology, low reference books, and minimal formal training on the curriculum. The focus of this study emphasizes structural barriers and resource readiness in the context of English learning at the high school level. Compared to this study, a striking difference can be seen from the subjects, who in the previous study were high school teachers and students, but in this study were junior high school English teachers. Then the focus of the previous study was structural challenges while in this study it was classroom management, as well as the approach used. This study presents more micro aspects in the form of teacher strategies in managing classes and learning challenges in the classroom, while Ritan et al.'s research describes more external challenges that affect curriculum implementation in general.

4.4. The Research Results versus Theories

The findings of this study align with several existing educational theories and policies. First, the differentiated learning practices implemented by English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli Idanoi reflect Tomlinson's (2001) theory, which emphasizes the importance of adapting content, processes, and products based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Furthermore, the use of polite language and reinforcement support Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction in cognitive development. These practices are also in line with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 56 of 2022, which emphasizes flexibility and student-centered learning, as well as Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 4(1) concerning non-discrimination in education.

Thus, the implementation of classroom management in English learning through the *merdeka* curriculum not only reflects a classroom-based strategy but is also based on a structured theoretical framework and national education policy.

4.5. The Research Results Implication

Key implications found from the research findings, as follows:

- a. The implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum provides teachers with the freedom to adapt learning materials to students' needs and abilities. Teachers who are able to design differentiated materials and assignments can help students understand lessons more effectively, create meaningful learning, and increase student motivation.
- b. The use of flexible and adaptive classroom management strategies can create a positive and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers who are responsive to classroom dynamics, such as by using icebreakers and positive emotional approaches, will be more successful in maintaining student engagement throughout the learning process.
- c. The use of digital learning media such as videos and projectors supports visual and auditory student engagement. Teachers who utilize technology appropriately can enrich students' learning experiences, facilitate understanding of the material, and foster student interest in learning, particularly in English.
- d. Student involvement in classroom management, including rule-making, fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership of the learning process. This approach supports the creation of a democratic learning climate, in line with the principles of student-centered learning emphasized in the *merdeka* curriculum.
- e. Challenges faced by teachers, such as limited implementation modules, uneven facilities, and differences in student characteristics, demonstrate the need for ongoing support from schools and policymakers. Providing advanced training, access to digital and printed modules, and improving infrastructure are crucial to the successful implementation of the *merdeka* curriculum.

4.6 Limitations of Research Results

a. Respondent Scope

This study was conducted with only three English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Gunungsitoli Idanoi. Therefore, the findings may not be representative of classroom management practices in other schools or regions that also implement the *merdeka* curriculum.

b. Observation Duration

The observation period was limited to a few meetings in each class, which may not fully capture the variability of classroom management practices over time. Daily dynamics, changes in student behavior, or long-term strategies may not have been fully observed.