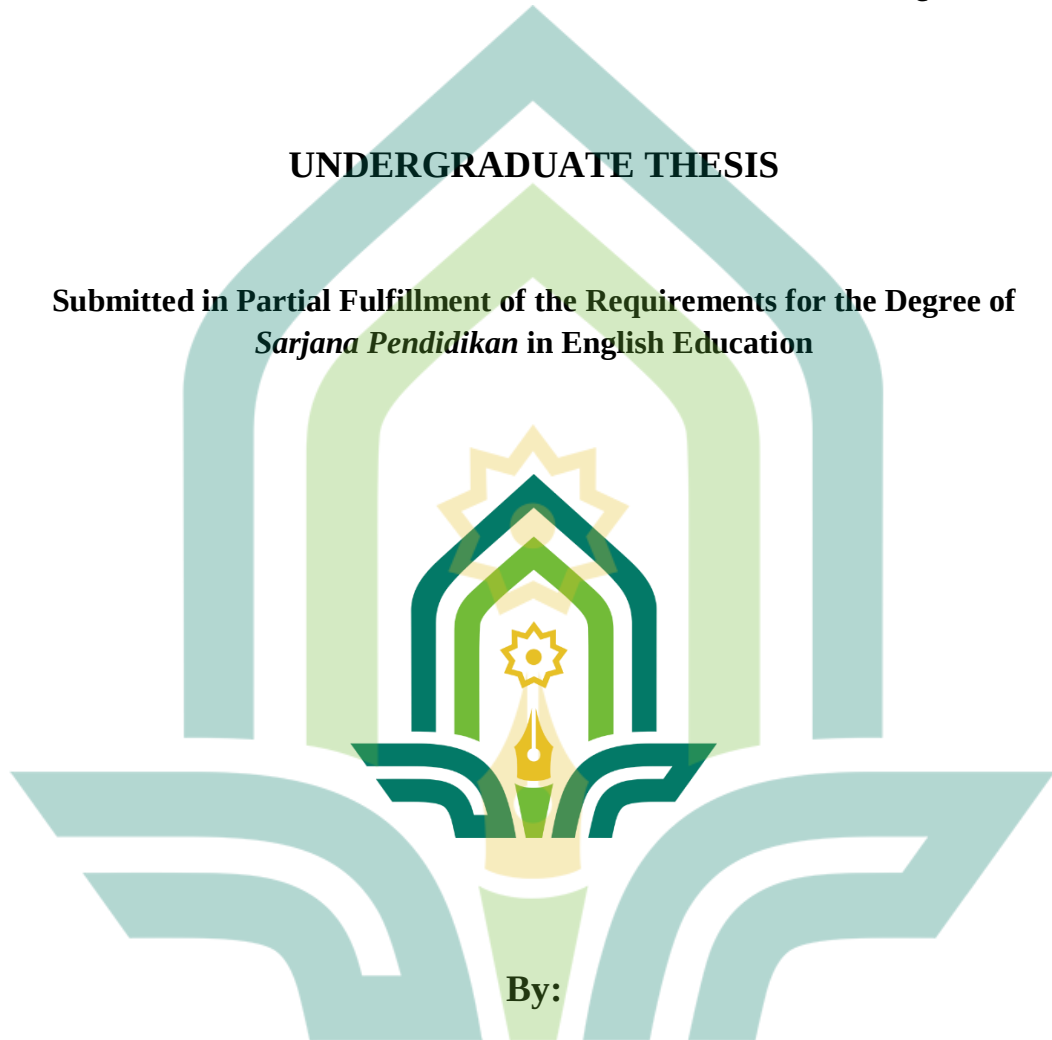


**TEACHER'S FEELING OF *MERDEKA* CURRICULUM  
IMPLEMENTATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING AT  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
*Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education**



**By:**

**LISA APRILIANI**

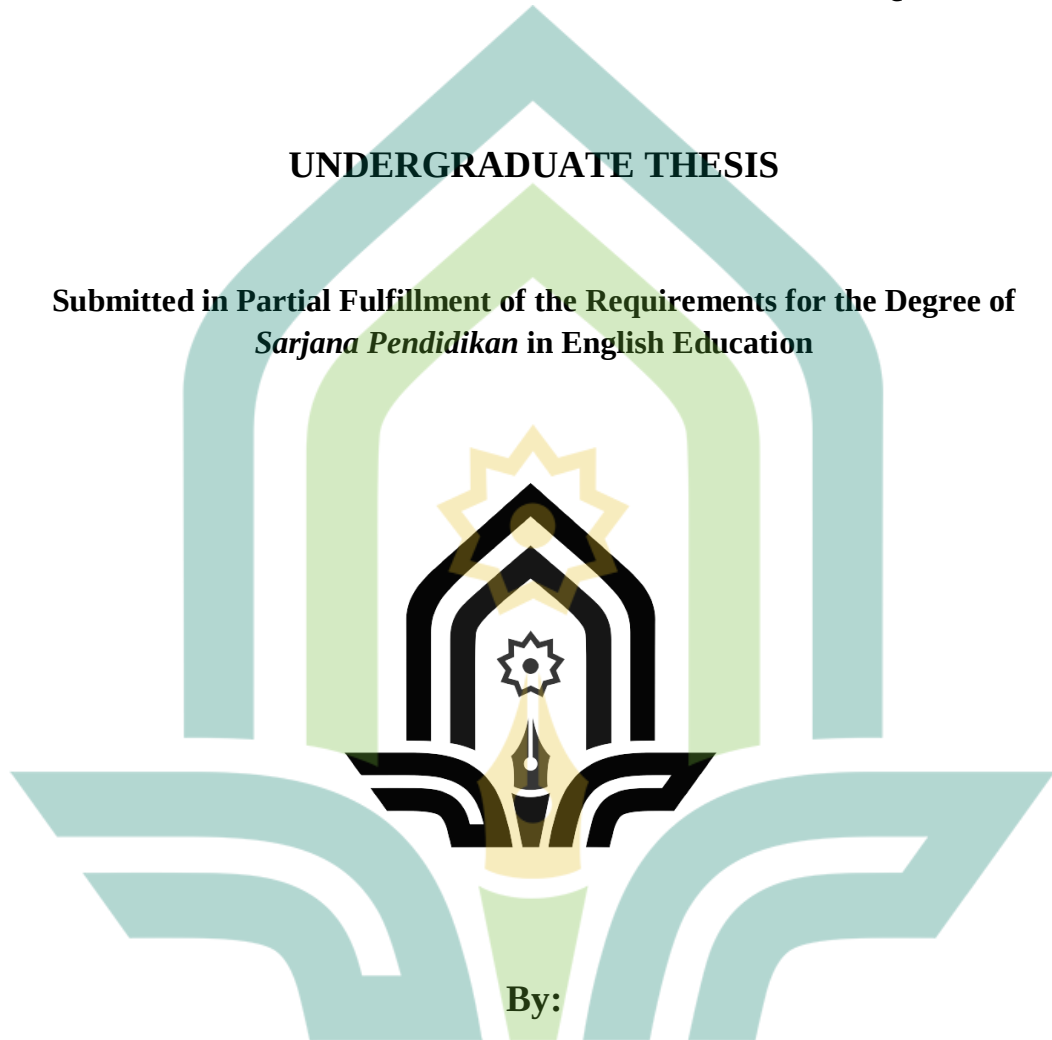
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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING  
K.H ABDURRAHMAN WAHID STATE ISLAMIC  
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UNIVERSITY  
2025**

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*Assalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

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IMPLEMENTATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING AT  
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*Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

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IMPLEMENTATION IN ENGLISH LEARNING AT  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

Has been established through an examination held on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
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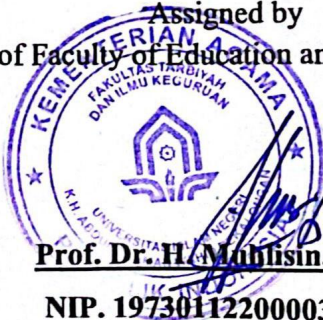
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Therefore, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to :

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never satisfied and at peace until now, because in truth, real life was just about to begin for him, so she would step forward again with confidence and prayer.



## **MOTTO**

*"Tidak ada sesuatu yang mampu membatasi mimpimu kecuali rasa malasmu.  
Masa muda hanya sekali, lakukan yang terbaik hari ini, dan tentukan akan  
menjadi apa dirimu di masa depan"*

**Lisa Apriliani**

*“Even if theories fade, data speaks, but curiosity is eternal”*

**Someone Famous**



## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini menyelidiki perasaan guru bahasa Inggris terhadap penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah pertama. Penelitian ini dilatar belakangi dengan adanya kesulitan guru dalam menerapkan kurikulum merdeka ketika pra-penelitian yang dilakukan oleh peneliti. Menggunakan pendekatan penyelidikan naratif dan dipandu oleh Teori Penilaian (Martin & White, 2005), studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi respons emosional kompleks yang dialami oleh guru dalam menghadapi perubahan kurikulum. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan seorang guru bahasa Inggris di Pekalongan, Indonesia, dan dianalisis melalui empat dimensi afektif: (Dis)Kepuasan, (In)Keamanan, (Un)Kebahagiaan, dan (Dis)Kecenderungan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa guru tersebut mengalami campuran emosi positif dan negatif selama pelaksanaan kurikulum. Temuan ini menyoroti pentingnya dukungan berkelanjutan bagi guru, infrastruktur yang memadai, dan strategi adaptif dalam memastikan pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka yang efektif. Studi ini diharapkan dapat memberikan wawasan untuk penelitian dan pengembangan kebijakan pendidikan di Indonesia di masa depan.*

**Kata kunci:** Kurikulum Merdeka, perasaan guru, pendekatan naratif, teori penilaian (appraisal), pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the feelings of English teachers toward the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in junior high school English language learning. This research was motivated by the difficulties teachers encountered in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum during the preliminary research conducted by the researcher. Employing a narrative inquiry approach and guided by Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), this study aims to explore the complex emotional responses experienced by teachers in the face of curriculum change. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview with an English teacher in Pekalongan, Indonesia, and analyzed through four affective dimensions: (Dis)Satisfaction, (In)Security, (Un)Happiness, and (Dis)Inclination. The findings reveal that the teacher experienced a mix of positive and negative emotions during the curriculum implementation. These findings highlight the importance of continuous teacher support, sufficient infrastructure, and adaptive strategies in ensuring the effective implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This study is expected to provide insight for future research and policy development in Indonesian education.

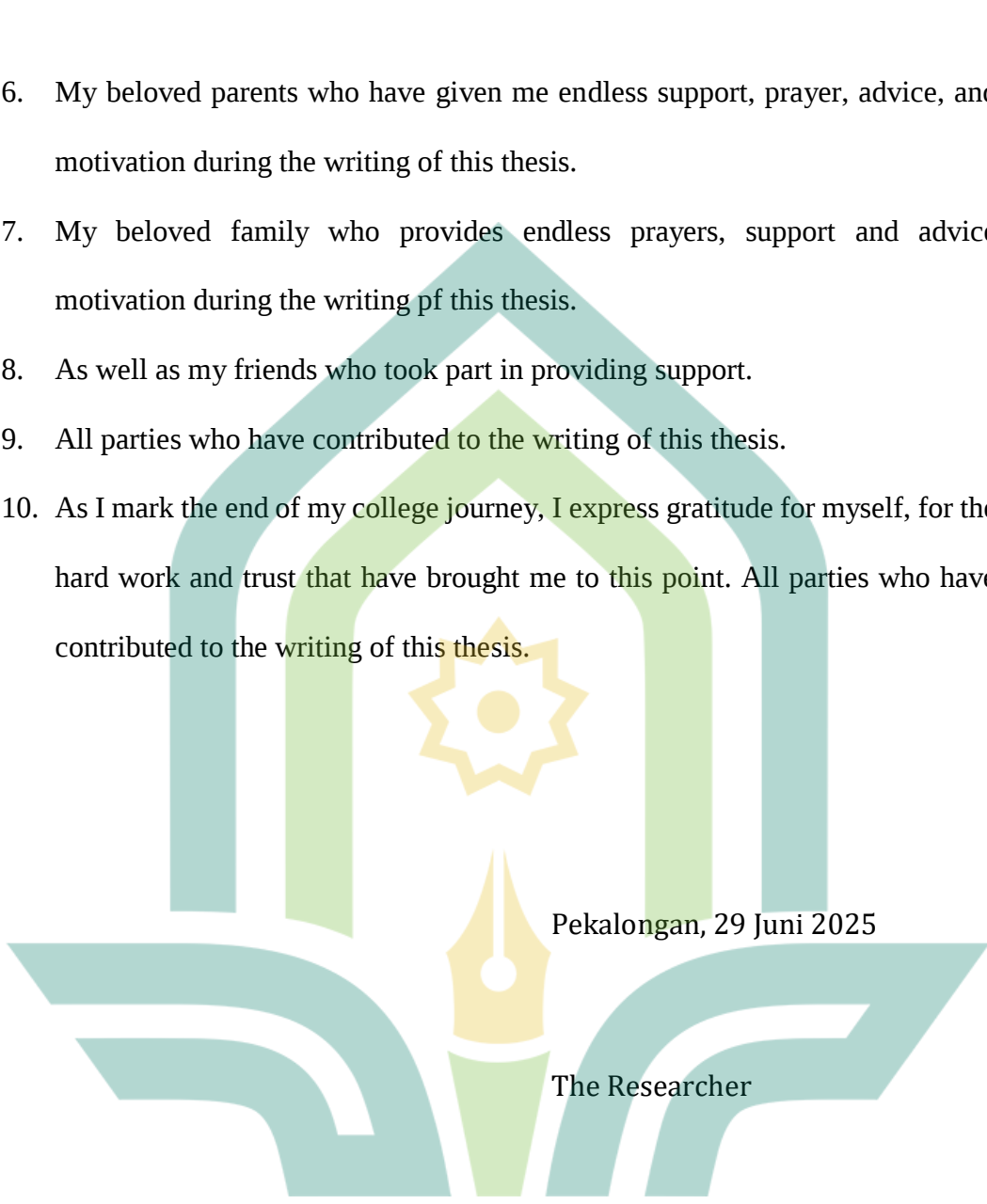
**Keywords:** *Merdeka* Curriculum, teacher's feelings, narrative inquiry, appraisal theory, English learning

## PREFACE

All praises and gratitude are directed to Allah SWT, who has bestowed upon me His blessings, guidance, health, and patience to complete my thesis, entitled "Teacher's Feeling of *Merdeka* Curriculum Implementation in English Learning at Junior High School: a Narrative Inquiry ". This thesis is submitted to the English Education Department of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan as one of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor of Education degree in the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.

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Pekalongan, 29 Juni 2025

The Researcher

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Since all useful activities lead to the educational program, it serves a significant role in the training plan (Pratikno, 2022). Curriculum design involves various stages, with the initial stage being curriculum planning. The planning orientation, which aims to develop students' potential in line with 21st century competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, is emphasized in studies by Carnevale (2013), Fantini et al. (2010), and Lambrechts et al. (2018).

The government, guided by the Minister of Education, announced a plan aimed at improving the *Merdeka* Curriculum as the last attempt to reestablish learning that had been affected by the epidemic (Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2021). The *Merdeka* Curriculum is a new educational curriculum implemented in Indonesia that aims to promote critical thinking, creativity, and innovation among students (Rokayah et.al., 2023). However, this newfound freedom can also induce anxiety, uncertainty, and resistance, particularly for teachers accustomed to more structured and directive curriculums (Priestley et al., 2015).

According to a study by Sari et al. (2021), teachers play a critical role in the success of curriculum implementation. The study found that "teacher's perceptions of the curriculum significantly influenced their level of commitment and involvement in the implementation process." From the

study, it can be concluded that the role of teachers is very important for the implementation of a curriculum, including the feelings of teachers in it.

As part of this curriculum, English as a foreign language (EFL) learning is a key component, and teachers play a vital role in its successful implementation. Emotional factors, including stress, enthusiasm, and confidence, can significantly influence a teacher's approach to instructional practices and their engagement with students (Kelchtermans, 2011). In the EFL context, where teaching materials and methodologies are often influenced by international standards, Indonesian English teachers may experience additional pressure to align the local curriculum with global expectations. These pressures, combined with the need to foster English language proficiency in students with limited exposure to the language outside the classroom, add further emotional complexity to the teaching experience.

The implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum has been a significant challenge for Indonesian teachers, particularly in the EFL context. Many teachers report feeling unprepared and unsupported in implementing the new curriculum, and there is a lack of resources and training available to help them. This has led to inconsistencies in the implementation of the curriculum, with some teachers struggling to adapt their teaching methods to the new curriculum, while others have embraced it and are seeing positive results (Kurniawan & Widayanti, 2021).

Based on the results of preliminary research conducted by the researcher in October 2023, it was obtained some information from the English teacher at one of the junior high schools in Pekalongan; she said that she was still confused in understanding the *Merdeka* Curriculum and felt it had not been ready yet in implementing the curriculum.

This study conducted to investigate the feeling of English teachers in junior high school in Pekalongan in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum, with the hope of providing in-depth insight into the feelings encountered when experiencing difficulties and providing concrete recommendations for improvement to increase the effectiveness of the curriculum.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

Based on the background described, the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English learning at the Junior High School level necessitates a deeper investigation into the teacher's perspective. While existing studies have extensively covered the technical implementation, policy adaptation, and student learning outcomes related to the new curriculum, there remains a critical gap in understanding the human dimension of this educational change. Specifically, there is a distinct lack of research that meticulously explores the teacher's subjective experiences and affective domain, or 'feelings,' (such as confidence, anxiety, motivation, or dissatisfaction) as they navigate the challenges and adjustments of integrating the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This study, therefore, aims to fill this

void by providing a detailed narrative inquiry into the teachers' feelings. This exploration is essential to obtain a comprehensive picture of the reality of curriculum implementation from the main actors' point of view, which in turn can inform future policy-making and professional development programs.

### **1.3 Formulation of the Problems**

In this research the researcher will find out by asking some questions to the teacher *"How are the teachers' feeling of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation in EFL learning?"*.

### **1.4 Limitations of the Problems**

This research is limited to exploring the feelings of English teachers regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning at the junior high school level. The study focuses specifically on emotional responses experienced by the teacher, which are categorized into four affective domains based on Appraisal Theory: (Dis)Satisfaction, (In)Security, (Un)Happiness, and (Dis)Inclination. The research does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation or students' learning outcomes, but rather to understand the teacher's emotional experiences during the process of adapting to and executing the Merdeka Curriculum in the context of EFL teaching.

### **1.5 Operational Definitions**

#### **1. Feelings**

"Affect is concerned with registering positive and negative feelings: do we feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored?"

(Martin & White, 2005). They describe "feeling" as part of the Affect system, which focuses on emotional responses.

## 2. *Merdeka* Curriculum

The Minister of Education and Technology has introduced the *Merdeka Curriculum* as a new education plan. However, schools can still choose between the 2013, Emergency, or *Merdeka Curriculum*. The Independent Learning Curriculum was made in response to COVID-19, allowing students to pick subjects they are interested in. This is called independent learning (Supriyono, 2022).

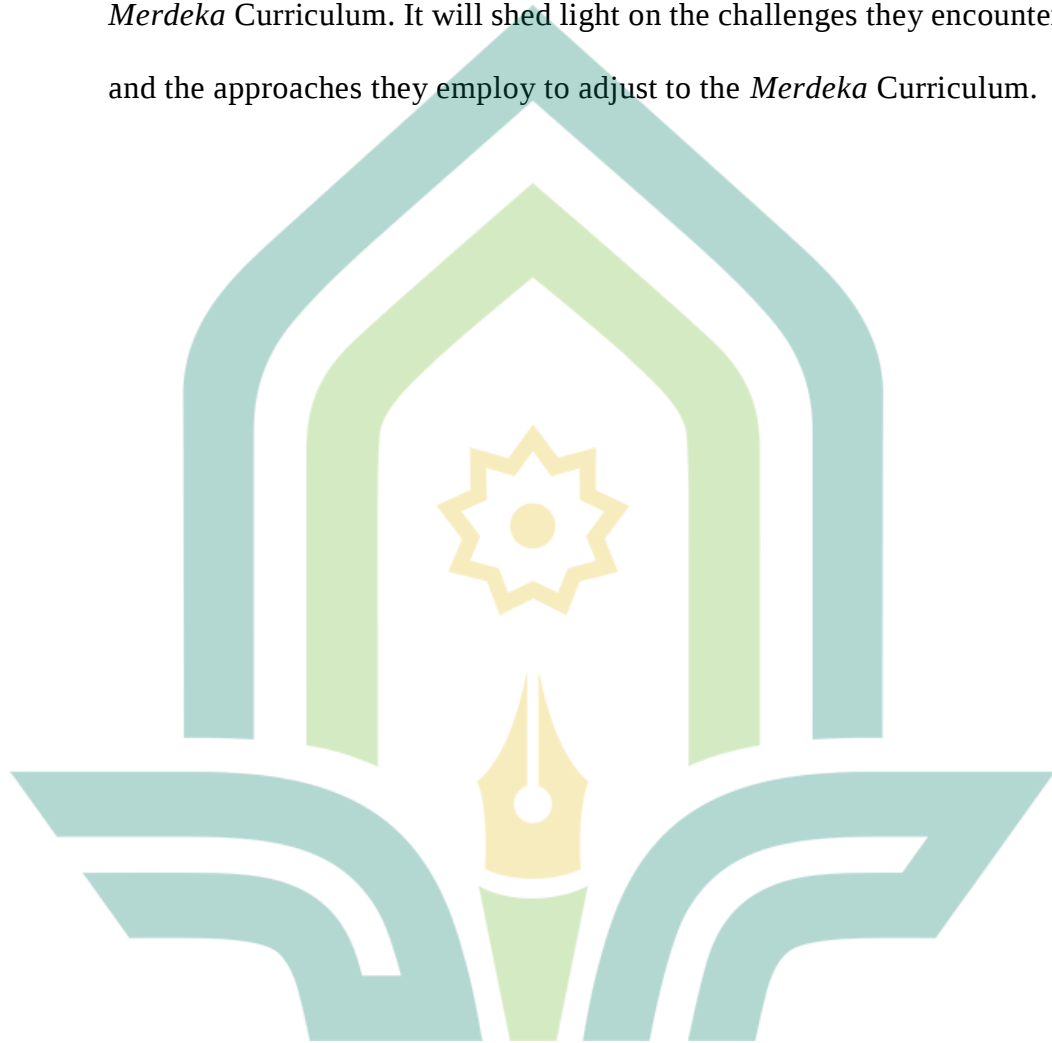
### 1.6 Aims of Study

This study aims to gain in-depth knowledge about teachers' feelings in implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* in English language teaching in junior high school. The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers feel in implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* in English language teaching.

### 1.7 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical Significance: This research will contribute Martin and White theory, suggests that feeling arise from an individual's appraisal of events, and that these appraisals shape and organize emotional responses. Cultural differences in emotional experiences can be explained by differences in appraisals of events, and will support other related theories about feeling.

2. Empirical Significance: This study will offer concrete data regarding the feelings of English teachers regarding the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. It will shed light on the challenges they encounter and the approaches they employ to adjust to the *Merdeka* Curriculum.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. Summary of the Findings

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language learning elicits a range of complex emotional responses from teachers, which include both positive and negative feelings. Through the lens of appraisal theory, participants in this study expressed satisfaction, security, happiness, and a tendency to show enthusiasm for student-centered learning, digital integration, and adaptive teaching. However, challenges such as limited resources, diverse student competencies, and technological disruptions also led to dissatisfaction, insecurity, unhappiness, and disinterest. These findings suggest that while the *Merdeka* Curriculum provides opportunities for pedagogical innovation and teacher growth, its successful implementation requires ongoing support, adequate infrastructure, and teacher professional development to minimize emotional burden and maximize curriculum effectiveness.

#### 5.2. Recommendation

The researcher understands that this research is far from perfect. Since this study only involved one participant, it is hoped that this study will provide insight into teachers' feelings towards the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language learning. This study can be a starting point for additional research from different viewpoints, providing new insights into the same

background for teachers' feelings in *Merdeka* Curriculum Implementation in English Learning.

#### 1. For Teachers

Teachers are encouraged to continuously engage in professional development, particularly in understanding and applying the *Merdeka* Curriculum effectively. Actively participating in teacher communities such as MGMP and school-based learning forums like KOMBEL can provide valuable sharing sessions and collaborative support. Teachers should also strike a balance between digital and traditional methods to maintain student focus and adapt to varying levels of student readiness.

#### 2. For Schools and Policy Makers

It is essential for schools and educational authorities to provide sufficient training and infrastructure, such as working audio-visual tools and learning laboratories. Schools should facilitate access to digital resources and ensure that all teachers are equipped with the skills needed to use them effectively. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to monitor the challenges faced by teachers and provide timely support.

#### 3. For Future Researchers

This study was limited to a single participant in one school context. Future studies are recommended to involve more diverse participants from different regions and educational levels to gain a broader understanding of teachers' feelings in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Comparative studies across

different subjects or involving longitudinal data could further enrich the insights and contribute to curriculum development strategies.



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