

THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH “MERDEKA BELAJAR - KAMPUS MERDEKA” (MBKM): A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This publication systematically reviews literature on MBKM (Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka). As MBKM is relatively a new program, its prospects and challenges in its implementation in English language teaching are regarded important to be scholarly-reviewed. In this study, the total of 17 scholarly-published journals were systematically reviewed. The journals included in this study were those published in 2020 and 2021 which set “Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka” and/or “MBKM” as keywords. The searching was conducted on www.google.co.id. Based on analysis, it is found that all journals appreciate the MBKM programs as promising and innovative. Furthermore, the scholarly-published journals explore the MBKM programs through philosophical basis, its implementation, challenges, and how they are perceived. In addition, the 8 programs and 4 policies are mainly set as the findings. In this publication, the future of English language teaching and learning through 8 programs and 4 policies of “Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka” is addressed.

Keywords: MBKM, Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka, English language teaching and learning

INTRODUCTION

English still becomes the most widely used language in education. Its importance leads major universities in Indonesia treat English as study program. As for the higher education students are required to conduct research for their final study and by considering the fact that majority of literature are written in English, this language is learned in university level even by non-English major students.

The fact that Indonesians still lack of English proficiency (Budiharso, 2019; Wulyani et al., 2019) leads literature to call the stakeholders to (Renandya et al., 2018) to participate in the acceleration of English. The most up-to-dated program which can be expected in known as MBKM (Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka) which has been implemented in the last 2 years now. The official document released by Ministry of Education and Culture reveals that the MBKM covers 8 flagship programs including students exchange, apprenticeship, teaching assistance, research, humanitarian project, entrepreneurial activity, independent

study, and thematic community service program (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020). The programs are aimed at providing students to master various fields of science (Sopiansyah & Masruroh, 2021). In this study, scholarly-published journals on the MBKM are systematically reviewed while the discussion is oriented towards the future of English language teaching and learning through 8 programs and 4 policies of “Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka”.

METHODS

In conducting the systematic review, we followed the following guidelines including (1) framing the questions; (2) identifying relevant publications; (3) assessing study quality; (4) summarizing the evidence; and (5) interpreting the findings (Khan et al., 2003). In collecting the data, the following keywords were applied in www.google.co.id: “MBKM” and “Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka”. The documents included in this systematic review were scholarly-published journals published in 2020 and 2021 that set “Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka” and/or “MBKM” as keywords. The data were obtained through online searching on Google (www.google.co.id).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on data collected as explained in research method, it is found that documents on the MBKM program are oriented towards guides and its technical implementation. Furthermore, the scholarly-published journals mainly explore the MBKM program from philosophical perspectives, its implementation in particular institution and particular field, students’ perception and impression, and its challenge and opportunity.

There are 3 journals exploring the MBKM program from the perspective of philosophy –John Dewey’s progressivism (Mustaghfiroh, 2020) and humanism (Susilawati, 2021). The former reveals that the MBKM reflects Dewey’s progressivism theory by giving freedom to learn based on students’ interest and talent while the latter emphasizes the learning autonomy offered by the MBKM programs to students. Another publication which explores the MBKM program through the perspective of philosophy views that institutions should redesign the structure of curriculum and outline the importance of formal agreement so that the MBKM program can be implemented well (Muslikh, 2020).

The study exploring students’ response towards independent campus concludes that 5 participants included in the study support the concept of MBKM while 3 participants refuse it (Wahyuni & Anshori, 2021). In addition, the MBKM program is seen as superior since it provides students experiences before graduation (Asdinah, 2021). Furthermore, the MBKM is claimed as programs that promotes student-centered learning, co-creation, and ubiquitous learning (Junaidi, 2020). Another resource reveals that students view student exchange program as innovative (Insani et al., 2021). However, its implementation especially in relation

with institutions from different background, vision, and mission is questioned by academicians (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

For the implementation of the MBKM in particular major, 3 journals are found emphasizing its implementation in Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Program Hukum and, Program Studi Bahasa Inggris. The resources conclude that the MBKM program is applicable in Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia (Sudaryanto et al., 2020), Hukum (Rodiyah, 2021), and in Program Bahasa Inggris (Khrisnapatria, 2021). However, those three resources outline that the MBKM has challenges that should be taken into consideration.

The rest of journals reviewed in this study mainly applied literature review and they all entail on conclusion that the MBKM offers 8 flagship programs – including student exchange, apprenticeship, teaching assistance, research, humanitarian project, entrepreneurial activity, independent study, and thematic community service program – and 4 main policies – including opening new study programs, higher education accreditation system, legal entity, and right to learn in three semesters (Arifin & Muslim, 2020; Baharuddin, 2020; Fuadi & Aswita, 2021; Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021; Siregar et al., 2020; Wahyuni & Anshori, 2021). The conclusion is derived from official document released by Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020 entitled “Buku Panduan Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka” applied as main reference.

Discussion

Based on review, it is found that the concept of independency in the MBKM (independent learning – independent campus) is totally different with the famously known term so called independent learning which refers to as the shifting of learning responsibility to students (Rachul et al., 2021). It potentially causes a scholarly-published journal referring to the program as freedom to learn – independent campus (Nurtjahyati & Sukisno, 2021) to emphasizes its difference with independent learning.

Based on the collected documents which meet the criteria of this study, it is found that the purposes of MBKM offer both students, lecturers, and institutions some advantages through the 8 programs and 4 policies as revealed in findings section. For the contribution of the MBKM on English language teaching and learning, the discussion is based on the eight programs categorized into 2 main benefits namely academic advantages and life skills advantage. Academic advantage the MBKM program offers are reflected through student exchange program, teaching assistance program, research, and independent study. Furthermore, life skills are reflected through apprenticeship, humanitarian project, entrepreneurial program, and thematic community service program.

1. Academic feature

Tall the MBKM program can be beneficial for students majoring English in terms of academic experiences. The (1) student exchange program that allows students to learn in another study program; (2) teaching assistance that requires students to practice their English skills and proficiency in classroom; (3) research

that requires students to dive into the real academic practice; and (4) independent study that allows students to autonomously learn based on their interest and talent are philosophically supported by experiential learning theory (McCarthy, 2010; Morris, 2020; Schenck & Cruickshank, 2015) and the concept of independent learning (Broad, 2006; Glynn, 1985; Hockings et al., 2018; Wright, 1987).

2. Life skills feature

Literature explains that life skills program is developable if the skills are applied across different settings that the students experience in daily basis (Gomes & Marques, 2013). Furthermore, it is explained that life skills are learned and reinforced through demonstration, modelling, and practice. Through programs called apprenticeship, humanitarian project, entrepreneurial program, and thematic community service program, the students are enrolled into real life experiences in some period of time. The idea is considered superior in providing them skills through real life experience. The concept is the manifestation of the famously known philosophical theory called behaviorism stating that the more an individual practice something, the more proficient he/she will be in the area. As the time goes by, three types of life skills including behavioral (e.g. managing time effectively), cognitive (e.g. managing negative thoughts), interpersonal (e.g. managing conflicts with other persons) and intrapersonal (e.g. managing lack of motivation by setting personal goals) (Gomes & Marques, 2013).

As for the entrepreneurial project, scientifically-processed literature reveals that college of business programs prepare students for workforce (Humpherys et al., 2021). By the existence of entrepreneurial program, each individual student can have equal opportunity to join in business which is advantageous for their future life.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that literature adopting the MBKM as theme of writing appreciate the idea that the MBKM covers 8 programs and 4 policies as revealed in findings of this publication. Regarding the benefits of the MBKM programs and policies in English language teaching and learning, it is concluded that the MBKM offers 2 outlines including academic feature and life skills feature. To maximize the academic feature and life skills feature of the MBKM, it is suggested that the program considers enrolling the students into international student exchange. Academically, the suggestion is supported by argument that learning in non-English speaking country significantly improves students' English performances (Llanes et al., 2016). In regards with life skills feature, it is believed that international experiences the students acquire while living abroad significantly contribute to students' life skills. That the MBKM program is relatively new leads to the lack of scholarly-published literature adopting the MBKM as research variable on English language teaching and learning. To scientifically explore and measure the impact of the MBKM program, both quantitative and qualitative studies are urgent to be conducted.

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