Classroom Technique Used in Teaching English Based on the Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract
The newest Merdeka Curriculum issued in 2021 began to be adopted by many high schools in Indonesia. However, not many studies were conducted on the technique used to teach English based on the curriculum. This descriptive case study aimed to investigate the technique used by an English teacher to teach English based on the *Merdeka Curriculum* as well as the teacher's reasons for using the technique. The research data were collected through observations and interviews then the collected data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. The research found that the English teacher used the Presentation technique to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, the teacher chose the technique because could help the students develop their speaking skills, and let them improving their communication skills.
Keywords: Merdeka curriculum, teaching technique, English teaching

Introduction

In English classes, the teacher has an active role in teaching the language skills. Hence, it is the responsibility of language teachers to select appropriate materials for English classes, specifically in countries where L1 is spoken the most. In response to this, teachers might consider using classroom techniques when teaching English to get students engaged and make them interested in the teaching-learning process.

The Regulation of the Ministry of the National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2007 on the Academic Qualification Standards and Competences of Teachers states that teachers should possess professional competence. Therefore, English teachers are required to have the appropriate knowledge of various elements of the English language (Prayogo, 2022). In addition, there are many things an English teacher needs to consider. According to Saragih (2012), English teachers should do their best to make the students interested in learning the language. One way to achieve this is by being creative in designing and presenting the materials and including the use of classroom technique.

Based on Brown (2000), English teachers should use teaching techniques as needed and uses a wide variety of techniques when teaching. Brown (2000: 275) also explained that in choosing the appropriate technique, the teacher should consider the following principles: 1) using techniques that cover the students' needs; 2) providing intrinsically motivating techniques; 3) encouraging the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts; 4) providing appropriate feedback and correction; 5) paying attention on the natural link between speaking and listening; 6) giving students the opportunities to initiate oral communication; and 7) encouraging the development of speaking strategies. Classroom techniques help English teachers in delivering the materials in the classroom, including the one that uses the newest Merdeka Curriculum.

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum or Merdeka Curriculum is the newest school curriculum issued in 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. English learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is focused on strengthening six language skills in English, namely listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting in various types of text. The minimum learning outcomes for these six English language skills refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) and equivalent to level B1 for high schoolers. Level B1 (CEFR) reflects specifications that can be seen from students' ability to: maintain interaction and convey a message in various contexts with clear articulation; express the main points to be conveyed in a comprehensive manner; and maintain communication even though there are still pauses.

The approach used in the English learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum is a genre-based approach which means that the English learning is focused on text genres, whether spoken, written, visual, audio, or multimodal where communication occurs at the text level, not just sentences. With this, meaning is not only conveyed by words, but must be supported by context. There are four stages in the text-based approach, and these four stages are carried out in discussion of the same topic. They are:

1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF): The teacher builds students' knowledge or background knowledge of the topic to be written or discussed. At this stage, the teacher also builds the cultural context of the text being taught.
2. Modeling of the Text (MOT): The teacher provides a model/example of the text as a reference for students in producing works, both orally and in writing.
3. Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): The teacher guides students and students produce texts together with their peers.
4. Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): Students produce spoken and written texts independently.

Furthermore, based on the mentioned decree, the learning objectives of the English learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum are as follows:

1. Students are able to develop communicative competence in English with a variety of multimodal texts (oral, written, visual and audiovisual).
2. Students are able to develop intercultural competence to understand and appreciate Indonesian and foreign cultural perspectives, practices and products.
3. Students are able to develop self-confidence to express themselves as an independent and responsible individual.
4. Students are able to develop critical and creative reasoning skills.

There has been some research about the classroom techniques used to teach English. However, there are not many that put focus on the technique used to teach English based on the newest Merdeka Curriculum and at the time this research was conducted, not many studies in Indonesia used interviews to gain more in-depth data about the teachers' reasons for using the techniques. Therefore, we were interested in conducting a study entitled "Classroom Technique Used in Teaching English Based on the Merdeka Curriculum". This study aimed to answer the following research questions.

1. What classroom technique was used by the English teacher to teach based on the Merdeka Curriculum?
2. Why did the teacher use the technique to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum?

The findings of this research hopefully can give inspiration to English teachers to select classroom techniques to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum and become a reference for conducting similar research on observing techniques used to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum at a certain school or institution.

Method

This research employed a qualitative case study design. The type of case study used in this research was a descriptive case study which aimed to describe a phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 2003). This research was conducted at a senior high school in Jember where the English teacher uses both a classroom technique and the Merdeka Curriculum. The targeted participant was Ms. N, a high school teacher who taught all 10 classes of the 10th grade where the research took place. She was chosen as the research participant because in addition to using classroom techniques, she was the only English teacher who implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching English. This is because the curriculum was only applicable to the 10th graders in Indonesia by the time of this research. In choosing the technique, Ms. N had her own considerations, namely the materials being taught, the level of the students, and the task she planned to give to

students. Ms. N was also considered as a senior teacher, having taught English for more than 20 years and had adapted to the use of technology in the classroom.

In this research, we used classroom observation and interview to collect the data. We adopted the stages of conducting a classroom observation proposed by Parra & Hernández (2019). These stages included:

1. Identification of classroom events (or episodes)

   In this stage, we created a sequence of non-structured events to help researchers capture general classroom dynamics. During the observed session, field notes of the classroom activities were taken.

2. Recollection of classroom events

   In this stage, we looked for specific and critical instances or interactions occurring in the classroom which were then judged to be illustrative for some aspects of the teachers' teaching strategies.

3. Towards the why question

   In this last stage, we looked for further information that shaped the dynamics of the observed classroom (as gathered during stages one and two). This was done by conducting a follow-up interview to understand and explain how teachers acted, and why they acted the way they did during the teaching-learning process. In this research, this stage was also needed to answer the second research question, "Why did the teacher use the technique to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum?"

Once all data were collected by using the previously mentioned instrument, data analysis followed. The collected data were analyzed by using a thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke (2012) to identify, analyze, and repport themes found in the data. There are six steps in analyzing data in using a thematic analysis. They are: 1) Becoming familiar with the data; 2) Generating codes; 3) Searching for themes; 4) Reviewing themes; 5) Defining and renaming themes; and 6) Producing the report.

Findings

The classroom observation as a data collection method based on Parra & Hernandez (2019) was conducted through three stages. In the first stage, we observed the classroom activities twice on March 20th and March 27th, 2023, and recorded the teaching and learning process, obtaining documentations with a duration of approximately 90 minutes each, following the duration of one classrrom session. Field notes were obtained during this stage of classroom observation, which we further reviewed in stage two to determine specific events relevants to the research questions. Then, we developed a set of questions we wanted to study further in stage three of the observation to answer the "why" questions. In stage three, two interview sessions were conducted on March 23rd
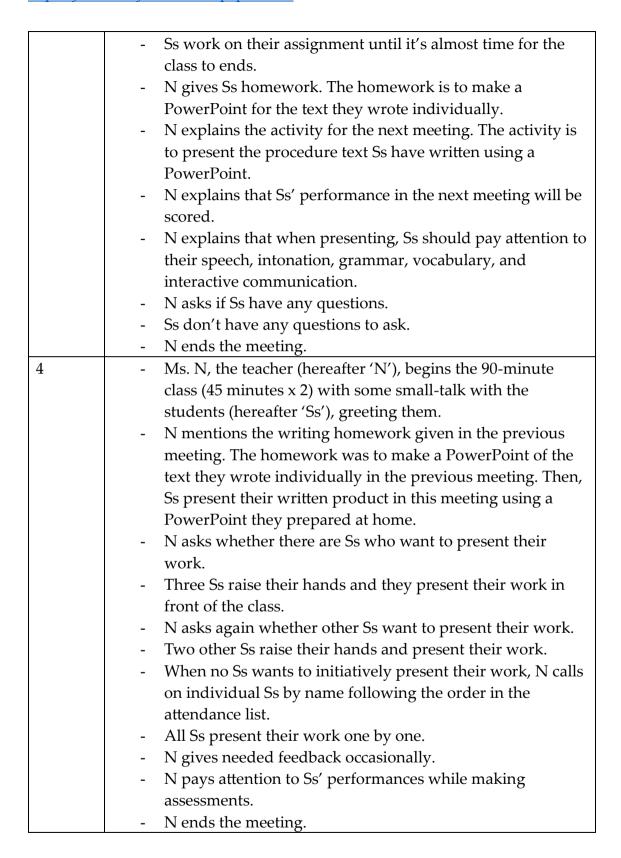
which lasted for 20 minutes and March 30th, 2023, which lasted for 15 minutes. Further explanations of the findings of each stage are presented below.

1. Stage one: identification of classroom events (or episodes)

In this stage, we obtained 2 lists of classroom events we recorded on my field notes. These events were then reviewed during stage 2 to develop interview questions needed to answer the second research question. The list of activities can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Identification of Classroom Events

Meeting	Classroom events
3	- Ms. N, the teacher (hereafter 'N'), begins the 90-minute class (45 minutes x 2) with some small-talk with the students (hereafter 'Ss'), greeting them. - N asks Ss to open their books. - N reviews the material about procedure text discussed in the previous meeting. - N asks some questions regarding procedure text to check Ss' comprehension. - N gives a writing task to Ss. The task is to write a procedure text in groups using a list of themes N has provided. - N asks Ss to form their own groups of 4 and start working. - Ss spend the first 45 minues to write a procedure text in groups. - Ss ask questions whenever they need help from N. - N tells Ss that the time is up and that they should stop writing. - N now gives another task to Ss. The task is to write a procedure text individually using a list of themes N has provided. - Ss spend the last 45 minues to write a procedure text individually. - N asks whether anyone has finished writing and would like to present their work in front of the class. - Two Ss present their work in front of the class. - N gives feedback, such as in the form of "very good". - N asks whether other Ss want to try presenting their work too. - No one wants to present their work, so N calls two more Ss who appear to have finished their work to present it. - N gives feedback and correction when needed, such as "You should use Verb 1, not Verb-ing," and "Speak louder, please."

	- Ss work on their assignment until it's almost time for the class to ends. - N gives Ss homework. The homework is to make a PowerPoint for the text they wrote individually. - N explains the activity for the next meeting. The activity is to present the procedure text Ss have written using a PowerPoint. - N explains that Ss' performance in the next meeting will be scored. - N explains that when presenting, Ss should pay attention to their speech, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, and interactive communication. - N asks if Ss have any questions. - Ss don't have any questions to ask. - N ends the meeting.
4	- Ms. N, the teacher (hereafter 'N'), begins the 90-minute class (45 minutes x 2) with some small-talk with the students (hereafter 'Ss'), greeting them. - N mentions the writing homework given in the previous meeting. The homework was to make a PowerPoint of the text they wrote individually in the previous meeting. Then, Ss present their written product in this meeting using a PowerPoint they prepared at home. - N asks whether there are Ss who want to present their work. - Three Ss raise their hands and they present their work in front of the class. - N asks again whether other Ss want to present their work. - Two other Ss raise their hands and present their work. - When no Ss wants to initiatively present their work, N calls on individual Ss by name following the order in the attendance list. - All Ss present their work one by one. - N gives needed feedback occasionally. - N pays attention to Ss' performances while making assessments. - N ends the meeting.

The conducted classroom observations found that the teacher used presentation in both meeting 3 and 4 to teach English using the Merdeka Curriculum.

2. Stage two: recollection of classroom events

   In this stage, we looked for specific and critical instances or interactions that are in line with the focus of my research. Therefore, we paid more attention to the implementation of the technique used to teach English. Then, we developed a set of interview questions regarding the highlighted events. The set of questions for the interview after the observation of meeting 3 is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Interview Questions following the Observation of Meeting 3

No	Question
1	*Have the students learned how to write a procedure text? When?* Apakah siswa sudah mempelajari cara membuat teks prosedur? Kapan?
2	*The students are free to choose the theme for their procedure text, why?* Mengapa siswa dibebaskan memilih tema untuk tulisannya sendiri?
3	*During this meeting, some students presented their procedure texts. Is this a technique that you use to teach speaking?* Pada pertemuan ini, beberapa siswa mempresentasikan tulisannya. Apakah ini teknik mengajar speaking yang Anda gunakan di dalam kelas?
4	*What is the name of this technique?* Apa nama teknik ini?
5	*Why are students allowed to open their books when presenting?* Mengapa siswa diizinkan untuk *open book* saat mempresentasikan?
6	*What is the purpose of using this technique?* Apa tujuan dari teknik ini?
7	*What skills are focused on in the implementation of this technique?* Skill apa yang difokuskan dalam implementasi teknik ini?
8	*What about the micro skills in speaking?* Bagaimana dengan micro skills dalam speaking?
9	*Did you grade students' performance at this meeting?* Apakah Anda menilai presentasi siswa di pertemuan ini?

In addition, the set of questions for the interview after the observation of meeting 4 is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Interview Questions following the Observation of Meeting 4

No	Question
1	*Why did the students work individually, and not in groups?* Mengapa siswa bekerja secara individu, dan bukan berkelompok?
2	*In this fourth meeting, the focus was on presenting the procedural text orally. What differentiates this activity from the similar one in the third meeting?* Di pertemuan keempat ini, fokusnya mempresentasikan teks prosedur secara lisan. Apa yang membedakan aktivitas ini dengan aktivitas serupa di pertemuan ketiga?
3	*Why did you give students the opportunity to present their work initiatively?* Mengapa Anda memberi kesempatan siswa untuk maju secara inisiatif?
4	*In this meeting, students presented their writing. Was it a form of a classroom technique used to teach speaking?* Pada pertemuan ini, siswa mempresentasikan tulisannya. Apakah ini teknik mengajar speaking yang Anda gunakan di dalam kelas?
5	*What is the name of this technique?* Apa nama teknik ini?
6	*What is the purpose of using this technique?* Apa tujuan dari teknik ini?
7	*Why were students required to use PowerPoint when presenting their work?* Mengapa siswa diharuskan menggunakan PowerPoint saat mempresentasikan hasil pekerjaannya?
8	*What skills were focused on in the implementation of this technique?* Skill apa yang difokuskan dalam implementasi teknik ini?

9	*What about the micro skills in speaking?*
	Bagaimana dengan micro skills dalam speaking?
10	*What was expected from students when they presented their written products?*
	Apa yang diharapkan saat siswa mempresentasikan tulisannya?
11	*Did you grade students' performance in this meeting?*
	Apakah Anda menilai presentasi siswa di pertemuan ini?
12	*What are the advantages of using the presentation technique to teach speaking?*
	Apa kelebihan dari teknik presentasi untuk mengajar speaking?
13	*What are the disadvantages of using the presentation technique to teach speaking?*
	Apa kekurangan dari teknik presentasi untuk mengajar speaking?

3. Stage three: towards the why question

In this last stage, we conducted a follow-up interview for each meeting, hence there was a total of two interview sessions. The transcripts of the interviews can be seen in Appendix C & D. After data analysis, two themes emerged. They were: (1) classroom technique to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum, and (2) teacher's reasons for using the technique. The themes can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The Aspects of Classroom Technique Used to Teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum

Themes	Sub-Theme
Classroom technique to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum	Presentation without a PowerPoint Presentation using a PowerPoint
Teacher's reasons for using the technique	In line with the learning objective Honing speaking skills Allow students to practice communication skills

The themes were determined based on the research questions we proposed. As for the sub-themes, they were the more specific themes that emerged underneath the umbrella of each theme.

Classroom Technique to Teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum

The discussion of this theme reveals the technique the teacher used to teach English using the Merdeka Curriculum. It answers the first research question, "What classroom technique was used by the English teacher to teach English based on the Merdeka Curriculum?". From the interview results conducted after classroom observation, it was found that the English teacher used the presentation technique to teach speaking skills in meetings 3 and 4 of teaching procedure text. The teacher's responses are presented below.

Excerpt 1:

"For the speaking activity in this third meeting, you could call it the presentation technique since students presented their work. However, the presentation was conducted perfunctory and only a few students performed in front of the class. When they were presenting, they also had their books with them, and we also provide feedback for them to pay attention to at the next meeting." (Ms. N, 23 March 2023)

Excerpt 1 above explains Ms. N used presentation technique in meeting 3 (Appendix C). In addition, the same technique was also used in meeting 4 as shown in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 2:

"Presentation technique. So, students present their work manually using PPT and an LCD projector." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpts 1 & 2 show that the same technique was implemented in both meetings. However, there were differences in each implementation and through the conducted interview, those differences were discussed. First, in implementing presentation technique in the 3rd meeting, the presentation technique was implemented as a small part of the lesson with a few students participating in it. The excerpts of the teacher's responses are presented below.

Excerpt 3:

"Yes, but it's not like the technique that we will use as a whole, meaning that the students' speaking activity in this meeting was limited and was intended to kill time. This is because the real focus of this meeting was to write procedure texts in groups and individually. It's just that, there were high-level students who only needed a moment to write a procedure text. When they were finished, we would ask them to present their work in front of the class." (Ms. N, 23 March 2023)

Excerpt 4:

"This activity was like a warm-up activity. However, at the end of this meeting, they were told that they were not allowed to read from their books in the next meeting. They could only present the points in their PPT." (Ms. N, 23 March 2023)

The extract above revealed that Ms. N as the teacher did not ask all students to present their work in meeting 3. Instead, those who did were students who had finished writing their procedure text as an individual assignment. This is because in this meeting, the stages covered were joint construction and independent construction. In the joint construction stage, students constructed a procedure text in groups. It focused on students' writing skills and no speaking activity occurred. Then, in the independent construction stage, students were also expected to write another procedure text but individually. Although the activity also mainly focused on the students' writing skills, there was a speaking activity that took place in this stage during the 3rd meeting.

In writing a procedure text individually, some students finished their work more quickly. When they did, Ms. N then asked them if they would like to present their work in front of the class. Based on the conducted observation, only four students presented their work and Ms. N provided feedback such as "You should use Verb 1, not Verb-ing," and "Speak louder, please." The students who presented their work were also allowed to bring their books with them, so the activity was similar to reading aloud.

Meanwhile, in meeting 4, the presentation technique was implemented throughout the meeting and all students presented their work in front of the class. The extracts of the teacher's responses are presented below.

Excerpt 5:

"In the third meeting, the stage was joint construction. So, the students practiced making procedure texts in groups. The maximum time was 45 minutes, then the next 45 minutes were used to make procedure texts individually. Then, students made a PPT at home. Now, in this fourth meeting, they presented (their work)." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpt 6:

> "Presentation technique. So, students present their work manually using PPT and an LCD projector." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Based on this statement, students were more prepared to present their work orally in meeting 4. This is because in the previous meeting, they were given an assignment to make a PowerPoint of their procedure text at home. So, in the 4th meeting, all students knew that they were expected to present their work in front of the class using the PowerPoint they made at home with the help of an LCD projector. The reason of using a PowerPoint in the implementation of this technique is stated below.

Excerpt 7:

"Because if students didn't use PPT, they would only be presenting in front of the class by only speaking and it's not very interesting. If they used a PPT, there would be pictures. Therefore, the presentation would be more interesting and clearer. Other than that, they would have to understand the content of their text since they can only rely on points instead of a whole text." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Other than being more interesting, students were required to use a PowerPoint to ensure that they understood their text. This is because they could only show bullet points and pictures in their PowerPoint instead of a whole text. Then, in deciding the order of performing students, the teacher asked if there was anyone who wanted to perform first instead of directly choosing a random student or calling students' names in a certain order. The teacher's reason is stated below.

Excerpt 8:

"In English learning, there are students who are high-level, middle-level, and low-level. To facilitate high-level students and appreciate their work, we first announced, "Who wants to present first?" It would automatically feel rewarding to them. Furthermore, for the middle and low-level students, after the high-level students have finished, we would still ask the same thing. Sometimes, students want to initiatively perform but sometimes they need to be called so they want to present. Sometimes, students feel shy to perform in front of the class. So, it helps them to want to perform if their names are called. Before the students performed, they were given an example. This is a PPT example, this is how they should present it, their voice must be able to be heard by the whole class, and their eye to other students. Facial expressions and hand gestures can also elevate their performances." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

In conclusion, the English teacher as the participant of this research used presentation technique to teach English in both meetings. However, there were differences in their implementation. In the third meeting, no PowerPoint was

used because the presentation was only a small part of the lesson involving students who finished their work earlier than the rest. On the other hand, the presentation technique implemented in meeting 4 required the students to use a PowerPoint they prepared beforehand with all students presenting their work using points in front of the classroom.

Teacher's Reasons for Using the Technique

Based on the interview data, the teacher's responses regarding the purpose of the presentation technique used are presented below.

Excerpt 9:

"The goal of this technique was for students to be able to present their work, that's the main thing. According to the learning objectives, students were also expected to be able to individually present procedure texts correctly." (Ms. N, 23 March 2023)

Excerpt 10:

"So students can present their work, that's the main purpose. Again, according to what is required by the learning objectives, students are expected to be able to present oral procedure texts individually and correctly." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpt 11:

"In the Merdeka Curriculum, there is Phase F, which involves writing and presenting. The learning outcomes in phase F are, first, students are able to write texts independently and convey their ideas and vocabulary into written products. Second, students are able to present information using various means of presentation to achieve different objectives, either in print or digital form. The applied presentation technique using PPT helps students achieve the second learning objective, which is presenting information using various means of presentation. In this case, the means was PPT." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpt 12:

"As previously mentioned, this technique also hones speech and intonation, discourse management, grammar and vocabulary, as well as students' interactive communication skills." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpt 13:

"It was hoped that students could speak and present something properly and correctly. It was also hoped to become a practice for students at this high school level and prepare them to further improve at a higher level in university." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

Excerpt 14:

"Speaking skills. Speaking skills were the main focus. There were also presentation skills, so that students could learn. One day, when they are in university or society, they can present other things or when there

is a program in university, they can present something very well. It was hoped that students' communication skills could be honed." (Ms. N, 30 March 2023)

From these responses, the presentation technique was implemented due to several reasons. First, it aligns with one of the learning objectives stating that students are expected to be able to present oral procedure texts individually and correctly using PPT as the means of presentation. Second, it hones speaking skills, such as speech and intonation, discourse management, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as students' interactive communication skills. Third, the teacher hoped that through this technique, students could practice their communication skills as well as learn how to present something to an audience in university or society.

Discussion

Through a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, this study offers literature on classroom technique used by an English teacher to teach speaking especially in the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as her reasons in implementing the technique. In relation to the technique, this study found that the teacher used presentation technique. According to Sukardi (2019), presentation technique is indeed one of the techniques English teachers can use to teach speaking. A study on teacher's technique when teaching speaking using the Merdeka Curriculum was also conducted by Ayuningtyas & Ratih (2023). However, it was found that question and answer and role play were the used techniques teach speaking, which are different from the ones found in this study.

Furthermore, this study found three reasons for implementing the presentation technique. First, it aligns with one of the learning objectives stating that students are expected to be able to present oral procedure texts individually and correctly. Second, it hones speaking skills, such as speech and intonation, discourse management, grammar and vocabulary, as well as students' interactive communication skills. Third, the teacher hoped that through this technique, students could practice their communication skills as well as learn how to present something to an audience in university or society. These findings are in line with the study conducted by Wardoyo (2018) who found that presentation technique assist students in mastering speaking skills and help their communicative competence. The findings also support Riadil (2020) who found that according to students' perspectives, oral presentation helps them hone their speaking and communication skills.

Conclusion

Based on the analyzes, it can be concluded that the English teacher who used the Merdeka Curriculum implemented the presentation technique to teach English, especially the speaking skills. The technique was implemented in meetings 3 and 4 regarding the material on procedure text. There were some

differences in the implementation of this technique in both meetings. In meeting 3, the presentation technique was carried out without using PowerPoint with only a few students presenting their work, open book. Meanwhile, in meeting 4, the presentation technique was implemented throughout this meeting involving all students. This is because students' oral production was the focus of the meeting from start to finish. Furthermore, the teacher had previously asked the students to prepare a PowerPoint file to help them present their texts using bullet points instead of a whole text. As for the reasons for its implementation, this study found that the teacher chose the presentation technique because it aligns with the learning objective, helps students hone their speaking skills, and helps them practice their communication skills.

Referring to the research findings, the presentation technique can benefit students in acquiring English speaking skills. Therefore, the participant's reasons of using the technique can hopefully give other English teachers new insight on a technique to implement in teaching speaking skills in the new Merdeka Curriculum. Moreover, since this research did not focus on a particular type of classroom technique, future researchers are suggested to conduct other research about the technique used to teach English based on the newest Merdeka Curriculum but with focus on a specific technique from the beginning.

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