

## **Student Exchange Alumni of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program Shared Voice for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu**

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**Abstrak:** Telah banyak penelitian yang mendalami pelaksanaan pertukaran mahasiswa program MBKM. Namun studi empiris yang menyelidiki saran alumni pertukaran mahasiswa Program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) masih jarang dilakukan. Penelitian ini mengandalkan data wawancara semi terstruktur dari 6 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris yang mengikuti program pertukaran pelajar angkatan II dan III Program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) yang diadakan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi RI. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi saran alumni program pertukaran mahasiswa untuk kemajuan jurusan pendidikan bahasa Inggris. Analisis data menggunakan analisis tematik yang diadaptasi dari (Braun & Clarke, 2006) yang terdiri dari 6 langkah. Sebagai hasil pengalaman belajar di universitas lain di Indonesia selama satu semester, mereka sangat merekomendasikan mata kuliah story-telling, TOEFL, dan microteaching menjadi mata kuliah wajib di Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP Yapis Dompu. Temuan utama lainnya dalam penelitian ini adalah Dosen harus lebih tegas dalam memberikan perlakuan pengajaran kepada mahasiswa untuk meningkatkan kedisiplinan dan motivasi mahasiswa dalam mengerjakan tugas. Temuan terakhir adalah dosen Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris STKIP Yapis Dompu sangat disarankan untuk mengadaptasi pembelajaran berbasis permainan dengan menggunakan teknologi untuk memperoleh pembelajaran yang efektif, menyenangkan, dan interaktif.

**Kata Kunci:** Pertukaran Mahasiswa, MBKM, Saran

**Abstract:** *There have been studies exploring the implementation of student exchange of MBKM program. However empirical study which investigates Shared Voice of student exchange alumni of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program is uncommon. This study relies on semi-structured interview data from 6 English Education students who participated in student exchange program batch II and III of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program held by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. This study aims to explore student exchange alumni's suggestion for English education department improvement. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis adapted from (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which consists of 6 steps. As a result of studying at other Indonesian universities, they highly recommend story-telling, TOEFL, and microteaching courses to be compulsory courses in English Education Department of STKIP Yapis Dompu. Other main finding in this research is that Lecturers should be more assertive in providing teaching treatment to students to promote students discipline and motivation in doing assignments. The last finding is that lecturers of English Education Department of STKIP Yapis Dompu are highly recommended to adapt game-based learning using technology to gain effective, fun, and interactive learning.*

**Keywords:** *Student Exchange, MBKM, Shared Voice*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Student Exchange Program is a part of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program which is a domestic student exchange program for one semester Launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Through this program, students as the nation's successors are invited to gain learning experience at the best universities throughout Indonesia. Through this program, students will also receive credit recognition for up to 20 credits. Apart from that, students can also experience firsthand the diversity of the archipelago, both in writing and in practice. This program supports students in improving their thinking and social skills through an active learning approach, (Akmalina & Prastyo, 2023). Moreover, the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program's goal is to give students the freedom to select classes and coursework based on their areas of interest in order to better equip them for the workforce after graduation. Universities are currently developing and implementing cutting-edge learning procedures to support the MBKM program in order to achieve the best possible learning results and stay relevant to the needs and dynamics of society.

Additionally, the main purposes of student exchange (PMM) program are (1) Increasing students' ability to apply national insight, (2) Increasing students' understanding of ethnic, religious, racial and inter-group diversity (SARA) and the spirit of unity, (3) Developing intensive encounters and dialogue in diversity and mutual understanding to create strengthening unity, (4) Expanding and/or deepening students' academic knowledge. By holding student exchange, each student can voluntarily give the right to gain knowledge according to the desired passion, (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021). Furthermore Kamalia & Andriansyah, (2021) state that this student exchange program run flexibly and with no restraint so that it is hoped that later students will be able to improve their competencies and be ready to work.

Until 2014, STKIP Yapis Dompu frequently participated in sending its students student exchange program, especially students in the English education study program of STKIP Yapis Dompu. Student exchange of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program has been a program that all students STKIP Yapis Dompu always look forward to. Referring to the importance of this program for the improvements of educational system and policy in Indonesia, many researchers have conducted researches about Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program, such as (Arrasyid, 2023; Dewi et al., 2023; Djafar et al., 2023; Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021; Moenardy et al., 2022; Sinaga et al., 2023; Akmalina & Prastyo, 2023; Denny et al., 2022). Most of the researchers generally explored about students' perceptions toward Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program. However; empirical studies which investigate alumni of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) suggestions or voice for the betterment or improvement of university have not been explored. Therefore; this study was conducted to investigate or explore student exchange alumni of Kampus Merdeka Program Shared Voice for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu

## 2. METHOD

### Design and Samples

Since this study aims to investigate or explore student exchange alumni of Kampus Merdeka Program Shared Voice or suggestion for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu, this research was carried out using a qualitative approach. The participants of this study were 6 English Education students who participated in student exchange program batch II and III of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program held by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. They experienced to study at some best universities in

Indonesia, such as Jember University, and Indonesian Education University, Malang University, Erlangga University of Surabaya, Muhammadiyyah University of Jakarta. Because the probable pool of participants is already limited, the sample size is regarded acceptable for the selected (purposive) sampling strategy, (Marshall, 1996 as cited in (Ismail et al., 2023; Ismail, I., & Indriani, J. 2023.) First, it was told that the study was voluntary, and before to data collection.

### Instrument and Procedure

To deal with the objectives of this research, the researchers utilized semi-structured interview to collect the data. As this study was required to obtain students' in-depth suggestion for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu, semi-structured interview is a suitable data collection tool to be employed in this research. Semi-structured interview is particularly well adapted to acquiring a more in-depth understanding of people's experiences, (Knott et al., 2022; Ismail, 2022; Ismail et al, 2023). The interview sessions were conducted in Indonesian language as the participants' native language in order to gain accurate data and to avoid misinterpretation. In order to protect the spoken data, the interviews were also recorded. The questions asked in this research were focused on students' voice and they need to relate their suggestion to their experience in participating in student exchange program batch II and III of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM).

### Data Analysis

After obtaining the data from the interviewers, the data were then evaluated using a thematic analysis which is a technique for detecting, analyzing, and reporting data patterns (themes). Steps of analyzing data, as what explained by (Braun & Clarke, 2006, as cited in Ismail et al., 2022), consist of six phases: (1) Get acquainted with the data, (2) Creating the initial codes, (3) Looking for themes, (4) Themes to be reviewed, (5) Theme definition and naming, (6) Making the report.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to explore student exchange alumni of Kampus Merdeka Program Shared Voice for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu. After analyzing data based on the 6 steps data analyze above, here are the result of this study:

### Students' Shared Voice for English Education Department Improvement

1. **"Story Telling"** course is hoped to be a compulsory course on English Education Study Program of STKIP Yapis Dompu.

The interview analyzed demonstrated that some of them who had an experience to study in English education program of some Indonesian best universities highly recommended to English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu to have Story Telling Course. Beside the course motivates and improves students English speaking skill, it also enables students to understand their own culture by presenting or telling the traditional story in that course. As an English education student, it is a must to have high English speaking skill and cultural understanding. This idea is in accordance with the following interview result:

*I experienced having story telling course in Jember University, I think it's very interested course to be implemented in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu. As students, we were required to tell story about our own traditional story using creative and innovative media, (Student 3).*

2. TOEFL currently becomes a very crucial course to be taught in English education department at STKIP Yapis Dompu.

It cannot be denied that many English university students consider TOEFL is very significative both in their university live and in their upcoming live after being students. Some universities in Indonesia program TOEFL as a mandatory course especially for study program related to English. The benefits of TOEFL now-days are as requirement to apply for scholarship and job, or to enroll in particular universities. Therefore, TOEFL is expected to a mandatory course in STKIP Yapis Dompu. It is in accordance with the following interview result:

*As English students, we are required to possess adequate TOEFL competence as TOEFL is currently really needed for academic and non-academic live of students such as requirement to obtain scholarship, job, and university enrollment. So the opportunity to become a TOEFL instructor is widely open in the future after graduating from university. It is what I experienced learning TOEFL when I join student exchange program of MBKM for one semester. So I really hope that this course can be a mandatory course in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu, (students 4, 3, & 1).*

3. Microteaching course should be a compulsory course in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu

The Microteaching Short Course is designed to offer students the opportunity to experience planning, developing and delivering a lesson in a mock classroom with students. The goals of this course are to develop an understanding of effective teaching and learning strategies; to gain practical teaching preparation and teaching experience; to increase the confidence of your teaching skills; to receive and apply critical feedback to your teaching development; and to strengthen your ability to assess and evaluate teaching. Based on this, it is appropriate for campuses that produce teachers to receive direct training on how to become real teachers. This is in accordance with the following interview data:

*I highly recommend that this department makes the microteaching course a mandatory subject that students must take. In fact, we will become teachers, therefore it is appropriate for us to get a comprehensive understanding and a direct practice on how to become good teachers, (Students, 2 & 6).*

4. Lecturers should be more assertive in providing teaching treatment to students to promote students discipline and motivation in doing assignments.

Lecturer firmness means consistently enforcing discipline and commitment. Lecturers must show a firm attitude in the right situations. For example, when students deliberately do not submit their assignments on time or do not do their assignment at all, lecturers need to be decisive in enforcing lecture regulation that had previously been made. The lecturer's assertiveness in carrying out lectures will certainly contribute to the formation of student character. However; some lecturers are not very strict in implementing lecture rules, such as giving students so many times opportunities to do assignments even though the assignment submitting

deadline has already ended or passed. This kind of treatment can cause laziness for students in doing assignments and studying and taking every order and assignment given by the lecturers lightly. the interview data indicated that several lecturers in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu do not put enough emphasis on students regarding discipline in submitting and doing assignments compared to lecturers in other universities in Indonesia. This is in line with the following interview result:

*Compared to lecturers in other region universities, the lecturers in English education department do not put enough emphasis on students regarding discipline in submitting and doing assignments. It sometimes cause students' motivation or attitude regarding doing or submitting assignment on time. So we hope that lectures can be more assertive in providing teaching treatment to students to promote students' motivation and discipline in doing every single assignment from their lecturers, (Students 1 & 3).*

5. Game-based learning using technology is a remarkable solution to gain effective, fun, and interactive learning.

It is impossible to overlook the significance of technology-based education in the modern day. Using technology in the classroom has several important advantages, such as: Technology makes education more accessible. Students may access educational resources from anywhere with the internet and digital devices, breaking down obstacles related to geography and finances. Additionally, there's a chance that technology-based instruction will pique students' interests. Students' engagement in the learning process can be raised by using an interactive method that makes use of games, films, and online learning resources. Therefore; it is very crucial for lecturers especially in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu to adapt game-based learning using technology such as kahoot, quiziz, wordwall, and other game-based learning platforms.

*During learning at the university where student exchange program took place, the lecturers over there frequently presented their learning materials using game-based learning with technology such as kahoot, quiziz, wordwall, and other game-based learning platforms. We love the learning process. We highly recommend that the lecturers in English education department of STKIP Yapis Dompu adapt the styles of teaching, (Students, 1, 4, 5)*

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the main purpose of implementing student exchange of MBKM are to develop intensive encounters and dialogue in diversity and mutual understanding to create strengthening unity and to expand and/or deepen students' academic knowledge. This study aimed to find out student exchange alumni of Kampus Merdeka Program Shared Voice or suggestion for English Education Department Improvement at STKIP Yapis Dompu. There were some suggestions delivered by the alumni to improve English Education Department. As a result of studying at other Indonesian universities, they highly recommend story-telling, TOEFL, and microteaching courses to be compulsory courses in English Education Department of STKIP Yapis Dompu. Other main

finding in this research is that Lecturers should be more assertive in providing teaching treatment to students to promote students discipline and motivation in doing assignments. The last finding is that lecturers of English Education Department of STKIP Yapis Dompu are highly recommended to adapt game-based learning using technology to gain effective, fun, and interactive learning.

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