

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

The education system is the main component of education and has an important role in determining the quality of human resources. The education system introduced by the Indonesian government focuses on character education by conducting assessments in all subjects taught to students (Mahrus, 2021). Based on the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003, Article 1 Paragraph 19 states: "The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials as well as the methods used to guide the management of learning activities to achieve certain educational goals".

Indonesia has experienced 10 curriculum changes. These changes began in 1947 and lasted until the government implemented the curriculum in 2013. Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020. This curriculum is designed to strengthen national character, culture and adapt to the times. The implementation of this curriculum requires readiness from various parties, including teachers as direct implementers in schools. Merdeka Curriculum (Maulinda, 2022), has several important things in the context of education in Indonesia, including, first, developing national character. The Merdeka Curriculum aims to develop a strong

national character and character, so that students have quality and are ready to face future challenges. Second, improving the quality of learning. The Merdeka Curriculum offers more innovative and enjoyable learning for students, so it is expected to increase students' interest and motivation to learn. In addition, the Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes the development of students' competencies and skills that are relevant to the needs of the world of work. Third, adjusting to the times. The Merdeka curriculum is designed to adapt to the times, so that students can keep up with and take advantage of the development of technology and science that continues to develop. Fourth, part of independent learning efforts. The Merdeka Curriculum is part of the independent learning efforts launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Independent learning aims to provide wider opportunities for students to learn and develop according to their interests and talents.

English language learning in general at the primary and secondary education levels in the national curriculum provides students with the opportunity to open up insights relating to themselves, social relations, culture and employment opportunities available globally. Their understanding of this sociocultural and intercultural knowledge can enhance their critical thinking skills. The ability to communicate across cultures, English is a basic skill that all Indonesian children need to master. This curriculum emphasizes the importance of learning English as a global

language, and aims to improve the quality of English in Indonesia. Teachers as implementers of the Merdeka Curriculum are strongly emphasized to be able to implement this curriculum effectively. Teachers must ensure that they can implement Merdeka Curriculum in the learning process so that students can achieve academic goals.

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the government policies to recover the learning lag caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The curriculum structure will be more flexible and the targeted time allocation can be more than one year. The focus is also on essential material so that learning outcomes are more organized. The flexibility also provides flexibility for teachers to use various learning media according to the needs and character of students. However, in reality, because Merdeka Curriculum is a new education policy, English teachers in Indonesia need to adapt to all the regulations and guidelines of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Indonesia previously implemented curriculum 13, which in this curriculum contains the development of a balance between spiritual and social attitudes, as well as knowledge and skills that are applied in various situations in schools and communities, then the 2013 Curriculum (K13) became the Independent Curriculum based on the decision of the Ministry of Education and Culture as a solution to the backwardness of education in Indonesia due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the progress of the times. The 2013 curriculum itself has been implemented starting from the

2013/2014 school year. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia launched a policy in the form of Merdeka Belajar as a solution to the backwardness of education in Indonesia. So since then a new curriculum has emerged, namely the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum provides freedom to educators to create quality learning that suits the needs and learning environment of students. The Merdeka Curriculum is implemented with the aim of practicing independence in thinking for students. The main point of this freedom of thought is addressed to the teacher. If the teacher is not independent in teaching, of course, students are also not independent in thinking. The Merdeka Curriculum gives educators the freedom to create learning that suits the needs and learning environment of students. The Merdeka Curriculum is implemented with the aim of training students' independence in thinking.

Merdeka curriculum using modules, the Merdeka Curriculum Teaching Module is a document that contains learning objectives, steps, and media, as well as the assessments needed in one unit or topic of learning compiled based on the Independent Curriculum. This teaching module is used as a learning tool or tool which contains material, learning methods, limitations, and evaluation methods that are systematically and stunningly arranged to achieve the expected success indicators. Modules have the same function as lesson plans, except that there are a number of adjustments in them. Teaching modules assist teachers in carrying

out learning activities more optimally and provide teacher freedom in choosing or modifying teaching modules provided by the government according to the characteristics of students.

The government has established an independent curriculum that is applied in all Indonesian schools although in practice schools are still given the freedom to choose whether or not to use the curriculum. Therefore, the merdeka curriculum was not implemented massively and simultaneously. Based on the policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikburistek) which gives freedom to educational units to implement the Merdeka curriculum. Where schools that have implemented the Merdeka curriculum and have meet the criteria are called Mover Schools.

The merdeka learning curriculum has four principles that are transformed into new policy directions – new policies, namely; 1) USBN has been replaced by an assessment test, this is to assess student competence in a written test or can use other assessments that are more comprehensive in nature such as assignments, 2) UN is changed to a minimum competency assessment and character survey, this activity aims to competency assessment and character survey, this activity aims to encourage teachers and schools to upgrade the quality of learning and student selection tests to the next level cannot be used as a basic reference. can be used as a basic reference. Minimum competency assessment to assess literacy, numeracy, and character. 3) Lesson plans, different from

the previous curriculum in which lesson plans follow the general format. The independent curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to be able to freely choose, create, use, and develop the lesson plan format. What needs to be considered are the 3 core components in making lesson plans, namely learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. The lesson plan is now known as the teaching module.

Teaching modules are learning tools or learning designs that are based on the curriculum that is applied with the aim of reaching the predetermined competency standards. competency standards that have been set. Teaching modules have a major role to support teachers in designing learning. The role of the teacher when preparing learning tools. The role of the teacher when preparing learning tools is very important, in this case the teacher is honed to have creativity in following the teaching module so that later learning can run effectively and efficiently. teaching modules so that later learning can run effectively and efficiently in accordance with the character of the students. The module that is compiled must be in accordance with the Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP). Learning Objectives (ATP). Therefore, the pedagogical competence of teachers in the preparation of teaching modules needs to be developed. therefore the pedagogical competence of teachers in the preparation of teaching modules really needs to be developed.

Curriculum renewal is a natural thing, one of the factors is the rapid progress of science and technology that is so massive in the field of education. Among our society, it is often heard "change the minister change the curriculum" because maybe they think that every change of government will change the curriculum like a tradition that is continuously preserved. However, if examined further changes or improvements to the curriculum, therefore the researcher is interested in further analyzing the "Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in English Language Learning at SMP Negeri 02 South Bengkulu" because SMP Negeri 02 South Bengkulu has implemented the Merdeka curriculum but not yet optimally in accordance with the aspects of learning. optimized in accordance with the aspects of differentiated learning.

Based on this phenomenon, the researcher is interested in examining "Implementation Of The Kurikulum Merdeka In English Subject At Smp Negeri 02 Bengkulu Selatan".

## **B. Identification of the Problem**

Based on the background of the research above, the question of this study is "How is Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 02 Bengkulu Selatan?"

## **C. Research Limitation**

This research is limited to investigating how the kurikulum merdeka is implemented at SMPN 2 Bengkulu Selatan. The focus of the observer considers about:

1. Teacher preparation in implementing the kurikulum Merdeka
2. Implementation of the kurikulum merdeka in terms of teachers conducting the learning process in the classroom
3. Learning Assessment for the Kurikulum Merdeka

#### **D. Purpose and Significance of Research**

##### a. Research objectives

In accordance with the research questions, the objectives of this study are to find out the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 02 Bengkulu Selatan.

##### b. Significance of the research

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically.

##### a) Theoretical significance

Theoretically, this research can provide a reflection on how the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented in English language teaching. By implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, teachers must be more critical of curriculum issues. The researcher hopes that through this research it can make a theoretical contribution to the discipline of educational technology.

##### b) Practical significance

Practically, this research is expected to be a source of reference for readers to find out other issues in the Merdeka Curriculum and conduct other research.



## **E. Definition of Key Terms**

### **a. Kurikulum Merdeka**

Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning. For students to have sufficient time to explore and strengthen competencies so that the content provided can be optimized. Teachers have the flexibility to choose a variety of learning tools so that learning can be tailored to student needs and interests. In this study, Merdeka Curriculum is the new national curriculum introduced in Indonesia. This curriculum has officially been used by English teachers in Indonesia since 2021.

### **b. Implementing the Curriculum**

The process of implementing curriculum plans in the form of learning that involves student interaction with teachers in the context of the school environment both in the classroom and outside the classroom in this study teachers as curriculum implementers.