

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the study's background, problems, significance, objective, limitations and key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Education can help with all aspects of daily life, making it one of the most important things in life. Humans have experienced a transformation from the traditional era to the contemporary era. High-quality people are the key to a country's progress. Country cannot develop because it lacks of high-quality people. Education is main reason why country can create high-quality people. Without that, country is going to fall behind compared to other country. Therefore, the policy that are suitable to condition of Indonesia is policy about education.

The government aims to advance the life of the nation and create a society that believes and is devoted to God Almighty, has knowledge and skills, is physically and spiritually healthy, has an independent personality, and has a sense of social and national responsibility (UU RI, 2003). As a result, the government established new policies to raise the standard of education.

Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology, introduced the Merdeka Belajar policy. This policy gives educators and students the opportunity to organize the learning process independently. The freedom of students to choose how they want to learn, and

educators have the ability to structure lessons and conduct evaluations that show how students understand the material.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) declares that Merdeka Belajar policy has many advantages because it focuses on important material and builds students' abilities to get a more comprehensive, significant and enjoyable education while learning. He claims that in contrast to the 2013 curriculum, the autonomous curriculum employs the idea of “Merdeka Belajar”, and gives teachers, students and schools the opportunity to think creatively, innovate and learn independently.

The existence of this curriculum is a new challenge for educators. Teachers need to learn how to use it in learning. This new policy also has many pros and cons. The teacher's involvement is crucial to the learning process. It will impact students if they cannot adapt this curriculum. There are positive and negative perceptions about the new policy. Shaleh (2008:111) says that perception comes from experience, which is certainly different for each person. Teachers will be obsessed with implementing positive perceptions, but negative perceptions will create problems for new curriculum.

There are three previous studies to support this study. The results of study are similar with Adib Ahmada & Maulida Wafiq Azizah (2023). The study focused investigating on English teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum. The study conducted by using quantitative method to examine teachers' perception of implementing teaching tools in the Merdeka Curriculum. It was discovered that five teachers had extremely good perceptions, while four of them had good perceptions.

The study is also similar to Sholehuddin and Nabilah (2023), the analysis about how primary school teachers felt about the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. This study conducted by using descriptive qualitative approach. It was discovered that teachers' perception of the Merdeka Belajar policy are favorable.

This study is also similar to Triskia et al. (2023), was carried out to find out how teachers felt about the application of the Merdeka curriculum. They investigated by using descriptive quantitative research. From this study, the researchers found that the teachers' perspective of Merdeka curriculum's implementation favorably and acknowledge it.

The researcher would like to hold this study at MAN 2 Kota Kediri. Therefore, the researcher would like to conduct a study entitled “**English Teachers' Perception on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at MAN 2 KOTA KEDIRI**”.

B. Research Problem

What are the English teachers' perception on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Kediri?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems of the research above, this research is conducted to find out English teachers' perception about Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at MAN 2 Kota Kediri.

D. The Significance of the Study

The researcher consider can contribute in teaching and learning English, especially implementation of a new curriculum, in this case Merdeka Belajar. In addition, the teacher can use this research as media to develop their quality

in teaching and learning English. Furthermore, the research can be a reference for next researcher to gain more information about Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

E. The Scope and the Limitation

Based on the background of this research, it is important to state the scope and the limitation of this analysis. This study explores the perceptions of English teachers regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at MAN 2 KOTA KEDIRI. The research focused on three English teachers at this school. This study was limited by its small sample size, involving only three English teachers from MAN 2 KOTA KEDIRI.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. English Teacher

English Teacher is an educator that teaches English language in various educational level.

2. Perception

Perception is understanding and experiences related to their profession, students, and all of educational environment.

3. Merdeka Belajar

Merdeka Belajar is a new curriculum that established by Minister of Education. It is also refers as Merdeka Curriculum.