

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is to review some relevant theories underlying this study.

It includes various literature, there are:

A. Perception

Rakhmat (2012:50) says that perception is an experience of something, an event, or a relationship obtained through inferring and translating data. According to Leavitt in Sobur (2013:445), "narrow perception" is a perspective, or the way someone sees something. Meanwhile, "broad perception" refers to an awareness of one's own perspective and way of interpreting things. Slameto (2015: 102), is the process by which information enters the human brain. Through senses such as hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste, humans continue to interact with their environment. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Alngulya (2016:30-31) there are three components of perception: selection, interpretation, and behavior.

According to Tewel et al. (2017, p. 103), perception-forming factors consist of the person who forms the perception, the object or goal being perceived, and the situation or context in which the perception occurs.

Tewel et al. (2017) differentiates these factors into three categories:

- a. A person's sources of perception, interests, experiences, and expectations can influence how they understand things.

- b. The perceived target. The perceiver will use other objects to judge the perceived object. For example, when a student talks too loudly in class, they are considered or perceived to be talking too loudly because their friends around them are making quiet sounds.
- c. Perception results are greatly impacted by context and circumstance, which includes light, temperature, location or others element. Such of a person wearing a stunning attire to an evening party. Even though her dress was beautiful, she didn't catch everyone's attention because she walked into a place where everyone was wearing party clothes too. If someone wears a party dress to school, a different reaction will be received. If someone wears a school uniform, he or she will be the center of attention of many people.

B. Merdeka Belajar

- a. Definition of Merdeka Belajar

Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim proposed a policy known as "Merdeka Belajar". To better understand this idea, we will explain the words "Merdeka" and "Belajar".

The word "Merdeka" means to freedom in English. According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, independence does not depend on other parties. In other words, someone who frees himself from limitations. According to Hasnawati, Merdeka Belajar is when students are given the opportunity to study in a comfortable atmosphere. Then, they can develop their hobbies and passions without any pressure (Hasnawati, 2021).

Sagala (2006) defines learning as an effort or activity carried out to gain intelligence. And learning is not only understanding fact and remembering. Learning involves observing, reading, imitating, trying things independently, and listening to follow directions.

So, a classroom environment where students may express themselves without confronting any barriers, including psychological stress, is what aim of *Merdeka Belajar* to develop.

b. Purpose of Merdeka Belajar

The goal of Merdeka Belajar is to give students and teachers more autonomy. The objective is to produce individuals who are more humane. The development of human aspect is the primary goal of education. In order to accomplish the purpose, students are expected to actively participate as responsible creature for people and their surrounding (Idris & Tabrani, 2017). Humanizing education seeks to enable students to explore their potential, such as the spiritual and emotional capabilities, in addition to acquiring their intellectual skills.

The main purpose of the Merdeka Belajar concept is to prioritize the principle of freedom. Then, teachers and students are allowed the freedom to explore their capacities for creativity, creating and innovation. Hence, it is important to understand that education is a concept that intends to mold and develop each individual's potentation.

Based on the previous explanation, education not only aims to develop intellectual capacity, yet also contributes to examining each

students' potential. Therefore, the education system needs to pay attention to the value of balance and establish autonomous system.

c. Learning System of Merdeka Belajar

Several explanations support the existence of the Merdeka Belajar policy, also referred as the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Nadiem Makarim, the country's current Minister of Education and Culture, claims (Ainia, 2020), Merdeka Belajar Curriculum aims to improve children's thinking skills, free students to learn outside the classroom, and shape students' characters to be more independent in behavior, socialize, and be more courageous in expressing opinions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the government created the independent learning curriculum as a means for students to develop their interests and talents, especially in the context of learning at school.

The Merdeka Belajar learning framework shifts the focus to the relationship between teachers and students. In this framework, students no longer see the teacher as the sole authority for truth. Instead, there is a collaborative effort between students and teachers to explore and discover truth together. This highlights the fact that an teachers' job in classroom to investigate students' perspectives, analytical skills, and critical viewpoints on the world and various phenomena, rather than imposing the truth as told by teacher. Utilizing technology and internet advances play an important role in facilitating independent learning, breaking free from the constraints imposed by traditional education systems that can limit freedom. This approach also involves

reorganizing the administrative tasks that traditionally dominate the responsibilities of teachers and educational institutions. As a result, educational institutions, teachers and students have the chance to try new things, pick up skills on their own and be creative (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

The Merdeka Belajar Policy is a directive that the government of the Republic of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has released. It acts as a roadmap for enhancing the current educational system in order to raise the standard of instruction. This is accomplished by allowing educators and learners to select a curriculum based on their personal tastes and passions. In addition, the program aims to improve the creative performance of teachers and students.

d. Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

The implementation of curriculum development policies will determine how the planning, implementation and evaluation of education is carried out. The curriculum provides a planned and a clear direction for educational policies. The correct education policy will be seen through the implementation of the curriculum that is applied because “the curriculum is the heart of education”.

In Merdeka Belajar concept, there are several things that must be studied further such as simplification of curriculum, implementation of national exam, simplification of lesson plan (RPP), and teacher profession.

First is simplification of curriculum. The main reason of simplifying curriculum is to create a curriculum more relevant so that competence of education graduates in accordance with the demands of the times.

Second, implementation of national exam. The implementation of national exam is heavy by schools, not only students but also teachers. Schools spend many time to prepare national exam especially before the implementation. Moreover, it must reach national standards as learning success. Minister of Education decides to delete national exam, changed with education and character assessment.

Third, simplification of lesson plan (RPP). The previous lesson plan contains of 10-13 components. Then, in Merdeka Belajar only changed into 3 components such as objective, activity, and assessment. The objective of lesson plan making is to give chance to teacher in planning interactive learning, that suitable with students need.

One of policy from Minister of Education is Merdeka Belajar, the other 3 policy started from 2021 such as there are no national exam and changed into minimum competency assessment and character survey which is done in the midst of school level, simplification of lesson plan, and regulation for accepting new student.

The concept of Merdeka Belajar by Nadiem Makarim is encouraged because his wish creating happy learning atmosphere without burdened to score achievement or certain score. The main points of the Ministry of Education and Culture's policy were contained

in a presentation before the heads of provincial education, districts/cities throughout Indonesia, Jakarta, on December 11, 2019.

There are 4 policy points by Ministry of Education and Culture as following:

1. National exam will be changed by Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey. This assessment emphasizes literacy reasoning skills and numeric which is based on PISA test best practices. It is different with National Exam which is carried out in the end of school level, this assessment is carried out on class 4, 8, and 11. The results hoped to be advice for schools to fix the next learning process before students finish their study.
2. National standard school exam will be given to school. According to Ministry of Education and Culture, school is given a freedom in deciding assessment form, such as portofolio, papers, or other assignment form.
3. Simplification of Lesson Plan (RPP). According to Nadiem Makarim, Lesson plan is only made one page. Through administrative simplification, It is hoped that teacher's time in administration can be diverted to learning activities and increasing competence.
4. In Accepting of New Students (PPDB), zoning system is widen (except 3T: *tertinggal, terdepan, dan terluar*). For

students that through affirmation and achievement, given more chance from PPDB system. Regional government is given authority literally to decide this zoning area.

e. Implementation of Merdeka Belajar

Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, 2022), the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented on a limited basis in 2,499 educational units that are members of the Mover Schools and 901 Excellent Program SMKs. Of these, 75% are public schools and the rest are private schools. This limited implementation is carried out evenly in schools of varying quality. There are several changes and differences in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum compared to the previous curriculum, especially at the Senior High School (SMA) level. The SMA/MA curriculum structure consists of two phases, namely Phase E for grade X and Phase F for grade XI and grade XII. This curriculum structure is divided into two parts, namely;

- a. Intra curricular learning; and
- b. Project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students allocated about 30% (thirty percent) of total JP (Lesson Hours) per annum.

The implementation of the Pancasila student profile strengthening project is carried out with flexibility, both in terms of content and time. In terms of content, the project must refer to the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile according to the student's phase, and does not need to be associated with course learning outcomes. Regarding

implementation time, projects can be carried out by combining the allocation of lesson hours from various subjects, and the duration of each project does not have to be the same (Kepmendikbudristek, 2022).

Teachers are not obliged to use the thematic approach, but are given the freedom to use it in the context of the subject. Based on the Learning and Assessment Guidebook, the selection of learning approaches must consider the stage and level of student development. Therefore, teachers can apply various learning approaches during the learning process.

The government determines the learning load for each subject in lesson hours (JP) per year. Education units have flexibility in organizing weekly time allocations throughout the school year. Based on the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology No. 162/M/2021, the learning load for grade 10 SMA is assumed to be 36 weeks per year, with 1 lesson hour (JP) lasting 45 minutes. This arrangement aims to make learning more meaningful, provide students with more effective learning time, and allow focus on achieving competencies without excessive material pressure. However, the intracurricular JP allocation per week is still given to assist teachers in designing curriculum and learning. In addition, according to the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECristek) Regulation No. 56/M/2022, English subjects are allocated a maximum of 2 JP per week.

In its implementation, some terms have changed. Based on Permendikbud Number 22 of 2016, there is an explanation of several terms used in the 2013 Curriculum, including lesson plans (RPP), syllabus, core competencies (KI), and basic competencies (KD), with the following details:

- 1) Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) is a plan of face-to-face learning activities for one or more meetings.
- 2) Syllabus is a guide for preparing learning frameworks on each subject topic.
- 3) Core competencies are general descriptions of the competencies that students must master in terms of attitudes, knowledge, and skills for each school level, grade, and subject.
- 4) Basic competencies are specific abilities that include attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to certain materials or subjects.

In addition, according to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), there are several definitions of terms such as teaching module, flow of learning objectives (ATP), learning outcomes (CP), and learning objectives (TP) and their explanations as follows:

- 1) A teaching module is a document that contains learning objectives, steps, media, and assessments

required in a unit or topic based on the flow of learning objectives.

- 2) The flow of learning objectives (ATP) is a sequence of Learning Outcomes arranged systematically and logically in the learning process so that students can achieve these Learning Outcomes.
- 3) Learning outcomes (CP) are competencies that must be achieved by students at each stage of learning.
- 4) Learning objectives (TP) are descriptions of the achievement of the three aspects of competence, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which students acquire in one or more learning activities.

From this explanation, there is a similarity in meaning between the definitions of existing terms. It can be concluded that in the Merdeka Curriculum, there is no change in the learning tools themselves, only the naming of the terms is changed. For example, the syllabus becomes learning objectives, Core Competencies (KI) become learning outcomes, Basic Competencies (KD) become learning objectives, and Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) become learning modules.

According to the Learning and Assessment Guidebook (2022), there are several terms that explain the understanding of learning in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. These terms include learning

principles and learning adapted to the stages of students. First, learning principles include five main points:

- 1) Learning is designed with attention to students' current stage of development and level of achievement. Learning must be tailored to students' needs, and reflect their characteristics and various aspects of development, so that the learning process becomes meaningful and enjoyable. At this stage, educators try to understand students' learning readiness, so that learning can be designed according to their developmental stage. In addition, learning is designed to create a pleasant experience, which brings out positive emotions in students.
- 2) Learning is designed and implemented to develop students' capacity to become lifelong learners. Educators encourage students to actively participate, build an independent attitude in learning. Educators also encourage students to reflect so that they understand their strengths and areas that need to be developed. Finally, educators use open-ended questions that stimulate deep thinking.
- 3) The learning process supports the comprehensive development of students' competencies and character. In this case, educators use various learning methods, such as inquiry-based learning, projects, problems, as well as

differentiated learning to help students develop competencies. Educators also reflect on their own processes and attitudes to serve as positive role models and inspiration for students. In addition, educators provide feedback (both appreciation and correction) by referring to the profile of Pancasila learners.

- 4) Relevant learning is learning that is designed according to the context, environment and culture of students, and involves parents or the community as partners. Educators organise learning according to students' needs and relate it to the real world, environment and culture that interests them. Educators also design interactive learning that facilitates planned, structured, integrated and productive interactions between educators and students, between students, and between students and learning resources. Finally, educators empower local communities, societies, organisations and experts from various professions as resource persons to enrich and promote relevant learning.
- 5) Learning that is orientated towards a sustainable future. Educators seek to integrate the concept of sustainable living into various learning activities, by instilling values and behaviours that show concern for the environment and the future of the earth. For example, using resources wisely (such as saving water and electricity) and reducing

waste. In addition, educators engage students in finding solutions to everyday problems that are appropriate to their stage of learning. Educators also utilise projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila learners to build students' character and competence as future global citizens. In short, educators guide students to become independent and responsible for their learning, work and projects, both in the present life and in the future. Thus, students understand that the future belongs to them and they need to take roles and responsibilities for their future.

Referring to the learning principles in points one and three, the learning process must be adjusted to the stage of development and competence of students. Therefore, the Merdeka Curriculum strengthens the use of a differentiated learning approach. According to the Merdeka Curriculum Learning and Assessment Guidebook, differentiated learning is an approach that provides learning materials in various ways according to student understanding. The purpose of this learning is for each student to achieve the expected learning objectives. Educators can choose learning strategies that match student achievement levels, design special approaches, or group students. Here is the explanation:

- 1) Small group learning, where educators can group students based on their interests.
- 2) Grouping based on abilities that vary according to the competencies that each student excels in.

- 3) For advanced students, more diverse challenges should be considered.
- 4) Students can choose various roles to enrich or deepen their competence. For example, at the beginning of the school year, teachers invite students to discuss the roles needed, and each role can be taken by students in turn.

According to the Learning and Assessment Manual, there are several aspects of learning that educators can differentiate, namely based on the content/material, process and products produced by students. In differentiating the learning process, educators can choose one or a combination of these three aspects. The following is an example of differentiated learning:

1) Content/material (taught material):

- a. For students who need guidance, they can focus on the three main part of the material.
- b. For students who are advanced enough, they can study all the material.
- c. Students who are already advanced can be given additional material for enrichment.

2) Process (how to teach):

- a. For students who need guidance, educators need to provide direct teaching.

- b. For students who are advanced enough, learning can begin with modeling combined with independent work, practice and review.
- c. For very advanced students can be given independent assignments.

3) Product (results to be produced):

- a. For students who need guidance, they can be asked to answer questions related to the content or important aspects of the material.
- b. For students who are advanced enough, they can make presentations explaining simple problem solving.
- c. Advanced students can innovate or analyze more complex problems.

According to the learning assessment manual, there are trigger questions. The questions asked are also linked to the core components. In addition, according to Pandu (2023), trigger questions are questions that increase listener participation and allow listeners to start the topic being discussed. According to Iqbal (2022), the use of trigger questions during the learning process can stimulate students' cognitive abilities, test their abilities, and convey the ideas they want to convey. In this case, trigger questions play an important role for students. This has a very positive impact on the learning process.

C. Previous Study

There are several previous studies that support this research. First is Adib Ahmada (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 teacher had extremely good perceptions, while four of them had good perceptions.

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

This study is also similar to Triskia et al. (2023), they conducted to to know teachers feel about the use of the Merdeka Curriculum. They investigated by using descriptive quantitative research. From this study, the researcher showed that teachers' had a positive opinion of and appreciation for the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation.

There are differences between previous study and this study that can be seen in the subject and objective of the research. The research "English Teachers' Perception on Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 2 KOTA KEDIRI" has main focus on what teachers perception and how they dealing in the class with various challenges and also the subject is limited for English teacher. The similarities between the study and researcher focus on teachers' perception on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum