# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

In the initial chapter, researcher elaborates on the explanation related to the background of the study, statement of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations, and definitions of key terms.

## A. Background of the Study

Curriculum development is an important aspect in facing globalization and technological advancements. In Indonesia, the education system has undergone various changes to remain relevant to the challenges of future generations. Several policies in 2013 Curriculum, such as the dense learning materials, require adherence to a coherent structure. Therefore, a simplification is necessary to allow teachers to prioritize essential content and adapt lessons according to the abilities and interests of students (Elitasari et al., 2023). Additionally, 2013 Curriculum assumes that students are similar and establishes Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) that rigidly assess students based on exam scores (Azita et al., 2023). This policy has also been evaluated, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the uniqueness and diversity of students. Notably, the evaluation of the national examination as the main assessment has been replaced with more holistic formative assessments, allowing students to engage in deeper learning. Thus, curriculum development aims to prepare students to be adaptive individuals in an ever-changing global era.

As a further step in improving the education system, the government

introduced Merdeka Curriculum as an initiative to address the weaknesses of Curriculum 2013 while responding to the challenges of education in the digital era. The main factor behind the launch of the Merdeka Curriculum was in response to the loss of learning time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of providing a more flexible and responsive educational framework (Pradesa & Rahma, 2023). Under the leadership of Nadiem Makarim, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, this policy was announced through Ministerial Decree No. 56/M/2022 as an option for schools ready to implement it. The curriculum changes in Indonesia are adjusted to the continuously evolving social, economic, and technological dynamics and are expected to provide solutions to various educational challenges (Yunita & Widodo, 2023). As an evaluation and enhancement of 2013 Curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes a student-centered approach, creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills, helping students recognize their unique potential (Pradesa & Rahma, 2023). The integration of technology has become a crucial component in learning, supporting teachers in utilizing innovative methods. Thus, Merdeka Curriculum serves not only as an enhancement of the previous curriculum but also as a response to the need for more relevant and innovative education in the digital era.

Understanding the roots of Merdeka Curriculum provides insight into its core principles and intentions. Building on this foundation, Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes a flexible, student-centered educational approach. This curriculum is designed to encourage learners and educators to be independent and adaptable. It

comprises three main learning activities: intraculicular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning. Teaching and learning activities carried out in the classroom are examples of intra-curricular activities at school, while co-curricular activities are activities carried out to support them for developing *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, and extracurricular activities with various choices that offer students according to their interests or talents (Negro et al., 2024).

According to Suari et al., 2023 and Asrianti et al., 2024 Merdeka Curriculum implements various teaching strategies to enhance learning quality. Including the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) that focuses on text comprehension and writing skills, Project-Based Learning (PJBL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) that encourage students to create real projects and solve problems, then Discovery Learning, which invites students to actively explore. Besides the last one, Inquiry-Based Learning focus on learning by emphasizing and encouraging independent research. With this strategy, Merdeka Curriculum creates an innovative learning environment that is responsive to students' needs.

However, the success of Merdeka Curriculum is contingent upon various factors influencing its implementation. This independent curriculum is characterized by three primary categories: *Mandiri Belajar*, *Mandiri Berubah* and *Mandiri Berbagi*. Some of the important elements that influence implementation include the preparedness and professional development of teachers, access to adequate resources and infrastructure, and strong governmental support (Muhammad & Zaitun, 2023). Without continuous training, educators may struggle to adopt effective teaching methods aligned with the curriculum's

principles. Additionally, schools that do not have adequate resources and technology will face challenges in implementing this curriculum. Evaluate and procurement cost are needed to support schools in dealing with these changes. There should also be regular evaluations to identify barriers and improvements in the implementation process.

Some previous studies, such as Lestari (2023), which utilize a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the perspectives and challenges faced by English teachers in curriculum implementation, highlighting aspects like material flexibility, student-centered learning, and comprehension focus. Additionally, previous research by Anisah & Qamariah (2023) employs library research to examine the role of teachers in implementing the curriculum, emphasizing lesson planning and innovative strategies such as using games, role play, jigsaw, etc. The third study by Sari & Muamaroh (2024), this research uses a case study method that focuses on the teaching strategies used by English teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum in Senior High School. The strategies include CERIA (Choose, Explore, Resume, Inform, Apply) technique, Quizzes using different tasks and jigsaw method for collaborative learning.

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emphasis on lesson planning and innovative strategies such as the use of games, role-playing, jigsaw, and so on. The third study by Sari & Muamaroh (2024) used a case study method that focused on the teaching strategies used by English teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in senior high schools. These strategies included the CERIA technique (Choose, Explore, Summarize, Inform, Apply), quizzes with different tasks, and the jigsaw method for collaborative learning.

Previous studies share a common focus on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the challenges faced in English language teaching. However, there are differences in scope and context. Lestari (2023) research provides a broader picture, while Anisah & Qamariah (2023) focus on the general role of teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, without discussing the specific strategies used by English teachers. Similarly, Sari & Muamaroh (2024) conducted a case study, focusing on teaching techniques and challenges. Additionally, regarding the research approach used, Lestari (2023) employed a descriptive qualitative approach, while Anisah & Qamariah (2023) adopted a library research approach. On the other hand, Sari & Muamaroh (2024) applied a case study approach.

For comparison, this study also uses a case study approach. The purpose of this study is to highlight teaching strategies and challenges in classroom management in English lessons. The uniqueness of this study lies in its emphasis on the real experiences of teachers and the local context, providing deep insights into how teaching strategies and challenges in the implementation of the Merdeka

Curriculum occur in a specific secondary school environment. This study is titled **"Strategies and Challenges of English Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Kediri."**

B. **Statement of the Study**

1. How do English teachers at Islamic High Schools in Kediri apply teaching strategies to implement Merdeka Curriculum?

2. What challenges do English teachers at Islamic High Schools in Kediri face when implementing Merdeka Curriculum?

3. How do English teachers at Islamic High Schools in Kediri deal with the challenges in implementing Merdeka Curriculum?

C. **Purposes of the study**

Based on the statements of the study mentioned above, this study aims to investigate in depth the strategies of English teachers at Islamic High Schools in Kediri in implementing Merdeka Curriculum. It also explores the concrete challenges they faced and their solutions adopt. This investigation is expected to provide better insight into curriculum implementation at Senior High School level.

D. **Significance of the Study**

1. The Teachers

The researcher hopes that the result can give contribute into effective teaching strategies for implementing Merdeka Curriculum in English language learning, equipping them with innovative approaches to improve

teaching practices and enhance student learning outcomes.

2. The Students

This research may revolutionize students' learning experience by introducing more interactive and diverse teaching strategies. This not only increases their interest and participation in English classes, but also develops essential skills and knowledge, leading to improved academic performance and holistic growth.

3. The Researcher

This study is able to serve as a basis for future researchers to explore effective and innovative strategies in adapting Merdeka Curriculum to the needs of diverse students. Future researchers can also investigate how teachers' strategies and challenges in implementing assessments in Merdeka Curriculum.

**E. Scope and Limitation**

This research focuses on strategies and challenges in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at Islamic High Schools in Kediri. The researcher limits the challenges and solution to those related to classroom management. Choosing to focus on classroom management issues is based on the importance of classroom management as the foundation for the success of teaching strategies. Classroom management often involves unpredictable dynamics. Therefore, focusing on it allows this study to explore more fundamental challenges, provide practical contributions, and ensure the optimal implementation of teaching strategies.

While the strategies pertain to teaching strategies in English Class.

**F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstandings, it is important to define important terms. Some terms that will be discussed in this research should be defined as follows:

1. Merdeka Curriculum

   This curriculum was developed to give schools, teachers and students more freedom in determining learning content, methods, media and assessment. With this freedom, this curriculum provides greater flexibility in encouraging educational creativity and innovation. This flexibility allows for better customization to local needs, student interests and the times.

2. Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

   The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum involves applying its principles and structures, requiring teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, lesson plans, and assessment methods to meet curriculum objectives. It emphasizes to project-based learning, allowing teachers to adapt their methods based on student needs. This student-centered approach focuses on character development, promoting active engagement and holistic student growth.

3. Teaching Strategy

   Refers to the various methods, certain techniques or approaches used by teachers to deliver subject matter to students. This includes how the teachers convey information, organize classroom activities, facilitate discussions, provide feedback, and adapt learning according to student needs.

4. Challenges

   Challenges refer to obstacles or difficulties experienced by teachers and students in the process of implementing Merdeka Curriculum. These include problems related to classroom management. It is important to identify the challenges for the success of Merdeka Curriculum, teaching, and learning experience itself.

5. Solutions

   Solutions refer to efforts or steps taken by teachers to overcome challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This includes strategies, adjustments, or innovations that aim to improve teaching and learning effectiveness. The identification of solutions is essential to support the successful implementation of the curriculum, create a conducive learning environment, and ensure the achievement of educational goals.