

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter is the introduction. This chapter contains the background of the study, research problem, research objective, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the study

Education in Indonesia has undergone various curriculum changes, these changes are intended to improve the education system in Indonesia. The latest curriculum change is Merdeka Curriculum which replaces the previous curriculum, namely K-13. A curriculum can be understood as the goals and strategies for learning, aiming to realize those goals through developed materials, social relationships, and structured techniques within the school environment (Wahyudin, 2016; Jauhari et al, 2017). This proves that the curriculum is not only an educational formality in the form of documents but also a bridge to achieve learning goals. The curriculum can also create more effective learning by paying attention to several things such as the use of media and the selection of relevant materials, good communication, and also the use of appropriate methods. The curriculum in schools has a role as a reference or guideline in teaching and learning activities so that students can achieve learning objectives. In addition to the media, the learning material delivered by external factors such as communication between students, teachers and parents is one of the supporters of the realization of curriculum implementation. Thus, the curriculum not only acts as an academic guide, but also as a framework for building student competence and character holistically.

Merdeka Curriculum was launched by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Nadiem Makarim on February 11th 2022. With the change of the existing curriculum in Indonesia, it is necessary to adapt to the implementation of the new curriculum, namely Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation on the Merdeka Curriculum in the lower grades of primary schools brings significant educational changes, along with expectations and challenges Ndari et al., (2023). This curriculum aims to provide a more flexible and relevant framework for teaching, focusing on essential materials and character development. It emphasizes project-based learning to enhance soft skills and competencies aligned with the Pancasila student profile. Additionally, the curriculum allows for differentiated instruction, enabling teachers to adapt their methods to the diverse needs of students. As part of this initiative, schools are encouraged to assess their readiness for implementing the curriculum, which was designed to address learning loss experienced during the pandemic. The flexibility in curriculum design is intended to foster a more engaging and meaningful learning experience for students. Furthermore, the government supports schools through training and resources to ensure effective implementation. Overall, Merdeka Curriculum represents a significant shift in educational practices aimed at improving student outcomes across Indonesia. Many things must be considered with curriculum changes, this concerns many parties, such as students, teachers, schools and everything related to education.

Ningrum (2022) stated that Merdeka Curriculum focuses on developing a creative attitude and creating a pleasant learning atmosphere for students. This curriculum not only focuses on achieving academic results, but also seeks to nurture students' individual potential based on their interests and talents. In its implementation, Merdeka Curriculum

gives teachers the freedom to design learning that is relevant to the needs and characteristics of students, so that the learning process becomes more meaningful. With this approach, students are expected to be more active, creative, and involved in learning activities. In addition, a pleasant learning atmosphere also aims to increase student motivation, so that they are more enthusiastic about developing their potential. This approach is in line with the vision of education that emphasizes diversity and flexibility. Merdeka Curriculum also encourages learning that is more personalized and adaptive to the times. Thus, students can grow into individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have relevant life skills for the future.

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia has not been able to be implemented optimally in several existing schools due to lack of knowledge about Merdeka Curriculum and also the need for technology in schools that are not supportive in implementing Merdeka Curriculum. Although Merdeka Curriculum has been officially established in Indonesia, this change has made several schools in Indonesia have to adapt to the new curriculum. In practice, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is not always carried out optimally. Some teachers still experience difficulties in understanding curriculum concepts, designing teaching modules, implementing differentiated learning, and determining appropriate assessment strategies. Differences in teachers' backgrounds, teaching experiences, training opportunities, and school facilities also influence the level of readiness in implementing the curriculum.

Therefore, it is important to explore teachers' readiness in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at school. This study focuses on exploring teacher readiness in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in terms of curriculum understanding, lesson planning, learning processes, assessment practices, and supporting facilities.

Some previous studies similar to this study are: a research written by Waruwu entitled "English Teachers' Perception of Merdeka Curriculum Implementation" published on March 1, 2024, a research written by Lestari entitled "The English Teacher's Perspective and Challenge on Implementing Merdeka Curriculum" published on December 31, 2023. The research has similarities in discussing the Merdeka curriculum and English teachers' toward Merdeka curriculum, but this research has a different focus to analyzing the readiness of teachers from before teaching to the end of learning.

There are several reasons why the author took this topic, the first is because the curriculum is a benchmark for success in education, the author aims to determine the level of teacher readiness for the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, the author also focuses on the readiness of teachers because teachers are key in learning activities. The second is the author wants to know how effective the implementation of the new curriculum is in the world of Education. Because Merdeka Curriculum is called a better curriculum than the previous curriculum, the author wants to find out whether its application in teaching and learning activities does have a significant effect on student understanding and the convenience of teachers in teaching. And the reason why the author chose MTsN 7 Kediri is because this school is one of the schools that has implemented the Merdeka curriculum since the establishment of the Merdeka curriculum, and the teachers are experienced teachers in the Merdeka curriculum.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the author purpose questions “How is the readiness of English Teachers’ of MTsN 7 Kediri?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the research problem above, the author decides the objective of the study: to know the Readiness of English teachers of MTsN 7 Kediri.

D. Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical
 - a. The results of this research are expected to be materials that can increase knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum.
 - b. The results of this study can play a role in the study of English teachers' readiness for the Merdeka Curriculum.
2. Practical
 - a. For teacher : This study can serve as a reflection for English teachers to assess their readiness for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.
 - b. For student : With well-prepared teachers, it is hoped that students will have an engaging and innovative learning experience.
 - c. For School : The results of this research can help schools analyze the challenges and resource needs needed so that schools can make improvements in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum.
 - d. For further author : In addition to analyzing the experience of English teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum, further research can expand this research by examining the relationship between teacher readiness and student learning outcomes.

E. Scope and Limitation

This research conducted at MTsN 7 Kediri and analyze the Readiness of English Teachers in implementing Merdeka Curriculum in the school. This research will focus on implementation Merdeka Curriculum. This research involve several teachers to obtain and analyze English teachers' readiness in implementing Merdeka Curriculum. The weakness of this research in the research subjects only focus on the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Teaching process based on English teachers' readiness.

F. Definition of Key term

1. Curriculum

curriculum is a guide designed to carry out the learning process so that students can achieve their learning goals. The curriculum can also be used as a reference for an educator to convey material and strategies in the learning process. The curriculum also serves as a guideline in assessing student learning outcomes.

2. Merdeka curriculum

new curriculum that gives educators the freedom to use strategies and methods tailored to students' learning needs. Merdeka Curriculum also prioritizes technology. So, Merdeka Curriculum is structured to face existing global challenges. Through the Merdeka curriculum, the teaching and learning process can be adjusted to the needs of each student and school.

3. Implementation

Implementation is the act of a plan that has been prepared in advance. In education, implementation is the process of implementing a design called a curriculum to achieve the goals that have been set. Implementation is a real action that is carried out in a structured manner from an idea and idea that has been made before.

4. Teachers' Readiness

Conditions that indicate teachers' readiness in terms of knowledge and skills in dealing with new curricula such as the Merdeka curriculum.

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