CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter is the introduction. In this chapter, the researcher explains the background of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and the limitation and definition of terms.

A. Background of the Study

For the past two years, COVID-19 virus has attacked the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. Stated by WHO in A'yun (A'yun, 2021), pandemic is known as a new disease which is widespread around the world. The virus forced people to be socially distant by keeping distance at least one meter from each other and wearing masks (Siste et al., 2020). Hence, they cannot interact freely as usual, and most of their activities are hampered. All of the activities change in online mode, such as meeting, learning, and conference. This also happens to education program. Students and teachers hold learning and teaching processes via online using Zoom, Google Meet and other platforms.

The impact of online learning is learning loss. The Education and Development Forum cited by Cerelia gives meaning to learning loss is when the students lose their knowledge and skill. In the other words, there is a regression in academic due to there being no learning process (Cerelia et al., 2021). In launching Kurikulum Merdeka, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemdikbudristek), Nadiem Makarim also added that Indonesian students lost for six months (Kemendikbud RI, 2022). The effect of learning loss is the student is tough to understand simple reading and

the concept of knowledge.

The condition of learning loss is also supported by data from Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). It is a study to evaluate the education system of 79 countries in the world. This test is built by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It aims to evaluate the education system in reading literacy, mathematics and science literacy for students who are 15-years-old. They are not tested from theory but how to implement their knowledge into real life. Not only the test, but they also have a questionnaire that has to be answered by students and the headmaster (Balitbang Kemendikbud, 2019). The Research and Development Agency and Books Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Balitbang) released the score for Indonesia as a participant of PISA 2018. The result is Indonesia occupies the 10th lowest position of 79 countries that joined PISA. This condition is a sign that education in Indonesia should be improved.

Based on the analysis conducted by (Jojor & Sihotang, 2022), learning loss is caused by some causes, such as education environment, national education standard, and teacher. Due to social distancing restrictions, people have to keep their distance from each other. Consequently, the learning process in the school changes into online learning. This condition is rare in Indonesia because teachers and students cannot gather directly. Whereas if the teaching process takes place in person, students will be more excited to study at school. Nevertheless, their learning teaching process forces them to see the screen for a long time. Moreover, if they live in a non-conducive

environment, it will affect students' inconvenience for studying.

The second cause is the national education standard. The previous curriculum is considered too many learning achievements to get. However, online learning is considered less effective to achieve that. Moreover, the condition is supported by inadequate infrastructure so that the students have a lack of understanding.

Beside school conditions and educational standards, teachers have a role in the learning success. Pandemic challenges the teacher to create innovative ways in teaching the learning process for students. Online learning usually uses online platforms to support the study, for instance online websites, conference applications like Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Team. The problem that needs to be concerned is there is a lack of teachers who do not have proper capability in technology (Jojor & Sihotang, 2022).

Indonesia is an archipelagic state. It is a challenge to conduct online learning evenly. Some regions in Indonesia do not have internet access. As cited by Arkiang from Kemdikbudristek (Arkiang, 2021), there are 31,8% area that does not have internet access while 7,1% area has not had electricity. In the same way, the teachers and students complain the cost for internet quota is quite expensive.

Based on the problems above, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemdikbudristek), Nadiem Makarim takes action to create a new curriculum named Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum). Based on the *Buku Saku Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka*, Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with varied intracurricular learning, where the

content will be more optimized, so that it allows the students more opportunity to explore concepts and strengthen their competencies (Kemdikbud, 2022). He stated that this curriculum is a learning loss recovery which Indonesian students experienced during pandemic.

Process of learning in Kurikulum Merdeka applies the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach. This approach helps to achieve a goal named Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profiles), the abilities and characters that national education seeks to foster in students in achieving Pancasila values (Nurhayati et al., 2022). This project trains the students to analyze a problem in life and find the problem solving collaboratively. The role of teacher is assisting them to create their project (Rachmawati et al., 2022). Sudibjo agreed that project-based learning and collaborative learning are suitable for learning in the digital era (Sudibjo et al., 2019).

However, the school has obligation to adopt this curriculum or still uses the previous curriculum, such as Kurikulum 2013 or Kurikulum Darurat (the simple version of Kurikulum 2013) (*Dorong Pemulihan Pembelajaran Di Masa Pandemi, Kurikulum Nasional Siapkan Tiga Opsi*, 2021). It depends on the readiness of every school. If the school is willing to use Kurikulum Merdeka for their students, the headmaster can register their school. In summary, there is no compulsion to implement this curriculum immediately.

Curriculum is one of the most strategic components of education. According to Hamanik as cited by Wasimin, a curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and methods that guide the implementation of learning activities to accomplish specific educational goals

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(Wasimin, 2022). Also, the curriculum has an essential position to shape a better future for students. According to Campbell, education is the foundation of a successful career, financial freedom, the ability to think and reason critically and to make informed decisions. For education to be of great value, curriculum should be implemented (Campbel, 2020). According to Aslan and Wahyudin as cited by Khoiriyah (Khoiriyah, 2022), curriculum changes depend on the present need. The previous curriculum is regarded unsuitable with current times. It means the curriculum is dynamic and adapts to the needs of the future.

Kurikulum Merdeka is a strategy from the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology to shape human resources who are ready to fight for industry 4.0 (Yuhastina et al., 2020). Mentioned by Sudibjo, characteristics of industry 4.0 are digitalization, information transparency, connectivity and automatism (Sudibjo et al., 2019). This era is closely associated with the use of technology, providing people access to anything they desire.

In this globalization age, people will converge and interact with various people in the world. In communication, they need an international language, which is English. It is undeniable that English is essential worldwide. This is the initial capital to reach other worlds. This statement is in line with Cahyo. He stated that English is a need to be a global citizen (Cahyo et al., 2019). Hence, teaching English is crucial.

In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. It means that English is not a primary language (Cahyo et al., 2019). This is challenging for

teachers to give the best English teaching for the students. Moreover, Indonesia has Kurikulum Merdeka as a new curriculum.

Therefore, the researcher would like to hold a study. From this problem, the researcher would like to conduct a study entitled **"The Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in Teaching English for Seventh Grade at SMPN 3 Kediri"**.

B. **Research Problem**

As mentioned in the background study, the researcher attempts to understand the implementation of the new curriculum in Indonesia. Thus, the research problem is "**how is the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in teaching English for Seventh Grade at SMPN 3 Kediri?**".

C. **Objectives of the Study**

The researcher will consider the objective of the study is to describe the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in teaching English for seventh grade at SMPN 3 Kediri.

D. **The Significance of the Study**

1. The Teacher

From the study, the researcher hopes that the result can give information in depth about Kurikulum Merdeka. Moreover, the teacher can use this research as media to develop their quality in teaching and learning English activity.

2. The Students

The students can recognize the function of curriculum in their learning process, in this case Kurikulum Merdeka. In addition, the study

can help them to improve themself in learning English and character. As a result, they can prepare for the future globalization.

3. The Researcher

From this study, the researcher hopes that she can contribute in teaching English, especially the implementation of a new curriculum, in this case Kurikulum Merdeka. In addition, the study can be considered to promote new insight related to the implementation of curriculum.

E. The Scope and the Limitation

The study's scope of the study is about the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in teaching English. This study concerns the teaching learning process using Kurikulum Merdeka. The researcher limits the study on seventh grade classes at SMPN 3 Kediri due to the policy from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Indonesia.

F. Definition of Terms

To make the study clearer, the researcher creates the definition of each keyword. Here is the list of some definitions:

1. Implementation

The researcher defines the implementation as the execution of a new plan into action. Thus, a plan is not just theory but it has to be realized into real life.

2. Teaching English

Teaching English is the process to transfer knowledge about English from teacher to students. Teacher is the instructor of the teaching learning process. This activity usually happens inside or outside the

classroom.

3. Kurikulum Merdeka

       The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum designed to concentrate on essential materials and character development to achieve the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P3). For English teaching and learning, this curriculum adapts a genre-based approach. Different from the previous curriculum, Kemendikbud makes its material more compact so that the students will learn essential material.