

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the researcher presents related to the study. Those are the background of the study, formulation of research problems, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

The Indonesian government places a high priority on education, because it believes that producing high-quality educational materials will help Indonesia keep growing as the globalization period advances. As a result, the educational system in Indonesia advances along with it (Kavanoz, 2006). English is officially taught as a foreign language in Indonesia schools in line with the decision of the Minister of Education and Culture in year 1967. To generate high quality education in Indonesia, the curriculum is frequently reviewed to create successful education results through evaluation. The implementation of this curriculum was recently restricted, and other instructors' interpretations including those of English subject matter experts also surfaced (Rafique, 2018). There are differing opinions about the curriculum's acceptability and concerns about the differences between the 2013 curriculum and how it is used in classrooms (Rumahlatu, 2016).

The Indonesian Government has changed 2013 Curriculum to the newest curriculum named Merdeka Belajar or *Kurikulum Merdeka*. It is the one of

government's initiatives to aid in the accomplishment of the educational objectives in the Law on the National Education System. The core subjects, character development, and student competency are the main goals of this curriculum. The *Kurikulum Merdeka*, principals and educators are free to create lesson plans, carry out instruction, and create curriculum based on the needs of their students. Teaching and learning process in elementary schools needed a new atmosphere of learning English (Nurhayati, 2019). The revised curriculum is either negative or just different from the intentions of policy makers. All educational levels, including elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, vocational school, and college level can use *Kurikulum Merdeka*. One more issue for the English subject in Elementary School is brought about by modifications to the Indonesian curriculum. The subject was included in the previous curriculum known as KTSP, but is not included in the Kurikulum 2013. It becomes a current issue in the field of education. There are many teachers who believe that English should not be taught to Elementary School. On the other hand, some teachers argue that it is crucial because English is a universal language that everyone should learn. However, some people state that it is important because English is international language that should be learnt by everyone in the world. At Elementary School level, it is found some changes such as English subject.

English was taught in Elementary Schools as local content in the 2013 curriculum. However, English required subject that is taught once a week. Nonetheless, the school may take this case into consideration by changing the facts and priorities. Learning English to gain understanding themselves, social interactions, and culture.

However, curriculum is described as a course of study, a broad outline of the instructional content, or a specific subject that schools must teach students in order to certify them as graduates (Basturkman, 2004). Furthermore, the term "curriculum" can refer to a wide range of concepts, such as the courses that are taught in schools, programs, lists of courses taught, teaching materials arranged in a certain way, or a framework for choosing and arranging learning opportunities (Howel and Wolet, 2005:5 as cited in Yanto, 2011). English as minimum curriculum could be developed by moving on the teachers' creativity, as extracurricular, it should be developed and managed based on the schools' characteristics related to the vision and mission (Nurhayati, 2019). According to BSNP (the National Education Standards Agency) *Kurikulum Merdeka* is a curriculum with diversified intra curricular learning, although the material might be improved A teacher can select from a wide range of instructional resources during the learning process. The Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek), Nadiem Makarim, introduced the *Kurikulum Merdeka* program, also known as freedom learning, as a means of assessment in order to enhance the 2013 curriculum. Three promising advantages of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* such as, first focus on essential material so that there is a more meaningful and enjoyable deepening and also for development of competencies. Second, teachers have the independence to teach according to the level of ability and development of students, and schools have the authority to develop and manage curriculum. Third, learning through character development project activities and competence of Pancasila Student Profiles through exploration of actual issues must be done at school.

Kurikulum Merdeka formally implemented at the early childhood, elementary, and secondary education levels in the new academic year 2022–2023 with three options: independent learning, independent change, and independent sharing. The Principle of Independence, one of Ki Hadjar Dewantara's principles, is adopted by this *Merdeka* curriculum. Through the advancement of science and technology, curricula are developed in an effort to restore and enhance the quality of education in Indonesia (Darwisah, 2020). *Kurikulum Merdeka* is a curriculum with diverse intra curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to deepen the concepts and strengthen competencies (Nurhayati et al., 2016). The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* which refers to policies is implemented not simultaneously and massively, which gives schools more flexibility in implementing the curriculum. At the level of early elementary school, it is carried out in 1 grade and 4 grade. Since the implementation is new, the preparation for the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* of course, schools and teachers must prepare well (Rahmadayanti, 2022). Based on these policies, the teachers must have good readiness so that the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* takes place properly and optimally. Actually, curriculum vary throughout schools based on student characteristics, school environment, and instructor readiness. However, they continue to make reference to the same curricular framework. Modifications to the curricular framework undoubtedly necessitate adjustments from every aspect of the educational system. To achieve desired result, which is to raise the standard of learning and education in Indonesia, this process needs to be carefully managed.

As part of the change management initiatives, the Ministry of Education and Culture offers curriculum options. English Language Learning through the independent learning curriculum to create a Pancasila student profile. Nowadays there are still many teachers who use theoretical and rote learning techniques, so that learning activities tend to be monotonous, and boring. There are many things that must be possessed in preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Fitriyah et al., 2022), including knowing well the contents and concepts of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Teachers need to understand it well so that they can design and implement a learning in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum. Moreover, educators must be able to plan original, creative lessons. In order to increase students' interest and willingness to learn, the Merdeka Curriculum mandates that teachers be able to create engaging and unique learning experiences. By applying any kinds of games, the teacher can improve their interesting joining the English lesson (Nurhayati, 2015). Besides, teachers need to be able to use technology in the classroom and create engaging, varied lesson plans. Teachers must be able to develop diverse and interesting learning methods, and utilize technology in learning. The use of technology can be a teacher's choice to carry out differentiation learning in the classroom. There are several various ways of using technology in creating learning products and content include the use of educational videos, audio learning, interactive multimedia and learning application. Teachers and students get the content and supported material prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture by accessing at PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar) and Rumah Belajar Portal.

According to Majid (2021) readiness is a competency that educators should acquire in order to be ready to do something, particularly ready to do learning. Because they possess a good knowledge and abilities, teachers who are prepared be able to conduct effective teaching and learning activities. As a result, they always prepare to deliver learning in any situation and condition. Additionally, the case of teacher preparedness has been handled expertly. This can be demonstrated by examining how teacher competency indicator standards are met and understood by applying pedagogic, personality, social, and professional abilities. The teachers who have readiness to implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* is simple and deeper to focus on essential material and develop student competencies, teacher more independent can teach according to the stage of achievement and development of students and school to develop also manage a curriculum. Especially, teaching English in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Teachers build interactive learning with students through project activities for students to explore the actual issues.

In order to successfully apply *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the Elementary School English teaching curriculum, teachers' readiness is a crucial factor. On the other hand, there were additional categories of teacher competency preparation that focused on the instructors' pedagogical expertise. Pedagogical knowledge refers to an educator's capacity to oversee students' learning. Then, based on their attitudes toward teaching English to Elementary School students, instructors' emotional attitude preparation will be determined. One component of teachers' attitudinal preparedness is their emotional attitude, which includes their sense of accountability, excitement, adaptability,

independence, and reward for intrinsic worth (Saputri, 2016). Three components make up the aspect of teachers' competencies. The first component is their language competence, which essentially sums up their language ability. Additionally, the teachers' language proficiency, particularly when it comes to hearing students speak English. Next was the pedagogical competency, which demonstrated the teachers' command of classroom management. In the classroom, Elementary School teachers have put their pedagogical talents to use.

There were several previous studies to support this research. All previous study used qualitative design about readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*. First previous study was written by Luluk Setyowati, et al (2023) *The Implementation of English Curriculum at SDN Jatimulya 11 Bekasi*. Elementary School students need to get English as one of subject in their school, because they have high interest in learning new things and it is important to take English as one of subject in Elementary School curriculum with several considerations.

Next, previous research by Ni Putu Artila Dewi., et al (2021) entitle *Urgency of Teaching English to Young Learners in Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*. The result are the students able to master English when teaching English since earlier, English useful in gaining a job in the future, and the students will have the social and economic benefits in the future. Then, research was written by Yuni Pratikno, et al. (2022) *Human Resource 'Kurikulum Merdeka' from Design to Implementation in the School: What Worked and What not in Indonesian Education*. The result of this study was found significant obstacles where the government was successful in designing the curriculum

but it was constrained in implementation.

The research of "Analysis of Teacher Readiness in the Implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in SDN Serut Baru Gedangsari Gunungkidul" was written by Ardian Arief, et al (2023). The researchers discovered that: 1) teachers are not fully prepared to implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* based on indicators of the four policies; 2) supporting factors are not fully prepared to implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka*; and 3) the obstacles encountered during implementation are teachers' lack of understanding of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* as a whole or incomplete; additionally, differentiated learning and the Pancasila student profile project have not been implemented, and school facilities are incomplete.

The last area has different school level. It focused on secondary level. This previous study was written by Arum Ambar Sari (2023). *The Kurikulum Merdeka implementation in English teaching and learning at SMPIT Insan Mulia Surakarta of seventh grade during the academic year 2022–2023*. The study's findings demonstrate that teachers create Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP) and Modul Ajar using the Merdeka Curriculum, which is modified to fit the needs of the particular educational unit. Based on the Merdeka Curriculum, a learning cycle was implemented and an assessment was carried out.

The objectives, resources, techniques, media, and evaluation of the English teaching process have been fulfilled in English teaching learning. The problems faced by the teachers were very complicated in implementing new curriculum or *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Based on the result of pre survey at Elementary school in Kediri regency

conducted by researcher on three time. The first time conducted on September 15th 2023 with Mrs. SFL. In this presurvey, the researcher got the data the English teacher has limited time to design differentiated learning based on the individual needs of and students' interest, the teacher also cannot maintain students' enthusiasm until the end of the English lesson. The second time conducted on September 27th 2023 with Mrs. AA, and Mrs. MW, the result presurvey was the English teachers have many reasons for the situation of teachers' readiness such as the teachers feels something new with *Kurikulum Merdeka*. So that they need for adaptation, preparation, understanding the concept of curriculum. Besides, teachers should have creativity, innovative for learning and look for any sources as the reference to make easy for implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Furthermore, based on the result presurvey with Mrs. ADM as teacher at Elementary school conducted on October 16th 2023. The teacher said that not fully ready to Implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the classroom. The English teachers, have many reasons. In addition, to reach a successful of implementation *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the teachers should have creativity using media to support for learning English. Teachers could be started by creating atmosphere in order to make the students ask actively, to build ideas, and proactive it means that they conduct any activities to give direct experience (Nurhayati, 2019). Besides, teachers must mastery the factors of readiness. The factors of teacher readiness are physical readiness, psychological readiness, material, and technology readiness. For any physical readiness the teachers should charismatic, energetic to deliver the material of English learning. The teachers

also being as role model for their students. Furthermore, the psychological readiness is concern in intrinsic motivation, good memory, optimistic, confident, and self-care to provides reward. Then, the technology readiness is teacher utilize technology computer to support the teaching process, teachers also show a power point, game, quiz, and related video for English learning. Furthermore, for material readiness, any references of English book, teaching module, and the teachers used formative and summative assessment for learning process. Teachers also use PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar) which provided by the Ministry Education and Culture as facilitate for teachers. The teacher's training was needed to develop the teacher's professionalism. Unfortunately, they also stated that they had not joined that training yet. Teachers have opportunities to attend training to advance teacher' experienced and proficiencies (Nurhayati, 2018).

Therefore, less professional development training became a factor in decreasing the teacher readiness to teach at Elementary School. Hopefully, teachers can increase optimally to conduct the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This research focus on study English Teachers' Readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency. The researcher limit to conduct the research at Elementary School that implemented the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. However, the purpose of this research is created to complete the shortcomings of previous research which was only limited to discussing research similar to this research especially for teacher's implemented of English learning based on *Kurikulum Merdeka*. So that, the researcher investigated the **English Teachers' Readiness in Implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency.**

B. Formulation of Research Question

- 1) How is the English Teachers' readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency?,
- 2) How is the Factor Influence of English Teachers' readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency.

C. Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the research are:

- 1) To know how the English Teachers' readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency,
- 2) To know the Factor Influence of English Teachers' readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency.

D. Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that this research will be useful for:

- 1) Future Researcher

The result for the future researcher can be guidance, improve knowledge, and another reference for the future researcher who want conduct the same research.

- 2) English Teacher

This research is useful to English teachers can be a reference in the teaching learning using *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

3) For Government of Education in Indonesia

The government can use this research to get information on how *Kurikulum Merdeka* being implemented at Elementary School level. In order to improve education, the government can also ascertain the demands of educators and the significance of implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, especially in English learning.

E. Scope and Limitation

The scope and limitation of this research is a study on English Teachers' Readiness in Implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Teaching English at Elementary School in Kediri Regency. The researcher limit to conducted research at Elementary School that implemented *Kurikulum Merdeka* with sample of 60 teachers.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1) *Kurikulum Merdeka*

According to BSNP (The National Education Standards Agency) *Kurikulum Merdeka* is a curriculum with diverse intra curricular learning where the content will be more optimal. In learning process, the teacher has the freedom or flexible to choose a variety of teaching tools.

The Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek), Nadiem Makarim, introduced the *Kurikulum Merdeka* program as an assessment tool to enhance the Kurikulum 2013.

2) Aspect of Readiness

According to Slameto (2010, p.113) defines readiness as a person's overall state or circumstance in which they prepare themselves to react or answer in a particular manner to a circumstance. In case, this research focused on teacher readiness in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Especially in terms of four aspects readiness: physical, psychological, material, and technological readiness.

a). Physical Readiness

Physical readiness is related to health and it can affect learning outcomes and social adjustment. Ensuring one's body is in good condition.

b). Psychological Readiness

Psychological readiness is closely related to intelligence, a good memory, satisfaction, desire or motivation to learn, concentration, and attention.

Psychological readiness reflects a state of mind who is ready to learn

c). Material Readiness

Material readiness is related to learning materials and other supporting materials used in learning, such as having a notebook, as so on.

d). Technological Readiness

Technological Readiness is indicated by understanding the several technologies to access digital learning resources, and develop learning material to support the learning process.

3) Elementary School

Elementary School is the primary school education level. The first and fourth grade have studied of English learning. In *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the English as the compulsory subject.