

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Based on the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, "*Pendidikan merupakan upaya sadar dan terencana bagi peserta didik untuk mengembangkan potensi dirinya melalui proses pembelajaran untuk mendapatkan pengetahuan spiritual keagamaan, pengendalian diri, kepribadian, kecerdasan, akhlak mulia, serta keterampilan yang diperlukan bagi dirinya, masyarakat, bangsa dan Negara*". Students will develop their potential through learning to gain religious knowledge, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed for themselves, society, nation, and state through education. In supporting every citizen's development and educational needs, Indonesia has a national education system that aims to educate the nation's life and develop the Indonesian people as a whole with government assistance in implementing compulsory education programs. Furthermore, it is intended so that national education units can run according to educational goals and continue adapting to current world developments.

A curriculum appropriate to the learning situation is needed both in terms of lesson materials, teaching methods, and current scientific developments to achieve specific educational goals as stated in Law no. 20 of 2003 Concerning the National Education System Article 1 Paragraph 19. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture, through circular letter No. 2774/H.H1/KR.00.01/2022, provides an option

for schools to implement a new curriculum, namely the "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" which focuses on strengthening student competencies and the freedom for teachers to choose teaching tools or teaching content to make students skilled through their independence. In addition, it is still in accordance with learning outcomes and the profile of Pancasila students.

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that provides freedom for teachers to determine teaching tools, teaching materials, and teaching content that remains focused on themes and elements as well as competency achievement through the flow of learning objectives to ensure learning remains following national education goals. The *Merdeka* curriculum is implemented based on Kemendikbudristek No. 56 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum in restoring learning from the previous curriculum. Based on Kemendikbudristek No.56 of 2022, Article 2 point c explains that the *Merdeka* curriculum can be applied to early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education. Meanwhile, the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum is currently not fully implemented. The government has made efforts to socialize the *Merdeka* curriculum to academic units to implement the *Merdeka* curriculum in various schools. Another government effort to socialize the *Merdeka* curriculum is implementing the *Sekolah Penggerak* and *Guru Penggerak* program.

Curriculum changes impact changes in its components, and *Merdeka* curriculum brings new features for learning (Aulia, 2021). First, in the *Merdeka* curriculum, learning is not complicated. It only focuses on essential material, without

any complicated demands that students must achieve. Second, various learning activities can be carried out by teachers and students, for example, working on group projects. Third, the *Merdeka* curriculum frees students, schools, and teachers to manage to learn. Therefore, Teachers' perception is also something that needs to be considered in implementing this *Merdeka* curriculum.

Teachers' perception toward the implementation of merdeka curriculum can be defined as a process in which teachers organize and interpret their sensory perceptions in order to give meaning to their surroundings about the curriculum. It provides recommendations for improving teachers' practice because it influences what they do both inside and outside of the classroom. It influence teachers' decisions and actions but also provide vital insights into many elements of education. Teachers can determine learning models, learning activities, or learning materials that suit the students and can help them achieve the learning outcomes.

Teachers who have an important role in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum directly in the classroom are responsible for achieving learning outcomes in this curriculum. The teacher's perception, different from this curriculum, is also a success factor whether this curriculum is achieved well or not. The teacher's role in facilitating students during learning takes place makes the teacher able to adjust whether he is a facilitator in the classroom and whether he plays a role with lectures as in the previous curriculum. Learning methods that were rarely used before can now be applied in *Merdeka* curriculum. Furthermore, it's allowing teachers to have more roles in the classroom, not only as teachers but also as facilitators, student discussion

partners, student mentors, student coaches, student advisors, and promoters of student creativity. With these various teacher roles, students can develop their skills and potential, especially in English subjects.

A study conducted by Martin (2017), entitled “English Teachers' Perception on KTSP and K13 Curriculum in SMAN 8 Banda Aceh”, stated that teachers face difficulties in understanding and implementing the new curriculum when switching from the KTSP curriculum to the k13 curriculum. Therefore, in this study, the researcher discover the strategies, challenges, and how to overcome the challenges in implementing the new curriculum, namely the Merdeka curriculum in teaching English, by giving out perceptions from teachers who have already implemented that curriculum for two years.

From the previous study mentioned, this problem is an exciting topic for research because this Merdeka curriculum has only been implemented for two years and in these years, still, not all schools have implemented it. Providing perceptions from teachers that already use merdeka curriculum in teaching will help other teachers who still have difficulty understanding this curriculum for teaching.

From the consideration above, the researcher proposes a proposal titled **“Teachers’ perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum in Teaching English”** where the researcher focuses on teachers’ strategies, challenges and solution to overcome the challenges in the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching English at Senior High School 4 Jambi City.

1.2 Research Question

The problem of this research can be formulated as follows:

1. What strategies are used by teachers in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english?
2. What challenges do teachers face in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english?
3. How do teachers overcome the challenges of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the research can be stated as follows:

1. To identify teachers' strategies in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english.
2. To identify challenges teachers face in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english.
3. To identify how teachers overcome the challenges in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching english.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide an overview of how to implement *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching English classes. This study expects to benefit institutions and communities, particularly schools and teachers. This study is helpful for teachers because it provides an overview of the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum in

English classes. This study provide examples of any strategies that can be implemented in teaching English in class that use *Merdeka* curriculum. This study will be beneficial to teachers who are implementing or have recently implemented *Merdeka* curriculum.

1.5 Limitation of the Research

In line with the purpose of this research, this research is limited in finding out teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum in teaching English. The research was conducted at Senior High School 4 Jambi City, one of *sekolah penggerak* in jambi that has implemented *Merdeka* curriculum for more than two years. *Sekolah penggerak* is also responsible for disseminating information about the *Merdeka* curriculum to schools that are not yet affiliated with *sekolah penggerak*. The English teachers at Senior High School 4 Jambi City was studied in this research.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

a) Teacher's perception

Perception is an idea, belief, or image that you have as a result of how you see or understand something (Srakang, 2013).

b) Merdeka Curriculum

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that focuses on essential material, character development, and student competencies to help children develop their interests and talents from an early age (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

c) Teaching Strategy

A teaching strategy is a general plan for a lesson or lesson that includes the framework, expected learner behavior, and a description of the tactics needed to accomplish the strategy (Antoni, 2010).