

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about : (1) background, (2) focus and sub-focus of research, (3) formulation of the problem, (4) objectives of the research, and (5) significant of the research.

1.1 Background

In education, the curriculum is an important component in organizing education to achieve educational goals because the curriculum is use as a guide in the teaching and learning process activities. The curriculum includes objectives, content, learning materials, and methods that are use as a guide in the teaching and learning process activities. However now, the existence of curriculum cover new terms such as *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)*, *Modul Ajar (MA)*, *Capaian Pembelajaran (CP)*, *Kriteria Ketercapaian Tujuan Pembelajaran (KKTP)*, *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, diagnostic assessments, student reflections, and teacher reflections, all of which aimed to strengthen the competence of both students and teachers. The curriculum was changed to meet educational needs as time went by. The changes that occurred were an effort to improve the quality of education and create a generation that had superior human resources and could compete with other countries.

The curriculum is plan or guideline for learning and educational programs created by educational institutions. The curriculum contained lesson plans that would be taught to students throughout their education. The curriculum

functioned as a guide or benchmark for achieving academic goals. Curriculum, according to Article 1 of Law Number 20 of 2003, was a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as methods that were used as guidelines for organizing lesson activities to achieve certain educational goals. So the curriculum was a guideline regarding a series of activities that would be carried out in the teaching and learning process to achieve the desired educational goals. Curriculum is very important in the world of education. Without an effective curriculum, students will not achieve appropriate learning goals. The world of education also continues to experience curriculum changes as time goes by. Everything is designed to meet the needs of students in their respective eras.

On February 11, 2022, the *Merdeka* Curriculum was launched online by Nadiem Anwar Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek). According to him, *the Merdeka* Curriculum was shorter, easier to understand, and more flexible to support learning recovery caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to catch up with Indonesian education compared to other countries. Apart from these factors, the *Merdeka* Curriculum was created due to the urgent need to overcome increasingly complex challenges in the world of education. The *Merdeka* Curriculum encouraged teachers and educational institutions to provide education that not only focused on academic subjects but also taught students creativity, collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking to compete in the modern world. The *Merdeka* Curriculum was a learning approach that aimed to reduce students' burdens, increase their creativity

and diverse intelligence, and form strong characters. One of the main characteristics of the *Merdeka* Curriculum was that it gave teachers the flexibility to adapt their learning to student needs and local characteristics.

Anidito said the *Merdeka* Curriculum began to be implemented in stages in 2020. It was tested in 3,000 schools in Indonesia, including SMAS Bina Mandiri with 10th-grade students. Based on initial observations and information from schools, the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English education produced interesting results. Students showed improvement in their critical thinking and English skills, and they actively engaged in learning. In addition, the assessment process became more flexible. It was proven that educational institutions needed student-centered learning, meaning that students had to be active, critical, creative, and able to solve problems.

Based on observations in December 2023, SMAS Bina Mandiri had just implemented the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The researcher wanted to know whether the *Merdeka* Curriculum had been implemented correctly, because observations indicated that the teachers there still did not understand the implementation of the independent learning curriculum and had a lack of experience in applying it.

In this regard, the self-learning curriculum underwent many changes in the learning system. As a result, school elements such as students and teachers faced obstacles in learning English, such as: 1) As a result of implementing the self-learning curriculum, teachers needed a long time to carry out non-cognitive diagnostic evaluations because they had to observe students. 2) It was effective for

implementing differentiated learning in teaching and learning activities. 3) This learning was adapted to student characteristics, so it was hoped that students would be motivated to discover their individual abilities. The *Merdeka* Curriculum not only faced many problems then, but also would face many challenges in the future. One of the most important issues was increasing student creativity, because the aim of the *Merdeka* Curriculum was to optimize technology and innovation. The implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, which was integrated with the use of digital media in learning English, could help improve the quality of education in Indonesia. It was hoped that this could develop students' language skills in achieving English proficiency.

By considering the problems faced by teachers and students above, this research needs to be carried out to evaluate the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum on schools. The aim of this research is to describe the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum on students' achievement in English learning at the tenth grade of SMAS Bina Mandiri in 2024/2025 academic year.

1.2 Focus and Sub-focus of Research

The focus of this research was on how the *Merdeka* Curriculum was implemented in English language learning for tenth-grade students of SMAS Bina Mandiri. Meanwhile, the sub-focus of this research was on the challenges of implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language learning. This sub-focus identified and analyzed the obstacles faced by teachers during the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

1.3 Formulation of The Problem

Based on the background description above, the problem of the research was about “How was the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum on students’ achievement in English learning at the tenth grade of SMAS Bina Mandiri in the academic year 2024/2025?”

1.4 Objectives of The Research

The objectives of this research were to describe and analyze the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum on students’ achievement in learning English at the tenth grade of SMAS Bina Mandiri in the 2024/2025 academic year.

1.5 Significant of The Research

1.5.1 Theoretical benefits:

Theoretically, the benefits of the study were as follows:

- a. This research was expected to increase knowledge about the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language learning.
- b. This research was also expected to serve as a reference for other researchers who wanted to conduct studies on the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language learning.

1.5.2 Practical benefits;

Practically, the benefits of the study were as follows:

a. For English Teachers:

The results of this study were expected to provide an overview of how English teachers used the *Merdeka* Curriculum in English language teaching. They were also expected to motivate teachers to improve their professionalism and gain more experience with learning methods based on the *Merdeka* Curriculum. These results could be used to enhance teachers' knowledge and their ability to organize the classroom.

b. For the School Principal:

This research was expected to provide information and evaluation of the steps teachers took to plan and implement *Merdeka* Curriculum learning.

c. For Other Researchers:

It was hoped that the findings of this study would be utilized by other researchers conducting research on the *Merdeka* Curriculum. These results would also determine whether it was worthwhile to repeat the study or conduct further research using various research designs, and would provide inspiration for additional research on related issues.

d. For the Researcher:

The researcher hoped that the findings of this research would provide new understanding and direct experience. This would increase knowledge and serve as a stronger reference when working in the field of education,

particularly in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum in teaching English
in senior high school.