

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consisted of the background, research question, objective of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, and key terms definitions.

1.1 Background

Education is an important foundation for the progress of a country because with education a country will achieve progress, both in increasing human resources and managing natural resources. Education is an effort that must be made by a person to learn and maximize the potential in himself which is carried out in a planned and conscious manner and carries out teaching and learning activities effectively.

National education based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution has the function of developing the ability and improving the quality of life as well as the dignity and dignity of the Indonesian nation, to realize the national goal of educating the nation's life and developing the potential of the Indonesian nation as a whole. This is a challenge faced in the world of education, therefore, educators or teachers must be able to make variations in teaching and learning activities that are by the material and circumstances of students at the time of learning. All of this is arranged according to guidelines called curriculum, which functions as a foundation in carrying out the learning process (Khoirurrijal et al., 2022).

The curriculum had an important role in the education system to be able to create an innovative, creative, and responsible generation. The program includes teaching materials, procedures, content, and learning objectives that form a set of learning plans that are used as basic references in the teaching and learning process to achieve national education goals (UU No 20 Tahun 2003). To achieve a better life and existence, the curriculum played a role in determining a person's experience and the type and quality of their knowledge.

The importance of developing curriculum and teaching materials are the first step in determining the success of various education systems in Indonesia. Minister of Education Mr. Nadiem Makarim based on the National Education Day Ceremony held on Monday, May 2, 2023, explained that educators and students continue to enliven the Merdeka Belajar program in several schools. To support the success of a curriculum applied in the world of education, the curriculum that has been implemented needs to be reviewed and developed into a new curriculum. The purpose of developing an educational curriculum is to increase competitiveness, as well as add several national and international insights so students can later become the next generation of a strong nation and able to compete with international education (Guspita Sari et al., 2022).

As already known above along with the development of increasingly modern times, of course, a curriculum is needed that can follow the development of science and technology so that it can support the progress of human resources (HR) and the country. Therefore, this Merdeka Curriculum recommends teaching English starting

to be taught from the elementary level. This is driven by three main reasons, namely English as a need for all Indonesian children, alignment of the English curriculum and equalization of learning quality. This is in line with the government's commitment to develop every dimension of the Pancasila student program which includes global diversity. In the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, there was confusion about the competencies that must be achieved by students at the junior high school level. Without English language education at the elementary level, students are expected to achieve intermediate-level competence without learning a solid foundation. Therefore, to overcome the gap in the achievement of this competency, the independent curriculum is here to provide a solution, namely providing basic level English education at the elementary level. Teaching English early with good planning will encourage the strengthening of the foundation of English. research shows that teaching English at the elementary school level has many benefits such as fostering confidence in English, building global awareness and intercultural competence and opening students' insights about cultural differences to foster tolerance.

The application of the Merdeka Curriculum in English learning in schools brings the potential to change the paradigm of education to be more inclusive, creative, and relevant. By prioritizing students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and active participation, education can be a means to developing a generation better prepared to face the complexities of the modern world. Fun learning activities in learning at school can later have an impact on student interest or can motivate a

student to instill a love of learning. The Merdeka Curriculum is currently considered a new curriculum adjustment method applied in several schools, with the existence of Merdeka Curriculum, that can certainly foster students' interest in creating learning that is considered high quality by the needs needed in the learning environment for students. Activities that a person likes, always pay attention to accompanied by a feeling of pleasure. Interest is the attraction, liking, and desire that a person has towards something, without any impulse. Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge within a certain period that can bring changes to a person. Great interest affects learning because if the learning material to be studied is not by student interests, students will not learn as well as possible, because there is no interest in them. If student realise that learning has an important role to play in acheving a goal, it is likely that they would be interested in learning.

English language learning education would be carried out in elementary schools, starting with the Merdeka Curriculum taught in education units (Anindito Aditomo, 2023). Currently, several schools had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum and SDN 8 Makale had implemented this curriculum in the 2022/2023 school year. In connection with this, related to English language learning in the Merdeka Curriculum which is new to students at the elementary school level, especially at SDN 8 Makale, which only implemented English language learning in the odd semester of the 2023/2024 school year. Therefore, based on this phenomenon, the researcher is interested in knowing "Students' Interest in Learning English: A Study of the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SDN 8 Makale"

1.2 Research Question

Based on this background, the question underlying this research is what level of the student's interest in learning English in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum?

1.3 Objective of the Research

The aims of the research to find out the level of students' interest in learning English in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Based on the objectives stated above, the researcher expects this research to be useful:

1. For schools

Can provide input to teaching staff (teachers) in the implementation of an Merdeka Curriculum to optimize quality education, especially in the field of English lessons

2. For teachers

Can be useful in increasing student interest in learning English and increasing knowledge and providing advice, especially in implementing an Merdeka Curriculum so that it can be carried out as desired.

3. For students

With the implementation of this Merdeka Curriculum, it is expected to increase students' interest in learning in the teaching and learning process.

4. For Researchers

This research is expected to increase the experience of researchers' knowledge about facts that occur in the field, especially in English language learning, and increase knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum to train future students.

1.5 Research Methodology

In this research, the researcher used a quantitative method. Quantitative method is a research method based on concrete data, research data such as numbers which are then measured by using calculation test tools, to produce a conclusion relate to the research questions (Sugiyono, 2015).

1.6 Key Terms Definition

- A. A curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements of materials, learning, and assessments prepared and organized by an educational institution.
- B. Merdeka Curriculum is a repair of the national education system which develops according to the times.
- C. Implementation refers to the process of implementing a concept, plan, policy, or program into concrete actions. It involves practical steps to carry out an idea or plan that has been drawn up.
- D. Interest is a person's enjoyment of somethings that give rise to curiosity and motivation to engage or learn more about it.
- E. English Learning is studied very seriously by many people, and they realize that English is important, many people want to learn English because they can easily communicate in English with people all over the world.