

## **CHAPTER II**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM MERDEKA IN THE CONTEXT OF ENGLISH LEARNING**

#### **A. The Educational Curriculum in Indonesia**

##### **1. Definition of Curriculum**

The existence of a curriculum in the world of education is a benchmark for the success of education held in a country. This affirmation makes it necessary and important for a country to study, design, try out, revise, and determine curriculum that will be applied or enforced in all educational institutions (Werang, 2015: 55). The first curriculum appeared in 1947 under the name of the Leer Plan curriculum which had a more Dutch nuance. After going through studies and trials, this curriculum was officially implemented in Indonesia in 1950. Because the implementation of the curriculum was carried out in 1950, a number of people saw the year 1950 as the beginning of the development of the education curriculum in Indonesia.

The curriculum is a design that is used to organize and manage a number of knowledge from teaching carried out by the teacher (Hidayat, 2011: 4). The curriculum is used in all learning processes, both formal and non-formal. With the existence of a curriculum, the entire education process in schools or educational institutions will be greatly assisted because of more systematic planning. The curriculum becomes a medium that can be used to prepare students to play a role in the future in the new industrial society.

According to Hamalik in 2008 in Mustari (2014), curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content, and learning materials as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. Furthermore, Nurdin & Sibaweh (2015), stated that the curriculum is a

learning program that students are expected to have under the auspices of the school with the intention of achieving learning goals.

The curriculum can have a concept in 3 ways, namely, first, the learning program which must contain curriculum objectives, namely the formulation of the behavior that is expected to be possessed by students after participating in the program, then the contents of the program are study programs or subjects that have been selected based on the science and their intended use can support the achievement of institutional goals, and the third program strategy includes: learning activities, administrative supervision activities, guidance counseling activities, and assessment activities (Nurdin & Sibaweh, 2015: 128).

In the world of education, the curriculum is indispensable and cannot be separated from the teaching process. Teachers as educators must have the potential to choose learning models that can be used based on or in accordance with the characteristics of students and of course related to what is demanded by the curriculum. Which is stated by Mustari (2014: 53), in essence the curriculum is made with the arrangement of a series of activities which contain student learning plans, as student learning experiences obtained from school while in class and outside the classroom. So that the curriculum plays a very important role as a reference to assist teachers in compiling and preparing plans, material for objective and evaluating learning activities for students in the classroom.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that the curriculum is the most important part in the education process in which it is clearly described and planned how and what should happen in the teaching and learning process carried out by the teacher to achieve educational goals. So that with the curriculum, the education process in schools can be directed and run well.

## 2. The Functions of Curriculum

The function of the curriculum in education is nothing but a tool to achieve the goals of education. The education of a nation with other nations will not be the same because each nation has certain philosophies and educational goals which are influenced by various aspects, both religion, ideology, culture, and the needs of the country itself (Mustari, 2014: 72).

The function of the curriculum according to Idi (2016), is described based on the point of view of its users, namely students, educators, principals, parents, schools above it, community users who graduate from schools/madrasas:

- a. For students, the curriculum functions as material in learning experiences or also as learning content. The curriculum presented in teacher, books, and other information becomes a learning experience for students.
- b. For educators, the curriculum functions as a guide or guide in working to compile and organize students' learning experiences and as a basis for evaluating student development in order to absorb the amount of knowledge provided. So that the curriculum plays an important role in facilitating teachers in compiling learning instruments and making the learning process more focused.
- c. For school principals, the curriculum serves as a guide in supervising learning, a guide for evaluating learning progress, and is used as study material for future curriculum development.
- d. For parents, the curriculum functions as a tool for communication which can take the form of direct consultations between parents and schools/teachers regarding issues related to their children. Apart from that, it can be used as a guideline in the form of parental participation in helping school efforts to advance their children.

- e. For schools that are above it, the curriculum functions as maintenance of the continuity of the learning process and is used as an indicator to improve the quality of education so that students can continue their education in tertiary institutions.
- f. For people who use school/madrasah graduates, by knowing the curriculum of a school, the community as users of graduates can provide constructive criticism and suggestions as an effort to improve the education program.

Furthermore, according to Alexander Inglis in Yani (2014), the function of the curriculum is to function as an organization of the learning process:

- a. Adjustment, which functions so that students can adapt in their lives. Where changes continue to occur in society, so that it becomes a challenge in adjusting the curriculum so that it functions to prepare students as they should.
- b. Integration, namely the function of the curriculum in providing complete and proper education to students, meaning that not only intellectual aspects are considered and taught, but attitudes and skills must also be honed and developed.
- c. Differentiation, namely the function of the curriculum in understanding student differences and providing services according to the needs of each student.
- d. Preparation, namely the function of the curriculum in preparing students to be able to continue their education to the tertiary level or to be able to equip students to be able to learn for life in the community.
- e. Segregation, namely the function of the curriculum in providing opportunities for students according to their interests and talents. Thus, the curriculum must be designed flexibly to serve all students.

- f. Diagnostic, namely the function of the curriculum as an instrument to recognize the various strengths and weaknesses of students.

From the explanation of the function of the curriculum above, it can be concluded that the presence of the curriculum greatly influences the education system and is considered important, especially for students, teachers, principals, parents, school that are above and for people who use graduation. In addition, the curriculum also as adjustment, integration, differentiation, preparation, sorting, and diagnostics. The curriculum has a major influence on the world of education, this can be seen and also felt by education managers regarding their function and role in making changes and progress in the world of education, so that the quality of education can be continuously improve.

### 3. The Importance of The Curriculum

The curriculum is very important in the world of education both in educational institutions and in the community, with the curriculum it can be known where the goals of an education will be carried out. In other words, within the scope of the school can know where the direction of learning that will be accepted at the school, therefore the curriculum is mandatory in every institution. The curriculum plays a role in shaping students to be ready to enter society.

Curriculum as an educational design that has been systematically arranged certainly has a very large and influential role for education. Which roles have their respective responsibilities. According to Hamalik 1990 in Agustiana & Asshidiqi (2021), the curriculum has an important role as a component of education as follows:

#### a. Conservative Role

This role emphasizes that the curriculum is the target for transmitting and interpreting cultural values to students. Cultural values will be an illustration for students in knowing the actions that are accepted or allowed and actions that are prohibited in

society. This conservative role places the curriculum as a very basic role and is adapted to the fact that education is essentially a social process. Which education task is to influence and foster student behavior in accordance with social values.

b. Creative Role

The creative role emphasizes that the curriculum can develop something new and up-to-date in accordance with the times and also the needs of society for now or in the future. Which in essence Education is not only used today but also to prepare for the future. Thus, it is inevitable that the curriculum in education must always be creative and innovative so that students can face current and future developments.

The curriculum plays a role in creating and compiling programs and activities that are creative, innovative and constructive in accordance with the needs of society and student development. The program must be able to encourage the development of the potential that exists in students both inside and outside the classroom. So that the curriculum does not only contain lessons, mindsets, patterns of action, or patterns of experience, but also abilities and skills that are very necessary for life in the future.

c. Critical and Evaluative Roles

This role is based on changes in cultural values in social life. In transmitting cultural values, it is necessary to pay attention to existing changes, so that the inheritance of past values and culture to students must be adapted to the conditions that occur in the present. However, the current and future developments may not necessarily meet the needs. Therefore, the role of the curriculum is not only to pass down existing values and culture or apply the results of new developments that occur, but also has a role to assess and select values and culture as well as new knowledge to be inherited. So, in this case, the curriculum must be actively

involved in social control and filtering. Values that are no longer in accordance with current demands are removed and modifications or improvements are made.

#### 4. The Relationship Between Curriculum and Learning

Curriculum and learning have a very close relationship. The curriculum is a written plan that contains ideas and ideas formulated by the curriculum developer. The written plan then becomes a curriculum document that forms a curriculum system consisting of components that are interrelated and influence one another. The components that make up the curriculum system will then give birth to a teaching system and that system will guide the teacher in the teaching and learning process in the classroom (Fauzan, 2017).

As an education program, the curriculum places more emphasis on the operational learning process. The curriculum is meaningless if the learning process is not carried out and vice versa, while learning is a form of implementation of the curriculum (Yani, 2014: 30). The curriculum functions as a guideline that provides direction and educational goals in which there is material that must be provided and learned by students while learning is related to form in realizing curriculum goals.

Learning is a combination of the composition of elements, namely human, material, facilities, equipment, and procedures with one another and all of these will influence each other in achieving learning objectives. Curriculum and learning cannot be separated, because the curriculum itself is a subject that must be taken and studied by students in order to gain knowledge, therefore curriculum and learning have an effect on achieving learning goals (Silviani, 2010).

The curriculum is understood as a plan of learning activities for students at school which contains objectives, teaching materials, learning processes, and learning evaluation. Conceptually, the curriculum was prepared by experts and has been used as a national

policy and used as a reference in the implementation of learning. While all learning processes, starting from the purpose of selecting methods, approaches, content, to the evaluation process must refer to the curriculum used. Currently, the concept of learning is growing, learning activities are no longer just teaching activities that ignore learning activities, but learning activities that are even more complex and pay attention to various learning patterns (Fauzan, 2017).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that curriculum and learning are one unit that cannot be separated, this is because the curriculum has no meaning if the learning process is not implemented and vice versa. Therefore, the curriculum can exist more when it is supported by a series of good learning activities, and vice versa.

#### 5. Curriculum in English Learning

Every curriculum change is of course adapted to the times where these changes aim to develop and improve the quality of education in Indonesia. In its implementation in English learning there have been many changes, starting from the 1984 curriculum which used a communicative approach, but still focused on reading material only and was supported by grammar skills. Furthermore, the 1994 curriculum which was based on meaning (meaning-based curriculum) questioned the discrepancy between learning materials, student expectations, and also the teacher's understanding of the applied curriculum. The 2004 curriculum is based on competence-based curriculum, which contains authentic learning materials adopted from the culture of the target language. This also makes it difficult for teachers and students to understand the material due to a lack of understanding of the target country and its culture. So that the 2004 curriculum was updated which was introduced in 2006 with a school-based curriculum which established a policy that each school designed its own learning materials, this was felt to be not effective enough



because not all education units had the same readiness (Widyaiswara, 2014).

The government also always makes curriculum revisions to perfect the previous curriculum, so that quite significant changes have occurred in the 2013 curriculum. In which the English subject, especially at the elementary school level, is not abolished, but it is also not required for every elementary school. This causes differences in implementation in each elementary school in Indonesia which depends on the policies of each school whether to continue to include English lessons in their curriculum or not to include them, so that the spread of English lessons in elementary schools is uneven (Ardaya et al., 2022). Each curriculum development has its own policy in its learning system, some curriculum do not apply English learning subjects at the elementary school level such as the 2013 curriculum, but there are also curricula that implement English learning in elementary schools such as the KTSP curriculum and also the curriculum that is currently being pursue, namely Curriculum Merdeka.

## **B. The Curriculum Merdeka**

Implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka, of course, many changes have occurred in the school system and school elements, these changes are of course to improve and advance schools, especially teachers and students. Changes that are felt with the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka are seen in the teaching and learning process between teachers and students, learning becomes more active, innovative, besides that the use of technology as a tool to support learning based on the concept of independent learning is also more optimal.

In Indonesia there have been several changes and improvements to the curriculum in line with the times, namely 1947, 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1994, 1997 (revised curriculum 1994), 2004 (curriculum based competencies), the 2006 curriculum (educational unit level

curriculum) and in 2013 the government through the ministry of national education changed to the 2013 curriculum (kurtilas), which in 2018 there was a revision to become a revised kurtilas (Ulinniam et al., 2021). In 2019, the Minister of Education, Research and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek) Nadiem Makarim sparked a Curriculum Merdeka, which is a refinement of the 2013 curriculum, which was tested in 2020 and began to be used in 2022.

The Curriculum Merdeka is an important part of the advancement of education in Indonesia and this curriculum certainly follows the current developments (Rahayu et al., 2022). The existence of the Curriculum Merdeka is a realignment in the national education system in Indonesia which, as stated by Yamin & Syahrir (2020), is in the framework of advancing change and progress of the nation so that it can adapt to changing times. As also stated by Minister Nadiem Makarim that “Education reform cannot be carried out solely using an administrative approach, but must carry out culture transformation” (Satriawan et al., 2021). Implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka has not been implemented simultaneously in all schools in Indonesia, but several schools have implemented it.

The Curriculum Merdeka is a curriculum that focuses on essential material and develops student competence in its phases so that students can learn more deeply, meaningfully and enjoyably, and not in a hurry (Kemendikbud, 2021). The learning process will become more relevant, and interactive through project activities that can provide wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual issues such as environmental, health, and other issues to support the character development and competency profile of Pancasila students (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022).

Based on the decision of the Minister of Education and Culture to restore the national education system which is in line with the 1945 Constitution, bearing in mind the vision and mission of Indonesian

Education in the future for the creation of quality human beings and able to compete in various fields of life. The Curriculum Merdeka is interpreted as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to study in a calm, relaxed, fun, stress-free, and pressure-free way to show their natural talents (Rahayu et al., 2022). With the Curriculum Merdeka, it is hoped that students will be able to develop according to their potential and abilities because with the Curriculum Merdeka students get critical, quality, expressive, applicative, variative, and progressive learning (Sari et al., 2020).

The issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022 as a form of full support for the improvement of the curriculum in Indonesia to realize an advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent, and has personality through the creation of Pancasila students who are critical, creative, independent, faithful, pious to God Almighty, and have noble character, work together, and have global diversity through the Implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). The curriculum provides freedom and is student-centered, teachers, and schools are free to determine appropriate learning. The Curriculum Merdeka carries the concept of “Freedom to Learn” which is different from the 2013 curriculum, according to Sherly et al (2020) this means giving freedom to schools, teachers and students to be free to innovate, learn independently and creatively, where this freedom starts with the teacher. In the curriculum, there is no longer any demand for achieving a minimum completeness score, but emphasizes quality learning for the realization of quality students, characterized by the Pancasila youth profile, having competence as Indonesian human resources ready to face global challenges (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022).

In the Curriculum Merdeka, the principles of implementing learning are designed to provide quality, interactive and contextual learning experiences. At this stage, the teacher as a mover is expected to

be able to organize learning that is: interactive, inspirational, fun, challenging, motivates students to actively participate, and provides sufficient space for initiative, creativity, independence according to students' talents, interests and physical and psychological development (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022).

### **C. Previous Study**

Researcher must find information that can be used to support data in later research. To find this information, researcher must read the results of previous studies that have similar topics. The purpose of finding research that has similar topics is so that researcher can prevent plagiarism in research that researcher will do later.

There are several studies related to the topic as this research, as follow:

First, a research entitled "Analisis Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Penggerak Sekolah Dasar" by Sumarsih et al (2022). This research is research conducted using a phenomenological approach, this type of research is qualitative which aims to describe and analyze the phenomena that are happening at SDN Guruminda 244, namely related to the Implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka.

In this study, they found that by becoming a driving school and the perseverance of the principal of SDN Guruminda 244, the principal understands the student learning process and becomes a mentor for teachers in the school, so that the driving school has teachers who understand that every child is different and has different way of teaching.

Second, a research entitled "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Penggerak" by Rahayu et al (2022). This research is a qualitative descriptive study, in which this study aims to explain and provide an overview of the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in driving schools.

In this study it was found that the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in driving schools had been carried out optimally and was ongoing, however, in its implementation there were still many shortcomings and obstacles. The key to the success of the curriculum is from the principal and teachers who have the will to make changes. In addition, teachers must be able to become tutors, facilitators, and inspirations for their students so that they can motivate students to be more active, creative, and innovative. Therefore, teachers must create a comfortable atmosphere during the learning process. Facilities and infrastructure also support the smooth implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka, especially equipment in the form of technology.

Third, a research entitled “Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Muhammadiyah 19 Sawangan” by Damayanti et al (2022). This research is qualitative descriptive research, which aims to identify and obtain information about the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka at Muhammadiyah 19 Sawangan Middle School.

The results obtained in this study are the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in Indonesian language learning at Muhammadiyah 19 Sawangan Middle School, there are still challenges that must be faced including teacher skills in using the Curriculum Merdeka, skills in mastering basic skills in the digital era, skills in managing classes, limited references. Apart from these challenges, there are also obstacles, namely, lack of experience with the Curriculum Merdeka, lack of adequate facilities, lack of learning hours because they are focused on projects.

Fourth, a research entitled “Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja” by Redana & Suprpta (2023). This research is research that uses a qualitative descriptive method, with the aim of identifying and describing the Implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja.

The results of this study are that the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka at SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja is influenced by several factors, namely, communication, resources, dispositions, and bureaucratic structure. The supporting factors are due to the availability of adequate resources, besides that the contents of the Curriculum Merdeka are not too difficult to apply in learning. While the inhibiting factor is the lack of implementor skills.

Fifth, a research entitled “Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Negeri 16 Padang” by Melani & Gani (2023). In this research using a descriptive method with a qualitative approach, which aims to describe the results of the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in learning Indonesian at SMP Negeri 16 Padang.

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka by teachers at SMP Negeri 16 Padang has not been maximized, this is because it is still in the adjustment stage, besides that it is also difficult for Indonesian language teachers to change their mindset regarding old habits in teaching. Indonesian language teachers also do not understand in detail about differentiation learning and often have difficulty applying it in learning.

Based on the previous study above, it can be seen that what distinguishes this research from previous research is the research location, where research related to the implementation of Curriculum Merdeka is still rarely found in West Kalimantan, especially Pontianak City. In addition, this research will also describe the implementation of the Curriculum Merdeka in the context of English learning which is also rarely found in previous research, so the results of this research will be different from previous studies.