

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

Education is the most important thing in human life, this means that every Indonesian person the right to get it and is expected to always develop in it. Education will never end. Education generally has the meaning of a life process in developing each individual to be able to live and carry out life. Thus it is very important to be an educated person. People are educated to become useful for the State, Nation and Nation. As one of the famous philosophers, Aristotle, said, he interpreted that education is one of the functions of a state that is done for the purpose of the state itself. He viewed that education is a provision for some activities or worthy jobs. Hence, education should be guided by law to make it in accordance with psychological analysis results and follow developments step by step. This is reinforced by the understanding of education contained in UUSISDIKNAS No. 20 of 2003 that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential to have spiritual strength, religious, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, as well as the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (T Noor,2018).

In education, there is one important component that cannot be left out, which is the curriculum. Curriculum comes from the Greek words *curir* which means runner, and *curere* which means racing track or competition venue. From these two words, curriculum is interpreted as the distance of the race that must be complete by the runner in a racing arena. Therefore, the term curriculum (curriculum) refers to the distance to be traveled when carrying out activities from the beginning to the end, and applied in the field of education (Indarta, *et al.*, 2022). This concept is consistent with Bobbitt's (1918) definition of curriculum, which is the entire spectrum of directed and undirected experiences aimed at unlocking the potential of individual learners. The curriculum must be designed by the competent authority with the expertise and capacity to create it (Maryono & Emilia, 2022). As quoted by Leli Halimah Curriculum is the heart of education. This is in line with other views that the curriculum has a central position in any

educational effort. This shows that every educational activity, the main one being the process of interaction between educators and learners, resources, and the environment. In the true sense of education, the curriculum is the heart of education, meaning that all educational activities in school are based on what is planned in the curriculum (Susilowati.E, 2022, p. 119). Thus, from various definitions of the curriculum, it can be concluded that the curriculum is the main component in education which is in the form of a plan and is arranged systematically in the learning process to produce outputs in accordance with the desired results and the curriculum becomes a component that cannot be left out because with the existence of the curriculum will regulate the process of running Education of a country in achieving its goals.

The curriculum is the main component in determining the model and form of education in Indonesia. In line with the increasing development of education in all types and levels of education in Indonesia. Formally, the curriculum has been implemented in schools since the Dutch era, meaning the curriculum has been around since the colonial era. During the Dutch era, the implementation of education and schooling had its own characteristic curriculum and of course was colored by the mission of Dutch colonialism; the same was true for the Japanese era curriculum, so it can be said that the purpose of education at this time was to create human resources that could help the mission of colonialism in the homeland (Indah Sari, 2022). It is different from the education curriculum in Indonesia when the country was independent. Where the educational curriculum is an important part in shaping the nation's generation in realizing the ideals of a country.

After Indonesia proclaimed its independence on August 17, 1945, education in the country continued to develop, including the Government's attention in terms of curriculum development. In connection with this, the development of the curriculum in Indonesia is in 2 periods (1) Period before independence / colonization, (2) Period after independence. In the course of history since 1945, the national education curriculum has undergone changes, namely in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, and now 2006. The change is a logical consequence of the change in the political system, social

culture, economy, and science and technology in the nation and state. Because, the curriculum as a set of educational plans needs to be developed dynamically according to the demands and changes that occur in society. All national curricula are designed based on the same foundation, namely Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The difference lies in the emphasis on the main objectives of education and approaches in realizing them.

At this time, a new curriculum has arrived, namely the Independent curriculum. Independent curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that gives students the opportunity to learn peacefully, relaxed, enjoyable, free from stress and pressure, to show their natural talents. In line with the idea of the Father of Indonesian Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, who stated that education is a place to plant seeds. This philosophical perspective shows that the purpose of education is to help students realize their full potential. School is not a prison. Developing, standardizing, and integrating various abilities. Self-learning, which is the central theme of Indonesian education policy in the current paradigm and the forerunner of the Independent curriculum, ultimately begins with the desire of students to learn freely Setiawan *et al.*, (2022).

In the Independent Learning Curriculum emphasis is placed on freedom and creative thinking. One of the programs presented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the launch of Independent Learning is the start of the driving school program. This program is designed to support every school in creating a generation of lifelong learners with a Pancasila personality. To make all of this successful, the role of a teacher is needed. In line with the opinion Ainia, (2020) Teachers as the main subject who are expected to be able to be a driving force to take positive actions towards students. The existence of the Independent curriculum is a rearrangement in the national education system in Indonesia which Yamin & Syahrir, (2020) states that this statement is in order to anticipate changes and progress of the nation in order to adapt to the changing times. Likewise, what was put forward by the Ministry of Education Nadiem Makarim that educational reform cannot be done solely with an administrative approach, However, a cultural transformation must be undertaken Satriawan *et al.*, (2021). This is in line with the opinion that the concept of self-learning can be accepted in view of the

vision and mission of Indonesian Education in the future to create quality human beings who are able to compete in various fields of life (Sibagariang *et al.*, 2021).

With this independent curriculum, it is hoped that students can develop according to their potential and abilities because with the independent curriculum they get critical, quality, expressive, applicative, varied and progressive learning. Thus this new curriculum change requires cooperation, strong commitment, selflessness and real implementation from all parties, so that the Pancasila student profile can be embedded in the students (Fetra Bonita Sari, Risda Amini, 2020). Hence that in the implementation of this curriculum requires cooperation from several elements in the world of Education. Thus that the goal of this independent curriculum is able to educate the nation's generation that is able to survive and compete according to the development of the times.

This curriculum transformation in Indonesia is a sign that digital education is rising in the homeland. In response to the educational challenges of the digital age, the government has launched the Independent curriculum. In addition, the Independent curriculum is also backed by the low literacy and numeracy skills of students. The 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study revealed that the average scores of Indonesian students in literacy and numeracy were below average. Through the “upgrade” of the curriculum, the government is striving to improve the reading and mathematics skills of students in Indonesia. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic that has been sweeping Indonesia for the past two years has forced all educational activities to be done at home. As a result, the Indonesian education system has experienced learning loss.

Therefore, various efforts have been taken by the government as a form of recovery. One of them is to give freedom to each educational unit to choose the curriculum applied in the school based on the needs of the school community, especially the learners. To equip them with a strong foundation in the digital era, educators must balance between theoretical and practical knowledge Sharma, (2017). In the field of English language learning, curriculum changes bring new challenges for the development of effective lesson plans, creative and meaningful teaching and learning processes, and evaluation of learning outcomes Sofiana,

Mubarok, Yuliasri, (2019). Technology changes the way teachers and learners learn Richards, (2017). In the era of digital advancement, technology plays an important role in the implementation of the curriculum.

Teaching English in vocational education, particularly in secondary education, should be taken into account as the English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP) program, as Widodo (2016) has argued. For this reason, the English instructions applied in ESP teachings should be totally different from general English (GE) instructions which are very general in nature; serving the students with the teaching of all four language skills and stressing them equally. ESP courses, on the other hand, are designed to meet the needs of learners and other stakeholders to communicate for work or study purposes in specific disciplines (Vogt & Kantelinen, 2013). In this sense, they are hardly trained to use English in a specific discipline or a particular communicative context.

In Indonesia, there is the Vocational High School Program (SMK). This school program is an effort to realize the vision of Indonesian education by realizing an independent and characterful Indonesia through the creation of Pancasila students. The focus of the vocational high school program (SMK) is to develop student learning outcomes holistically, which includes competencies literacy and numeracy and character, starting from superior human resources headmasters and teachers (Sahabudin C, 2016). This school program is an evolution of the previous school program development process. Thus this school program will accelerate state/private schools in all schools to move up to higher levels

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in teaching English in vocational high schools requires a lot of process, time, and readiness which causes several changes in the learning system. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is carried out as comfortably as possible to facilitate the process of interaction between teachers and students. This is according to Merdeka Curriculum which refers to the achievement of at least six English language skills on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning,

Teaching Assessment (CEFR). CEFR reflects the visible specifications of the student's ability to maintain interaction and convey something desired.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum, teachers must understand the Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP), Teaching Modules (MA), Project Modules, to evaluating student progress (Nurhidayat et al., 2022). This shows that teachers have a strategic role in realizing national education goals in teaching and educating, so it is necessary to focus on developing the potential of teachers as a profession that is moral, obeys rules, upholds professionalism and competence. Other parties that have influence to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum are educational institutions or more precisely school principals. In the Independent Curriculum, students act as learning centers or are called Student Centers. Students are considered as the essence of education so that they become the main target when the learning process must have a facilitator to develop their talents, interests and potential in the field of English. Facilitators are teachers, principals and staff.

Various relevant studies that have been carried out related to this matter are the Independent Curriculum. Like the research of Anita K.P and Ririn P. (2021), discussing the views of vocational high school English teachers in the independent curriculum. In this study it was explained that infrastructure and facilities greatly determine the success of implementing the Independent Curriculum in driving schools. Furthermore, research conducted by Kasman and Lubis (2022), regarding the Teacher performance evaluation instrument had fallen short of the goals independent learning. However, all relevant research does not focus on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in teaching English in vocational high schools which is a novelty of this research.

In this study, the schools selected were SMKN 1 Bojonegoro, SMKN 2 Bojonegoro and SMKN 3 Bojonegoro. Based on information obtained from the 2022/2023 Schooling Field Introduction. The Vocational High School is the favorite vocational high school in Bojonegoro, both in terms of quality and quantity, as evidenced by the large number of students who have completed it. This school has three classes. Grades are seventh grade, eighth grade, and ninth

grade. Each vocational high school has many majors. Currently the school has used the Merdeka Curriculum for two years. However, the implementation of the independent curriculum in these schools is still not optimal. Because there are still many teachers who do not understand the concept of IKM (Implementation of Independent Curriculum) which is in accordance with government recommendations. Therefore, researchers will conduct research in these schools by involving English teachers in vocational high schools.

Based on the results of the Introduction to Schooling Fields, the researcher received information that the teacher was still confused in understanding the Independent Curriculum and felt that he was not quite right in carrying out learning according to the Independent Curriculum. However, the researchers also saw directly the teaching and learning activities at SMKN 2 Bojonegoro, in learning English in the classroom the researchers saw the teacher doing the pretest. Then the teacher forms groups based on the results of the pretest. This shows that the teachers of SMKN 2 Bojonegoro have a strong will to carry out teaching and learning activities based on the Independent Curriculum where learning is adapted to the needs of students. Evidenced by the division of groups based on the results of the pretest, namely based on student readiness, collaborating and also mapping the material.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in doing research on THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPEDENT CURRICULUM ON ENGLISH LEARNING AND TEACHING IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN BOJONEGORO.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The description above can provide an overview of the problems encountered in schools in the teaching and learning process, for this reason these problems can be identified as follows:

1. How is the implementation of independent curriculum in English learning and teaching in Vocational High Schools ?
2. What are the challenges faced by English teacher in implementing independent curriculum in Vocational High School ?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of the researchers:

1. To analyse the implementation independent curriculum in English learning and teaching in Vocational High Schools.
2. To analyse the challenges faced by English teacher in implementing independent curriculum in Vocational High School.

1.4 Significant of The Research

1 .The theoretically:

Theoretically, this researcher outline the factors that teacher encounter when using the indepedent curriculum approach to English teaching and learning on vocational high school in this era.

2. Practically Significance :

It is hoped that this research be useful for the following people:

1. English teacher

The findings of this research are anticipated to explain further about the process implementation of kurikulum indepedent on english learning and teaching in vocational high school and the researcher hopes that this research can provide some results from the perceptions of English teachers about the difficulties students face during school and can overcome obstacles and find suitable ways to teach students who have difficulty in understanding learning English.

2. Students

The researcher hopes that this research can be used as a way to evaluate students' difficulties in learning English, so that students are able to practice and apply it in everyday life, students can master and apply grammar in speaking English.

3. Researcher

Researchers hope this research can be useful for other researchers and provide motivation and lessons that can be learned by everyone. Besides that,

the writer hopes that this research can be used as a learning tool to analyze difficulties and also give some ideas to make research better.

4. School

The making of this analysis has beneficial purpose for the school, such as help the writer contribute the energy and knowledge with this technique research. And also helps the writer to build good connection between the school and university.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The researcher focuses his research on the application of the independent curriculum in learning English at vocational high schools. Therefore, the authors limit this problem to English teachers at equivalent vocational schools in Bojonegoro.

1.6 Definition of the key terms

1. Independent curriculum

The Independent Curriculum was developed as a more adaptive curriculum framework as part of the learning reform initiative, with a focus on important content and character and skills development of students.

2. English language teaching

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia refers to the process of teaching and learning the English language in formal education settings, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions.

3. Vocational high school

Vocational High School is a secondary education level that provides special education to students in certain vocational fields, such as information technology, health, accounting, automotive engineering, and so on. Vocational High School aims to equip students with skills and knowledge relevant to certain vocational fields so that they are ready to work or continue their education to a higher level.