

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTIONS

The chapter reveals the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the research, the significance of the research, the research scope, the research framework, and previous studies.

A. Background of Study

This research aims to explore teachers' perceptions of utilizing and the content of *English for Nusantara* textbook in the 7th grade in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Teacher perception is a way of understanding or interpreting various educational contexts, especially in the context of the utilizing and content of the *English for Nusantara* textbook for grade 7th in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Teacher perception is a teacher's view of something and interpret it according to what sees (Leavitt, 2001). In this case, teachers' perceptions reflect how they assess the flexibility and innovation offered by this curriculum, as well as how effective the textbook is in supporting English language learning goals. Textbooks are the main tool utilize in the learning process, so their effectiveness is important to achieve the desired learning outcomes. According Sinaga (2009), textbooks is to support learning activities. The central government supports the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in educational units by developing student textbooks and teacher guides as textbooks.

Education is always related to the curriculum, which means achieving educational goals. The curriculum functions as a tool to achieve academic goals more effectively and efficiently and as a benchmark for the education system in Indonesia (Angga et al., 2022). The curriculum is utilized to achieve educational goals more effectively and efficiently and to monitor academic progress in Indonesia. Considering that the Indonesian curriculum often changes, this change was made to improve the quality of Indonesian education. Nadiem, as Minister of Education, issued a new curriculum named "*Merdeka Belajar*". The *Merdeka Curriculum* was introduced to improve the goddess education system (Dewi, 2022). This curriculum change also includes an application that provides teachers with various reference materials to improve teaching practices and share experiences.

the *Merdeka Curriculum* focuses on project-based learning, which teaches basic skills according to individual needs (Makarim, 2022). This curriculum change affects learning, including textbook selection.

Textbooks as learning tools required by the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and Education. According to Hermawan et al., (2022) textbooks are the main teaching tool in Indonesia and are considered important for independent learning. In this case, textbooks such as "*English for Nusantara Class 7*" published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, culture, research, and Technology were utilized. The central government supports the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in educational units by developing student textbooks and teacher guides as the main textbooks (Nurlelawati et al., 2022). This textbook has become a learning reference source that can be modified to develop learning according to student needs. The *English for Nusantara* textbook is a textbook specifically developed to support English language learning in a local context. This textbook is designed according to *Merdeka Curriculum* learning. *English For Nusantara*, published by the Ministry of Culture, Research, and Technology, is an English textbook for grade 7th junior high school (Damayanti, 2022). This textbook adapts to the curriculum currently being implemented in Indonesia, namely the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The *English for Nusantara* textbook contains various materials, starting from developing speaking, writing, and reading to the development of social values such as honesty, discipline, and cooperation.

In presenting material by the learning outcomes in the *Merdeka Curriculum*, it is important to consider that teacher perceptions can be partial and do not always reflect students' views or needs. The teacher's perception is a partial and incomplete view of something so real, capable of different interpretations when seen from various points of view. It depends on how and what curriculum rules and materials the teacher utilizes in the classroom. Teacher perception is a person's process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting the information obtained to create something meaningful in education. Teacher perceptions are in the form of professional educators' responses about their experiences in educating, teaching, and guiding in the educational path (Kotler, 2015).

The researcher conducted preliminary observations at an Islamic junior high school. During observation, the researcher captured an interesting phenomenon related to teachers' of utilizing and content *English for Nusantara*. Researcher found that some teachers still experience difficulties in utilizing *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. The teachers' readiness and experience may influence their understanding of the concept of a *Merdeka Curriculum*. This research seeks to explore teachers' perceptions of utilizing and the content of *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

Along with this research, the researcher found previous studies that were almost similar. Linagustin (2023) analyses character education contained in reading texts in the *English for Nusantara* textbook, Sari (2023) classifies the types of illocutionary acts in the *English for Nusantara* textbook by identifying their functions, and Candra (2023) investigates teachers' perceptions of the suitability of the content in English textbook for VII students in *Merdeka Curriculum* learning. Although relevant, the current study has differences from previous research. This research focuses on explaining teachers' perceptions of the utilizing and content of the *English for Nusantara* textbook in the context of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This research seeks to study teachers' perceptions in the Islamic junior high school environment utilizing observation, interview, and documentation methods.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of utilizing the *English for Nusantara* textbook in the 7th grade at an Islamic junior high school for the *Merdeka Curriculum*?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the content of the *English for Nusantara* textbook for grade 7th Islamic junior high school in the *Merdeka Curriculum*?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the background of the research above, the study is intended to:

1. To find out the teachers' perceptions of utilizing the *English for Nusantara* textbook in the 7th grade at an Islamic junior high school for the *Merdeka Curriculum*
2. To find out the teachers' perceptions of the content of the *English for Nusantara* textbook for grade 7th Islamic junior high school in the *Merdeka Curriculum*

D. Research Significances

In this research, significance is divided into 2, namely theoretical and principals:

A. Theoretical Significances

Theoretically, the results of this research can be used as a reference for parties conducting research. Therefore, the researcher provides a good method to develop it effectively. This research also enriches academic literature on implementing.

B. Principals Significances

This research provides insight for teachers, researchers, and textbook writers. This research findings enlighten teachers about their perceptions utilizing and the content of *English for Nusantara* as part of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. With a better understanding of how the *English for Nusantara* concept is applied in a learning context, teachers can know the advantages and disadvantages of integrating this approach in their teaching.

This research provides a basis for further study in the utilizing of *English for Nusantara* at various levels of education. Researcher can explore multiple approaches to meeting the needs of teachers and students of different backgrounds and abilities. In addition, this discovery can open up opportunities to develop new strategies that can improve learning outcomes. As well as providing feedback on improving and perfecting teaching materials according to the *Merdeka Curriculum*. With this, the author can design more relevant, interesting, and effective textbooks to support English language learning in the local cultural context. This helps meet curriculum standards.

E. Research Scope

This research is conducted at an Islamic junior high school, focusing on teachers as respondents. The respondents were two English teachers teaching in

grade 7th who had implemented the *Merdeka Curriculum* utilizing *English for Nusantara*. This research aims to explore teachers' perceptions of utilizing and content of *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Each teacher has a different perception, this difference is influenced by the experiences the teachers have in utilizing *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. From these differences, valuable findings are hoped to be obtained in this research.

F. Research Framework

The curriculum utilized in Indonesia constantly changes from year to year. The *Merdeka Curriculum* is a manifestation of the changes made by the government. The *Merdeka Curriculum* is the government's genuine effort to improve the quality of education related to the demands of society in the 5.0 era. (Manalu et al., 2020). In this way, the curriculum is not only a form of change but also a reform step in improving the quality of education. The *Merdeka Curriculum* is a new form of reform and is a breakthrough that focuses on the cultural transformation of (Makarim, 2020). Implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum* requires adjustments to certain aspects, including textbooks and their context, based on the *Merdeka Curriculum* objectives.

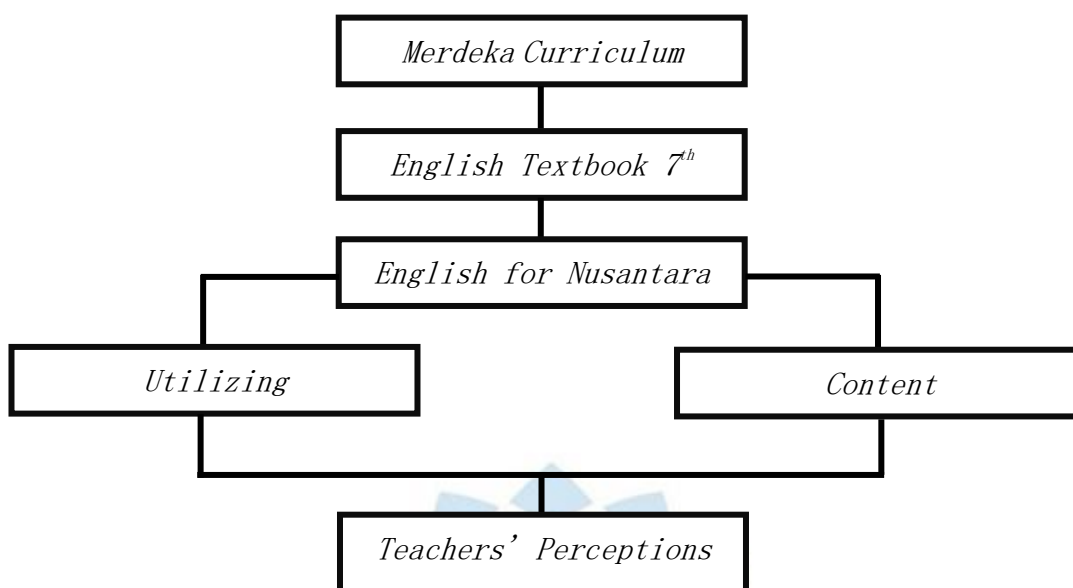
Textbooks are specifically designed to support teaching and learning in a particular subject. Textbooks are textbooks for a specific field of study, standard textbooks prepared by experts for instructional purposes and objectives; they are equipped with harmonious teaching tools that are easy for users in schools and colleges to understand high so that they can support a teaching program (Guntur, 1986). Textbooks provide a structure and framework for systematically understanding material and systematically presenting concepts, theories, or practical information. Textbooks are one of the main components of teaching and learning activities. Besides that, textbooks provide knowledge systematically, making it easier for teachers and students to learn. Based on this opinion, utilizing textbooks is based on learning objectives that refer to the curriculum. In implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum*, English textbooks are a supporting instrument in this vision. This textbook is designed to support independent and creative learning and is utilized as a guide for teaching English by teachers. A

textbook is an information and a guide for teachers to learn English (ika et al., 2022). The textbook can help students develop English language skills by presenting content from the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Tomlinson (2012) state textbooks provide a set of ideas to be studied in one textbook and are intended as the main textbook students apply in learning.

The *English for Nusantara* textbook in the *Merdeka Curriculum* supports the educational vision. *English For Nusantara*, published by the Ministry of Culture, Research, and Technology, is an English textbook for grade 7th Junior high school (Damayanti, 2022). The textbook not only contains material that is relevant to national standards but also pays attention to local wisdom and Indonesian cultural content. They learn English and develop a deeper understanding of Indonesian culture. Also, *English for Nusantara* supports independent and creative learning and guides teachers to teach English. *English for Nusantara* is aligned with the level of education set by the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This alignment creates learning experiences that are based on curriculum objectives.

The teacher's perception of the *English for Nusantara* textbook is a process of reflection on understanding and evaluation of the material presented. This will produce a meaningful picture. Robbins (2003) states that perception is an individual process to organize and interpret their sensory impressions to provide meaning to their environment. Teacher understanding or perception is essential in teacher perceptions regarding utilizing *English for Nusantara* textbooks in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Suggests that a vital principle regarding the emergence of perception is perception based on experience of human patterns based on reality studied by Mulyana (2000). In this case, the teacher can assess the extent to which the *English for Nusantara* textbook supports the achievement of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This includes evaluating the content, effectiveness, and, weaknesses of the *English for Nusantara* textbook. In this way, teacher perceptions can provide in-depth insight into how the *English for Nusantara* textbook contributes to learning the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework



G. Previous Study

This research is based on previous studies that provide insight into utilizing *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. By referring to these studies, this research aims to fill existing gaps and expand the impact of teacher perceptions in utilizing *English for Nusantara* at Islamic junior high school. Candra (2023) has researched teachers' perceptions of the feasibility of an English textbook for seventh-grade students in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This research discusses teachers' perceptions of the appropriateness and superiority of the content of *English for Nusantara* for grade 7th middle school. The respondent was an English teacher at the junior high school. This research utilizes interviews and documentation. The researcher created eight questions based on the main theories of content appropriateness and analysis of English textbooks. Researcher have analysed all indicators through interviews and document analysis in these findings. As a result, the textbook has its advantages and disadvantages. The content is complete and relevant to students' daily lives, making it easier to understand. Apart from that, the presence of Indonesian language elements such as character names, regional names, and local food is the main attraction of this textbook.

Gunawan (2023) researched teachers' perceptions of using English textbooks to teach English to *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Munawwaroh*. This research investigates teachers' perceptions of utilizing English textbooks and identifies teachers' barriers to using these textbooks. The respondents were two English teachers at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Munawwaroh*. This research uses qualitative descriptive and data collection through interviews. The study results show that teachers provide a positive attitude and adapt by changing assignments and editing material. The main challenges faced are the level of difficulty of the material and limited teaching resources. These findings may improve teachers' understanding of appropriate textbook standards and assist in formulating more relevant and communicative goals for future textbooks.

Esa (2021), conducted a study on the perceptions of English teachers related to textbooks provided by the government as a primary teaching material, focusing on English teachers' views regarding government-issued textbooks. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method through a case study, the research involved three English teachers from SMPN 4 Baubau. Findings revealed that these teachers did not adopt the government textbooks as their primary resource; instead, they preferred using textbooks from private publishers, with government materials serving only as supplementary resources.

Orfan (2021), in his research on Afghan EFL instructors' perceptions of English textbooks. This research has discussed Afghan EFL teachers' perceptions of English textbooks. This research gathered respondents from EFL teachers to understand their views on the effectiveness and relevance of textbooks in teaching English. This study utilizes a survey method to determine the perceptions of Afghan EFL teachers toward English textbooks. The survey results show that teachers have a positive perception of textbooks. They believed the textbook equally presented the four English language skills and contained adequate listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. In addition, the textbook is also rich in cultural issues relevant to the Afghan context.

Somaili (2024), Perceptions of Saudi EFL Teachers on the Adequacy of Textbooks. This study evaluates the EFL textbooks utilized in Saudi Arabian

elementary school, focusing on the perceptions of male and female teachers. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected via a 49-item questionnaire covering five evaluation criteria: layout, objectives, language methods, skills, and overall assessment. Results indicated that while the textbooks are well-designed and include necessary language skills, they inadequately meet learners' needs due to insufficient lessons, poor logical progression, and lack of supplemental materials. Recommendations for improvement include revising objectives and increasing lesson frequency to enhance educational effectiveness.

The research above has shown significant similarities between the two variables studied, as well as diversity in methods and focus. The first research focused on teachers' perceptions about the suitability of the content of the *English for Nusantara* textbook using interview methods and data analysis. Second research, this research focuses on teachers' perceptions of the utilize of English textbooks and identifies what obstacles teachers face in utilizing English textbooks. The third research focuses on English teachers' perceptions of textbooks provided by the government as the main source of learning. The fourth study, has discussed the perceptions of Afghan EFL teachers regarding English textbooks. This study gathered respondents from EFL teachers to understand their views on the effectiveness and relevance of textbooks in English language teaching. The final study, this study evaluates EFL textbooks utilized in elementary school in Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the perceptions of male and female teachers. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data was collected through a questionnaire consisting of 49 items that cover five evaluation criteria.

In this study, the researcher focused on teachers' perceptions of the utilizing and content of *English for Nusantara* in the context of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Utilizing observation, interviews, and documentation methods. Examine the perceptions of teachers in Islamic junior high school. This research is expected to provide in-depth insight into how teachers perceive *English for Nusantara* in the *Merdeka Curriculum*.