

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter contains the background of the research, research questions, the purposes of this research, the significance of this research, the conceptual framework, and previous study.

#### **A. Background**

The Merdeka curriculum is the newest curriculum that is implemented in Indonesia. The Merdeka curriculum is a diverse intracurricular learning system incorporated into the Merdeka curriculum. The curriculum will be better designed to give students enough time to study ideas and develop their skills. Teachers can select from an extensive selection of open resources so that teaching may be customized following the requirements and interests of each student. This activity can make students more responsible for the learning process (Ministry of Education, 2021)

Moreover, the Merdeka curriculum aims to emphasize Pancasila values to Indonesian students and focus on students' character and skills. The Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum model that describes the creation of a Pancasila student profile to enhance students' character and diverse skill sets as a crucial part of learning implementation. In the Merdeka curriculum, students become more active and cooperative. Students-centred is implemented in this curriculum. Moreover, the Merdeka curriculum helps students understand the material better.

Besides, the Merdeka curriculum also has English subject achievement for every phase. Phases A through C are for elementary school students. Phase D is for junior high school students, and Phase E is for senior high school students. Because this research was conducted at S.M.P.N 8 Bandung, this is an achievement that students must pass in their learning process that is appropriate for speaking well-being.

In phase D, students must interact and exchange ideas, experiences, interests, opinions, and views with teachers, peers, and others in various familiar formal and informal contexts. They also have to give their opinion and make comparisons. Moreover, students must explain and clarify their answers using basic sentences and tenses. Furthermore, students can understand text types, short messages, and advertisements. Students also have to produce their writing and understand the aim of the text.

Speaking is one of four essential skills that must be learned for people who want to acquire the English language. According to Hornby (1995), speaking is about something to talk about, saying something about something, mentioning something, having a conversation with somebody, addressing somebody in words, saying something, or expressing oneself in a particular language. In learning English, there are four essential skills that students must have. Such as vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. (Brown,2001)

In the context of students in a classroom, students will learn English material and linguistic aspects. So, students will learn how to convey their thoughts in English through verbal language. Therefore, if students already mastered the linguistics aspect and the material and are confident to express it in a classroom, they already have speaking well-being. According to Widoyoko (2019), students' speaking well-being can be affected by several factors. The first is that students have mastered the material and linguistic aspects, and the second is that students try to be confident in their abilities. The third student tries to be calm in speaking, and the fourth student has the confidence to share their opinion, stay positive, and bravely take risks.

Furthermore, the Merdeka curriculum uses project-based learning to support this speaking well-being. This model of learning involves achieving learning objectives through projects or activities. The key characteristics of project-based learning include improving students' problem-solving and critical thinking skills by discussing specific themes. Moreover, students are asked to create a product, give a presentation, and participate in a discussion

on the material. This technique will assist students in increasing their confidence in expressing their opinions and making them more responsible for the learning process. (Sadia, 2023)

Based on the observation in the classroom, students in the Merdeka curriculum can get a chance to improve their speaking skills through group or pair discussions about the material. Moreover, the teacher also actively asks students' opinions regarding the material in English which can improve their speaking skills. Furthermore, teachers also frequently ask students to have a presentation in English which can help students to elaborate their speaking skills. Besides that, there are several students who already show their confidence in speaking English.

This descriptive qualitative research will explore the strategy of implementing the Merdeka curriculum to improve students' speaking well-being. The researcher wants to investigate the significance of students' speaking skills using the Merdeka curriculum, which uses more learning sources. Students become more active in a classroom because the teacher is only the learning process facilitator.

This research focuses on teacher strategy from both the perspective of teaching strategy and curriculum implementation, which can support students in having a comfortable learning environment to achieve speaking well-being. Moreover, this research examines students' opinions of the learning process and the benefits that they got from the learning process especially in the aspect of speaking.

## **B. Research Question**

This research analyses the impact of the Merdeka curriculum on students' speaking skills until they can achieve speaking well-being. Therefore, this research formulates two research questions, including:

1. What teacher strategies of the Merdeka Curriculum contribute positively to the speaking well-being of students?
2. What is the positive effect of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation on students' speaking abilities until students can achieve well-being?

### **C. Research Purposes**

This research aims to explore the role of the Merdeka curriculum in students' speaking well-being regarding the perspective of the teacher and students in the teaching process. Therefore, there are two research purposes, including:

1. To find out the teacher strategies of the Merdeka Curriculum contribute positively to the speaking well-being of students
2. To find out the positive effect of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation on students' speaking abilities until students can achieve well-being

### **D. Research Significances**

The significance of this study is that it will be helpful theoretically and practically for both students and teachers.

#### **1 Theoretical Significances**

This research can elaborate on information about curriculum and syllabus arrangement and implementation that can support students' speaking well-being and make them more active and cooperative in the learning process. Students must become the center of the learning process, which makes them confident. Moreover, schools also have to determine whether students are comfortable in the learning process.

#### **2 Practical Significances**

Practically, this research will be helpful for both teachers and students in the learning process.

##### **a. Teacher**

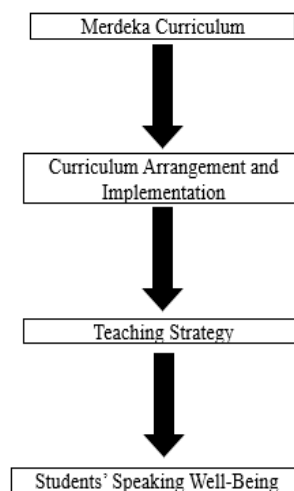
Teachers can start determining speaking well-being as the learning objective besides English knowledge. Teachers can use many fun teaching strategies that encourage students to participate in the learning process and give them practice to improve their speaking ability. Moreover, teachers must consider students' comfort in the learning process so that students can achieve speaking well-being.

b. Students

Using a Merdeka curriculum, students can actively participate in the learning process. Project-based learning and student-centered learning can give students much practice, leading to speaking well-being. Students can consider the things that can make them confident and comfortable. So they can improve their speaking skills.

**E. Conceptual Framework**

This research analyses the impact of a Merdeka curriculum on students' speaking well-being. Several aspects are considered to improve students' speaking well-being. Such as the Merdeka curriculum, the arrangement and implementation of the curriculum, and the teaching strategy can then support students speaking well-being. The conceptual framework is specified like this.



Figures 1.1 Framework of Merdeka Curriculum to Students Speaking Well-Being

The conceptual framework above combines the elements of the Merdeka curriculum, curriculum arrangement and implementation, teacher strategy, and students' speaking well-being. A Merdeka curriculum has various extracurriculars with optimal learning content, giving students time to understand the content and strengthening competence. (Ministry of Education, 2024). Merdeka learning is when a person has the right to

independence in investigating, thinking, and doing things from several sources. (Efendi & Suastra, 2023). A Merdeka curriculum aims to actualize meaningful learning and perform well in developing students' faith, worship of God Almighty, development of noble morals and creativity, and initiative as lifelong learners with Pancasila character. (Wibowo, 2024). Every learner in the Merdeka curriculum is allowed to become more engaged in their studies in the appropriate ways. (Fauzan, 2023).

Based on the definition above, a Merdeka curriculum is a new curriculum implemented in Indonesia that considers optimal learning content by letting students and teachers use any learning sources. A Merdeka curriculum also emphasizes students' behavior as a learning objective. Students have an essential role in the Merdeka curriculum as the center of the learning process, while the teacher is only the facilitator.

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, there are thirteen steps in arranging and implementing a Merdeka school curriculum. The first step is organizing the school's operational curriculum. In this step, the school must develop the curriculum based on the school conditions and reflect on the results of an analysis of school characteristics that involve representatives of students, parents, and society, as well as show the school's vision and mission. The second step is arranging the learning objectives. This step requires the school to develop learning objectives supporting students' needs and learning achievements.

The third step is the learning and assessment plan. The school must develop the learning and assessment plan from the government based on students' needs. The fourth step is the development and use of teaching tools. In this step, the teacher can combine many teaching tools to adapt to students' needs while developing the module. The fifth step is project planning to strengthen student profiles in Pancasila. Teachers are required to develop the project module from the government to adapt to the local context, participants' needs, and interests by involving opinions and students' ideas. The sixth step is implementing the project to strengthen

student profiles in Pancasila. Implement a profile-strengthening project for Pancasila students by number as recommended by the government, and the project will lead students to do problem-solving.

The seventh step is implementing student learning. In this implementation, teachers must use various teaching methods suitable to students' needs, learning achievements, interests, and talents by being facilitators. Thus, students can be more responsible for the learning process. The eighth step is assessment integration in learning. This step requires the teacher to do an initial assessment to know each student's ability. After that, the teacher can make a suitable learning process to achieve learning objectives, which will be used to arrange the curriculum. The ninth step is appropriate learning based on students learning stage education (basic and intermediate). Based on the data from the initial assessment, the teacher can do the teaching process based on the students' stage. For those students who are not ready to learn based on their stages, there will be extra classes to support them in achieving the learning objective.

The tenth step involves teachers collaborating on curriculum and learning. Teachers arrange the learning process for one semester by sharing information about students' progress and teaching tools for curriculum development in the school. The eleventh step is parental and family collaboration in the learning process. Teachers communicate with the parents about students' learning progress. Teachers advise parents about a to-do list supporting students in learning. The twelfth step is a collaboration with society, community, and industry. Schools involving society, community, and industry sustainably to support the learning process and strengthening projects Pancasila student profile.

The last step is reflection, evaluation, and quality improvement of curriculum implementation. All of the teachers reflect and evaluate the implementation of curriculum and learning. Results of reflection (experience and teacher perceptions) are completed with Education Report data as a reference for the learning plan. (Ministry of Education c. r., 2022)



Teaching is a system that leads the learning process. It is a set of activities that support students in achieving learning objectives by encouraging beneficial communication between educators and learners (Salandanan, 2008). A strategy is designated to move a group or individual to follow a particular procedure and method according to the direction to be followed (Salandanan, 2008). So, it can be said that a teaching strategy is a set of activities with the direction of doing something that can support students in achieving learning objectives.

The role of students is essential in a Merdeka curriculum because students are the main focus of the learning process. The student-centered method relies on constructivism, which implies that learners interpret new information by connecting it to prior knowledge. (Tang, 2023). So, the teaching strategy in a Merdeka curriculum must be student-learner-centered.

Merdeka curricula have several teaching models, such as project-based, problem-based, inquiry-based, discovery-based, and cooperative learning. The first is Project-based learning (PJBL), which involves starting or ending a project to obtain knowledge. It is intended to work on challenging issues that students must investigate and comprehend. The second one is problem-based learning, which models that provide new knowledge to students by presenting a problem for them to solve. However, teachers still must ask students to express themselves—Genuine and current issues. (Fahira, 2023)

The third one is inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning involves students individually generating questions, researching, and following up. Tests or studies to obtain the knowledge they require. This methodology guides students to discover the material delivered in the lesson through questions and self-reflection. The fourth is discovery-based learning, a model that focuses on actively and indecently comprehending a material notion to draw attention. Conclusion. This learning technique requires students to engage more in learning activities where the teacher is a supervisor. The teacher asks the kids. a series of questions about the



material. The students were then assigned to discover and research, and they decided to use this observation as capital for answering teacher questions. (Fahira, 2023)

The fifth one is cooperative learning, which is Model collaborative learning with a specific capacity. The goal is to motivate group members to achieve results and maximize learning. This methodology aims to maximize learning results based on established goals. (Fahira, 2023)

From all of the teaching models in the Merdeka curriculum, the implementation emphasizes student-centered learning and discussion, which can help students convey their ideas. Besides, the teacher's role here is just a facilitator. This learning model supports students in practicing their speaking ability in the classroom.

According to Harmer, speaking activities can give students confidence and satisfaction. If a teacher can do the learning activity properly, like roleplay, discussion, and problem-solving, it will have a tremendous effect, and students will enjoy the learning process. (Harmer, 2007) Speaking is a skill that includes deciding what to say, how to say it, and how to develop it. The correctness of our speaking is determined by several aspects such as word choice, efficiency, developing the point, the aims of speaking, and the interaction with the audience. (Bygate, 1987)

Psychological well-being refers to how well a person's life is going. It is a combination of feeling good and working well. Sustainable well-being does not necessitate constant happiness; experiencing unpleasant emotions (e.g., disappointment, failure, loss) is a normal part of life, and managing these negative or painful emotions is critical for long-term well-being. (Huppert, 2009)

Speaking well-being is affected by students' self-confidence. Students with low self-confidence will find it challenging to reach speaking well-being. Vice versa, if students have high self-confidence, reaching speaking well-being is easier. (Mollah, 2019)

## **F. Previous Study**

The first is a study by Muh Shofiyuddin, Nina Sofiana, Santi Andriyani, and Husni Mubarak (2023) titled *Students' Perception Toward Merdeka Curriculum Implementation Through Project-Based Learning in Speaking Class*. In this qualitative research, the data showed that most of the students gave positive responses. Students admit that their speaking skills were increased by being taught using Project-based Learning. It can be concluded that implementing the Merdeka curriculum through Project Learning gained a very positive perception from the students.

The second one is a study by Arina Ayuningtyas (2023) titled *Strategies Used by The Teacher in Teaching Speaking in Merdeka Curriculum at S.M.P.N. 13 Surakarta*. This research showed that English teachers used two strategies to teach speaking in the Merdeka curriculum. They were role-playing and answering questions as strategies for teaching speaking. Then, the teachers implemented these strategies based on the module and teaching procedure: pre-activity, while-activity, and post-activity.

The third one is a study by Aulia Putri Rahmawati and Etika Dewi Kusumaningtyas (2024) titled *Implementation of Project-Based Learning Though Merdeka Curriculum in Teaching Speaking Skills*. The result of this study is that implementing the Merdeka curriculum using project-based learning has a good effect on enhancing students' speaking ability because the learning process is focused on students' needs.

Based on three previous studies, this research's gap is observing teachers' strategies to make students feel comfortable and want to improve their speaking skills. Moreover, the Merdeka curriculum positively impacts their speaking skills until they can achieve well-being in speaking. Furthermore, this research explored the sides of students and how they feel about the learning process. Besides that, this research also examines the information about the arrangement and implementation of curriculum that impact students' speaking well-being.