

**ENGLISH TEACHERS' PREPARATIONS TOWARD  
*MERDEKA BELAJAR* CURRICULUM OF *SEKOLAH  
PENGGERAK* IN PALEMBANG**

**A THESIS**

by

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**English Education Study Program**

**Language and Arts Education Department**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITAS SRIWIJAYA  
INDRALAYA  
2022**

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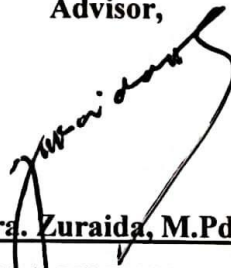
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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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State that the thesis entitled "*English Teachers' Preparations Toward Merdeka Belajar Curriculum of Sekolah Penggerak in Palembang*" is my own work and I did not plagiarize or use inappropriate quotation in violation of the ethic and standards endorsed by Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 concerning the plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, if I am found to have plagiarized this work, I deserve to go to court.

Indralaya, December 10<sup>th</sup> 2022

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## DEDICATION

*This thesis is dedicated to:*

*My beloved and lovely parents, Mama and Papa who always believe in me in whatever steps I choose and are always proud of whatever achievements I get. Thank you so much for the support, help, advice, care, and love you give me. I love you to the moon, the galaxy, the universe and back.*

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Hopefully, this thesis will be able to be useful for teaching and learning in English Education Study Program, the schools in Indonesia, also all of the people who need it.

Palembang,  
The writer

Deby Dwi Juliani

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**ENGLISH TEACHERS' PREPARATIONS TOWARD  
MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM OF SEKOLAH  
PENGGERAK IN PALEMBANG**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is where teachers can design learning according to their student's needs, interests, and talents. A teacher's careful preparation is essential in designing excellent and effective learning. This study aims to describe English teachers' preparations toward the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum and to find out whether teachers have implemented English learning in accordance with the characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach by interviewing, observing, and collecting documentation from seven English teachers of five *Sekolah Penggerak* in Palembang. The data analysis technique in this research was in the form of descriptive analysis. This study resulted in two things. First, the preparation of the English teachers in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum has been carried out with careful preparations; even though the teachers faced some difficulties, these were resolved thanks to the cooperation of fellow teachers. Second, teachers have implemented English learning in accordance with the characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, which can be seen from the *Pancasila* character development activities in the classroom, scant learning material but in-depth understanding, and differentiated learning implementation.

**Keywords:** *English Teachers' Preparations, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, Sekolah Penggerak*

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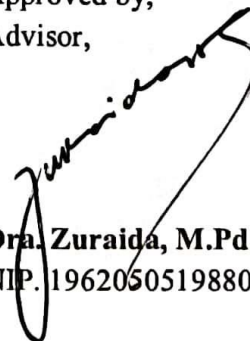
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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher explains (1) background of the study, (2) research questions, (3) research objectives, and (4) significances of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Changes in the education system in Indonesia have continued to occur in the last few years. Starting with the replacement of the KTSP-2006 Curriculum into the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) in 2014 for simplification and thematic-integrative reasons. K-13 focuses on student-centered learning to encourage students to be more active in learning.

Not long after the implementation of K-13 at all levels of education in Indonesia, in early 2020, the education system was changed to online distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic of COVID-19 has caused the most significant disruption of education systems in human history, affecting approximately 1.6 billion students in over 200 countries (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). For the reason of breaking the spreading chain of the COVID-19 virus, the government closed all access to face-to-face education, forcing teachers and students to study remotely by utilizing technology and the internet.

In mid-2021, in the new normal era, the government imposed a limited face-to-face learning system, namely face-to-face learning with a limited number of students and time. Many rules and regulations must be applied in limited face-to-face learning in schools. Cindy et al. (2022) stated that limited face-to-face learning needs to pay attention to three things: vaccinating all teachers, staff, and students, increasing the immunity of school residents, and preparing facilities and infrastructure according to health protocols. Schools applied an emergent curriculum in the limited face-to-face learning system, namely the Balitbang Curriculum. Balitbang stands for Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan dan Perbukuan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Research and Development Agency and Books of the Ministry of Education and Culture). This curriculum was created and simplified specifically to simplify basic competencies

(Kompetensi Dasar/KD) for learning activities and was used temporarily during the pandemic era.

Recently, in mid-2022, when schools were back to implementing 100% face-to-face learning, returning to traditional learning before the pandemic era, the government again made a policy on the latest education system. The government launched *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum and *Sekolah Penggerak* Program.

The breakthrough of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) regarding the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is intended to advance education in Indonesia. This idea is a very strategic and innovative step and is a big challenge in the world of education. *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be optimized so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. *Merdeka Belajar* (freedom to learn) is the freedom of education units (schools, teachers, and students) to innovate, be independent, and creative (Syafi'i, 2021). In *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, teachers are free to design learning according to their students' needs, interests, and talents by referring to the learning outcomes that the government has set for each level of education in Indonesia.

One of the *Merdeka Belajar* Programs presented by the Ministry of Education and Culture is the launch of the *Sekolah Penggerak* Program. *Sekolah Penggerak* Program is an effort to realize the vision of Indonesian education in realizing an advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent, and has personality through the creation of *Pancasila* students. *Sekolah Penggerak* focuses on holistically developing student learning outcomes, including competence and character, starting with superior human resources (principals and teachers) (Sekolah.penggerak.kemdikbud.go.id, 2022). *Sekolah Penggerak* is a school with a competent principal who is expected to be able to guide teachers in that school to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum to the fullest. Then, it is hoped that this school will become an example and can guide other schools in the vicinity with cooperation between schools.

Regarding the implementation of the new curriculum, *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, teachers are expected to be ready to carry out their duties and

obligations in order to achieve maximum learning outcomes. A professional teacher must be able to prepare learning activities to be excellent and effective. With careful preparation, a teacher gains self-control in order to improve his teaching method and also as a guide for teachers in carrying out their duties. As it is known that in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, teachers are free to design learning according to the needs and interests of students, so it is very essential to know more about how are the teachers' preparations before carrying out learning in the classroom.

Based on Sekolah.penggerak.kemdikbud.go.id (2022), there are 14.237 schools of the *Sekolah Penggerak* Program in 34 provinces and 509 regencies/cities. Among the thousands of schools, there are only 66 *Sekolah Penggerak* in Palembang. As stated earlier, *Sekolah Penggerak* implements the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, which means that every teacher in the school is obliged to design learning according to the student's characteristics and the school's circumstances. One of the lessons designed is English learning. In elementary school, students did not study English as a compulsory subject. Some state schools do not have English subjects in their school program. Following the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum policy, 7th-grade junior high school students are in phase D of English learning. Hence, the 7th-grade English teacher must be able to design English learning that can meet their students' needs and must be in accordance with phase D learning outcomes.

Therefore, based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in doing a research entitled "ENGLISH TEACHERS' PREPARATIONS TOWARD MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM OF SEKOLAH PENGGERAK IN PALEMBANG." The participants of this research are 7th-grade junior high school English teachers of *Sekolah Penggerak* in Palembang.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher focuses her study on teaching preparations by English teachers toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum of *Sekolah Penggerak*. The research questions are as follows:

1. How are English teachers' preparations toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum of *Sekolah Penggerak* in Palembang?
2. Have the teachers implemented English learning in accordance with the characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

Referring to the research questions above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To describe English teachers' preparations toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum of *Sekolah Penggerak* in Palembang.
2. To find out whether teachers have implemented English learning in accordance with the characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

## **1.4 Significances of the Study**

This study is expected to benefit English teachers and future researchers. The following are the significant contributions of the study:

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Benefit**

Theoretically, the results of this study can be a scientific contribution to English education research. This research can also be a reference for researchers examining English teachers' preparations toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in junior high *Sekolah Penggerak* in Indonesia.

### **1.4.2 Practical Benefit**

#### **1.4.2.1 For Teachers**

This research can be a reference for English teachers to find out what and how the preparations teachers need toward the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, which can help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of English learning in the classroom specifically in *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.



#### 1.4.2.2 For Future Researchers

This research can be additional knowledge regarding research on English teachers' preparations toward *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. This research can also be a reference for similar research.

#### 1.4.2.3 For Government of Education in Indonesia

This research is useful for the government to obtain information regarding the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in *Sekolah Penggerak*. The government can also know teachers' difficulties and needs in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, especially in English lessons, so that the government can improve them.

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