

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English language teaching in Indonesia has undergone significant changes with the introduction of *the Merdeka Curriculum*. The introduction of the *Merdeka Curriculum* has transformed English language teaching in Indonesia, allowing for greater adaptability in lesson planning and delivery" (Hunaepi et al., 2024). This curriculum is designed to give teachers flexibility in developing and delivering lessons to be more responsive to students' needs (Arjuna, 2023). In this context, it is important to analyze the teaching methods used by English teachers to understand how effectively this curriculum is implemented.

Instructional media have been considered a tool of English language teaching to support students' learning. Teachers use instructional media in the teaching process to help them in delivering English material (Alamsyah, 2019). Scanlan (2010) states that instructional media encompasses all the materials and physical means an instructor and teacher might use to implement instruction and facilitate learners' achievement of instructional objectives. Instructional media is an important element in the teaching and learning process, as stated by Tanggoro (2015), that the role of media is very important in the English teaching-learning process to achieve the instructional goal. Besides that, to achieve instructional goals and learning objectives, the teacher must choose media, methods, and techniques that are appropriate to the characteristics of students.

According to the study conducted by Jon et al. (2021), students' perceptions of English language teaching are significantly influenced by the use of instructional media. Utilizing instructional media is crucial for making learning activities more engaging, effective, and appealing to students. In line with Sudjana and Arsyad (2007), as cited in Utami (2019), instructional media offer several benefits, including: (1) enhancing student attention, (2) clarifying and simplifying learning materials, (3) providing varied learning processes that prevent student boredom and conserves the teacher's energy, and (4) enabling students to engage in diverse activities such as observing, demonstrating, and more. With these benefits, teachers can actively involve students in the teaching and learning process, thereby achieving educational objectives.

One of the roles of teachers is to develop effective strategies for teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Gushendra (2017) explained that teachers should have several instructional media to motivate their students to learn English. The students need a modification of teaching, which can involve them in English. Moreover, Dewi et al. (2020) found that combining the material with any devices, such as mobile devices, can be an alternative strategy to give students experiences in learning English. According to Ali (2009), there are two aspects to support successful learning, such as the teaching material and the instructional media. The teaching materials depend on the syllabus of the course in each school. Besides, the instructional media for the teaching and learning process depend on the teachers' knowledge of implementing it.

The use of instructional media in the teaching and learning process is essential. According to Adegbia and Fakomogbon (2012), instructional media are the human and non-human devices, materials, or methodologies teachers use to overcome all learning problems. This means that instructional media is the key to effectively transferring knowledge from the teacher to the students. Mateer et al. (2018) also stated that the use of media in teaching English would help students relate the concepts more easily to the context.

Regarding the instructional media in teaching English, several studies have been carried out. Ristika et al. (2020), found that English teachers used several kinds of instructional media, such as real objects or models, slides, pictures, video, web, audio, books, and boards. Furthermore, Sari (2023) found that the teachers used three procedures in the use of instructional media in teaching English: teachers showed the instructional media to the students, teachers explained the material by using instructional media, and teachers used instructional media to give exercises.

In addition, Nastiti (2018) stated that in the selection of instructional media, teachers believed that they should make a consideration in choosing media that should be based on the curriculum and the 4 topics. A 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 (Lee et al., 2010). To achieve the national educational goals set by the Indonesian government, the curriculum should be

arranged and formulated strategically into certain programs (Nur & Sulistyani, 2018).

Education in Indonesia has undergone several curriculum changes. This is caused by several factors such as the changes in society's needs, political issues, the new insight into teaching teaching-learning process, development of industry and technology (Pajarwati et al., 2021). *The Merdeka Curriculum* is a new offer in the world of education. The implementation of *The Merdeka Curriculum* is intended to answer the challenges of educational principles in the digital-based industrial era or industry 4.0. In line with the use of instructional media which is a form of technology integration in the world of education. *The Merdeka curriculum* was designed as part of the government's efforts to overcome the learning crisis, which has gotten worse as a result of the pandemic. Students' poor learning outcomes, even like reading literacy, are a defining feature of this crisis (Kemdikbud, 2022).

The *Merdeka Curriculum* did not simply emerge in Indonesia's education system; it required a lengthy process starting from the 1947 curriculum, KTSP, K-13, to the present *Merdeka Curriculum*. In fact, the *Merdeka Curriculum* was introduced as a solution for the education system in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic because it is considered more flexible, concise, and straightforward to support learning loss recovery during this period. Additionally, the *Merdeka Curriculum* aims to improve the quality of learning, reduce academic burdens, encourage teachers to be more creative and innovative, and shape students' character to be more independent, critical, and socially sensitive (Rahayu et al.,

2022). However, in terms of its implementation, the *Merdeka Curriculum* system is not final for all schools in Indonesia. Schools or teachers are still given the freedom to choose between the K-13 curriculum or the *Merdeka Curriculum*, with the hope of preventing disparities in learning across different regions.

The *Merdeka Curriculum* emphasises the development of 21st century competencies, such as critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills. Therefore, the instructional media chosen must be able to support the development of these competencies (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). For example, the use of learning videos that involve dialogue or group discussions can improve students' communication skills. In this case, SMP N 28 OKU as one of the educational institutions implementing the *Merdeka Curriculum*, faces challenges in selecting and using effective instructional media. At the eighth-grade level, students have a variety of different characteristics and learning styles. Therefore, teachers need to understand and analyze the most appropriate media to use in teaching English. Smith, J. and Brown, L. (2020) states Appropriate media selection is expected to increase student engagement, strengthen understanding, and facilitate the achievement of learning objectives.

The analysis of instructional media used by English teachers at SMP N 28 OKU is crucial for understanding how these media contribute to the effectiveness of learning. This study aims to identify the types of media used and analyze how they support the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. Therefore, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for teachers in designing and implementing better learning processes. One important reason for conducting this

analysis is the variability in the use of instructional media across different schools. Each school has different resources and facilities, which affect the choice of media used. At SMP N 28 OKU, teachers are expected to utilize information and communication technology in the learning process, such as the use of online learning platforms and interactive applications. This is important so that English learning is not only focused on cognitive aspects but also engages the affective and psychomotor aspects of students.

In addition to the media aspect, it is also important to consider other factors that influence the effectiveness of learning, such as teachers' skills and competence in using learning media greatly influence the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Teachers who are skilled in utilising information and communication technology can create a more interesting and interactive learning experience (Hwang & Chang, 2019). Therefore, this study will also observe how teachers prepare and implement instructional media in English language learning.

In relation to the use of instructional media, teachers need to be careful in selecting or determining the media to be used. The accuracy and precision in choosing instructional media significantly support the effectiveness of the learning activities conducted and help achieve the learning objectives in the teaching and learning process. Research indicates that appropriate media selection can enhance student engagement and facilitate a deeper understanding of the material (Mayer, 2017). Furthermore, when teachers utilize varied and relevant instructional media, learning activities become more interesting, which can

generate motivation among students. This is crucial, as motivated students are more likely to focus their attention on the topics discussed during learning activities (Hattie & Donoghue, 2016). Thus, the thoughtful integration of instructional media not only aids in delivering content but also fosters an environment conducive to active learning and participation (Baker, 2019).

Based on the above background, this study aims to answer important questions regarding the analysis of instructional media used by English teachers at SMP N 28 OKU in the context of the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of better teaching practices, as well as provide useful information for decision-makers in education to improve the quality of learning in schools. With a better understanding of the effective use of instructional media, it is hoped that teachers at SMP N 28 OKU can be better prepared for the challenges of implementing *the Merdeka Curriculum*. This research not only aims to identify and analyse the media used, but also to provide recommendations that can assist teachers in designing more innovative and effective lessons in the future.

B. Problem of the Study

1. Limitation of the Problem

This research focused on the use of instructional media in teaching English with *the Merdeka Curriculum*. The researcher selected the eighth-grade students because at the secondary school level. The subject of this research was an English teacher at SMP N 28 OKU who teaches eighth graders.

This research looks at how the teacher uses instructional media to teach English with *the Merdeka curriculum* at eighth graders at SMP N 28 OKU.

2. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the research problem can be formulated as follows:

How is the teacher's implementation of instructional media in relation with the *Merdeka Curriculum* at the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 28 OKU in the academic year 2024/2025?

C. Objectives of the Study

In line with the research problem stated above, the objective of this study is :

To describe how do the teacher implementation instructional media in relation with the Merdeka Curriculum at the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 28 OKU in the academic year 2024/2025?

D. Significance of the Study

The result of the study is expected to contribute to the following:

1. For the Student

If the teacher uses appropriate instructional media and the appropriate ways of teaching English using instructional media, the learning process will be more planned, directed, and interesting. Students can understand

the materials that have been taught easily. It means that students can achieve their learning objectives effectively.

2. For the Teacher

This study references the implementation of instructional media and the *Merdeka Curriculum* framework for English teachers in other schools, even teachers in any subjects. Teachers used to get references to determine appropriate instructional media, so teachers can try to use instructional media that are appropriate to their classroom circumstances and students' learning characteristics. Teachers should know that there will be no perfect instructional media in teaching because every media has advantages and disadvantages. Thus, teachers should be creative and always try to combine or integrate any instructional media to get a better result.

3. For the School

The findings of this study are expected to help schools enhance their educational strategies by integrating effective instructional media into the curriculum. Schools may benefit from understanding how instructional media can improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Moreover, the results of this study may support the development of professional training programs for teachers, ensuring that they are well-prepared to use various instructional tools effectively. This, in turn, may contribute to a more dynamic and innovative learning environment.

4. For the Other Researcher

This study is expected to provide useful information in the field of English language teaching, particularly in selecting appropriate instructional media based on the Merdeka Curriculum. It can serve as a valuable reference for future researchers who intend to conduct similar studies related to instructional media and curriculum implementation.

E. Definitions of The Key Terms

In order to clarify the title, the researchers give the definition of key terms to avoid misunderstanding.

1. Instructional media

Instructional media is a tool used by teachers to explain material in the classroom, which is anything that can be used to stimulate children's thoughts, attention, and feelings, to encourage the learning process (Rachmijati, 2020).

2. Teaching English

Teaching English in the digital age requires teachers to integrate technology, adapt to learners' needs, and foster digital literacy, which enhances learners' engagement and language proficiency Hwang, G.-J., & Chang, H.-F., 2019).

3. *Merdeka Curriculum*

Kemdikbud (2022) explained Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with various intra-curricular learning where the content will be more 14 optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen

competence. Teachers have the flexibility to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be adapted to the learning needs and interests of students.