

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that 70% of 15-year-old Indonesian students are below the minimum competency level in reading and basic math (McComas, 2014). This PISA score has not significantly increased in the last 10-15 years. A study reveals significant gaps in learning quality between regions and socio-economic groups, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Pascoe et al., 2022).

To address this, the Ministry of Education and Culture has simplified the curriculum in special conditions (emergency curriculum) to mitigate learning loss during the pandemic. Results from 31.5% of schools using the emergency curriculum demonstrate a 73% reduction in the impact on literacy and an 86% reduction in the impact on numeracy (Hindriyanti et al., 2023).

To support Indonesia's educational vision and restore learning, Kurikulum Merdeka (formerly called the prototype curriculum) was developed as a more flexible framework. It emphasizes essential material and the development of students' character and competencies. Character development aligns with the vision of Indonesian education: "Creating an advanced Indonesia that is sovereign, independent, and has personality through the creation of Pancasila Students." The Pancasila student profile includes six dimensions: 1) Faith, fear of God Almighty, and noble character, 2) Independence, 3) Cooperation, 4) Global-mindedness, 5) Critical reasoning, and 6) Creativity. The Pancasila Student profile is "Indonesian students being lifelong learners who are competent, possess character, and behave according to Pancasila values" (Nurani et al., 2022).

The Learning Outcome in Kurikulum Merdeka is still very new in Indonesian education, so some teachers do not understand it yet. Furthermore, based on the feedback received by the Ministry of Education and Culture, some educators still have difficulty fully understanding Learning Outcomes (Aditomo, 2022) . Therefore, educators can be encouraged to participate in communities where they

can develop their professionalism and learn more about Learning Outcomes and their role in facilitating students to achieve them. The previous curriculum, specifically the *Kurikulum 2013*, included KI or *Kompetensi Inti* (Core Competence) and KD or *Kompetensi Dasar* (Basic Competence). In contrast, based on government regulation in 2022, Kurikulum Merdeka replaced the KI and KD with CP or *Capaian Pembelajaran* (Learning Outcomes) (Aditomo, 2022).

Learning outcomes are a key concept in Kurikulum Merdeka, presented as a comprehensive set of competencies and materials in narrative form. Learning outcomes are important for teachers in setting goals and planning lessons. These outcomes determine the competencies that students need to achieve at each phase of their development. They integrate knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward learning. This framework is outlined in the Decree of the Director General of Education Number 033 of 2022. In addition, Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 23 of 2006 explains competency as a combination of knowledge, behavior and skills that students must acquire through the learning process (Sudiby, 2006).

Kurikulum Merdeka adapts student learning outcomes to student development stages by dividing learning outcomes into age phases. Different from the previous curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) which was timed per year, the term used in Kurikulum Merdeka is "phase". Thus, teachers who previously studied using Kurikulum 2013 where competencies were achieved every year need to adapt to the Learning Outcomes in Kurikulum Merdeka designed for each phase. Each phase represents the level of competence of each learner in a lesson. There are six phases in Kurikulum Merdeka, namely: for elementary school, phase A is for grades 1 and 2, phase B is for grades 2 and 3, and phase C is for grades 5 and 6. For junior high schools and the equivalent there is phase D for grades 7, 8, and 9. For high school and the equivalent there is phase E for grade 10, and phase F for grade 11 and grade 12, with an additional phase for PAUD (*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini- Early childhood education programs*) level.

The three aspects of competency in Learning Outcome, namely knowledge, behavior, and skills align with the domains in the Revised Bloom's

Taxonomy: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Therefore the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to analyze Learning Outcome.

Even though Kurikulum Merdeka has only been implemented for three years, research has been carried out to evaluate Learning Outcomes based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, as seen in “Analysis of Arabic Language Learning Outcome using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy” by Rizal Maulana (Maulana, 2022) and also in “Analyzing the Senior High Schools Learning Outcomes of Kurikulum Merdeka using the Revised Bloom ’ s Taxonomy” by Benedict, N. (Benedict, 2023).

Given this information, the researcher is interested in studying the learning outcome of phase A English subject in Kurikulum Merdeka based on the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The researcher chose to research Phase A because no one has researched Phase A and besides, in Kurikulum Merdeka phase A is the first of 6 phases from phase A to F.

1.2. Statements of the Problem

In relevance to the title and the background of the study above, this study investigates the following problems:

1. Does the English learning outcome of phase A contain complete domains of taxonomy (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor)?
2. Does the English learning outcome contain both Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)?
3. Does the English learning outcome of Phase A logically place the thinking skills in the hierarchy of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which runs from LOTS to HOTS?

1.3. Objective of the study

The objectives of the study, derived from the formulated research questions, are outlined as follows:

1. To confirm whether the English learning outcome of Phase A contains complete of taxonomy (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor).

2. To confirm whether the English learning outcome of Phase A contains both Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).
3. To confirm whether the English learning outcome of Phase A logically places the thinking skills within the hierarchy of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which runs from LOTS to HOTS.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on three significant points: Kurikulum Merdeka, the English Learning Outcome, and the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with diverse learning and focuses on essential content so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Nurani et al., 2022). Kurikulum Merdeka is designed with diverse intra-curricular learning, optimizing content to allow sufficient time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Kurikulum Merdeka is one form of government policy that can be used as an alternative to anticipate the occurrence of learning loss conditions in the learning process. This can be seen from several characteristics of Kurikulum Merdeka, which are very suitable for learning conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic, such as focusing on essential materials, being project-based to shape the character of Pancasila students (Wahyuni, 2022), and being flexible according to the needs and character of each school (Rizaldi & Fatimah, 2022).

Learning outcomes describe what students should be able to achieve by the end of a course. This can take the form of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes or behavior. Learning outcomes are the first element to improve in course design as subsequent assessments and activities will align with these (Buffalo, 2024) .

The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is a widely used educational framework that classifies cognitive skills into six hierarchical levels: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create (Wilson, 2016). This taxonomy offers a structured way to understand and categorize different levels of thinking skills, progressing from

lower-order thinking skills to higher-order thinking skills. Emphasizing that higher-order skills build upon lower-order skills.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is to analyze the English Learning Outcome of Phase A in Kurikulum Merdeka using the revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework. The analysis focuses on identifying the cognitive processes and levels of complexity required by each English Learning Outcome and mapping them onto the appropriate domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

This study focuses on analyzing whether the English learning outcome of Phase A in Kurikulum Merdeka contains complete domains of taxonomy (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor), contains both Lower-Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), and logically places the thinking skills in the hierarchy of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which runs from LOTS to HOTS.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights and improvements to the field of English language education for the following sites: The English Department students, the educators, the English Department, the government (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology), and the other researcher.

The study's focus on this taxonomy allows for an assessment of how well Kurikulum Merdeka aligns with established educational standards. The findings may contribute to discussions on the relevance and alignment of the curriculum with broader educational goals and standards, facilitating improvements in curriculum design and implementation.

Educators can benefit from the study's findings by gaining insights into the cognitive demands of the curriculum, enabling them to tailor their teaching approaches to foster a deeper understanding and application of English language skills.

Researchers, policymakers, and educators can use the findings to inform future studies, policy decisions, and instructional practices, creating a cumulative impact on the advancement of educational research.

Institutions and educational authorities can use the study's outcomes to make informed decisions about curriculum development, revision, or adaptation. The research may guide stakeholders in making evidence-based choices to enhance the overall quality of English language education in line with contemporary educational theories and frameworks.

In summary, the significance of the study lies in its potential to inform and improve the English learning outcomes of Kurikulum Merdeka by employing the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a robust analytical framework. The insights gained from this research can contribute to better educational practices, curriculum development, and overall improvements in English language education.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some key terms used in this study are defined as follows.

- a. Revised Bloom's Taxonomy:** Revised Bloom's Taxonomy is a framework for categorizing educational goals and objectives according to cognitive processes and levels of complexity. It consists of six cognitive domains arranged in a hierarchical order, namely remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Wilson, 2016) .
- b. Learning Outcome:** Learning outcomes specify what students are expected to accomplish by the conclusion of a course. These outcomes can manifest as transformations in knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behavior. They are the primary focus for enhancement in course design since subsequent assessments and activities will be aligned with these outcomes (Buffalo, 2024) .
- c. Kurikulum Merdeka:** Kurikulum Merdeka is a set of planned educational experiences designed to achieve specific learning outcomes. Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the

content will be more optimal for students, so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Nurani et al., 2022).