

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the significance of character education in the Indonesian education system, particularly within the framework of the 2013 curriculum and Kurikulum Merdeka. It introduces the Pancasila Student Profile and its six dimensions and discusses the critical role of textbooks in supporting character education. Additionally, this chapter outlines the research background, identifies the research problem, states the research question, defines the purpose of the study, and highlights its significance for various stakeholders.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Since introducing the 2013 curriculum, the Indonesian education system has aimed beyond merely assessing students' academic achievements and skills. A key component of this curriculum is character education, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral and ethical values of students. Character education, as defined by Singh (2019), refers to the conscious effort to develop a noble character based on universally accepted values that benefit both individuals and society. Kemendiknas (2010, in Thoyyibah et al., 2019) stated that the 2013 curriculum integrates 18 core character traits into the learning process, such as religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curious, nationalist, patriotic, appreciative, communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, caring environmental, socially conscious, and responsible.

Despite these efforts, various challenges remain in implementing character education effectively, particularly in addressing behavioral issues among students, such as bullying and inappropriate social behaviors (Annisa et al., 2020). To address these concerns, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology introduced the Kurikulum Merdeka in 2022, which emphasizes project-based learning to integrate academic competencies with character development. Central to this curriculum is the Pancasila Student Profile, encompassing six dimensions:

Faith, Devotion to God Almighty, and Noble Character; Global Diversity; Collaboration; Independence; Critical Reasoning; and Creativity (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

Building on the foundation laid by the 2013 curriculum, the Kurikulum Merdeka offers a more flexible approach to education, allowing teachers to design learning experiences tailored to students' needs. One of its key innovations is the emphasis on project-based learning, which fosters both academic competencies and the development of character values. Within this framework, the Pancasila Student Profile serves as a guiding concept to cultivate holistic student development, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to society.

As Bialik et al. (2015) argue, character education is essential for preparing students to navigate the complexities of the 21st century, equipping them to thrive as responsible citizens. Putri et al. (2022) highlight that character education in the Kurikulum Merdeka is designed to foster students' morality and integrity, creating a generation that excels intellectually while upholding values essential for thriving in a modern and interconnected society. In this context, the renewed focus on character education within the Kurikulum Merdeka addresses the growing need for students to develop both academically and morally, providing them with the tools necessary to face modern societal challenges.

This Pancasila Student Profile is applied to daily learning in every subject, such as English through textbooks. In the English textbook, there are various kinds of written texts, spoken texts, materials, and practice questions that have been adapted to the Kurikulum Merdeka. Torres & Hutchinson (1994, in Idris, 2023) stated that textbooks are an important tool for meeting various needs that arise in classrooms and broader contexts. According to Wardani et al. (2019), textbooks play an important role in the learning process. Textbooks can influence the formation of students' character and personality. According to Nisa (2022), material in textbooks can motivate students to think and act according to what they have learned from the textbook.

However, while the Pancasila Student Profile aims to support holistic student development, its integration into learning resources, such as English textbooks, remains inconsistent. Previous studies, such as those by Idris (2023), highlight these inconsistencies, noting that while character values are present, they are often limited to specific aspects and lack a balanced representation of all six dimensions. Similarly, while Suryantari (2022) found that certain dimensions like faith and collaboration dominate, others like creativity are underrepresented. These findings suggest the need for more comprehensive evaluations of how textbooks support the holistic development envisioned in the Pancasila Student Profile.

Additionally, it is important to note that previous studies often highlight gaps in the representation of character values within English textbooks, despite analyzing different materials. For example, Idris (2023) and Suryantari (2022) examined distinct textbooks but arrived at overlapping findings regarding the lack of comprehensive representation of certain character dimensions. Idris (2023) analyzed the "English for Nusantara" textbook for eighth-grade students, highlighting its alignment with character formation values outlined by the Ministry of National Education in 2010. However, gaps were identified in some visual and verbal content, particularly in integrating certain character-building aspects. Similarly, Suryantari (2022) found that while all dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile are represented in a tenth-grade English textbook, elements like creativity and critical reasoning were minimally implemented, demonstrating an imbalance in the overall representation of the profile dimensions.

Wardani (2019) found a strong focus on social awareness but limited creativity and independence in the twelfth-grade English textbook "Bahasa Inggris SMA/SMK". Similarly, Istandy (2019) examined the eleventh-grade English textbook "Pathway to English" and found that while 17 out of 18 national character values were present, the dominant focus was on fostering reading interest, with less emphasis on other crucial values. Meanwhile, Liagustin (2023) analyzed the "English for Nusantara" textbook for seventh-grade students and observed that faith and noble character were predominant, while creativity appeared least frequently. These findings underscore the need for further research to evaluate whether newer textbooks under the Merdeka Curriculum address such gaps comprehensively.



These results indicate that while prior studies provide insights into general character education, they often lack a comprehensive evaluation of all six Pancasila dimensions. Addressing these gaps, the current study provides a focused analysis of the "English for Nusantara" textbook to examine how it incorporates the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. This analysis aims to offer a more detailed understanding of how the textbook aligns with national character education goals and contributes to the holistic development of students under the Kurikulum Merdeka.

## **1.2 Scope of the Study**

This study analyzes the eighth-grade English textbook "English for Nusantara," published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2022. The textbook comprises five chapters, each divided into three units, resulting in 15 units overall. Each unit contains multiple sections, such as "Say What You Know," "Did You Know," "Fun Time," and other activities that combine language skills with character education. This study uses several units of analysis to conduct the evaluation. These include sentences and paragraphs, dialogue and character interactions, illustrations and pictures, exercises and learning activities, and topics or themes in the textbook.

To ensure a thorough analysis, the evaluation encompasses several units of analysis, including sentences and paragraphs, dialogue and character interactions, illustrations and pictures, exercises and learning activities, and topics or themes in the textbook. These units provide a detailed framework to assess the alignment of the textbook with the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile and its potential to foster holistic character development. The criteria for all units of analysis, including sentences and paragraphs, dialogue and character interactions, illustrations and pictures, exercises and learning activities, as well as topics or themes, are assessed based on their alignment with Pancasila values and their ability to promote holistic character development. Other materials, such as teacher guides or supplementary resources, are excluded from this study. Despite these limitations, the findings provide a comprehensive overview of the textbook's role in achieving character education goals under the Kurikulum Merdeka.

### **1.3 Research Question**

1. How are the Pancasila student profile character values represented in the English textbook entitled “English for Nusantara” for eighth-grade students?

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out how the Pancasila Student Profile character values are integrated in the English textbook “English for Nusantara” for eighth-grade students. It aims to identify how these values are represented and aligned with the character education objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka. This study seeks to find out the balance and effectiveness of the textbook in supporting holistic character development. Ultimately, it provides insights for enhancing the integration of character education in Indonesian textbooks.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study aims to offer insights for educators and textbook authors in evaluating the alignment between English textbooks, such as “English for Nusantara”, with both curriculum standards and select dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile that enhance content comprehension, such as critical thinking and global diversity. Understanding that character values are often cultivated through actions and habitual practices rather than through direct instruction in textbooks, this study does not imply that all Pancasila values should be explicitly represented in textbook content. Rather, this analysis may assist educators in identifying how the textbook supports educational objectives in ways that align with the overarching goals of character education. Additionally, this research can serve as a reference for future studies examining how curriculum-aligned textbooks may implicitly reflect values that reinforce educational content.