

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

One of the countries in the world facing the impact Industrial Revolution is Indonesia. Today's economic, social, technological, and educational sectors all have to make adjustment to suit this time period. One of the most important factors in the development of a nation is education. Therefore, education refers to all the efforts made by society to help students reach their full potential in terms religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, moral character, and possession of the necessary social and civic skills (Faiz & Yulianasari, 2024). The main task in practicing formal education is teaching and learning. As a result, it is the effectiveness of teaching process that determines the extent to which education progresses.

General education and Islamic education are the two types of formal education offered in Indonesia. However, the aim of both general education and Islamic education is to acquire education itself. The goal of national education is to help students reach their full potential in order to produce people who believe in and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, and the democratic and responsible citizens (Law of the Republic Indonesia, Number 20 of 2003).

(Saratno et al., 2022) Stated that teachers need to be aware of the curriculum's content, scheduled phase activities, evaluation criteria that are based on it, as well as variety of standards that are mostly found in the Curriculum's syllabus. The curriculum can be used to determine how the educational objectives are being carried out. The direction of learning that will be permitted at school will be known within the confines of the institution. The legal curriculum must be present in every school setting for this reason. There have been various curriculum modification in Indonesia. In regard to the educational system in Indonesia a new policy. The Merdeka Curriculum was released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and

Technology. In a curriculum, many parties participate in developing it, namely: education administrators, education experts, curriculum experts, science experts, teachers, parents and community leaders (Suratno et al., 2022). The shift from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum has resulted in many changes at the stages of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning. One of them is the existence of new terms such as Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), Modal Ajar (MA), Capaian Pembelajaran (CP), Kriteria Keterampilan Tujuan Pembelajaran (KKTP), Profil Pelajar Pancasila, diagnostic assessments, students reflections and teacher reflections, all of which aim to strengthen the competence of both students and teachers (Faiz & Yulianasari, 2024). This change indeed encourages teachers to continue learning and adapting to effectively implement the new learning paradigm of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Minister Nadiem Makarim stated that several advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum. One of them is more simple and more in-depth because this curriculum will focus on essential materials and the gradual development of student competencies. The teacher will teach to the stages of student achievement and development. In the Merdeka Curriculum, a learning approach that refers to the level of achievement or ability of students is called Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). Teaching at the right level (TaRL) does not refer to class level, but refers to the students' ability level (Sari Yunita, 2025).

In the Merdeka Curriculum there is Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP) which contains all plans for the learning process to be held in educational units. KOSP is used as a guideline for all implementation of learning in educational units and is developed according to the needs of students and educational units so that they become more meaningful. The school has the authority to develop and manage curriculum and learning in accordance with the characteristics of the education unit and students (Kemendikbud, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum is expected to be able to respond to the rapid globalization. That has entered the 21st century. So that

the demands of the times encourage and educational institution ton always be adaptive and solution to the curriculum. Contextually, many things affect change, including changes in the national curriculum. So far, community needs are uncertain and even tend to be difficult to predict. The need for education is expectation, including English subjects which are the needs of the community, especially students (Pertiwi et al, 2023).

Alderson (2014) stated that the personal view of the researcher herself that reading is the activity that occurs as a whole work. It means that reading is not only done when we have reached the end of a text or a story, but there is also a close interaction between the reader and the text. The reader is not only looking at a printed book but also elaborating in several senses such as marking the page, deciding what the meaning, and how the content of the text relate to one another.

The students must constantly engage in the action of reading in the educational setting. Reading can help students understand concepts better and have a broader perspective. Reading is a a fundamental ability that helps kids access information an develop their critical thinking abilities. In other words, reading significantly contributes to a students' ability to learn. (Yukselir, 2014).

(Lau et al., 2015) stated that highlight reading as a fundamental skill and how it aids students in developing their vocabulary and fluency as well as other skills. Finally, it aids in their language acquisition and proficiency. Reading, for instance, is crucial to the growth of language learning when learning English. As a result, reading English language texts will aid pupils in expanding their vocabulary, learning grammar, and developing effective writing skills.

English reading is one of the courses that students have been learning since they entered junior high school. In actually, students' find it challenging to read in a foreign language. Who discovered that there are some causes of EFL students' difficulty, support it. These are the vocabulary issues, as well as

word, phrase, and paragraph ignorance as well as pronunciation issues (Hamra & Syatriana, 2019) .

Teaching is a process carried out by teachers in supporting student learning by providing knowledge and also being able to share experiences. This method is related to the students' learning process in learning english for himself (Halik, 2016). The purpose of teaching is to provide knowledge so that students can understand what has been stated accurately and precisely (Muslaini, 2017).

Teacher strategy is a form of teacher planning process in teaching activities to achieve the planned goals. Whereas teaching technique is a method to help students in their learning. The learning process is very important, and teaching methods for understanding can have an impact on students' understanding (Enggar, 2020). Making students able to understand is the goal of reading instruction. When teaching reading, teachers must be innovative and able to guide students in everyday learning strategies that encourage effective learning. Therefore, incorporating interesting methods into teaching reading will encourage students to be involved in the learning process activities (Ridianto, 2021).

Based on the explanation above, the researcher analyzed the entitled **“Exploring Teacher Strategies in Teaching Reading Based on the Merdeka Curriculum at the Junior High School 11 Cirebon ”**.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research, several issues were identified regarding the implementation of reading instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum at Junior High School. Although the curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, independent thinking and the development of literacy skills, the actual classroom situation shows that students and teachers still face various obstacles in achieving these goals. The challenges found relate not only to students' reading comprehension abilities, but also to their adaptation to new learning approaches, as well as teachers' readiness in

applying appropriate strategies aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, the problems in this study are identified as follows:

- 1.) Students struggle to identify the purpose of the text and understand unfamiliar vocabulary or implied meanings. This occurs because many students still have low literacy skills and limited exposure to authentic English texts, making it difficult for them to interpret meaning beyond the literal level.
- 2.) Many students have difficulty comprehending English texts, especially in identifying main ideas. Students are not yet accustomed to reading activities that require recognizing text structure or summarizing key points, which are essential skills emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum.
- 3.) Students often translate word by word instead of understanding the overall meaning. This habit results from previous learning patterns that focused on grammar and translation, causing students to miss global comprehension and contextual meaning.
- 4.) Limited vocabulary and lack of reading strategies hinder comprehension. Students' restricted vocabulary size and unfamiliarity with strategies such as skimming, scanning and predicting weaken their ability to understand texts effectively.
- 5.) Students have not fully adapted to the student-centered and independent learning approach of the Merdeka Curriculum. Many learners still rely heavily on teacher explanation and struggle when required to think independently, reflect or engage actively during reading activities.
- 6.) Teachers face challenges in aligning reading instruction with Merdeka Curriculum principles. Limited training, time constraints and unfamiliarity with differentiated instruction or formative assessments make it difficult for teachers to implement the curriculum effectively.
- 7.) Traditional reading methods are still commonly used and not fully aligned with the curriculum's goal of strengthening literacy and

higher-order thinking skills. Teacher-centered practices such as translating texts and answering questions dominate the classroom, reducing opportunities for students to develop critical and analytical reading abilities.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

The Merdeka Curriculum encourages the use of various student-centered learning models that promote active participation, creativity and contextual understanding. Learning models applied in the Merdeka Curriculum include Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Discovery Learning and Differentiated Instruction, which all aim to support independent and collaborative learning.

In addition, the Merdeka Curriculum allows teachers to apply various reading strategies to support comprehension, such as scaffolding, reciprocal teaching, SQ3R and Question Answer Relationship (QARs). Among these, this study is limited to exploring teachers' strategies that align with scaffolding and reciprocal teaching, as these strategies encourage active student participation, collaborative learning and contextual understanding key principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The research is conducted at the eighth grade of Junior High School, focusing on how teachers apply these strategies within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on study above, the problems of the research is formulated as follows :

- 1.) How is the implementation of teachers' strategies in teaching reading used Merdeka Curriculum?
- 2.) What are the challenges and solution faced by english teachers in teaching reading in merdeka curricullum?

1.5. Aims of the Research

Based on the research questions mentioned above, the aims of this research are :

- 1.) To know the the implementation of teacher's strategies in teaching reading used the Merdeka Curriculum.
- 2.) To know the challenges and the solution faced english teachers in teaching reading in Merdeka Curriculum.

1.6. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research is rooted in the need to deepen the understanding of how reading instruction is carried out within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly at the junior high school level. As the curriculum introduces new concepts such as differentiated learning, project-based activities, formative assessment and student-centered approaches, both teachers and students are required to adapt to new learning demands. In practice, these changes often present challenges that influence the effectiveness of reading instruction. Therefore, this study holds importance not only in enriching theoretical perspectives on reading strategies and curriculum implementation, but also in offering practical insights that can support teachers in designing more meaningful and effective learning activities. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to provide valuable guidance for students in developing their reading skills, assist educators in improving classroom practices and serve as a reference for future researchers who seek to explore similar topics. The significance of this research is elaborated as follows:

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the theoretical understanding of reading instruction within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially at the junior high school level. It provides insights into the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading at Junior High School 11 Cirebon. Furthermore, the findings of this research can serve as additional information and references for students, teachers and

researchers who are interested in exploring effective reading strategies and pedagogical approaches. Theoretically, it enriches the existing literature on reading comprehension and curriculum-based teaching strategies in EFL contexts.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

Practically, the results of this research are expected to offer meaningful contributions to various stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning of English reading. The findings provide valuable insights that can be applied directly in classroom practice, assisting teachers in designing more effective reading instruction aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, this research serves as a useful reference for students, schools and future researchers who seek practical guidance on improving reading comprehension through relevant strategies and curriculum-based approaches.

1.6.2.1. For Students

This study is expected to serve as a guideline for students to understand the strategies used by teachers in teaching reading based on the Merdeka Curriculum at Junior High School 11 Cirebon. It also provides additional information for students who wish to learn from or apply the findings of this research to improve their own reading skills.

1.6.2.2. For Teachers

The researcher hopes that this research can serve as valuable input and provide useful suggestions for teachers who teach reading in class VII at Junior High School 11 Cirebon. It is expected that the findings can help teachers choose and implement appropriate teaching strategies to effectively transfer knowledge to students and improve their reading comprehension.

1.6.2.3. For Future Researchers

This research is also expected to provide new insights and knowledge for future researchers regarding teacher strategies in teaching reading. The results of this study may serve as a reference or foundation

for future investigations, thereby contributing to the continuous development of research in reading pedagogy and curriculum implementation.

1.7. Literature Review

A comprehensive review of the literature is essential to provide a strong conceptual foundation for this research and to position the study within the broader context of English language teaching, particularly reading instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum. As reading is a core component of language proficiency, numerous scholars have examined its definitions, processes, strategies and challenges, offering valuable insights into how students develop comprehension skills and how teachers can effectively facilitate learning. Furthermore, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum introduces additional dimensions that must be understood, such as differentiated learning, project-based approaches, authentic assessment and student-centered practices. These shifts in educational policy require teachers to adapt their instructional methods, resulting in new opportunities as well as challenges in classroom practice.

In this section, the researcher reviews theoretical perspectives related to reading, including definitions of reading, types of reading, the nature of reading comprehension and established theories in reading pedagogy. A detailed discussion of teaching strategies such as scaffolding, reciprocal teaching, SQ3R, QARs and think-aloud is also presented to highlight their role in supporting students' comprehension and engagement. Additionally, this literature review examines the concept of curriculum and explores the principles, objectives, advantages and limitations of the Merdeka Curriculum as a national educational reform that reshapes instructional practices in Indonesia. The review further discusses previous studies that relate to teachers' strategies in teaching reading and the challenges they encounter, thereby identifying research gaps that justify the relevance and necessity of the current study. Through

this literature review, the researcher aims to establish a solid theoretical framework that supports the analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

1.7.1. Definition of Reading

Reading is a importance first activity for all because is fosters the development of ideas and improves language skills in addition to serving as a source of iformation. Stated that reading is a technique for acquiring information from texts mixed with one's experience to discover meaning. By updating the text's meaning based on the readers understanding, someone is engaging in a sophisticated process that makes us of techniques. The meaning of the text can be understood using a variety of techniques. Students can draw connections between the selection or assessment processes as they see fit. Making understanding of a text requires reading. Reading is a process in which readers combine information from texts with what they already know to look for meaning. Reading is necessary activity in the classroom, because pupils must be able to read. Reading can be seen as a process of comprehending the text's contents in order to learn something or acquire information. Brown (2016) stated that identified four different categories of reading.

1.7.1.1. Perspective Reading

Reading with attention to the larger components of discourse, such as punctuation marks, letters, words, and other graphic symbols, is known as perspective reading. It has to do with the bottom-up approach in this case.

1.7.1.2. Selective Reading

This kind of categorization is determined by the assessment format's content with projects that are graphic, multiple choice, or graphical. It is employed to briefly understand grammar in consice texts. This kind may combine top down and bottom up procedures.

1.7.1.3. Interactive Reading

Reading that involves interaction between the reader and the text is referred to as interactive reading. To learn information from the text, read the paragraphs or pages where the language is present. Bottom-up processing is an option in this kind.

1.7.1.4. Extensive Reading

Reading a book or article with more than one page of content is referred to as extensive reading. The majority of readers' free time is spent outside of the classroom. Top-down processing is a possibility.

There are four different forms of reading, namely perceptive reading, selective reading, interactive reading and extended reading, as can be seen from the explanation above. The meaning of letters, words and symbols must be learned in order to read perspective. The method of selective reading involves identifying the locations of words in brief paragraphs. Finding information from a text after having read it is called interactive reading. Understanding the entirety of a larger document requires extensive reading.

Reading is a task performed to fulfill specific objectives. One of them can extend one's horizons and offer new facts. Reading is done to make connection between the information presented and what one already knows. The types of reading objectives, Grabe William and L. Fredrika (2014) stated that :

1.7.1.5. Reading to search for simple information

Reading to find simple information is a general ability that a person has in reading. This objective is often used in assignments to be seen as a type of reading ability.

1.7.1.6. Reading to skim quickly

Skimming is part of one's skill whose purpose is to find important things in a text. This is part of the strategies used in reading that are common to everyone.

1.7.1.7. Reading to learn from text

Reading to learn, namely where a person needs to learn from the information in the text according to the existing content. This means that it requires the ability to connect the reading text with the main idea needed.

1.7.1.8. Reading to integrate information

Reading to integrate information is to make additional decisions based on interests to complement, assist, in accomodating information from various sources.

1.7.1.9. Reading to write and critique texts

Reading to write and reading to critical texts are variations of integrating information. In this case, it requires the ability to select, organize, and critize information from a text.

1.7.1.10. Reading for general comprehension

Reading for general skills requires a fast process for fluent and skilled people. Skills possessed such as being able to find the meaning of words or interpret the meaning of words so that they can find out the main idea of the text.

1.7.1.11. Teaching Reading

Teaching reading is one of the essential components in language education, as it plays a vital role in developing students' overall language competence and academic success. Through reading, learners gain access to new ideas, expand their vocabulary and strengthen their comprehension skills. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teaching reading is not merely about decoding words, but also about helping students understand meaning, interpret context and engage critically with various types of texts. Effective reading instruction therefore requires teachers to apply appropriate strategies that match students' levels, needs and the curriculum used. In recent years, teaching reading has received increasing attention, particularly with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes active slearning, contextual understanding and student-centered approaches to improve reading comprehension.

1.7.1.12. Process of Reading

According to Grabe and Stoller (2013), reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print. It involves not only decoding the printed words but also constructing meaning from the text.

Teaching Reading for teaching students, the teacher needs strategies to facilitate teaching so that students understand the text. Brown (2014) stated that there are six strategies for teaching reading in the classroom that teachers can use as follows :

1.7.1.12.1. Identifying the purpose of reading

In reading, focus on the information you are looking for and want. So that the purpose of the reader to read can be known clearly. In addition, get rid of unwanted information in reading the text, so that reading activities will not be disturbed.

1.7.1.12.2. Using graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding (especially for the beginning level learners)

As a beginner in learning English, one of the difficulties in learning in the early stages is adjusting between spoken and written English. Then the teacher can teach you how to spell in English.

1.7.1.12.3. Using efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid Comprehension (for intermediate to advanced levels)

Understanding the meaning of a text in reading is important for advanced learners. Silent reading strategies can make it easier for students to improve understanding and do not need to be fast readers.

1.7.1.12.4. Skimming the text for the main ideas

Skimming is a quick way to get to the main points of entire text. The advantage of skimming for readers is that they can determine the main ideas or topics that develop and support them.

1.7.1.12.5. Scanning the text for specific information

Scanning is a speed-reading technique to find specific information in a text. Such as searching for name or date as well as a list of some

supporting details. Scanning reading practice is needed without having to read the entire text.

1.7.1.12.6. Using semantic mapping or clustering

The semantic mapping strategy is to collect the important words they get from a text. Which can help the reader to know again the meaning of the contents of the text. Teachers frequently assume that their students will learn to read on their own and without assistance. In actually, every student might benefit from an intriguing method that would increase reading comprehension and decoding abilities.

Brown (2018) stated that a strategy is a way to solve problem, it's a way to achieve certain goals, and it's a way to make plans handle specific information. A strategy is mechanism used by teachers to assist students learn by removing barriers from the learning process. This design was created with the learning process and the surrounding environment of students in mind. Teachers develop strategies as tools to facilitate learning environment for their students.

Richards & Renandya (2020) stated that there are 6 appropriate teaching principles in teaching reading as follows :

1.7.1.12.7. Lowering Inhibitions

The activities carried out by the teacher in the classroom such as teaching using games and singing songs or forming small groups, which can help students minimize problems in learning English.

1.7.1.12.8. Encouraging risk-taking

One technique so that student's language can come out is by praising students. This can be applied when students feel they have made mistakes or are afraid to learn. Mistakes made can be corrected by providing writing or speaking exercises.

1.7.1.12.9. Building student's self-confidence

An important factor in the process of learning English is students' self confidence which can affect their language development. For this to

be done, the teacher must provide work that students believe they can do.

1.7.1.12.10. Helping students develop intrinsic students have

The appreciation of learning English for students is done by motivating them to get clear abilities. This form of effort takes into account the importance of an achievement that students must get in learning.

1.7.1.12.11. Promoting cooperative learning

To learn English, there needs to be cooperation between students rather than competition between individuals. With collaboration, students can share their knowledge and can increase an active mindset. As a group, of course, students will try to be compact and do their best for their group.

1.7.1.12.12. Encouraging students to use right-brain processing

Students can realize the development of learning in the form of creativity. This means that learning a language is not just curious or answering questions but there are tangible results. The goal is to increase students' desire to learn. Some activities can be done such as speed reading exercises, writing essays, or using useful videos.

1.7.1.13. The Nature of Reading in English Language Teaching

Reading is an active process involving interaction between the reader and the text to derive meaning. According to Grabe and Stoller (2013) stated that reading is a complex cognitive skill that requires vocabulary mastery, understanding sentence structure, reinforcing grammar knowledge, and critical thinking strategies. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, reading is not only a means of understanding information but also of developing comprehensive language skills. And effective reading instruction helps students become independent readers who can comprehend and critically evaluate texts.

1.7.1.14. Teaching Strategies in Reading

Reading teaching strategies or technique used by teachers to help students understand text effectively. Brown (2011) stated that classifies

reading strategies into two main categories : bottom-up strategies (starting from word recognition to sentence and text comprehension) and top-down strategies (starting from general understanding to text details). Harmer (2014) stated that categorizes reading instruction into three stages :

- 1.7.1.14.1.** Pre-reading, activities that activate students' prior knowledge, predict the content, or introduce key vocabulary.
- 1.7.1.14. 2.** While- reading, activities that guide students in comprehending the text, such as answering comprehension questions, highlighting key points, or making inferences.
- 1.7.1.14. 3.** Post-reading, activities that promote reflection and deeper understanding, such as summarizing discussing the theme, or giving personal responses.

Other reading strategies commonly used include skimming, scanning, intensive reading, and extensive reading. Teachers often adjust these strategies depending on the student's needs, proficiency levels, and text complexity.

1.7.2. Strategies in Teaching Reading

Teaching strategies are a general description of the plan of a lesson such as the needs or objectives for implementing teaching strategies (Antoni, 2019). It can be concluded that the teacher is a means of knowledge that can help the student learning process. That way students can gain knowledge about learning, especially in English. Teaching strategies are related to to teaching and learning activities used by teachers such as techniques, structures, methods, inspire their students to learn. Teachers must therefore adapt a number of ways to support teaching and leraning (Purwanto, 2022).

In order to teach reading, Vacca (2018) stated that following strategies :

1.7.2.1. Scaffolding

Scaffolding aligns with the principles of differentiated learning and teaching at the right level (TaRL) emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Teachers provide gradual support according to students' learning needs until they can perform tasks independently. In reading instruction, scaffolding helps students comprehend texts through guided assistance that is gradually reduced as their ability increases. This approach reflects the Merdeka Curriculum's vision of fostering independent, flexible and self-regulated learners who can construct knowledge through guided experiences.

1.7.2.2. Think Aloud

The Think Aloud strategy supports the Merdeka Curriculum's focus on reflective learning and metacognitive awareness. By verbalizing their thought processes while reading, teachers model how to think critically and make meaning from a text. Students learn to monitor their own comprehension and reasoning, which enhances their engagement and critical thinking. This strategy embodies the curriculum's goal of developing active, reflective and critical readers who understand not only what they read but also how they think during the reading process.

1.7.2.3. Reciprocal Teaching

Reciprocal Teaching is highly relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum's emphasis on collaborative and participatory learning. In this approach, both teachers and students take turns acting as discussion leaders while engaging in predicting, questioning, summarizing and clarifying activities. This promotes interaction, cooperation and communication among students, reflecting the values of the Pancasila Student Profile, particularly collaboration, critical reasoning and effective communication. Thus reciprocal teaching represents the essence of student-centered learning promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7.2.4. SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)

The SQ3R strategy supports the Merdeka Curriculum's objective of developing autonomous and responsible learners. Through its five systematic steps Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review, students actively manage their reading process and engage with the text

meaningfully. This strategy encourages learners to connect new information with prior knowledge and real-life contexts. Therefore, SQ3R reflects the Merdeka Curriculum's aim to cultivate critical, reflective and independent readers who can comprehend texts deeply rather than translate them word-for-word.

1.7.2.5. Question Answer Relationship (QARs)

The QARs strategy aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum's principle of assessment as learning, where questioning becomes a tool for comprehension and reflection. By analyzing the relationship between questions and text information, students learn to distinguish between literal and inferential meanings and to apply higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). This method not only helps teachers assess students' contextual understanding but also encourages learners to become active and analytical readers, consistent with the curriculum's focus on critical literacy and reflective learning.

1.7.3. Teacher's challenges in Teaching Reading

In the regulation of Minister of National Education number 36 of 2018, teaching problems are related to internal and external conditions. Internal conditions include teachers, materials, interaction patterns, media and technology, learning situation and systems. While external conditions include the environment where the teaching and learning process takes place.

Based on Kemendikbud (2022) stated that in implementing an independent curriculum, educators need to work on adjusting learning strategies to suit the learning needs of students. However, for some educators conducting differentiation learning is not a simple thing to do. Some educators experience problems due to limited time to design different lessons based on the individual needs of students. Another problem is the difficulty of educators in grouping students based on readiness due to large number of students and limited classrooms.

Meanwhile, Hamalik (2014) states that teaching problems have two dimensions, namely component dimensions and interactions between components. The components here are learning, objectives, teacher, lesson plans, learning media, learning strategies and learning evaluation. Interaction between components means whether these components are synergetic or dynamic. Example problem relates to the interaction process, namely the teacher's explanation is not clear, the media is not appropriate, students are not active, students are afraid to ask questions, students' vocabulary is lacking and assessment are not precise. Generally, the teacher problems in the teaching are material, method and media (Hamalik, 2014).

1.7.4. Definition of Curriculum

Curriculum is a plan and arrangement that includes objectives, materials and learning methods used to achieve certain educational outcomes. It covers a wide range of subjects and learning experiences necessary to achieve educational standards.

Wafi, (2017) stated that the notion of curriculum is taken from the latin "Curriculae" which means the range that must be taken by runners. Then, Hamalik also defines that the curriculum is a period of time education that must be taken by students in order to obtain an education certificate. Another definition put forward by Casswell and Campbell as quoted by Sukiman (2015) stated that curriculum is all experiences that children have under the guidance of teachers.

Furthermore, Hilda Taba in Fadhilah's book (2017) stated that the curriculum is learning plan, therefore what is known about the learning process and individual development has an effect on shaping the curriculum. So, it is explained that the curriculum is a learning plan that includes various learning guidelines and learning outcomes. In conclusion, the curriculum is the core of education that is used as a reference for educational elements to achieve educational goals.

Marsh (2014) stated that the curriculum is all planned learning that is the responsibility of the school, all experiences that students have under the guidance of the school, the totality of learning experiences provided to students so that can acquire general skills and knowledge in various places of learning, and all experiences that students that have during their life. From this definition, it can be concluded that the curriculum is a plan consisting of learning experiences given to students, so that they can achieve their learning goal in terms of skills and knowledge.

Based on some definition above, it can be concluded that the curriculum is an educational program or device that contains teaching materials and learning experiences that he programmed, planned and systematically designed on the basis of applicable norms and used as guidelines in the learning process for education staff and students to achieve maximum educational goals.

1.7.4.1, Definition of Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competenc teaching tools so that learning can be adapted to the learning needs and inteterests of students (National Education Standards Agency (BSNP)).

The Merdeka Curriculum was launched by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim stated that of evaluation of the 2013 Curriculum improvement. Previously, this curriculum was also reffered ton as the Prototype Curriculum which is one part of the government's efforts to produce a more competent next generation in various fields.

Stated that Merdeka Belajar means an educational process that must create a pleasant atmoshpere for students, teachers, parents, and everyone. The purpse of Merdeka Belajar is to explore the greatest

potential of teachers and students, and improve the quality of learning by giving teachers the freedom to choose how to deliver the curriculum or teaching methods that are in accordance with the competencies or their students (Kemendikbud, 2019).

Hamdani(2022) stated that the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse learning. The Merdeka Curriculum is applied to practice independence in thinking. The concept is determined by each individual in it. Baderan & Indrajit (2020) stated that the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum is a form of freedom for school, teachers, and students to think and innovate in independent, creative, and responsible learning in a pleasant atmosphere.

The core of Merdeka Belajar is that schools, teachers and students have the freedom to innovate, freedom to learn independently and creatively (Kemendikbud, 2019b). And the Merdeka Belajar focuses on the freedom to learn independently and creatively. Teachers are also expected to be the driving force to take the actions that lead to the best for students.

In addition, the Indonesian education system which still relies on ranking which creates a gap between smart students a because children actually have their own intelligence or what is called multiple intelligence. Multiple intelligence is a theory developed by Dr. Howard Gardner is a psychologist of modern technology at Harvard University, where Gardner intelligence stated that is defined as the capacity to solve problems and create products in a conductive and natural environment. The potential possessed by children must be appreciated and continues to be developed, children will excel in their fields. So that later it will form a competent person and have a character that is embedded in him (Baro'ah, 2020).

1.7.4.2. Objective of the Merdeka Curriculum

Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (No.56 of 2022), during the Covid-19 era, education in Indonesia was backward

and left behind. The Merdeka Curriculum policy is a solution to the backwardness of education in Indonesia. The objective of the Merdeka Curriculum is to answer the problems of previous education. The existence of this curriculum will direct in developing the potential and competence of students. This curriculum serves to develop potential, one of which is the learning process that is designed to be relevant and interactive. This learning will make students more interested and able to develop issues in the environment.

Based on the Merdeka Belajar program, all Indonesian people who are affiliated with education strive to have independence in thinking. Independence in thinking in achieving better educational goals and improving the culture and character of the nation. The objectives in the Merdeka Belajar program are prioritized in order to obtain an education system that is beneficial for the life of the nation and state (Asfiati, 2020).

Merdeka Belajar certainly aims to improve the learning process. Merdeka Belajar is starting to become a good momentum for the world of education is achieving goals and expectation that are able to (Christianna, 2019). The Merdeka Belajar program is an alternative to develop thinking and a free creative process through a variety of activities.

Asfiati (2020) stated that the goal of Merdeka Curriculum is to create a fun learning and enjoyable learning atmosphere without being burdened with certain values and achievement targets. The learning system is designed in such a way as to form the character of intelligent students with multiple intelligence and multiple talents.

1.7.4.3. Advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum

The advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum to Hamdani (2022) stated that as follows :

1.7.4.3.1. Simpler and deeper

The essential material is the focus of the Merdeka Curriculum. Simple and deep learning without haste will be more absorbed by students.

Deep learning with a fun design will make students more focused and interested in learning.

1.7.4.3.2. More Independent

The Merdeka Curriculum is a benchmark in designing learning. The concept of independence that is given gives freedom to the teacher in designing the learning process according to the needs and learning outcomes.

1.7.4.3.3. More relevant and Interactive

Learning process activities develop their competencies that are more relevant and interactive will have a good impact when applied in the learning process. Interactive learning will make students more interested and able to develop their competencies.

1.7.4.4. Disadvantages of the Merdeka Curriculum

Although the Merdeka Curriculum is designed to provide autonomy and flexibility in learning, several shortcomings have been highlighted by researchers. These include the lack of teacher readiness, limited infrastructure and monitoring processes.

Below are some disadvantages of the Merdeka Curriculum as identified by educational research :

1.7.4.4.1. Teacher Readiness

In practice, the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum largely depends on the readiness of teachers as the main facilitators of the learning process. Although the curriculum promotes flexibility and innovative approaches, not all teachers possess the same level of understanding and competence to apply its principles effectively. Therefore, teacher readiness becomes one of the central challenges that must be addressed.

1.7.4.4.1.1. Lack of understanding and mastery of the curriculum :

Some teachers still struggle to fully grasp the concepts and principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially when it comes to lesson

planning, developing teaching modules, and conducting authentic assessment (as report by *Jurnal Basicedu*).

1.7.4.4.1.2. Limited ability in using technology :

The Merdeka Curriculum encourages the integration of technology into learning. However, many teachers still face in utilizing digital tools and online learning platforms.

1.7.4.4.1.3. Inadequate development of teaching methods :

Certain educators find it challenging to design and apply diverse teaching strategies that align with the Merdeka Curriculum student centered approach.

1.7.4.4.2. Facilities and Infrastructure

Apart from teacher readiness, the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum is also strongly influenced by the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure within schools. The curriculum requires supportive learning environments, including access to technology, proper learning spaces and relevant learning resources. However, many schools still face significant limitations in these areas, hindering the optimal implementation of the curriculum.

1.7.4.4.2.1. Limited school resources :

Many school lack adequate facilities such as learning spaces, internet access, teaching devices, and supporting textboks that are essential for effective curriculum implementation.

1.7.4.4.2.2. Shortage of quality learning materials ;

The availability of relevant and high quality learning resources remains a significant obstacle, particularly in remote or under resourced areas.

1.7.4.4.3. Evaluation and Monitoring

Another challenge in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum lies in the area of evaluation and monitoring. Since the curriculum emphasizes authentic and competency-based assessments, schools require clear and consistent mechanisms to monitor learning processes and outcomes.

Nevertheless, many teachers and institutions still struggle to understand and apply this new assessment system, resulting in inconsistencies in its execution.

1.7.4.4.3.1. Challenges in learning assessment ;

Teachers often find it difficult to carry out authentic assessments that align with the curriculum's values and objectives.

1.7.4.4.3.2. Lack of clarity in monitoring mechanism :

There is a need for improved systems to consistently monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum across various schools and regions, ensuring its effectiveness and consistency.

1.7.4.4.4. Other contributing Factors

In addition to teacher readiness, infrastructure limitations and challenges in evaluation, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is also influenced by several external factors that lie beyond instructional planning. These factors, which involve students, parents and the broader learning environment, play a significant role in determining the success of curriculum application. Understanding these contributing elements is essential, as they often shape students' engagement, learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of teaching practices. Therefore, this section presents other external factors that may hinder or support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in classroom settings.

1.7.4.4.4.1. Student, Parents ,and Enviromental factors :

The Merdeka Curriculum also faces challenges related to student readiness, varying levels of parental support, and diverse learning environments.

1.7.4.4.4.2. Unclear understanding of learning materials :

Some students may struggle with the new learning content due to shifts in instructional approaches and methods.

1.7.4.4.3. Inconsistency in implementation :

Variations in curriculum application across schools and regions can result in inconsistencies, making it difficult to evaluate and compare learning outcomes effectively.

To overcome these challenges, researchers recommend enhanced teacher training, improved educational facilities, and a stronger system of monitoring and evaluation. These efforts are essential to ensure the successful and equitable implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum across Indonesia.

1.7.4.5. Overview of the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational reform initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education to promote student-centered learning, flexibility, and contextualized instruction. It emphasizes differentiated learning, project-based activities, and formative assessment.

Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to design learning experiences that cater to students' interest and capabilities. This autonomy allows teachers to creatively implement reading strategies that go beyond traditional textbook instruction. Reading instruction in this curriculum is expected to foster literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration, often through interdisciplinary and real world contexts.

1.7.4.6. Teachers Strategies in Teaching Reading Used the Merdeka Curriculum

Demonstrate several important characteristics include :

1.7.4.6.1. Differentiated Learning

Teachers implement learning adapt to students, needs, interests, and abilities. For example, students with low reading skills are given simpler texts and vocabulary guides, while advanced students are challenged with critical analysis of articles or essays.

1.7.4.6.2. Utilization of Authentic Texts

Teachers tend to use relevant and authentic texts such as news stories, folktales, or articles on local culture. This aligns with the principles

of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasize context-based learning.

1.7.4.6.3. Interactive Learning

Integrative strategies such as group discussions, jigsaw reading, and presentations of comprehension are used to increase student engagement. These strategies encourage students to think critically and share meaning from the text.

1.7.4.6.4. Digital Literacy Integration

Teachers utilize digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Quizziz, or interactive reading apps to strengthen students' understanding and familiarize them with digital literacy, which is an essential competency in the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7.4.6.5. Formative and Reflective Assessment

Assessment is not only based on multiple choice test, but also through student reflections, reading journals, and project portfolios. Teachers act as facilitators who continuously support students' learning process.

The various strategies used by teachers in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum demonstrate reading instruction is no longer one-way or teacher-centered. Instead, these strategies demonstrate that learning is dynamic, adaptive, and oriented toward the development of students' critical literacy. The successful implementation of these strategies depends heavily on teachers' creativity and preparedness in translating curriculum policies into concrete classroom practices.

In implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers many adopt a variety of strategies to enhance reading comprehension and student engagement. Some of these include, Differentiated instruction (Assigning reading materials based on students' reading levels and reading styles.), Project- Based Reading (Asking students to create posters, presentations, or summaries based on texts they have read), Collaborative Learning (Group discussions, literature circles, or peer teaching to support shared understanding), Use of Authentic Texts (Incorporating newspapers, short

stories, blogs, or digital context to expose students to real-life language use, Integration of Technology (Utilizing reading apps, e-books, and digital quizzes to increase interactivity and motivation).

These strategies aim to create a more inclusive and meaningful reading experience, in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7.4.7. Learning Methods in Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum introduces a variety of learning methods designed to support student-centered instruction, promote active participation and encourage higher-order thinking skills. These methods aims to accommodate students' diverse needs, abilities and learning styles while ensuring that learning becomes meaningful, relevant and connected to real-life contexts. Based on research from Nuzula & Khusnah (2025) several key instructional methods commonly practiced in the Merdeka Curriculum are described below.

1.7.4.7.1. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is a method that adjusts teaching strategies, materials and assessments based on students' readiness levels, interests and learning profiles. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are encouraged to modify text difficulty, provide varied support and design tasks with different levels of complexity. This method allows all students to progress at their own pace and ensures that learning remains accessible for both advanced and struggling learners.

1.7.4.7.2. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Project-Based Learning places students at the center of the learning process by engaging them in meaningful projects that require investigation, collaboration, problem-solving and presentation. In reading instruction, PBL may involve activities such as creating posters, analyzing texts to solve real-life issues or conducting mini research based on reading materials. This method aligns with the curriculum's focus on contextual and experiential learning.

1.7.4.7.3. Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-Based Learning encourages students to formulate questions, explore information and draw conclusions based on evidence. In reading classes, this method helps students develop critical thinking by guiding them to question the purpose, structure and ideas within a text. Teachers act as facilitators, helping students navigate their inquiry process and reflect on their learning.

1.7.4.7.4. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning emphasizes group work and peer interaction, allowing students to negotiate meaning, share ideas and build understanding together. This method is particularly useful in reading activities such as group discussions, reciprocal teaching and reading circles. Collaborative learning supports the Merdeka Curriculum's vision of fostering communication, social skills and collective responsibility.

1.7.4.7.5. Discovery Learning

Discovery learning encourages students to construct knowledge through exploration and observation rather than receiving information directly from the teacher. In the context of reading instruction, students may discover the meaning of new vocabulary from context, identify text structure independently or infer implied meanings. This method strengthens students' autonomy and deepens their comprehension skills.

1.7.4.7.6. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)

Contextual learning connects academic concepts with real-life situations to make learning more meaningful and relevant for students. In the Merdeka Curriculum, reading activities often use authentic texts such as articles, brochures, news stories and digital media. By linking reading materials to students' lives, CTL enhances motivation, engagement and comprehension.

1.7.4.7.7. Blended Learning

Blended learning integrates face-to-face instruction with digital tools and online resources. Under the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers may

use platforms, e-books, interactive quizzes or multimedia texts to enrich reading activities. This method accommodates diverse learning preferences and supports self-paced learning, especially relevant in modern classrooms.

1.7.4.7.8. Literacy-Based and Genre-Based Approach

Literacy-based approaches focus on developing students' overall literacy skills, while genre-based learning teaches students to understand different types of texts based on structure, purpose and language features. This method is essential in reading instruction, as it equips students with the ability to analyze narrative, descriptive, recount and expository texts, which are part of the English curriculum.

1.7.4.8. The Difference Between Merdeka Curriculum And Others Curriculum

1.7.4.8.1. Curriculum 2013 (K13)

The essentials of Curriculum 2013 emphasize structured and standardized learning. The curriculum contains a heavy load of competencies that must be completed within one academic year. Learning tends to remain teacher-centered in practice because teachers must follow strict competency standards. Assessment is complex because it covers knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Learning materials are dense and rely heavily on textbooks. Flexibility for teachers is limited, and instructional activities often follow a fixed sequence.

1.7.4.8.2. Merdeka Curriculum

Based on the thesis, the Merdeka Curriculum is designed to be more flexible and responsive to student needs. It allows teachers to adjust teaching methods, learning materials, and pacing according to students abilities. The curriculum simplifies learning objectives by reducing content and focusing on deeper understanding. It promotes student-centered learning, differentiated instruction, and the use of authentic materials. Teachers have more independence in choosing strategies, and learning

activities often involve projects, inquiry, discovery, and collaboration. The assessment system emphasizes formative assessment and continuous feedback rather than complicated summative testing.

1.7.4.8.3. Other Curriculums (Before K13)

Earlier Indonesian curriculums, such as KTSP, place strong emphasis on content mastery. The curriculum structure is uniform and leaves little room for teacher autonomy. Learning processes are mostly teacher-centered and rely on lectures, memorization, and repetitive tasks. Assessment focuses primarily on cognitive outcomes with minimal emphasis on skills and character development. The use of real-life materials and technology is limited, and instruction tends to follow traditional patterns.

Merdeka Curriculum differs from Curriculum 2013 and previous curriculums in its flexibility, focus on student-centered learning, and reduced content load. Curriculum 2013 and older curriculums are more rigid, teacher-centered, and content-heavy. The Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes deep learning, autonomy for teachers, differentiated instruction, authentic materials, and continuous assessment, making it more adaptable to diverse student needs.

1.7.5. Theory of Teaching Reading In Junior High School

Teaching reading in junior high school plays a critical role in shaping students' language proficiency, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). At this level, students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," which requires well structured teaching approaches grounded in sound theoretical foundations.

1.7.5.1. The Bottom-Up Theory emphasizes the importance of decoding individual words and sounds to understand the whole text. In this strategies, students begin with phonics, word recognition, and sentence structure before grasping the meaning of a passage.

1.7.5.1.1. Application in class, teachers can use phonics exercises, vocabulary, and sentence matching activities to strengthen students' basic reading skills.

1.7.5.1.2. Goal, accuracy in decoding and recognizing words.

1.7.5.2. The Top-Down Theory, introduced by Goodman (1967) stated that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. Readers use their background knowledge, experience, and predictions to make sense of the text.

1.7.5.2.1. Application in class, teachers provide pre-reading activities such as brainstorming, predicting content from titles or pictures, and discussing prior knowledge.

1.7.5.2.2. Goal, to enhance comprehension by activating schema (background knowledge)

1.7.6. English Teachers' Challenges and Solution

In the implementation of reading instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum, English teachers inevitably encounter various challenges that affect the effectiveness of classroom learning. These challenges arise from both internal and external factors, including curriculum demands, student diversity, learning resources and teachers' pedagogical readiness. Understanding these obstacles is essential in identifying appropriate solutions that can support teachers in improving reading instruction. Therefore, this section discusses the definitions of teaching challenges, the specific challenges faced by English teachers and the solutions implemented to overcome them within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.7.6.1. Definitions of Challenges

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a challenge is something that motivates a decision to improve the ability to solve problems, or something to be overcome. Additionally, the Cambridge Online Dictionary says that a challenge requires great mental or physical effort to do successfully, or a situation that requires significant effort. Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that challenges in this context define as obstacles and difficulties in solving problems faced by teachers when teaching students in class.

1.7.6.2. Challenges on Teachers

Nath (2016) identifies problems in teaching English such as uneducated teachers, overcrowded classrooms, poor curriculum and syllabi, non-standard textbooks, local language interference, and lack of new methods. Mudra (2018) says that obstacles faced by pre-service teachers of English as a foreign language related to classroom management, learning materials/resources, teaching materials, teaching methods, skills of English students, choice of language use, slow internet connection, student motivation, research process and parent support. Teevno (2011) finds that teachers did not have adequate training for teaching English, proper facilities were not provided, and the curriculum was not tailored to the needs of students. Evue (2013) shows that the problem of poor use of English is a combination of various factors, including the problem of student discipline, teachers' inability to teach effectively, and insufficient coverage of course content. Joyce (2014) states that classroom management, training and large classes were challenges faced by teachers. The first, was classroom management, multi-grade classroom teachers indicated that classroom management was problematic for them. The second, was teacher training, teachers said that they did not provide training for multi-grade teaching even in their first teacher training. The third related to large classes, teachers said they were overwhelmed by the high number of students in their classes. Based on

what many researchers have found above, it can be concluded that there are eight challenges related to teachers. These challenges are uneducated teachers, poor curriculum and lesson plans, classroom management, learning materials or resources, lack of new methods and techniques, local language, interference, teaching materials and large classes.

1.7.6.3. English Teachers' Solutions

Odedeji and Olaniyan (2011) reveal that improving teachers' working conditions in rural areas and improving teaching conditions in rural areas was like using ICT in the teaching-learning process and creating fun English learning methods or techniques. That way might be the solution. Febriana, Nurkamto, Rochsantiningsih, and Muhtia (2018) say that the solution that teachers in rural schools could take was to routinely take their students out to places that made them realize that English is very important to learn. Biswas (2018) says that recruiting qualified and professional teachers, providing adequate training for their professional development, increase in salary levels to enable them to fulfill their duties and providing sufficient resources for language learning can be the solutions to these problems. Endriyati, Prabowo, Abasa, and Akmal (2019) say that in order to overcome the problems of students, teachers tried to implement some methods in the learning process and communicate with parents well. Teachers should be well prepared before handing over material. There were also challenges related to teachers, for example, lack of computer literacy, lack of systems and limited teacher training. Teachers were trying to get into the teaching profession to overcome the problems. Widyaanggara, Tanduklangi and Siam (2020) state that the challenges faced in this research could be overcome. However, it depended on the teachers and the school itself. The teachers must work harder with the school to overcome the factors that caused the challenges, and teachers need good resilience. Songbatumis (2017) finds solutions to overcome challenges by changing attitudes, applying different teaching methods and techniques, improving equipment and facilities, matching

students' skill levels and learning situations using available resources and providing motivational feedback, and the teachers' self-reflection. Halik & Nusrath (2020) state that challenges and difficulties could be overcome when more attention was paid to primary school students to acquire the basic knowledge of the English language, workshops, training programs, and motivational programs about the importance of English were conducted for students and interest was created in learning English. Further, every school in a rural setting should have modern learning equipment like town schools, and a language unit should be established with the necessary equipment.

1.7.6.4. Reading in Junior High School

Reading is one of the language skills which is very important to be learned by students. Through this activity, students can improve their language and experience. They will get information and ideas which they need to know. Moreover, they will be able to know what they do not know before. By reading, student may get a lot of information. The more we reads, the more information we will get. Reading become unique because not everyone can use the skills to promote oneself or internalize it as a culture (Rombot, etc., 2020). Reading can easily be defined as the process in which a person receives and interprets a message from printed materials. Reading is the process of how information is processed from the text into meanings, starting with the information from the text, and ending with what the reader gains. Reading forces the reader's brain cells to work on a regular basis, so the reader becomes sharper and smarter. Even though some information can be obtained without reading, for example by listening to teachers, seminars, radio, television. By reading someone may get wider information than listening.

According to Martina et al., (2020) stated that reading is a reader's ability to understand and be able to convey about something, an expository, or read a description of a particular topic. Moreover, Nurhasanah (2020) stated that reading is one of the basic language skills

that enable learners to improve because they can obtain a lot of information by reading. The students are not only expected to read the text but also understand what they have read. It refers to the ability in interpreting the word and understanding the meaning and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text. Furthermore, we summarized reading instruction for the teacher as following a three step procedure, mentioning, practicing, and assessing. In other aspect, when word recognition skills are not develop, problem arise in reading. Most of the students reported having difficulty with reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and understanding the main idea of paragraphs. Here, students will have difficulty undersanding the information presented, as well as answering questions related to the text. In this condition the teacher must helps students becoming a competent an successful readers. The teacher also helps the students to develop their skill in reading by some strategies that match with students' need and condition. After give some treatment, then also give them opportunities to practice those skills through workbooks or worksheets, and finally asses whether or not they use the skill successfully.

Arafi (2019) stated that through great reading instruction, teachers help each student in the classroom become a fluent and successful reader. Teachers who are effective use some strategies and procedures. However, to address the needs and learning styles of each students in the classroom, the teacher can employ a variety of strategies and skills. It is believed that if a teacher teaches reading to the target language all day, they will improve their reading. The teacher must prepare some strategies through students' in reading. In specific discussion, the teacher must know what the students' problem facing reading activity, the students' challenges during read different text from the easiest until the most difficult.

1.8. Previous Studies

Previous research with the same method namely of qualitative descriptive has been carried out by Alfian (2018), Sarjan (2017), Nurmadia Sarjan (2017), Rizal Ali Nurdin (2021) et al., with a thesis entitled “An Analysis Teacher’s Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension at Junior high school 5 Bone.” This study aimed to find out : (1) the strategies used by the teacher in teaching English. (2) The students’ perception towards the strategies used by teacher in teaching English. The data were conducted from 1 class that consisted 28 students the Eleventh Grade of Junior High School 11 Cirebon. This study used descriptive qualitative research design. The instruments used were observation and interview. Reading is the process of constructing meaning involving the written language by interpreting textual information in the light of prior knowledge and experiences using appropriate and efficient strategies.

The findings of this research showed that the teacher used two strategies in teaching English. Those were Reciprocal Teaching and Question Answer Relationship (QAR). The students’ perception about two methods are easier to understand, can convey and change the opinions, get the new ideas, can motivate them to think in the group, and the students can inure themselves to practice speaking by giving question and answer it and finally it concluded that the students are like of the using those strategies.

Secondly, Nurmadia Sarjan (2017) with a entitled “Analysis of English Teacher’s Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension to class VII of Junior High School 1 Wonomulyo.” In this study, the researcher wanted to know how the English Teacher’s strategy was applied in teaching reading comprehension in class VII Junior High School 1 Wonomulyo. The method of this research was qualitative research. The subject of this research was English teacher in Junior High School 1 of Wonomulyo. The instrument of this research were observation and

interview. The result of the research found that two strategies that the teacher used, Scaffolding and QARs (Question Answer Relationship). Scaffolding strategy student can develop about idea which readable by the student. QARs (Question Answer Relationship), the teacher able to know how far their students understand what the teacher has given to them. And the teacher able to know how far understanding of the student doing the task after read the text has given and the students guided to more focus on the text and understand what the context of the text.

Thirdly, Rizal Ali Nurdin (2021) with a thesis entitled “Teacher’s Strategies in Teaching Reading Comprehension at Junior high school IT-Ghofar during covid-19. This research was aimed at : (1) knowing the teachers’ strategies in teaching reading at Junior high school IT Al-Ghofar during covid-19. In this research, the qualitative approach used by the researcher involves three instruments, observation, interview, and documentation. The data were processed in stages, including data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion. The participant of this research was two English teachers of Junior high school IT Al-Ghofar and took two meetings. The result of this research showed that there were teaching reading strategies used by the English teacher’s during covid-19. The strategies were Question-Answer Relationships, and Translating simple paragraph. The steps that applied by the English teachers of Junior High School IT Al-Ghofar in implementig the strategies were mostly same, they made an instruction that was shared in WhatssApp group and provided a task.

The Difference Between the Two Thesis Titles

The two qualitatives thesis titles “Exploring Teacher’s Strategy In Teaching Reading Based On The Merdeka Curriculum At Junior High School and “ An Analysis of Teacher;s Strategies in Teaching Reading Compreehnsion In Junior High School” may seem similiar at first glance, but they reflect different research focuses and scropes.

1.8.1. Depth of Study Focus

The word “exploring” in the first title suggests an in-depth, open-ended investigation into how teachers apply specific strategies aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. This title emphasizes discovery and understanding of real classroom practices within a specific educational framework. On the other hand, “An Analysis” in the second title indicates a more evaluative or critical approach, possibly comparing and categorizing various strategies used in teaching reading, without necessarily focusing on a particular curriculum.

1.8.2. Curriculum Context

The first title explicitly states its alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum, making it highly relevant to current Indonesian education reform. It narrows the research to how teachers adapt to and implement this new curriculum in teaching reading. Meanwhile, the second title is more general. It may cover a wider range of teaching strategies across different contexts or curriculum models, but lacks the specificity that league it to a current educational issue like Merdeka Curriculum Implementation.

1.8.3. Targeted Educational Level

The first title clearly specifies the research setting: Junior High School, providing a focused context for the study. The second title does not mention the educational level, potentially making it broader but also less targeted.

In conclusion, the key differences lie in the purpose (exploratory vs analytical), curriculum focus (specific vs general), and educational setting (clearly defined vs unspecified). These distinctions influence the scope, methodology, and academic relevance of each study. Researchers must choose their title carefully based on their intended focus and contribution to educational research, particularly within the context of Indonesia’s Merdeka Curriculum.

1.9. Frame of Thought

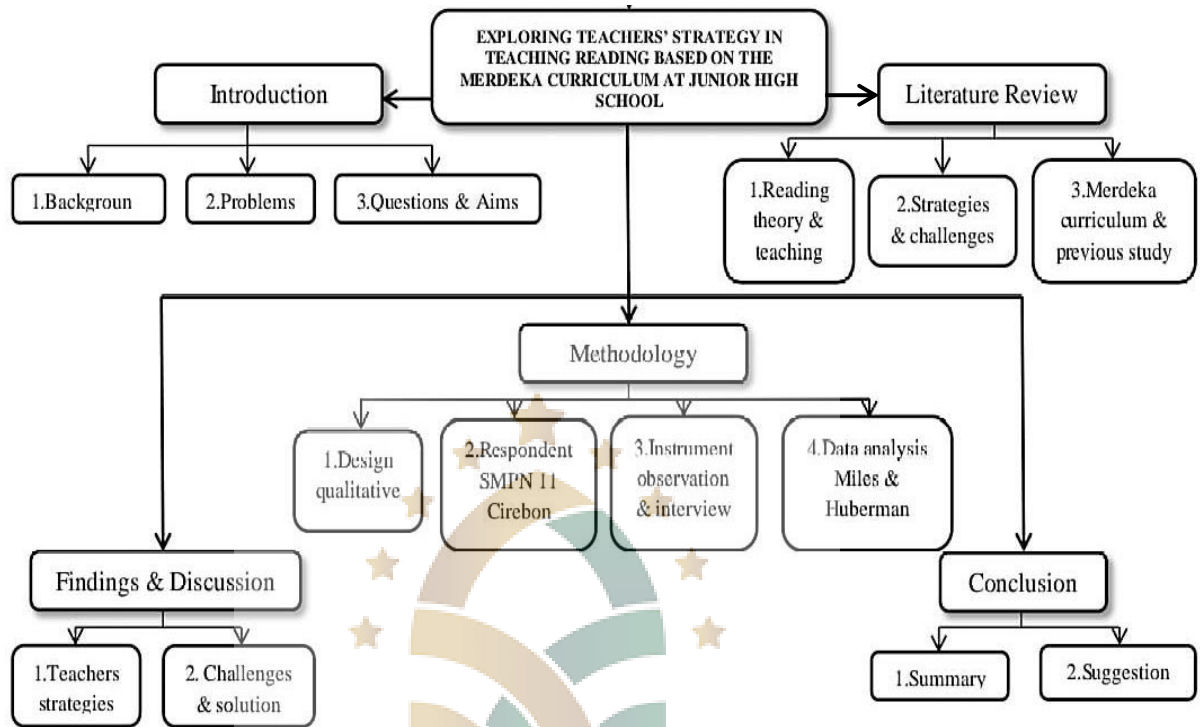


Figure 1 Frame of Thought

The frame of thought above illustrates the overall structure of the research entitled **“Exploring Teachers’ Strategy in Teaching Reading Based on the Merdeka Curriculum at Junior High School.”** This frame of thought provides a clear visual representation of each main component of the research, including the Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Discussion and Conclusion. In the Introduction section, the research begins with three key elements: the Background, Problems, Research Questions and Aims. These points describe the rationale for conducting the study and the objectives to be achieved. The Literature Review section is divided into three major parts: Reading Theory and Teaching, Strategies and Challenges, Merdeka Curriculum and Previous Study. This part discusses relevant theories, concepts and prior studies that support the research framework. Next, the Methodology section outlines the

research design and process. It consists of four sub-points: (1) Research Design, (2) Respondent (3) Research Instruments and (4) Data Analysis. This section explains how the research was conducted and how data were collected and analyzed. The Findings and Discussion section presents the results of the study, focusing on Teachers' Strategies, Challenges and Solutions encountered in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching reading. These findings are analyzed in relation to the theories discussed in the literature review. Finally, the Conclusion section consists of two parts: Summary and Suggestions. This section summarizes the main findings of the research and provides recommendations for future practice and studies.

Overall, the frame of thought serves as a visual guide that connects all the key elements of the research systematically, helping readers understand the logical flow of the study from introduction to conclusion.

1.10. Research Method

This section outlines the research method employed to investigate the strategies used by English teachers in teaching reading based on the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as the challenges they encounter and the solutions they implement. A clear explanation of the research design, data sources, data collection techniques and data analysis procedures is essential to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Therefore, this chapter presents the methodological framework that guides the entire research process, describing each step systematically to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the study was conducted.

1.10.1. Research Design and Steps of the Research

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. This design was chosen to explore and understand the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching reading used the Merdeka Curriculum and the strategies they applied to overcome those challenges. Qualitative research is the collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to

gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach is “a process of inquiry to understand a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and carried out in a natural setting”. In other words, qualitative methods involve the study of social phenomena in which the environment, circumstances, and problems are naturally based on what is happening. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth understanding of the participants, experiences, perceptions, and practices in a real educational setting.

This research explains and describes the teacher’s strategies in teaching reading at Junior High School 11 at Cirebon. The researcher obtained information about the strategies used by a teacher. Therefore, using a descriptive qualitative research design.

According to Ary (2022) stated that a qualitative research is made to obtain information on a phenomenon. To study this phenomenon include non-numeric data such as interviews, observation, and other sources that can be used to obtain information. Descriptive research aims to describe people’s behavior and gather their perspectives opinions, and beliefs addressing current educational issues (Lodico, 2010). The conclusion is that the descriptive qualitative approach is research that aims in depth to solve a problem through non-numeric data.

Based on the above definition, the researcher can conclude that descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that aims to clarify phenomena according to descriptions and conditions in the field in words without involving statistics to reveal a fact. That is by summarizing data with certain topics to get a good understanding.

1.10.2. Sources and Types of Data

The researcher was conducted at SMPN 11 Cirebon. It is a Junior

High School which located in street Perjuangan Number 48, Karyamulya, Kec. Kesambi, Cirebon City, West Java. The school was established in 1992 and has received A accreditation from the National School/Madrasah Accreditation Board (BAN-SM) 2018. There are 30 classroom from class VII until IX. English is taught as compulsory subject. The participants of this study consisted of four English Teachers who were actively involved in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in their reading classes. The selection of participants used purposive sampling, focusing on those who had at least one year of experience using the Merdeka Curriculum.

To determine the participants of this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling in order to help the writer understand the phenomenon being studied. According to Creswell, purposeful sampling is aimed to learn or understand the central phenomenon by selecting individuals and sites intentionally. The participant of the study were a Junior High School in class 8 who were considered to be anxious in English class based on the characteristics of anxious students illustrated by Oxford such as :

- 1.10.2.1. General avoidance: showing carelessness, low levels of verbal production, lack of volunteering in class, seeming inability to answer even the simplest questions.
- 1.10.2.2. Physical actions: Squirming, stuttering or stammering, displaying jittery behavior, conversational withdrawal, lack of eye contact, image protection or masking behavior (exaggerated smiling, laughing, nodding, joking), and being unable to reproduce the sounds or intonation of the target language even after repeated.

1.10.3. Data Collection Technique and Instruments

Researcher used several instrument to collect data. With the existence of research instruments, it will be helped in working so that it makes easier, more efficient, more intensive. In this study, researchers

used various methodologies and instruments to find data for this study, such as observation, interviews, and documentation.

1.10.3.1. Observation

According Sugiyono (2015) stated that a collect data in qualitative research, observation is the technique used. Observation is a group of information seekers who make direct observations of what any researcher wants without disturbing the topic. In qualitative reasearch, th use of Recording as a data collection technique and instrument is crucial for several reasons.

1.10.3.2. Obtaining Accurate and Complete Data

Recording (audio) allows researchers to capture entire conversations or interactions in their entirety, without losing important details. This specially important in qualitative research, which emphasizes depth of meaning and context.

1.10.3.3. Allows for Deeper Analysis

With recordings, researcher can replay the data multiple times to explore hidden meanings, emotional express, tone of voice. This strenghtnens the validity and quality of data interpration.

1.10.3.4. Interview

Interview are the second method of obtaining data in research. The researcher used a semi-structured interview method to collect data that contained a list of questions and also had additional question option to complete the topic. A semi-structured inerview is a data collection technique in qualitative research that combines pre-designed questions (an interview guide) with the flexibility to explore answers in more depth based on participant responses. An interview guide contains a list of main questions. It is flexible, allowing researchers to develop follow-up questions spontaneously. The researcher and participant engage in a more open, two-way interaction. Suitable for exploring participants,

perceptions, experiences, or opinion in depth. To obtain rich, contextual information, To understand the meaning behind participants' experiences, To adapt questions according to dynamics of the conversation.

Research Instrument

The main instrument in a semi-structured interview guide, which

List open-ended questions : does not direct participants answers

Main topics : serves as a framework to keep interview focused.

Probing questions : used to deepen the answer, for example : “Can you explain detail?”, “Why do you feel that way?”.

1.10.3.5. Documentation

In qualitative research, documentation is an important source of information. And documentation techniques are a data collection obtain information from various written and visual documents related to the research object. According to Sugiyono (2015) documents are relics in each different era. Documents can be in the form of writing, pictures, and monumental works of a person. Documents in the format of colorful images, illustrations, and other media forms. Documents in research are usually used in qualitative research including observation and interview. This technique in non-reactive, meaning data is collected without influencing or changing the social situation being studied. Documentation can include, Interview transcripts, Articles, Books, and Journals, Photos, and Audio Recordings.

The purpose is to trace the historical traces of the policies, events, or practices being studied in a contextual and in depth manner. However, for documentation techniques, the researcher is usually assisted by : Document Analysis Checklist

A table of contents that helps the researcher evaluate the relevance of documents to the research focus. It usually contains

indicators or categories to be studied, such as teaching strategies, types of reading texts, or curriculum use.

The research discusses teacher strategies in teaching reading based on the Merdeka Curriculum, the documentation collected include, Syllabus and lesson plan based on the Merdeka Curriculum, Teaching Modules, and Student worksheets (LKS). Documentation techniques in qualitative research are crucial for strengthening data validity and providing empirical evidence to support interview or observation results. Researchers need to be critical, selective, and systematic in assessing documents to ensure the data obtained is truly relevant and in-depth.

1.10.4. Data Analysis Techniques

After the data collection process, the next activity carried out is data analysis. Data analysis is to describe what is contained in the data. In the process of data analysis, researchers will use an interactive data model by Miles and Huberman (2016) which consisted of three parts. These three components can be explained through the following :

1.10.4.1. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of data simplification and transformation in selecting and focusing attention on the raw data that has been collected. Data reduction requires summarizing and selecting important information. In conclusion, data reduction is getting more correct data and easier data collection.

1.10.4.2. Data Display

Data display is an organized way of summarizing information. Researcher would understand all the data that has been collected to be managed to be able to take the results of the teacher's strategy according to the conditions. Then the data has been selected is presented in qualitative method. The data would be

presented in the form of descriptive narrative that explain the teacher's situation in using teaching strategies.

1.10.4.3. Conclusion and Verification

The conclusion is the final result of data processing. The purpose of reducing and displaying data is to draw conclusions. Then note down the important things to get accurate results. After that, the last action was to conclude the research and verify the data about the reading teaching strategies used by teacher in teaching in the classroom.

