

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Context

Education in Indonesia has experienced a learning crisis for a long time and The learning crisis that has occurred for so long has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Then in 2022 the government launched the merdeka curriculum as a form of evaluation of the previous curriculum. Namely, curriculum 13. Kemendikbudristek said that the merdeka Belajar Curriculum was launched to catch up with education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The word merdeka in the Merdeka curriculum comes from the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara about human freedom through education.¹ Its meaning is that education must empower learners to become independent individuals: be able to live independently, stand firm with their own strength, and manage their lives carefully and not at the behest of others.

Teaching reading skills is one of several language skills taught at the junior high school level, with the aim of developing comprehension not only of text content, but also pronunciation and intonation. The ability to understand reading has a very important value for English students to be able to acquire and absorb new information and knowledge effectively.²

In this study, the researcher made the limitation of observation is reading comprehension. Teachers who teach English at SMPN 1 Pamekasan

¹ Puji Astuti et al., *English for Change*, 5.

² Klingner, Vaughn, and Boardman, *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*, 2.

need to know effective strategies for teaching English reading. Effective strategies can help students understand English subject matter better. This research will describe the problems faced by teachers in teaching English and the strategies they use based on the Merdeka Belajar curriculum..

SMPN 1 Pamekasan is one of the schools that implements the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Pamekasan in order to restore learning in schools experiencing learning crises. The learning crisis in question is related to low interest in learning, lagging factors on the material and several other factors.³

Based on interviews when researcher conducted a pre-survey, not a few teachers said that they had difficulty understanding the contents of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading comprehension. In fact, they still use the previous way of applying the curriculum in learning. Based on this explanation, the researcher wanted to know more about the causes of teacher ignorance in implementing an Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading comprehension. So that researchers are interested in researching "The Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Teaching Reading comprehension At seventh Grade Students SMPN 1 Pamekasan".

The existence of previous studie certainly provides some guidance and reference points that can be used as a basis for comparing and contrasting new research on the same topic. A number of studies have been conducted on this issue such as "English Teachers' Readiness in Implementation of

³ anggnaena, *kajian akademik: kurikulum untuk pemulihan pemebelajaran*, 92.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Teaching English at Junior High School in Padang". The findings show that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is considered ready, but English teachers face several challenges in implementing it.⁴

Based on previous research, Updating this study, researchers are interested in examining the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading comprehension to seventh grade students of SMPN 1 Pamekasan. This study aims to find out how the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is applied in reading comprehension learning, as well as how effective it is in improving students' reading comprehension.

B. Research Focus

1. How is the Merdeka belajar Curriculum implemented in teaching reading comprehension at seventh grade students SMPN 1 Pamekasan?
2. What are the perceptions of teacher towards the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading at SMPN 1 Pamekasan?
3. What are the perceptions of seven grade student towards the implementation of the Merdeka belajar Curriculum in teaching at SMPN 1 Pamekasan?

C. Research Objective

Research aims to solve a problem. Therefore, this section contains the description to be achieved in the research. The study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum in promoting critical thinking and creativity among students. The research objective is aligned with

⁴Sania Tricahyati, M. Zaim, "English Teachers' Readiness in Implementation of 'Merdeka Belajar' Curriculum in Teaching English at Junior High School in Padang | Tricahyati | Journal of English Language Teaching."

the overall goal of improving the quality of education in based on the research problem, the researcher can determine the objectives of the research carried out, namely:

1. To describe the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching reading comprehension at seventh grade students SMPN 1 Pamekasan.
2. To explain the perceptions of teacher towards the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading at SMPN 1 Pamekasan?
3. To explain the perceptions of sevent grade students towards the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in teaching reading comprehension at SMPN 1 Pamekasan.

D. Significance Of Study

This research is expected to provide benefits for all parties, especially for English teachers and students. Here are some of the advantages of this researcher:

1. The English Teacher
 - a. Provide guidelines for teachers in conducting effective teaching during the learning process.
 - b. Improve the quality of English learning by helping teachers understand the obstacles students face when learning to read.
 - c. Provide solutions to solve problems that arise when students learn to read.
 - d. Recommend teachers to pay attention to the special needs of students during the teaching and learning process, such as a conducive atmosphere in class, appropriate materials and methods.

2. The Student

As a reference and provide information for a student about problems in learning reading skills.

3. For school

The study is also significant in that it can serve as a reference for other schools and educators who are implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings of the study can help inform best practices for teaching reading comprehension under the new curriculum.

4. For Researcher

The study is significant because it aligns with the broader goal of improving the quality of education in Indonesia. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum was developed with the aim of promoting critical thinking and creativity among students, and this study will assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving these goals. By providing insights into the implementation and effectiveness of the Merdeka belajar Curriculum, the study can contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

E. Scope and Limitation of Study

Scope is range of the thing that a subject. It means that scope is refers to the problem or issue that the researcher wants to study with the project. Scope means is arrangement or organization of things the subject to know what the study will explain and focus on the specific the study not explain to other study that unsuitable with it. The scope of this study only focused on How is the Merdeka belajar Curriculum implemented in teaching reading

comprehension, What are the perceptions of teachers towards the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in teaching reading and What are the perceptions of seven grade student towards the implementation of the Merdeka belajar Curriculum in teaching Reading.

Limitation is role, fact or condition that are limited or controlled by research. The limitation of this research were limited to grade VII students of SMPN 1 Pamekasan.

F. Definition Of Keyterm

To avoid some erroneous interpretations of the title of the study, researchers need to explain the key terms used. Therefore, researcher want to clarify and explain the terms used.

1. Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a curriculum that provides flexibility for teachers and students to choose materials and learning methods that suit their needs and interests. This is so that students can learn more deeply and meaningfully.

2. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process by which proficient readers can combine information from the text and their own background knowledge to develop complete comprehension. Thus, the information contained in the text alone is not enough to make the reader understand the text in depth, the reader must also relate the information to his previous knowledge or experience.

3. Perception

Perception can be interpreted as the way we see the world. Our perceptions are shaped by a variety of factors, including our experiences, background, and expectations.