

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Reading becomes the crucial skill that need to be investigated, because it is one of the important aspects in learning English that plays a role in the learning process and becomes the only way to help students to keep contact with English. Through reading, students can get a lot of information, knowledge, enjoyment and even problem solution. In addition, the ability to read the text in any form will bring great advantages to the students.

Reading in a foreign language is not an easy task because it is complicated tasks in which students bring their knowledge into the text and process them to build new information. Therefore, it needs strategies to comprehend or get information conveyed by the writer. Therefore, teachers should provide their students with effective reading strategies in their learning. Since Reading comprehension is the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it appropriately to get what is stated. It can be stated that reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it, and understand its meaning. Grabe and Stoller (2013) contend that an individual's ability to understand text is 'influenced by their nature and skills'.

To cope with the reading skills, students should be familiar with several Components. Nuttal (2000) maintains that students should master the following Components including the ability to (a) 'determine the main idea; (b) find specific

information; make inferences; (d) identify word references; and (e) understand the meaning of words or detail information.

In Junior High School level, as stated in the previous curriculum, students had to deal with some kinds of text such as descriptive text, narrative text, procedure text, and report text, etc. Each text is characterized by their purpose or function, generic structures, and language features. Therefore, in comprehending the text, the students have to know the purpose (lexico grammatical), organization (generic structure), and language features of the texts. However, little is known about the students mastery of these genres and how teachers adjusted their teachings into Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, a thorough analysis needs to be conducted to enable English teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum.

The phenomenon above is reflected on the observation that the students often faced difficulties in reading comprehension. Most of them were confused about the words they faced; they could not guess the meaning of new words; they failed to state the main idea also. Some students seemed to lose their interests in reading English text. Therefore, it is important to disclose students' difficulties and factors causing their difficulties in reading comprehension. By knowing the difficulties, both teachers and students are hoped to adjust and improve their ways of teaching and learning.

Related to the above phenomenon, students' comprehension were mostly unsatisfied as indicated by their daily test (see the table below) which were conducted by the teachers.

Table 1.1 Students' Average Score on Reading Comprehension

	Very Low	Low	Average
Test 1	9	12	9
Test 2	8	16	6
Test 3	4	14	12
Total	21	42	27

The students' score on table 1.1 is the students' score from their daily activities based on the teacher's evaluation. It was score from the students in class VIII-6, it was the score from students' reading comprehension test that has been conducted by the teacher on the daily activities. Based on the data above, it shown that the students had a low score in the material of reading comprehension.

The data showed that on the first test, most of the students in this class had a low score (between 50 to 60). Among all the 30 students, only 9 of them had an average score, it is from 60 and above. From the second test, it can be seen that students with the low and very low score was more than the average score. And from the third test, the students with low and average score was more than the lowest score. It means the students' score has improved on the last test.

From the data above, it can be conclude that the highest score from students' reading test is between 50 to 60. It means the students had difficulty in comprehending the text, even after the teacher gave them test for three times. From this phenomenon, the researcher decided to analyse the students' difficulties in reading comprehension, and what is the factors of the difficulties.

Current studies on the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum suggested that teachers have never made a thorough assessment of students' abilities. In line

with this issue, Sucita (2022) states that teachers were less attentive to the ability of students to understand the reading text. In addition, Gultom (2021) mentioned that students still experienced many difficulties in understanding the text. It means, those issues need to be investigated in more details to help the students easy to understand the reading text. The issues are particularly important if we look at the students' readiness when facing the new Merdeka Curriculum.

The descriptions above raises the main problem as to: What strategies will be effective in teaching Reading Comprehension in the perspective of Merdeka Curriculum? Therefore, to answer such a question, the researcher needs to investigate students' knowledge and skills of current trends in reading and explore possible traits of the students to comprehend the text. To deal with the main problem as stated above, it is necessary to do a research entitled: **“Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Reading Comprehension at Junior High School 1 Lubuk Pakam”**.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, focus of this study are identified as follows:

1. Most students lacked knowledge of texts that they could not identify the genre being exposed to them.
2. Some of the students were less enthusiastic to read English text.
3. Students need to master several genres as a basis for their reading activities

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the width scope of this study, the researcher needs to limit it into:

1. Reading strategies that the students lacked in reading comprehension and the factors that hindrance them.
2. The genres to be explored include descriptive, narrative, and recount text.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, this research is going to answer the following questions :

1. What Components of reading comprehension are the most difficult for the students at SMPN 1 Lubuk Pakam?
2. Why did the students have such difficulties in reading comprehension?
3. What factors are cause the students' difficulty from teacher's perspective?

E. Purpose of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this research are:

1. To find out the aspects or Components of reading comprehension that are mostly difficult for the students
2. To find out the reasons or factors of students difficulties in reading comprehension

F. Significances of the Research

1. To the teachers

This study serves as a basis for the teachers to develop and modify their

strategies in teaching reading in the perspective of Merdeka Curriculum in Junior High School level.

2. To the other Researchers

Hopefully, the results of this research can be used as a reference and previous correlative study for further researchers. The theories and technique can give knowledge and insight so that it could be practically used in their research.

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding on this research, the researcher needs to describe some terms used. These some terms are: difficulty and reading comprehension.

1. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a process of understanding the meaning of the content, knowing the information by the text, also getting the topic of the reading text. The limitation of thinking and analyzing the meaning of the sentences make readers unable to get the author's idea. In order to understanding the idea of the text, readers need to only focus on the text while reading on it.

2. Difficulty in Reading Comprehension

Most of the students have difficulties in understanding the meaning of the sentence or the text, because the students have limited vocabulary knowledge. Factors that can affects the difficulties was also different from one another. The researcher believe that there are many other difficulties in comprehending text, along with the factors causing it.