CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background information of this study, problems of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Limitations of the Study, Significance of the Study.

A. Background of the Study

English is an international language that is mandatory to learn, especially for the world of education. According Jennifer Jenskin (2007) English acts as a lingua franca, which is a language used as a connector by people from various different linguistic backgrounds. In the era of growing globalization, the use of English as an intermediary language is becoming increasingly crucial, because it allows communication across cultures and countries to occur more efficiently and effectively. The role of English as a global communication tool helps overcome language barriers in international interactions, thus supporting various forms of cooperation and information exchange at the global level. In the era of globalization that we are currently experiencing, technological developments continue to advance very rapidly. According to Chodijah (2000:21), the need for learning English is very urgent for all groups, including both children and adults. This is due to the position of English as an international language which is mandatory for all levels of society. In this context, mastery of English is considered essential to be able to participate effectively in the global sphere, regardless of age or background of a particular age group.

Teaching English in Indonesia has become increasingly significant with the introduction of the Independent Curriculum Policy, which allows educational institutions to tailor the curriculum to local needs. This flexibility enables teachers and policymakers to adjust learning materials based on students' needs and interests. According to Minister Nadiem (2022), the Independent Curriculum Policy offers several benefits. Firstly, it simplifies the curriculum by focusing on essential material and the gradual development of student competencies. This approach aims to foster greater independence among educators and students. At the high school level, where there are no specialized programs, students can choose subjects based on their interests, talents, and aspirations. Teachers are encouraged to cater to students' individual abilities and development. Additionally, schools are empowered to design and manage the curriculum and learning processes according to the unique characteristics of their students and educational contexts.

A number of education experts have expressed their opinions regarding the Independent Curriculum and the importance of analyzing this policy from a theoretical perspective. (Tuerah & Tuerah, 2023) stated that the Merdeka Curriculum seeks to increase student independence and facilitate student-oriented learning by emphasizing empowerment and skill development in accordance with the demands of the times. On the other hand, according to Riyanto (2019), the aim of the Independent Curriculum is to free students from the confines of a curriculum that is too theoretical and to encourage learning that is more contextual and relevant to the

realities of everyday life. From the understanding of several experts above regarding the independent curriculum, it can be concluded that, the Independent Curriculum aims to increase student independence and present learning that is relevant to everyday life, as well as freeing students from a curriculum that is too theoretical.

The Merdeka Curriculum has brought major changes to the education system in Indonesia, starting a new era where schools have more freedom to develop and adapt their curriculum according to students' needs and potential. This policy gives schools greater autonomy to design educational programs that are more relevant and contextual. This change is most visible in English language learning at junior high school level, where a more flexible and adaptive approach can be implemented. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum structure for junior high school level is grouped in phase D, which includes grades VII, VIII, and IX, allowing for a more holistic and sustainable approach in teaching English.

To achieve effective learning outcomes, it is crucial for language learners to develop four key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Ariawan et al. (2022), these skills are fundamental for mastering a language proficiently. In the context of English education in Indonesia, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the development of these four skills. Speaking skills involve clearly and effectively articulating thoughts and ideas verbally. Listening skills entail the ability to understand and respond appropriately to spoken information. Reading skills are centered on comprehending written texts accurately,

while writing skills focus on expressing thoughts and ideas clearly and coherently in writing. Each of these skills plays a vital role in achieving comprehensive communication abilities in the English learning process.

Reading is an active process that involves interpreting the text rather than merely receiving the message. As a fundamental method for acquiring information, reading encompasses receptive skills, as described by Masduqi (2013). This skill involves receiving and comprehending written content without the need for students to produce language. Students are expected to not only recognize the text but also grasp its meaning by understanding the words within it. Consequently, students will derive numerous benefits from this process.

On May 3, 2024 after conducting observations at SMPN 4 Blitar, especially in class VIII, researchers discovered a phenomenon related to English language learning. Students had difficulty in understanding recount text, which is caused by several factors. First, students have difficulty understanding texts that consist of long sentences separated by commas. Second, they have difficulty interpreting the new vocab they get. Third, students also do not understand the structure of words in recount texts, causing them difficulty in identifying the meaning and context of the words, fourth because there are affixes in the words they found.

Based on an interview with a student regarding their difficulties in understanding recount text, the student stated, "I have difficulty understanding recount text because I don't really like reading books. However, sometimes if I read slowly, I can understand it. It's just that,

when I find the words words that I rarely know or new words, I have difficulty understanding recount text." (20 May 2024) The main difficulty faced by these students is in the aspect of understanding the meaning of the text. This is caused by a lack of interest in reading which leads to limited exposure to vocabulary. When encountering words that are rare or have never been encountered before, these students must try harder to understand the text. As a result, the reading process becomes slower and less effective, hindering understanding of the overall content of the recount text. In situations like these, more specific and targeted interventions may be needed to help students expand their vocabulary and improve their reading skills.

Apart from that, an interview with one of the class VIII students on 12 June 2024 showed that this student experienced significant challenges in understanding recount text, especially when the text contained long sentences separated by commas. This difficulty is caused by the complexity of the sentence which requires understanding many words at once, which ultimately makes them confused and has difficulty understanding the entire text. One student explained, "I find it difficult to understand recount text when there are long sentences separated by commas. In my opinion, this is quite difficult because there are many words that have to be interpreted, so it makes me confused." These problems highlight the need for more effective teaching strategies and additional assistance to help students overcome these language barriers.

Inadequate vocabulary mastery is also a significant factor. Lack of vocabulary mastery makes it difficult for students to understand the contents of the text as a whole. All of this is proven through interviews with several class VIII students who expressed their difficulties in these aspects. This observation highlights the need for a more effective approach in teaching recount texts in English classes to overcome the various difficulties faced by students.

This situation shows that there are challenges that need to be overcome in learning English, especially in understanding recount text. By identifying various factors that cause difficulties for students as well as the strategies used by teachers and students to overcome these problems, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to solving problems that are more effective and in accordance with students' needs. This research aims to formulate strategies that not only help students overcome difficulties in understanding recount texts but also improve the overall process of learning English in the classroom.

Research conducted by previous researchers also shows several causes and impacts of lack of reading comprehension in reading texts. For example, Muhammad Rafi (2022) believes that there are 6 reasons why students cannot understand reading, namely because there are background factors regarding students' knowledge of the text, students' understanding of sentences in the text, students' English vocabulary, students' motivation for the text, students' memory for text and students' understanding of text structure.

Meanwhile, Aida and Wahyuni (2022) argue that there are 4 difficulties experienced by students in understanding reading texts, namely, Firstly, students have difficulty in understanding the complexity of grammar. Second, the students have difficulty in knowing certain vocabulary when understanding reading. Thirdly, students have difficulty in using reading strategies, and lastly one the students have difficulty in concentration.

Fadillah (2019) The research carried out, namely research on the difficulties experienced by students in understanding reading text in third grade students at SMAN 10 Pekanbaru, is qualitative research and uses qualitative descriptive methods to describe data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Linkert scale.

Also conducted research on student difficulties and the factors students face in reading comprehension in grade 8 students at SMPN 1 Rumbio Jaya. The findings from this research show several indicators, including identifying specific information, finding general structures, finding language features that are categorized as difficult. Several factors that influence reading comprehension are environmental influences, interest and motivation and decoding or speed of word recognition.

Based on phenomena that exist in the field and also previous studies, researchers are interested in uncovering patterns of solving student difficulties based on phenomena from observations. So in this research the researcher chose the title "Model of Resolving Student's Difficulties in

Understanding Recount Text : a Single Case Study of Second Grade Students at SMPN 4 Blitar."

B. Research Focus of the Study

Based on the description above the main focus is:

How is the Resolving model of student difficulties in Recount Texr at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar?

These main factors are translated into a problem formulation as follows:

1. What are students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar?

2. How do teachers overcome students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar?

3. How does the learning process interact between students and teachers in an effort to overcome students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar?

4. What are the results of the teacher's efforts in the learning process in overcoming students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar?

C. Research Objectives

From the questions above, this research aims to:

1. Desribe the aspect of difficulties faced by the students in reading comprehension at the second grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Blitar.

2. Describe how teachers overcome students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar.

3. Describe the interaction of the learning process between students and teachers in an effort to overcome students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar.

4. Describe the results of the teacher's efforts in the learning process in overcoming students' difficulties in reading comprehension of second grade students at SMP Negeri 4 Blitar

D. Limitation of the Problems

After identifying the problems described, researchers need to narrow the research focus. This research problem centers on the difficulties experienced by students in understanding recount text reading and the strategies applied by teachers to overcome these difficulties. The final goal is to form an effective solution model to overcome this challenge for class VIII students at SMPN 4 Blitar in the 2023/2024 academic year.

E. Significance of the Study

This research is designed to offer advantages to students, teachers, and future researchers in several ways:

1. Theoretical Significance

   a. This research offers a comprehensive overview for future researchers examining similar topics, serving as a valuable resource and reference.

b. It provides insights into the factors that contribute to second-grade students' difficulties in understanding English reading texts at SMPN 4 Blitar.

2. Practical Significance

a. For Teachers: The study will assist teachers in identifying the challenges students face with reading comprehension, especially with recount texts.

b. For Students: The findings will encourage students to become more engaged in their reading activities and motivate them to read more regularly.

c. For Future Researchers:This research will serve as a valuable reference for those exploring the English teaching and learning process.

F. Definition Key Term

To prevent misunderstandings in this research, it is important for researchers to clarify several key terms. These include: difficulty and reading comprehension.

1. Models

A learning model is a plan or pattern that is used as a guide for teachers in designing learning in the classroom. The benefits for teachers include: 1. Facilitating teachers in choosing appropriate teaching techniques, strategies and methods to utilize them effectively in certain learning situations and materials to achieve learning goals. 2. Helps in bringing about desired changes in learner behavior.

2. Difficulty

Difficulty is a situation or condition where a person faces challenges, obstacles, or problems that are difficult to overcome or resolve. Difficulties can come from a variety of sources, including challenges in work, relationships, health, finances, or other things in everyday life. Difficulty can also be subjective, where what is difficult for one individual may not be difficult for another, depending on experience, skills and available resources. Facing adversity is a natural part of life, and often requires perseverance, creativity, and support to overcome it.

3. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a person's ability to understand and interpret the text they read well. This involves more than just recognizing the words on the page, but also understanding the main idea, important details, relationships between ideas, and the purpose of the text. Reading comprehension involves the ability to relate new information to existing knowledge, analyze information, conclude, make inferences, and evaluate arguments or opinions presented in text. This is important in learning activities and everyday life, because it allows a person to access information more effectively and make more informed decisions.

4. Recount Text

Recount text is a type of text designed to recount events or experiences from the past or narrate stories that have taken place. Typically organized in chronological order according to the sequence of events, the primary goal of recount text is to either inform or entertain readers with stories from the past. This type of text is commonly found in contexts such as travel narratives, personal experiences, biographies, and historical accounts. It allows readers to revisit or understand events from the author's viewpoint.