CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the researcher presents about theoretical background such as theory of curriculum, theory of reading, teachers' problem in teaching learning and previous study.

A. Theoretical Background

1. Theory of Curriculum

a. Definition of Curriculum

Curriculum is a guide for all educators that shows them how to teach and help students learn the content and skills they need. It is based on standards and consists of planned experiences that students participate in and master. The curriculum has a clear structure, organization, and purpose that support effective teaching and learning. It includes the goals, methods, materials, and assessments that are essential for instruction.

According to Lake and Winterbottom (2010) in Kattington (2010), a curriculum is a set of guidelines designed to aid students in honing their skills in both social and content-based curricula through active learning, interest exploration, civic engagement, character development, recognition, and assistance. It is a framework that enhances student learning by offering opportunities for active engagement, exploration of interests, promotion of civic duty and

character, receiving public recognition, and receiving assistance in accomplishing goals.

Moreover, Nation and Macalister (2010) contend that a curriculum functions as a framework for designing courses, consisting of an external cycle and an internal cycle. It is characterized by a logical flow of information connecting causal relationships among statements. The external cycle comprises practical and theoretical elements of Principles, Environment, and Requirements that shape course creation. Meanwhile, the internal cycle consists of the course's goals, content, sequence, format, presentation, and assessment. The use of precise technical terms must be consistently employed, while avoiding bias or subjective evaluations, figurative language, and filler words. Additionally, formal register and clear, concise language should be employed; and grammatical correctness should be ensured.

According to the aforementioned perspectives, the curriculum can be defined as a structured plan containing objectives, content, learning materials, and methods that serve as guidelines for achieving specific educational objectives in learning activities.

In Indonesia, the curriculum is designed to increase faith and morality, foster noble character, enhance students' potential, intelligence, and interests, consider the diversity of regional and environmental resources, address the requirements of regional and national development, take into account demands of the workforce, and

promote the advancement of science, technology, art, religion, global development, and national unity and values.

b. **Definition of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum**

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum offers diverse intracurricular learning opportunities focused on deepening students' understandings and strengthening their competencies. Teachers are given the liberty to select varied teaching tools that align with students' needs and interests. Additionally, the curriculum includes a project designed to enhance the attainment of the Pancasila Student Profile. It was designed based on pre-defined government themes. The purpose of this project is not to meet specific learning outcome goals and is therefore not linked to any particular subject content.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's (2022) policy, the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum offers flexibility for educational units, teachers, and learners. The federal government establishes several components as a reference to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum in education units and classrooms. These components include the Pancasila Student Profile, Learning Outcomes, Curriculum Structure, and Learning and Assessment Principles.

c. **Characteristics of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum**

According to Regulation 57 of 2021 regarding National Education Standards in Indonesia, the curriculum's structure refers to organizing competencies, learning content, and learning load. The

curriculum design focuses on the following: subject changes, education units have the power to create the curriculum, and learning divided into intracurricular and co-curricular through Pancasila. The Student Profile Strengthening Project offers students the ability to make choices about their education.

Furthermore, According to Wiguna, I. K. W., & Tristaningrat, M. A. N. (2022). The main characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum that supports learning recovery are:

1) Project-based learning for developing soft skills and character in alignment with the Pancasila student profile.

2) Focus on essential content, prioritizing in-depth learning of fundamental competencies such as literacy and numeracy. Avoid tangential material and extraneous details that detract from the main objective.

3) Flexibility for educators to implement differentiated instruction based on individual students' abilities and adjust to the specific context and local content.

d. **Advantages of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum**

There are some advantages of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. First, making the world of education more flexible, which means to release the shackles of the world of education to make it easier to move. Second, provides opportunities for students to explore the lessons taken as needed. Third, provide a forum for students exploring general knowledge by plunging into the community. And the last, Students can

prepare themselves in dealing with the world of work (Kemendikbud, 2022).

Further explanation of the advantages of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum according to Hamdani (2022) is as follows:

1) Simple and deeper

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum places greater emphasis on fundamental material and the development of student competencies throughout each stage. The shaping of learning is envisioned as being more immersive, significant, leisurely, and enjoyable.

2) More independent

Teachers must teach based on the students' level of achievement and development. Additionally, schools have the power to create and oversee curricula tailored to the education units and students' specifics.

3) More relevant and interactive

Learning through project activities offers students broader opportunities to actively engage with real-world issues like the environment and health. Such engagement facilitates the development of character and competence in line with the Pancasila Student Profile.

e. **The Differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum**

According to Kemendikbud (2022) developed the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum as a more adaptive and comprehensive framework

for learning reform. The curriculum's focus is on fostering student character and advancing essential material and skill development. The curriculum's main features that support learning recovery are as follows: Project-based learning is implemented for the development of soft skills and character in alignment with the Pancasila Student Profile. The approach emphasizes critical competencies such as literacy and numeracy while ensuring sufficient time for in-depth learning. Teachers are given independence in implementing essential materials.

According to Nur Azmi Rohimajaya, et. al. (2022), the following is a comparison of the 2013 Curriculum and the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum:

Table 2.1 The Differences between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

No	Component	2013	Merdeka Belajar
1	Basic Framework	Based on the national education system and national education standards.	Based on the national education system and national education standards. And there is additional development of the Pancasila Student Profile
2	Targeted Competence	Basic competencies (KD) and core competencies (KI) are the targeted competencies.	The targeted competency uses the term Capaian Pembelajaran (CP). Which is explained through the Alur dan Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP)
3	Curriculum Structure	Intracurricular and extracurricular.	Intracurricular, extracurricular, and projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile.
4	Learning Process	Using a scientific approach to all subjects.	Using a differentiation approach that is

			appropriate to the abilities of students.
5	Assessment	Using formative and summative assessments.	Using formative and summative assessments and the results as reflection to shape student learning according to their abilities.
6	Teaching Toolkit	Text books and non-text books.	Text books and non-text books. In addition to the Merdeka curriculum, the teaching tools used are Modul Ajar, Alur dan Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), and a project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile.
7	Curriculum Toolkit	Guidelines for implementing curriculum, assessment and learning for each level of education	Learning and assessment guidelines, development of school operational curriculum, development of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, and implementation of inclusive education.

f. **Learning Achievements in English Subject in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum**

1) English Subject Rationale

In accordance with the Merdeka Mengajar education curriculum and assessment standards body, English holds a dominant position among global languages used in various fields, including education, business, trade, science, law, tourism, international relations, health, and technology (Kemendikbud,

2022). Students who learn English gain opportunities to communicate with global citizens hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds. Mastering English provides students with increased opportunities to engage with diverse texts. Through these interactions, they acquire knowledge, learn valuable skills, and gain insight into human behaviour necessary to thrive in a multicultural society.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2021) on Merdeka Mengajar platform, learning English gives students the ability to access the outside world and understand different ways of thinking. Their understanding of socio-cultural and intercultural knowledge can improve their critical thinking skills. By comprehending other cultures and their interactions with Indonesian culture, students can develop a profound appreciation of Indonesian culture, strengthen their identity, and appreciate differences.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) clarifies that learning English aims to improve proficiency in six language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing, and presenting across different types of texts. Proficiency levels for these skills correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR). The CEFR shows how well students can communicate their ideas and maintain a conversation in different situations. They are

able to articulate their thoughts clearly and express them thoroughly, even if there are brief silences.

The genre-based approach is predominantly used in English language learning, where learning revolves around texts in different modes such as oral, written, visual, audio, or multimodal. This approach aligns with Halliday and Mathiesen's (2014) proposition that "text" is an interpretive object that listeners and readers engage with when people speak or write. Emilia (2011) explains that the text-based approach involves four stages, all of which are applied to the same topic throughout the discussion.

a) Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF): The teacher builds students' knowledge or background knowledge of the topic to be written or discussed. At this stage, the teacher also builds the cultural context of the text being taught.

b) Modeling of the Text (MOT): The teacher provides a model/example of the text as a reference for students in producing works, both orally and in writing.

c) Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT): The teacher guides students and jointly produces texts.

d) Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT): Students produce spoken and written texts independently.

General English education in the national curriculum aids students in preparing for lifelong learning, cultivating the Pancasila Student Profile, including attributes like noble character, faith,

independence, creativity, critical reasoning, mutual cooperation, and global diversity. This profile can be refined through general English learning, which offers dynamic and fluid learning experiences providing students the chance to select texts or learning activities. English language learning provides opportunities to attain the Pancasila Learner Profile via written, visual, and oral materials, in addition to activities created during the teaching and learning process.

2) English Subject Objectives

According to (Kemendikbud, 2021) on the Merdeka Mengajar platform, english subjects aim to ensure students can do the following things:

a) Developing communicative competence in English through various modes of communication such as oral, written, visual, and audiovisual

b) Communication is crucial, as is developing intercultural competence to comprehend and value Indonesian and foreign cultural outlooks, practices, and goods.

c) Building self-confidence in expressing oneself as independent and

d) Responsible individuals are equally significant, along with the development of critical and creative thinking abilities.

3) Characteristics of English Subjects

Below are the characteristics of English subjects based on (Kemendikbud, 2021):

a) There are several types of texts commonly taught in general English, including narratives, descriptions, expositions, procedures, arguments, discussions, specialized texts such as short messages and advertisements, and authentic texts. Various texts are presented in written, spoken, visual, audio, and multimodal forms. These texts include authentic and instructional examples, ranging from single to multiple texts produced on paper or screen. The objective is to promote students' technological literacy, enhancing their proficiency in navigating digital information.

b) Teachers can choose the text they want to teach based on classroom conditions. Students can start learning from texts with topics they already know, to understand what they read and produce this type of text orally or in writing. Then, teachers can introduce students to new text types. The teacher can assist students in comprehending new text forms, enabling them to generate verbal and written works in such formats. The variety of text forms can adapt to circumstances commonly encountered by the students, such as those within school or home settings, facilitating real-world application and practice.

c) The learning process should be centred on the learner. It should focus on modifying students' behaviour due to their inability in

using English in the six language skills across various text types. General English learning concentrates on students' language skills at different stages of their language development. It covers receptive skills such as listening, reading, and viewing, as well as productive skills such as speaking, writing, and presenting.

The following are the elements of the subject and their descriptions (Kemendikbud, 2021):

Table 2.2 The elements of the subject and their descriptions

Element	Description
Listening	The skill to comprehend information, appreciate the speaker, and convey appropriate and meaningful responses is essential in listening. The listening process involves engaging in listening activities, recognizing and comprehending linguistic sounds, and ultimately understanding the intended message. Listening skills are important non-verbal communication abilities that involve understanding the implied and direct meaning conveyed in spoken presentations, as well as comprehending the primary and secondary concepts contained in the presented information and context.
Reading	The skill of comprehending, utilizing, and contemplating written material based on its intended goal and attraction, to cultivate one's abilities and possibilities for engaging in society.
Viewing	The skill to comprehend, utilize, and analyze visual materials based on intention and curiosity.
Speaking	The ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally in social interactions.
Writing	Effective writing involves expressing ideas clearly and creatively across various genres in a way that engages readers through proper organization and language usage.
Presenting	The skill of communicating ideas effectively through different types of media (such as visual, digital, and audiovisual) is vital. It is important to deliver messages that are clear, accurate, and accountable to

	listeners. When delivering speeches or presentations, it is critical to structure and tailor the delivery to meet the audience's needs and characteristics.

4) English Subject Learning Achievements in Phase F

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2021), students use spoken, written, and visual communication in English to convey information based on the situation, intention, and audience. Students mainly reference different text types, including stories, explanations, directions, debates, talks, and actual texts when studying English. Additionally, students converse in English to express their desires and emotions. Students use their English language skills to explore different types of written texts covering various contextual topics. They read these texts to gain knowledge, entertainment, and deepen their understanding. Through inference, they imply their skills in understanding information, and develop their ability to evaluate various written texts in English. They produce structured oral and written communication along with visuals using a wide range of vocabulary. Students create various written and visual materials, including both fiction and non-fiction, while considering their audience and purpose.

The following table shows the achievement of learning English (Kemendikbud, 2021):

Table 2.3 Achievements of Learning English Subjects

Elements of Listening – Speaking
By the end of Phase F, students will communicate in English with teachers, peers, and others in a range of settings and for various reasons. They will use and answer open-ended questions, and use approaches to start, maintain, and end conversations and discussions. Students will comprehend and recognize the key concepts and pertinent specifics of talks or presentations about diverse subjects. They discuss social issues and express opinions about topics relevant to teenagers in different cultures using English. They support their opinions with evidence, compare ideas, and evaluate different perspectives. Additionally, they revise their work and use body language like gestures, pace, and tone to ensure that they can communicate effectively in most situations.
Elements of Reading – Viewing
By the end of Phase F, students read and respond to various texts such as stories, descriptions, explanations, instructions, arguments, and conversations. They read to gain knowledge and enjoyment. They find, combine, and assess significant details and understandings from multiple types of text. These texts can be in print or digital form, including visual, multimodal, or interactive material. They understand the main concepts, problems, and storyline in a variety of texts. They recognize the author's intent and draw conclusions to understand implied information in the text.
Elements of Writing – Presenting
By the end of Phase F, students are able to write a wide variety of fictional and factual text types with an awareness of purpose and audience. They plan, write, review and revise their writing, demonstrating proficiency in self-correction strategies such as punctuation, capitalization, and appropriate use of verb tenses. They plan, write, review and revise their writing, demonstrating proficiency in self-correction strategies such as punctuation, capitalization, and appropriate use of verb tenses. Their writing shows an ability to effectively communicate complex ideas using precise language and varied vocabulary. They utilize topic sentences within paragraphs and incorporate time markers for

> sequencing, as well as conjunctions, connectives, and pronoun references to link or contrast ideas both between and within paragraphs. They adapt their presentation style to suit diverse audiences and meet specific communication goals, employing various formats in both print and digital mediums.

g. Implementation of Learning in the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum

According to the guidelines for implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in educational units issued by the BSKAP of the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are three stages to the curriculum implementation process: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

1) Planning

The initial step in executing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is planning. This involves establishing written objectives aligned with the education unit's vision and mission. The planning stage comprises various phases, including creating the Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP), Teaching Modules, and enhancing educational resources.

2) Implementation

The second step of implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is to put the plan into action. This includes incorporating planning into the implementation process with guidance and motivation, ensuring that each participant can carry out their tasks to the best of their abilities according to their roles, duties, and responsibilities. This stage has various exceptional measures,

including using Pancasila student profiles, student-centered learning, merging evaluations into learning, and teaching based on student learning levels.

3) Evaluation

According to Aisyah (2022), the evaluation phase involves evaluating something through specific criteria to produce the essential data or information set.

The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum highlights the importance of crafting teaching methods that correspond to students' learning stages, also referred to as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)(Kemdikbud, 2022). This method entails developing educational materials that are customized to suit each student's cognitive abilities. The purpose behind such differentiation is to guarantee each student achieves the desired learning outcomes.

According to Kemendikbud (2022), the following is an illustration of the learning implementation cycle:

1) At the start of a learning experience, educators conduct assessments to evaluate the preparedness of each student to learn the material that has been developed.

2) Based on the results of the assessment, educators adjust their plans or make modifications for some students based on the assessment results.

3) Emphasizes the importance of monitoring learning progress through various formative assessment methods. These methods allow

educators to evaluate students' understanding of the material and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. There are several formative assessment strategies that educators can use, such as entry and exit slips, low-stakes quizzes and polls, and simple assessments. By using these methods, educators can gain valuable insights into students' learning progress and make informed decisions about how to proceed with their instruction.

4) At the end of a learning session, it is recommended to conduct an evaluation to assess the attainment of learning goals. This evaluation can be utilized as an introductory assessment in the following lesson.

2. Theory of Reading

a. Reading Comprehension

Reading is one of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that everyone must learn and master. It is a way to get information from written material. Based on Yurko, N., and Protsenko, U. (2020), reading comprehension is the capacity to analyze literature, comprehend its meaning, and incorporate prior knowledge. The reader's aptitude and capacity to digest information affect his or her capacity to grasp a text. Reading proficiency is defined by a person's cognitive development and is heavily reliant on their ability to swiftly and readily detect words. Typically, people gain knowledge via education and teaching.

Reading is something people can do to learn more without spending more money. When people read, they find out new things,

learn new things, and come up with new ideas. According to Komiyama (2009), reading is an important skill for people who are learning English because it helps them grow as people and gives them access to important information at work and at school. By reading, students can learn new things and find out useful information. Day and Bamford (1998:12) say that reading is figuring out what a printed or written message means. This means that the reader has to combine information from a written message with what they already know to come up with meaning and understanding.

b. **The Important of Reading**

Reading is a big part of our lives and is very important. By reading, we can learn more and gain more experience. So, reading is also very important and can't be replaced. We can learn more about science and technology and find out a lot of useful information by reading.

According to Nell (1988), reading for enjoyment is a sort of play that enables one to experience the world and different roles via the use of their imagination. When reading, we shall feel as if we are really there. This is how fantasy is created, despite the fact that we never experience it. Reading is the most important skill for academic achievement. Students who only rely on what their teacher teaches in class and don't make an effort to read a lot of reference will no longer by pass in time and achievement. Reading more is a means of gaining information. Additionally, reading as a target language can build

vocabulary for English lessons. It has been discovered that reading skill or reading desire will broaden comprehension and add vocabulary and knowledge.

c. **The Purpose of Reading**

The objective of reading as a receptive ability is often to get information or messages via written language. The goal of reading is decided and impacted by a variety of factors, including the reader's informational needs and the sort of reading selected. Experts propose several reading goals depending on the reader's informational needs.

According to Grabe William and L. Fredrika (2002), there are different reasons why people read. These include finding basic information, quickly skimming a text, learning from it, integrating new data, writing about or critiquing it, or generally comprehending it.

1) Reading to find simple information

Reading for basic information is a widely practiced reading skill, although some scholars consider it to be a somewhat distinct cognitive process. Given its frequent use in reading tasks, reading comprehension can be seen as a subcategory of basic information reading.

2) Reading to skim quickly

Skimming is a valuable reading skill and frequently assigned task. Its method involves predicting significant portions of text and implementing fundamental reading skills to discern the main idea.

3) Reading to learn from the text

       Reading for learning typically takes place in academic and professional settings, where individuals must gain a significant amount of information from written materials. This involves the capacity to recall key concepts, establish and analyze rhetorical structures, and establish connections between the text and its intended audience.

4) Reading to integrate information

       Integrating information necessitates decisions about the relative importance of data that is complementary, mutually supportive, or conflicting. In order to accommodate information from diverse sources, rhetorical frameworks may need to be restructured.

5) Reading to write and critique texts

       Reading to write and reading to criticize texts can be different forms of reading to understand information. Both need the skill to create, choose, and give feedback on information found in text.

6) Reading for general comprehension

       Reading for understanding requires experienced readers to quickly process words and effectively coordinate multiple processes within a limited time. This involves forming clear representations of main ideas through strong comprehension skills.

Reading provides advantages to society in addition to students. To gain knowledge about social life, reading extensively is essential. It assists in staying informed about social, political, and economic issues that impact the nation.

d. Type of Reading

1) Intensive Reading

Intensive Reading is a teacher-centred methodology. In other words, instructors manage the majority of classroom activities, including what and when students read, and which vocabulary, grammar, text structure, and comprehension issues to discuss. According to Long and Richards (1987), it is a "teacher-led, in-class study of vocabulary and grammatical issues in a brief piece."

2) Extensive Reading

According to Brown (1989), thorough reading is performed "to get a broad comprehension of a material." The notion of extensive reading exposes children to an input-rich and engaging environment with the hope that their language skills will improve and their intrinsic motivation to study will grow spontaneously (Hedge, 1985, cited in Sheu, 2003).

3) Reading Aloud

Reading Aloud is a technique that enables a student or instructor to read aloud a piece. While listening, kids read aloud. This facilitates comprehension of word pronunciation, pauses, and

word accents in fragments and offers a model for academic language acceptance and registration (Hirai, 2010).

4) Silent Reading

The capacity to read without speaking called silent reading. This may involve sub-vocalization and silent speech, which is 10 described as the internal language formed while reading a word and allows the reader to picture the sound of the word as it is being read.

e. **Reading Process**

Effective reading involves organizing thoughts and thinking patterns logically. This skill requires practice and can be broken down into seven basic processes:

1) Recognition: registration of the reader's knowledge of the symbols of the alphabet.

2) Assimilation: the physical process of exploration and scanning.

3) Intra-integration: a basic understanding derived from the reading material itself, with minimal reliance on previous experience, apart from knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

4) Extra-integration: analysis criticism, appreciation, selection, and rejection. These are all activities that require readers to bring their own experience to the task.

5) Retention: this is the ability to store information in memory.

6) Recall: ability to retrieve information from memory.

7) Communication: this represents the application of information and can be divided into less than 4 categories, namely: written

communication, oral communication, drawing communication and manipulation with objects, thinking (this is another word for self-communication).

f. Strategy in Reading Comprehension

In reading comprehension. There are many varieties of strategy. They are skimming, scanning, references, summarizing, and identifying the main ideas and supporting details.

1) Skimming

According to Brown (2004: 213), skimming is a predictive tactic used to provide the reader a sense of the topic and goal of the text, the text's construction, and the author's perspective or point of view. From this, we may 11 deduce that indirect reading comprehension can anticipate text content by analyzing the sentence context. You can also gain an understanding of the author's point of view by reading the book.

2) Scanning

A scan entails a rapid reading for particular information. The objective of scanning is to obtain particular data without reading the full document (Brown, 2001: 308). Brown (2003) defines scanning as the fast search for specific textual information.

3) Guessing and making inference

Guessing and reasoning entails guessing the meaning using multiple signals (both verbal and nonverbal) when the learner does not know all the words helps readers overcome knowledge limits in

reading. Before getting the broader idea, readers do not need to identify and comprehend every word. In reality, many paragraphs may be read and inferred without the reader necessarily comprehending every detail (Oxford, 1990: 90).

4) Summarizing

In her popular writing work Fit to Print, Buckley (2004) describes summarizing as reducing material to onethird or one-quarter of its original size, clearly stating the author's purpose, and keeping the major ideas. Additionally, Jones (2012) writes, "This technique is actually about preparing your students to be lifelong learners."

5) Identifying the main ideas and supporting details

The objective of finding the primary concept, according to Barnes, Brown, and Burgdorf (1980), is to assist students locate a paragraph paper or idea. The main idea is the most essential component in a paragraph. It is 12 the basis upon which all other phrases are constructed (pp. 9-10)

g. **Problem of Reading Comprehension**

People who can't read well might not spend as much time reading, so they have a smaller vocabulary and less general knowledge (Yunus, Mohamad, & Waelateh, 2016; Ismail & Yusof, 2016). Gunning (2002, pp. 356-359) says that reading problems include not being able to do basic decoding, not having enough academic vocabulary, using background too little or too much, not reading in a way that makes sense,

not using strategies or not knowing how to use them, and not having good language skills.

3. Teachers' Problems in Teaching Learning

In Regulation No. 36/2018 of the Minister of National Education, teaching issues are linked to both internal and external factors. Internal factors consist of teachers, materials, interaction patterns, media and technology, learning situations, and systems. External factors, on the other hand, pertain to the surroundings in which the teaching and learning process occurs.

Kemendikbud (2022) stated that educators must adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students when implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. However, some educators find it challenging to provide differentiated learning due to time constraints in designing lessons tailored to individual student needs. Additionally, grouping students based on readiness can be difficult for educators due to large class sizes and limited classroom space.

B. Previous Study

During the research, the researcher found few theses or journals regarding the use of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum for teaching reading comprehension. Even though there were some previous studies, they were not detailed and systematic enough to fully understand how the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum can improve reading comprehension. While there has been research on the implementation of the curriculum in other areas, there is still a lack of

specific information about its application in reading comprehension teaching. The researcher conducted this study to gain a clearer understanding of how the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is applied in teaching reading comprehension at SMKN 2 Kota Kediri. Through a review of relevant literature, the researcher identified several related research titles.

The initial inquiry was led by Shinta Amalia Ferdaus and Dian Novita in 2023, entitled *"The Implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum in English Subject at A Vocational High School in Indonesia"*. The study's objective is to inspect how the *Merdeka* Curriculum is executed for English at a vocational school located in Sidoarjo, which is considered a center of excellence for vocational education. The study discovered that the *Merdeka* Curriculum was extensively put into practice at a vocational high school. Despite this, there are difficulties concerning transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. The methods utilized for teaching English have all ended up adopting a student-centered approach which aligns with the Pancasila Student Profile goals. The goal of combining the Pancasila Student Profile orientation and student-centered approach in English education is to create individuals who are self-reliant, possess critical, creative, and inventive thinking skills, are socially adept, and have the ability to communicate and work with others effectively.

The study conducted by Amiruddin et al. (2023) investigates *"Implementation Merdeka Curriculum of Learning to Students' Learning Activities"*. The study employs a descriptive research methodology to explore the relationship between the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and students' learning activities. The study employs a descriptive research

methodology to explore the relationship between the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and students' learning activities. Technical terminology will be explained upon their first usage. The paper adheres to appropriate citation rules, and quotations are carefully distinguished from the rest of the text. The results of the research indicate that visual learning-style accounts for 47%, kinesthetic learning-style for 37%, and auditory learning-style for 16%. The research subjects were students in class 7B at SMPN 3 Lubuk Pakam. The observed outcome demonstrates that the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum has a positive impact on students' learning activities.

The latest study by Dea Digna et al (2023) titled "*Teachers' Perceptions of Differentiated Learning in Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools*". analysed teachers' perceptions of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum, particularly at the elementary school level. This qualitative research employed a mixed-method approach using questionnaires and interviews conducted with 30 teachers. The study results indicate that the teachers demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm in learning the new curriculum, and their participation in independent curriculum training is relatively high. However, teacher participation and enthusiasm do not correlate directly with their understanding of differentiated learning. Only a small number of teachers have grasped differentiated learning and must implement it in their classes. It was determined that teachers recognize the necessity for curriculum modifications that align with local developments, thus eliminating additional burdens associated with curriculum changes.