

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of a background of the study, research problem, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, definitions of the key terms, hypothesis, and the previous studies.

### **A. Background of the study**

English is an International language that is important to learn. In Indonesia, English is taught as foreign language (EFL), it has been included in the educational curriculum in Indonesia. English is often used in writing science books, journals, or articles about knowledge and technology, so English is important to learn for Indonesian students from junior high school until universities in order to develop science and technology and also to make us easier doing conversation with people in another countries. As a developed nation, there is a need for Indonesia to prioritize a relevant education system following the current situation. Thus, to follow the new need in education, one of the efforts to improve the quality of education is through the implementation of the new curriculum called the Merdeka Curriculum (Suhandi et al., 2022).

Generally, there are two skills in language learning, namely the receptive skill and productive skill. Receptive skill is the ability to listen and read, while productive skill is the ability to speak and write. Reading is a receptive skill in which the students are introduced and exposed to the written text, (Syahfutra et al., 2019). Reading is one of the most important language skills that should be developed inside and outside the classroom. It is also one of the most common ways to get information. Reading is one of the most important skills in English

beside listening, speaking, and writing. By reading, students can get much knowledge and find any information. Understanding and creating meaning from a printed or written material is reading. To grasp and comprehend what they have read, readers must connect information from written texts with prior knowledge. This process is known as the creation of meaning. Additionally, reading is a method by which we acquire knowledge from the things we see, such as books, texts, newspapers, and others (Meilani et al., 2024)

Reading comprehension refers to a dynamic progression where the reader uses the information in the textual contents to develop the meaning (Utomo et al., 2018). English reading comprehension is the most crucial language abilities in colleges where English is learned as a second language (Hartshome, et al., 2018). English is also important in the internalization program (Sari & Faiz, 2021).

Reading is an essential skill for academic success, particularly for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as they must investigate complex texts in a language that is not their mother tongue. In today's globalized world, proficiency in English has become increasingly important, particularly in academic settings where English serves as a medium of instruction. For Junior High School students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), reading skills are essential not only for understanding course materials but also for engaging with a wealth of knowledge that extends beyond their immediate curriculum. Effective reading enables students to access information critically and enhances their overall academic performance. However, many EFL students face significant challenges in developing their reading skills. These challenges

may stem from a limited vocabulary, unfamiliarity with idiomatic expressions, and varying levels of motivation and engagement with reading tasks. Understanding these barriers is crucial for educators aiming to support their students effectively, (Cahyani 2023).

According to Arjuna (2016), it is difficult for the students to understand the text as they just read without have comprehension about what they are reading. They are only reading some sentences and saying them out to the other students. Furthermore, most of students' times just spent for gaining new vocabularies from some difficult words in their reading source. The students more focus to find the meaning of the difficult words on the dictionary for comprehending what they are reading. This kind of learning process may give bad result or negative effects on students' reading skill. The students just focus to look for the difficult words and memorize them. It caused many of them are difficult to get the idea or meaning of the reading sources. Ardhan et al., (2020) then stated that learning and understanding the very detail problem in a text needed reading comprehension. It shows that critical thinking skill like deductive and inductive reasonings, analysis, evaluation, and inference closely relate to skills needed in reading process.

In the education sector, teachers can use a lot of methods and techniques to teach their students, but what are the best or most proper methods to apply in class effectively? In higher education, there are many successful approaches and methodologies that teachers have used in order to teach basic skills, but critical thinking skills are essential as they are skills that students must possess in both their personal and professional lives (Bezanilla et al., 2019).

PBL is an innovative learning model that can provide active learning conditions for students. This learning model is characterized by real- world problems as the context for students to learn critical thinking and problem-solving abilities and to acquire knowledge that can generate their curiosity (Siswandari et al., 2017). Hou states that one of the advantages is that the students have the opportunity of participating actively in problem solving so that the students are motivated in the learning process. This learning model is considered good and very effective (Hou, 2014).

Using PBL in teaching reading comprehension is one of good ways to improve student's learning experience. By applying this method, it is hoped that it can help the student at using the power of authentic problem solving to engage and enhance their learning and motivation in reading comprehension. In addition, it is also very important as a teacher to be aware in making a good strategy in the learning process because the application of the appropriate strategy will be affected to the student's achievement in the result of learning process (Arjuna, 2016).

Previous research by Rosyidin et al. (2022). their study was conducted at the senior high school level and did not specifically address the implementation of PBL within the framework of the new *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes student-centered learning and critical thinking from an early stage. Furthermore, their research employed a general experimental design without focusing on middle school learners, who face unique cognitive and motivational challenges in reading comprehension.

The second studies conducted by Kaganang (2019) the researcher used

Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which is limited in terms of generalizability due to its focus on iterative cycles within a single classroom setting. Additionally, the study did not include a statistical comparison between treatment and control groups, which restricts the ability to draw causal inferences about the effectiveness of PBL.

The third research was conducted by Syahfutra et al. (2019) the researcher used primarily descriptive and focused on the general classroom application of PBL without employing a structured experimental framework to measure the statistical significance of the outcomes. Moreover, their study did not specifically address how PBL influences students at the junior high school level, nor did it consider the evolving context of curricular reforms such as the Merdeka Curriculum.

Another study related to this research was conducted by Muriyah et al. (2023) improving students' reading comprehension by taking into account different learning styles (visual, auditory, read/write, kinesthetic). Their findings showed that online PBL was effective across diverse learner preferences. However, their research was conducted in a fully online learning environment and emphasized learning style differences rather than classroom-based implementation. Moreover, the context of their study involved senior high school students and used a 2×4 factorial design, making the scope different from traditional in-class instruction and limiting the application of findings to offline junior high school contexts.

And the last research conducted by Intan et al. (2020) both vocabulary size and reading comprehension used quantitative experimental design. Their

findings confirmed a statistically significant impact of PBL on students' reading comprehension, indicating that the method was effective. However, their study combined two language components vocabulary size and reading comprehension as outcome variables, making it less focused on an in-depth analysis of reading comprehension alone. Additionally, their research was conducted at a general level without specifying the curriculum framework or educational stage in detail.

Based on preliminary research conducted on students at MTs Nurul Islam Kediri, the researcher found that the students often got bored in English class. There are several problems faced by the students especially in English class. Most of the reading text contain word that is foreign to students, it caused students to lack understanding. Then, the difficulty of students in understanding the reading text is caused by the differences in usage of the word itself. The learning system is centered to the teacher and that students only rely on their hearing. This is certainly creating many problems because all of the teachers are not necessarily fluent in reading. The several problems caused the students' attention during the English class to be low.

Based on statement above, given the importance of reading comprehension and the potential of PBL to improve learning outcomes, the researcher is interested in investigating how effective PBL is in enhancing reading comprehension among 8th grade junior high school students. Therefore, this study is entitled "*The Effectiveness of Problem Based Learning on Students' Reading Comprehension at the 8th Grade Junior High School.*"

## B. Research Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates problem statement as follow: “Is Problem Based Learning (PBL) effective on students’ reading comprehension at the 8<sup>th</sup> junior high school?”

## C. Research objectives

Related to the research question above, the objective of the research is to find out whether PBL effective toward students’ reading comprehension at the 8<sup>th</sup> junior high school students

## D. Hypothesis

Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) : There is no significant effect of Problem Based Learning (PBL) on reading comprehension at 8<sup>th</sup> grade students

Alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) : There is significant effect of Problem Based Learning (PBL) on reading comprehension at 8<sup>th</sup> grade students

## E. Significance of the Study

### 1. Teachers

The significance of theory in this research could be the references for the teacher in order to improve students’ ability in reading skill. It is advantaged for the school and university in terms of the improvement of quality of students, especially in the skill that concerns in reading area. Moreover, this study was contributed the strengths of the use of the problem based learning to encourage the students to think the plan, and work of the whole text level in order to enhance their reading effectively.

## **2. Students**

To the students, the implementation of this study provided them a new experience, as well as to enrich their knowledge in terms of learning the new approach of reading.

## **3. Other Researcher**

To other researcher, to conduct this study was a priceless experience as I am a student that endeavors to be an English teacher. This study provided me a better comprehension on how to conduct an action research and more importantly on how to improve my quality in teaching.

## **F. Scope of the research**

The writer limits the scope of study so that the problems are not too wide and the study is effective, here the writer only discuss about the use of Problem Based Learning technique to improve students' reading skill in Junior High School. The use of Problem Based Learning technique in teaching reading is a strategy that can help the teacher in presenting materials and the students to understand the material.

## **G. Definitions of The Key Terms**

### **1. Reading**

According to Collins English Learner's Dictionary, reading is a text that students use to help them improve their reading skills by it and answering questions relating to the text. Sometimes used as a test or examination of reading skills. Comprehension is the ability to understand something with full knowledge and meaning. In Longman Dictionary, perceiving a written text in order to understand its contents is called comprehension. It means that reading

comprehension is an activity to extract the meaning of written materials with fully understanding.

## **2. Reading Comprehension**

Reading Comprehension According to Alexander (1977), comprehension is a special kind of reader comprehends by actively constructing meaning internally from interacting with the material that is read. Reading comprehension is the process of actively building knowledge about the text being read. In this study, reading comprehension means a process in understanding reading to obtain information.

## **3. Problem Based Learning**

Problem based learning (PBL) is a curriculum development strategy and instructional strategy that simultaneously develops both problem-solving strategy and disciplinary knowledge. In addition to that, problem based learning (PBL) strategy is a strategy to encourage the student to interact and communicate for solving their learning problem.