

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter I typically sets the stage for the entire parts by introducing background of the study, identification of the problems, scope and limitation, research question, the objective of the study, research hypothesis, significant of the study, and definition of the key terms.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Being an international language, English is felt useful and becomes a very important tool for people in their life. English plays an important role in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, all people are eager to learn and master it both spoken and written. In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language and is as a mandatory subject in school. Based on competency standard issued by Kemendikbud (2022), students in Junior High School (Phase D) are expected to have a basic understanding of everyday.

The purpose of studying English based on Merdeka Curriculum is to develop comprehensive language skills, improve learning motivation, enhance critical thinking and creativity, prepare students for global opportunities, and strengthen character development while adapting to technological changes. In this case the students at Junior High School are hoped to communicate or participate in creation of text in spoken or written in their daily life. In short, the students at Junior High School are expected to learn daily expression to

accompany their action when they join class or interact with their teachers and friends inside or outside the class.

In learning English, there are four skills which are important to be learnt, namely: listening, speaking, writing and reading. Reading is one of the skills that should be mastered by students in all levels of school. In the last of summative test, for English lesson at Junior High School, reading is one of the materials that are tested.

The questions presented in this test are literal, inferential evaluative, applied, synthesis, creative, and reflective comprehension questions and then open-ended questions. (English for Nusantara Teacher Guidebook for SMP/MTs Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and technology. Number 008/H/KR/2022).

In Junior High School, English is one of the subjects that is tested in summative test especially reading skill, it is very crucial thing for understanding the reading text. There are many materials that are presented in the form of many texts, namely: monolog and short functional texts. The teacher can use the texts to teach many topics that should be discussed such as teaching grammar, vocabulary through text, and teaching writing integrated with reading text.

Reading is one aspect of language skills that is essential for students in learning English. Petty and Jensen state that reading is a mental process requiring accurate word recognition, ability to call to mind meanings, and ability to shift or reassociate meanings (Petty and Jensen, 1987: 208). It means

that by reading, the students can get a lot of information they found, such as in journal articles, textbooks, and social media. It can also increase the reader's knowledge. In the reading process, comprehending a text is very important to help the students understand what the text read and connect the author's ideas to what they already know.

Rosenshine says that reading comprehension commonly entails 7 skills. They are: recognizing the words in the context, identifying main ideas, recognizing the sequence, decoding details, drawing inferences, recognizing cause and effect and comparing and converting. Being able to state the main idea of what has been read is one the most important comprehension skills (Rosenshine, B., & Stevents, R, 1986:376-391). Reading skill is also important to help the students to understand many tests that are usually used to measure their ability such as formative and summative test in which most of the questions are in the form of reading text. Reading is an activity in which the reader has to obtain both explicit and implicit information from the text (Kim and Piper, 2019). Besides, by reading the students can not only get information and knowledge but also widen their vocabularies.

The problem faced now by a teacher that the habit and interest of reading of Indonesian learner is very low. Bakar (2014) found out that a factor of low interest in reading was the society did not like reading. This is such a kind of big obstacles for the teacher to teach reading in a classroom.

However, for foreign language learners, they must be well prepared to implement many kinds of abilities and strategies that they have already had in

their reading experiences in their native language. The learners will need their prior knowledge to help acknowledge themselves to many kinds of texts. Without it, students may struggle to comprehend new information, make connections, and draw inferences. Prior knowledge acts as a bridge, connecting what the reader already knows to what they are about to learn from the text. When students connect the text to their prior knowledge, they create mental models or representations of the information, which helps them organize, understand, and remember what they've read to reach reading achievement.

According to Smith, Natalie Wexler (2019) prior knowledge is comprehension strategies rely on activating prior knowledge, emphasizing that they only work if a reader has sufficient background knowledge to understand the text.

Then, the act of reading is a non-linear process that makes the readers tend to jump ahead or go back to different segments of the text, depending on what they are searching for in the text. This concept has significant implications for how we understand and assess reading achievement, especially in the digital age. Non-linear reading highlights that comprehension isn't passive. Students actively engage with the text, selecting and prioritizing information based on their goals. Skilled readers employ strategies like skimming, scanning, and re-reading to locate relevant information. Students with strong reading comprehension skills can flexibly adjust their reading strategies based on the text's complexity and their reading goals. They can identify key information, make connections, and synthesize ideas from different parts of the text.

Students make progress in comprehension as they travel through school and can read and understand increasingly complex texts, and they can demonstrate their understanding by engaging in increasingly sophisticated thinking about the ideas they encounter in text. When comprehension breaks down, readers must reconsider options and look for ways to achieve coherence (P. David Pearson and David Liben, 2015).

Recognizing the significance of teaching reading comprehension, various methods and approaches have been developed to meet learners' needs in understanding texts, improving their reading habits, and providing insights into strategies for extracting information effectively to find reading achievement.

Furthermore, certain approaches are believed to support the process of students reading achievement. In the learning approach, there are several learning methods, especially for reading achievement, but there is one learning method that is more prominent, namely the inquiry-based learning method. Inquiry as an activity that includes all students' search and investigation abilities while being focused, critical, rational, and analytical.

According to Sanjaya (2009), inquiry learning model is a series of learning activities that emphasize the process of thinking logically and systematically towards learning objectives. It also emphasizes the process of critical and analytical thinking to seek and find answers to a problem in question. This approach is student-centered, where groups of students are faced

with problems, and the knowledge they possess becomes meaningful when based on curiosity.

This approach encourages learners to engage with questions, often perceived as the act of "asking questions". Questioning plays a crucial role in both the teaching and learning acts associated with the inquiry model of learning. This is so because by asking questions, the teacher assists the students in using his mind and attempting to understand the topic (Sund, 1993: 110).

After delivering the questions, teacher leads the students to find the answer. The next step is collecting the answer and the last is making conclusion based on the answers. Inquiry-based learning requires learners to take ownership of their learning and navigate their learning to formulate meaning and manage activities with the teacher's guidance (Pedaste et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2013). The process includes exploring, generating, developing, and answering question activities (Swanson et al., 2014). The five stages of inquiry-based learning are: (a) orientation: the process of stimulating learners' curiosity and providing a challenging problem statement, (b) conceptualization: the process of stimulating learners' curiosity and providing a challenging problem statement, (c) investigation: the process of stimulating learners curiosity and providing a challenging problem statement, (d) conclusion: the process of concluding the data, comparing ideas, drawing hypotheses, and formulating research questions and (e) discussion: presenting data from particular / the whole inquiry cycle by communicating with others and controlling the whole learning process by engaging in reflective activities (Pedaste et al., 2015, pp.

54-55). The process of inquiry is started by delivering questions/problems. The teacher delivers some questions to the students to lead them to get the problem presented. The orientation of inquiry-based learning is teacher seldom tells but often asks questions.

Inquiry-based learning is supposed appropriate to develop students reading competence. Firstly, instructors or teachers act as coaches, guides, and facilitators who help learners at their questions or the thing they really care about. Secondly, students take control of their own learning and to apply knowledge, which they learn with understanding. Thirdly, inquiry is an active process, where progress is assessed by how well students develop experimental and analytical skills. Inquiry based learning is a process in which students are trained to actively participate in learning, formulate questions, conduct extensive research, produce new understanding, and understand to build knowledge. This knowledge is new to students and can be used to solve existing problems and strengthen situation and opinions (Putri et al, 2023).

Also, Lee (2014), categorized inquiry-based learning as pedagogical approach as well as a learning strategy. The fundamental principle of inquiry-based learning is to promote discovery learning through the use of questioning, which in turn fosters the development of cognitive skills and metacognitive strategies.

Moreover, Gonzalez (2013) discovered that employing the inquiry-based learning approach is an effective way to design a course that encourages

undergraduate students to become more critical, complex, and autonomous learners.

Inquiry-based learning prioritizes student engagement by fostering curiosity and critical thinking through questioning, exploration, and analysis. Research conducted at MTsN 2 Kediri demonstrated that interactive teaching methods significantly enhanced student participation and understanding. These approaches transformed students into active learners capable of critically examining texts, identifying key ideas, and making inferences, shifting them from passive recipients to independent thinkers.

Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka focuses on fostering critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) aligns with these goals by promoting independent exploration and teamwork. Evidence from MTsN 2 Kediri highlights the effectiveness of such methods, demonstrating that IBL can support the curriculum's objectives by enhancing student engagement and skill development.

The disparities between the ideal approach to teaching reading and its actual implementation in schools are considerable and complex. These gaps can be categorized into two dimensions, including the ideal practices for teaching reading, and the current realities of reading instruction.

Reading instruction must be based on the principles of reading science. This involves the explicit teaching of the five essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Every student, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, should have the opportunity to



receive high-quality literacy instruction. Instruction should be customized to cater to the varied needs of students, including those who have learning differences or lower initial proficiency levels and educators should implement proven teaching methods that are consistent with research on effective reading acquisition.

The reality of reading instruction. Many teacher training programs do not sufficiently cover all five essential components of scientifically based reading instruction. For instance, only 25% of these programs fully incorporate these components, while 40% rely on outdated practices. As a result, many educators feel unprepared to provide effective literacy instruction. Despite various initiatives, significant achievement gaps continue to exist between students with high and low initial proficiency levels. For example, although students with lower initial proficiency may show faster growth rates, their overall achievement often remains below average when compared to their peers with higher initial proficiency after two years of standard instruction.

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reports that two-thirds of teacher preparation programs fail to sufficiently address phonemic awareness, a critical foundational skill for reading success. (Drake, 2020).

A longitudinal study revealed that students with lower initial reading proficiency tend to grow at a faster rate than their higher-performing peers over two years. However, despite this progress, they still fall significantly behind in overall achievement levels. (Singh, 2022).

Research from Georgia Southern University indicates that whole-class teaching methods often fail to close the gap between high-performing and low-performing readers. This is largely due to the lack of alternative strategies that effectively support all learners equally. (Price, A. M., 2022).

The research examines the impact of inquiry-based learning on reading achievement within the cultural and religious context of MTsN 2 Kediri, an Islamic school in Indonesia. This study is particularly noteworthy as most existing research on inquiry-based learning has been conducted in Western or secular educational environments. By focusing on MTsN 2 Kediri, the study underscores the influence of cultural, religious, and contextual factors on the implementation and effectiveness of inquiry-based learning.

Although inquiry-based learning has been extensively researched in the fields of science and mathematics, its effects on reading achievement have received less attention. This study adds to the increasing body of evidence suggesting that inquiry-based learning can enhance literacy skills by involving students in active exploration, fostering critical thinking, and promoting collaborative learning.

## **B. Identification of the Problems**

Based on the background of the study, there are many problems that arise.

The problems can be identified as follows:

1. They have low reading achievement scores
2. Some teachers still using traditional teaching method

3. They lack active student participation
4. They need for improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills

### **C. Scope and Limitation of the Problems**

Due to time constraints and the multitude of responsibilities associated with the teaching profession, the researcher focused to investigate the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning as one kind of teaching model on reading achievement at MTsN 2 Kediri. The researcher focused at the eighth-grade students of MTsN 2 Kediri in the academic year of 2024/2025 as a sample of this research.

The researcher chooses this Islamic Junior High School 2 Kediri because some of its missions are related to the research. Those are realizing the quality and professional educational institution, producing graduates who can think logically, creatively, and create innovation in applying the knowledge learned, improving quality educational facilities under the development curriculum. Many students graduate from MTsN 2 Kediri, a lot of students can continued to the best Senior High School almost 80% according to the Deputy Head of Curriculum MTsN 2 Kediri. This school is a place where the researcher teaching, it is one of the reasons.

The subject of this study was two classes of grade VIII of MTsN 2 Kediri, the academic year 2024/2025. Those were VIII-J class as the experimental group and VIII-K as the control group. The model used in this study is inquiry-based learning on reading achievement at MTsN 2 Kediri.

#### **D. Research Question**

From the background of the study and identification of the problem above the research question was formulated as follow:

“Is there any significant different in mean score of students who are taught by inquiry-based learning method and those who are taught by traditional lecture method?”

#### **E. The Objective of the Study**

This research is aimed to know the effect of teaching methods on reading achievement. This research is particularly proposed to know whether: There is any significant different in mean score of post-test students who are taught by inquiry-based learning and those who are taught by traditional lecture method.

#### **F. Research Hypothesis**

Based on the research question above, the objective of this research is to find out whether students who are taught by inquiry-based learning method better on reading achievement than those students who are taught by traditional lecture method for grade VIII students at MTsN 2 Kediri.

There are two kinds of hypothesis, they are the Null Hypothesis (Ho) and Alternative Hypothesis (Ha). This research formulates both hypotheses to be tested as follows:

##### **1. The Null Hypothesis (Ho)**

Inquiry-based learning does not have a significant effect on reading achievement at MTsN 2 Kediri.

## 2. The Alternative Hypothesis (Ha)

Inquiry-based learning has a significant effect on reading achievement at MTsN 2 Kediri.

### **G. The Significance of the Study**

In general, the significance of the study is to give the benefit for English teachers as information dealing with teaching method in teaching reading. English teacher can implement inquiry-based learning to teach reading as one of the teaching method alternatives. In addition, this research is expected to inform the teacher to be more innovative in teaching.

For the next researchers who are interested in researching with same issue, further experimental study related to inquiry-based learning can be conducted in different areas of languages skill and it can be applied in the different levels of students.

### **H. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding about the topic discussed, it is necessary to understand the definition of the terms related to the topics. Here are some explanations about the key terms.

#### 1. Inquiry Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning (IBL) is an educational approach that actively engages students in the learning process by encouraging them to ask questions, explore real-world problems, and investigate topics through critical thinking and problem-solving rather than passively receiving information from the teacher. In this method, students take responsibility

for their learning by posing questions, conducting research, analyzing information, and drawing conclusions, while the teacher acts as a facilitator guiding the inquiry process. This approach fosters deeper understanding, promotes curiosity, and develops skills such as critical thinking, communication, and self-directed learning.

## 2. Reading Achievement

Reading achievement, in the context of the research titled "The Effectiveness of Inquiry-Based Learning on Reading Achievement at MTsN 2 Kediri," refers to students' performance and ability in reading, specifically their fluency and comprehension skills. It encompasses how well students understand, interpret, and utilize the information from texts they read, reflecting their overall reading proficiency and success in reading tasks.

More specifically, reading achievement involves:

- The ability to comprehend and interpret written texts effectively.
- Reading fluency, which allows students to read smoothly without losing meaning.
- The application of background knowledge to understand unfamiliar words or complex ideas in the text.
- The development of vocabulary and critical thinking skills through reading.
- The measurable outcomes of reading skills, often assessed through tests or reading comprehension evaluations